

that responsibility? An intelligent person, then, is one who adapts himself to society by abiding by the rules and regulations society has set forth and by fulfilling his responsibility to society.

Fulfilling one's responsibility calls for preparation, certainly. Therefore, an intelligent person is one who prepares himself for his life's work. Likewise, an intelligent person learns all the other requisites: how to adapt himself to society, how to think clearly and logically, and how to distinguish the relationships between ideas. With the learning of these, then, only one requisite of an intelligent person remains—the final one. An intelligent person will apply what he learns to his own life.

## The Trembling Hand

Elizabeth Simpson

**A** MOST vivid and descriptive expression, to me, appeared in the short story "The Egg." The sentence described the deformed chickens which die soon after birth, and stated, "They go quickly back to the hand of their Maker that has for a moment trembled." An interesting parallel may be drawn between these creatures and humans who are deformed at birth, humans in whose making the hand of God has trembled.

An acquaintance of mine had been married for twenty years. Her life, as well as that of her husband, was busy and seemingly happy, but both wished for children which they never had had. Finally, after many years, when the couple had entirely exhausted their hopes, the doctor gave them the news for which they had waited so long—the news that they would have a child before the year was ended. Husband and wife both began immediately to buy baby clothes, furniture, and books. They remodeled their basement, which was already beautiful, for a time in the future when their still unborn child would want to have parties. All available medical care was lavished on the wife, and for nine months her only tasks were to shop for the baby and to take care of herself. At last she entered the hospital, and the next day the happy father announced, amid cigars and hearty toasts, the birth of a boy. Until almost the end of the first year, the baby appeared to be normal, but then to the parents it became obvious that something was abnormal about the baby. He responded to nothing; he was uninterested in the activities going on around him; he engaged in no physical exertion such as crawling or walking. His worried parents took him to several pediatricians who pronounced the same verdict: the baby was a Mongolian idiot. The first reaction of the husband and wife was to keep the child and to hope that the love which they gave so whole-heartedly would make the child as happy as was possible under the circumstances. As the child grew older, however, they realized that this arrangement would never be successful, that the child must have more than just love, that he should be placed with other chil-

dren of his own kind with whom doctors had learned the best methods of care. Consequently, the boy was sent to an institution which specialized in the care of mentally deficient children, where his parents visit him occasionally. They say that almost always the child recognizes them, and they seem to realize that their decision was best for the welfare of the boy.

And so, a life has been smothered, not by death as yet, but by the trembling hand of the Maker; thus, one is prompted to ask the question of why God did such a thing to a couple who could and would have provided a child with everything he could possibly desire. But because humans are hardly in a position to question the actions of God, it is expected that they accept His actions as just and right. To the man and his wife, God's judgment was difficult to accept, but they showed their true faith in many ways. Because they were wealthy, they contributed generously to the home where their child was placed, as well as to a national fund to provide for others like him. To outsiders, it seems that they have drawn more closely together in their desire to aid each other in bearing the knowledge that their long-awaited baby will never bring them the joy for which they had hoped. They plan parties for teenagers which are held in their remodeled basement, and are always ready to help these young people with advice or with just a listening ear. I cannot believe that a normal child would have brought about these far-reaching consequences. Just as the grotesque chickens in "The Egg" brought out a kind of ignorant sympathy in the desire of the father to preserve them, so the mentally deficient child brought about a sympathy and compassion never before present in the parents. The hand of the Maker never trembles; it only pauses so that He may consider how best He may make stronger the people involved in what seems to be a tragedy of His own creation.

## Taps

John Stokesberry

**T**HE old sergeant slumped in his chair as if the troubles of the world were on his shoulders. His hazy brown eyes were recessed far back into his head as though they had seen enough and were seeking a place in which to hide; dark clouds of worry hovered about them. A network of capillaries covered the tired, sullen, worried face. Above the wrinkled forehead lay a mass of gray hair, neat but lifeless, like last year's crop of clover hay. Fourteen rows of "hash marks," representing forty-two years of devoted military service, ran up and down the right sleeve of his olive-drab uniform. On the front of the coat, one-half inch above the right pocket, were four rows of campaign ribbons which included two silver stars, one bronze star, and a purple heart.

The orderly room was shrouded in hushed silence. The desk behind which the sergeant sat was cleared of its usual multitude of