

The FICTION Corner

EXCEPTION

By PAUL TULIEN

DOWN in the well, with no way of getting out and with little hope of rescue, Chris Thornton remembered the line he had written over and over in his copybook some 40 years before. "NEVER PUT OFF TILL TOMORROW WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY." He could fairly see the large round letters he had so laboriously formed with pen held stiffly in ink-smudged fingers.

The line had had little meaning for him then—just some words that he must write over and over until Miss Curry was satisfied. And Miss Curry had been hard to satisfy. Its meaning was brought home sharply to him now—when perhaps it was too late.

However, the former owner of the farm had let so many things about the place run down that he had time only to take care of what seemed most necessary. Undoubtedly, he thought ruefully, it would have been wiser to replace the rotten boards that covered the abandoned well, even though his cows might have stepped over a fallen wire to trample his promising corn.

All day he had been fixing fences, and coming home he had forgotten about the well which he could not see in the darkness. An ankle had been hurt in the fall—perhaps sprained or broken. It was swollen and painful, and probably would be worse by morning.

He struck a match and looked at his watch. Twenty to nine. Surely it must be later than that, for it seemed like hours since he had fallen. He held the watch to his ear; it was running now anyway.

Never before had a night been so unending. Snatches of sleep came at intervals, sleep broken by torturous dreams in which he was forever climbing, yet never quite reaching the top.

How long, he wondered, could a man live without water? And how soon would anyone miss him? Not soon enough, he was certain.

The farm lay in a lonely place and a car seldom passed over the grass-grown road. He had had few visitors during the months he had lived here. Lou Edwards, his nearest neighbor, had stopped in several times, but it was unlikely that Edwards would come again soon for he had little time for visiting since his last boy had left.

Thornton knew that a man could climb out of a well without a ladder by bracing his back against one side and getting a foothold between the stones on the opposite side. He had seen it done though he had never tried it himself. To try it now, when his foot was so painful he could not stand on it, was out of the question.

"Should've busted my neck instead," he muttered bitterly. "That would have ended the misery sooner."

The stars faded from the small circle of sky that he could see. Gradually light entered the well. Whining softly, his dog looked down at him; probably she had been sitting there all night, waiting for him to come up. If only there were a way to have the dog summon help. He might as well forget that. There wasn't any way.

He wished it would rain, for enough water might run down into the well to satisfy his growing thirst. Then too, Edwards might find time to come; his other visits had been made on rainy days. Might as well forget that too. It wouldn't rain.

Why did that copybook line keep looming before his eyes? Otherwise he never thought of things that happened so long ago. Of course, otherwise he had other things to think

about—like worrying about the crops or planning something else. Such worries looked pretty inconsequential now. And unless he could get out of the well, there wouldn't be any more planning.

Thinking of the line made him think of the boys who had been his schoolmates and playmates in those long-past days—Tom, George, Cecil, Jimmy, Fred and many others whose names he could not even recall. Where were they now? He hadn't seen one of them for years.

Dimly their faces appeared out of the past, and then the line came bobbing back, blotting them out. "NEVER PUT OFF TILL TOMORROW WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY." Why couldn't the line stay away, he thought angrily. It couldn't do him any good now.

His dog began barking—at a squirrel maybe. Or was somebody coming? He shouted for help, hopefully at first, but as the minutes went by, despairingly.

The dog continued to bark. Probably at a squirrel, for there were many of them about.



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LET'S TALK ABOUT You

BY CHARLES B. ROTH

Why Be a Negative? There are some persons—too many, I am forced to declare—who live under the handicap of a personality that has a negative tinge.

In psychology we recognize them as a definite and an unpleasant group. We classify them. We name them. We call them negatives, and the disease from which they suffer—for it is really a chronic mental state of unhealth—we call negativism.

A person with a negativistic personality always is ready to argue the other side of the question. You make a statement. He says: "Oh, I don't know about that. Listen." And then the battle is on. For an exhibition of downright contrariness, the negativistics always are on hand.

They do not really know that they handicap themselves by this trait. To the contrary. They are proud of their bold, contrary attitude. They will tell you it is a sign of courage and strong will. All of which is piffle.

A negativistic tendency, far from being a sign of strong will and in-

teligence, is definite evidence of an adult who hasn't grown up and who is dumb in the bargain!

Dr. M. M. Reynolds, careful observer of human traits, made a study of negativism in babies. It begins to appear at the age of six months, he found. Then it gradually subsides. Intelligent children exhibit negativism less than dull children. Wherever it persists, it is a sign of deficient intelligence and a mind that won't grow up. And to have negativism is not a thing of which to be proud.

Closely akin to negativism is a commoner trait. We call it stubbornness. One-third of us are born stubborn, grow up stubborn, die stubborn—to the everlasting damage of our personalities. For like negativism, stubbornness is a sign of mental deficiency and inadequacy. The stubborn person isn't strong; he is merely weak; he is afraid that if he gives in, yields a point, he never again will be able to climb back to the same degree of vantage. Therefore he sits tight.

If you have negativistic or stubborn tendencies, don't give up heart. You can get over both. Just examine your own mental outlook. Do you find yourself taking the opposite side of questions? Do you find yourself holding your ground when there is no reason for it, no need of it?

Then guard against both these tendencies of yours. Watchfulness you must exercise. But you can win if you try. And you must win, because no negative, no stubborn personality was ever a successful, a likeable or a charming personality.

Job Injuries Increase In Postwar Industry U. S. economy is expanding under the pressure of postwar necessity, but that almost frantic expansion is taking a high toll in deaths and injuries of workers.

Last year, the bureau of labor statistics reports, was the seventh in a row in which more than two million workers suffered disabling injuries on the job. Time lost during the year because of injuries amounted to 44.7 million man-days—the equivalent of a year's full-time employment for about 150,000 persons.

Giving even greater pause was the fact that 17,000 persons were killed in job accidents during 1947. Bureau of labor statistics puts the blame, to a large extent, on rising employment. Another factor last year, however, were two major industrial disasters—the Texas City explosion and the Centralia, Ill., mine disaster—both of which took heavy tolls.

Job injuries in 1947 increased 1 per cent over 1946, job injury deaths jumped 3 per cent. The year's toll included 1,800 employees who will be totally disabled for the rest of their lives and another 90,000 who will suffer some permanent impairment as long as they live.

Increases in injuries and deaths occurred in construction, mining and quarrying, public utilities and trade. Agriculture and railroading injuries were fewer than in 1946.



THERE are more shattered dreams, dislocated hopes and raggedies in a training camp than non-combatants could ever guess.

This is no sob story—no crying match. It is a true story affecting the future lives and hopes of many very fine young men—such as Charlie Keller of the Yankees. Keller is as clean and as fine a citizen as I ever have known. He was a top student at Maryland. He was a young star with the Yankees. He has known more than one bad break. He was just edging into the money when he was called to war service. Last season a growth on his spine cut him down.

Keller has been working desperately to get back. The old pain is gone. The suffering is over. But back muscles take time to mend. "I can hit the ball solidly," he told me, "but it doesn't go very far. I need time to rebuild those destroyed muscles. What about the future? Who knows? I can only hope."

There is Spud Chandler, nearing 40, a great pitcher with a great heart. The chunk they cut from his elbow is still a St. Petersburg exhibit. "I'm aiming at 15 wins," Chandler told me. "I won't be far away." Maybe. Maybe not. But here's a man's career hanging in the balance.

Tex Hughson of the Red Sox—one of the best. Chandler rated Hughson the best in the American League. Last year Hughson won 12 and lost 11. Not too hot. But he also had a sore arm that called for an operation.

How good will Hughson be this season? Who can say? Hughson in old-time shape can win the American League pennant for Joe McCarthy and the Red Sox. A wavering Hughson can bring about their defeat.

If you saw the Kellers, the Chandlers, the Hughsons and others on the borderline, at work, you could sense their background of tragedy or their hopes of better and brighter days. A job is pretty important when you have a wife and a few kids. I mean a job where you belong—a job such as these veterans and others deserve.

There happens to be more than you might know on the human side in a spring training camp, where men from 30 to 39 might be wondering what the next move will be.

Football Coaches The new football season of 1948 already is under way, with the greatest coaching shift in history. There are new men at Yale, Harvard, Indiana, Navy, Michigan, Washington and Kansas, to mention only a few. They are all good men and those who have the best material will win. Those who haven't, won't.

The most distinct shift belongs to Herman Hickman who left Army for Yale. The poet laureate of the Smoky mountains, who as a fat country boy, reached stardom as a guard at Tennessee over 20 years ago, had no early dream that some day he would be head football man beneath New Haven's classic elms.

At West Point, Hickman became the best line coach I ever saw. He also became one of the most inspirational factors in all football.

No one can say just yet how Hickman will work out as a head coach in his first year. My guess is that the Smoky mountain bard will do a fine job with even fair material.

Even at football's middle age, Herman knows in advance that he can handle any man on his squad, physically. This was true at Army when he had Coulter, Foldberg, Steffy and a few other, brawny linemen. I've seen Hickman take them on two at a time with his amazingly active 300 or more pounds.

Hickman should make a fine head coach. He has been a great football player—and also a great fellow. Between seasons he can take over the chair of mountain poetry at Yale, in which his kinfolk might figure.

The Great Bambino There is a story marching the rounds that is beyond all telling. Its setting is deep in tragedy, but its outline is as brilliant as any rim of stars.

It is the story of Babe Ruth, suffering beyond all comprehension, yet valiantly retracing his path of nearly 30 years ago for the good of baseball, for the good of all kids and for the good of suffering humanity in general—whatever the cause may be.

It is the story of a man who is much greater nearing the trail's end of glory than he ever was hitting his 714 home runs, and giving a vast nation the greatest thrills that sport ever has known.

Babe Ruth has been my friend for over 30 years—a great guy, set in mammoth proportions of build, heart and appetite, especially when he was starting from 1914 through 1935 in the box, in the field and above all, at bat.

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First Draft Law First use of selective service devices in America was in the county of Bath, N. C., when Royal Governor Hyde called all able-bodied men to the militia around 1710.

Exploding the Wood The heat of a lightning bolt turns the moisture of the wood cells to steam, exploding the wood. Lightning sometimes completely girdles the tree.

Gigantic Statues Found Recently uncovered ruins of San Augustin in Southern Colombia contain a veritable forest of gigantic statues, some reaching a height of 40 feet.

Iowa Well Supplied Iowa's 701,824 families own 621,971 automobiles, 671,000 radios, 580,000 residence phones and have 612,706 electricity-equipped homes.

Lemons Go Underground A lemon tree 1,300 feet underground has been thriving in a west coast mine. The tree receives sun lamp treatments.

First Wire Across U. S. First transcontinental telegraph message was sent October 24, 1861, by Stephen J. Field, chief justice of California, to President Lincoln.

Native American Berry Although the blueberry is a native American fruit, it has been in commercial cultivation for only the last 30 years.

Eating More Food The average person in the United States is eating about one-sixth more food now than in 1935-39.

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Buy U. S. Savings Bonds! Indiana Plants Trees Approximately 700,000 pines of the jack, red and white varieties were planted in Indiana during 1947. The red and white were used for reforestation and windbreak purposes and the jack pine on waste regions and gullies.

Better Right Now In 1865 Frederick Smyth, then governor of New Hampshire, stated that New England had a right to be proud of her corn crop averaging 31 1/2 bushels to the acre. Today twice that amount is common.

Electricity in War First use of electricity in war as a motive power for all turrets, ammunition hoists and auxiliary machines was July 3, 1898, on the U. S. cruiser Brooklyn during the Battle of Santiago.

Idaho's Rock Cities Two rock cities, composed of granite shapes resembling buildings, cathedrals, and obelisks, are to be found in Idaho. These rock cities are the Cassia City of Rocks, and another 26 miles north of Gooding.

Not Without Water! Allowing birds to be without water, even for a few hours and especially in hot weather, is the most serious thing that can happen from the standpoint of growth, production and general health of flocks.

ETERNAL ASSURANCE Grace Noll Crowell THROUGHOUT the ages men have ever clung To the everlasting promises of God. When loss and grief and suffering have wrung Their hearts, the pilgrims journeying on earth's sod Have turned their faces skyward, and will turn Forever toward the arching starlit skies, Where steadfastly his silver fires burn Like words of flame before their seeking eyes. O men, behold! Lift up your eyes and see Who hath created them. He brings them out, He names each one—he knows their destiny. Not one will fail! Oh, we so prone to doubt, Can we not trust the One through life's brief hour, Who has such infinite, unending power?

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