

THE BLESSED BARRIER

By FANNIE HURST

(© by McClure Newspaper Syndicate.) (WNU Service)

SOMEWHERE in the heart, the mind and the spirit of young Sterling was a barrier as high, practically, as his life was long. Had you even suggested anything of this to any member of the Buhlow family, they would have met the implication with loyal and heated denial. How could Sterling secretly feel himself an outsider in the Buhlow family, when not one of the Buhlow children, although they had quite simply been told when they each became eight, had an atom of consciousness that Sterling was not blood brother? As a matter of fact, bending too far backward perhaps to achieve this end, Ann and Proscow Buhlow took pains to see to it that Sterling received even more than their own children of parental solicitude. The fact that Sterling had been adopted by Ann during a previous marriage was as remote in the minds of her present husband and children as if it had never happened. Sterling belonged. As the senior member of a remarkably alert group of children, he was the acknowledged leader of the clan. "Sterling is too outrageously clever," Ann was wont to remark of her alleged eldest, treating him in the colloquial young fashion of the modern mother. "He sets a dreadful example to the rest of the children. They have to live up to him." "Sterling is not clever," Ann's really eldest, Shirley, would sing out on such occasions. "He's a soulless misanthrope, an acid-throwing cynic, a misbehaviorist, and he passes off among the unworldlings of my mother's generation as clever." "Oh, Shirley, be yourself," Terry, two years below Shirley, would retort on the fling of a soft pillow. "You know you'd give your sleepy head to be as clever as Sterling." "What Shirley can't be, she is not going to bid for," remarked her father, dodging in turn the same sofa pillow flung by Shirley toward him, that had been flung by Terry to his sister. "Father, it is a good thing you make it a point to speak your true words in jest. Otherwise your family would never grant you a hearing." Typical, all this, of the way Sterling stood in the admiration of his so-called parents and brothers and sisters. Not only the two older of the Buhlow children vested him thus in their full and enthusiastic approval, but the stepladder of younger ones followed suit with hero worshipping eyes. "Sterling this," "Sterling that," "If I had Sterling's brains," "Sterling is the genius of this family," "If only Sterling would take the trouble he could be anything he set out to be!" Something undoubtedly there was in Sterling. The something that would not take the trouble. Time after time, her sweet, anxious eyes scrutinizing this youth, Ann tried to analyze that trouble. Proscow, too. And as Ann said banteringly of her husband, as a famous alienist whose job it was to analyze the workings of the human brain, Proscow ought to be able to ferret out the way to attack the streak of cynical inertia in Sterling. "Darling, with all your brains, isn't there anything you want to be?" "I want my father to subsidize me with ten thousand a year as guarantee against the horrible thought of ever wanting to be anything." "Sterling, won't you be serious just once? You're twenty now. The time has come when you simply have to decide what you want to do with your life. You're too talented! Music. Painting. Writing. I've a suspicion you can be a great person in any one of them." "Perhaps." "Proscow, you talk to him." Curious, with any one of their own children, this problem would have been treated in quite another manner. In fact, the problem of Terry had already been handled with decision and the school for his medical training selected. With Sterling, just because of his equivocal position in the household, the dilemma of stimulating him to action was a subtle and troublesome one. "You know after all, Sterling, your father, in spite of his wealth, could never be wealthy enough to encourage a dilettante in the family." A flush ran beneath the pallor of the best-looking member of the Buhlows. Ann had struck in. Proscow, and rightly, would not permit one of his sons to live off of his ingress

... much less Sterling, the outsider. How to convey to these dear, warm discreet people that gnawing, sickening sense of his outsidiness. The very coloring of the eyes and hair of his five foster brothers and sisters was something Sterling could never look upon without the cold sense of being alien sweeping through the lonely inner moors of his desolation. The Buhlows were blond, every one of them, blue-eyed, straw-haired. Dark, aloof, alone, he stood in their dear, kind world—the alien whose isolation no one dared mention. The alien, who by very virtue of the anomaly of his position, was treated with considerations that hurt more than helped. All of his childhood Sterling had yearned for the heartier reprimands handed out so unselfconsciously to the Buhlow children. No childish dispute had ever been settled against him. The alien detested to! The same way now with his retarded decision. With not one other of his children would Proscow have been so indulgent. Even Shirley, the only girl in the group, had never met the quality of indulgence that had been meted out to Sterling. It made the bitterness and the hurting and the secret gnawing pain of being special, and a little outside the dear, inner group of people who were dearer than dear to him, almost too vast to be borne. It was not alone the sense of being the outsider. It was the knowledge that their unspoken sense of it kept them all so cruelly considerate, so deferential to his special position. Not even his foster father was to sense this out as the secret of the curious problem confronting him in this foster son of his. Too bad. Most gifted member of the family. Brains. Talent. Will get his bearings in time, of course. But a curious licked kind of psychology to the lad. Doesn't care a great deal about anything. Fine intelligence. High strung, but not unduly nervous. Sensitive, of course. But somewhere in the machinery of the boy's fine mind, a monkey wrench. For a while Shirley had seemed to have easiest access to the confidence of Sterling. They were so close; so filled with admiration, each for the other. Their entire childhood had been like that. Merciless in their repartee, gibe and banter, they were nonetheless closer than any other two of the children. But then at this stage, when more than ever Sterling had become the noncommittal dilettante, even Shirley had fallen back defeated. Something was eating Sterling. However, in the end it was Shirley who was to find her way into the tormented labyrinth of Sterling's dilemma. The recital of his years of secret anguish and hurt and jealousies came from him one night in a torrent, on the heels of a discussion they had been having together on the subject of his refusal to compete for an art prize. Sentence by sentence, revealing commitment by commitment, the strange secret tortures of the years lay revealed. "I'm too jealous, Shirley. Too eaten with the devilish pain of being an outsider to the people I love best in the world, to care about anything. I'm licked before I start. You can't want anything badly enough to go out and get it when you're eaten with a devil like that. It will always be that way with me. Homesickness, heart sickness, to be one of a group that will always too consciously and conscientiously try to make me think I am what I am not." "You fool," said Shirley, after hours of letting this too long dammed-up confession flow from him. "You darling, blessed, adorable idiot. The only thing, Sterling, that has made all these late years of mine the grand luminous years that they have been, is the fact that you are not one of us in the sense you mean. Fool. Darling idiot. Please, please don't sit there pretending you don't know what I mean. Sterling—how terrible it would be if really you were of us." Suddenly, seeing her there in a radiance that was as beautiful as it was unmistakable to him, Sterling did see... and seeing, came to bless the fact that he was not one of them!

Biblical "Slips"

Our recent note on a clergyman's discovery that a Bible verse ran: "Gird up thy loins," instead of "loins," brought from correspondent letters concerning other errors that have slipped into this and kindred religious works. Thus in one Bible an error in punctuation made a certain passage run: "The wicked flee, when no man pursueth the righteous, is as bold as a lion." And the omission of a letter in a passage in the Book of Common Prayer made it run: "We shall all be hanged in the twinkling of an eye."—Boston Transcript.

Stowaway Takes in Sights of London

Very Simple the Way La Raviere Tells It.

London.—Strict as immigration officials and steamship officers are, it is still possible to cross the Atlantic as a stowaway, eat two square meals daily for seven days while mingling with the passengers and crew, and then enter Great Britain without so much as a question from the authorities. Raymond La Raviere, twenty-eight, who says he lived at 2432 Marquette road, Chicago, did it. Travelers who have experienced the thoroughness of the European investigations of foreigners at ports and frontiers, plus the usual ticket and passport inspections of stewards and others aboard ship, merely go through formalities in no way essential. La Raviere proved it. He boarded the Olympic in New York 15 hours before the vessel sailed, made himself comfortable, traveled to Southampton, landed, tramped to London, and was going for a walk with two newly found girl friends in Drury Lane some time later before the police called him to account. Then he was fined 810 or given one month in Wormwood Scrubs prison for the offense of entering England illegally.

Afterwards he restored himself to the trust of the officials and spent a month doing the tower, houses of parliament, Westminster abbey, Kew gardens, and other points of interest.

La Raviere was even given a police registration card such as all Americans and other foreigners who stay in England any length of time must have.

It all sounds easy as he explains it.

He walked up the Olympic gangplank, stored his luggage in the crew's quarters, and went for a walk. He came back at eight, got his bag, and picked out an unoccupied third-class stateroom. Mattresses and other un-used bedding were stored in the room, and out of these he built a screen to shield himself from the door. Then he made his bed behind and turned in for the night. When he woke up next morning he was at sea.

La Raviere stayed in his stateroom until evening, when he grew hungry. So he changed his clothes and went on deck. Then he learned that the night crew was about to be fed, so he dashed back and got into his seaman's clothing in time to follow the

crew in to supper. He helped himself and nobody asked any questions.

He made this quick change twice a day for seven days. He ate lunch with the day crew and at night he fed with a different watch. Nobody suspected. The rest of the time he lolled in deck chairs and mingled with the passengers.

La Raviere meant to debark at Cherbourg, but found this impossible because of the landing card necessary to board the tender. So he went on to Southampton and was unlucky enough to arrive there in mid-afternoon. He saw two gangplanks taken aboard, one for the passengers and the other for the crew, who immediately began unloading laundry. Then he did his quick change for the last time. He left his bag behind to avoid customs officers and walked off the ship with the crew.

He was unable to get out of the dock yards at Southampton because the only exit is through a gate in a high steel wire fence and this is guarded by immigration officers.

But he waited until dark and then jumped the fence, the last hurdle of his crossing taken. Then he walked

to London, a fraction less than 80 miles away.

He confessed to a policeman guarding the door of an American organization in London that he entered as a stowaway without a passport. This policeman, La Raviere claims, refused to arrest him then, but when he saw him on the following day strolling with two pretty English girls he put him under arrest and took him to the immigration office in Bow street. He was convicted of entering the country illegally and on the same day they took him to Wormwood Scrubs, a prison on the outskirts of London.

There he says his treatment was of the best.

After his sentence was finished La Raviere was sent automatically to Brixton prison to await deportation. He appealed to the home office for release and to polish off his experiences he was allowed his freedom in the name of Sir Herbert Samuel, home secretary. Throughout his difficulties American consular officials were anxious to help him, but they could do nothing without proof of his American citizenship. This he could not supply without a passport, and it was necessary to write to Chicago for his birth certificate.

Spain Ignores Death Penalty in New Regime

Madrid, Spain.—Although the constitution of the second Spanish republic is silent on the subject, and the new criminal code has not yet been drawn up, the death penalty has gone out of vogue in this country.

Recently, the minister of justice, Don Alvaro de Albornoz, announced the commutation of the death penalty to life imprisonment of a man who had killed the wife of a dairy owner, and their twenty-seven-month-old baby.

The Cortes Constituyentes, a few weeks ago, refused to take into consideration a bill proposed by a deputy belonging to the radical party, which would provide the death penalty for all robbers who engaged in holdups. The bill was proposed on the day when a bank in Madrid was held up and robbed of \$4,000, but it was promptly hooted down by the Socialists and Radical Socialist deputies.

These two events are symptomatic of the spirit of the times in Spain.

KING'S BODYGUARD



Here is the bodyguard of a king of the west coast of Africa, a soldier in the guard of the King of Ko, who wears green spectacles, a straw hat on his mud-plastered hair, a bandana handkerchief, and decorates his arms with a string of bracelets.

Twins Celebrate at Eighty

Bristol Ferry, R. I.—Mrs. A. Gore Trueman and Mrs. George S. Martin, twins, recently celebrated their eightieth birthday here. They were married at a double ceremony 60 years ago and each is the mother of two children.

300-Year-Old Bean Sprouts in Museum

San Antonio, Texas.—A large white bean, picked up in the ruins of Grand Quivira and believed to be 300 years old, has sprouted into a living stalk at White Memorial museum here.

The bean was found in an excavation 70 feet from the surface at ruins located 100 miles south of Santa Fe, N. M. Franciscan missionaries founded a mission there in 1629, and prior to that time the Piro Indians maintained a settlement there called Tabira.

The bean was soaked in water for five hours March 19. Less than two weeks later a stalk six inches tall had grown from the seed.

U. S. Memorial in France

Old French Defenses Are Discovered by Laborers.

Bar-le-Duc.—As excavations for the construction of an American monument were being made on the peak of Me. afuco, in the Argonne, the foundations of an old fortress built there by Godefroy de Bouillon in 1076 were discovered.

The American monument is to commemorate the 1,512 soldiers of the United States army who were killed there in September, 1918, when the po-

sition was taken from the Germans. The old fort is said to have been destroyed and reconstructed in the Eleventh, Thirteenth, Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries and finally burned with the village during the Thirty Years' war by the Swedes.

Godefroy de Bouillon was a young vassal of Emperor Henry IV, from whom he received the title of Marquisate of Anvers at the death of Godefroy-le-Bossu. The fortress was dismantled when the Duc de Basse Lorraine left with the Crusaders.

Explorations are being made by Baron Renaux, curator of the Verdun museum and library, under the auspices of the ministry of fine arts, in collaboration with Canon Almond, historical savant of the Meuse, and other authorities. Among the finds so far are an entrance stairway, a series of galleries of different sizes, small rooms in one of which was a stone bench, and several piles of burned wheat, indicating the destruction of 1636. These were all discovered at a depth of eight or ten meters.

The American battle monument is to be made of reinforced concrete faced with Burgundy stone. It will be 200 feet high, overlooking the entire battlefield. Dedication ceremonies are scheduled for this summer, unless present excavations postpone the work.

New Yorker Owns Goose That Lays 11-Inch Egg

Pen Yan, N. Y.—Peggy J., owned by Mrs. J. F. Goundry, is no ordinary goose.

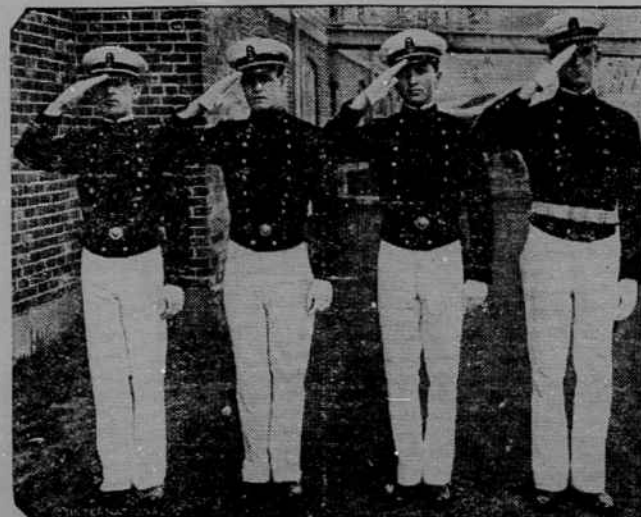
Peggy lays eggs so large that one of them, mixed with two quarts of milk, will make enough custard for the family.

Every spring Peggy goes on an eccentric production schedule. On alternate days she lays a huge double-yolked egg weighing ten ounces. It measures 11 inches around.

When hot weather sets in, she settles down to one normal egg a day.

The man who lacks faith in his ability seldom accomplishes anything.

Best of the New Coast Guardsmen



Four members of the graduating class of the United States Coast Guard academy at New London, Conn., who were awarded prizes as well as diplomas at the ceremonies conducted in the casemates of old Fort Trumbull. Left to right: Cadets R. D. Schmidtmann of Washington, D. C., winner of a prize for proficiency in military tactics; G. L. Lynch of Methuen, Mass., awarded the Charles S. Root prize for being best in drawing; W. H. Snyder, honor student who won the alumni association prize for the highest academic standing for the entire three-year term, and J. D. Craik of Andover, Mass., awarded a sword by the Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution for having best conducted himself during his course.