

FEBRUARY 24, 1969GEORGE P. STIMSON

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Thumb Nail SketchesThe left thumb by land

Arthur Bradford had a very fine farm in Warwickshire. Warwickshire, in case you don't know it, is really in the middle of England; in fact there is a little town not far from Arthur's farm called Meriden, which is the exact center. We were visiting some friends who lived in Coleshill, which is also in that same general neighborhood. Coleshill is an old county town. In fact many years ago when Birmingham, now a city bigger than Detroit was just a small village, the address was Birmingham near Coleshill. But in spite of the factories of Birmingham, Warwickshire is still a county country and the people do a lot of hunting. Our host in Coleshill was a doctor and he'd been the doctor there for all his life; his father was the doctor there before him, his grandfather before that and I think his great-grandfather before that were the doctors of that village and, like all good county people, they hunted vigorously at least three afternoons a week in the winter.

Now the huntsmen, that is the ones who wore the pink coats, and the country people, that is the farmers, all got along very well with each other. They had to. In fact the fox always chose to rim across the farmers' fields and you couldn't hunt unless you chased the fox, so they just got together and were good friends at all times. On this visit of ours which was in the latter part of

August, our host took us over to Arthur's farm. He wanted us to meet Arthur, he wanted us to see just what a nice farm was like, and incidentally he wanted to visit his mare and see if she remembered him and would give him a good ride as soon as the hunting started again.

The farmhouse was interesting. It was a moated affair. It was complete with all the details to house a goodly number of people. There were the old-fashioned cooking utensils, the old-fashioned fireplaces, and then like all such places in England, it was made of brick. All the buildings on the farm were brick, even down to the privy, and that was rather strange to me because the farms I've been on in our country, the houses and out-houses and barns, etc. were all made of wood but it was a fact ours burned down every once in a while.

Arthur had been in our country and knew something about our farms and he was anxious to show us what he had and how he worked his farm. And as we walked around through some of the fields that afternoon he had this to say. "You know, you chaps in your country are very fine farmers, and they're fine folks, I can tell you. I've met lots of them. But I'll say there's one fellow over there I simply cannot understand and cannot accept and that is a chap named Henry Wallace. It's the same fellow, I believe, that you people made Vice-President at one time. And it's a jolly good thing for you, too, that Roosevelt didn't die while he was his Vice President because he certainly would have messed up the whole agricultural situation of the United States had he got into the White House. Anyhow, he came over here and he got to our Ministry of Agriculture and he got them interested in his way of doing things and I can tell you his way is the wrong way. He simply doesn't understand anything about farming here, or the climate, or the soil, or anything about it. Now look at this meadow we're going through here. I spent 5 shillings an acre to keep this meadow in the way the Ministry thinks it ought to be kept. That is, the way that Mr. Wallace thought it ought to be done. And I tell you, it's no good; there's absolutely no reproduction here."

About that time we came upon a herd of young steers and I noticed that among them was a young heifer. And I asked Arthur why this heifer was grazing with these young steers who were apparently being fattened up to go to the butcher. "Oh, she wouldn't take the bull. I tell you, there isn't reproduction here. But I'm going to show you another meadow that I did my way, and please don't you tell on me. The meadow we're going in to now was done the way I think it ought to be done and I'll show you the difference." So we went over a stile, through a hedge, and onto the other side and sure enough there was a meadow that was very much greener. The grass was really lush. And there, lying just under the edge of the hedge as we came over, was a young couple, a lad and a girl. They were lying on a Burberry coat, because you know even in August the grass is a little damp, and there was another Burberry coat over them. They were engaged in very, very intimate embrace. "I say", said Arthur as we passed by, "I say, young man, you won't leave any litter, will you?" And the young man said, "Oh, no, sir". And as we went along I said, "You know, Bradford, there is reproduction in this field that you're doing your way, isn't there?" And he said, "My word, I say, there is". And he said, "You know, perhaps if I had kept that heifer over here, she might have taken the bull."

The Right Thumb by Sea

Sinbad was one of those aristocratic Englishmen whom it is delightful to know and whose friendship one can be very proud to obtain. Sinbad was of the sea. His family had been admirals way back for many generations, had performed many wonderful deeds for His or Her Majesty as the case might be because they went even back before Victoria and they were just what made Britannia rule the waves.

Sinbad himself had gone to Naval College when he was 6 years old and had grown up in the navy. He was, however, a very well-educated gentleman; he knew a good deal about the history of our country; he knew a lot about our Civil War; and he had, of course, been all over the world. So later

on when he had progressed and had obtained the rank of Lieutenant Commander, he was invalided out of the Navy. This was a great blow to him but he couldn't help it. As a matter of fact he was just too damned tall; he couldn't go down one of the corridors, gangplanks, or what ever they call them on battle ships without bumping his head, and so he was out and that was before World War I.

The war came, of course, and while they refused to take him back on a ship, he managed to get into the Royal Engineers of the Army, because after all, his training had been along the lines of engineering.

And it was as an Engineer Officer that we first got to know him. He was stationed in Birmingham - we in a hospital, and he in the city going around looking over the factories where supplies were being manufactured. We met at the Midland bar. One of the lads in our group had never been anywhere in his life except a little bit of Maryland, Baltimore, up to New York and over to the war, and he was so amazed by the great number of ports that our friend had been in, that he named him Sinbad the Sailor, and the name stuck. Sinbad was a railway fan too and so were we, and we became fast friends, which friendship lasted until the day he died, which was not too long ago. We visited him every time we returned to England and as a matter of fact he came over here and we had him in the Literary Club at one time. He mentioned to us that he had not had too many very literary experiences except that at one time his grandfather, then an Admiral, had taken him as a cabin boy on a cruise. They put into Boston. And one afternoon they went ashore and walked by Longfellow's house. And on another occasion he crossed on a ship which bore Ian Hay, the author of a then very popular book, "The First 100,000". But Sinbad did know a little of our literature. For instance he knew that Cincinnati was not far from the place where Eliza crossed on the ice.

Now finally he, of the Royal Engineers, was sent to France, and he almost got invalided out of the army which would have been a terrific

blow. The trouble there was that he had never been on a horse in his life and engineers were a mounted organization. He wore his spurs of course back in Birmingham, but he was not one of those hunting Englishmen, no, sir, he was the kind who had gone to sea.

At any rate he managed to get along and finally the war was over and he settled down to developing a little factory where they made model trains. One of the places - the last place he lived, where he had a house we visited on several occasions - was at Chichester. From the bedroom upstairs, which we occupied, one looked across beautiful meadows to see the Cathedral. I got a picture of that with a great big bull in the meadow nearby. I showed the picture around the Good Samaritan Hospital and told them that this was the Papal Bull in the English language; I don't think the Sisters thought it was very funny.

But speaking of pictures, his house was almost a museum. There were many pictures of his ancestors who were certainly swashbuckling admirals I can tell you...he...plenty of swords in there. There was one set of pictures of a battle back in sailing ship days with times marked, say 2:45 in the afternoon, 3:00, 3:20 and so on, and out boys, British of course, just knocked the hell out of that Frenchman and sank him. First made him helpless by stealing his wind and then setting him afire.

There was another picture of a young girl. Sinbad asked me if I knew who that was and of course, I didn't. I said, "I can tell you who it looks like, however". And he said, "Who's that?". And I said, "It looks like Alice in Wonderland". And he said, "You're right. That's my mother - she was Alice in Wonderland".

On our last visit he had a little party to which some of his naval friends, some who were still active, were invited. One of these gentlemen invited us to have lunch on the Vanguard. The Vanguard then was the largest battleship in the British Navy and I believe the largest ever built. At any rate

it was going to be dismantled at a later date but was still in shape and was parked in Portland harbor.

We had a car we had bought. We drove to Southampton where we left our car to be put aboard the Mauritania; Sinbad followed in his. We then went on over to Portland where we arrived presumably on time. There's one thing about the British Navy - they can tell time and I mean it, too. A gig was waiting for us at the foot of the Royal Steps. He got on and went on across the harbor to the ship. I tell you it's an awful long climb up those steps up the side of one of those boats, but we made it all right and not being in uniform I, as Sinbad had instructed me, tipped my hat instead of saluting.

They were a jolly group - plenty to drink and a very good lunch. In the mess there was a very lovely picture of Queen Elizabeth sitting at the table in this very same mess and she would have been sitting immediately opposite me, but in some gala occasion some time in the past. There was also a piano there which she had played for them. And they asked me if I played the piano and I was invited to do so, but I didn't because I didn't know how to play the piano.

And I remember one of the things that interested the gentlemen more than anything else was that I had come over on a jet and this was in the first months that the jets were flying the Atlantic. It had been a fast trip. These naval fellows of course were used to sea level stuff, and sea level barometers, etc, and to have heard that one went up to 31,000 feet or thereabouts and crossed in the short time that it did was just something that they could hardly believe.

Then one of them said to me, "I say, do they have comfortable seats?" And I said, "Oh, yes, they are quite comfortable". And he said, "Did they give you good food?" And I said, "They certainly did, they fed us well." "And do they have the facilities, you know, that you need on a trip like that?" And I said, "Absolutely", but I

added, "I didn't really use them. We weren't gone long enough. I just remained strapped to my seat." "You did that, what, you...." And I said, "Yes, I had been to the hotel in New York and I went to the hotel in London".

My host fairly screamed, "Did you hear that?" said this gentleman, "Did you hear that? Our American guest is a marvelous chap. He's hopped the bloody ditch on one bladder."

Ralph G. Carothers

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Ultimate Conglomerates **

The Terrible Group

My wife and I have done a good deal of travelling by car, plane and ox cart, and have developed a wary eye for economic history. It was twelve years ago that we uncovered the Terrible Hotel Lamp Company. At first we thought it was a Hilton or a Sheraton subsidiary, but when Holiday Inn, Howard Johnson, and Quality Court became important Terrible Lamp customers, we realized that the Terrible Hotel Lamp Company was a sprawling empire in its own right.

As research material in recent economic phenomena is not extensive, our authenticated data on the company are a bit sketchy. It has a large and persuasive sales staff; it has factories and shipping facilities of great capacity and ingenuity; and analysis of its products indicates crowds of designers and skilled craftsmen. (The analysis of another consultant suggest total absence of designers and skilled craftsmen, but he is a cynic; perhaps in the pay of the other side.)

There are three principal working and designing groups, operating in a decentralized, divisional setup. These are: (1) the Candlestick Variation Group, which has a big lathe and 1,000,000 cords of old fence posts; (2) the Vase Adaptation Group, which has several over-size potters wheels,

a kiln slightly smaller than the Merchandise Mart, a mountain of clay, and a warehouse of mixed glazing compounds prominent among which is a viscous, gold-like substance; and (3) the Miscellaneous Group. The third is the most creative, though all groups have nervous minds and intoxicating approaches to decoration. It was the Miscellaneous Group, for example, which produced for an inn near Phoenix a semi-pyramid of dark grey, whose sides were heavily encrusted with an intertwining design of lotus blossoms and piano lids in red and gold; and for a Pennsylvania motel a shortened Greek column consisting three-fourths of compound capital (green and purple leaves, gold scrolls), one-eighth base, and one-eighth shaft; and for upper New York a sort of free form Venus with a switch in her navel.

Most of us have become aware, to an extent, of the works of the Terrible Hotel Lamp Company. This exposition would not add much to our knowledge of the expanding economy, except for later developments which have not been so evident. It will come as no surprise that the Terrible Hotel Lamp Company is on top of things. In fact, its founder's motto was "semper ultima", always ultimate. The company, taking its nature from its founder, has in recent years become a conglomerate. Its first venture after it had achieved dominance in lamps was the Terrible Thruway Catering Company. It began in a small, conspicuous way in Pennsylvania but reached full glory in New York, where it nonserves brightly decorated nonmeals at nonmeal hours. This, like lamps, has been a fairly slow-growing operation, though extremely profitable, and has spread to only a few states, though the conditions on which it fattens are wide-spread. It is plain that an affluent future is just around the next curve. I had better add that the great success it has enjoyed cannot be measured by the names actually used on Thruway feeding stations. It is a franchising operation, the latest thing for conglomerates, under which franchise takers pay royalties on Terrible methods, materials, and designs (those forests of dummy gas pumps, for example).

Terrible's next venture, which has been a spectacular success, was the Terrible Tomato Growers Association. The product has a bright, unblemished red skin, and is halfway between a golf and a tennis ball in diameter. Inside is a pinkish pulp mixed with tomato seeds. About this product, I am sorry to report, my wife and I have a disagreement. I think the skin is a kind of plastic (related to the miracle wiener skin), stuffed with what is left from making tomato juice. My wife thinks this cannot be right, as tomato juice usually has a sort of tomato taste which she believes would survive in the left-overs and would therefore impart a similar tomato flavor to the Terrible Tomato. As there is no such flavor, she thinks the things actually grow on vines, probably with their roots in water troughs, and that somebody in the Ozarks probably got an award for, and a patent on, the Most Terrible Tomato. He is now growing rich on his profits from asexually reproducing them, which is how you make money in botanical things.

What happened is history. At first, Terrible Tomatoes were sold in cardboard tubes covered with Cellophane, but the public soon learned not to buy them. As result Terrible Tomatoes were taken out of tubes and placed in neat pyramids in chain stores, very like the piles of real tomatoes made by the farmer out on State Route 157. There is a deep biological appeal in pyramids - they are a non-phallic symbol - and Terrible Tomatoes sold like wild when real tomatoes were out of season and prices were high. This merchandising method, selling out of season at high prices, is one of the best profit-producing mechanisms developed in recent years. Terrible Tomato has, of course, pushed it to the ultimate.

To outward appearances this is the present status of the Terrible conglomerate. But there is a development on the horizon much bigger than a man's hand, without describing which this report would be incomplete. It began years ago with the founding and solid growth of the Disagreeable Service Institute. The Institute was opened in Cincinnati in the thirties - earlier than and wholly independent

of the Terrible Hotel Lamp Company - to provide service personnel for an ice-cream chain. My wife and I have been observing its students for years and have accumulated enough data to be reasonably certain that our hypotheses have proved out.

It is an ingenious operation, a graduate school with a full panoply of courses, such as Verbal Attack, Physical Attack, and Unkempt Appearance. The course in which we were most interested, however, was The Customer Is Always Wrong 101 and 102. B in the course is, by the way, a prerequisite for a degree. We have found out a good deal about the Institute's work. For example: if the table top is clean when you sit down, the waitress is probably flunking; if she wipes it clean after you sit down, she's still only a D; if she sets down your glass of water with a solid bang and an ounce-and-a-half spill, she's a B; if she wipes your table messy and achieves the bang-and-spill with the water glass, she's an A. There are, of course, flunks and dropouts; one was immediately recognizable by her apologetic smile for being out of marshmallow sauce; somehow she had not learned how to make me feel that it was my fault.

It was on the New York Thruway, however, that we made the discovery which prompted this report. The Disagreeable Service Institute is now supplying personnel to the Terrible Thruway Catering Company. AND WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE that merger negotiations are taking place. When the merger is consummated, the name of the Institute will of course be changed to the Terrible Service Institute, which after all will not be much of a wrench. At that point the Terrible conglomerate will have become so big and diversified that it will have to become a many-tiered holding company, of which the top tier will be known as the Terrible Group.

I am reporting this, because I want all of us who contribute so handsomely to this Terrible opulence to have an opportunity to get a cut of the profits, I don't give anybody any tips on anything (though I do have a minor talent in financial astrology), but I can say this: the Terrible Group

will be ripe for a public offering in a few more months, and when you see a dull-seeming advertisement with Terrible Group in large capitals, read further. If it contains a list of securities dealers, and if it says it is not an advertisement nor a public offering of anything, call your broker. This will be your chance to get in on the ground floor.

One last bit (but this is not a tip if tips like this are illegal). My son and daughter-in-law are convinced that the Lumpy Avocado Carpet Company is next in line for merger into the Terrible Group. I don't think so. For grammatical reasons: "Terrible Lumpy" is illiterate without a comma and therefore grammatically elegant, disqualifies for improper corporate nomenclature. It will have to be a two-step deal. The carpet company will, as a preliminary step, merge into the kitchen equipment company to form the Avocado Kitchen Equipment and Lumpy Carpet Company. Then, it will be in position to join the Terrible Group.

Edward W. Merkel

Family Life

There is an old joke about the ideal wife, that she should be a wealthy nymphomaniac who owns a liquor store. If this idea were widely held among men today, it would not bode too well for the chances of their coming to a comfortable modus vivendi with the ladies of their choice. For today we are surrounded by feminism, and it is feminism of superior sophistication. We have succumbed to it, given in so completely, and so gradually that we hardly notice it.

It might be interesting to wonder what is the feminine ideal today for a husband. It is difficult to say, but we might picture a successful charmer, a man of large accomplishment in the great world, who is nonetheless never lacking in time and attention to the lady, to the house and the problems of the children. The ladies, in short,

want a man who has a background of worldly accomplishment but whose present moment is at her complete disposal.

Men and women both find, when they leave whatever dream world they were in and venture out into the brambles of real life, that there is considerable give and take required. This has always been so, but today, in a time of rapid social change, it is even more true that what dreams are and what reality turns out to be, are only distant cousins. As Mark Twain said about something else, the difference is as between lightning and the lightning bug.

Lady Sommerskill recently objected to lowering too far the age at which young men might marry without parental consent, on grounds that must, coming from this great leader of political feminism, be described as sporting. Young women just below twenty-one, the lady observed, are so much more mature in physique, manners and emotions, that the poor fish of a boy has no chance at all. The contest is so one-sided, that the protection of parental control is needed by the boy to even the scales. The House of Lords, if I read the news dispatches rightly, was sufficiently convinced to move a compromise, lowering the age, but not to the eighteen originally proposed.

Right now, the population specialists tell us, we are in a difficult period, a sort of marriage squeeze. In the United States, women have, by and large, sought husbands from among males just a few years their senior. But because of the sharp decline and subsequent sharp increase in birth rates during and just after World War II, the girls born, in great numbers, in say 1946, cannot find sufficient numbers of men born in say 1944. The result will tend to be that some of them will marry men nearer their own age than is usual, some will reach out for the residual men left over from somewhat older age groups, and some will not marry at all. It will probably take some time for this to readjust itself, and the results will be interesting to observe. Since we are creatures of habits and customs that we neither

know nor understand, there will surely be some repercussions that are not predictable in detail, but that will result in upsets to our social equilibrium. Since I have no idea at all of what, if anything noticeable to predict, I can only portentiously suggest that you watch developments.

The difference in age of husband and wife, particularly when both are relatively young, serves to overcome somewhat the earlier maturation of the female. Later on, it permits the somewhat younger wife to serve as a nurse for her husband. Since she is probably going to outlive him in total years anyway, the fact that she is a few years younger, means that he will probably enjoy her support and vigor till his end. This is nice for the husband, and one wonders how long, in this era of equality, the ladies will stand for it. Their problem is that they probably wouldn't like the simple solution, that of coming into the habit of marrying younger men initially who are six or eight years younger than themselves. This would, for one thing, raise the typical marriage age for females to at least twenty-four or twenty-six, and even this would mean taking sixteen to eighteen year old husbands. One could imagine such a world, where the wife takes her boy-husband and then arranges to supervise the completion of his education and to get him started in a career. But the difficulties are considerable. While there might be some advantages, and certainly an angle of interest for these boy-husbands in their mature wives and tutors, the concept turns the world we know quite upside down. It is unlikely to eventuate, at least not soon or suddenly, nor really at all as long as the state needs large numbers of these same boys to fodder its wars and man its armies.

Other solutions, for which there are some indications in the development of our customs, would lie in the direction of greater flexibility of relationships, in which, by the time that people get old enough to need nursing care, they would no longer be involved in the conventional marriage a deux (any longer at all.) They would by now have entered into some sort of group arrangement in which members of the reproduction family they had been

a part of might only incidentally be participants.

Certainly if the growing independence of women and the decline of social stigma attached to divorce combine and enlarge their impact on family relationships, then old men will have to find some other source of loving care than the reliance on the residual affection of their younger wives. It is pleasing to note that changes in these kinds of relationships occur slowly and almost imperceptibly, so that none of us, even the youngest of those here, need worry about adjusting themselves to major new forms of family life. But certainly, the loss of the force of the clan-family that has been going on in the western world for almost a hundred years will not continue to the point where there are no recognized relationships of enduring character outside of actively reproducing couples. Some revival of a broader family entity is surely in the cards, perhaps more fluid, and more self-selecting, but in any case, providing something better than rest homes as the inevitable last stage of life for the weakened elderly.

As always, we humans can say that we live in fascinating times. At prospect, over the next generations surely, is no less than the reconstruction of the way we form and support the closest relationships in our lives. Surely this is not just all going to hell and chaos. And just as surely, something that will satisfy the growing need for independence of women, and at the same time provide a fabric of relationships that will be satisfying to children, to young lovers, to people raising families, and to the retired and weakened elders, will be found. In today's world of knowing ourselves, we shall settle for nothing less. Stick around and watch the reconstruction.

Robert H. Allen

4 "Merry Christmas - From All of Us"

Each year at Christmas we look forward to the many greetings which we receive from our

friends, both at home and far afield. The cheery cards, with their infinite variety of designs and sentiment, always fascinate me. Since I am not in the greeting card business, I am constantly amazed at how few duplications we receive - and those which we do are almost always purchased by the sender to help some worthy cause, like the National Cathedral, Frontier Nursing, or Unicef, organizations which could not be expected to sponsor a multiple choice of designs and still realize much for their charitable endeavours.

There are, too, the cards which are home made-designed and sometimes actually produced by the sender-which often reveal a talent which we had little realized existed among our friends. Hidden artistry often appears unexpectedly on a simple Christmas card.

While we love to hear from all our friends, even those we see in the course of every day or week, it is particularly heartwarming to receive these annual greetings from our many friends scattered across the country and in foreign lands. Generally, this is the only time we hear from them, and we eagerly anticipate the notes which they usually write inside or on the back of the card, telling what they have been doing the past year, how the family is, where they have been and where they plan to go. And it is always somewhat of a let down to us to receive a card from a friend or relative in another city or state which merely says "Merry Christmas", and nothing else. It only tells us that they are alive, which is good news in itself, but disappointing otherwise, when we would like so much to know a little more of how they are getting on.

One particular type of Christmas greeting has always fascinated us. It is the Christmas letter which some of our friends in other cities obviously send to a long list of acquaintances, including some they have not seen for at least a dozen years.

Many of these, in fact most of them, are extremely interesting, even if sometimes necessarily

impersonal. We find out, for example, how many children and grandchildren the Postlethwaites, whom we met in Maine in 1956, now have, or whether the Mordecais went back to Old Annisquam and their cottage again. We enjoy hearing about the interesting trip that Miss Williams, who taught our children in Kindergarten, had in Norway and Sweden last summer, and we are glad to know that our classmate, Art, has finally found the kind of job he has always wanted, sometimes in a part of the world that we have had a secret hankering to give more than a passing visit.

However, there is one type of Christmas letter which we usually set aside on opening, to tackle at a later time, when we have more strength to absorb its message. For it comes to us from a family that apparently has never been touched by anything but beauty, whose children are perfect examples of unstained virtue as they get older year by year, and whose family life is one great, wonderful joy after another. I would like to share a few with you, quoted as is, verbatim, with only names and places changed.

Thus from the Middletons, in Grand Rapid, Mich. (He used to be a young doctor who lived down the street and with whose children ours used to play, about a dozen years ago.)

"With the end of this year in sight, the dark winter days bleak, and the time troubled, Christmas rises, once again, like a star. That shining star gives out light and joy. Part of the joy for us is hearing from our friends and keeping in touch through this annual letter.

"As we were sitting around the table the other night, our conversation turned toward Christmas and Mary suddenly commented: "I know there is no Santa to bring presents, but there is a spirit of St. Nick". With that statement we lost our last believer, and will no longer need to perpetuate the myth of Santa Claus. However, we will perpetuate the spirit of Christmas, the celebration of the birth of Christ, and the holiday season that brings such happiness and joy to many people.

"The Season begins for us as we sit down to compose this letter and review the events of the past year. Each year seems better than the last. Our four healthy, active youngsters are growing rapidly—both physically and mentally. We have fun together as a family, whether it be touch football, skiing, or a trip to Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry. It's great to be alive, and we are continually thankful for our blessings.

"Betty seems to be constantly chaffering, although she did manage to find time to take a course on decoupage and is in the midst of a class on weaving. A weaving course at the Art Center last spring was not sufficient and so she is still trying to learn more. Service Club takes care of the do-good projects. Bob finds his practice both fun and rewarding, and somehow the jobs keep piling up. He is still a YMCA Board member, active politically, and very busy as the new Vice-Chief of Staff at the hospital and chairman of the utilization committee.

"And now we come to the action filled days of our offspring. Bob, Jr., at 14, is still growing, although he's already a big strapping 150 lb. boy. He played on the Jr. High Basketball and tennis teams, and this fall he played 9th grade football. Last summer he took typing and left for a wonderful trip to the Philmont National Scout Ranch in New Mexico. Carrying all of your provisions on your back for ten days in the mountains is quite an adventure. You can imagine our pleasure when a local judge recently pinned the Eagle badge on Bob's chest. We are so proud of his achievement. His effort and interest have resulted in his being selected to represent this district at the 12th World Jamboree next summer.

"Betsy has her father's restless legs. She took ballet all summer so that she could perform in a special program this fall. Ballet twice a week, ballroom dancing, swimming for the Y. , and now having just entered a competitive tennis program keeps her running. The school sent her to a leadership training camp for a week last summer and she is putting what she learned to good use as secretary

of the Jr. High. She loves every minute of her sewing and art classes, as well as the academic work. This dainty little girl is having a hall in the eighth grade.

"Our competitive, sophisticated, affectionate 10-year old by the name of Bill is suddenly maturing. He loves to slick down his hair and is quite the dandy. He still swims for the Y, but is much more interested in a gymnastics class that just started. Motors still fascinate him. Can you imagine being unable to wait until a newly-ordered power mower arrived? My, he does love to cut grass.

"Our kooky 8 year old Mary lives to the fullest, every minute of the day and goes until she drops. She is continuing with dancing and seems to like it much better this year. She is also continuing with Brownies and began piano lessons this fall. This athletic, dimpled darling is growing up too fast and reminds us that the years are going by too quickly. That is why we try to enjoy each day as it comes.

"Although we all worry about big government, creeping socialism, huge debts and an ugly war, we can but pray that we can so live each day that we will have some small influence for good.

"May the Holiday Season bring you joy and a renewed faith in the opportunities that await you in 1967".

Obviously the Middletons' are a wonderful, happy and extremely talented family, with no troubles whatsoever.

After reading the Middletons' Christmas greetings, it is interesting to turn to the following, which found its way across the Atlantic from the daughter of a German family in Heidelberg whom we have known for many years:

"The magic of Christmas, with its beautiful hours, and the transition into the New Year have passed and I want to wish you and your loved

ones happiness and success and fulfillment of your wishes.

"Yes, with us things have changed during the last years and we hope that 1969, with God's help will be better. The year 1968, was very decisive. Actually, things go back to 1966, when Mother was quite miserable with regard to health, and died in October.

"Through the death of Mother Fritz has found his freedom. Yes, I didn't know myself that he was so chained to Mother. After we persuaded him, he finally got engaged.

"Last spring I was operated on for kidney trouble after strong colics, and I had a hard time for three months. First some stones were removed from the kidney, there was a second operation in the fifth week, and finally the kidney had to be removed. Then things got better and I came home in October from the sanitorium.

"Katy retired, after being with the family as housekeeper for 45 years. Finally, two months later I got a young girl to help me.

"In March, 1968, Fritz got married with a big wedding. The night before I had 45 guests in the house. In April Fritz moved out and I had to direct the moving.

"After he had been gone for eight days I had hoped to get a rest, but then our daughter, Barbara, came home really ill. Half of her face was paralyzed, the glands on the neck and cheek swollen and after two weeks the diagnosis was made: Boeck's glandular swelling, a rare and curable disease. It was a terrible scare. She, too, was three months in the hospital and still is treated with large doses of cortisone..

"In November suddenly her pupils were paralyzed. Thank God the paralysis of the face is improved, except for the angle of the mouth. The pupils also improved. It is a big worry, since the disease is very chronic and its origin is not

known. The course varies and nobody knows what will develop. Let us hope that she will recover completely. The last examinations were fortunately favorable so that she can return to her school as a nurse.

"In July, 1968, Ludwig had to change his offices and this was traumatic until we finally, through the death of the landlady, found we could stay in the house, one floor lower, which was very favorable for my husband. We had difficulties, worries and changes. Let's hope we'll stay well and have tranquil times."

Or this happy bit of information, written on the back of a Christmas card from a friend in Toledo:

"Did you know Mary Robinson Smith died after many operations for cancer and Dorothy Cole Swindon just got a divorce? Can you imagine starting with someone new at this point? That's what the rumor is. She moved to Boston, so I don't know if I'll ever know the end of the story. Barb Wilson Stevenson's husband and son both died this year.

"Heavens! I'm not going to try to think of any more news, for it's all bad".

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, all of you!

George P. Stimson
