

Nature as a Mirror: BUTTERFLIES

By: Dorothy Gonick

Fragile butterfly that brightens warm summer days flits from flower to flower.

The warm summer air is filled with a ballet of dancing butterflies. The display of kaleidoscopic colorful flight is a delight to the eye and to the soul. Wherever flowers bloom we may see the oranges of Skippers and Monarchs, the yellow and whites of Sulfurs, and the brightness of the Blues. There may be Swallowtails, Red Admirals and the Painted Lady that have multi-colored designer wings. We watch the flight of butterflies with fascination as they sip nectar from flowers of meadow and garden. If you sit quietly among the flowers, perhaps one will alight near you, especially if you are wearing bright colors. To have a butterfly rest on your motionless, outstretched hand is an awesome experience—what a gift of loveliness!



Butterflies vary in size and habits as well as color; some have a very short lifetime, while others like the Monarchs, migrate to warmer climate in the winter and return in springtime. All have begun life as caterpillars, to feed on foliage, shedding their outer covering (called an exoskeleton) several times as they grow, until it's time to spin their cocoons. It takes courage to split and emerge from this covering when necessary for growth to happen, and especially when breaking from the safety of its cocoon. We "mirror" this as we grow through our own stages of life; leaving childhood, developing our skills and meeting the challenges of maturity to "spread our wings" in the adult world. This brings thoughts of a person who finds it difficult to break out of his "cocoon" of silence and dark despair, unaware of his God-given ability to break out, spread wings of freedom and enjoys the beauties of life.

What an incredible, creative God we have who causes a tiny egg to hatch into a squirmy caterpillar that feeds on foliage until it turns itself into a chrysalis. There it hibernates in its dark, silent world while being transformed, soon to break out of its cocoon and flex newfound wings of incredible beauty to take flight and beautify the world. God's creative wisdom has placed the butterfly's sense of smell in the supple antennae to recognize where nectar is to be found. The keen eyesight of the compound eyes are able to see flowers as we see them, and also in their infrared spectrum. He has placed the sense of taste conveniently in its feet, helping to locate acceptable flowers and pollinating the flower at the same time. Having chosen a blossom, another surprising feature is noted—a coiled drinking tube called the proboscis is uncoiled to probe deeply into the center of the blossom to extract sweet nectar. What a surprising bit of wonder and creativity is the butterfly! I wonder, did God in his love for us, create the butterfly as a gift of hope and comfort? The ancient Greeks, as well as the Aztecs and other civilizations found great comfort in the belief that the soul of a person left the body as a butterfly— a very comforting belief for the bereaved.

May our summer months be blessed with warm breezes, fragrantly colorful flowers and graceful, enchanting butterflies.

NATURE AS A MIRROR

By Dorothy Gonick
QUIET WOODLAND

The woodland beckons-
To become one with nature
We stroll hand-in-hand.

There's magic in an early morning hike into the woods with a congenial companion, enjoying nature in all its beauty and variety, away from the everyday noise and bustle. As we start out the golden dawn of sunrise emerges before us, we leave the dew sparkled lawn and enter the shadows of the



woodland where silence is all around except for the crunching of fallen leaves underfoot. Birds soon greet the dawn with cheerful song, accenting the quiet beauty of the woods. Butterflies are snippets of loveliness flitting from flower to flower, their colorful wings like flying petals. Near the path we see varied mushrooms, some like a russet umbrella and others atop slender stems. Unseen creatures have nibbled these morsels and we hope to see these creatures somewhere along our hike. Spider webs and anthills tell us that the woods are full of life, silently going about their business of living. We become aware of muffled sounds of buzzing, clicks, and squeaks of the insect world that we may not see. To quote Shakespeare, "The earth has music for those who listen."

We come to the clearing where glaciated boulders invite us to rest awhile and eat the crisp apples we have brought. Squirrels are gathering acorns nearby and we tempt them with our peanuts. It is fun to watch them snatch a nut, then scurry away before eating it or burying it for their winter food. Their fluffy tails twitch and twirl as they chase away. A black crow watches with keen eye for a chance to swoop down and claim a nut. The nearby brook breaks the silence with its soothing murmur as it flows over its pebbly bottom and we wonder if perhaps fish are swimming silently there.

Nature flourishes in silence. Silently the sun, moon and stars move through the heavens. Tiny seeds sprout silently in the woodland soil. Plant life from trees to mosses grow in silence, yet it is not emptiness that we sense in nature, but a pulsating, living, embrace of heartening, silent wholeness. We return from our quiet hike through the woods enriched and content. We recall that Mother Theresa said, "We need silence to be able to touch souls." And we note that our hike has touched our souls.

Patriots of Peace

By Dorothy Gonick

Wars of ages past
fought for gain of land;
for power over people,
to make their nation grand.

Colonists hoped for fairness,
voted for freedom.
Revolutionary patriots
fought hard and won.

Then came a time of shame
when pushing ever westward-
the Indians deserved respect.
Their griefs still being heard.

The Civil War which
threatened to divide,
brought freedom to the slaves,
Unity: now nationwide.

Two World Wars
clouded the skies,
yet Allied patriots
kept freedom alive.

Overseas we have gone
helping the weak
their freedom to gain,
their dignity to keep.

Today we have
new wars to fight.
The evils are many
and not pleasant sights.

There's hunger, corruption, hate,
oppression, ignorance, fear
we've been sad to discover.
And prejudice, poverty, greed,
pollution, loneliness, stress
are more to uncover.
Are there many more
for us to deplore?

Let's put down our guns,
choose a cause to defend.
Win freedom from these;
bring strife to an end.

Let's be Patriots of Peace
and justice, release.

Prohibition Days

By Dorothy Gonick

Growing up in the 1920's and '30s during prohibition days, our values were influenced greatly by our parents and grandparents. Booze was abhorred by them. Mom and Grandma Adair belonged to the Woman's Society of Christian Service and the WCTU (Women's Christian Temperance Union).

This ink blotter was given out by the Hospital in Rochester, Minn. and used by my grandparents. We kids thought it was funny and had fun imagining liquor turning people's heads into wooden ones. Before the 18th Amendment was passed, Grandpa Adair had once attended a lecture by Carrie Nation and acquired a mother-of-pearl hatchet-shaped pin. Carrie Nation was a dedicated fighter for prohibition of liquor and went from one tavern to another chopping up the bars with her hatchet while giving a fiery lecture to the patrons. As kids, we were awed by that story, admired that tiny pearl hatchet, and vowed never to touch liquor.

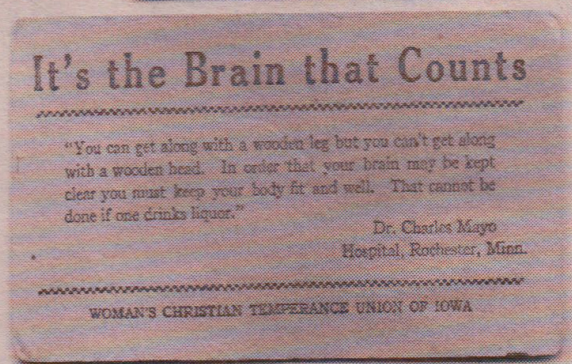
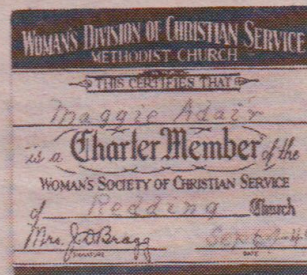
In 1933 when the states were given the choice of allowing liquor to be sold or not, Iowa chose to be a 'dry' state and Missouri chose to be 'wet'. Our Iowa farm's southern boundary was on the Iowa/Missouri state line. Soon a Beer Shack was erected just over the state line and became a focal point for thirsty Iowans, judging by the license plates on cars passing by, some from 100 miles away. Cousin Maurice visited us each summer and remembers opening his bedroom windows for fresh air and hearing country music blasting away throughout the night.

There were times that motorists were out of gas or had slid off the road, they came knocking on our door asking for help, even in the middle of the night, which caused Dad to form a hatred for what liquor did to people and he began locking our doors after years of unconcern. Nevertheless on those mud-slicked roads, he would use his tractor or hitch a team of horses to extricate the car and send it on its way. He vowed never to patronize a place that served or sold liquor.

Years later on a family trip to Maine, Mom's relatives invited us to an elegant restaurant for dinner. When we arrived, Dad noted that drinks were offered. He didn't criticize us, but stuck to his vow and would not go in, but took his small grandson, Tommy, down the street to a Wimpy's for hamburgers. Another time we remember happened while on a social visit when he was given a mug of beer. Not wanting to create an incident, he quietly poured it onto a potted fern. The host noticed his empty mug and promptly refilled it!

When liquor became available in Iowa, the Beer Shack was closed but was soon reopened to sell fireworks: something that Missouri allowed and Iowa did not. From fire-water to fire-works, and the traffic flowed on. Here's an interesting postscript:

During World War II my fiancé was stationed in Germany and then served in the Military Government after the war ended. The U.S. Army Education Program was formed and servicemen were given the opportunity to enroll in classes at certain schools. Walt was accepted at the Bavarian State Brewery of St. Stephan (Weihenstephan) A&T School, where he achieved his brewmeister certificate. Dad may not have approved, but we weren't chastised for it. After his discharge Walt returned to his pre-war occupation of soil scientist, which pleased the family I'm sure.



ROADSIDE LOVLINESS

By Dorothy Gonick

"Oh, look!" Mom exclaimed as we passed a clump of purple flowers along the roadside, as we came home from a shopping trip in Grant City. "Aren't they lovely!" Later that afternoon, Dad surprised her with an armful of those lovely roadside flowers. Mom arranged the purple *Liatrus* flowers in a big crock on our front porch for everyone to enjoy.

All of nature pleased Mom and we 'caught' her delight in flowers, birds, weather and all it had to offer. The upside down feeding of Nuthatches and the brilliant orange of Orioles were a couple of her favorite birds to see. Queen Anne's Lace was a weed that enchanted her in summertime. It bloomed alongside the lovely blue Chicory plant

that Dad admired. It was such a favorite of his that when mowing along the roadside he skipped cutting it, and allowed the Chicory and Queen Anne's Lace to bloom extravagantly.

The delight in all of nature and the love and concern they had for each other and for our family became implanted in each of us. Today the sight of Chicory and Queen Anne's Lace blooming together along a roadside continues to warm our hearts with happy thoughts of Mom and Dad.

