

The Overturned Mailbox



As You Were Saying...

MY RURAL MAIL ROUTE goes through a backwoods section where happiness is a rare commodity. Once a year the highway department cleans out the roadside ditches, upsetting some of the mailboxes. Since it's against rules to dump mail on the ground, I have to stop and blow my horn at the homes of the folks who haven't put their boxes back up.

At one home one year, a youngster always ran out to get the mail. "Bet you won't have to blow your horn tomorrow," he'd say, and each day it became a game to see whether I'd get there before he did.

Meanwhile, his dad kept promising to replace the mailbox, but never did. Finally, I gave notice that mail would have to be discontinued.

Next morning he met me. "Mister," he said, "Sammy gets a lot of fun out of your visits. It's the best thing he likes. Every morning he gets up and talks about meeting you before you blow your horn. So if I put up that mailbox. . . ."

"Skip it," I said.

Sammy's still racing to beat the horn.—*F. Neville, Denmark, Tenn.*

The Best Discipline. A friend of mine has an odd hobby: bringing together friendly dogs and angry boys.

"When I was 12," he explains, "one of my classmates was a sour kid named Joe. He was always picking fights, never had a friend. I guess it stemmed from a loveless home life.

"Then one day a big brown mongrel wandered into town and adopted Joe. It followed him to school, never tired of playing with him. Warmed by the dog's companionship, the boy began to thaw. His manners improved, and so did his grades. He went on to college."

This convinced my friend of the therapeutic value of dogs on small boys. Now he seeks out juvenile delinquents and makes each a gift of an affectionate puppy.—*Cecil F. Hanna, Santa Barbara, Calif.*

Terse Tome. My daughter, one of those bright young moderns, shudders when I use old-fashioned expressions. She recently invited me to visit her, and instead of writing that I couldn't come because I was just plain broke, I explained eloquently that my financial resources were exhausted. Back came a two-word reply: "Income pooped?"

—*Mrs. Grace Watson, Eureka, Calif.*

We Pay \$10 for Your Letters. We welcome your views on any subject of general interest. If we print your letter, you will receive \$10. Letters must be signed, but names will be withheld on request. We reserve the right to edit contributions. Letters cannot be returned. Address Letters Editor, Family Weekly, 179 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago 1, Ill.

I Was Just Thinking...



. . . IN A SUCCESSFUL Broadway play a few years back, the grandfather of the family rose at the beginning of each meal. He looked at the ceiling and opined conversationally:

"Well, Lord, it's been a pretty good day."

The play was "You Can't Take It with You" and the family's name was Sycamore. Sometimes I lie awake trying to remember either the title or the name or both. They fall constantly from their allotted slot in my mind.

I have never forgotten the words.

I have wondered why. They're not poetry nor lit-

ing prose. They couldn't move men to greatness nor halt the hand of vengeance. They'll never be droned aloud in classrooms, engraved on silver, or carved on stone. They are written on my heart.

In the eyes of God, a year is as a day or a moment or perhaps a microscopic fragment from the far touch of time. I do not presume to call His attention to insignificance. But I cannot relinquish the thought that, on this eve of a new year, I wish to stand alone here in my room and feel the words.

When the year began, I had no great hopes for it, but I hoped. Each year is for me the clean sweep

of excitement across the page of myself and each the bright expectation of adventure.

Some years have held little, some much. Yet each has been a turning point for me, as for all men. Each has been memorable for more than pain and less than tragedy. Each has contained a measure of joy and delight and, if some have been other than fulfilling, each has been other than disaster.

I could ask nothing more than to find myself here in the last twilight with my eyes raised to the stars and on my lips:

"Well, Lord, it's been a pretty good year."

Patty Johnson