The Free Press' Short Story

THE SERVICE OF THE KING

LULITA CRAWFORD PRITCHETT

September sun. "I reckon the Lord's so car or fust a pumpkin turned into one? busy lookin" after the rest of the world And are you really-" He's plumb forgot about 6agtbrush Basin!" she observed to the slender darkhaired girl behind the scarred counter. "I declare, if it wasn't for you, Marybelle darlin', I don't know what all us folks would do."

As Marybelle Lewis unwound bright pink calico from a bolt so that her customer's knotted fingers could feel it appreciatively a shadow clouded her eyes. "I don't know why you say that, Granny,"she protested. "No matter how hard I try to carry on Father's business, I can't seem to make a success of it."

The old lady looked at her sharply "Well, I do say it," she declared with spirit. "I don't know as your Paw ever figured much on that word success. He was always too busy thinkin' up new ways to help his neighbors. For forty years this store has been something to anchor to. No matter if the crops failed, or the creek went dry, or the cattle got poison weed, the old log house was always here and your Paw. Caleb Lewis, with Nobody came here askin' who didn't get help, and many a time your Paw's gone down in his own pocket to keep things going. Why, only the week before he was took sick he went up Placer Creek where there's a couple of dozen families of miners tryin' to scratch out enough gold to live on and with his own hands he helped 'em build some cabins."

"I know," the girl said with trembling lips. "That's what caused his death."

"I recollect how Caleb was our nearest neighbor when Jessup and me took up our homestead." Granny went on after a moment. "He could put new hope in a person just by the way he said 'Howdy!' Many a time we've gathered here and he's done the preachin' when we couldn't get no minister. I remember but there now! My tongue's runnin' away with me. What I started out to say was that you take after your Paw, Marybelle. It seems just natural to keep on comin' to you now that Caleb's gone to his reward. You're sort of like this here calico -a bit of brightening to remind the rest of us that there's something in the world besides sagebrush and trouble, and to help us be the kind of men and women

"Granny, Granny!" Marybelle's troub-

led little laugh ended in a sob. "There, there now honey. You're just worn out sitting up nights nursing Kate Duff and spending your days keeping store and trying to teach little Pasy Thompson not to stutter. Too bad she ain't strong enough to ride the ten miles to school with the other young ones You go get your things and come home with me. A nice hot supper and a good night's rest will make you feel like new. I'll warrant."

Marybelle knew that far more than that would be needed to lift the heaviness from her heart. She felt that she could not endure Sagebrush Basin another moment. Why should everyone pile their burdens upon her? Since her father's death they had expected her to step right into his shoes. She could not! She could not! She had honestly tried, but after all, she was only twenty-two. How could she be expected to cope with the problems of an entire community? Store keeping seemed to be only a minor part of her duties. Because she had gone to college, folk looked upon her as a teacher; because she had had a smatteding of nurse's training they expected her to doctor their ills; because she was Caleb Lewis' daughter, they came to her ;

tor counsel. "Listen!" Granny Jessup said suddenly. That sounds like an automobile stopping out in front.

The girl lifted her head and hastily dabbed at her eyes. "Neal-I mean Dr. Stuart-said he'd take me riding this

afternoon." "Humph," said Granny. "That'll better medicine than anything I could offer. You go powder your nose. I'll cut me off enough of this here called to make little Jody Ann a dress for her birthday and then I'll be gettin' on. I brung in a bucketful of my best white potatoes to

pay for the coxis. A few moments later Granny departed, slapping the reins along the back of her lasy sorrel. Marybelle climbed into the

sleek blue roadster beside the doctor. He was obviously not a product of Sagebrush Basin. He was tall and good looking, with straightforward gray eyes and a chin which had a right to be square, for he was going to make a name

for himself in the medical world. The first time she had seen him had been in June when he had come in response to her long-distance telephone call to mend Cowboy Joe, who had been dragged by a bronco.

"I'm really on a vacation," he

RANKY JUSTOUP sank into a chair way Cinderella must have felt when she her faded sunbonnet, which she corner to attend the grand ball. Do you, had worn as a protection from the hot suppose this is an honest-to-goodness

> "I should say I am," grinned the young man. "I can guarantee that neither the car nor the driver will vanish and that if any magic spell lies upon us it has been cast by a charming young lady named Marybelle."

The color deepened in the girl's on a high point where they could look "Tibetan Buddhist supreme masters, with laughing gray eyes jumped out of In poetry, various odes have been adon her and in them was a warm tender very existence are unknown and against Denver day after to-morrow," he told her, "consequently helpless." 'but before I leave there's something I Mint to ask you, Marybelle."

voice startled them both. "Hey, Mary- boxes.

running-board, 'Kate, she's feelin' some worse," he panted. "I saw the doctor's Caleb Lewis' dog-cared Testament, but car stop up here and wondered would he come over and see if he could do something to make her easier." "Why-why of course!"

"Well!" growled the doctor. "That is —I mean—where do I turn off?"

Darkness had fallen when he and the they could for Kate. They were accom- teries for them and kept them simply the door. Her keen old eyes took in the panied by a small tow-headed Duff who was to spend the night with his aunt three miles down the road. Neal drove in gloomy silence. Even the hope having a guiet evening with Marybelle was dissolved when he saw a couple of horses hitched in front of the store. got to have a chance to talk with you. off from everybody?"

car stopped for the girl and then whirled her away into the crisp September sunlight. To Marybelle the road had never

swerved at the sudden application of tended credit. She was certainly doing to the hen and the gathering of the brakes, screeched to a halt. A hayraci a losing business.

"Whoa, General! Behave yourself Star!" shouted old Sam Duff to his frightened horses.

"Why, it's M-miss M-m-m-marybelle!" shrilled little Patsy Thompson, standing be a failure in the end?" up and waving her scarf "Ain't we g-g-going to have m-meeting?"

Marybelle stiffened in her seat. All the joyous anticipation faded from her face. "Oh, she cried, "I forgot. This is

"What difference does that make?" demanded her companion, crisply. "You see we always have Sunday School at the store," faltered Marybelle, "I'm the only one who can play the

"Kate she's feelin' better." Sam Duff

I can't go with you," she said. "Nonsense!" snapped the doctor. "Must you spoil your day just to accommodate

a lot of country people?" "You don't understand," she hurried on. "Some of these folks have travelled miles to get here. They've been thinking about the meeting all week. It means more to them than just Sunday School. I'm terribly disappointed that we can't take our trip as you planned it, but don't

you see? I've got to go back." The man beside her frowned. "I came you." he countered. "Surely you can

spare me one day." The girl did not answer. The hayrack rumbled on around the bend.

"Please!" Something in her tons bas fled the young doctor. With a mumbled exclamation he jerked the car around and headed back toward the store.

Marybelle at once hurried in to pile cushions in an easy chair for Kate Duff and to make room on her bed for the sleeping Thompson baby. Other ranchers and their families arrived from the opposite direction. Two or three rattly Placer Creek and discorred children with

pinched, chapped faces and hungry eves structedly no one seemed to notice it. She was acutely aware of that stiffly store from every direction. He wasn't a augurs, told Publius Claudius Pulcher, back of the room. When Sam Duff prayed long and earnestly she heard only the and warm that it held everybody in the that the sacred chickens at the temple impatient drumming of Neal's fingers on country." the door frame. She tried to see things must seem shabby, with the children anged along the counter and the grown- ever so slightly, but her young shoulders

THREATENS EUROPE



The Abbot Chao-Kung, once known as Ignatius Trebisch-Lincoln, pastor, member of the British House of Commons and international spy, who announced to the world recently that unless governments of European belligerent countries resigned at once, the Tibetan far off to the blue ranges. His eyes, without prejudice, predilection or favor, the vehicle and bounded to meet her. glow. "I've got to be going back to whose operations" European leaders are

At that crucial moment, a man's husky ups hunched on nail kegs and cracker

With a flush of embarrassment she realized that every one was silent, waiting for her to read the scripture lesson, or mail west answered seriously. "

shabby homes. She too had looked out I together will make this a regular comseemed to cut them off from the rest of of the country." civilization. Since the depression every telephone in the Basin had been taken who had forgotten her spectacles and out except that in the store. Folks who had to come back for them, stamped the girl left the ranch house after doing all had had radios were unable to buy bat- snow off her feet and bustled through as ornaments. Ranchers had given up situation at once. "Land sakes!" she their cars and had gone back to using beamed. "Your faces tell me all I need horse power. Her thoughts raced on in to know. Doctor, I reckoned that square an alarming way. Winter would soon chin of yours would be good for somebe upon the community. The crops this thing, but it took Marybelle here to point year had been short and the gardens it in the right direction. Looks like I'm had dried up on account of the drouth; just in time to say, 'God bless ye both' "To-morrow," he said desperately, "I've therefore, food would be scarce. Hunger would stare many of the ranchers in the Can't we take a trip somewhere away face, and what would become of the POULTRY IN LITERATURE miners and their families? Then they The following morning the trim blue would need warm clothes and blankets. Everyone seemed to expect her store to supply these things; yet how could it without money to run on? It was giving memorial, polutry has played an immore than it could now. There was The car rounded a narrow bend, hardly a soul to whom she had not ex-

> thought, "I could work hard, help him these folks in the Basin. Wouldn't that 75. help the mmore than for me to try to hang on here to a store that's bound to

with the problem. For once she took no part in the lengthy discussions that followed the study of the Bible verses. The hands of the old clock slipped up toward

"Let us close with song." Sam Duff's voice broke in upon her consciousness What shall it be neighbors?"

"I Am Happy in the Service of King," spoke up Granny Jessyp.

spread out their lunches and proceeded the fact that a rooster is a brave bird to enjoy the society of their fellows; whom they rarely saw during the week. The afternoon seemed endless to Mary- in the coop; hen and chickens, a very belle. It was nearly night when the jast Marybelle swallowed hard. "I-I guess wagon creaked away and she and Neal were left alone.

> postulated the doctor. "I won't be put off any longer. Marybelle, will you marry

The girl made no answer and he push ed his arguments. "This is going to be one of the hardest winters we've eve seen. There's sure to be a certain amount of sickness and suffering in a place like this. Look at those miners some them living in tents with practically nothing to their backs. I don't want you mixed up in all that misery and wearing yourself out on these country

"Neal." Marybelle did not look around, I want to tell you about my father. A let of people called him a numskull for rying to start a store away off here in the mountains. And he never made anything to speak of-just always 'got along.' Mother died when I was seven and he and I lived here together. Oh, Neal, would make what I have to say to you so

lovely the sunset glow looks in your hair vow with great solemnity.

"No, you must let me finish," she Greeks and Romans; chickens were "There isn't much more to say. People began to make trails to father's story that when the soothsayers, or big man and he wasn't what you'd call the Roman Consul, who was about to handsome. But he had a heart so big engage the Carthaginian fleet in battle.

"Only

were set firmly. "I've got to stay-here cient times. Because it gave notice of and do my best to carry on."

"Be reasonable, girl!" cried the doctor. Apollo, the sun god, and because the "I couldn't practice here. I'd probably rooster also summoned men to business have plenty to do, but would I get my by his crow, it was also dedicated to pay? Not on your life. And what ad- Mercury. 'Never sacrifice a white vangement could I make in a God-for- rooster" was one of the doctrines o saken place like this? You know I Pythagers, because it was sacred to the couldn't give up my career just for the moon. The Greeks said "Nourish a sake of a dozen or so people!" most a whisper. "But I haven't any moon, because the birds announced the career and Sagebrush Basin needs me."

sied began to make themselves known. folks gathered at the store for their ing of this celestial bird arouses every usual services, Marybelle could think of living creature from sleep except man. little to which these people had to look The Moslem doctors say that Allah lends

the store that night. "

Even then over the white hills toiled a team of horses drawing a heavily loaded sled. It did not reach the store in cheeks. Neal knew how to say the nice Buddhist supreme masters would elimin- Sagebrush Basin until after all the things that every young woman likes to ate them. This final appeal for peace guests had gone. Marybelle flung open church steeples to remind man not to hear. He brought the roadster to a stop by the Aboot, if ignored, will cause the door in surprise. A tall young man deny his Lord,

> "Neal!" she cried, in unbelief. "Sure!" grinned the stalwart besides a pile of things I thought you might be able to ues in the store."

practice and your career?" gasped Mary- by a distinctive tag.

"I turned my practice over to a friend She rose and turned to the selection in doctor's first duty is to serve where he's her mind was not on the printed words. that until you put me straight on it. I'm How bleak and bare were the lives of going to use the fund I'd intended to use these people! She had been in their for study on the continent, and you and upon that lonesome line of hills which munity centre to take care of all this end

A few moments later Granny Jessup. in the service of the King!

AND DAILY LIFE

In the social customs, religion, and portant part, particularly in literature. Among the best known reference is that chickens under her wings in Matthew. "If I married Neal Stuart," she chapter 23, verse 37, and the stark drama of the cockcrew also referred to earn money, and send necessities back to in Matthew, chapter 26, verses 74 and

In the English language poultry references and phrases are numerous. For example, there are birds of a feather. All during the service she wrestled in full feather, showing the white feather (from the assumption that no game cock has a white feather); feather an oar (from the motion of a bird's wing); feather his nest; fine feathers make fine birds; feather in your cap (from the old custom of adding a feather to headdress for every enemy slain); cut a feather (said when a boat travels fast); chicken hearted; she's no chicken; don't count your chickens before they are hatched; fussy as a hen with one-Following the song, the company chicken; a hen party; hen-pecked (from at large but is frequently under hen government, and well pecked at that old name from the Pleiades, the "Seven Sisters." by which the Romans were said to have steered on their first voyage "Thank goodness they're gone!" ex- to invade Britain, and then there is a whistling-maid and a crowing hen are neither fit for gods nor men

The goose also comes in for its literary share, in cooking your goose kill the goose that lays the golden eggs; old nother goose; and in Egyptian hieroglyphics, the goose was the emblem for a silly fellow, while the rooster among us many references has a cock-a-whoop; ock and bull story; cockshure; don't crow before you are out of the woods: and many other references.

Reversing modern customs, in ancient times it was a superstition that if a milkmaid at cockcrow did not wash herhands after milking, her cows would

In olden times, poultry figured prommently in oaths, sacred and profane. In Henry IV. Shakespeare writes "By Cock and Pie. Sir. you shall not away In the days of chivalry, it was the practice to make solemn vowsfor the performance of a certain enter-This was usually done at a festival, when roasted poultry was served "Must you tell me anything now?" he in a dish of gold and silver and prebroke in. "Let me tell you instead how sented to the knight who then made his

In the temples of the oracles of the would not eat and that he had better "I don't see what that's got to do with not start the battle, he replied in breezy

rooster and sacrifice it not," for all roost-"I know." Marybelle's voice was al- ers were sacred either to the sun or the The rooster was also sacred to the God-A hurt, puzzled, angry young man left dees of Wisdom and to Esculapius, the god of health. Therefore, the rooster Winter came early that year. By the represented time, wisdom and health; last of November the ground was covered none of which were ever sacrificed. with snow to a depth of over a foot, and In Mahometan lore, Mahomet found

the rising sun, it was dedicated to

conditions which the doctor had prophe in the first heaven a rooster of such enormous proportions that its crest The first Sunday in January, when the touched the second heaven. The crowa willing ear to him who reads the "O Lord," prayed Sam Duff earnestly, Koran, to him who prays for pardon. and to the rooster whose chant is divine melody. When this rooster ceases to crow the Judgment Day will be at hand.

> was the war emblem of the Goths, and later in Christian times was placed on

Before Christian times, the rooster

The chief interest in poultry in these days is that it is an excellent food product at any time of the year. To get the best value it should be bought by grade. The grades are Special, Grade "But what will become of your city A, Grade B and Grade C. each indicated

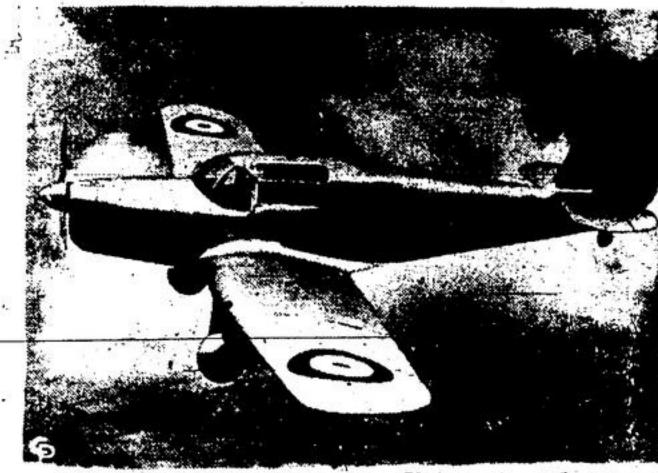
JOLT NO. 1

Wifey: "No. who?" Man: "You."

"Wifey: "Oh, no, you wouldn't."

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-Photo courtesy Flight Magazine Percival Proctor training ships, such as the Above, will be built in Canada in a \$140,000 factory, which is being built for the production of these ships. Percival Proctor ships are used as trainers by the R.A.F.

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