

A Point Of View

JEAN PITTENGER

For many years I had the distorted idea that a large back yard was a luxury to be desired since ours was comparatively small. I had gazed with envy at spacious, green lawns, edged with even, neatly trimmed hedges, with perhaps a row of rustling popular trees at one end, and carefully tended rock gardens at the other, rendering it a scene of symmetry and color; yards with rose-covered trellises or graceful bird baths.

I am now one of the unfortunate ones whose home is surrounded by such a lawn. At first I was completely satisfied with my back yard. It was long and level with circular rock gardens at either end, a white bird bath in the center, a cobblestone path at one side, while alternate lilac and rose of Sharon shrubs screened the view from the street. My yard is still long and fairly level, but most of the other pleasing characteristics have vanished entirely.

It seems that a back yard of this type is found equally as enticing by children as by birds and bees. In the fall it serves as a gridiron. In the winter it is a convenient site for a snow fortress. The spring atmosphere arouses the undying loyalty and enthusiasm of all baseball fans, and what can provide a better baseball diamond than a large back yard? Last of all, the summer season stimulates the vitality of the whole neighborhood into the eternal spirit of "Cops and Robbers."

By nine o'clock every Saturday morning the activities have begun. Boys of every size, shape, and description stream into my yard. Some are tall and very thin with shaggy mops of hair, partially concealed under brightly colored skull caps adorned with trinkets. Others are under-

sized, white-haired little fellows, anemic in appearance, but wiry and energetic. One loyal comrade, more corpulent than his companions, is frequently compelled to halt the riotous proceedings while he mops his flaming face with a grimy handkerchief and gasps painfully for breath.

Bicycles line the sidewalk, some leaning on standards, others flung carelessly on the ground. Three or four barking, wagging dogs dart wildly from one boy to another, causing complaints from the whole of the canine neighborhood.

All of the participants are clad in their oddest, most patched and ragged clothes. They invariably wear the customary rolled up pants and flying shirt tails, their hair uncombed and faces unwashed. The picture presented by those who are to be renegades runs distinctly true to form; the defenders of law and order, however, appear a trifle unkempt and negligent.

The game is begun immediately after the choosing of weapons. "Spike Davis", the leader of the upholders of the law, equipped with a Buck Roger's twenty-fifth century ray gun, is the envy of the entire group, while the leader of the outlaws is protected by a blunt-nosed, sawed-off-shotgun. The lesser members of both ranks, for the most part, wield small, insignificant cap pistols or water guns encased in unique holsters.

Heated arguments ensue regularly and occasionally someone becomes angry and goes home, but never the whole gang until the last rays of the sun disappear completely.

Little Junior Watson sits on the sidelines hour upon hour, merely watching the proceedings, but no less enthusiastic be-

cause of inactivity. Junior is only four years old and, consequently, is not allowed to enter in physically.

Shouts of "You're dead!", "I got you first!", and "Drop that gun, you bum!" fill the air, along with a constant vocal barrage representing machine gun fire. Controversies arise continually concerning those dead or wounded, due to the constant reappearing of supposedly prostrate warriors at their stations on the firing line.

At last as the group is gradually dispersed by urgent calls for dinner, my

thoughts turn to some of the boys my own age, who a few years ago were ardent "Cops and Robbers" enthusiasts, but have recently exchanged their toy weapons for the deadly implements of war. I find myself wondering if perhaps some of the enthusiasm and courage displayed by these boys might originally have been inspired through hours spent at games such as these. I decide that if these pastimes contribute such qualities, I shall gladly offer my backyard in order that they may be preserved.

Revelation In Discovery

KITTY DENBO

The green and amber patches of grass stretch from the sedate black enameled fence which envelopes the front yard to the sturdy, but well-loved back yard fence. This wrought iron guardian is fancifully decorated with sprigs of greenery and a few red berries which impart to it just a touch of dignified color and give the passerby an impression of loftiness. For it is the sentinel which stands guard against all intruders who might trespass into the private domain of liquid green velvet expanse.

Just inside the protecting line of defense, a carefree Sugar Maple has begun to display a few of its fall wardrobe selections. Becomingly gowned in russet with sequins of scarlet sprinkled carelessly at frequent intervals, it blends silently with the background of clouds, fleecy as cotton candy.

A gentle upward slope leads to the

previous site of the fruitless plum tree, now replaced by a spreading Rambler of unknown origin. Lengthy thorn tentacles seek new growth in their outward conquest.

A few steps to the left reveal the "Squirrels' Delight", a gnarled crab apple tree, so named because the neighborhood's furry, leaping creatures adopted it as their own sanctum. Although autumn has gently transformed this domineering patriarch into a handsome gentleman worthy of admiration, I think he realizes the chill winter snows will turn his majestic regalia into leafless boughs with an empty squirrels' nest as the simplest ornament to complement the wizened structure.

The northern boundary is formed by a row of poplar trees whose slender lithe bodies respond as slaves to their master, the wind's slightest command.