

came to greet them. He shook hands with Mr. and Mrs. Stanley and then knelt beside little Pete and began to speak the beautiful language Pete had been taught in his Italian home. Little Pete threw his arms around the doctor and began in a very excited voice to plead with the doctor to explain to his new parents that he could never have another leg. The doctor silenced the excited child and ask him in his beautiful Italian tongue, "Little Pete, do you remember me?"

Little Pete was stunned, but he shook his head and searched the doctor's face for some feature that he might remember. There did seem to be something familiar about this man, but he could not remember him. The doctor said, "Little Pete, I am the doctor who was with the American Medical Unit in your home in Italy. I am the doctor who took your torn leg from you. Now, do you remember me and will you trust me?"

The whole process of making little Pete a brand new leg took about two months, the time it took little Pete to learn all over again those things like running, skipping, hopping or jumping was just a matter of days. Neighbors were amazed as they watched little Pete skip and run on his wonderful new leg. They are still talking about the afternoon when the little boy from Italy won the annual sack race for five-year olds.

Long, Long Ago

Forrest A. Dunderman

IT SEEMS TO ME that pleasant memories are a great deal like old photographs that have been tucked away in a drawer for safe keeping—too ephemeral to be really useful, yet too cherished to be discarded. They are taken out from time to time for a thorough dusting and airing, then returned to the darkness from which they came. Each dusting and airing, evoking a pleasant nostalgia as it inevitably does, diminishes the chance of the image's becoming cloudy or faded and increases the value of the photograph for having grown a little older. Time mellows and softens the pictures perhaps, but the outlines, the impressions seem to last forever. So it is with the memories which we recall with pleasure at odd moments, those flights back to the experiences of another day, richer by far, it seems, than those at hand. Each recollection of some bygone pleasure sharpens and enhances the image, glorifying it beyond all possible reason. Taking some treasured memory out for its dusting and airing is infinitely more satisfying than a conscious flight into fancy. Day-dreams are transitory and unreal; memories are harbored in the mind for having once been actual experiences.

Who among you does not consider memories of his childhood the pleasantest in his little store? Those were the days of simple unaffected pleasures, long before the weight of responsibility and care settled upon willing, or unwilling shoulders. Those were days of real excitement, for experiences were new and the impressions they made were vivid and lasting. It is not quite by chance that my earliest recollections are about the rain. My father was a man who enjoyed nothing more than watching a rainstorm from a vantage point too distant from the house for my mother's peace of mind. She was morbidly afraid of storms and held to the old belief that families should sit quietly together in one room until the "crisis," as she called it, had passed. I remember that my father, ignoring Mother's unfounded fears, took me with him to the garage or onto a porch where we stood watching the storm just out of its reach. Sometimes the wind would change direction and drive the rain in upon us, and I would laugh with childish excitement. Always there was a strange exhilaration at seeing the flashes of lighting and hearing the accompanying rolls of thunder. In another connection with the rain, I recall the comfortable feeling of security that I had when I would take my book and sit as close to the downpour as I could without getting wet. Often during a storm, I sat in the family automobile where the feeling of snugness and closeness to the rain was even greater. Of all the memories of my childhood, I think the remembered fascination of watching the rain and the purely physical elation of being warm and protected from it gives me the greatest pleasure. I recall too, as a little boy, how my mother bundled me up on a cold day and put me out-of-doors to play in the sun. At first I was very cold and I had to move about quickly to keep warm. Then I sat on the cement steps to rest, and I remember that the gentle warmth which the sun had given them would slowly melt the ice in my veins. Again, it is that feeling of physical snugness, the same kind of satisfaction one gets from sitting in a pleasant room near an open fire while a blizzard rages without, that lends such pleasure to the recollection.

Memories of childhood, like daydreams, actually may serve no practical purpose; indeed, may people argue that calling up recollections of the past, pleasant or otherwise, is neither constructive nor inventive. The cry is, "Forward! Don't look back!" I wonder how often this advice is heeded by those fortunate individuals whose mental images of childhood are pleasant enough to take out for an airing now and then. Not very often, I should say. Living their past again, savoring the pleasure of some long-ago experience, is an erstwhile escape from the stark reality and pressure of the moment. It is warming to the spirit, just as the cement steps were warming to a little boy who shivered in the cold.