

### Aptitude Blues

—Harriet Leonard

Taking vocations from a scientific viewpoint, let us consider aptitude tests. Aptitude tests are supposed to find out your inborn talent for putting big pegs in little holes, or putting little dots in little squares. I speak from experience.

As you know, not long ago state-approved aptitude tests were given to all the Seniors who are not going to college, and to any college-bound Senior who wished to take them. Naturally a group of us gals jumped at the chance. (We get out of all morning classes—Yipee!)

Well, it wasn't "yippee" very long. First thing, we got a nice little fifty page booklet of tests to take. One of the hardest things was the test in which you had a given figure and you had to find another (out of four) just like it. That was a cinch. Ha! Well, maybe it would have been, except that the practice problems were very misleading. In the practice, there was a simple square with one corner black. It was easy to find one just like it. But when you were given sixty seconds to do sixty, and each figure looked like the inside of a boiler factory with each nut and bolt a different color, wow!

"Oh, well. This next one looks easy." We had three triangles, two rectangles, and a crooked square, and we were to choose which atom smasher (choice of four) was made from these figures. (I didn't even get the practice problems right.) We swung into the test, and each problem looked like the works of a watch taken out and scattered around. I mangled them beyond recognition, trying to get them to look like one of those motors. (At least I suppose they were motors. They all took off and went flying out the window.)

Let's get this peg thing over with. "Pegs in holes, bottom to top, use both hands, quick, quick, quick." That looks simple enough for even me to do. Let me try. Ready, set, go!

Hey! I thought these pegs were supposed to fit. They are? Mine don't. Come and see for yourself. I can get them off home plate, all right, but they don't seem to want to go to first. There! I really think I could do much better with one hand, but if they insist—one, two; one, two; up and in; up and in; there goes one—on the floor—I don't dare—pick it up—can't you see—I got rhythm?

Now! "Pick the peg up in your right hand, turn it over, using your forefinger, and replace it in the hole." Wait a minute! Which is my forefinger? Here we—go again—I can't—do this—either—one, two—one, two—I can't—get them—turned over—much less—Fifteen seconds up? Well, I should hope so!

Then we received (absolutely free; no money, no boxtops) another little fifty-page booklet. This time we had to put three little dots in each square as quickly as possible. It wasn't hard to make little dots; I was so nervous I could just hold my pencil and it would automatically make dots, but I couldn't stop at three and I couldn't get them in the right square.

Then we had arithmetic problems. "If Miss Jones pays \$3.00 for two Latin books, how much does Mr. Clark get per dozen eggs if his chickens have red tail feathers?" How in the ding dong should I know? Unless I asked Mr. Clark personally, and they wouldn't let me leave the room. Oh, well.

By this time I was feeling faint, and I wanted to sneak out the nearest exit and go on a chocolate soda binge to forget all those little dots and dashes. But a person with the spirit of a rugged pioneer wouldn't let this Chinaman's morse code get

### SENIOR SOLILOQUY

(WITH APOLOGIES TO SHAKESPEARE AND MACBETH)

—Harriet Leonard

Is this a diploma which I see before me,  
Almost in my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.  
I have thee not, and yet I want thee still.  
Art thou not, hoped-for paper, available  
To Seniors as before? or art thou but  
A parchment of the mind, a false ambition,  
Proceeding from the over-homeworked brain?  
I see thee yet, in form as actual  
As one which once I saw.  
Thou promised me to college I was going;  
And such a diploma I was to have.  
My brain is made a fool by all the teachers,  
And quite deserves a rest. I see the still,  
And on thy inside pages words of hope  
Which was not so before. At least that's something;  
It is the Senior advisor which encourages thus  
My hopes. Now in my Senior year  
Peace is gone, and ambitious teachers try  
To make us work; Seniors celebrate  
Assembly privileges, and English students,  
Alarumed by their teacher, Mrs. Hedrick,  
Assisted by Grady McCoy, thus with their Macbeth contracts,  
With quizzes, tests, and themes, toward passing grades  
Work like a dog. Thou sure and firm-set aisle,  
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear  
I will not mount the stage to graduate.  
Oh, take this present horror from my mind  
Which does not suit it! Whiles I moan, hours fly;  
I wonder if it is too late to try.  
I go and take my quiz; the bell invites me  
Hear it not, Harriet, for it is a knell  
That may mean you will pass or that you will fail.

him down. (Or would she?)

Mercifully, we changed tortures right at this time. Now we all had a chance of showing how friendly we were with rivets and washers. "Take one rivet, slip it into the washer, and then put it in the little hole. See how easy it is? Rivet, washer, hole—one, two three." Uh huh—"Ready now? Go!"

Let's see, now how did he say? Rivet, hole washer—no. Hole, washer—no, no. Rivet, washer—shoops! There, that did all right—except there's two washers over the hole instead of one. Who cares? Now! Rivet, washer, hole; rivet, washer, hole; one, two, three; da de dum, de dum. Time's up? But I haven't even got started. What? You mean I was supposed to work from the bottom up instead of sideways? I always was a little original, you know. Plenty of initiative. My mother always said—

You mean we're going to put all the rivets and washers back where they came from? In fifteen seconds? Who, me? (Bravely)—Why, of course, I'll try. Here goes. Rivet, washer. I've got them out of the hole, but where do I put them? Oh, put the rivet in that other little hole up there and the washer on that little flag pole. How cute! I never would have thought of that. Now! Rivet, washer; rivet, washer—washer—washer—come on, washer, get on that pole. Times-a-wastin'! All through!

This next problem says, "What's the difference between two numbers if the first is twice the second minus two, and the second is three times the first plus the square root of five, and the sum of both is sixty-one?" That's what I say. What's the difference?

Then we came to the vocabulary quiz. I always prided myself on knowing that "polecat" and "skunk" mean approximately the same thing (at least to the untrained nose), but when it comes to words like salient, logomachy, ethmoid, and compendious, I might as well admit that I got lost way back there.

Just what all this enlightening information is supposed to lead to, I have no idea. Since when have they paid good money for putting big pegs in little holes? Well, I'm not really worried about my aptitude. (You notice that I use it in the singular.) Just because it's so rare and unusual the ordinary person can't see it, that doesn't mean it isn't there.

### Fishes Are Not So Dumb

—Carroll Leonard

It has long been said that fishes are simple, aimless creatures, but this is far from being true. Scientists now tell us that the social life of fishes is a rather highly developed affair.

Have you ever noticed a school of "soldier" trout? These fish run in schools, and they all run in the same direction and at the same rate of speed. Each one is a set number of paces from his neighbors. They line themselves up as perfectly as any military formation. Scientists have determined that schooling is simply a function of sight. These scientists have discovered that whenever two fishes see each other, they come together until there is a small but definite distance between them. Then they swim parallel to each other, maintaining their distance like a couple of soldiers. The formation of a school automatically comes about when more than two sociable fishes get together. It has also been proved that blind fishes do not school, but fishes will attempt to school with their reflection if a mirror is put in the tank with them. Some fishes, such as the perch, school more or less all the time. This makes it possible to catch more than one if the fisherman hooks one that is in a school. Other fish only school under special conditions.

From these few minor details, one can easily see that the fishes are not so dumb as one might think!

### Life Can Be Beautiful

—Bobby Leonard

Life can be beautiful, if we make it that way.

Life can be beautiful, happy, and gay.

Life can be beautiful—so fair and good.

Life can be beautiful if we do what we should.

Life can be beautiful whether young or old.

Life can be beautiful if friendship we hold.

Life can be beautiful, no matter the path we trod,

Life can be beautiful, but not without God.

### Or Would You Rather Be a Pig?

—Harriet Leonard

The question is often asked us poor Seniors—"What are you going to be when you graduate from high school?" And by actual survey (but I can't prove it) very few of us know what we're going to be, except a little smarter and a little freer than we are now (we think!) So I began to ponder why people end up in the occupations they occupy.

For instance, a person may make too grade in high school and Phi Beta Kappa in college and still be happiest packing pickles in a pickle factory. Not that there's any law against pickle packer's having high I.Q.'s, but when a person is prepared to be a teacher (at \$15 a day) why should he pack pickleks (at \$14 a day)? Of course, there's the advantage that pickles can't talk back. But there must be something about a person's character that makes him so contented when he's associating with dills. Perhaps when he was a tiny baby, his mother gave him a pickle to nibble to keep him quiet, and ever since then he has, in his subconscious mind, associated pickles with the happiness of childhood. Or maybe he's in love with the daughter of the pickled onion king and he wants to make a good impression on the chief pickle. There must be some good reason, if I could only think of it.

Again, we may wonder why the boy who was such a whiz at biology would wind up as chief pretzel twister in a pretzel plant. Probably the boy just associates the twisted pretzels with wiggling worms and snakes. There's always a reasonable explanation for everything, even if you have to make it up.

Then we have those most extraordinary persons, the jacks of all trades, who can do just about anything. A very well-known example is a teacher right here in the high school. He is a gentleman(?) farmer who likes nothing better than giving his chickens little pep talks about laying more eggs. He also enjoys hauling cows to Asheville the night of the Junior-Senior banquet.

Besides farming, he referees at basketball games. He is very popular with the basketball fans, who had rather watch the referee than the game. He also teaches school as a sideline, because he has to support his wife and seven children, each of whom has as big an appetite as he has. (He says.)

He is bound to be a mechanic to keep that discarded taxi of his on the road. He is also an experienced marriage counselor and an authority on child psychology. He is well-known as a connoisseur of good food and frequently visits the school store and the barbecue stand.

He is a diligent church worker and president of his Sunday school class, where they can hardly get him to stop talking on Sunday mornings. And last, but not least, this man of the old rugged pioneer stock is a terrific tease. (And a good sport about taking it, too.) So you can see, some people are just more talented than others.

As for me (if anybody cares) I readily admit that I don't know what I'm going to be. I'm gonna try a little of everything, and if I end up selling apple cider on top of Mount Mitchell, don't say I didn't warn you.