The Bree Press Short Story

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getting in, Stephen?"

Stephen Boyd, home from college for the holidays, grinned engag-His look was so amiable that no have guessed it masked irritation. It was queer how mothers, the best of them, took that tone as though a fellow rere a child to give account of himself. His tone burlesqued horror Early! As early as the milkman."

His mother smiled rather painfully in tribute to his labored humor. At the the table his father went on with his face expressionless, a doctor learns early, Stephen guessed he was annoyed, however, and be-"Social affairs don't begin at dusk as they did in your day, Mother."

a country doctor, the telephone has a way of ringing during meals. Rhods, the middle-aged maid, who had been member of the household for fifteen years answered the call, then bustled into the dining room. "They want to speak to you, Doctor. It's the Penningtons."

"Oh, the Penningtons," said Doctor Boyd, and rose quickly. He was at the telephone a full minute and when he came back, there was a new gravity in his face.

"She's worse?" asked Mrs. Boyd. "Yes. I'll drive out as soon as I have finished dinner. Borry to leave you alone

on New Year's Eve." quite a bit." Stephen was recalling that his mother had planned a little party for that evening. 'I thought I'd ask in your old crowd, Stephen," she had said, her face lighting up in a way had when she was pleased with an idea,

"for New Year's Ever you know." He actually had dreaded to tell her of his engagement. It was that reluctance. he was inclined to think, which had made his voice seem so gruff. "I'm asked to Scott's for New Year's Eve. They are having a big house party. Bobby saw me on the train and said he'd send one of the

"The Scotts? Do you mean the Scotts at Brookside?'

cars for me."

exclusive groups in the university. Just need to assume that they are not fit to the eye of father or mother.

Stophen had answered: "and that's all versation had taken place more than a Then he saw it was hanging in its acthe color leap to his mother's forchead

After his father had driven off into the. dark of the winter's night. Stephen a furtive glance at the chair by that many people felt his mother had "Who-who-are-you?" given up a career when she married a where a man had a chance to make you?" money. His father before him, Stephen's grandfather, had been a physician, Doctor Stephen Boyd, living in this same the chair was shaken by a convulsion Stephen knew, that he, too, should study | whispered: medicine and come back to the old town Stove." Stephen of that generation, had gone | 'used-to-be' about it.' away from home early and died some- The figure in the chair ran its fingers where abroad. Stophen guessed that this through its hair. "Well, well," it said, uncle of his had been the black sheep of Bthere's a chance. I suppose that I'm the family. Probably the old folks had the going-to-be Stephen." possessed such strait-laced ideas that a; Stephen, looking across the room, saw high-spirited young fellow was bound to that this was probable. The figure in

Mrs. Boyd was playing Chopin's noc- when he first caught sight of it, but

thing that goes nowadays."

would help him to shake off, the wholly "Something's wrong," it said. "You must unreasonable feeling of depression which be the used-to-be Stophen, because I was his response to the music. His used to come in on my tiptoes toward mother, as though she had seen through morning, hoping my father and mother his stratagon; only smiled and continued | wouldn't hear me." to play. Then the front door opened, and some one called, "May I come in?"

the chief of their troubles. He had seen he had fallen in with his mother's plan her half a dozen times since his return; for New Year's Eve, or accepted Conyet he noticed with a sense of pleased stance's invitation! surprise the agreeable modulations of her

"We saw Doctor Boyd drive by after my motto, a short life and a merry one! this, Relief comes, and at, once, while or of waste-baskets," sighed the woman supper. I hope he's not going to be late As long as you're just starting out, Yuture attacks are warded off, leaving the with aspirations. "It seems such a prosy getting home on New Year's Eve." Stephen-used-to-be, I'll tell you that it afflicted one in a state of peace and occupation."

said Mrs. Boyd.

SUPPOSE you'll be rather late | alone, perhaps you'd come over. We're not having a party, but there'll be guite growd of us to watch the old year out.

> He said lightly "Thanks but unluckily I ave an engagement at the Ecotts."

Mrs. Boyd left Stephen to decline

"You must have heard of them. Brookside, you know."

"Oh, yes," said Constance, but her had flattened. She turned to Mrs. Boyd and laid un impulsive hand on hers, think of you when the clock strikes welve," she laughed, "and wish you happy Now Year." Bhe was smiling whe she bade Stephen goodby, but he aware that when she had learned his destination for the evening, she had recoiled. Small town, again!

The car was to come for Stephen at ten, and as he dressed, he found himself lobating the wisdom of what he about to do. He told himself wrathfully ing's fun; yet he had an odd feeling of having come to the parting of the ways. Well, it was true that girls like Constance had nothing in common with the girls of Robert Scott's set, smoking, drinking, swearing, screaming. He know which sort he preferred, but after all a fellow had to think of the future. If he bes came friendly with some of these influential people, he could secure the sort of position he wanted when he was graduated. He wanted something connected with stocks. The old-fashioned idea of "Oh, I'll keep mother company for putting by part of one's earnings, and investing it, was too slow for him.

When the car came for him, Stephen ran downstairs whistling, and stopped o kiss his mother good night. "You won't sit up for father. I suppose."

"No. I think I shall go to bed very soon. I'm a little tired." Her face bore out her statement. She looked pale and weary, but after the door had closed ipon her son, she sat motionless, looking down at her folded hands.

Half-past three New Year's morning stephen entered his home. He m at that minute. He was aware that he flushed, and that his speech was somebecause they're not your sort, you don't realized that he was no fit object to meet

He stole down the long upper hall "It's common talk that Mr. Scott made his room, opened and closed the door seen in it a few hours before had moved and her lips tighten; although she had over to the chair beside the window. His heart jumped.

. Ho took off-his-hat-and-onat-and-stole mother was playing softly. He recalled by some one strangely like himself.

country doctor. It was a shame, Stephen question and the voice that answered reflected, watching the slender figure, was husky, too, as if it had been an that his father had not settled in the city ! echo. "I'm Stephen Boyd. Who are

"I'm Stephen Boyd."

After a moment's allence, the figure house. It had been his father's dream, slient mirth. "I might have known," it

Doctor Boyds had practiced. The same | "Nothing of the sort," declared Stephen. old sign would do for his, thought His throat was dry, but somehow it Stephen, his lip curling. His father's' seemed dangerous to let the statement go name was Charles, and his brother, the unchallenged. "I'm Stephen Boyd, no

the chair had seemed a replica of himself turns in D flat, one of her son's favorites. was really the image of a much older Stephen moved uneasily, with the feel- man. There was a pasty whiteness in the 'ing that the music was weaving a spell face, while the muscles of the throat me. about him, but he spoke with an affec- hung loose; but the features were those tation of hilarity. "Why don't you pep Stephen saw when he faced the mirror that up a bit. Mother? Jazz is the -the high forehead, the aquiline nose. and the cleft chin. As he stared, his He wanted to move her to protest. That heart thumping, the figure shook its head.

Stephen did not reply. He stood trembling, realizing that the liquor in the It was Constance Bright, of course, cocktails must have been deadly indeed. Stephen had grown up beside her and Here he was taking part in a grotesque had walked to school with her in the conversation with a thing that must be days when the multiplication table was a figment of his imagination. If only

He took a step toward the closet, and The girls he had seen most of stopped. To reach the closet it short, either.'

You're just a bit of memory, taking shape and looking real enough to pinch. But Stehpen Boyd, the

doctor's son, the clean-living, likeable youngster, doesn't extest except in my "That's' a lie," said Stephen hoarsely. "I'm as real as you are, That is, I'm the one that is real: You're just a

It's not real".

n the chair. "I can remember all about you and there are things in my life you've never dreamed of in your vilest moments." The figure rose suddenly and advancing on Stophen, touched his arm 'That settles it, doesn't' it?"

The touch frightened Stephen to the point of frenzy. The creature's bloodshot eyes were looking into his. A spaxm. of nauses shook the young man. He broke At away from the hand clutching his coat sleeve, dashed from the room and down the hall. His father was just coming "Stephen!" Horror and anger blended in his voice as Doctor Boyd spoke his son's name. A door opened, and Mrs.

"Stephen!" Ehe looked from her son to her husband. "What is it?". caught her hand. "I've been drinking, but. I'm not drunk. There's something finely she blacked my eye and I am

Boyd, standing just back of him, spoke in a voice Stephen hardly recognized. "So history repeats itself," he said.

"Oh, no, Charles," cried the wife. can't be. It mustn't be." There was a Bomething was coming slowly down the mebby. hall. The floor creaked under its tread. 'Stephen, how did you get here?"

mother's feet, turned his head. The floure Interrogatively.

"No. Btenhen, I'm your brother. Charles. How did you got here?" The question was ignored. "I'm seeing things-to-might,"-replied-the-man. "You wouldn't believe it, but as I sat in my old room, I walked in on myself, the boy "How did you get here, Stephen?"

"Well, I got tired of the place where you took me, Charlle, and after I'd wone bod, I got up, dressed, and slipped out. It would have been a long walk, I guess, but a car came along and the sald to Doctor Boyd's, and he said he was going within two blocks. It was pretty late when Y got here, but the door was unlocked, and I went up to my

"You'd better telephone the hos-

Mrs. Boyd hurried to the telephone disaster. Storms sweep scross their land Stephen followed her, his confused brain and destroy the work of their hands struggling to make the necessary adjust- whereas if they had left a few acres of ments. After his mother had onished forest in the middle of their land and a her call, he spoke tremulously, "Was that border of trees round the edge, doep Uncle Stephen, Mother? You always enough for a windbreak, they might have told me he was dead."

had been many years since any word of trees afford shade and by preventing had come from him, but the fall you evaporation preserve the underground went to college, he appeared. We decided supplies of water. There are places to leave you in ignorance, Stephen, for where reckless deforestation has imhe was diseased in body and mind. Your poverished the land. For growing thinks father placed him in Doctor Mitchell's need the protection that trees give.

hospital, and visits him often." quiet the buzzing in Stephen's brain.

be at your age, Stephen, terribly like, was intended as a windbreak, to do for Your father and I have seen you chang- life what the trees do for the earth ing into his likeness with feelings I But, forgetful of that original purpose, can't well describe. Not that he wasn't many people want to hack down the a nice boy, but he fell in with bad com- forest of Sabbath days. They say it is panions and degenerated rapidly. That is in their way. why Y felt as though you had broken my heart when you told me you were woman of her gardener, a himple, re-

She was not so self-controlled after all. Her voice broke in a dry sob. In- all days to me." stantly Stephen was on his feet, seizing time for New Year's resolutions."

now. I'd rather you'd wait till after small wonder that life becomes impoveragain after I've slept. Every day this quest of pleasure do not take the place

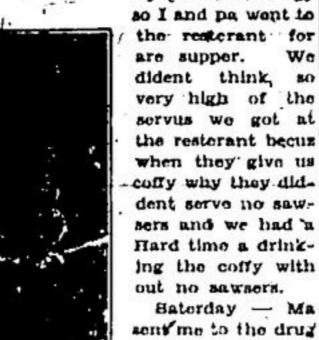
year, I'm done with booze. I'm done of religion and devotion. with that fast crowd. Mother, when Y go back to college, I'm going to buckle down to work and make you proud of

unawered sadly, and Stephen mastered ture carries an item of special interest man who had called himself the going- somewhat similar in external appearwindow and welcomed the rush of cold, been touched to or rolled on a hot stove. night air. The moon was high, and he but the soft scald affects the tissue of saw the outline of the Brights' big, the apple to a considerable depth wheresquare house, black against the silvery as storage scald is largely a matter of tightening of the muscles of his throat. Parise out of faulty methods in handling Cirls like Constance, sweet, plucky, and prior to storage quite as much as from tine, were an incentive to a fellow to improper storage practices. Some genlive at his best. When he dropped on eral rules for overcoming scalding in his knees, the thought of her mingled apples are: only properly matured fruit

late all sounded shrill. They screamed necessary to pass the chair in which the sands miscrable. Night after night the hours of picking. and squealed until a fellow had to shout figure sat, and he could not bring himself attacks return and even when brief resto do that, especially as it had begun to pite is given the mind is still in torment Constance was in the room, her fair speak again. "A short life and a merry from continual anticipation. Dr. J. D. face flushed from the nipping air outside, one," said the figure. I'That was always Kellogg's Asthma Remedy changes all "He will be very late. I am afraid." Won't be so merry as you think, nor so happiness he once believed he could "On the contrary there is really mile

SLATS DIARY BY ROBS PARQUHAR

up with, newralgy so I and pa went to



servus we got at the resterant becuz when they give us coffy why they diddent serve no sawsers and we had a Hard time a drinking the coffy with out no sawsers. Baterday - Ma

for Ant

Emmys · nowralgy

and pa give me twenty 5 cts. to get sick. I made the druggist mark both Packiges very plain becuz I woodent have nuthing happen to that Dog for nuthing. Bunday-Jane give a select tea party tonite up at her house becur she had Co. witch she wanted to honor sum way and had the Co, out in the libry and finely I that mebby I mite try and kins her mebby and she slaps me three times and almost sure she did not want me to kisa her or uther who why wood she do that

why was the days longer in the summer than the nites is and Jake sed that when "It it cooled off the nites contrack becar cold contracks and heat Xpands. Y think Jake will be pritty good in kemistry

Teusday-we liad Co. for suppor tonite ma pinched my leg and when I split supe Stephen Boyd on his knees at his on my cote she grinds my toe with her groom so nobuddy woodent pay no a Wensday-Elsys ma says she has got

> to be vascinated next week and new the save she is in a pikkle becuz she dussent no where to get vancinated at on abot. of Thiraday-well I um looking foreword to Easter day and I feel sorry for little bits of kids witch are to yung to go to skool to have hollowdays frum. Each & evry hollowday is a non disgized

WINDBREAKS

The late Mrs. Gene Stratton Porter used to criticize the furmers in her Limberlost country for clearing their omed, she said, to level every tree and "I'll take him to the front room and to destroy every old snake fence, so that got him quiet," said Doctor Boyd to his every inch of the ground may be cultivated. It is a foolish thing to do, for pital. They'll have men out searching." their very eagerness to turn all to visible The two brothers moved away, and productiveness and profit often ends in saved a summer's labor.

Besides providing windbreaks colonies

Human life has similar needs. Life Her clear, controlled voice helped to may be too responed to be fruitful. With-"Y out apiritual windbreaks, without places thought, Mother, he looked-like me." of shade, it may become barren and "You are very like what he used to profitless. The Sabbath, for example,

"Do you like Sunday?" asked a worldly

"I do," he answered: "It is the best of "Really," she exclaimed in astonishher hands in his. "Listen, Mother, it's ment, "we think it is a nuisance. It in-

terrupts all our pleasures, you know!" Walt, Stephen you are not yourself When people take such an attitude ished and pitifully unfruitfult Life needs "I can't wait. Mother, but I'll do it working and meditation; games and the

STORAGE SCALD

"You'd better go to bed now," she of the Dominion Department of Agriculthe impulse to repeat all he had said. | to apple growers. It. deals with cold His room down at the end of the hall storage difficulties more particularly seemed recking of the presence of the storage scald and soft scald. Both are to-be Stephen. Stephen flung up the unce, much as though the apple had light. He thought of Constance with a a skin affection. Most storage troubles should be selected for storing; the use of oiled paper in the container; and placing fruit to be stored into cold or com-Dread of Asthma makes countless thou- mon storage promptly that is within 24

HE KNOWS

"My husband is morely a manufactur-

never enjoy. Inexpensive and sold almost poetry in waste-baskets," replied the un-

A Happy and Prosperous New Year

The year 1930 is closing. We are on the threshold of a New Year---full of opportunities---some happiness and some prosperity for all, mingled with some reverses.

To a great extent your measure of happiness and prosperity for 1931 depends on yourself. It's impossible to secure a marked degree of either just by wishing, no matter how sincere that wish may be made.

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