

## Across the Editor's Desk

THE search for happiness, in a very large and important sense, is presumed to be the chief purpose of life. It is therefore distinctly worth while to find out, if possible, how we may find happiness. We should find out why people are happy.

It has been pretty thoroughly demonstrated that wealth, position, power, achievement, and other factors of material success do not necessarily bring happiness. Why, then, do people continue to drive in that direction with such enthusiasm?

The answer probably is found somewhere in the momentum and crowd psychology of the human race which has to do primarily with the struggle to make a living, and secondarily with the desire to live still more abundantly. To put it in a homely way, when we want a little of a good thing, a whole lot of it seems still more desirable. Few recognize a limit.

While pondering over this neat little problem, let us consider the results of a scientific investigation into the causes of happiness, conducted by Dr. George W. Hartman, of Pennsylvania State College. A series of tests has shown that "emotional stability, or a lack of neurotic tendency, is the most important single factor leading to happiness."

This is a profoundly important starting post. Just stop a moment and consider what it means.

The commonest impulse in the search for happiness is to plunge into a dizzy whirl of pleasure which is admittedly hard on the nerves because it keys us up to a high pitch, stirs the emotions, stimulates the whole mental system to a higher speed.

The over-stimulation may seem to bring happiness, but it is almost sure to bring a reaction which leaves the delicate nervous organization in a state of depression and impairment. The "dizzy whirl," therefore, is the very way *not* to achieve happiness. Well, what then?

Healthy effort in the daily work, with a reasonable amount of pleasure stimulus, followed by long periods of tranquillity, preferably in the home, field, woods, and garden, where peace and repose may be found—that, for most people, is the ideal recipe for achieving happiness.

The scientific demonstration by Doctor Hartman explains why so many people are supremely happy when working or resting in their homes and gardens. This sort of life, for most people, leads toward emotional stability and away from neurotic tendencies. It is Nature's way of healing the disturbed mind and nerves. Those who seek happiness thru what has come to be known as the "jazzy" way of living are following a vain delusion. They are sure to be disappointed.

Happiness is not so much in the things we do or have or strive for. Happiness is not speed. Happiness depends upon our state of mind. That, in one sense, may seem obvious, and yet Doctor Hartman's findings seem almost startling because of the new flood of light they throw upon our ways of living.

THERE are signs that the garden-club movement in the United States is in a process of evolution, I gather from leaders among the 9,000 clubs with which *Better Homes & Gardens* is in constant touch.

The social value of the clubs is not to be held lightly, but it is encouraging that the more serious aspects are taken more and more seriously in this process of evolution.

Florida, as a state of tropical and semi-tropical horticulture, is expected to furnish distinctive leadership in the movement, and the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs has undertaken a program which will lay stress upon garden design, civic beautification, the economic value of private and public gardening, the study of plant material, knowledge of botany and related subjects. Its beautification program has been endorsed by the National Council of State Garden Club Federations.

More and more the nation is realizing the economic as well as the esthetic value of private and civic beautification projects, and the activity of Florida is certainly commendable.

WE ARE immensely gratified at the results of the Better Homes Contest. One typical day in the midst of the contest brought in more than 300 entries, and we have no doubt that the entries will continue to arrive until late in the year. The outstanding success of this contest has attracted nation-wide attention to *Better Homes & Gardens*, which maintains unquestioned leadership in the movement for home betterment.

When the contest is over it will be found that the winners will be the most remarkable and interesting examples of home-remodeling ever brought before the American public, and there will be so many excellent examples that it can be safely stated that no similar array has ever been assembled before in the history of American home-building. You will get the benefit of the cream of this array in the pages of *Better Homes & Gardens* next year. There will be many prizes, including a wide variety offered by newspapers that are cooperating with *Better Homes & Gardens*. With the contest only at the half-way mark there were 168 cooperating newspapers with a total circulation of more than four and a half millions.

Such a broad, comprehensive, and intensive program of home betterment has never before been attempted in the United States, and we are glad at this time to give you this foretaste of the feast that is to be set when the contest is completed. You, as a reader of *Better Homes & Gardens*, will profit by this national program.

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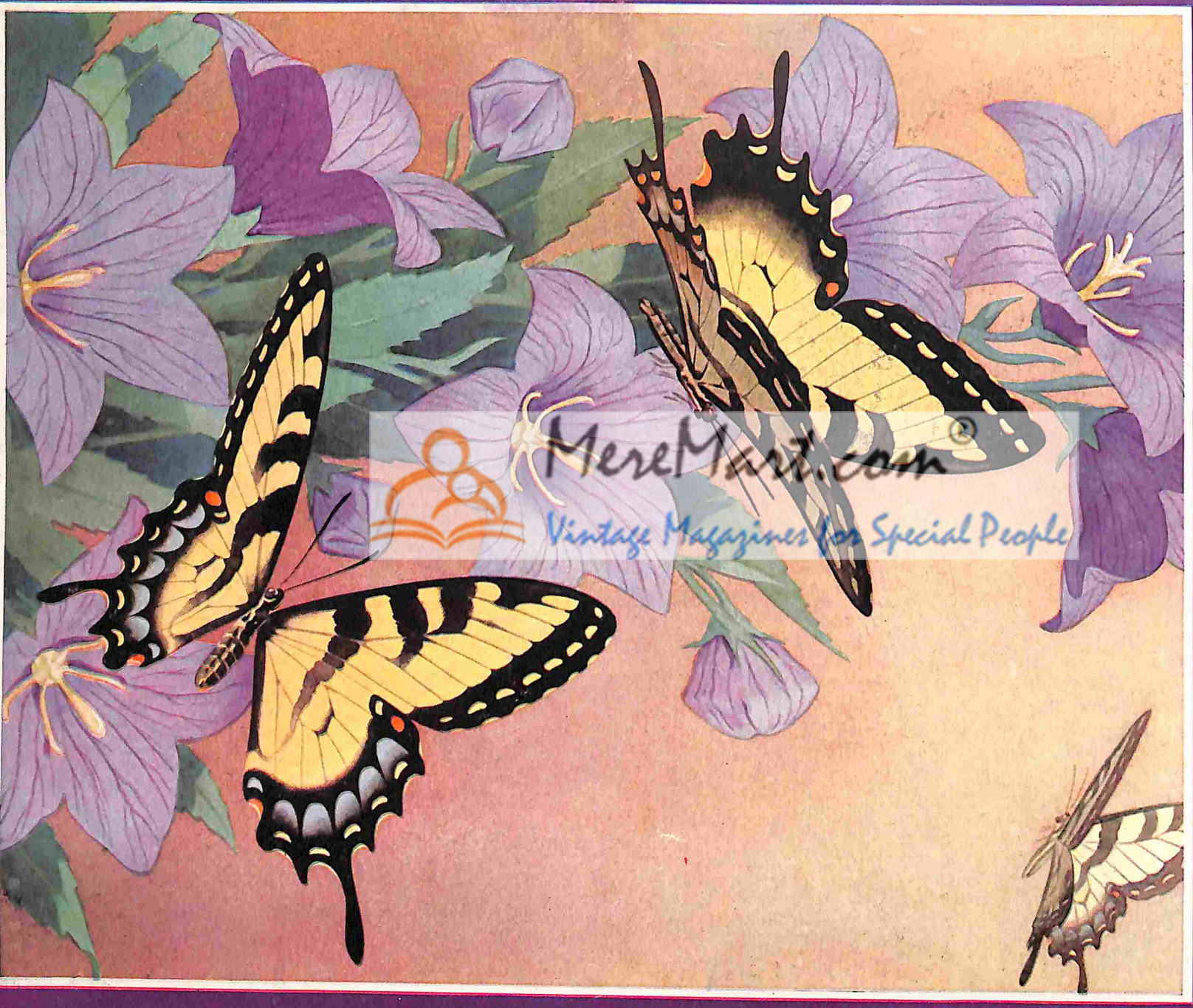
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