“My Father’s Business”

BETTY JO FARK

With an effort she pushed the iron over the last patch of wrinkled, white shirt, conscious of the stabbing pains in her back and shoulders. Force of habit made her gently slide the shirt off the end of the board and start to retouch the collar, pulling the collar after the iron to round it. She tilted the iron up on the board. It settled with a thud, and she rubbed her arm across her forehead, dotted with perspiration.

Her shoulders sagged as she buttoned and folded the shirt. She didn't see how she could go on like this for two more weeks. Iron this, wash that, dust this, sweep that ... A minister and a minister’s house must be ready to receive callers at any time any day, Ruth had said before going to the hospital to have her baby.

It sounded simple. She kept her own apartment neat and clean all the time in spite of Vic's habit of taking off his shoes and his tie in the front room every night when he read the paper. She wondered what Vic thought of living in the parsonage with his brother-in-law for three weeks. He spent most of his time at the club, so she hadn't really talked with him for two days.

She unplugged the iron. Maybe if she rested for a few minutes she would feel better. Maybe she could read a magazine story.

Walking into the front room, she tripped over a toy sheep on wheels. "Hell," she muttered and straightened abruptly. She shouldn't swear in a minister's house. But why couldn't Ruth teach her kid to put her toys away. She could have broken her leg on that sheep, she thought as she shoved it to one side with her foot.

Murder, where was Jane Elizabeth, she wondered. She started to call and then remembered the child had come in while she was ironing and said she was going somewhere. Now where was that? Oh, well, she was probably next door at a neighbor girl's house. She had taken her five dolls and dog with her, so she must be all right.

The screen door banged and Jane Elizabeth ran in. "I forgot my sheep, Auntie Jean," she announced.

"You did, all right," Auntie Jean replied. "It's over there," she said and pointed at the wall, but Jane Elizabeth had already found it and was heading for the door.

"Don't go in and out so much or you'll let too many flies into the house," Jean instructed as the screen banged again. She was glad Jane Elizabeth was playing somewhere else today. She had been under foot constantly since Jean had come to the parsonage. She wanted Jean to read her a story or play dolls or paint with her all day long. Jean didn't have time for kids. She was glad now that she and Vic didn't have any, she thought as she searched for a magazine.

The Christian Standard — The Christian Evangelist — Christ Today — didn't Ruth take any readable magazines? Certainly reading church magazines in her spare time would be too much for Ruth after living in a parsonage next door to a church and having a minister for a husband. Life — Jean had read that already. Reader's Digest — that was too deep for now. At last, she found a Ladies' Home Journal at the bottom of the stack.
It was an old issue and Jean hadn't read the novelette. She felt better as she settled back in a big easy chair and began the story.

She was miles away from the parsonage and Ruth and Jane Elizabeth when the screen door banged and Louis, her brother-in-law, walked in. Guiltily she closed the magazine and returned his hello. Supper wasn't ready, and she knew he would ask about it.

"Supper ready?" he asked in a cheery voice.

She shouldn't have been irritated, but she was. After all, hadn't she ironed seven white shirts—twice as many as Vic ever wore—for him today? "No," she snapped and regretted her sharp tone immediately. "Is there something special you would like?" she asked in an effort to cover her error.

"No," he answered as he sat down on the davenport and opened the paper he had brought in with him.

Jean moved to the kitchen and began rummaging through the icebox for the steaks she had purchased at the store in the morning.

"Where's Jane Elizabeth?—the house seems so quiet," Louis asked.

"I don't know," Jean answered. "She went out to play this afternoon."

"Maybe you had better call her in," Louis said. "She's been out late enough."

"All right," Jean answered and hoped she didn't sound as disgusted as she felt. How many things was she supposed to do at one time? Get supper, look for the baby, iron shirts—work in a minister's house stretched to infinity.

She got out a skillet and put the steaks on to fry. Then she went to the front porch and called Jane Elizabeth. She called several times, but Jane Elizabeth didn't answer. Why didn't the child come when she was called? Ruth should have taught her that much, anyway. Now she would have to go up and down the street until she found Jane Elizabeth. All this was Ruth's fault, she reasoned as she walked down the block. Why did Ruth have to have babies when nurses and maids were so hard to get? If Ruth had waited for a few years like a sensible person, she could have hired someone to keep house for Louis and chase Jane Elizabeth all over the neighborhood when she was in the hospital.

Well, Jane Elizabeth wasn't on the right side of the street and she wasn't on the left side. Where to now? Maybe she was around the corner on the other side of the church. Jean had to find her; she couldn't go back to the parsonage and tell Louis that Jane Elizabeth was lost.

Nearing the entrance to the church, Jean noticed Jane Elizabeth's dog sitting on the church steps. Now what could the child be doing at church, Jean wondered. She opened the door and walked in. Far away she heard Jane Elizabeth saying, "Now we will sing 'Onward Christian Soldiers.'" The singing began.

"Jane Elizabeth!" Jean called. The singing stopped. "What are you doing?" Jean shouted.

"We're having Sunday school," Jane Elizabeth answered from the basement.

"Well, come up here this minute," Jean said.

Jane Elizabeth just reached the top step with her five dolls and dozen books and papers before she spilled half of her armful.

"Why didn't you come home when you should have?" Jean scolded as she stooped to pick up the scattered papers. A small yellow pamphlet caught her eye.

"Bring your neighbor to church—help save a man on your street," bold-faced
print on the pamphlet said. This surpassed all the foolishness Jean had ever seen. "Save a man on your street"—as if there were heathens or naked savages with rings in their noses living next door to her. What would the church think of next?

She turned to the child. "Come on, Jane Elizabeth," she said. "Your father will sell you to the rag man if you don't be a good girl and hurry as I say."

The Fallacy of Isolationism

DOROTHY ZIEGLER

Following the first world war, the majority of people in the United States became great believers in isolationism; that is, they wanted to avoid any foreign contacts other than those necessary to trade and certain business relationships. "Buy American" became the slogan; "self-sufficiency" was the goal. The American people were determined that their sons should not fight on foreign soil again. Today we are facing the result of our holding to the idea of isolationism. We turned our backs on the invasion of Japan into Manchuria; we knew something should be done about it, but we were afraid to try it alone. We excused our inaction when Hitler marched into Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the other defenseless nations by saying, "It's a European war. Let them fight it out." We soon found out, however, that we could not ignore the militarism of any country for two reasons. First, we are connected with these countries by communication and transportation lines; and, second, we have business interests spreading all over the world. We know now that these facts cannot be ignored.

Because of the advancement in communication and transportation, the countries of the world have been welded together until now we can think of the world in terms of a unit rather than many pieces of territory, individual and separate. In considering the speed of transportation we naturally look to the sky. According to Transcontinental and Western Air, Inc., a person may travel from New York to Cairo, Egypt, in twenty-two and one-half hours; from Chicago to Mash-bad, Iran (Persia), in twenty-seven hours; from San Francisco to Singapore, Malay States, in thirty-four and one-half hours; and from Philadelphia to Capetown, Union of South Africa, in thirty-two hours. With the aid of the wireless we are now able to turn a few knobs, set the dials, and immediately hear from countries in any part of the globe. To travel to the other side of the earth is only a matter of hours; to hear and talk to someone in any remote spot, having the right equipment, only a matter of minutes. With this development in rapidity of contact, the peoples of the world now can easily learn of each other's habits, customs, and traditions, as well as the events taking place over the world. Out of this wide and wonderful development of speed in transportation and communication, all nations became vulnerable to aggression; oceans no longer provided