bed desperately for the bar, and when my hands closed over the cold steel, I breathed again. Wally caught me and pulled me down onto the platform. The circus performers began to cheer as Curt dropped into the net, turning gracefully as he fell. Wally dropped me. As I bounced up from the net, Curt caught me, and we jumped to the ground. The trapeze performers offered Curt a contract for the two of us to join the act, so I've been told. I have wondered what would have happened to us if Curt had accepted their offer.

Backstage At English's

ROSEMARY BROWNE

It has been my good fortune to spend many a performance backstage at English's, as well as to watch many performances from out front.

Opening night is the most exciting of all, but there is always a constant buzzing of preparedness before any show. When the play has begun and the actors have left their dressing rooms, backstage seems eerie. This dismal feeling takes me out of my realistic world and places me in a world of imagination too powerful to explain. There is almost a religious silence as the curtain goes up and during the show, until an occasional dim voice or movement from the stage is heard. It seems that all the life and light is out front, leaving the backstage with only a faint remnant of that life that filled it such a short period ago. The dressing room doors are left flung open, and the lights are left burning. Inside, the costumes here and there, spilled powder, add to the confusion. When there is a very large cast, canvas is strung from tall poles, making additional dressing rooms.

There is a tiny music room, which is like the entrance to a cavern down two steps. Sheet music is spread on the tables, and cigaret ashes cover the floor. Here I have spent many hours reading and waiting for my father, who conducts the orchestra. Between acts or after a performance, I may go shopping or eating. Sometimes I peek out from a tiny door leading directly into the orchestra pit, so that I can sense the reaction of the audience toward the actors. At other times I have watched performances from the pit itself. A hurt arises in me, partly because I am not part of the cast and perhaps partly because a stiff neck is easily obtained from trying to watch a performance from the pit.

After the play, the backstage is again filled with many actors and musicians. Some of them parade around with make-up only half on, singing or calling to their friends. Some go over their lines while dressing. This picture is varied with an occasional seeker of autographs. My brother, a tall blond who looks remarkably like one of the young men in "Junior Miss," was stopped by some of these who asked for his autograph. They were very much disappointed when they discovered that he was merely the orchestra leader's son.

The closing night of a play gives me

the most dejected feeling. Immediately after the show, the actors start to pack their clothes in huge trunks. The "wardrobe mother" helps them. The props are taken down, and in a very short time are loaded on trucks along with the trunks. And so the theater is ready for the next show, and the actors are off to a different city. I am sad when I see them leave, for I wish I were going with them.

Brave Fool

IRVING CROSHIER

"The bravest of fools." That is what my grandmother called him. And that is the description which fitted my uncle best.

All the men in my family, including myself, are fools—people who, because of their antics, are laughed both with and at. Van was perhaps the greatest of the entire family at this. He was always spending his time making people laugh from the day of his birth till, probably, the day of his death.

When he was in grade and high school, his work was always average—except when he liked a subject very much or needed it for some reason. Whenever either of these two incentives occurred, his marks were superior. His teachers were constantly sending notes home, the general theme being, "Van is entirely too cocky and boisterous." Yet even his teachers were forced to laugh at his antics, though back of their hands.

To say the least, a class of his was never dull. At times his questions had even the instructors stumped. Yet there was always that feeling in the teacher's mind that Van had not read his lesson as well as he might. Van very seldom played hookey for his absence was as conspicuous as that of the teacher.

When he graduated, he took every honor he could get from a small school. On the day of graduation everyone sighed in relief, including Van, at his departure. Another year would have been the school's undoing.

His next stop was Western Reserve, in Cleveland, for in his reckless, clowning manner he had decided to be a doctor. The strange thing was that he succeded. He went on to become later one of the most successful general practitioners in Ohio.

Perhaps the most decisive factor in his life was Millie. She was the kind-hearted, sensible, quiet counter-balance that Van needed. She encouraged him with his work, made him use his art of foolishness as a valuable asset. She believed, and she taught him to believe, that laughter is the sure cure for worry and self-pity, and, that if they are cured, illness is secondary. He now knew that a higher Power had granted his foolishness to him for a reason.

Never before had the hospital echoed with such joyous laughter as it did when Van called on his patients; never before had there been the warmth of the sunny smiles that followed Van as he left a patient.

The man I remember most vividly was the truck driver we shall call Tom, who was turned into a human torch when his gasoline truck exploded, covering him