

# and be PEGGY DERN

a rumer that there "Is something mighty peculiar" about Mrs. Fallon's sickness. It is discussed in the neighborhood and Megan hears it. She learns that a "Miss Martha," a sister of Mrs. Fallon, lives with the principal and his wife. Megan felt agent for "On Pallon and the felt sorry for Tom Fallon, and she thought a great deal about the gossip about him and his wife when she started about him and his wife when she started to her favorite resting place on the top of a low hill beyond the meadow. Tom Pallon was sitting on the rock she used as a bench when she arrived. When she inquired about his wife's health, he replied: "She is mentally III." When Meg went to a quilting party at Mrs. Stuart's, Alicia pricks her about Tom.

#### CHAPTER III

"I dunno as any of us think the 'fessor's exactly hidin'," she said curtly. "An' I dunno's any of us think Pleasant Grove is such a hick place, come to think of it. Some folks seem to like it. If they didn't I reckin they could go somewhere's

colored darkly and shrugged. "I'm sorry I even men-tioned the fact that I saw you," she said ungraciously. "But after all, said ungraciously. "But after all, the Ridge is public property. It's not posted or anything. I had as much right to be there as you and Mr. Fallon! I was merely gathering a few Autumn leaves and some bittersweet berries to put in the blue pottery bowl in my front window."

Megan was trembling a little, though she knew she was being silly. The little scene with Tom Fallon had been so absurdly innocent; yet there was something in the sly, fur-tive manner of Alicia's mentioning it that had made it seem evil and

Megan, still furious with Alicia and her nasty tongue, got away from the quilting party as early as she decently could. At least Mrs. Stuart understood, when, at the door she drew Megan aside and said forthrightly, "Now look here, Megan, don't pay no attention to that woman. Someone ought to take a gun to her and blow her to Kingdom Come, and that's a fact!"

Halfway down the road, she heard a cheerful voice and turned as a pretty girl of seventeen, her laden with schoolbooks, came running towards her.

"Hi. Meggie," said the girl, flushed and smiling, and very pret-ty in a childish, round-faced, bright-eyed way.

"Hello, Susie—you're late getting home from school!" said Megan

"Had to stay after school and write a composition. Like a fool, I thought I could get away with not doing one—according to the law of averages, I shouldn't have been called on today, but the darned law let me down. Miss Pound's a holy terror-seems to look at you and know without asking a question whether you've done your home-work," answered Susie bitterly.

They walked together in compan ionable silence down the wide, un paved road, until suddenly Susie said bitterly, "I hear the Alicia dame dug her little stiletto into you and Professor Fallon today! That makes you a member, in good standing, of my own club."

Megan caught her breath and stopped still.

"How on earth did you hear-" she began in amazement. Susie's little chuckle was dry and

quite without mirth. "Oh, it's all over the place." she

'By supper time, there won't be a man, woman or child within a mile of the place that won't know you've been meeting the professor secretly in the woods-"

"Susie!" Megan wailed. "That's

"Of course not-but d'you think for a minute that's going to stop the story? Don't be a twerp, Meg-gie—you know it won't!" said Susie. 'It wasn't true that I was sneaking off to meet Bill Esmond eitherbut you'd have a hard time con-vincing anybody in this town that it isn't! Just because one afternoon I happened to run into him at the county seat and had a soda with My mother hit the roof, on account of because Bill's folks are not—well, not quite as high hat as mother thinks we ought to be—" Her young voice trembled a little and she blinked heard to clear her eyes of threatened tears.

Megan asked curiously, "Is that all there is to that story, Susie?"
Susie flushed and her eyes were

"Absolutely! Up to then," she "Oh, sure, I liked Rill\_ all did! He was an honor student, and the kids were crazy about him and he played football like nobody's business—but I'd never had a date with him in my life. How could I, when dad and mother practically lock me up nights? But that afternoon, mother was sick with a head-ache, and she wanted some stuff from the county seat that Burns didn't have, and I took the car and drove over. And I ran into Bill. He'd just had his physical and was all but ready to be taken into the Cadet Air Corps, and we celebrat-ed by having a soda."

Susie drew a deep breath and said quietly, "Bill's-quite a fellowi" She laughed and said, "May-

be I ought to be grateful to the ed, so that its walls were a rough, Stevenson wench—if she hadn't dark gray of weathered drabness, raised such a row about my having But since Alicia had come, she had a soda with him, and behaving as though she'd seen me coming out of some foul dive with him-I'd never have noticed what a grand guy he is! Oh, well-"

They walked on in silence and at the gate to the MacTavish place, they stopped and Susie said sud-denly, "Meggie, is there any truth in what Stevenson says about— Mary Rogers?"

"Mary Rogers?" Megan repeated puzzled.

"You know she got expelled last month and she's gone to stay with her sister and learn to be a war worker—a riveter or something—"
Susie explained, and after a moment blurted out, "The Stevenson er-witch-says Mary is going to have a baby, and has dropped a hint that Bill may have some part in the matter-'

Megan said explosively, disgust in her voice, "Goodness, Susie—what a foul story!"

Susie nodded wretchedly.



Megan asked curiously, "Is that all there is to that story, Susie?"

"I know-the dickens of it is that most folks agree that the Steven-son's not a liar-but that she just has an unholy capacity for scatter-ing damaging truth about where it can do the most harm!" she admitted. "It's just that-well, I'd hate te think he'd be mixed up in any thing like that—"

Megan said forcefully, "Well, from my own personal experience, I'd say Alicia Stevenson has a fatal ability to pick one tiny shred off and embroider it to an incredible degree! I went for a walk on the Ridge, with my usual three-ring circus, and quite by accident, Mr. Fallon was also there and we ex-changed a few words. But this afternoon, Alicia let drop the information that since he and I'd spent hours together on the Ridge I must know him pretty well!"

Susfe nodded meaningfully. "Sure-that's why I said you were now a member in good standing of my club!" she answered. "What Megan laughed a little.

club is that?" she wanted to know. "The Club of 'Why the devil doesn't somebody do something to shut Alicia Stevenson up?'" an-swered Susie. "It's composed of practically every man, woman and child within a radius of ten miles of Pleasant Grove. Personally, I'd like to see her with her throat cut from ear to ear!"

"Susie!" gasped Megan, between shock and pity for the girl whose bloodthirsty words were at such comical variance with her Dresden china prettiness, her young, smooth flesh and shining blue eyes and golden hair.

"Oh, it won't happen, of course," aid Susie ruefully. "People like said Susie ruefully. "People like that live to a ripe old age—and then turn into hen's teeth! They never die-or have accidents!"

Megan put an arm about the slim shoulders and gave Susie a little hug. "Well, don't let her get you down, Susie. After all, everybody knows what she's like."

"Sure-and when she sticks that barbed tongue of hers into their own affairs, they say, 'But of course, that's not true.' But when But when she's stabbing somebody else they say, "Now, I wonder—" Susie pointed out, with such truth that Megan could only agree with her

For a little while they stood in silence, both of them looking uneasily across the road and to the shabby little old cottage where lighted windows proved that Alicia was at home. The cottage set well back from the road and there were a few trees surrounding it. It was a square, boxlike house, never paintpainted the window trim and the corners of the house a rich deep green; there were green window boxes at the windows, and the place had taken on a rather surprised perkiness.

"Oh, well-" said Susie at last, and heaving a sigh. "If I don't get on home, mother will have connip-tion fits and upset dad so that his dyspepsia will be worse than ever and I would like to go to the school dance the Saturday after Thanksgiving."

She said good night and went on along the road. A quarter of a mile farther on, she would come to the substantial, old-fashioned red brick house that was Pleasant Grove's finest home. Susie was the only child of Lawyer Bartlett and his wife, Maysie. The Bartletts were, next to the Burns, Pleasant Grove's most substantial citizens, and Mrs. Bartlett was not one to let the town forget that for a moment. There were times when Megan felt extremely sorry for Susie-and tonight was one of those times. She sighed a little and went into the house, where Annie had supper almost ready to serve.

Her father was waiting for her, very comfortable in his smoking jacket and slippers, provided with a new book (which had cost three dollars and a half, and which Megan could have borrowed for him from the small, but good local library) so he was inclined to be genial. For which small favor, genial. For which small favor, Megan told herself wearily, she was

For the next two or three days, although she told herself she was being a fool, Megan deliberately avoided seeing Tom Fallon at all. He had been in the habit of stopping on his way home from school late in the afternoon to get milk, butter, and eggs which he bought from her. She had always been the one to give them to him, but for the next two or three days, she saw to it that she was somewhere else when he stopped by, and Annie, puzzled and watchful, waited on him.

But on Saturday, she was in the chicken yard checking up on a setting hen who was due to hatch her brood in a few days, when Tom came to the back fence and spoke to

"Good morning," he said, almost

warily.

Megan turned, startled, and felt her face grow hot, even as she greeted him casually and matter-

He waited for her to come to the fence before he said anxiously, "I've been a little worried—and deeply puzzled. "I've tried my darnedest to think what I could have done to upset you-"

Megan laughed and hated herself because the laugh sounded artificial. What nonsense, Professor!"

"But you have avoided me, and

I thought possibly something I said or did—" he began anxiously.

Megan looked up at him and said quietly and frankly, "I see you haven't heard the news, Mr. Fallon!"

Puzzled, noting her use of the formal prefix rather than the careless friendly "Professor" that was almost a nickname, he said quickly, "News? No, I am afraid I haven't—"

"I feel very silly to be relaying it to you—but I know Pleasant Grove so well — the attitude towards teachers — especially towards the principal of the school—" She floundard miserable and was allest dered miserably and was silent.

Tom said quietly, "I think you had better tell me straight, Miss MacTavish-"

There seems to be a run about that you and I have been meeting secretly on the Ridge-"
She let him have it almost in a single breath

Tom stared at her as though he thought she had lost her mind. And then his face hardened and his eyes blazed and he said through teeth, "Where in blazes-who'd try to start a lie like that?"

Megan made a weary little gesture.

"It's too silly-and too-cheap to notice," she pointed out to him. "Except that since you are new here and this is your first year—oh, I feel an utter fool about the whole thing. But I thought it would be better if we-well, we've done nothing to start gossip, so it seems a little difficult to know how to stop

Tom said sternly, "Who started this talk?"

"Mrs. Stevenson," answered Me-"She happened to be gan frankly. "She happened to be on the Ridge the afternoon we met by accident, and chose to believe that we were meeting there reguarly-and as secretly as possible-

"But that's nonsense—she could not possibly believe anything so— so—darned silly!" Tom exploded. "I don't think she really believes it, but she seems to get quite a lot of pleasure out of dropping little

significant remarks." Puzzled, Tom said, "Who is this Mrs. Stevenson? I suppose she has a child in school, but I don't seem to recall the name, though it's not unusual, of course."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

### IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL CUNDAY JCHOOL Lesson

By HAPOLD L. LUNDQUIST, D. D. Of The Moody Rible Institute of Chicago Released by Western Newspaper Union.

#### Lesson for July 28

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JESUS AND REVERENCE FOR SPIRITUAL VALUES

LESSON TEXT—Exodus 20:7; Leviticus 19:12; Matthew 5:33-37; Mark 7:5-8; 8:38-86, MEMORY SELECTION—But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.—Matthew 6:33

Reverence is not an incidental thing which we may or may not choose to have in our lives. It is vital. Reverence toward God and the things of God will result in respect for all values in life. It will balance our thinking, speaking, and our acting toward our fellow men as well as toward our God. Our lesson calls for

I. Reverence in Worship (Exod.

20:7; Lev. 19:12).

The Lord rightfully expects from us a proper attitude toward him. If we worship him as we should, we shall find that other matters fall into their proper relationships.

Essential in true worship is reverence for the name of the Lord, for that name stands for all the qualities and characteristics of God. This means that there must be no taking of the name of the Lord "in vain." Our use of the word "vain" carries the meaning of "useless, without purpose or meaning." This is part of what is in mind in this com-mandment, for the name of Jehovah is sacred and is to be reverenced as standing for the eternal God.

It is never to be used carelessly, or for a frivolous purpose. All too often we tell jokes or stories which have no real purpose or meaning ex-cept to elicit a laugh, and in them we use the name of God. We all need to exercise care at that point.

The Hebrew word translated 'vain' has the additional meaning of "evil" and "falsehood." Men are so bold that they may even use the name of God to support themselves in a lie. God hears and will in no in a lie. God hears and wise hold them guiltless.

II. Reverence in Words (Matt. 5:

The Sermon on the Mount (so-called), from which this portion of Scripture is taken, is difficult to interpret to the satisfaction of all. Some disregard its evident applica-tion to the kingdom and, attempting to apply it in the midst of an ungody generation, fall into such in-consistency that they abandon the effort and regard the teaching of the passage as impossible idealism.

Others, who rightly interpret the passage as presenting the laws and principles of life in the kingdom of God, when it shall be fully set up on earth with Jesus as King, fail to make any application of those prin-ciples to life. This is also an unfortunate error.

We who follow the Lord Jesus are not to swear by either things sa-cred or things that might be called secular. Perhaps he has in mind that our lives should be so true that men will not need to have any kind of oath to be assured of our sin-

cerity and honesty.

Swearing should be entirely beyond the pale with Christian men and women. It is all too common with both men and women. One fears that this is true not only in the world, but among professed be lievers in Christ. Let us stop it! III. Reverence in Works (Mark

7:5-8). Words which do not issue in works are worse than meaningless. They lead to acceptance of a formal re-

ligious system which is dangerous.
"It gives a sense of religious satisfaction which is very superficial, but of some apparent value. It car-ries with it no high ethical demands. It helps a man to feel religious without being either ethical or moral. It does not probe or arouse. It soothes and calms" (W. R. White).

Who will deny that much of the church life of our day has reached that same sad state of "much ado about nothing"—talk, talk, talk, and no honest disposition to deal with sin, or to seek holiness of life. The Lord hates it, and it is a vain exercise as far as spiritual results are concerned.

IV. Reverence in Will (Mark 8:

Here true reverence shows itself in recognizing that God's will is 'good and acceptable and perfect' (Rom. 12:1).

Following the Christ of Calvary calls for a willingness to say no to self (literally, to deny any connection with self-life) and to follow through with him on the path of shame and crucifixion. No self-will and no compromise are perwill and no compromise are per-missible to Christ's disciples.

Foolishly to attempt to hold one's ife for self is to lose it. That painful loss has left brokenhearted, wrecked lives all along the path of man's history. But why should

Equally foolish is the one who supposes that this world has anyng to satisfy the human soul. Asuming the possibility of the impos-sible—that is, attaining the whole world as one's own possession—to do so at the cost of one's soul would be an indescribably poor bargain.

TRUMAN'S VETO
WASHINGTON. — Opinions may
differ as to whether President Truman was right in vetoing the price control bill, but he personally has not changed his mind a bit. When he arrived on Capitol Hill for the Roosevelt memorial service, Tr man was greeted by his old frier

Kenneth Romney, sergeant-at-arms of the house. As they shook hands, the President quipped: "I didn't know whether you folks would let me come up here today after reading my latest message."

"Oh, don't worry about that," chuckled the sergeant-at-arms. "A lot of us are glad you vetoed that OPA bill. And your veto message hit the nail right on the head. You did the right thing, in my opinion."

"I couldn't do anything else," replied the President with chin-set

#### EQUIPPING U. S. SCHOOLS

When a committee representing the leading national educational organizations tried to see War Assets Chief Lt. Gen. Edmund B. Gregory about getting surplus equipment for American schools, it

received two brush-offs.

Once Gregory had been "called out"; another time he was "too busy." However, the educators had no trouble seeing Gregory's boss, President Truman. Further, Truman's callers were definitely as-sured that steps would be taken to provide schools, colleges and uni-versities with more war surplus.

They informed the President that approximately 2,000,000 American youths would seek education next fall in colleges alone. Of these, about 970,000 will be World War II vets. Unwill be World War II vets. Un-less schools are given a "lair and reasonable" access to war surplus goods — laboratory, classroom, cafeteria and kitch-en facilities, electronics equip-ment, visual alds and other items — a great many of the students cannot be accommo-dated dated.

"Education cannot afford to the commercial market for what we need — and need drastically, Mr. President — because we do not have the money," asserted one of them.

#### CONSOLIDATING GERMANY

Top secret talks between the Americans and the French have now started to weld western many into one economic unit. The move may end up by uniting the U. S., British and French zones into one anti-Russian sector, with the rest of Germany under the hammer and sickle.

The U. S. occupation zone in-cludes most of the province of Wurttemberg and the northeastern quarter of Baden. The remainder of the latter province and a small western piece of Wurttemberg are under French control.

This suggestion was approved This suggestion was approved in principle by Maj. Gen. Lucius Clay and Lt. Gen. Joseph McNarney, highest-ranking U. S. commanders in Europe, and the war department has instructed General McNarney to inform the French that this country will discuss the plan if France agrees to discuss at the France agrees to discuss, at the same time, internationalizing the vital Ruhr basin.

If the deal is worked out, it will be an important step toward ending the economic confusion which exists under the present set-up. The United States, Britain and France are hoping to unscramble the cur-rent mess, at least in western Ger-

Russia so far has indicated no willingness to go along.

#### RESEARCH FOR FARMS

Secretary of Agriculture Ander-son and a delegation from the house agriculture committee re-cently called on President Truman to plug for the Flannagan - Hope farm research bill. However, not plugging was necessary.

Anderson opened the White House meeting by emphasizing the importance of the legislation, which is aimed at finding new uses for farm products and improving mar-

"The bill already has been called to my attention," the President said immediately. "I have looked into it and I am in favor of appropriating whatever money is necessary."

A primary aim of the bill is to do away with such marketing bottle necks as caused large acreages of cabbage and lettuce to be plowed under recently in North Carolina.

#### CAPITAL CHAFF Official state department broad-casts to Russia in the Russian lan-

guage will begin just as soon as the necessary staffs have completed their training. . . . One of John Snyder's first acts as secretary of the treasury was to agree to the release of gold to Argentina. This gold was seized by the U. S. gov-ernment at the start of the war. Its release is a major victory for President Peron. . . . President Tru-man has decided to abandon his plans for an Alaska vacation.



WNU Washington Surest

Utility Lobby Can Handle Congress, but Not the People

THE powerful utility lobby in Washington has been quite suc-cessful in bottling up measures which they consider inimical to the interests of the private utilities. Of course the most important of these are the bills which would set up regional authorities in the Missouri river basin and other rivers of the nation. Several of these bills have beer, bottled up in committee for

But hearings reveal that out in the country where the utilities come up against the rank and file of the American people close to home, their batting average is almost nil. During the past year 100 cities and towns have changed from private to municipal ownership. We now have 3,371 incorporated towns in the nation served by publicly owned

electric systems.

Of this number, and this is important, 2,827 towns are in the population class of 5,000 and under, Home Towns of the country. On top of this there are more than 800 Ru ral Electric Co-operatives operating outside incorporated towns and congress has appropriated \$550,000,000 to be spent in two years for the organization of new and extension of the lines of existing REA cooperatives. Moreover, during this past year there is not one city or town on record which has gone back to private utility ownership

These figures put the utility lobby in the bush-league class, making strange indeed the influence they have upon the elected representa-tives of these same people in the small towns and rural areas of the

## Cost of Current Lower

Why are the people looking to-ward municipal ownership instead of private ownership of utilities? The simple fact is that the records show every city with a municipal utility has a lower tax rate than cities of comparable size with private utili-ties . . . that they have lower elec-tric rates, that they can afford to make more use of electricity as a result, for as the price of electricity has been reduced by municipal own ership, its use has been multiplied. Wider use of current permits fur-ther rate reductions and consequently still more use of electricity.

According to the testimony in these hearings, however, the folks in our small towns and even in our cities have only scratched the surface in the use of electricity as a means of better living. For instance, in 1945 the national average of electric consumption in the country was 1,225 kilowatt hours per resident consumer, while in Canada where municipal ownership has been in vogue for many, many years,

the consumption runs more than 5,000 kilowatt hours per consumer. Contained in the testimony is acrid denunciation of the Tennes Valley authority, and yet the same testimony shows that when private utilities have lowered their rates to meet municipal competition they have invariably shown higher net earnings. This was true when the Georgia Power company lowered its rates to meet TVA competition and experienced the highest net income the following year in the history of their company. Many samples were given where this same condi-tion held true.

#### Twice National Average

Down in Mississippi at Tupelo for instance, the first town to get TVA power, folks there are using more than 2,000 kilowatt hours per consumer, almost twice the national average. These higher averages are true all through the TVA area, and at lower rates than ever were dreamed of in the days of private monopoly of electric utilities.

In many sections of the country, private utilities are now attempting to choke off or eliminate REA co-operatives by building spite lines and cutting rates for consumers who were refused private service until REA promised to serve them.

Claude Wickard, REA administra

tor here in Washington, warned that "We are facing a bolder and perhaps a more desperate opposition from private utilities at this time than REA has ever before experienced. This opposition extends from cream-skimming spite line activities in areas laid out for development by co-operatives, to the maintaining of a strong lobby in Washington.

"A national advertising campaign in the weekly and daily press, in nationally circulated magazines and on the radio networks is being carried out. State legislatures and regula-tory bodies are being flooded with utility proposals for various restric-tive measures to be applied to the REA program," Mr. Wickard con-

It would seem, however, that with growth of municipal utilities and the REA in the home towns and rural areas, this lobby is only affecting members of congress, not the peo-ple who elected them.



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### Down to Cases

A woman approached the local postmaster and said: "I've been expecting a package of medicine for a week back and it hasn't arrived yet."

"For a weak back?" asked the sympathetic postmaster. "What do you take it for? I have a weak back myself."

"I'm not interested in your back," replied the woman. "What I came here for is my package of medicine. "Very well," said the postmaster; "please fill in this form and

state

plaint. "Well," said the irate woman, "I don't see as it concerns you, but if you really must know, it's in digestion!"

the nature of your

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