

# Response to Needs

By PIERCE HARRIS

IT HAPPENED so many years ago that the whole countryside is changed and conditions are entirely different, but I think the principle is the same. Principles have no dateline. Like it says in the Book, they are the same yesterday, today and forever.



He was a country doctor and I was a country preacher. We became fast friends, though he was a good many years older than I. Then one day he said, "Preacher, I'm going to retire." It hit me like a hammer in the head. "Retire!" I said. "Why, and what will all these people do without you to doctor them?"

He smiled. "I'm tired of travelling these muddy mountain roads at all hours of the day and night. I'm going to settle down to looking after my farm, my cattle, and my investments." It still hit me—hard!

## ONE DOCTOR

There were several other preachers in the county, but only one other doctor. It was

*Thoughts to good & lovely things. Think in these things?*

going to be hard to get another doctor to come there and take his place. This was a long time ago. The shadow of the great depression was already dark across the mountains and money was scarce.

"You can't!" I said, as serious as a young inexperienced preacher can say it, "You can't! Think of all the people who will die but who might live if you keep on doctoring them." And that led him off into a long rambling dissertation about how he had done his duty by them, and how he was now entitled to his days of relaxation and rest. It didn't impress me.

"These people are the ones who made you rich," I said, though rich was probably an extravagance, because he was only worth about three hundred thousand dollars, or in that neighborhood, but like I say, that's a real nice neighborhood.

So he retired. He looked after his farm, his cattle and his investments, until there came a day . . . or a night, rather—cold, rainy winter night.

We had already gone to bed; then the phone rang. It was a friend way back up in the valley. He was much excited. "Could you get 'Doc' to come up here?" he asked, and his voice trembled like a leaf in the wind. "Mamie is going to have her baby tonight and we've just got to have help."

This was years before it was thought necessary to have a baby in a hospital.

It got me excited too. I called Doc and he had already gone to bed, too, and wasn't any too happy being called at that hour.

## NOT MADE

"If you don't go," I said, "I'm going to announce from every pulpit on my circuit that you've let a woman suffer—and maybe die—when you could have relieved her suffering, delivered her baby, and maybe saved her life." I wasn't mad, but I was as close to it as a preacher ought to come.

Reluctantly, he got out of bed and went. Benevolent black-mail, you'd say.

Just a few years ago, he died, full of honors, and beloved by all the people who called him Doc to the end of his days, and called him when he was needed.

His farm never suffered. His cattle took blue ribbons at shows all over the South, but his greatest happiness was in going back where he was needed.

"You shook me up," he used to say, "but you also saved me from a life of selfishness in which I could have never been really happy."

Now, let me ask you: Does a man, doctor, or what-have-you, have the right to retire when he is needed to help relieve the sufferings and sins of a sorrowful and shaken world? I doubt it.

Deep down in us all is the desire to know that we are still needed, and when we respond to that need, it may cost us money or time we want as our own, but it is finally the ultimate happiness.

# Some Memories of the Good Doctor's Battle

*Yes, Memories of the Good Doctor are pleasant indeed!!*  
*like these*  
*Memories articles by them are helpful, and turn our*  
By ERNEST ROGERS

A YEAR AGO Saturday was the saddest day of my life. It was at 7:05 the morning of July 27, 1962 that the Good Doctor died in the Emory University Hospital after fighting a losing battle for almost a year against the relentless attrition of age. Had he lived one more week he would have been 87 years old.

For the two-and-a-half months he was in the hospital it was apparent that it was only a matter of time—and not much, at that—before the end would come. It seemed to me that on no one day could it be said that he was in better condition than he had been the day before.

I am convinced that he knew he was living out his last days yet the subject was never mentioned between us. Before entering the hospital he had put his affairs in order but without expressing any doubt that he would be restored to useful good health. The matter of death was never discussed.

The night before he died I left the hospital with a heavy heart. The physicians who had exerted every skill at their command to fight off the inevitable had told me the end was not far away. I, too, had a premonition that the sands were running out.

So, after returning home, I wrote his obituary and marked it "Hold For Release." I planned to give it to Harold Davis, The Journal's city editor, to be placed in his files for use when needed. At the time I didn't realize it would be needed the next day.

A year has passed since the Good Doctor died. Time has worn away the keen edge of grief. But no day has passed since his death that he hasn't been in my thoughts. At odd moments I recall amusing things he had said or done; bits of his personal philosophy of living that had been etched in my memory; words of counsel that had guided me through the treacherous shoals of indecision and disorganization.

## VERY NEAR

There are times when I feel his presence very near. This is especially true on Sundays when I am almost convinced that he is sitting in his accustomed place in the sanctuary of the First Methodist Church where he rendered his last service as a minister of the gospel as Dr. Pierce Harris' associate. There are nights when I am watching television that the feeling comes over me that he is sitting in his rocking chair in our den and commenting about this and that.

This feeling of nearness was especially strong a few nights ago



when I attended the annual picnic of the Hemphill Bible Class which he taught for many years and which meant so much to him. Several others told me they had similar feelings. (As a tribute to the memory of the Good Doctor the members of the Hemphill Class are contributing the altar flowers for the services at the First Methodist Church next Sunday.)

My recollections of the Good Doctor are happy ones. He was one who let the sunshine of life disperse the shadows and had the happy faculty of transmitting this attitude to others. He was a man

## PERCENTAGE SAM SAYS:

*"The art of staying happily married is not nearly as tough as the art of staying unhappily married."*

of good humor as well as one of good will. He had a religious faith so strong that it overcame such doubts and indecisions as sometimes overcome other men. He never, as the saying goes, set the world on fire but he started a few blazes here and there.

I have taken the liberty of writing this very personal column on the anniversary of the Good Doctor's death because I feel there are many others who may read it who also have lost loved ones within the last year and share similar feelings about them.

Also, to those who may be puzzled by the term "the Good Doctor" I would like to explain that he was my father—Dr. Wallace Rogers—a Methodist minister who served his God, his denomination and his fellow man with consecration and dedication throughout his long life.

## PEACHTREE PARADE

. . . BILL CRYSTAL, the Lenox Square purveyor of young folks' clothing, fraternizing with friends on The Mall . . . Likewise BYRON BROOKE, the stock and bond company exec . . . EDDIE ALBRIGHT, the clothing store advertising genius, dining of a recent evening at Yori's . . . ABE WEINSTEIN, the advertising consultant, recalling days of Yore when he was being reared in Augusta (Ga.) . . . The REV. HUBERT A. (BALDY) WHITE, the minister-ordinator, commenting on recent expeditions in the interest of better after-dinner and convention speaking . . . HUGH MERCER, the CPA, proud of the fact that he recently has shed beaucoup avoirdupois . . . Pome In Which Is Contained An Observation Concerning The Virtues Of Frugality:

Persons who indulge in thrift  
Give their own morale a lift.