

In an otherwise identical version, the following
handwritten comment appears on the top of page 421B:

"Wife's story and husband is a 'Weather Stripper.'

May be usable. WC."

Birmingham, Alabama
1004-81st Place, East Lake
Gayle and Idella Posey (white)
N.S. McDonald

THE POSEYS

Mrs. Posey opened her door. She is a neat, pleasant-faced woman.

"Do come right in," she said. "I've been looking for you a long time, but then I always forget there are fourteen blocks to walk after getting off the car.

"When you 'phoned you were coming, I stood in the middle of the floor and wondered what in the world to do first, for the whole house was such a mess. If I had known a little earlier, I would have been nearer ready. Oh, let's forget about the house. You sit over where the light is best.

"Yes, we like this place," she said happily. "Look right through that window and you can see the county line. If we were just one block over, we would have escaped the city taxes, but then we would have been forced to send the children to the county schools and I don't think they are as good as the city schools. I am convinced that Birmingham public schools are the very best in the entire south.

"There you see is an example of the law of compensation. We live in the country, but we have all the privileges of the city and so our inconveniences and comforts balance. We just can't stand the noise of the city.

"Oh, no, we never get lonesome a minute. I listen to all the stories on the radio, and my housekeeping chores make it seem just a little while

from the time the children go to school in the morning until they come home again in the afternoon.

"William, who is sixteen, will finish just as Mary Violet, who is fourteen, enters Woodlawn High School next year. I do wish you could see them. They are both grand looking children and they are so congenial. Then Mrs. Posey made an odd comment. "My girl is really too beautiful for her own good, I am afraid. Sometimes a girl's beauty works to hurt her. We are planning to send both through college, although I'm sorry to say that Gayle isn't as interested in the children's education as I am. There's a reason for that difference," she added thoughtfully.

"When I was a little girl there was nothing in the world I wanted as I wanted an education. My mother couldn't even write her own name and I never knew anything about my father except that he came from very fine people. That's a sad part of my life that I don't like to talk about. Anyway I am not as resentful as I was when I was younger and had to use my mother's maiden name for mine. Some of that bitterness is gone.

"When I was just a little girl I told my mother that I intended to go to school and later to college; so when I was thirteen years old, my mother asked my aunt to let me live in her house and work so that I could go to school. I remember it just as if it were yesterday. My aunt said 'Yes, 'Bama, just send her down any time and I'll send her to school.' I put on my red plaid dress, tied all my clothes in a flour sack and started out. Aunt Nancy was kind to me and in return I worked hard to keep the house clean before and after school. My uncle was the Christian minister at Morris and he lived a true Christian life.

"I was in the fourth grade when I started but I studied very hard and

made several grades in one year. One of the teachers took a great interest in me and offered to help me go to college after I had gone as far as I could in Morris. I never went back to my mother's house except to spend one day, because my stepfather was unkind to me. He seemed to hate me because my mother loved me so much.

"The only money I required was twenty-five dollars for my first year at college. My mother brought it to me all wrapped up in a sack, for it was all in nickels and dimes and pennies. She is a grand woman, is my mother, and good; through and through. She saved all that money from her sale of milk, butter and eggs. She had a hard time hiding it from my stepfather.

"Well, with that twenty-five dollars and the help of my teacher I went to college and finished the Home Economics course. That course is a help to me every day of my life. It enables me to give my family the food they need at the lowest possible cost. My meals are always well balanced even when I don't try to think about it; proper selection of foods is perfectly natural to me. Throughout my college course I worked all winter and during the summer vacations I was dietician at a summer resort hotel in Tennessee.

"Oh, I almost forgot to tell you where the college was. It was at Maryville, Tennessee, a Presbyterian college. No, I'm not a Presbyterian. My children and I belong to the Christian church, and Gayle would join that church too, if he joined any. Gayle never discusses religion, but he lives a Christian life. We don't live near a Christian church, so the children go to the Baptist Sunday School. We feel that it doesn't make much difference, so long as you live honestly with your fellowman.

"No, none of us go around at night. We are all satisfied with each

other, the radio and our work. When things get too monotonous, we go to a movie, but even then we all go together. About the only real extravagance that we indulge in, is baseball. No amusement is half as thrilling to this family as a good baseball game! Even if I tried to argue about the expense, it wouldn't do a bit of good. Gayle would go without me. So I dress and we all go right along and don't even think about how much it costs. Later I just cut a corner somewhere in my household expense.

"Yes, you're right - it will be a little far out here for the boys to come to see Mary Violet, but that suits me just fine. The fewer boys come to see her, the better I'll like it," she said with an anxious frown.

"What kind of work was Gayle doing when we first married? He was working in the oil fields. We were married in Birmingham in 1921, and went immediately to Byar, Oklahoma. At that time there was a big dispute about which State really owned the oil wells, because it was right on the border between Oklahoma and Texas. Oklahoma won.

"Gayle operated the engine that pumped the oil from the wells. The engine was run by natural gas. Gayle took care of the engine for three years. Yes, we did well out there. We had out house, fuel, lights and water furnished and his salary was \$175 a month. I'll admit that it seems strange that we should have left all that and come back to Alabama, but there was nothing else to do. It will take right much explaining, but if you really want to know, I'll tell you.

"You remember that I told you Aunt Nancy kept me and sent me to school for four years? Well, it so happened that when Gayle was a little boy, his father and mother separated and their children were parceled out and the Simpson family got Gayle. They sent him to school just as my aunt sent me.

"Well, one day we received a letter saying that my uncle had died and Aunt Nancy wanted us to come back to Morris to look after her. In return, she would leave her property to us at her death, since she had no children of her own. You see we both felt indebted to her, and we just couldn't refuse to help her in her old age.

"So back we came to Morris. We had saved about seventy-five dollars each month and with our savings, Gayle bought some trucks and did contract hauling. He hauled all that heavy material for the big bridges around Morris. We call the biggest one, the 'Posey Bridge' for Gayle. He hauled every single piece that went into it. We are thrilled every time we pass over it.

"Well, we stayed at Morris and Aunt Nancy who was seventy years old, married again. Then we looked after both her and her husband until Aunt Nancy died. Did we really get the property? No, we didn't. You know what that old man did? While Aunt Nancy was very sick, he and his children tricked her into signing some kind of paper giving the property to them. Gayle and I decided against a law-suit. It wasn't much of a place anyway. Maybe we could have had it, but his children would have given us trouble about it as long as we lived, so we just let it go.

"Then we moved to Birmingham and he started to work at the Continental Gin Company. When the plant shut down, we couldn't pay our rent, so Gayle learned the trade of installing weather-stripping.

"There's Gayle now. He's come home for his dinner, so while I'm in the kitchen, he'll be glad to tell you all about his work. He knows more about it in a minute than I do in a whole week. He can tell you all about

how weather-stripping keeps the dirt from coming in but I can tell you that you still have trouble with dirt accumulating in the house! Nothing seems to cure that."

Gayle sat down and said, "Now, let me see just where I should start. I want you to know how I make my living. One of the first and most important arguments for weatherstripped doors and windows is that twenty to forty percent, depending on the weather conditions, of the heating expense of a house can be saved by weatherstripping the doors and windows. Engineering tests have shown that. To weatherstrip a five-roomed house like mine costs about seventy-five dollars. This whole side of my house is weatherstripped, but the other side isn't. You see we have just this one fire in the grate going and its perfectly comfortable, isn't it? Now come with me and I'll let you see the difference in the rooms."

In the other rooms the temperature was uncomfortably lower. Then he began again with renewed enthusiasm; "You have seen for yourself what it will do to the temperature. Well, it keeps out the dust, drafts, soot, rain and snow just as well. It's a great help to a housewife because it helps her to keep the curtains and the wall coverings clean.

"You've seen windows that were fitted so close that you could hardly open them and when you finally got them opened, you had just as much trouble getting them back down? Well, weatherstripping corrects that fault. It's mighty hard to leave a window that is weather-tight, loose enough for easy opening and shutting. Weather-stripping the windows and doors keeps the outside noises on the outside.

"I'm sure you can see why I'm sold on weatherstripping. There are still many other reasons, but none is more important than the prevention of

heat loss. People are always wondering why on earth they have to buy so much coal and are still uncomfortable much of the time. Just figure a little and you can see for yourself. Cracks between the frames and the sashes of double-hung windows vary in width from a very small one to one-fourth inch. Multiply the crack by the distance around the window, which is usually 216 inches. That will give you about $13\frac{1}{2}$ square inches. If you should see a hole that big in your wall you couldn't cover it up quickly enough and yet that is the average space around each window.

"Then there's the question of wind. In the living room of the poorly-built house, the leakage through this one window we were talking about, would change the air every eleven minutes. In this type of house, there is a constant drafty circulation of air that keeps expensive warmed air flowing from the house. A wind blowing on the north side of the house causes cold air to come in and then the warm air goes out the other side. Now you can see that if three sides of the room are weatherstripped, the leakage on the fourth side won't be much.

"When windows warp, swell, or shrink from dampness, weatherstripping takes care of the space left and stops that nerve-racking sound of rattling windows. It will easily pay for itself in the saving of fuel, and of laundry and paint work, but there is one thing to be remembered and that is - that the best type of material, if applied wrong, will help very little. Fully eighty percent of the efficiency of weatherstripping is in the skill of the mechanic that installs it. Good weatherstripping put in right, should last as long as a house does. The weather-stripped house is more comfortable in summer too, so you see it's a good investment anyway you take it.

"If all this is so, you want to know why we don't hear more about it?

Well, I hate to tell you, but the people in the south just haven't realized the saving to be made. Now, in the North, it's different. They use some form of insulation in nearly all the houses and the idea is gradually spreading south.

"We weatherstripped the Comer building, the Farley building and many others. It was a job working on those high windows in the Comer building and we were as black as could be when we came home in the evening.

"No, I am not a partner in the company. A salesman goes around and gets the orders for jobs. He does all the contracting about prices and credit and all we have to do is to install them. My wife's brother has worked side by side with me ever since I started this work. He is really my right hand. He takes out the windows and strips them while I prepare the facings. I would be lost without him. We are called the mechanics.

"I have been doing this work for about twelve years. There are about three months in the year that business is good and then I make from two hundred to three hundred dollars a month. During the other months we do odd repair jobs. Several rental agents give us all their work. I have a car and we put all our tools in the back seat and go wherever we can find work. Lately some of it has been out of Birmingham. Idella doesn't like that so much. When the children were small, she used to go with me and stay at tourist camps, but she can't do that now. We don't like to be separated so much, but we have to make a living.

"A living is about all we have made in the last few years, but we have managed to stay off of relief. I do believe that we are the only Poseys by name, though, that can say that. Sometimes it looked as though in spite of everything that we could do, we just couldn't make it, but along would come another job. The president has done some wonderful things, but I am glad

that we haven't had to use any of that money.

"Yes, we own this house, or at least we are buying it. We were just saying the other day, that we have been paying on it for twelve years and the mortgage is about the same as it was at first. But there's one good thing about buying a place - you don't have to worry about the rent going up and then too, they can't sell it from under you. Besides, the payments are less than rent would be.

"I am certainly glad that I have shown you that weatherstripping is not a kind of wood, as you thought it was. Maybe if more people knew what it was, my business would be better and we could pay off that mortgage.

"But we're doing pretty well anyway," he finished cheerfully. Already we are beginning to feel an improvement in our business since the company started radio talks on the many benefits of weatherstripping.

"There's Idella now. Dinner's ready and she always has something good to eat. Stay with us and see if I'm not right about that."

The Peseys - Weatherstripper -Ala.

Very good

Wife's story - wanted education - got it - went to college studied home economics - helps planned economical meals - family amusements limited husband at marriage working oil fields - returned to wife's aunts' to live, did contract hauling - moved Birmingham - worked in gin - shutdown learned weatherstripping - discussion of business - are buying house
Features: good type thrifty family, educationally ambitious for children proud of independence