

THE PROUD PAPA

2nd Prize-winning short story in competition sponsored by the Charlottetown Branch of the Canadian Authors' Association for Prince of Wales College students. By Betty MacPherson, 28 Kent Street, Charlottetown.

This, dear Reader, is the story of a certain young man I once knew. He was, without a doubt, the most insignificant young man I have ever met, or ever expect to meet; perhaps his one distinction was his complete lack of color in both his personality and appearance. From the top of his light yellow hair to the bottom of his shabby brown shoes, he was colorless and insipid. To support himself and his tired, dark-eyed little wife, this weak young man kept the books for the firm of Smith, Smith & Smith, Coal Retailers. In spite of his heavy dislike of office routine and in spite of his firm conviction that he was being over-worked and under-paid, the young man made no effort to better or change his condition. Day after day he sat at his audit desk, adding up debit and credit entries, writing statements, making balances, and day after day his list of grievances against the world in general and against Smith, Smith & Smith, Coal Retailers, grew longer and longer. Our young man was in rut so deeply that it seemed nothing could ever shake him out of it. Then came the day when he stood facing a short, white-headed figure awaiting her attention in the overcrowded, under-staffed hospital ward.

"Twins!" repeated the young man in an awed tone, then again, "Twins!" A dazed expression clouded his eyes and he proceeded to faint dead away, crumbling to a rattle faintly reminiscent of that made when the butcher drops a bag of bones on the floor.

This was the climax to more than four long hours which the young man had spent perched nervously on the edge of a chair; he had scorned the dog-eared magazines on the table, preferring instead to feast on his finger nails until prominent knuckles cracked ominously. The little nurse looked at him with pity as she poked at him miraculously unbroken glasses, then, stepping to the door, she spoke softly to someone outside. Almost instantly an army of Auxiliary Red Cross workers, clad in the grey uniform of the waiting room and surrounded by the fallen father. Grinning broadly at the Red Cross classes enthusiasm, the little nurse closed the door quietly behind her and hurried off towards the wards. Dr. Putnam trained his glasses so well that she could leave the young man in no better hands.

Indeed, in their excitement over having an actual patient, the good ladies quite forgot themselves in their efforts to revive the prostrate parent. So many damp so many bottles ammonia and smelling salts were waved beneath his nose, that it is a miracle then and there he mothered outright that in less than two minutes he was blinking dazedly about him and asking in the traditional manner where he was. Full consciousness returned quickly, and our hero blushed a rosy red when he realized one of the ladies had his head cradled in her arms as she forced water through his protesting lips. Without ceremony he struggled to his feet and beat a hasty retreat, leaving three very surprised ladies staring after him.

"What a singular young man!" exclaimed the buxom lady as she water. "He rejected the glass of I read once about someone called Ichybones Crow or something!" "Sarah darling, drawing the second of the good ladies, "you must mean Ichabod Crane. Really, darling, you have an atrocious right angle, he is like you're bod, and he whistles dangle a mile out of his sleeves!" "Poor boy," the third lady murmured sadly. "The nurse told me he just became a youngster like him having a family to support. Maybe they'll all starve."

"Really, Laura darling, you think of the most gruesome thing But no wonder he fainted when he heard such awfully atrocious news. Who is he, angel? Do you know?" "Anyone can tell with half an eye he isn't anybody," the first misfit of society. "One of those they have an alien manner over them every second. The town is full of his type, and I'm willing to bet his poor little wife will be just like him twenty years from now!" "Oh Sarah angel! You're so stern! But come along, darling. We must finish studying those perfectly gruesome sketches. Dr. Putnam gave us. That exam will

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be awfully gruesome. Coming, Laura darling?" Unconscious of this dialogue concerning his character, or lack of it, our insipid hero had just been refused permission to see his wife because she was in a deep and much-needed sleep. There was a bitter line around his mouth as he shuffled down State Street. What good did it do one to be a father if a stiff, cross person in a starched uniform guarded the door and would not let one see one's own family?

From long habit, the young man kept his face averted from the brightly lighted shop windows on State Street, so that his longing eyes could not see the seductive displays of merchandise, gay new dresses, warm furs, frilly boxes of candy, brilliantly jacketed books, all sorts of luxuries to make him happy, if he had the money to buy and buy and buy. The mere sight of all the desirable never failed to rouse a great yearning pain in the heart of the young man. Sometimes his thoughts on these occasions would frigh-

ted him. It would be so easy to come to State Street very early some morning, sneak round the back alley, wait until the policeman had passed on his round, then—

With a shudder the young man shook his blood head and turned his thoughts to what awaited him at the flat. He saw the messy living room, the open bedroom door revealing a heap of sheets, the kitchen with its five-day accumulation of dirty dishes, hopeless confusion everywhere. How on earth did he manage to keep everything so clean? He saw himself supping on a corner of the table, on a slice of bread, a pickle, a glass of water and the last wedge of pie sent over by that kind old Mrs. Snyder. Suddenly he was faced with an immense dread of going home. Home was not home unless Millie was there. It was a dreary, dirty, desolate, stinky prison, vomit inside him yelled. "Run! Run! Not home! Anywhere else but there! Run! Here comes the dishes chasing you! Run! Run! Wildly the young man stared around then plunged into the first door he saw, a friendly door, a heavy door to shut out that voice and the pile of pursuing dishes! A smiling man polished glasses behind a stained counter. The room was full of smoke and a heavy odor. Suddenly a familiar face jumped at him through the gloom. It was Hal, and another person, and they were inviting him to sit at the table with a red checked cloth. What was that brown liquid in the glass? Sure, give me some. Move? Well, alright.

Six hours and many drinks later, three very tipsy young men staggered noisily up the stairs to await our hero's flat. On the first landing one of them suddenly stopped, sprawled on the top step, and whined in a childish voice, "Shine for us, old pal! Wanna hear ya shine some mo!" Dizzily our hero flopped down around him and began to sing in an amazingly deep, rich baritone. His two companions stared groggily in tipsy approval of the young man's slightly slurred renditions.

Behind them on the landing, a door was opened a crack and a fat, shiny, pink face peeped out, a pair of beady eyes gazed with fixed attention at the singer. A large head, innocent of any such useless ornament as hair, nodded twice in a satisfied manner. Then the door was quietly closed. The male fat face smiled contentedly in sleep.

These things happened five years ago, dear reader. Now let us skip over time until we come to one day last week. The scene was the concert hall of the Service Men's Canteen on State Street. The audience was restlessly awaiting the appearance of the guest star of the evening. In the front row sat three ladies in grey uniforms. "Sarah darling," gulped the one in the middle, "whoever is that ting across the aisle? What an important looking creature! If I was as fat as him, I'd never dare appear in public!" "If you had his money, you'd care anything!" rejoined Sarah. "That man is C. C. Chase, the big radio executive."

"Sarah darling! You surely don't mean—it can't be the C. C. Chase! Why, angel, I read in a paper that he visits the most gruesome places just in hopes of finding talent for millionaire in his right mind would go slumming personally!" At this moment the lights were dimmed, and onto the stage stepped a tall, slight figure in Army khaki. The prolonged burst of applause which greeted him testified to his popularity, then an exclamation hush fell on the audience. Suddenly from the front row a gasping voice was heard to say, "Laura Darling! It's why, it's Ichybones—I mean Ichabod!" Yes, dear reader, it was our young man! At last he had found his fort in life. In the smart uniform he appeared exceedingly handsome, and his face was full of happiness as he sang. And who was that beautiful lady at the piano at whom he gazed while he sang? You guessed it! Millie! In a large house not many blocks away, two pajamaed little figures sat close to the radio listening with close attention. A tall young woman entered to carry them off to bed, and one chubby little boy smiled winningly at her as he murmured, pointing to the radio, "That's Daddy in there, Nurse."



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RELAX BAN ON SIGNS LONDON (OP)—Festivities on the display of place-name signs in Britain have been relaxed. The ban now is limited to those which can be seen from the air. A LA... NTRY Lakes and rivers are more numerous in Finland than in any other European country.

TIPPY AND "CAP" STUBBS By Edwina LE'S GO 'SPORIN' AGAIN!--LE'S GO AN' CLIMB ICE BERGS! DID YOU EVER DO THAT? OH, YES, MANY TIMES-- JUST DREAMIN' OF COURSE! BUT DID YOU EVER EXPLORE THESE WOODS RIGHT HERE, BOYS? WHY, YESTERDAY, 'FORE YOU CAME, I TALKED WITH A WOOD-CHUCK-- AN' THEN A CRANE FLEW LOW--TOWARD THE POND, AN-- 'C'M ON, BOYS!!

TILLIE THE TOILER-- "IMPORTED" TALENT By Webster THAT TALL GUY DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A REAL HAWAIIAN. WE'LL KEEP AN EYE ON HIM. HAL THOSE M.R.S ARE EYING YOU SUSPICIOUSLY. YEAH, I'LL DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT. AINA, YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME FOOL THOSE M.R.S. I WILL! YOU'LL TELL ME HOW. MY FRIEND LANI GAVE ME DIRECT FROM THE HOTEL KIRKWOOD NEW YORK.

PARKDALE W. L. The regular monthly meeting of Parkdale W. L. was held in the school on July 3rd, the president, Mrs. H. McInnis presiding. Meeting opened in the usual way with twelve members in attendance. Mrs. Robinson passed in a neat sum of money from the Rummage Sale. Mrs. Callbeck, convener of the sick committee sent two sympathy cards and one convalescent card. Mrs. P. Burke, representing the school committee reported an enjoyable picnic held on the school grounds on closing day. Red Cross report: 32 night dresses, 1 scarf, 6 turtle neck sweaters, 2 quilts. The treasurer reported a substantial balance in the fund; Mrs. Cook and Mrs. Newson, delegates to the annual convention, gave an