

The Free Press Short Story

MOTHER'S WAY

GENTRUDE WALKER

HOPE HARRINGTON sat looking at the note in her hand; she loved the very feel of the paper, it satisfied that almost unacknowledged longing she had been forced to put in the background since she came to this city. It represented, too, the thing for which she had worked, a chance at something really big, an invitation to sing the special solo at the "Mother's Day" banquet given by the most exclusive Women's Club of the city. She knew, if she succeeded, it meant many more chances, an opportunity to meet the kind of people she longed for. She could see the long dining-room of the club, sparkling glass catching and reflecting the soft ones of silver and linen; in anticipation smell the fragrance of the flowers; see the beautifully gowned women seated about the table. She knew what she would sing; knew she could do it well, visioned the newspaper announcements, imagined her mother's face when she read them. It would all be for her. She re-read the invitation. Friday night. She'd promised to be at choir practice that night. There was to be a special practice for the Sunday morning anthem, the composition of the organist. . . . She also had the solo for the morning service. . . . Well she just couldn't, that was all. She'd call the organist and tell him she'd sing the solo Sunday morning, but that she couldn't be at choir practice. They'd have to sing some anthem they knew. . . . he would be disappointed. . . . she could see the hurt look in his eyes. It was the first time he had presented any of his own work and he was depending on her to carry it through. It couldn't be helped, this was the chance of a lifetime for her, the first opportunity she had really had to show what she could do in a musical line. Then, she certainly wanted to honor her own mother at this particular time. . . . suddenly she seemed to hear again those simple words, "Hope, I named you that because I want you always to live up to it, and remember this, nothing drains your ability to hope like promises broken. Keep your word at whatever cost."

It was nearly two years since she had left home, she'd tried all that time to live up to that parting counsel. . . . but this. . . this was the chance for which she had worked and waited all those two years. . . . she was going to sing Sunday morning, it wasn't as if she were disappointing altogether.

How had they heard about her, anyway? Likely from Professor James himself; if she refused it meant his displeasure; he wouldn't teach you if he didn't like you. He hadn't much time for churches either; openly said she was a fool to waste her time down in that little church, that crowd could never get her anywhere. She must accept.

Hurriedly, lest her resolution fall her, she went to the phone, dialed the number given and accepted the invitation; called the choir leader and told him, his sigh of disappointment followed her back to her room. Again she read the note; the way lateness of it, the banquet was for Friday night, just three nights away, meant that likely some one else had been asked, failed, and she was being given the chance, a marvellous chance for her, her first big one.

Wednesday night she went for her lesson and came out walking on air at the Professor's praise for her choice and rendering of the solo. It was the one she intended singing Sunday morning, a favorite poem of her mother's which she had set to music.

Thursday night she settled down to the piano for a final practice. Suddenly her fingers left the keys, her voice broke almost in the middle of a note. . . .

"Mother-o' Mine, Mother-o' Mine" the music of another favorite of her mother's seemed to fill the room. Again, almost as if she stood beside her, she heard her mother's voice, "Hope, keep your word at whatever cost." But this was such a chance. Resolutely she commenced playing again, unheard by any ears; but hers, strange music filled the air. She glanced at her mother's photo. . . . it had never looked like that before. Those eyes that always smiled no matter what, they had a strange look, a sad one. Hope turned her head away and for a moment, sobs shook her frame and was she living up to the best mother God ever gave a girl, deliberately planning to break her word on Mother's Day of all days.

Wiping her eyes she flew to the phone, dialed her number and almost breathlessly explained she had a previous engagement which prevented her being at the banquet Friday night, heard and realized to the full what was meant by the "Oh! very well, we can get some one else."

Everything seemed to go wrong at choir practice Friday night; half the choir weren't there; the ones who were seemed absolutely indifferent to either music or words, the leader was in despair; the anthem was terrible, Hope felt sure they would never be able to sing it Sunday morning and wished she hadn't come, the only confident one was the organist, he was sure with Hope leading they would make it go.

The one comfort was that again the eyes of the photo seemed to smile. Picking up the paper Saturday she was surprised, in the church announcements, to

AWAKE APETITES! By Barbara K. Brooks

Let those lazy good for no nourishment appetites be gone. This is Spring! We need energy to climb an emerald hill; to follow some gurgling brook and to match our wits against its everflowing chuckle. All nature seems to have new life. Why should we sit back and be limited in our activities because we don't feel like eating and consequently haven't very much ambition?

If you have the faintest notion that you are losing your appetite, take these steps of prevention, immediately. Breathe deeply of the good fresh air and exercise in the open if possible. Take out the golf sticks; put on your walking shoes or grasp a spade and do things to the garden.

Next, look to your diet. See that it contains plenty of vitamins and minerals, plenty of green things and foods with fibre which make for internal cleanliness. It is well in this season of housecleaning, to make sure that your "own personal house" is cleaned inside and out, and ready for summer activities.

A sluggish system does much to dull the appetite. It gives a tired feeling and a low resistance and in this condition we care very little about eating and grow increasingly more uninterested in food. As water is one of the best cleansers in the world, indulge in it. Drink six to eight glasses a day and see how much better you feel.

As for foods with fibre, the markets are full of them. Most of these mentioned are available now or will be soon.

- #### GOOD FOOD-SOURCES OF CELLULOSE, OR FIBRE
- | | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| Bran | Parsnips |
| Oatmeal | Turnips |
| Carrots | Broccoli |
| Cauliflower | Cabbage |
| Beets | Lima Beans |
| Lentils | Celery |
| Asparagus | Dates |
| Onions | Figs |
| Lettuce | Prunes |
| Kale | Raisins |
| Chard | Whole Wheat Bread |
- The first listed is bran. If you have one of those families, the members of

TAKE YOUR SHARE OF THE BLAME

A certain satisfaction is derived from holding other people responsible for your failures. Take the boy who cannot get along at school because his teachers are unfair; or the girl who cannot get along at home because her parents are exacting, and her brothers and sisters bad-tempered; or the young man who cannot get along in his job because of the jealousy and the unfair tactics of his fellow employees.

It is true that it is pleasanter to put the blame on other people, but there the advantage ends. The student who faces the fact that his own laziness is responsible for his poor showing, may turn over a new leaf. The girl who admits that her own impatience is to blame for the shortcomings of her home life may make a change. The employee who owns up that he lost his job because he did not do his work satisfactorily, may fare better in his next position. If it is all the fault of somebody else, however, there is no use in turning over a new leaf. If you want to improve matters, take your share of the blame. Finding fault with other people may be comforting, but it does not help.

HOW'S BUSINESS?

"Business is dull," remarked the scissors grinder.

"Looking up," declared the astronomer.

"Dead," said the undertaker.

"Fine," said the judge.

"Looking better," said the beauty doctor.

"Fair," said the car conductor.

"Rotten," said the egg man.

"Pretty soft," said the mattress maker.

"Light," said the gas man.

"Hard to beat," said the bass drummer.

"Just sew, sew," said the seamstress.

"Bum," said the hobo.

"Looking brighter," said the boot-black.

The preacher, who was the last one seen, admitted that he "was working to beat the devil."

A BAR TO SUCCESS

How tired we become of the young people who say no as if they wanted to be teased to change their minds, and yes as if they were not sure whether they meant it or not. Irritating as such people are, they are to be pitied. For the hesitating no and the doubtful yes reveal the indecision which is the greatest bar to success. It is a great accomplishment to be able to say yes and no in a way that means fine.

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| Hotels | Summer Cottages |
| Farmsteads | Sun-porches |
| Barns | Covering old |
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