

SO BIG

By EDNA FERBER

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WNU Service.

"Doesn't get you anywhere?" Selina's tone was cool and even. Then she said, "Why, Dirk DeJong, Mattie Schwenniger is one of my reasons for sending you to a university. She's what I call a part of a university education. Just talking to her is learning something valuable. I don't mean that you wouldn't naturally prefer pretty young girls of your own age to go around with, and all. It would be queer if you didn't. But this Mattie—why, she's life. Do you remember that story of when she washed dishes in the kosher restaurant over on Twelfth street and the proprietor used to rent out dishes and cutlery for Irish and Italian neighborhood weddings where they had pork and goodness knows what all, and then use them next day in the restaurant, again for the kosher customers?"

Selina wrote Mattie, inviting her to the farm for Thanksgiving, and Mattie answered gratefully, declining. "I shall always remember you," she wrote in that letter, "with love."

Chapter XI

Throughout Dirk's Freshman year there were, for him, no heartening, informal, mellow talks before the wood-fire in the book-lined study of some professor whose wisdom was such a mixture of classic lore and modernism as to be an inspiration to his listeners. Midwest professors delivered their lectures in the classroom as they had been delivering them in the past ten or twenty years and as they would deliver them until death or a trustees' meeting should remove them. The younger professors and instructors in natty gray suits and brightly colored ties made a point of being unpedantic in the classroom and rather overdid it. They posed as being one of the fellows; would dashingly use a bit of slang to create a laugh from the boys and an adoring titter from the girls. Dirk somehow preferred the pedants to these. When these had to give an informal talk to the men before some university event they would start by saying, "Now listen, fellows—" At the dances they were not above "rushing" the pretty coeds.

Two of Dirk's classes were conducted by women professors. They were well on toward middle age, or past it; desecrated women. Only their eyes were alive. Their clothes were of some indefinite dark stuff, brown or drab-gray; their hair lifeless; their hands long, bony, unvital. They had seen classes and classes and classes. A roomful of fresh young faces that appeared briefly only to be replaced by another roomful of fresh young faces like round white pencil marks manipulated momentarily on a slate, only to be sponged off to give way to other round white marks. Of the two women one—the elder—was occasionally likely to flash into sudden life; a flame in the ashes of a burned-out grate. She had humor and a certain caustic wit, qualities that had managed miraculously to survive even the deadly and numbing effects of thirty years in the classroom. A fine mind, and incoercible, hampered by the restrictions of a conventional community and the soul of a congenial splinter.

Under the guidance of these Dirk chafed and grew restless. Miss Euphemia Hollingswood had a way of emphasizing every third or fifth syllable, bringing her voice down hard on it.

He found himself waiting for that emphasis and shrinking from it as from a sledge-hammer blow. It hurt his head.

Miss Lodge droned. She approached a word with a maddening uh-uh-uh. In the uh-uh-uh-uh face of the uh-uh-uh-uh geometrical situation of the uh-uh-uh.

He shifted restlessly in his chair, found his hands clenched into fists, and took refuge in watching the shadow cast by an oak branch outside the window on a patch of sunlight against the blackboard behind her.

During the early spring Dirk and Selina talked things over again, seated before their own fireplace in the High Prairie farmhouse. Selina had had that fireplace built five years before and her love of it amounted to worship. She had it lighted always on winter evenings and in the spring when the nights were sharp. In Dirk's absence she would sit before it at night long after the rest of the weary household had gone to bed. High Prairie never knew how many guests Selina entertained there before her fire those winter evenings—old friends and new, Sobig was there, the plump earth-grimed baby who rolled and tumbled in the fields while his young mother wiped the sweat from her face to look at him with fond eyes. Dirk DeJong of ten

years hence was there. Simeon Peake, dapper, soft-spoken, ironic, in his shiny boots and his hat always a little on one side. Pervus DeJong, a blue-shirted giant with strong tender hands and little fine golden hairs on the backs of them. In strange contrast to these was the patient, tireless figure of Muntje Pool standing in the doorway of Roelf's little shed, her arms tucked in her apron for warmth. "You make fun, huh?" she said, wistfully, "you and Roelf. You make fun." And Roelf, the dark vivid boy, misundestood. Roelf, the genius. He was always one of the company.

Oh, Selina DeJong never was lonely on these winter evenings before her fire.

She and Dirk sat there one fine sharp evening in early April. It was Saturday. Of late Dirk had not really come to the farm for the week-end. Eugene and Paula Arnold had been home for the Easter holidays. Julie Arnold had invited Dirk to the gay parties at the Prairie avenue house. He had even spent two entire week-ends there. After the brocaded luxury of the Prairie avenue house his farm bedroom seemed almost startlingly stark and bare.

Selina frankly enjoyed Dirk's somewhat fragmentary accounts of these visits; extracted from them as much vicarious pleasure as he had had in the reality—more, probably.

"Now, tell me what you had to eat," she would say, sociably, like a child. "What did you have for dinner, for example? Was it grand? Julie tells me they have a butcher now. Well! I can't wait till I hear Aug Hempel on the subject."

He would tell her of the grandeurs of the Arnold menage. She would interrupt and exclaim: "Mayonnaisse! On fruit! Oh, I don't believe I'd like that. You did! Well, I'll have it for you next week when you come home. I'll get the recipe for Julie."

He didn't think he'd be home next week. One of the fellows he'd met at



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the Arnolds' had invited him to their place out north, on the lake. He had a boat.

"That'll be lovely!" Selina exclaimed, after an almost unnoticeable moment of silence—silence with panic in it. "I'll try not to fuss and be worried like an old hen every minute of the time I think you're on the water. . . . Now, do you go, Sobig. First fruit with mayonnaisse, h'm? What kind of soup?"

He was not a naturally talkative person. There was nothing surly about his silence. It was a taciturn streak inherited from his Dutch ancestry. This time, though, he was more voluble than usual. "Paula . . ." came again and again into his conversation. "Paula . . . Paula . . ." and again . . . Paula." He did not seem conscious of the repetition, but Selina's quick ear caught it.

"I haven't seen her," Selina said, "since she went away to school the first year. She must be—let's see—she's a year older than you are. She's nineteen going on twenty. Last time I saw her I thought she was a dark scrawny little thing. Too bad she didn't inherit Julie's lovely gold coloring and good looks, instead of Eugene, who doesn't need 'em."

"She isn't!" said Dirk, hotly. "She's dark and slim and sort of—uh—sensitive!"—Selina started visibly, and raised

Indians Had Effective Method of Fire Making

The most widespread method of making fire practiced by the American aborigines at the time of the discovery of America by Columbus was by reciprocal motion of wood on wood and igniting the ground-off particles through heat generated by friction. It was the most valued as well as the most effective method known to the aborigines. The apparatus, in its simplest form, consists of a slender piece of wood or bone, tapered at one end, or drill and a lower piece or hearth, or drill and a lower piece of hearth, or drill and a lower piece of hearth, near the border of which the drill is worked by twisting between the palms, creating a socket. From the socket a narrow canal is cut in the edge of the hearth, the function of which is to collect the powdered wood ground off by the friction of the drill, as within the wood meal the heat rises to the ignition point. This is the simplest and most widely diffused type of fire-making apparatus known to uncivilized man. Some of the tribes also used flint and pyrites (the progenitor

of flint and steel), which is supposed to have been introduced into America through Scandinavian contacts or from Europe or Asia.

Dollar Courtship

John McBeth had secured a license to marry Mary Manning, but the intended bride changed her mind, and six weeks later John made his second appearance in the clerk's office.

"Misther Johnson, in February I got a license from you to marry Mary Manning, an' I deecn't marry her. An' now, please your honor, would ye be so good as to alter it so it would fit Ellen McWatty?"

"No, you must get a new license to fit Ellen."

"And pay for it?"

"Certainly."

"Ah, mon, I'm ruined entirely. Frr I just coorted Ellen to save the dollar."—Youth's Companion.

her hand quickly to her mouth to hide a smile—"like Cleopatra. Her eyes are big and kind of slanting—not squinty I don't mean, but slanting up a little at the corners. Cut out, kind of, so that they look bigger than most people's."

"My eyes used to be considered rather fine," said Selina, mischievously; but he did not hear.

"She makes all the other girls look sort of blowzy." He was silent a moment. Selina was silent, too, and it was not a happy silence. Dirk spoke again, suddenly, as though continuing aloud a train of thought,—"all but her hands."

Selina made her voice sound natural, not sharply inquisitive. "What's the matter with her hands, Dirk?"

He pondered a moment, his brows knitted. At last, slowly, "Well, I don't know. They're brown, and awfully thin and sort of—grabby. I mean it makes me nervous to watch them. And when the rest of her is cool they're hot when you touch them."

He looked at his mother's hands that were busy with some sewing. The stuff on which she was working was a bit of satin ribbon; part of a hood intended to grace the head of Geertje Pool Vander Sijde's second baby. She had difficulty in keeping her rough fingers from catching on the soft surface of the satin. Manual work, water, sun, and wind had tanned those hands, hardened them, enlarged the knuckles, spread them, roughened them. Yet how sure they were, and strong, and cool and reliable—and tender. Suddenly, looking at them, Dirk said, "Now your hands. I love your hands, Mother."

She put down her work hastily, yet quietly, so that the sudden rush of happy grateful tears in her eyes should not sully the pink satin ribbon. She was flushed, like a girl. "Do you, Sobig?" she said.

After a moment she took up her sewing again. Her face looked young, eager, fresh, like the face of the girl who had found cabbages so beautiful that night when she bounced along the rutty Halsted road with Klaas Pool, many years ago. It came into her face, that look, when she was happy, exhilarated, excited. That was why those who loved her and brought that look into her face thought her beautiful, while those who did not love her never saw that look and consequently considered her a plain woman.

There was another silence between the two. Then: "Mother, what would you think of my going east next fall, to take a course in architecture?"

"Would you like that, Dirk?"

"Yes, I think so—yes."

"Then I'd like it better than anything in the world. It makes me happy just to think of it."

"It would—cost an awful lot."

"I'll manage. I'll manage. . . . What made you decide on architecture?"

"I don't know, exactly. The new buildings at the university—Gothic, you know—are such a contrast to the old. Then Paula and I were talking the other day. She hates their house on Prairie—terrible old lumpy gray stone pile, with the black of the I. O. trains all over it. She wants her father to build north—an Italian villa or French chateau. Something of that sort. So many of her friends are moving to the North shore, away from these hideous South-side and North-side Chicago houses with their stoops, and their bay windows, and their terrible turrets. Ugh!"

"Well, now, do you know," Selina remonstrated mildly, "I like 'em. I suppose I'm wrong, but to me they seem sort of natural and solid and unpretentious, like the clothes that old August Hempel wears, so square-cut and baggy. Those houses look dignified to me, and fitting. They may be ugly—probably are—but, anyway, they're not ridiculous. They have a certain rugged grandeur. They're Chicago. Those French and Italian gimcracky things—they're incongruous. It's as if Abraham Lincoln were to appear suddenly in pink satin knee breeches and buckled shoes, and lace ruffles at his wrists."

Dirk could laugh at that picture. But he protested, too. "But there's no native architecture, so what's to be done! You wouldn't call those smoke-blackened old stone and brick piles with their iron fences and their conservatories and cupolas and gingerbread exactly native, would you?" (TO BE CONTINUED.)

Arabian Dancing Girls

"The Arabian dancing girls," a traveler explains, "are born to their profession. Many of them had dancing mothers. Others are dedicated to the profession by their mothers when they are but babies. While there are no dancing schools, these children practice continually, imitating from earliest childhood the steps and movements of the dancers, until they are highly skilled in it themselves. Unlike the other Arab women, these dancing girls appear with their faces uncovered. They wear heavy and voluminous skirts, like old-fashioned European dresses. They are frequently very plain, decorated only by the tangles and chains. While the girls are no more beautiful than other girls, they have exceeding charm, which makes them very delightful."

Greeks and Paint

The Greeks recognized the value of paint as a preservative and made use of something akin to it on their ships. Pliny writes of the mode of boiling wax and painting ships with it, after which, he continues, "neither the sea, nor the wind, nor the sun can destroy the wood thus protected." The Romans, being essentially a warlike people, never brought the decoration of buildings to the high point it had reached with the Greeks. For all that the ruins of Pompeii show many structures whose mural decorations are in fair shape today. The colors used were glaring; a black background was the usual one, and the combinations worked thereon were red, yellow and blue.

Maya Culture Takes Rank With the Best

About two thousand years ago, writes S. G. Morley, in the Mentor Magazine, while the peoples of northwestern Europe were living in a state of utmost barbarism, there was slowly flowering in the New world the most brilliant civilization of ancient America—namely, the Maya of southern Mexico and northern Guatemala. From a cultural point of view the Maya were the Greeks of the New world.

In many spheres of human activity these Maya excelled, almost beyond believing, in architecture, sculpture, and painting; in ceramics, stone and feather mosaics, and the lapidary art. In astronomy, history, and chronology. In this last-mentioned field their attainments were so remarkable that it may be claimed that no people of the Old world at that time—2,000 years ago—had worked out a system of chronology anywhere approaching that of the Maya, not only in accuracy of results, but also in simplicity of use. This spectacular progress the Maya accomplished without man's two greatest aids to civilization in the Old world—namely, beasts of burden and tools of metal. When it is considered that they had no beasts of burden, no horses, asses, oxen, camels, or elephants to carry for them, nor tools of iron, bronze, copper, or tin to cut and hew and carve with, it may be ventured that, judged by what they had, they achieved more than any other people the world has ever known.

Turkish Sumptuary Laws

The Constantinople vilayet council was recently asked by the ministry of the interior to draw up a sumptuary law forbidding legal prodigality. A commission, which has worked hard on the project, has now devised a number of minute restrictions on the marriages of the well-to-do. Under the rules proposed a bridegroom will give his bride a ring not exceeding 20 Turkish pounds in value, about \$10, and no other wedding present. As for the bride, she may not bring to her new household more than two dresses in all, and her contribution to the furnishings may be no more than for one room.

Weddings must pass off without nuptial banquets, only sweets and innocuous sirups being offered to the guests. The wedding procession must not parade more than five carriages or motor cars. As for banquets to celebrate the births of children, they also are forbidden.

These regulations, which have not yet been adopted, would have taken the wind out of a Stamboul Turk who, not very long ago, shocked the respectable street with a parade of 40 carriages and who opened 100 cases of champagne for his guests.

Hats Off, Fellers!

The Honorable Mrs. Richard Norton, before sailing back home with the prince of Wales' party, paid a splendid compliment to American manhood.

"American men," she said at a Tuxedo luncheon, "are the handsomest men in the world. But that is nothing. They are the most urbane men in the world."

"An American girl writer was telling me the other day how, to get material, she traveled in the wild West and worked in factories and mines, and lived in the slums."

"But aren't you afraid," I asked, "to go about in this way unprotected?"

"Oh," said she, "I'm not unprotected. I never venture beyond the call of the American gentleman."

England Imports Zebras

Zebras from the wilds of Rhodesia are soon to be added to the animal collections of several of the vast British and Scottish estates, where they will have nearly as much freedom as in their native haunts. Twenty-two zebras arrived in London recently for G. B. Chapman, an animal importer, who will have charge of the experiment of raising the little striped beasts in the British climate. Several pairs will be assigned to the grounds surrounding Chilham castle, in Kent, owned by Edmund Davis, while others will go to H. Whitley's Primley park, Paignton, Devon, and eight or ten others to Beattock park, Dumfriesshire, owned by Sir William Cross.

Soap Bubble as Eye Test

The tiniest things which the human eye can see are the black spots and patches sometimes visible in soap bubbles, said Sir William Bragg, lecturing recently on "Ray and Soap Films" at the Royal Institution, reports the New York World. The rainbow-colored soap films are, therefore, not the tiniest things the human eye can detect. The black areas are so thin that if the soap bubbles could be magnified to the size of the earth and the thickness of the enveloping film increased in proportion the film would then be only the thickness of a sheet of glass.

Odd Source of Idea

Professor Galvani, a noted Italian scientist and anatomist, had passed a copper skewer through the limbs of a dead frog, and was about to hang them up on an iron nail in his laboratory. As soon as the copper touched the iron he noticed a convulsive twitching of the legs. That this was due to some electrical influence he proved by touching a nerve in the frog's limb with a piece of zinc and a muscle with a piece of copper. As soon as these two metals were connected together a convulsive kick took place. And so came into being the first recorded instance of the electric battery.

Lessened the Shock

Mose Lightfoot, one of the best hod carriers on the job, lost his footing and fell to the street, four stories below. Mose hit on his head, struck the cement pavement and went through to the basement. When the foreman went to the basement, expecting to find Mose cold and stiff, he met Mose coming up the steps. "Great Scott, man, aren't you killed?" he cried. "No," Mose replied, dusting off his clothes. "I guess dat concrete pavement musta broke my fall."

HIGHWAY MARKER HELPS MOTORIST

Standard Signs Are Best Solution of Vexing Cross-road Puzzle.

The American Indian, when he went over a new or unfamiliar trail, retraced his steps by following bent or broken twigs left on his previous trip. This was the first road sign used in this country. Following the Indian came the white man who erected picturesque sign posts, and later, enduring milestones to mark the routes of hardy travelers of stagecoach days. And now we are concerned with adequate road signs to meet the needs of motorists.

Solve Crossroad Puzzle.

This is a problem which may well engage the attention of highway engineers. While there are maps and road guides in abundance for the tourist, the plainly marked, easily read standard highway markers along the trunk line highways in some of the states are the best solutions to the crossroad puzzles the motorist is called upon to solve at almost every fork of the road or intersection.

There are still far too many localities where the choice of the right road is left mainly to chance. Many motorists who have driven over a strange road have had the experience of suddenly coming to a fork in the road,



Standard Road Sign.

both of which seem to be equally traveled, and not a sign in sight to point out the right road. All states have not made adequate progress in highway marking and county roads are marked in only a comparatively few communities.

Appreciate Service.

Motor tourists are quick to appreciate highway service. There is no better way for a highway department to "sell" itself to the public than through just such activities as highway marking and providing dependable touring information.

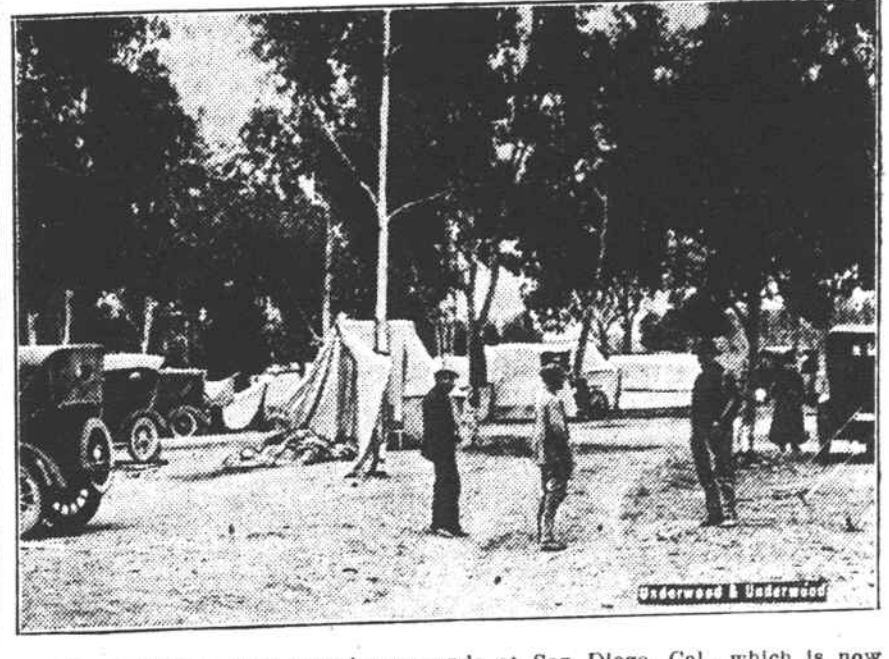
It has been found unsatisfactory to allow any unofficial organization to take over this work. It is well recognized that in communities where the highways are marked with standard signs by the highway department in charge of the roads, motorists are sure to heed the notices of caution or danger. They know that such signs warn of a danger that really exists, and are not placed merely to frighten them into reading an advertisement.

Keep Fan Belt Tight to Prevent Any Slipping

The fan belt on the average car is a good example of the importance of knowing what's right for your own particular car, sitting promiscuous advice accordingly. Some people will tell you not to keep your fan belt too tight, since such a plan will result in stretching it unduly, thus keeping it loose. That's good enough advice for some fans and some belts, but it doesn't apply in every case.

If a belt is flat and narrow, for instance, and runs on a flat and narrow pulley, it has to be tight all the time, otherwise it will slip. The owner has to use a type of belt that will not stretch to any extent after it has worked in.

HOUSING SHORTAGE DOESN'T WORRY HERE



The municipal auto camping grounds at San Diego, Cal., which is now at the height of its popularity. It is for the benefit of tourists, and no charges are made, it is stated.

AUTOMOBILE NOTES

Keep the storage battery terminals clean and tight. Tighten up parts of the car when the engine is cold. Heat expands and if this is remembered a perfect job may be had.

Medical authorities assert that too many Americans are dying of hurry. In many cases, the hurry is that of drivers of automobiles.

When Springs Break

A broken spring may lead to serious trouble or even an accident, when experienced on the road if the driver attempts to reach the nearest garage without taking some steps to safeguard his car.

Probably the simplest way to make a quick temporary repair on a spring which is fractured through all the leaves consists in jacking up the frame slightly above its normal height above the axle, cutting a heavy piece of wood—a section of fence rail will serve in an emergency—to fit loosely between them and then letting the frame down on top of it. After the wood has been bound securely in place with rope, straps, wire or cable—non-skid chains sometimes come in handy for this purpose—it will be safe to proceed at moderate speed to the nearest repair station.

Increased Motor Speed

Now Blamed on Oxygen

Motor cars of all kinds have long been known to gather speed in some unaccountable manner when passing over smooth paved roads. The cause has long been unexplained, but it is now held, both by automotive engineers and road engineers, to be due to the abnormal profusion of vegetation usually to be found along these "mystery" roads. Trees and plants exude oxygen. Motors run more smoothly when there is plenty of oxygen in the air, as motorists are well aware. The increased amount of oxygen diffused in the localities where the vegetation is profuse, coupled with the smoothness of the road surfaces and the consequent decrease in tractive resistance, constitutes the cause of the "picking up" of the motor and the increased speed. Scientists recently conducted experiments in several localities, and along roads bordered by heavy vegetation, and these experiments demonstrated to their complete satisfaction that the behavior of the car was due to the increased amount of oxygen in the air.

Physician Warns Driver to Relax While Driving

Don't grip your steering wheel too tightly when you drive a car, or you may get neuritis in your shoulders, warns Riley D. Moore, osteopathic physician, writing in American Motorist.

"The prolonged tension and undue jarring transmitted to the shoulders may develop neuritis," he says. "Do not lean with your elbows on the wheel, for long at a time, for like reasons."

Doctor Moore says also: "The driver of a car should be alert but not tense, rigid. If you cannot relax, begin at once to learn how. If you are tense from nervousness and fear when driving, and cannot overcome it in a reasonable length of time, you'd better stop driving. If you do not, you will wreck your nervous system and in emergency likely wreck your car and a life as well."

It is cheaper to have the brakes relined than to wear the lining down to a point where the bands have to be replaced as well.

Excess Engine Heating Traced to Kink in Hose

On one occasion, excess heating of an engine finally was traced to a kink in the rubber hose leading to the radiator. It had become heated several times and weakened the walls, so that in making a rather sharp curve it collapsed, partially shutting off the flow.

This was remedied permanently by removing the hose and inserting a coil spring made of rather stiff wire, wrapped about a broom handle. When freed this spring was slightly larger than the inside diameter of the hose but was inserted by turning the spring in the direction that the wire was wrapped when it was made, in the meantime being forced in. This straightened the kink, and it has not bothered since.

This method of reinforcing and strengthening various sizes and kinds of rubber hose and tubing also works well in all sorts of instances. In making sharp turns and bends, tubing for gas lights tends to collapse, and this can be remedied effectively by this method.

The entire world spent \$3,360,000,000 for autos last year. But the United States was by far the greatest customer. This country leads with 62.5 per cent of the purchases.

The average motorist spends 24 days and 4 hours each year in his car, according to Pyke Johnson of the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce. The average mileage, he figures, is 12,000 miles a year. Dividing this figure by 20, the motoring hours are 600 a year.