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In A Country Lane

By Lillian Collier Gray

The past week contributed two thrills of a literary nature. The bigger one was, of course, listening to the now internationally famous poet, Edna Jaques, recite her poems and tell of some of her experiences which led to the writing of them. Edna Jaques is very unlikely to ever have a slim audience, no matter where she goes. For her poetry is known and loved everywhere for its sparkling optimism and its appreciation of home, people, and all the lovely things of earth. She is an extremely busy person, but she always has time to enjoy the sunlight, a budding flower, a newborn animal, courage in a fellow traveller, anything and everything that is worth while. And it was a real pleasure to hear her tell how much she is enjoying her few acres at Clarkson and the all too few hours she is able to spend there. Miss Jaques has crossed Canada, I don't know how many times, on speaking tours. She has been up the Alaska highway, and I think into the Peace River country. She has charmed audiences in the big neighbourhood country to the south. And she is starting out in the fall on another across-Canada tour. What an ambassador of good-will she is wherever she goes! She leaves such a nice feeling of harmony and optimism behind her. When I say these things I am just repeating what everyone who has heard Miss Jaques already knows.

The other thrill came the following day when I listened to one of my own short stories being read over the CBC on the "Bernie Braden tells a story" program. This program features short stories by Canadian writers only, and if you happen to be a regular listener you will know there are a good many Canadians writing short stories. Some of the names are familiar from having been seen in current magazines. Others are new writers, just coming into production. The program itself deserves a good deal of credit for playing this part in bringing the work of our own writers before the public. And, incidentally, if there be any who would like to try their luck, the payment is generous.

The poetry of Edna Jaques always reminds me of that of a very gifted friend of mine who passed away three years ago. A farm woman, native of my home county, she was known to many farm people throughout Ontario, and particularly to readers of the Ottawa Farm Journal to which she contributed poetry and prose for nearly twenty years. Her name was Gertrude Bowen Webster. Her son is becoming well known now in Junior Farmer circles. And that is just what she would wish, for she loved the farm and country life in all its phases. She was a shining light in her own community, and the good she did there lives on. She wrote hundreds of lovely poems, and these are two I like particularly.

I HAVE NO TIME

I have no time to coddle some old grudge,
To foster ancient feuds that should be dead;
For I must weed the garden of my heart,
And cultivate new virtues there instead.

I have no time to water withered hates,
And train them up the trellis of desire;
For I must wrest them from my plot of earth,
And toss them to the discard and the fire.

I have no time to clutter up fair soil
With poison plants a garden should not grow,
Since there's scant room for all life's sweetest seeds,
And I have such a little time to sow.
—G. B. W.

I SHALL RETURN

I shall return to wander here one day,
Unhampered by the things of time and space,
I shall return in spirit to these hills,
And my accustomed place.

My days may be as ashes on the wind,
My face forgotten and my name unknown,
But I shall come with joy—with joy return—
Unto mine own.

In some far distant May-time I shall come,
When orchards are alight with living snow,
And I shall fellowship with vanished springs,
I used to know.

Oh, if I find my "bleeding heart" in bloom,
And lilacs laughing by a farmhouse door,
I'll lift glad eyes to the blue hills of home,
Content for evermore.

G. B. W.

ACCIDENTS—THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Statistics prove that most accidents happening around the house are somebody's fault—are a result of somebody's carelessness, it is stated by Arthur Tidy in an article headed—"There's No Place Like Home—Absolutely No Place!" in the current issue of Health, magazine published by Health League of Canada. Mr. Tidy is manager of the advertising department of the Mutual Benefit Health and Accident Association.

The writer says the tragic part of home accidents is that the victims are very often not the ones responsible. Carelessness, with which is closely allied the desire to get things done in a hurry, is responsible for more accidents in the home than any other factor. Obsolescence and the developing of flaws in often-used equipment claim a very low percentage of accident victims.

Mr. Tidy says that people at home generally feel safe—possibly a throw back to remote ancestors, who, when they were out about their daily tasks had to be constantly on the alert and only felt truly safe when they were back in their own cave or dwelling.

"It has been truly said that every minute of the day some man, woman or child in Canada meets with an accident in the home," writes Mr. Tidy. Many are minor, but all too many of them assume serious proportions—and all too many could have been avoided with a little care.

The writer states that housewives make up a third of the victims of household accidents and are responsible for a quarter of the accidents that occur among children in the home. Further, it also is definitely provable that the majority of home accidents occur in what might be called the housewife's domain—cellar stairs, kitchen and attic stairs, and the back garden.

Causes are dimly lighted stairs; articles which have not been put away or stored properly; overloading when carrying articles down stairs; highly polished floors; loose rugs; careless handling of or improper storing of knives and can openers; toys, roller skates, etc., which have not been properly put away; improper opening and placing of stepladders; carelessness in leaving garden tools lying around; icy sidewalks and icicles; amateur electrical work; mishandling of matches; improper handling of furnaces, stoves, cleaning fluids and gasoline.

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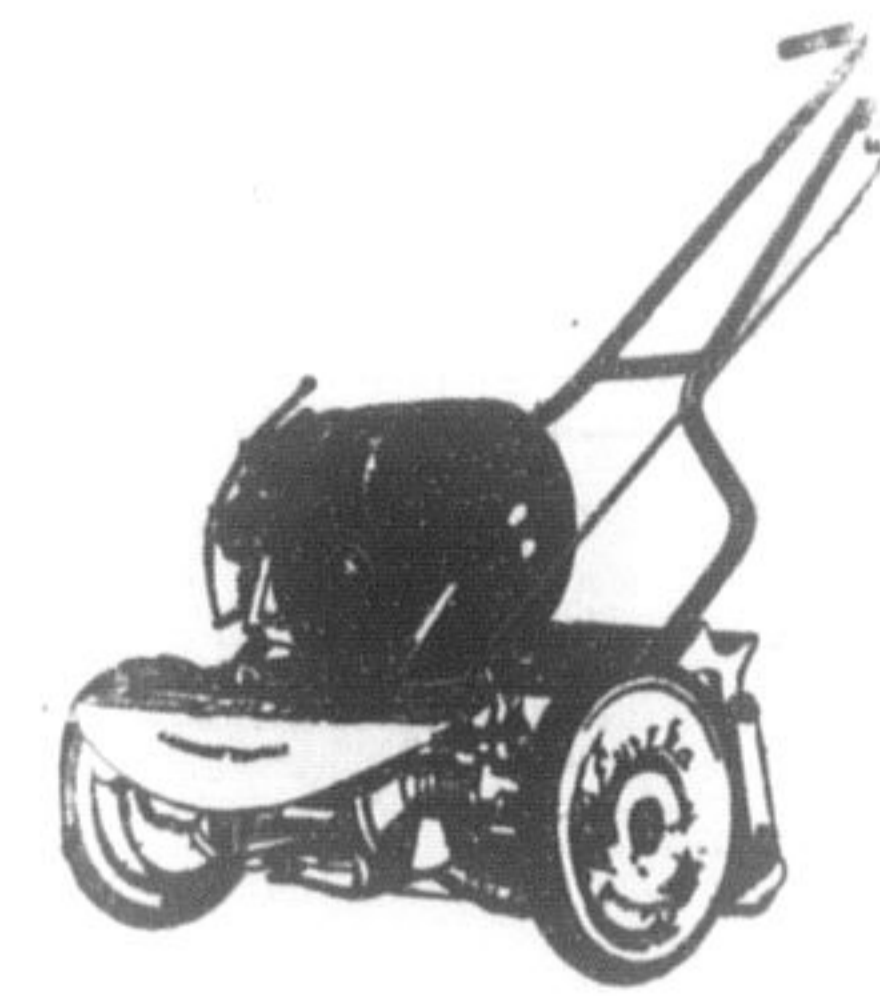
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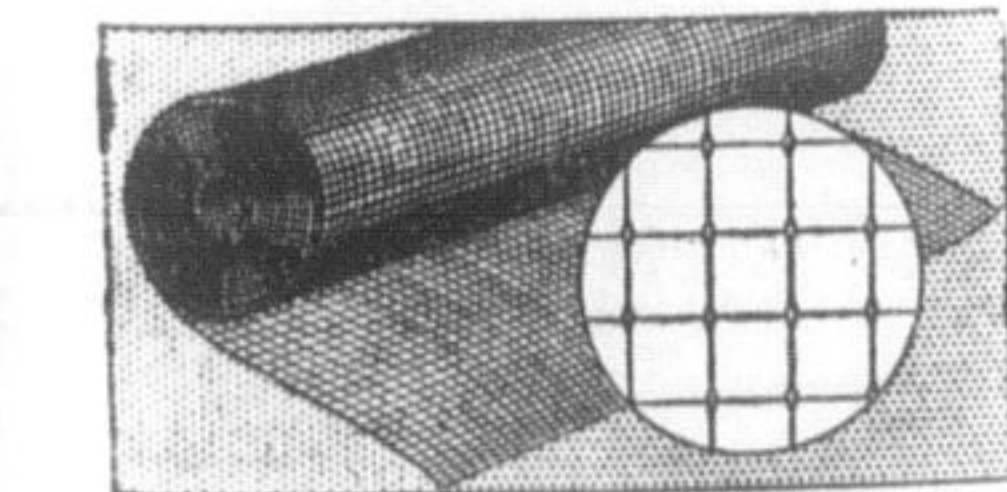
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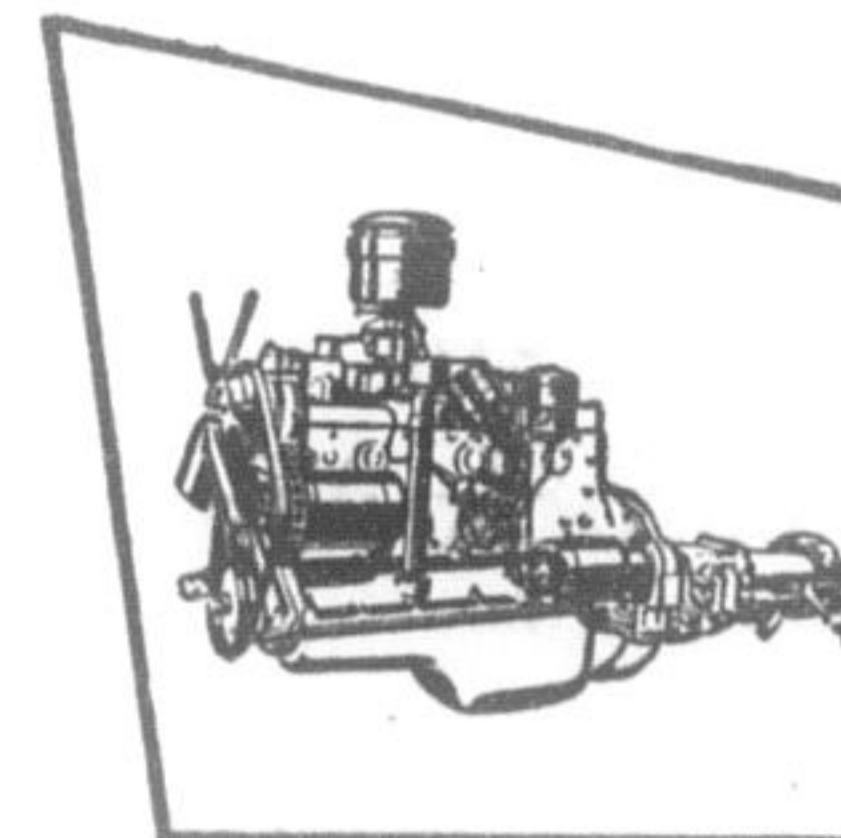
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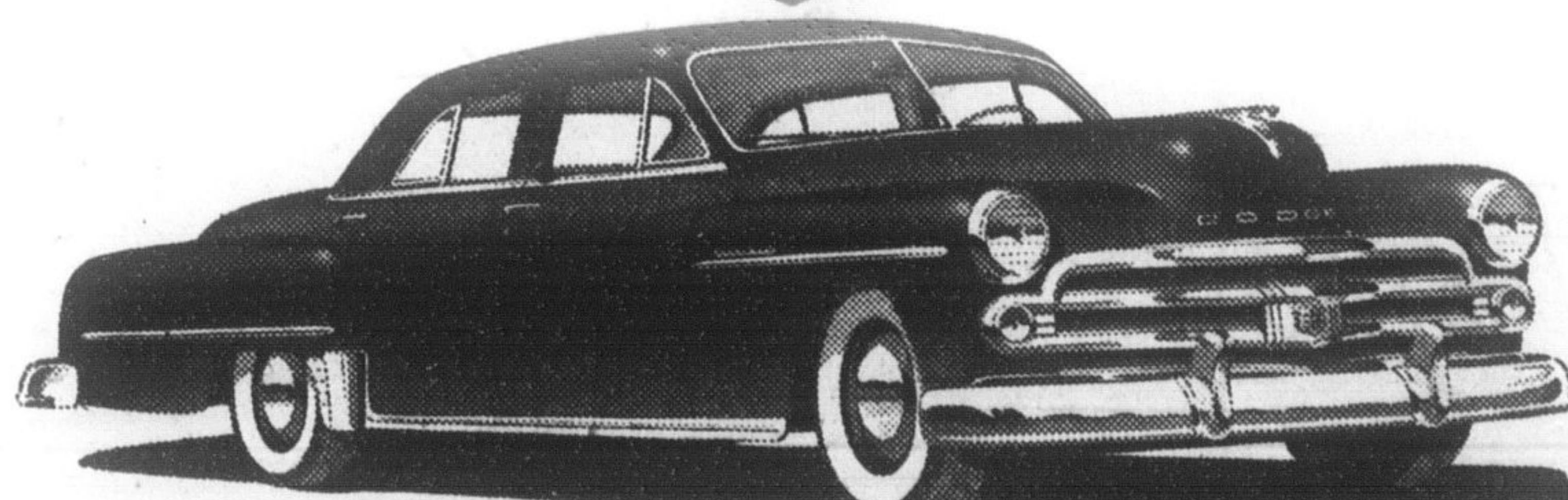
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