



# STRIKE SECRET

"MY FATHER a scab! My father a scab!" screamed Johnnie. "He is not! And I'll beat you up. I'll beat up any of you guys that says so again!"

"Yeh, your father is a dirty yellow scab. And he's gone down in the mines ter work," yelled another kid at Johnnie.

"My father's not a scab!" Then Johnnie got so angry at the insult that he immediately started to beat the other boy up. However, the other fellow was older and larger than Johnnie, who was only eight years old, so Johnnie went home with a black eye, and a bloody nose.

But Johnnie didn't cry. No, indeed. He was too brave a boy for that. All he wanted was to get home as soon as possible and ask his father if he was a scab or if he wasn't. He surely hoped not. How he and his whole gang hated scabs.

Imagine when a strike is called and all the workers go out of the mines to fight for better conditions, these people go inside the same mines to work for the bosses. They go in to break the workers' strike!

Johnnie and all the other boys in the gang had decided that they would fight all the scabs and their children. They would also try to show them how wrong their pops were to work with the boss and break the strike. Now, what could be worse than to have his own father a scab! His own father, why it was impossible!

He ran across the wooden bridge over the creek, and alongside the railroad track. He dashed into the house and called at the top of his voice, "Where's pa, where's pa?"

"Why, Johnnie," exclaimed his mother, "look at your face, you're all bloody."

Johnnie's mother pulled him over to the wash basin to scrub his face with some yellow soap and well water. Johnnie, however, struggled and pulled and tugged. "Ma, where's pa? I wanna see pa. Where is he?"

Just then, his father entered. Big John was a tall, husky man, with haggard features and large circles under his eyes.

"Pa," began Johnnie, standing before his father on his

two little sturdy legs with an accusing look in his eyes, "Did you go into the mine today?"

"Yes," replied his father.

Johnnie's fists clenched. To think of it, his father went into the mine. His own father, who had taught him to hate a scab as the rottenest kind of person, was a scab himself!

Tears came to Johnnie's eyes. He could stand a beating without a whimper. He could stand a bloody nose and a black eye, but to have his own father whom he loved so much be a scab, that was the last straw.

"Pop, are you really a SCAB?" he asked.

Johnnie could control himself no longer. He dashed out of the house, before his father could reply. He wouldn't have anyone, not even his own father, see him cry.

He ran and ran until he came to a deserted part of the patch. There he sat down amid some scrapped cars. The shame of it—his own father a scab. How could he ever face the gang again? How could he look into any honest striker's eyes when he knew that his father was a . . . was a rat? He couldn't even think of it.

Johnnie decided that he wouldn't go home at all, ever.

He'd run away. Finally he fell asleep amid the quiet of the wrecked autos and the grey of the slate dump.

In the meantime, Johnnie's father was looking for him. Big John found him and brought him home still sleeping. Johnnie was undressed and put to bed.

The next morning Johnnie awoke, and thought it perfectly natural to be in bed, but he reminded himself that he had run away last night. Then with a shock he remembered that his father was a scab. . .

He jumped out of bed hurriedly and started to dress. He looked up and there beside him was his father.

Johnnie and his pap had always been good friends—buddies as a matter of fact. Wherever pap had gone, there you would find Johnnie trailing along behind him. Johnnie had gone to secret union meetings in the deep woods with Big John. He had stood at the edge of the forest on the lookout for state troopers or deputies while the speakings were going on. So, Johnnie's father knew that he could trust his boy. He whispered to him, "Can you keep a secret?"

Johnnie answered, "Yes."

"Well, boy, I go to work, and it does look as though I'm

## underground infiltration.

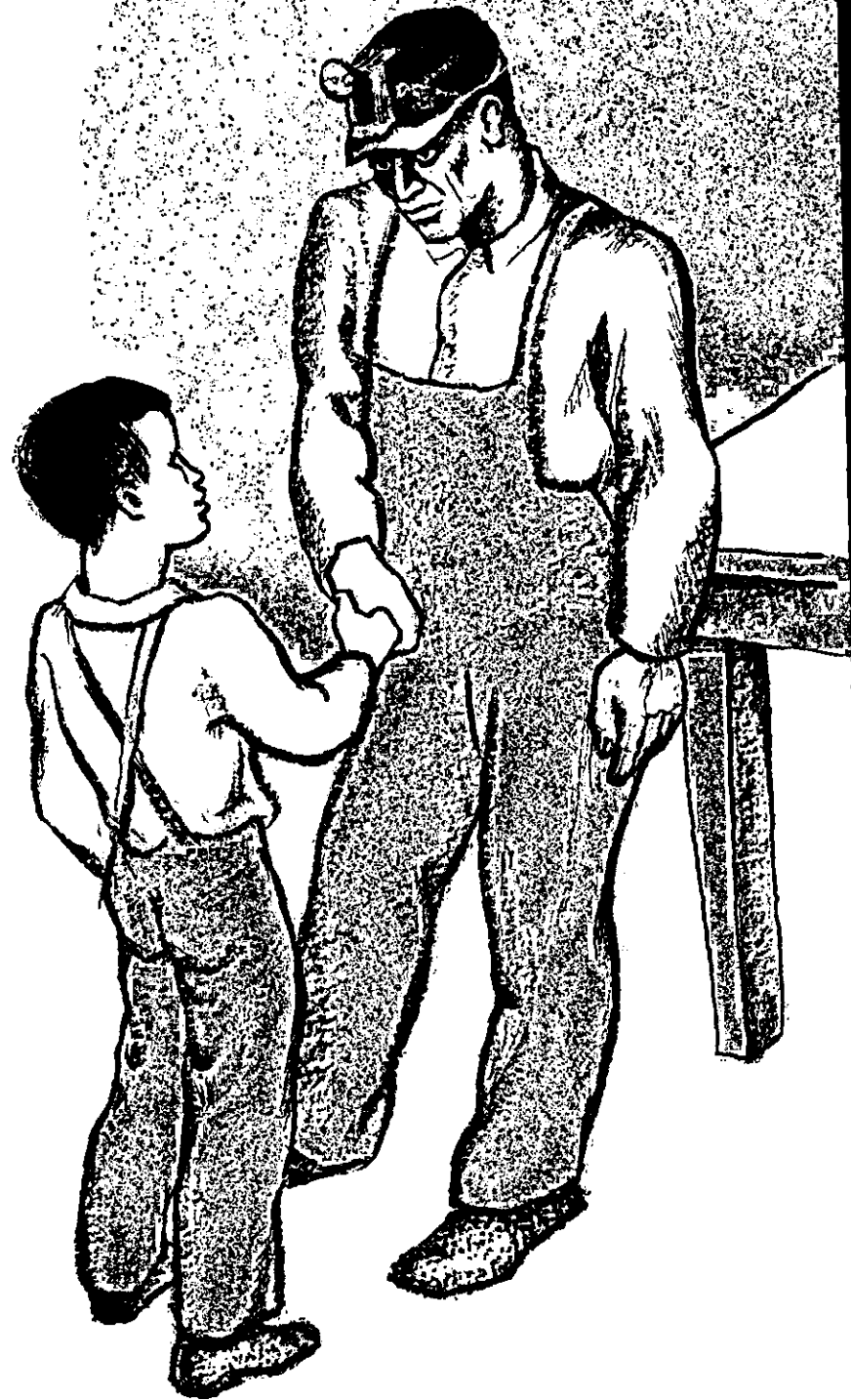
scabbing, but I'm not, son. I was sent into the mines by the new union to get the other fellows out—to make them join our union. You see? No one must know about this. It will remain a secret between you and me only."

Johnnie promised, and he kept his word. Johnnie and Big John shook hands and looked each other squarely in the eye.

It was hard for Johnnie to keep his secret. Especially when he was called a scab's boy by the gang. They kicked him out, because they thought that he really was a scab's child. But, Johnnie knew he was all "union." He knew that his father wasn't a scab. He knew that his father was working for the miners and their union, and for this reason he walked with his head high in the air.

A few days later, the shift his pap worked in came out on strike. They came out to fight side by side with the other miners for better conditions.

Johnnie knew that it was his father's work. He felt proud. But he kept his secret. No one ever knew until after the strike was over—and then it wasn't Johnnie who told—it was Johnnie's father. He explained it to the gang so that they would again make Johnnie a member.





## THE ISLAND ACROSS THE LAKE

THE BAKE SHOP was full of good things to eat. There were brown and white loaves, buns, cakes, and delicious cookies. The air was filled with savory odors.

The door opened and in stepped a little girl of about ten. She was very small and thin for her age. Her eyes looked large and dark in her peaked little face. The hungry girl looked about. Seeing no one, she grabbed a loaf of bread and dashed out of the store.

Alice ran as fast as her skinny little legs could carry her. Faster and faster as though all the world were at her heels, and she must hurry on. She scrambled across the car tracks and fled from the small dingy factory town into open country, still hugging the bread tightly in her arms.

Finally, she came to a secluded spot, and sat down to eat. Alice was so hungry and ate so quickly that her drawn stomach was soon too full to eat the whole loaf. The remaining piece was carefully wrapped in a leaf that lay on the ground. There

tired and worn, her hunger quieted, the little girl fell fast asleep.

No one knows how long Alice slept. But she was awakened by the gabbling of a bird. She opened her eyes very much frightened.

For there before her stood an extremely queer looking creature. A bird that she had never before seen. It had an enormous bag under its long bill, webbed feet like those of a duck, and its eyes were small and beadlike.

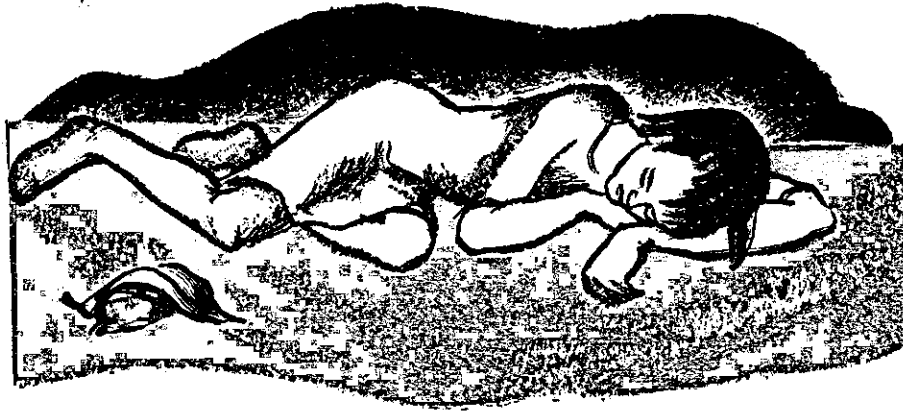
Alice's fright turned to sudden anger! The bird was calmly devouring her loaf! "Oh, you ugly bird, why are you eating my bread?"

The bird looked at Alice with eyes so sad that her heart softened. She understood that he must have been as starved as she had been.

"What are you?" she asked.

"I am a Pelican."

"Where do you come from?"



"From the island across the lake."

Alice regarded the bird with curiosity. She noticed its clean snowy whiteness, short awkward feet, and squat capable body. She observed that around its

neck it wore a ring made of the slender reeds which grew in abundance along the shores of this very lake.

While the little girl was so carefully examining the bird, the bird in turn was taking stock of the little girl. The pelican took in Alice's bare feet, torn dress, and peaked face.

"What is that you got round your neck?" Alice curiously asked.

Then the surprising thing happened. The pelican began to cry. Alice looked about distractedly. What had she done? She saw a piece of bread that had fallen to the ground, forgotten. She offered it to the bird. But in spite of the inducement, the pelican would not stop weeping.

Huge tears rolled down the side of his bill, and to the

ground. One followed the other—tear after tear. Alice was very much disturbed. She didn't know what to do. After a few moments the pelican as suddenly stopped. He squatted on his haunch in front of the little girl, and started to speak.

"That island across the crystal clear lake is where I and a group of other pelicans used to live very happily. We built our nests and reared families. While Mrs. Pelican cared for the little ones we would bring in pouches full of fish." He pointed to the curious bag which he carried at the end of his long bill. "It was a grand sight to watch the baby pelicans dig deeply into the mother bird's pouch and take out the food that was stored there for them.

"We were great fishers. Sea food was about the only dish we lived on. Most of us swam along the water quietly and then suddenly dived in and caught in our hooked beaks the water animals that we wished to eat. We were very happy and free in our colony—all except one pelican.

"He used to steal from the very little pelicans. We used to call him Mr. Lazy, because he didn't fish for himself. Since we were so very happy, we did not bother him.

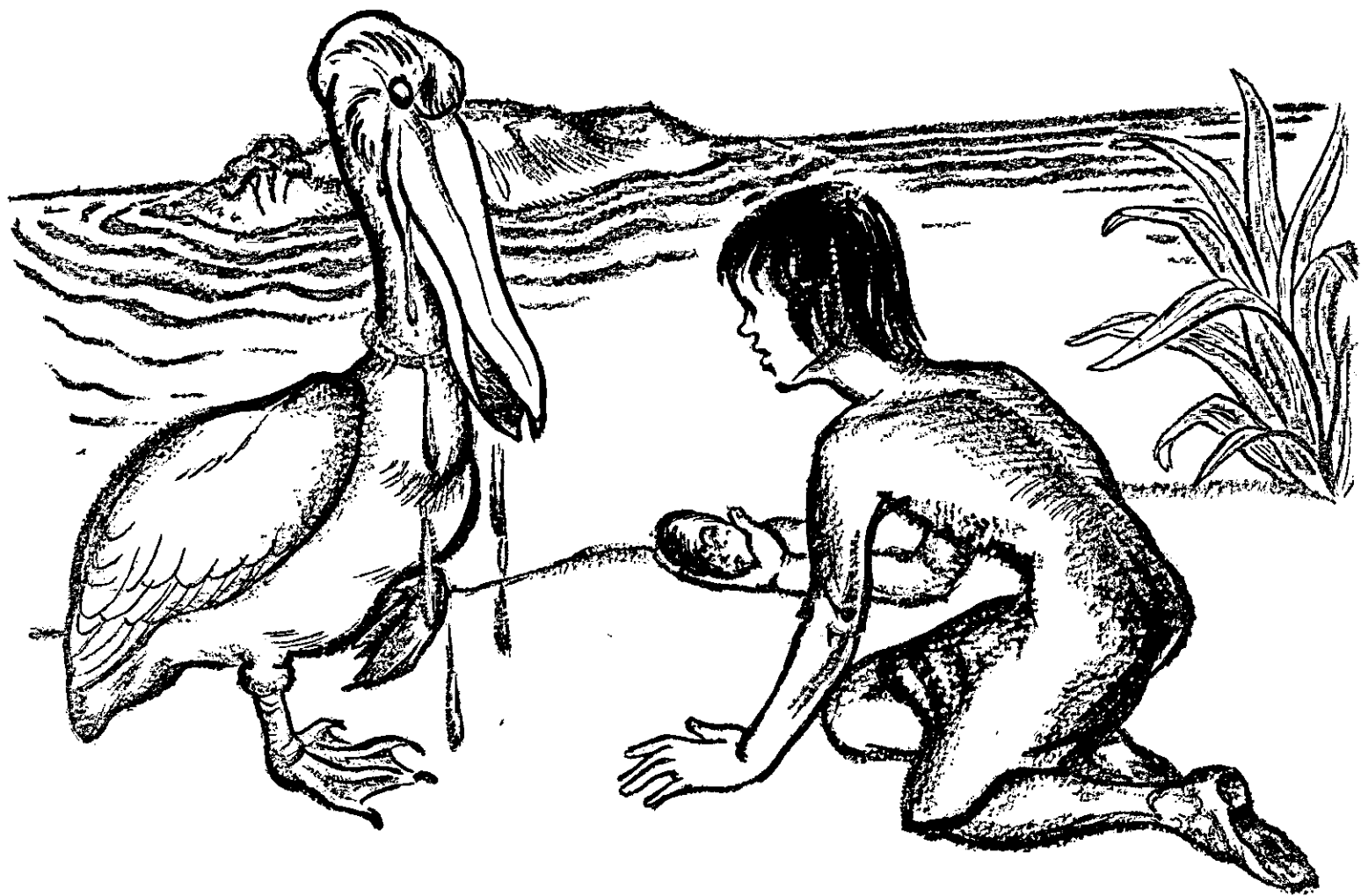
"We had a festival, and a fishing contest. We swam on

our beautiful lake and competed with each other in catching fish.

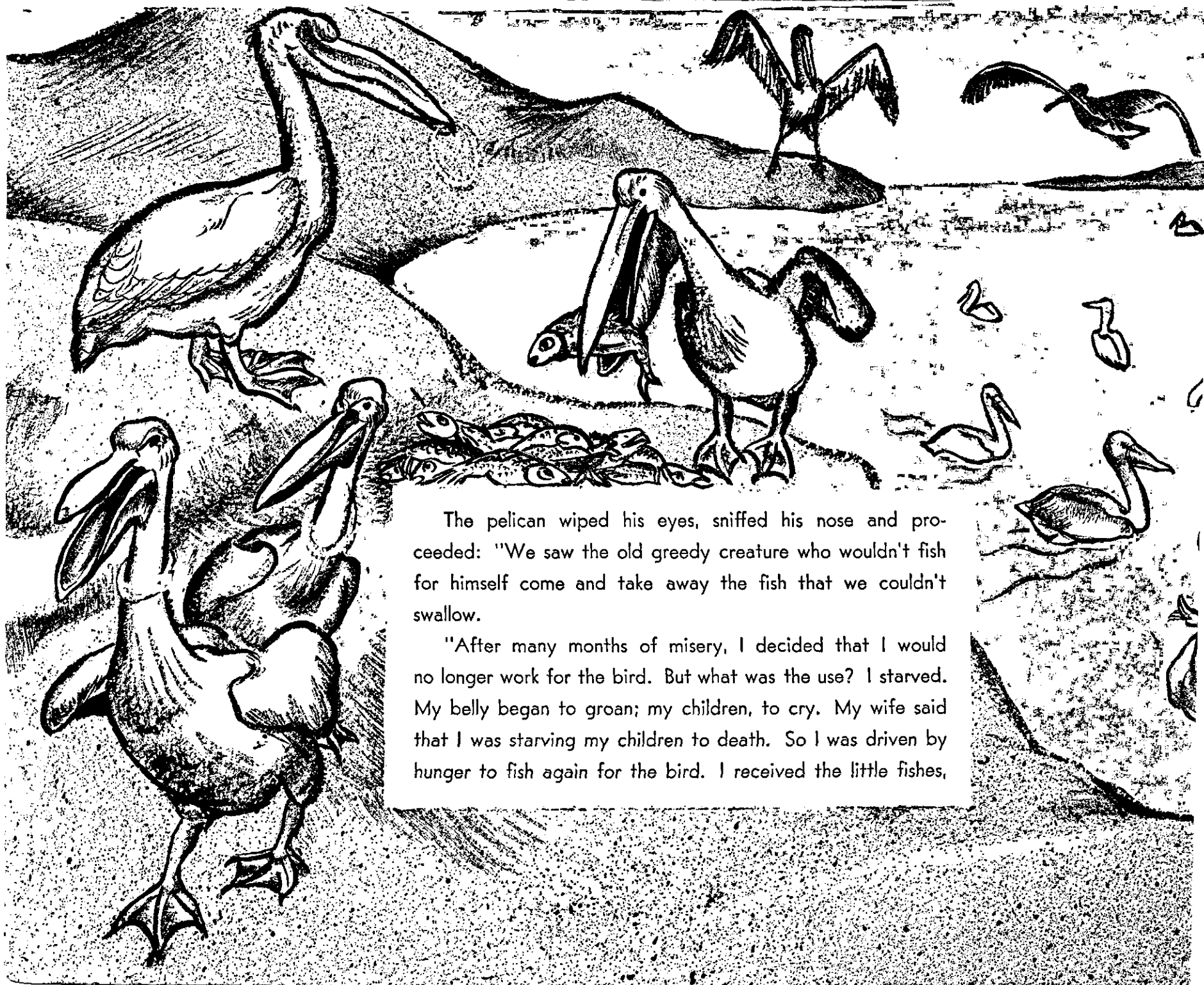
"While we were contesting, the old pelican of the colony climbed up to the top of a huge rock. We noticed that in his pouch he carried a number of reed rings. He called down to us, 'I have here a number of rings that I shall bestow on the ablest fisher. All those who catch over fifty fish will receive a ring from me.'

"This we met with great approval. We looked on it as a lark. We thought that at last the mean pelican was becoming good. Of course, we could all easily catch fifty fish, and we entered the race with great spirits. As we finished our catch we would climb up on the huge rock, and the pelican would put a ring around our necks.

"Soon, nearly the entire colony had rings around their necks. Eating time came. We started to empty our pouches. We wanted to swallow some of the huge fish that we had caught. But horrors! We couldn't. Every time we tried to gulp down a big fish as we had formerly done, we would choke. The only fish that we could eat were the little skinny ones. The ring, placed around our necks, stopped us."







The pelican wiped his eyes, sniffed his nose and proceeded: "We saw the old greedy creature who wouldn't fish for himself come and take away the fish that we couldn't swallow.

"After many months of misery, I decided that I would no longer work for the bird. But what was the use? I starved. My belly began to groan; my children, to cry. My wife said that I was starving my children to death. So I was driven by hunger to fish again for the bird. I received the little fishes,

and the lazy pelican took the large healthy ones for himself."

"What did the greedy thing do with them all?" questioned Alice.

"I also pondered much on that problem. I knew that he couldn't eat all the fish himself. So one day, as he swooped to the air, I followed him. He sailed across the lake to a place called a market. I saw him weigh out the fish that he had stolen from us, and he received money for them in turn. With this money he bought rings to enslave us, and delicious goods for himself.

"I swam back to what had been our happy island, and reported this to the other pelicans. But no one seemed to know what to do. We felt lost."

Here, Alice's friend stopped speaking. He looked ahead, and burst forth: "But we won't stand this much longer. We'll do something. We'll get together." Alice nodded her head in sympathy.

The sun began to set, and cast lovely hues over the clear blue of the lake. Alice had to go home. It was getting late. She hurriedly said, "Good-bye," to the strange bird, and started on her way.

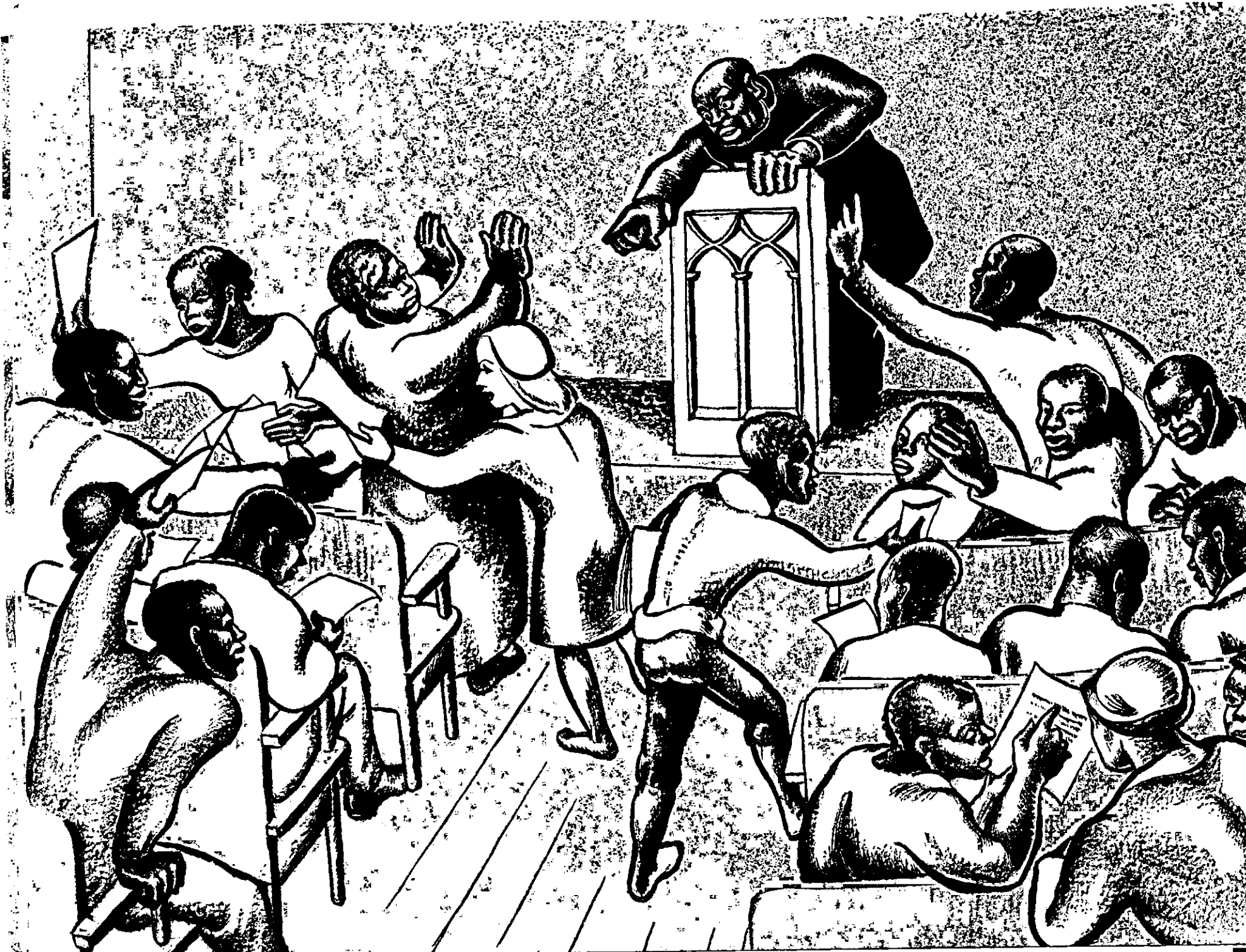
She looked back and saw the pelican sail gracefully through the air with his white capable wings spread against the colorful sky, bound for his island home. As Alice watched the pelican flap his strong wings, she felt confident that he would not long remain a slave.

The little girl walked through the woods towards home. When she neared the railroad tracks she paused to allow a long freight full of goods from the mill roll by. These were the things that her father had made. "Where are they going?" wondered Alice. "They must be going to the same place that the pelican's fish went, to the market," she mused.

The freight moved on and Alice, a lonely little figure in the enclosing darkness went into her ramshackle house. That night Alice tossed upon her bed. Her thoughts were troubled. They were of her father, of the articles he made in the mill and of the pelican and his stolen fish.

"Something must be done about this," Alice murmured through her dreams. "Something's gotta be done."

The words of the pelican came back to her, "We're going to get together. We're no longer going to stand for this."



# A NIGHT'S ADVENTURE

THE CAPITOL building in Washington loomed white and clear against the black of the night. To the west lay the brilliantly lighted Avenue leading to the White House, to the south, the Negro section of the city.

Old gas lamps which had long been replaced by electricity in the wealthier parts lighted our way. They flickered weakly in sharp contrast to the huge electric bulbs on the dome of the nation's capitol and the Avenue.

Soft melody floated from a dark court. Our goal was further. We were going to the Navy Yard where there were more dirty streets, unpaved and muddy, where the houses were small and wooden framed, and looked as though they would fall at the first wintry blast.

One of our Pioneers tripped on the broken pavement. Her leaflets fell from her hand. To the rescue, comrades! But she was up before we could help her. We picked up the scattered leaflets. What luck! Only one was soiled! Laughing, skipping, full of spirits we arrived.

The leader knocked on the door. A frightened voice asked, "Who is it? What do you want?"

"Comrades, friends," we chorused back. The door was promptly opened. A woman who was not old in years, but a working woman bent and broken by labor, framed the doorway. Still, her eyes were bright, and her spirit as young as the merry serious group of Pioneers around her.

"Are the comrades ready?" we asked.

"Yes, come right up," answered Mrs. Lee.

Around and around a snake-like staircase we trudged. We were a noisy bunch of youngsters, and filled to overflowing the small oil heated room.

"Stand Ready!" we called.

"Always Ready!" came the clear response.

The leader took the floor to explain our task. "Here are your leaflets. We'll divide into four groups. Each group will take another territory. George and Selma, Dan and Daisy, Carl and Dora, and Jean and I will be the groups. We shall



start with Sixth Street, from there each group knows its ground. We are to meet after the distribution, and report. Are you ready? Let's go!"

"Let's go!" A flash of white teeth, a bobbing of cotton pigtails.

"Let's go!" We scampered out of the house, and separated into our sections. Up the cobblestoned street from one house to another. A knock on the door. No answer here. Into the letter box we put a leaflet. At the next place there was someone home.

"Oh, the Pioneers, yes, we know. Sure we'll take your leaflet." They were our friends. These people were working men and women. We were only children, but Negro and white; we were fighting for things that they



understood. Sure, they would come to our protest meeting. Were we not fighting for better conditions in the schools, and against the Jim Crow?

Our leaflet told our story. In some of the houses there were workers who could not read our message. We explained, "the schoolhouse where the Negro children in this neighborhood go to school is not fit for use. Years ago it used to be for white children. Now they've turned it over for the use of the Negroes.

"Last week there was a storm. One side of the old building was blown off by the wind. Luckily, the wall crumbled after school hours, when no one was inside. But what if there had been children in the building? What if the children had been in session at that hour? Think of it! We were putting up a fight for more and better schools in working class neighborhoods. The Board of Education was being thrifty at the expense of children's lives."

Under the dim light of a flickering lamp we assembled. But some of us were missing. "Where are Dan and Daisy?"

We waited for them. Still they did not appear. "Could they have been arrested?"

The leader took matters in hand. "Comrades Selma and George, you go into Daisy's territory, and see what happened. In the meantime we will go over to Comrade Lee's home."

We scattered. Selma and George to look for our lost comrades. The rest of us, a little down-hearted and worried, to Comrade Lee's house. As we walked along we could see the beautiful capitol dome, white and shining against the murky blackness of the winter sky. A little to the other side we could see the tall needle-like memorial to George Washington—two beautiful buildings.

Beneath them, on one side of us rose the wire fence of the Navy Yard. Even now, we could see the lights of the night shift and the smoke and flames of the foundries. On the other side the poverty stricken homes, the rambling fences, the



broken panes of glass, stuffed with old rags to keep the winter cold out. The pitiful smoke barely crawled from the chimneys, and the dimly lighted streets spoke of poverty. All this engraved itself clearly on our young minds.

Upon reaching the house we sat around the oil stove anxiously awaiting Selma's and George's return. Soon there were knocks. We jumped—tense and expectant. "Were they safe? Would they be here?"

They were safe. We could hear Daisy's merry laugh.

"What kept you? You sure had us worried." "Why didn't you get here sooner," we shot at them as they came into the small room.

We could again breathe freely.

"Well, you see . . . it was this way . . ." started Daisy, and then she broke into peals of laughter.

"What was it, Daisy, control yourself."

"Oh, I can't tell it, you tell it, George," answered Daisy.

"When we got there we found them surrounded by a crowd of people," began George, but he got no further, for Dan immediately interrupted.

"You see, we bumped into a church meetin'. We handed

out our leaflets, but it seemed sort a sacrilegious to the old pastor. He wanted ter have us thrown out. We had to convince the congregation that he oughtn't throw us out. It took us a mighty long time, but we did it anyway. Didn't we?"

"Indeed, they did. 'Cause when we got there everyone was a swearin' that he would bring more people down to tomorrow's meetin' than the guy next to him."

"Oh, comrades, it was so funny watching that preacher though. We thought sure we'd be kicked out. He was so sore," put in Daisy. "I can't help laughing even now at the way he looked. He seemed like a fat frog all blowed up and ready to burst.

"You know, the old guy wouldn't let us give out our leaflets. He just wouldn't budge, but the workers were with us. They just turned right over in our favor when they saw that one of us was Negro and the other white."

We sighed with relief. Our spirits rose like a kite on a breezy day. Each wanted to tell the other about his experiences. We were chattering away like a bunch of magpies.

Comrade Lee began to hustle us home.

We broke up and parted. "Until tomorrow, comrades."