

those silly pieces of advice to women about their husbands. I hesitate. The dog stands, his front paws scraping against the glass. His eyes plead. If he were a vocal being could I resist him? Can I resist him anyway. No. I get up and open the door to him.

Back to the typewriter. Man is not a reasonable being. I must have some argument. Would the fact that though he's always losing it, he never keeps but one collar button be a case in point?

The door bell. Unconsciously I halfrise. No, I'm busy—although so far only two lines have been produced. It's the trash man after his check. I write that. And while doing so I can see in my mind's eye the uncouth, very dirty man, his lips half open, his straggling beard and his slow apologetic smile as he stands at my back door. A dollar and a half. What a pittance for one who spends his days emptying trash cans. He needs this money. My conscience gives me several twinges because I know so little about this inarticulate soul who has come to my door every month for five years. How does he live; is he rebellious; does he suffer?

But I must get down to business and leave the trash man to his fate. Man is not a reasonable being. There are brilliant comments to be made on the subject, only I can't seem to think of them. A fly buzzes overhead, knocking itself frantically against the window pane. Immediately I begin to cogitate about flies. Where do they keep themselves. Why do they always appear at unexpected and most unwelcome moments? Is there some sort of fly code which informs the sleepers when a lady guest is arriving? And my mind runs on the many times when I have had women in the house and the cursed things flocked in from all corners, making merry over the luncheon table. That brings me to the consideration that men are much easier to entertain than women. No fly escapes the feminine eye, no spot goes undetected. Pondering this, my contention that man is not a reasonable being grows weaker. He has his points.

Sighing I look over the room again—when Heavens, my eye lights on an enormous cobweb in full view in the opposite corner. The sun has turned it into a fairy net. It sways delicate, gauzy, languid as a sigh. But I must destroy it and immediately. No housewife can permit a cobweb to go unmolested. I run out after the broom for if I don't get it at once I shall have forgotten it in five minutes and may not spy it again for days—or until another lady who has come calling, spies it at the same time.

The telephone again. I refuse to answer. It rings, twice, three times. I snatch the receiver.

"Good morning, Mrs. Ferguson," comes a lilting feminine voice over the wire. "This is Miss So and So of the Such and Company department store speaking. We

are having a marvelous offer of the *Delineator* this week. A year's subscription for only 90 cents. You pay a few cents a week and it's added to your monthly account. It's really getting it for nothing. Do you know the *Delineator*, Mrs. Ferguson? Such fine fashion hints, a wonderful beauty department, excellent fiction—"and so on and on and on.

"No," I say when I can get in a word. "No, I'm not interested. No, I don't care for the *Delineator*. I don't like it. I wouldn't have it as a gift." A sniff comes over the wire and I know I have made another enemy.

Why doesn't one have gumption to fib immediately under the circumstances. Simply say quite blandly, "Sorry, Mrs. Ferguson isn't in this morning." But that takes more moral quick wittedness than I possess, even though it is far kinder to lie than to tell the truth to magazine sales ladies.

Now I must get down to business. How fast the leaves fall. It's time for pensive thoughts about autumn. Perhaps an editorial—but, no, millions are done every

year. The subject is too trite. And while I sit that nice sweet sad feeling steals over me, the regular autumn feeling and so for a while I just sit, my mind a complete and utter void.

Man is not a reasonable being. The door bell again. Somebody to see the lady of the house, reports the maid. We whisper together. Is it a peddler, a beggar, a book agent or the Fuller Brush man? Looks like a beggar, she reports. Rather a nice looking young man—can't tell. I go to the door. He is a nice looking young man. Hunting work—says he's hitch hiking from Texas to Michigan where his folks live. There is something shy yet charming in his face, a wistful little-boy look which no woman can resist. I ask him questions. Presently we sit together on the front stoop and he tells me of his vagabond wanderings over the country, his observations on life in the United States in 1934. So in ten minutes I have my column. Just like that. Who cares whether man is a reasonable being—he's always an interesting one, which is all that matters to newspaper people.

A Letter from Japan

By WINBURN T. THOMAS, '29

(Following are excerpts from a letter sent to Doctor J. O. Hassler, professor of applied mathematics and astronomy at the University, from Winburn T. Thomas, '29as, who has been in Japan a year.)

ONE year in Japan! And temporarily located.

These words meaning little to you are quite significant for me. Can you appreciate the feeling of a person just from America, who after facing responsibilities, meeting regular obligations, and performing the routine tasks of a pastor for a number of years suddenly finds himself in a new country, forced to adapt himself to an entirely different culture, unable to understand a word of the language, and without significance or responsibility?

It means moving from a world in which one has meaning—perhaps is the center of his own little world—into a place where one must begin all over again. The effect on the individual is comparable to the effect of the Copernican theory upon the Ptolemaic science of four centuries ago. . . .

Once again, however, life has begun to have the feeling of reality. Many factors have contributed to this change. Doubtless the growing acquaintance with the language has played its part for while I can

scarcely understand Japanese, I can express—sometimes—simple ideas which they seem to grasp. . . .

Another problem which arises when we try to take seriously the admonition of our General Assembly to "make unmistakably clear to the constituencies of the church and the world at large" the fact that followers of Christ must "break with the whole war system" and implement the gospel into social channels. By way of illustration, I was asked yesterday to write a sermonette for one of the local religious papers "but without any social implications." . . .

An unusually large percentage of the Japanese are shop-keepers. Yet, few of them seem intent upon doing more than enough business to pay for their daily bowls of rice. A friend of mine recently entered a small stationery store to purchase a quantity of envelopes. After inquiring the price of a single bundle, he asked the owner what she would charge for the entire stock, some two thousand. Much to his surprise, she replied, "Oh, I wouldn't sell all of them. Then, I wouldn't have any left." . . . Personal avarice is reduced to a minimum among these people.

The ease with which they accept life is illustrated by their customs with reference to the theatre. While I personally find very little time to attend the shows here,

history books are so filled with allusions to the theatre, and the Japanese are so fond of all sorts of amusements, one can not avoid acquiring considerable information concerning them. During the centuries of Japan's development, several types of drama have emerged, the distinct forms of which are retained intact, even after scores of years.

The *No* and *Kabuki* are two of the most commonly known forms. When the lighter musical shows and the cinema of the west were introduced, along with many of the other veneers of civilization, they were simply adapted to the traditions and customs already existing. For instance, the family has always made a day of an entertainment. Just as a caller would regard himself as impolite if he failed to remain with you less than several hours, just so a family would not think of staying less than half a day at an entertainment.

Restaurants are built in connection so that between acts and during the long intermissions, the patrons may eat their meals or drink tea.

The older forms of the theatre usually start during the afternoon, continuing until late in the evening. The final show at the movie houses usually begins about six o'clock. Only an Oriental's patience would stand for such a long performance, or the unusually long intervals between numbers. Unfortunately for any Westerner who may be present in the audience, the "talkies" are usually distorted (save for a few of the larger Tokyo theatres) by the voice of an announcer who makes running explanations of what the characters are saying. . . .

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Sooner Roll Call

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