#### The Free Press Short Story

#### THE WORD OF A

-BY VIRGINIA T. VAN DE WATER

OUNG people do not apprec- was not going to be unhappy about inte how cruelly anxious it we older people can be: Mrs. Derrick spoke the words decidedly, though gently. Her daughter, Eleanor, uttored a protest.

. "Older people should not worry so | dashed against the panes with such much," she said. "And may it not force that the drops sounded like be a mistake for young people to hall. If it kept up like this the encourage them in this habit?" The weather would be dreadful tomor-

allay or prevent a parent's anxiety is because it was raining. encouraging her in a habit of worry." Her mother clung to her the next one idea in her mind. Her mothe to spend the night with her aunt in Milton instead of coming home in the rain. Surely she might have sent this message to her mother by you in the first place, Eleanor."

tonight?"

"Of course she might have taken \_ it for granted," Mrs. Derrick admitted. "But my contention is that Ruth's love ought to be great enough would be. You understand that if would be cruelly anxious."

around the table, kissed her mother to come out in it." tenderly. "Such a little worrier as you are!" she chided. "Yes, dear, I claimed. "So long as the train shall never stay away from home on here I'm safe." account of storm or flood without

"I am sure you will not," mother said confidently, laying her head for a moment against the strong, young shoulder. The argument had ended happily, as all Eleanor's arguments with mother did. When, as was now the ease, Mr. Derrick was away on business trip, the girl felt peculiarly responsible for her parent's peace of mind. She seldom made outside enengements for the evenings during her father's absence. She had to be ton, a dozen miles distant, and commuted regularly. On these trips ship was accompanied by her friend, Ruth Smythe, whose neglect in informing Miss Derrick," he observed. her family of her intention to stay in cussion between Eleanor and Let

The rain was falling steadily when, after a while, the pair went into the library across the hall Here a fire was burning on the hearth and contentment. At the end of a half hour a ring at the front door announced the arrival of young Doctor Roy Edmunds He came in drip-

ping with rain . "Some night" he exclaimed, greeting mother and daughter "And the" up for a couple of days more wish," he turned to Eleanor, "that might have difficulty."

you would not go to Milton tomorfrow if this storm continues." "So do I." Mrs. Dertick supple mented

"I must go, no matter how tain do me on a railroad - train " Eleanor spoke quickly

"None, of course," the man agreed to the Milton railroad station. . become of Eleanor "

of warriors, the girl teased later so swollen and the bridge so unsafe. "Not unless she can get word to when Mrs Derrick had left the room, that no trains were to pass over it me," the mother insisted. "Oh, Roy, Roy did not smile "Perhaps be- today. She would telephone her I remember exactly what she said, cause you are so dear to both of us. mother, and then go to Ruth's nunt's to me this morning-her very-words ally difficult. Ottawa sources stated he temarked. The girl checked him for the night. She dreaded to think were, 'If you do not hear from me.'

she murmured

yet, when an hour later she went to distinctly: abruptly.

"The rain is coming down in tot- All wires have been crippled by the "How could you know what would rents," he said "Please Eleanor, storm,"

she said firmly "Let's not talk any was she to do" The price of an auto- "If Eleanor promised to do a thing "Very well! If you mean to do a to her home was prohibitive. She de- try to come home. And, dear lady," thing, you'll do it, of course, no mat- cided to ask at the only garage in taking her trembling hands in his. ter, how anxious it makes others!" this neighborhood about the cost of "I shall do my best to get her her-"Clood pight!" she said stiftly and the trip. shut the door after him, tears of re-

Derricks had just finished dinner, row. She was determined to goand were still at the table. -The | -more determined than ever since mother looked grave as she replied. her altercation with Roy. Moreover | Eleanor stopped. She would not "I do not feel that a daughter or the idea was absurd to think that a son who does what she can to anything could happen to one just

she declared. "You tell me that Mrs. morning as she bade her good-bye would be terrified if she did no Smythe was anxious when Ruth did The storm had not abated a bit of come. She stood for several minutes, 'not come home this afternoon, and its fury, and the roar of the water in the lee of a pile of lumber, talking that at last she telephoned to you rushing over the dam in the river on with the man about the storm an and learned that Ruth had decided which the little town of Riverview asking him questions. She was give was built was menacing.

"It sounds like a train of cars always coming and never arriving." Eleanor s said lightly. "So lone. Mother dear! It will probably clear "Yes, she might," the girl agreed, by noon. And remember if I should companion's attention to this fact. "yet, as she goes to Milton to school, be detained in any way. I shall let 'ns I do, every day, and occasionally you know.' If you do not hear from spends the night there with her nunt, me you may expect me, even if Y might not her mother-have taken it have to swim!", she added with a for granted that she was doing that laugh. She ran hurriedly down the steps and boarded the car that was was wet and slippery, but she had it did not come up too high to take her to the railroad station a on rough-soled rubber galoshes. Once would wade through it. If it half mile distant.

The train to Milton was exasperatingly slow this morning-so slow, in for her to put herself in imagination fact, that Eleanor asked the fatherly in her mother's place. Your love conductor what was wrong. He explained that in some places the road you did not come home from Milton bed was so badly washed that the and did not send me any word. I engineer must proceed with caution.

"It's the worst storm we've had in The daughter got up, and going years," he continued. "You're brave

"Yes," he admitted dubiously,

"that is, if the tracks don't get wash- she whispered. ed-so had that we don't dare run

ness assailed the girl. Suppose the pulled herself sternly together and trains did not run this afternoon? began the long walk which she noust Of course they would. If they did accomplish before nightfall. not, she could telephone her mother. She remembered with startling distinctness her remark: "If you do not | window of the library when she hear from me, you may expect me Doctor Roy Edmunds coming up the even if I have to swim."

away all day, as she was taking throm school that day. Mr. Rogers, er. She had been too uneasy to eat course at the business school in Mil- the principal, raised his eyebrows her luncheon or to settle down to when he saw her.

ture out in this inclement weather, physician, "I am glad to see you! !

"I must go home if possible," expression on his face.

young people go home.

trouble, I can telephone out home, arm it repeated this assurance to Ruth as ed, "you cannot telephone The wires storms, besides, what harm can the the pair parted at the school door are all down. Riverview at present " With her head bent against the dr.v. is virtually an island"

"You and Mother are a great past inide her heart sink. The river was Eath," the man affirmed.

"Please Roy don't talk like that . . in this dreary weather." Going into a telephone Booth, she the sentence, her voice broke "All right, he agreed, "I "won't asked for the number of her home. "Nonsense" Roy said practically just yet. But sometime I'm going to She heard such a buzzing on the "She was only in fun". tell you a little of what you mean wires that she could scarcely tell. The parent shook her head to me" As he saw the protest in what the operator said After in know her better than you do! Show

the front door with him, he spoke . "I am sorry, madam, but the con- Oh, I wish I had told her not to try nection with Riverview is cut off to come home!"

don't go to Milton if it's like this" | Eleanor restored the receiver 'to mused for a moment, his face grave. "I'm going, to school tomorrow, its book and stood very still. What "I believe you are right," he said. mobile to drive her the twelve miles for you, she would do it. She will

"The information she received did" "But how" she gasped sentment grising to her eyes. She not solve her problem. The owner: "I shall drive as fa ras possible in kept abreast of studies to find addiwished she did not like Roy so much of the garage had no car he could my car. And, when I cannot drive tional uses for Canada's high-quality for then his reproofs would not hurt space for that trip. "And if I had any farther, I shall walk or wade" wheat Experiments have indicated

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lin' to risk it." would have to walk.

The shortest way was along the rallroad tracks. Going back to the could do!" the mother mouned. station, she started forth, her books swung from watran on her arm, her head bent against the gale. She did not attempt to raise her umbrella for it would be torn to strips by the

A half mile from the station was the railroad treatly. For an instant she caught her breath in-timidity. The river was tearing under the trestle, the yellow form dashing She repeated this to herself when, in huge spurts. She had a steady after telling her mother good-night, head, she reflected gratefully, and she went to her own room. Her win- she would not let herself look down. dows faced the east, and the storm | As she set her foot on the bridge; ? voice hailed her and a man in work man's garb stepped forward.

"You can't go on that bridge, Miss," he said firmly. "It's condemnedand it isn't safe for nobody to try to

let this man suspect that she had no intention of obeying his command She must get home. That was the ing no heed to his replies for, her only endeavor was to clude him. Suddenly a railroad official ap-

the workman. Eleanor called her

"Some one is calling you," she said. As the man turned and started to through clenched teeth. prayers that she might be brought Now she uttered them with a groan was in the middle of the bridge, the straight ahead. wind was so strong that she let her umbrella go, fearing it might trip her. As she slipped and almost lost her balance, her book strap slid from her arm and she did not attempt to catch it. She needed all her strength

beneath her. "If I stop I may follow the books."

When at last she reached the other side of the bridge she was panting For an instant a qualm of nervous- and her legs were weak beneath. She

.Mrs. Derrick was standing at the front walk, she ran to open She was surprised to note how door, thankful for a chance to voice many out-of-town pupils were absent; her anxiety to a sympathetic listen

reading or work. "I hardly thought you would ven- "Oh, Roy," she greeted the young" ter?" she demanded noting a strange peare.

Eleanor rejoined. "Thank" you just "I came to tell you," he said, mother said, then stopped. At noon, Mr. Rogers addressed the hour ago. The ;lower part of the have been," the young physician said pupils. No afternoon session would village is flooded, and no trains will softly "only of what is. And," he be held, he said. The storm was in- be able to arrive today. There- added hesitatingly, "of what may be creasing and he preferred that the don't be so frightened!" as the woman's face turned deathly pale nor stretched out her hand to him. "I am glad there are no suburban- "Eleanor will stay in Milton with ites here," he remarked. Then, as Ruth Smythe's relatives, of course." his eyes fell on Eleanor, "except you. | "No!" the mother exclaimed, "She Miss Derrick," he added. "If you will not! She knows how anxious I have friends in Milton, I would ad- am when she is away, and I am sure evening paper says it is going to keep vise you not to attempt to go home. she will try to get home. I must The river is terribly swollen, and you; telephone the school at once and tell

ther not to attempt to come." "I shall have no difficulty," she she started toward the telephone, the sand "But if I find there is any young man laid a kindly hand on her Wheat Alcohols and stay with Miss Smythe" She! "Dear Mrs Derrick," he explain-

ing wind and rain, she made her way. "Oh!" she mouned "What will

with a laugh "I suppose I am fussy ... Here she received information that ... "She will be sensible and stay with.....

of her mother being alone at home you may expect me, even if I have to swim" As the mother repeated

her tage, he changed the subject, exclamation, the words came to her laughed when she made that promise but it was a promise, just the same

happen" the doctor soothed.

in an awful state. I wouldn't be wil- "how dear Eleanor is to me. Some time she may know too-and per-The staggering truth was plain to haps may care a little for me. Y am Eleanor Derrick. If she was to get telling you this only to make you to her home today-and she must, understand that you may trust me to to save her mother anxiety, she bring her home safely, But you must try not to worry too mucle". "If there were only something

> "There is!" was the cheery re sponse." "You can pray." Then he hurried from the house.

The March day was dawning to'a close. -The heavy clouds darkened the skies and the rain continued pour down in forrents. Mile after mile Elennor trudged alongside the railfond tracks. The mud was deep that she lost her galoshes before she had gone more than two miles, but she did not try to recover proach is left to the discretion of the

It was almost dark when at she turned the curve in the road that had it been light, would have brought her in sight of the village in which she lived. Only a mile more she reflected, even us she wondered how she was to traverse that distance. Then she stopped in dismay. What had happened?

Ahead of her stretched only an expanse- of water! In the gathering rusk she could see it shining. The awful truth flashed upon her. The dam was broken! The village was

She remembered with a spasm of gratitude that the residential section Force to make a smashing blow on was on a hill. Her mother was safe This reflection, was swallowed up by say details from North Africa on the dreadful realization that peared in the distance, signalling to could not reach her mother, and that her mother would think she was

"I must get to her!" she obey the summons, she sprang for- help me! I'll do my best -but please ward and without a backward glance help me!" With a shudder, she walkfled across the trestle. The wood ed forward into the water. If only or twice she had a sensation of gid- come up too high-she recalled her diness, but would not yield to it. As words-"Even if I have to swim!" she ran, she uttered ejaculatory They had been spoken with a laugh safely to the other side. When she yet she did not hesitate, but forget

The muddy water crept up to her ankles, then to her knees. Her feet and legs were numb with cold a though the perspiration poured from her face. She had lost her hat long ago. Now she paused and took off "Oh, no, I'm not!" Eleanor dis- and polse to keep from plunging her cont. The weight of it was too down into the torrent rushing along much for her to carry.

Fighting the current, gasping, she struggled-on.-The mud-about-her feet seemed to be sucking her down The water rose to her armpits.

All at once she stopped, smothering a cry of fear. Something was splashing in the flood ahead of her and she saw a dark object approaching. Was it some animal, like herself struggling in the flood? Suddealy the swirling torrent swept her off her feet, she tried to regain her equilibrium but could not. She felt herself caught in a pair of strong arms, and some one was telling henot to be frightened, that she was safe. She knew at once that Ray Edmunds had saved her.

That evening, Mrs. Derrick and Roy sat in front of the fire by the have been worrying about Eleanor sofa, on which warmly clothed in a - You'd best plan to stay at and the idea of her coming home in woollen robe, ideanor lay. She was Milton tonight had started the dis- | Auntie's with me," Ruth Smythe sug- this storm. Why what is the mat- pale, but her face was alight with |

"If it had not been for Roy," the

"that the dam is gone. It broke an ". "Don't let us think of what might if " He stopped abruptly. Eleaand he grasped it in his. The mother; arose and, bending down, kissed

"God bless you both, my dears!" she murmured, her eyes brimining

## Very Difficult

Two Bushels of Wheat for One Gallon is Rate of Production

OTTAWA, March 13 (CP) Production of alcohol from wheat is in discussing this suggested means of Adams Canada's wheat surplus

Officials of the Teade and Commerce Department which have the problem of a langua can-oushel wheat surplus, and the National Research Council, which has conducted studies of new uses for, wheat, agreed there were major difficulties in the

"It takes two bushels of wheat to produce one gallon of alcohol;" said one official. "This means the choice providing subsidy for wheat alcohol production or of paying less than the cost of production for wheat

to be processed." .... Alcohol could be secured from various Canadian products, it was start. Of these, wheat was one of the

most expensive . National research scientists have her. Anyway, he had gone away I'd have to ask at least fifthen dold He tried to smile reassuringly: "You that one gallon from two bushels is angry and it was his own fault. She lars," he said roughly. "The road is must know," he added solemnly, close to maximum production.

#### Put Technique

In Lowly Stew

Members of Women's Corps · Travel Around Britain Advising on Wartime Food

LONDON, (CP) A new job - for women in England is that of technical advisers on food problems. The Ministry of Food is sending out experienced, motherly women to all districts with food problems to advike women how to provide most nourishing ments from the products available at the smallest cost.

How they will direct their apwomen. Some like a stall in- the market place, others art themselves up in a shop window while some have mobile kitchens and hold mass demonstrutions.

The lowly "stew" which combines meat and vegetables to make a most hourishing dish has developed "class" and an "a la mode" title in warring England. Stew is cheap to make, but full of food values - so it has been entitled in one food-program, "Stick to stew and stop invasion."

#### NATIVES CO-OPERATE

LONDON, (CP) Clues brought by native patriots enabled the Royal Air secret Italian airdromes in Abyssinia, she British successes there.

NO FRIENDLY MOSQUITOES

BRISBANE, 2(C. P.) Australian mentists are skeptical of the report of a discovery in Queensland of mosquitoes that don't bite. It is explained they may be "male" mosquitoes who never bite, leaving it to the female of the species.

BOMBAY, (CP) . Sng Aurobindo Ghose, famous Indian spiritual leader, commended, and, increased the Madras War Fund "as an expression of our entire support of the British people and the Empire."



G. Herbert Lush, Director of Public Information, was in Winnipeg for the inaugural broadcast of "Canadians All," the series of broadcasts now being presented over the CBC National Network on Wednesday at 10.30' p.m. E.D.S.T. He is seen admiring the colorful national costumes of Poland and Norway as worn by Francos Galdzinski and Marion Kummen, young Canadians who trace their ancestry to those countries. On Wednesday, April 2, "Canadians All' will salute Finnish Canadians.



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GRAPEFRUIT Jules 3 20-oz. 25c Aylmer, Canadian

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