

## COMPETITIONS . . .

tion. Toby Fillpot, apparently, was a drinker whose ways were the talk of the countryside, and his feats in this direction prompted the Rev. F. Hawkes, in 1759, to put them into a song, half-humorous, half-gruesome. These are its first and last verses:

"Dear Tom, the brown jug that  
now foams with mild ale,  
(In which I will drink to sweet  
Nan of the vale)

Was once Toby Fillpot, a thirsty  
old soul  
As e'er drank a bottle or fathomed  
a bowl.

"His body, when long in the  
ground it had lain,  
And time into clay had dissolved  
it again,

A potter found out, in the covert  
so snug,

And with part of fat Toby he  
formed this brown jug."

Prowess in drinking, with attendant good-fellowship, thus became the accepted idea connected with the Toby jugs. And here, as though to draw us right into the midst of jolly company at some cheerful inn, is the finest Toby jug of them all! In green-glazed pottery, more than pint size, with a grin that seems first cheerful, then sardonic, according to the angle at which it is held, is a character stepped straight from the past. In the Devonshire song "Widdecombe Fair" mention is made of the cronies who rode to the fair astride the grey mare: "Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney, Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawke, Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all." Well, our green Toby jug is Jan Stewer himself—witness his name carved on his collar—the very embodiment of the old song.

I heard it said recently that persons' characters may be summed up by their treasured possessions. These, then, are mine, apart from the intangible gems of friendship, music, books, and nature. I leave the judgment with those who share my treasures.—"London Lass."

### Second Prize

AN oval lustre dish, which has successfully negotiated the many packings and unpackings of a much-travelled existence, is a piece of china I should be sorry to lose. More years ago than I care to admit I was on a visit to Auckland, when a friend took me to a garden party held by Miss Elsie K. Morton for the girls of her "page." It was a delightful experience and I can still visualise the glorious garden in which it was held—a garden which Miss Morton has endeared to her readers in that chucklesome book "Gardening is Such Fun" and to her radio audience. Only a woman could have grown such a garden. It was a glorious hodge-podge of cornflowers,

scarlet poppies, and escholtzias, ablaze with colour. Little paths crept among the blooms, and here and there the gardener had made a determined effort to conform to the accepted standards of respectable suburban gardening by carving out little formal beds for sweet peas, carnations, and other treasures. As one wandered through this field of wild flowers, these formal beds came as a distinct surprise, and no less surprising to my country eyes was a large bush of St. John's wort, which I had been accustomed to regard as little better than ragwort. In fact, I would not have been astonished to come face to face with a ragwort bush at any moment.

After the challenging glare of colour it was inexpressibly restful to sit under the shade of the fruit trees. Here was cool, green lawn which took on a new tranquillity, and a white-painted seat on the back of which some verses had been written by

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### TO GWENETH, WHO WRITES TO ME

*I have a friend who gathers treasure,  
Sweet treasure of the cadenced word.  
(How else should she linger on "grey-winged day"*

*On chords that her inner heart has heard?)*

*I have a friend who garners beauty—  
To her, dawn's tender star is fair:  
A gull's slow grace, an autumn leaf,  
And birdsong, borne on tranquil air.*

*Yet though she garners joy, and treasures  
it,*

*She hoards it not, as misers do their gold.  
Gifts fill her eager hands, and into mine  
She pours them freely for my heart to hold.*

—M.E.T.

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Isobel Maude Peacock, Miss Morton's friend, as a memorial to Miss Morton's mother, for it was here that she loved to sit in the summer afternoons. A lovely idea, don't you think? One that has always appealed to me.

And the dish. Well, that was fifth prize in one of the competitions, for Miss Morton, like the kind and gracious lady she is, had arranged the number of prizes to suit the number of guests. I always wash and dry it most carefully and pack it with special care when it goes on its travels, for it never fails to bring back to my "inward eye" a picture of that lovely garden with its dazzling colour and the cool, hallowed contrast of the trees.

—"Willow Whistle," Christchurch.

## Full Many a Mile to School

I HAVE lived among hills most of my life and they still draw me back. Our hills are almost bare of foliage except for the occasional lines of pines upon their ochred crests. Nevertheless, the valley also has its appeal, with its cultivated river flats and curving landscape bordered on either side by tussocked hills, while the snow-capped Alps meet the gorge and cut deep into the valley on the farther side.

I remember as a child watching the sun rise on a winter's morning. Being the eldest I used to marshal the family together at 7.30 a.m. and we would start out in a sleeping world of white frost to walk a full mile, mostly uphill, to the station gate to meet the school bus at 8 a.m. Half-way up we had a resting place and would stop to watch the sun rise. There would be a brightening of the sky in the east behind a hill across the valley, and then the orange rim of the sun would make its appearance over the crest. Gradually it grew larger and if you stood very still you could see it slowly moving until it looked like a golden ball resting on the hill and you could feel its warmth. It set the frost crystals shooting myriads of colours in every direction, colours clearer and purer than earth-born gems as they festooned the grasses, tussocks, and gorse bushes. I just couldn't concentrate on French verbs with such beauty before me, so I'd give it up and continue to gaze about me as I reluctantly continued on my way. If we were early, or the bus late, and we were becoming chilly with waiting, we'd collect pieces of dead gorse and place it in our boulder-built fireplace where my eldest brother would strike a match to it. Then we



would huddle close to the flames to be warmed and comforted ready for our long and tedious journey to school. When we returned the sun would be set, so we'd run to keep warm till we reached home where Mother would have a hot dinner awaiting us.

—"Clara Jane," Rakai.