

gram intensified enough to make sure that we could defend ourselves against future aggression, could at all times preserve our independence as a nation, and could preserve a world in which democ-

acy may live.

1Dr. Edward C. Elliott, "An Educator Looks at U. M. T.," *American Legion Magazine*, Vol. 38, No. 5, p. 19.

My Brother's Recital

BILL DYE

The big night had arrived. My eight-year-old brother was to perform on the "eighty-eight" in his first recital. Tonight was the climax of a month of madness. Four long weeks had seen the rise and fall of the neighbors' patience. Day and night, night and day, all they heard was piano, piano, piano! They, as well as we, almost went mad. It would not have been too bad if Al could have played the piano without making it an instrument of torture. But his brand of music involved no more than two fingers, one on each hand.

When Al's music teacher first told him of the coming recital, Al had almost passed out of existence from nervousness. He play in a recital? Ridiculous! We thought so too. But the teacher convinced him otherwise. As time marched on, he became more confident of his abilities: the family gave up trying to discourage him.

Tonight all the parents and friends of the students had assembled to endure the agony with these budding virtuosos. I came prepared to enjoy myself. In one pocket was a deck of cards and in the other a pocket edition of "Captain Horatio Hornblower." I had been to these affairs before.

The choice of the place for the recital bordered on the sacrilegious. A fine old Methodist church was chosen as the victim. A majestic organ maintained its dignified aloofness in the left corner near

the pulpit. The piano, unaware of its impending disgrace, was placed nonchalantly in the right corner. Dogwood stared open-eyed from the front of the auditorium at the audience.

When all was ready the pupils marched in from the right of the hall. The line started with the youngest and smallest and climbed up to the tallest — a girl — who brought up the rear. They took their places gingerly on the front rows and stood until all were in place. Then they all sat down as one body. The recital was about to begin.

In spite of my apparent unconcern, I began to get nervous. I had noticed that evening before leaving the house that Al's confidence had left him. He was scared. So was I now. Captain Hornblower lay neglected in my pocket; the cards were still in the box. I sat on the edge of the pew and dug my fingernails into the wood in front of me. I am sure my parents shared my anxiety. Regardless of my slighting remarks about my brother's pianistic accomplishment I really felt proud of him and was eager to see him do well.

Al, in the front row, was as pale as was Brutus upon beholding Caesar's ghost. And I noticed that in his right hand he clutched his music. This recital was supposed to be conducted entirely from memory. Why should Al, then, have his music? He must have gone to pieces so completely that he was afraid to play

his number without the music in front of him.

The first pupil to perform was a four-year-old boy. Too young to have any fears, he leaped to his feet when he was announced and with a little assistance from the instructor climbed the three steps to the platform, which extended the width of the auditorium, and pranced across to the piano. He was placed on the bench and a box was shoved under his feet since they could not reach the pedals. He played very well and received a nice ovation. And so they went — some nervous, some confident, some audacious, and some quite frightened.

Finally it came time for my brother to do the honors. Slowly he got to his feet and climbed to the stage. The family was now on the edge of the bench with me. I saw mother's hands open and close nervously. Dad showed no external signs of emotion, but I know he was closely watching my younger brother. As if in a trance Al stared for a time at the piano

on the far side of the floor and then slowly and hesitantly moved toward it, the music still clutched in his hand, his eyes riveted to the piano. He carefully placed the music on the piano and then turned to face the audience. He placed one hand in front of him on his stomach and the other on his back, as if about to do a Scottish hornpipe, and bowed. Then he sat down at the piano. His tongue raced back and forth over his lips. Beads of sweat stood out on his forehead. Then he began to play, the music lying open before him. Throughout the entire number the family joined with the audience in holding its breath.

He passed the trial with flying colors. Not one mistake did he make. When the last note had sounded, he sat on the bench in a trance while the people vigorously applauded. Then he seemed to come out of the spell. Slowly he raised his head, his face now wreathed in smiles. Something queer met his eye. For a second he stared; then he broke out in laughter. The music was up-side-down.

Let's Stay Out of It

MARY SCHREIBER

Once upon a time a golden haired princess lived on the top of a great mountain. Now this princess was the ruler of a kingdom whose people occupied all the available living space on that mountain. Everyone was very happy because the princess was a good ruler and all desirable commodities were plentiful.

All about the base of the mountain were other little kingdoms. One day all these rulers got into an argument, and so these kingdoms started a war among themselves.

Up on the mountain the princess and her council heard about the war which was going on down below. They called a

meeting, and the talk buzzed around for days and days. In fact, the talk was so loud that even the warring kingdoms could hear it. After all the discussion died down, the princess decided not to enter the war. Her people were self-sufficient on their mountain. It seemed sensible to stay out of the quarrel.

Down at the base of the mountain the cannons boomed and the rifles shot. And one day a soldier mis-aimed his cannon and shot at the mountain. Boom! went the cannon. When all the smoke cleared, the people down below saw that the kingdom up above had been blown away. Poor princess, poor council, poor mountain!