

Phantasia By Krakd Shar.

Sometimes I wonder what to do with myself. I'd love to learn to write good prose or poetry but always seem to get off on the wrong foot. When after several false starts I finally get down to putting something on paper, almost invariably the children start a fight or an uproar that drives all initiative from my mind and replaces it with an earnest desire to bite and scream and generally raise Cain.

Take for an example this evening. To begin with no one seemed to want much supper. My wife and I had already partaken of an afternoon clarity tea, one of innumerable charities in this small town, and we were in no mood for a big supper. However Janie our third girl in line managed to sling something together of which we all partook. She forgot to make ^{the} tea ~~of which I am usually fond of~~ for supper. I like my supper tea. Long to we had supper teas. Shortly afterwards I tried to read. Time Magazine made my supper turn sour. Even my wife quietly sewing a dress for our fourth girl failed to restore what little good humor left me. Then our eldest hope and joy wanted the car. Usually

we don't mind him having the car but the mechanical condition of that vehicle at present does not warrant that it be driven more than necessary. So he didn't get the car. Anyway he has almost run himself to death all winter and we don't see why he should now do the same to the car. I always say "we" when slightly in doubt of any decision. Although my wife never says much the "we" gives me a slight sense of moral support.

It is not easy to write of things that make sense. Observations on paper look entirely different than when we constantly turn them over and over in our own mind without utterance. Usually I find my mind, sooner or later, turning over too. However at times I wish one's friends would take a good big looking glass and take a look at themselves. From one's friends of whom the last two weeks I have had too many of impertinently character I turn to myself. I find myself elated at the thought that sooner or later I shall kick myself in the face and in the pants at one and the same time. Just how to arrange the mirror to establish this feat puzzles me somewhat. If the act is successful I shall no doubt be called

upon to present a public demonstration. My hope is to so arrange the scenery that the effect will be to replace one's face with one's seat an achievement of no small importance in that I feel sure the effect would be salutary for a great many faces I meet floating along life's busy streets.

Sunday is a day of rest in our house. The children sleep in till breakfast time. That means they are downstairs about one and a half minutes later than on week days. At least they all get to the table. Weis managed to keep that a rule in this family unless one of them is sick! Being a day of rest Mother gets a bigger breakfast than on week days and generally does about twice as much work as on week days. The family encourage her by sitting round reading comics, making shy advances to Sunday school lessons, or fighting over who has used whose curlers. By the time we are all ready for church Beebebut is having a cornucopia fit and bearing over the minister's shoulder before even that worthy gets as far as the pulpit. It is not really such a bad day for most of us. We read and sleep after church,

that is, the one who can get the most comfortable chair and the newest paper or magazine reads. The others plan how they can wriggle chair and reading material away. Like all other days the evening comes on the heels of another fight.

Sunday evening is the best, tired but just not completely out, Mother and I get a few moments respite. Big brother has gone out to see some one's big sister. One girl is away to choir and the older one left at home finds time to play with the babies. We have discovered that there was one thing wrong with those "Wellturns Dolls" the trade presented a few years ago. They lacked the uriny odor that would harden the young mothers into looking after still younger and more helpless relatives!! We must have that corrected! However we would not have it much different, family ties have compensations all their own.

Often walking down the streets of some city one has time for comparisons. How often does one see a young mother surrounded by a half dozen children!! Very

seldom I'll admit. But when one does run across a family group of that size it is often hard to tell the mother from the eldest girl. The "one click" Mothers are by far preponderant. But you'd think all the cares of all the world lay on their shoulders. The wee cherub in the carriage looks fine but the poor worn Mother, ah me - her face is often lined and the eyes tired and harassed. She looks older than her own grandmother and the paint applied with more enthusiasm than art makes one think of those old, old portraits that have grown pitiful over the years because they were never really "living". If that is what city life does to humans one can understand Abraham's choice in the long ago. But one can walk all day on Portage Avenue in Winnipeg and never hear spontaneous laughter. Chatter and giggles yes but not the laughter that rings like a bell, lifts the hearer's heart, and makes the day brighter and the world a good place in which to live.

We are perhaps a people in transition. Often

I think we are a fearful people. So busy absorbing the different nationalities that make our life that we have laid aside the happiness that might be found in all company. I recall once hearing a peal of laughter in a restaurant. It was so spontaneous, so bell clear, that it brought its own anticlimax. A profound shocked hush, for a moment only and then neighbors looked up and smiled at each other. Neighbors of a big city who had perhaps never noticed the other fellow before. That is what that laugh accomplished. Oh that we could all laugh happily, with so much of ourselves in it that neighbors would become 'our' neighbors.

It is likely the result of two wars. We have had the laugh knocked out of us. More than the war did the grim Thirties have their effect on us. Wars are bad but they do unite people in a common purpose. Depressions are just that. There is no other word to use than depression. It is no comfort then to say glibly there are others in the same boat. Even more than in war does mans depravity come

to the surface. He feels that he struggles alone against an unknown force. He never knows from which side it will attack next. No matter how secure his job it will in turn be affected. After several years of such hopelessness man is ready for anything even glad of war as affording him an excuse to strike blindly back at fancied wrongs. Nor does he care much on whom the blows fall. Even his sons are beaten down by the blind retaliation of humans released from a fear they don't understand and ready and willing to follow any leader and swallow any lie. Thus men surge too and fro until in utter physical exhaustion they cease for a while until another period more cataclysmic than the last is on them.

Could we but look up and laugh! That carefree laugh that God gave us as children and which we lose before we have properly acquired it. Could we but look in the mirror at the funny fellow we see there and lean back and laugh till the buttons popped. Could we but crinkle

up that serious block of flesh we call a face and get it to grinning at itself perhaps we would go far on the way to a happier world. Take the Englishman, he was once a jolly fellow full of fun and good fellowship. True, ready for a fight if someone pushed it his way but always ready to give the other fellow a square deal. Then some fool discovered property and money and accumulated a lot of both. At once his chin lost its merry tilt. The lower part of his face grew long and pendulous through never getting near the upper part on the ladder of laughs. Big families were the style in those days so presently we have the baronial estate cluttered up with merry children, boys and girls whose faces were sunny and cheery under the governess's care. However when dear papa took over that long face and troubled expression got in its work and so a new race was spewed forth on the earth. By the time dear papa was dutifully lowered into a gout beckoned grave the poor children had no need to draw long faces. They had them.

2 Rhontana By Krahed Jhar.

The other day a temporary job of cleaning grain gave me time for thought. One could watch the grain slide over the sieve and into a pail, listen to the staccato bark of the gas engine and fairly give oneself up to reverie. The bright red kernels of wheat brought to my mind the price that such wheat would bring in what we, as farmers, called the hungry thirties. Those were the years when wheat piled up everywhere. Elevators were full to bursting and after our years work on the land those of us who had no livestock turned to any job that would offer an honest dollar. Some of us didn't diagnose the honest part too deeply either.

Then, these red kernels were worth thirty five cents for sixty pounds. It cost many of us sixty cents and over to produce that measure.