THE FRONTIER, O'NEILL, NEBRASKA, THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 1946



Escape to Home By MIRIAM GILBERT M. Clure Syndicate. WNU Features. H ^E CRUSSED to the other side of Vine street so that the light

from the lamp post wouldn't shine furtively, his head low. The walk from the train depot to the center of town hadn't been bad, but now he had to cross Main street in order to get home. Someone passed him and Tommy

pulled up his coat collar. He wondered how he could slip past the theater. He decided to stroll casually. A sudden shout startled him.

'Tommy, Tommy Mitchell," the blond cashier called. Panic-stricken, Tommy started to

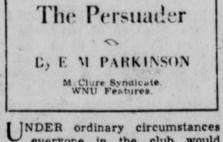
run. Couldn't they leave him in peace? This wasn't the way he wanted to come home. But they had invited trouble. They shouldn't have left him alone when they changed trains

at Chicago. They had told him to worker." pulled out. They would be after him He swung open the front door.

What would Ma say when she saw him? He tiptoed in and stood quietly in the kitchen doorway. Ma had her back to him and was stirring a cake batter. Alice's baby was come quite a psychologist, if I do say sitting on a cushion on the floor. The baby looked up and spied Tommy. "Ganma, Ganma," he prattled.

She turned around still mixing 'Tommy, my Tommy!" He rushed forward as the bowl

slipped from her hands. She clung John Conrod, Henry Werner, down his sleeve. "Why didn't you coming home?"



everyone in the club would have expected Irene Smythe to be ceived a telegram and telephone on his face. He glanced around our delegate to the northern states annual convention. Irene was our secretary and certainly expected the appointment. And Mary Dixon our president, stubborn and contrary as she is, is a stickler for conventions. So when most of us agreed that little Elsie Latham ought to go, we knew Mary would never see it our way.

> "It's a shame," Madge Leigh declared. "Did you notice the wistful light in poor Elsie's eyes when Mary announced that the convention's to be in Detroit? All Elsie's people live there, and she hasn't been able to go back in the fifteen years she's been married. Of course she's never held a club office or asked for one, but she's been a hard

"Who's going to make Mary listen to that?" I demanded.

"I am!" Anne Herrick said firmly. Anne's fairly new in town. "You don't know Mary," Madge

said with a rueful laugh. "I know what stubborn, contrary people are like," Anne said grimly. 'I've been married to one of them a good many years, and I've be-

"But Mary will argue that Elsie's shy and retiring and a little dowdy-"

"Don't worry," Anne said briskly. "I'll persuade her, provided that you'll let me have my way. Not one of you is to say a word to Mary about it."

Madge phoned me the next day. Anne's gone right to work on Mary. I saw them having coffee at Kaap's. Anne was doing all the talking."

"How did Mary look?" I asked skeptically.

"Stubborn and contrary as ever," Madge admitted.

Madge and I met Anne on Saturday. "Have you persuaded Mary?" we demanded.

"Not yet. But I will." "But she makes the appointment Thursday - the convention's only two weeks off."

Thursday, I was relieved when Madge told me that Elsie Latham would not be at the meeting. "Elsie says she has a cold, but I think she ust can't bear to hear Irene Smythe appointed."

At our meeting that afternoon the air was tense. Anne's expression told is nothing Mary seemed contrari-



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"And God said,

Ert there be light:'

and there was light.

And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness."

Genesis 1:3,4

Go To Church Somewhere Sunday

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Ma, you see-" "Here, take off your things. Alice is upstairs."

He decided to stroll casually.

"I don't know how long I can stay

"Skipper's sure gotten big." Tommy swung the baby up in his arms. "He was just a handful of pink flesh

and blue eyes when I last saw him." "Baby looks like Rick, doesn't he?" Ma said softly. "That's Alice's only consolation. Go up and say hello to her. I'll fix something for you to eat." Her fingers pressed deep into his arms. "You're thin as a scarecrow."

"Where's Dad?"

"Dad closed the garage. Ted was drafted and Dad can't find another mechanic to replace him. Ted's in the Pacific now," she added quietly.

"In the Pacific." Tommy ground out the words.

"I'm sorry, Tommy. Go up and see Alice." He started up the steps, then

turned back. "Ma, for tonight and maybe tomorrow, don't let any strangers in the house." "I understand, Tommy. I'm proud

of you no matter what." He awoke with a start. His fingers touched the wall unbelievingly. Rose-colored wallpaper. He was in his own room. He had spent one night at home.

Alice was sitting in the rocker. rage. He wants to talk to you. Tommy-"

He looked at her, then swallowed. "They sent someone after me." She nodded. "Tommy, for Rick's sake and mine, go downstairs. People have to know the truth. Much as you hate it, tell them every-

thing." "I'll be down in a few minutes." As soon as Ma heard him com-

me all about you, more than the newspapers did."

"It's all right, Ma." He turned to the man and sighed. "Hello, Mac-ly, I suppose, to give her a trip back Carthy. Did you use bloodhounds to home." trace me?"

"No, just common sense. I figured you were homesick. Don't you realize you're the first man who escaped from the Jap prison camp

on Corregidor? Now the others on the island are free but you're still the important one. It's as if you paved the way for them." He nodded. "We should have let you come home first but the people needed to

hear your story right away. That's why we booked you solid for bond rallies and lectures." "I won't run away again, MacCar-

thy. I needed one smell of home to make me mad all over again at what the Japs made me and mine lose." He swung around to MacCarthy. "O. K., what's the day's schedule?"

er than ever; if possible. And Irene Smythe looked very smug. Mary called the meeting to order, and we hurried through the other business. At last Mary rose to "discuss the convention ...

"As you know," she said sweetly. 'the delegates are appointed by the club presidents, according to past records and suitability. Now, we have a secretary who has been faithfully at her post at every meeting this year. She knows the club history, and its aims."

Madge poked me. "I'll never trust Anne Herrick and her psychology again."

Anne, in the front row, leaned forward as Mary went on. "Then we have a member whose home town is Detroit. A very faithful member who, in her quite way, has done a great deal for us. Elsie Latham is not here and so I feel at liberty to talk freely, for I know that she won't be embarrassed.

"You'll all give me credit, I believe, for being fair-minded. You know that I like to look at both sides of a problem and that I do not make my decisions hastily." "Or change them, once they're made!" Madge hissed.

Mary continued, with her sweetest smile. "We all love Elsie Latham, of course, and we know that Elsie is a bit on the retiring side. She "It's after eleven. Dad waited for would be first to admit that she you to get up, then went to the ga- can't make a speech, while our efficient secretary, Irene Smythe, has addressed many groups and can represent any club in a manner of which it can be proud."

Someone clapped. Irene smirked. Anne Herrick just listened.

Mary went on. "You'll grant that experience is - well, experience. Irene Smythe has traveled widely and is equal to any occasion. However, there are some provincial ing, she ran to him. "I couldn't and sentimental folk who feel that chase him away, Tommy. He told it is more fitting that a member who hasn't even held office should be appointed the delegate-partly as

> Mary paused with a little shrug. Madge squeezed my arm. But Anne Herrick-who knows how to handle contrary people psychologically-

never changed expression. "Well, I'll confess that I'm one of those provincial and sentimental folk-and that's why I'm appointing little Elsie Latham as delegate," Mary concluded.

The moment the meeting adjourned we found out how Anne had persuaded her. Mary went straight to Anne and said sweetly, "I do hope you'll understand, Mrs. Herrick. I can't help being sentimental. But I know you're practical, dear, and I realize that you were acting conscientiously when you tried to hard to convince me that Elsie wouldn't do at all."

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