The Free Press Short Story

THE PERTNESS OF JOHNNY

came round the corner of the house,

"Good morning, Harriet," was Aunt Susan's cheerful greeting. "You know the school-teacher, don't you?"

The amenities being observed, visitor sat down in a worn splint-bottomed chair and removed her sunbonne She was a thin woman with a trailing sweetness of voice and an air of habitual leaning on some one for support, and it was not long before she made her errand matter with Johnny Alkire?" known

"Aunt Susan," she said, hesitatingly, dicated a faint desire on her part for my kind, "I don't know as there's anything everybody's estimation if he had have withdrawal, "I'm thinking of papering the matter with him." my_front room.

it's a good color, not too gay nor too in the ointment, somewhere."

'A sower went forth to sow'! Now, the miracle to his pa and ma. a man with a big sack of grain on his I ever saw when they presented the Annie kept puttin him off and putting back, but it's the scatterin' wide to the little fellow fur baptism, and he certain- him off. winds of kind words and good deeds. ly did behave in a way that reflected "The Squire was mightily pleased And so when I look at that wall paper it credit on himself and them too. He there was no mistake about that; and sin't them mingly shades of drab, but it's never hollered, never whimpered, just oftentimes the Squire would go into the other things I see it's when Amos first looked up at the preacher as if he under- parlor or Johnny would come out into brought me there to his father's house; stood it all and was enjoyin' the stir he the settin'-room, and the two of them it's the days of hard work, the days of was creatin'. And he was that way would spend a whole evenin' discussin' sunshine, and the days of sorrow; it's about everything. He did things better better ways of farmin'.- And Johnny, the children taken away; it's Amos dead, then other bables; he learned to walk he was right up; he takes all the scienand back of it all the everlastin' blue of earlier, and he could talk plainer, and tific journals, and he sends abroad fur God's love. That's what that wall paper by the time he got big enough to go to his seeds, and then he tests them, and

I winked tears out of my eyes and halfway through his first reader.

fore the truth came out.

Susan's full, round, pleasant tones.

change his way of livin'." "Why, Harriet," and Aunt Susan drop-

"why, Harriet, you don't mean to tell his neighbors right and left as if he had no appreciation of Annie's talents, but me Johnny is goin' to get married?" | the government of the whole moral uni- she might have overlooked that if he "He's thinkin' about it some," and verse on his shoulders. Mrs. Alkire, all in a pleasant glow now . "Now. mind, I ain't sayin' that Johnny likewise. She's got a piece framed and that the great news had been imparted, ain't made a fine man, for he has. He's hung up over the parlor mantel board went on as if quite oblivious of an alien as straight as a string in all his business that's the very apple of Annie' eye. It's a presence. 'I asked if I should tell you, transactions, and his word's as good as meadow scene, with a couple of cows and he said, 'Certainly, mother, I've no his bond; he never overreaches, and he's a-drinkin' out of a still pool, and them call to be ashamed of it.' Johnny is always ready and willin' to to help a that's judges say it's worth a hundred

Susan, not yet recovered from her as- communion he looks like he'd been born forelegs of her cows wasn't accordin' to

"Why, it's Squire Porbes' Annie." Susan. 'I ain't seen the child this long ness. It's such a little one, and it's the spot that when he could paint a while, not, since Abner and me used to named along at the last like as if it was better cow than she could he could have 'tend Quarterly meetin' in the Pisgah so insignificant it almost escaped Paul's her and not until then. neighborhood and put at Squires Forbes'! notice, and it is insignificant—when it's "I dont' know which one of them told But I'll tell you, Harriet, if little Annie there to be looked at. But when it's the Squire, but he laughed and chuckled has made as nice a woman as the older lackin', honey, it somehow makes you like it was a mighty good joke, but all girls made, you have cause to fall on feel like you'd rather see just that one the same he talked to Annie, who didn't your knees and give thanks. Is it all grace a-throwin' out a little shoot than seem to see it that way. The Squire had

mother, speaking with conviction. meant to cover the whole earth."

Johnny his answer, yet."

Susan, "I don't know as I'd speak of it paper-I don't think she will need to." horns over politics these days, it seems abroad before she does."

people, anyhow; but ever since I've been me to ask if the papering had been to be his plain duty to set him right. in the neighborhood, Aunt Susan, you've done. said to Johnny, even if something should Johnny will suggest makin' any change and I expect prayin' some that a-way, happen to prevent you and Annie marry- in wall paper." in'. Aunt Susan Wetherby is as deep as | "I suppose his sweetheart liked the Johnny's got a bigger day's work than

After the click of the picket gate had suggestion. announced the safe distance, of Mrs. I was so afraid that I was going to afrit a bit of a shirk about Johnny. Alkire. I turned to Aunt Susan. She miss the story,

WAS sitting on Aunt Susan Ever since I had been admitted as a you can imagine, and he'd certainly back porch boarder into that immaculate spare room showed the same sense in selectin' a girl thinking guiltily of the stack of with its optimistic hit-and-miss rag that he exercises in his everyday busiexamination papers upstairs in my room carpet, its enormous valance-hung bed ness. I guess, honey, that was the real and wishing every day were Saturday and cavernous chest of drawers that cause of the jolt he finally got-he just when one of Aunt-Susan's neighbors enfolded the sum total of my possessions made it seem a little too much like in so ample a way that it made me husiness failing in its fresh outpouring nor yet largest landowner in the county, of his

> that came from its hidden springs. "Aunt Susan," I said, reaching after as unlike as possible for Johnny to have a spray of the honeysuckle that bent taken a notion to Lucy Graven that invitingly above my head, "what is the helps in his mother's kitchen, though

"Why, honey." replied Aunt Susan with a laugh that bespoke a cheerful amity toward the whole world of man- have gone up a hundred per cent.

riet," said Aunt Susan, mildly. "If I festooned the porch; "you never speak a worldly pint of view; and whether or after they are made. Yes-sir-ee, if ever remember rightly, you had that room out hearty in praise of him, and you not he had an eye to that, he made his there was a man fitted fur the Presidpapered the spring before Amos was don't have that pucker at the corners of intentions known right-from the start. taken away; it ain't a mite soiled, and your mouth unless you have seen a fly

thing to consider in selectin' a wall ment rendered with what to my mind it ain't the way a girl likes it done best. paper; and I recollect your tellin' me the seeemed an effort at judicial fairness. They're just like that little bay mare very day that paper was hung that you "He's always been that, and I don't know Abner drives to his runabout. She's liked it better than any other design as the rest of us who have more failin's the gentlest creature to handle, but ever and bigger ones have any call to speak single time he tries to catch her she "So I did. When I first saw it in ill of him. But it was this way with backs off and makes him chase all over Jones Pratt's store, it just filled my eye. Johnny; he was the only one left to the lot until he's clean wore out before It was all in such pretty shades of drab Harriet and Amos out of the five chil- she'll submit to havin' the bits put into with little blue dabs here and there that dren born to them. They was all such her mouth. made me think of a rainy day when the delicate, splindlin' bables and none of "Johnny didn't propose to get winder sun keeps tryin' to break through the them before him lived to be put into by any such fool nonsense as that, Aunt Susan. I don't know as I can last of the lot, showed a disposition he went after Annie, holdin' his bridle that wall paper; it's like the parable, grow up, why it seemed little short of a deliberate as if he knowed of no reason

there was nothing incongruous in a est little chap in the whole county, and farmer in the community; and as fur wall paper typetying religion and life I reckon he was about right, for he stock raisin', his Shorthorns and his certainly did take the shine off all them Yorkshires have carried off blue ribbons "I know, Harriet," she said, and the that was raised around here, and land! enough, I guess, to belt his whole farm. tenderness lay deep in her voice, "I the store that Amos did set by that Of course that would have been a highly know. Then, why are you going to child. If ever you got within earshot of acceptable way of courtin' if it had been Recalled from her dream, Mrs. Alkire that boy of mine has been up to.' Now but it didn't help him with Annie. She fidgeted with her sunbonnet strings be- you know, honey, that sort of a feelin' was all fur fine needlework and paintin'; on the part of a parent ain't a-goin' fur and, honey, I wish you could see the "Johnny says it's too old-fashioned and toward lessenin' the esteem a boy like work she does. Her drawn work is as sober. He says he don't like to set Johnny just naturally feels for himself; fine as cobweb, and as fur paintin', why, Then let Johnny do his settin' some- was sent off to college that he came does seem like any man with a grain o'

him anythin' at college that he didn't but Johnny was so concerned fur fear "I want that Johnny should be pleas- know already, and Amos, instead of the drawn work would hurt Annie's eyes ed." said Mrs. Alkire. "I want that he chastisin' and sendin' him back, was -it is tryin' on the eyesight; you know should, especially since he's like to that pleased he took him into partner- that, honey-that he tried his level best ship the very next spring.

ped the knife with which she had been into the belief that he was as wise as table cloth with an openwork border a industriously paring apples for a pie, sit- Solomon, a-dispensin' of his judgments foot deep! ting bolt upright in her astonishment, and a-correctin' of the false notions, of "Now, that was bad enough, to show

that old-fashioned, you know, talks about neighbor out of a pinch. And more dollars-if it's worth one-without any than all that, he's religious. You know frame on it at all. Well! after Johnny "Who is the girl?" demanded Aunt yourself, honey, when he passes the had studied it a bit he told Annie the dom' it; and as for the Christian virtues, nature, and Annie, instead of bein' pleashe possesses all the apostle saw fit to ed to be set right, as he thought she "Little Annie Forbes." exclaimed Aunt name but just bare one, and that's meek- would be, got mad and told Johnny on to behold all the rest a-flourishin' and no mind of lettin's Johnny's six hundred "It's as good as settled," said Johnny's readin' out good and strong like they acres slip away from his family on any

"And how about Annie's mind?" course was reached, she had finished to give in if it hadn't been election quickly and searchingly questioned Aunt paring her apples. As she rose to go year. "Well! I don't know as Annie's give she paused just long enough to make the Squire is a Democrat, and, though this further and seemingly irrelevant there's no reason on earth, so fur as I "Then, Harriet," gently advised Aunt remark, "I don't think Harriet will can see, why men felks should lock

been with me in all the joys and "No, honey," replied Aunt Susan, "it about openin' the subject with a man sorrows of my life and I just couldn't hain't been done yet, and it's my opinion that had named his first boy Andrew bear not to talk it over with you. As I that it will be quite a spell before Jackson and who's been votin' steady

old pattern," I threw out, by way of common on hand he just gets up a little

"And so he just went right after the

large interrogation point.

did set out, there was the biggest flutter

positively ashamed of their shrunken "Now, I don't say that Johnny had meagreness, I had felt the abundance of ever calculated. I don't say that he ever a nature that was indeed a well, never once thought of Squire Forbes bein' the ever yielding up to exhaustion the supply having the biggest house and the most influence; but, still, it would have been Lucy's as handsome and good a girl as ever lived. Human nature is just that contrairy, honey, that Johnny would

"Some say he'd already spoke to the Squire before he'd ever been to see sober, which to my mind is the chief "Johnny is a good boy," was the judg- Annie. That's honorable, of course, but

clouds. You know yourself how that is, short clothes; so when Johnny, the very he got the Squire's consent, and then make it plain the way Tve felt about right from the very first to thrive and right in plain sight, movin' as calm and thing that you set your mind on ain't "I think they was the proudest parents and showin' no concern whatever when

> "Amos used to say he was the pert- does raise more to the acre than any Amos it was "Sav. let me tell you what the Squire Johnny was after marryin'; and so it wasn't surprisin' when Johnny their walls is covered with pictures. It "He gave out that they couldn't teach would take pride in executin' all that, to make her promise never to do another "And so it went on, Johnny a-growin' stitch, and she right in the midst of a

hadn't undertook Annie's instruction,

such whim as that, and I don't know When this point in Aunt Susan's dis- but what Annie would have been forced

out into the pantry to make her pies, "Now, Johnny is a Republican and It was late the next autumn, after the Squire and Johnny got into a dis-"No." said Mrs. Alkire, rising to go, "I my summer vacation was over and I was cussion and Johnny found the Squire mon't. It ought to be give out by Annie's back in school again, that I bethought was so fur off the track that he saw it

"Now, most folks would have hesitated too, for forty odd years; but when earlier in the mornin', that's all. There

as well know the rest, if you're sure it he'd brought over in his pockets fur will go no further." Here she looked a the purpose that after a bit the Squire ceased talkin', and fell to listenin' like I affirmed with haste and she pro- as if he was so deeply interested he ceeded. "Now, it was this way with didn't want to miss a word. I guess Johnny, honey. You see, he'd never the Squire thought that was the best way of tirin' him out and it generally is good best, honey, to give a runaway-horse a didn't straight road and a free rein and just think that way at all: but he got the let him run it out and by and by he'll stop of his own accord. And so after a time Johnny did get to the end of literature, and I guess he was feelin' mightily pleased that he'd been the means of oringing the Squire round to his way of thinkin'; but he wanted the Squire to

> Here was the climax. "Every pint." said the Squire, "is as clear as daylight but just bare one." And what's that?" said Johnny, havin' more idee than a day-old gosling that the Squire's wrath was nigh to

explodin'. "What's that? Mebbe I can

say so and he opened the way for a

word of testimony by asking if there was

my pint that he'd failed to make clear."

"Well! the thing that's puzzlin' me is this," said the Squire. "I can't fur the ife of me see why 'tis that young, fellar your keen political sagacity is content remain here ploughin' corn and raisin' shotes when the country is threatened with destruction the way you've proved chosen Lucy, fur she'd been faithfuller ain't justice to yourself. The place fur "I am sure there is," I persisted be- than most daughters to Harriet. Of you is down there at Washington makin' hat course Annie was a suitabler match from the laws, or, better still, executin' them ency-born and bred fur it-you're that very fellar, and I ain't goin' to be no party to defraudin' the government of any such valuable services as is your bounden duty to render.

"Now, you've asked me fur my daughter, and I've said you could have her, and so you can; but I'm goin' to make it provisional on your gettin' yourself established first in the Chief Magistrate's

"I'll make the terms liberal-you can run on the ticket of your own choosin' and whenever you get ready-fur-it, a place this election because, so fur as can judge, the candidates is all as good as chose, already.".

"You've left out something, daddy." And there was Annie, who'd been listenin'-to-it-all from the next room, standin' in the doorway as purty as a peach. in a pink lawn dress and lookin' that pleased. "You know he's got to paint a better cow than I can."

"That's so, daughter," said the Squire. laughin', and slappin' them fat sides of his'n, "I'd clean forgot that cow. We'll put her in too, and she can hang over the mantel-board in the White House

Hospital for Sick Children

(Country Branch, Thistletown)

The prolonged period of hard times has created a most difficult problem for Ontario's world-famous Hospital for Sick Children, which only the

benevolent public can solve. Here it

The Hospital has nursed in its cots Out-Patient Department, an increase of 16,092. On one day 520 treatments there was a similar growth in the demand for the merciful ministrations of the Hospital. While all this " has been going on the amounts of the donations from the kind-hearted have decreased by many thousands of dollars, creating the situation of far more to be done-and far less to

The statutory grants obtained by the Hospital fall much short of being sufficient to pay for the actual cost of maintenance of the little patients and each additional patient means an added deficit. The task of bridging the gap between the cost of operation and operating income has usually been accomplished by contributions from the benevolent. While the Hospital has retained the majority of-its friends who kindly donate to its work yearly, and is continually adding new ones, donations diminished to a somewhat alarming extent in the response to last year's appeal for funds and there has been little improvement in that respect throughout the year. It is unthinkable that any child needing the humane service provided by the Hospital should be refused. The Trustees are anxious and can only hope that the kindsee them through the difficulty by generous response to the

for Sick Children to the institution of its kind in the world. Its country branch at Thistletown is a recognized model and persons interested in child welfare come from all parts of the globe to inspect it. Any child in the Province of Ontario, deformed or diseased, is eligible for admittance to this wonderful institution, where the very finest treatment known to medical and surgical science is at once available. There is no class or creed distinction. The very best that any Hospital can give is placed within easy reach of the

Now, more urgently than ever before, is the Hospital in need of contributions and no amount would be considered too small. Please ask the benevolent in your community to help. Tell them that the story of the Hospital, covering 57 years, is not that of merely adding cot to cot and ward to ward. It is the story of battle constantly waged against disease and deformity, with all the advancing resources of the medical and surgical sciences. It is a story of demands which have ever exceeded the financial resources, but which have always been met by generous response to appeals for aid. But for this generosity the Hospital would many times have been bankrupt.

Ask your readers, please, to prevent
it from becoming so now.

Faithfully yours,

Did You Ever Stop To Think?

By EDSON R. WAITE, SHAWNEE, OKLAHOMA

Gault MacGowan, Editor of the Trinidad Guardian, Port-of-Spain (B. W. I),

"The more I see of advertising, the more I am convinced that we know nothing about it.

"We built up a world boom by advertising luxuries we could do without; then when the luxuries were doing all the business there was a slump in primary com-Naturally and logically. modities. Everyone was buying luxuries and was learning to do without primary products.

"The girls smoked cigarettes instead of eating sugar candy and chocolate; they gave up bread for rusks; they began to use artificial silk instead of wool and cotton and flannel; we use electricity instead of coal; we learned to eat canned goods instead of village product. Thousands of people acquired a taste for canned milk instead of fresh.

"What did primary products do? Instead of advertising their way to success too, they cried overproduction. Overproduction is only a child's way of saying 'no buyers.'

"Look around and see who advertises least. It is the producer of primary products every time. They got the idea that they were indispensable and when they found they were not, they sat down and wept instead of taking a course in salesmanship.

"Fortunes used to be made out of land and farming. The farmer as the one-man shop in the one-horse town. Everybody had to go to him) or starve. Nowadays instead of going to the farmer it is easier to buy canned food; luxuries advertised by middlemen or importers. The farmer sits around and wonders where his customers have gone.

"We can do without bread, cocoa, sugar, potatoes and practically all the fresh produce there is. But the producers 'kid' themselves that we can't. They blame economics and overproduction for lack of sales. If they advertised and packed and marketed like everybody else, they would not get left in the rush.

"When the primary producers learn. to keep pace in their advertising with the producers of luxury goods, the world will get balanced again. So long as the primary producers don't get together and advertise so long will they tell a hard luck tale. And so long will the world slump, because, though we all like luxuries, we can only buy them so long as enough of us earn the right to do it by selling the fruits of the sweat of our brow.

"And Those Who Sweat Must Learn to Sell"