In a customer's library I ran across a book on architecture which emphasized fitting design and materials to the purpose of a building. The author stated that the keynote of field stone is informality, so the Chases were working in the right medium before they were aware of it. Daisy and I could see, by the time the principal stone walls were finished in the fall of '56, that we should have hand-hewn beams in our living room ceiling. Dismantling an old tree-nailed barn frame did not appeal to us; they were getting hard to find, and one does a lot of work to get a few timbers that are mortised in the wrong places, and perhaps smell horsey. So we figured out a schedule of timbers that we would need. When cold weather came I put in a day now and then cutting suitable pines and rough-hewing them, leaving them up on skids until they had dried enough to be smoothed with a slicking chisel. Door and window lintels were also needed, which I hewed from one large red oak. In spring, when the bark would slip, I cut and peeled straight fir balsams for rafters; left round, they are strong, and light in weight when dry. We also decided to make one side and one end of our bedroom of peeled logs, and these had to be gotten out. This proved to be at least as much work as building an equal area of stonework, but in riding around the country we had observed that a lot of new houses had two or three kinds of material used for the outside walls, and we are not immune to the appeal of fashion, adapted to our situation.

The summer of '56 saw the one stone wall of the ell completed, footings in for the log walls, and low stone walls built for the sidewalls of the porch. We left the end that includes the fireplace chimney until last, and before starting to close it in, had several large loads of sand and rocks dumped inside the house area. In this way we had enough material to complete the mason work, the gable end and chimney being built up together, and this kept the clutter on the inside.

After one slushy snowstorm, I marked the outline of our baby grand in the soft snow in one corner of the living-room-to-be; the slush froze, and these marks were visible for many days. Daisy plodded up the knoll pretty often to see the view and to oversee its improvement.

Toward spring, in 1957, when there was no longer any snow to bother, my nephew Herbie Flanders and his two big boys came to help carry up the hewn timbers, which were in the woods at no great distance. We got them laid from wall to wall, then the spacing of them began. Daisy looked at them from underneath, and after some study said, "I think we have one too many for the space." After eliminating one, the proportions were better. Teamwork. But she had become so accustomed to having blue sky and pine branches overhead, that as soon as we had the hewn timbers in place spanning the parallel walls, she said, "I don't think I'm going to like this, having it closed in overhead." So I had to persuade her a little: "Well, woman, most places that people live in have
roofs." Then she became engrossed in the details of building and dropped her misgivings. I had hewn a pine 8 by 8, 23 feet long, that was to span a picture window opening and a kitchenette alcove; it was to rest on stonework on one end, on a hewn post at the other end, and would be supported midway on the masonry walls of a dish cupboard. Daisy and I raised this to the required height by using a variety of mechanical aids, building up blocking in cobhouse form as we progressed. I would raise one end with my hydraulic auto jack, Daisy would build up the blocking, then we would shift to the other end and bring that up, until we could slide the timber into place.

At about this stage of construction of the stone house, the State Highway Department bought a strip of my woodland a half mile in length for right-of-way when a portion of Route 202 was to be relocated. The proceeds came in handy for buying windows that were in keeping with the permanent character of our building effort. Brother Steve, learning of this transaction, remarked to me, "You must be heartbroken to have the State pay a thousand dollars for your swamp."

Also at about this stage of building, I proposed my prize name for the new domicile: "Heavy House." My good wife kept on picking up wood chips and mortar scraps without comment.
Even more than the scenes and places, the people I have met keep coming to mind. They go on in human experience and develop in various directions, even as you and I. Some of these acquaintances have been renewed periodically through the years; others have been solitary encounters marked by sheer delight.

When tuning in a private school, in a cubicle of a practice room, I looked up and saw a boy watching me, a presence I had felt rather than heard. He was musical -- played the piano and the violin. He had a lively sense of humor without being loud, was friendly without being forward. He had worked during the summer vacations, one year as a bait boy for a lobster fisherman, another summer helping a building contractor. I detected just about every mark of a good upbringing that one might expect of a human being at that stage of experience. His family name was Dodge; when I saw him a second time a few days after our first encounter, we had a lively bit of conversation, during which it came out that I had hoped to see him again, but knew it would be useless for me to chase him, as he could always dodge me.

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Upon entering Franestown village school to do some tuning, I was met by the head teacher, whom I recognized, but could not associate with that type of work. He directed me to the lunch room in the basement for the first piano, and as I made ready to work, I thought about this man whom I hadn't seen for years. He had lived in a town near mine, worked in a mill, operated a filling station, made a marriage that didn't last, played on the town's athletic teams, took his share of drinks with the boys, in general was well liked, but was without much serious purpose in life. He must have felt my surprise at finding him teaching school, because after I had been working a short time he came down and talked with me.

"My kids are upstairs taking a test. I can walk out and leave them any time. We are on the honor system. I have convinced them that anything they might get by cheating will do them no good. The thing that started me on this work was my experience with the Marines in Korea. I was thirty-five at the time, and I kept seeing boys half my age getting picked off all around me, while I was spared. So I did some serious thinking, and reached the conclusion that God had something for me to do in life, more important than I had done up to then." He paused, a little self-consciously. "I don't often mention this. I hadn't finished high school, so when I came back I completed the credits I needed to enter teachers' college." He went on to tell me of completing a teacher training course in much less than the usual time, and of landing a job in that small town where he could know the people and start his work.

"They never had another teacher like me. I am entirely frank with the
children and their parents. Some of the parents couldn't take it at first, but they're coming around; the kids have been with me right from the start. I tell them, 'You can't try anything that I haven't tried, but I'll tell you what happened to me when I did such-and-such a thing.' They get the point about what works in life and what doesn't. I tell the parents things they need to know about their children. I say to one couple, 'Your child needs help at home with his reading,' or in another case, 'Your child is not getting enough affection at home.' A few of them resented this at first. One of my boys went on to high school and dropped out after a few weeks. I went and talked to him and his parents together -- told them things out of my own experience. Pretty soon I had them all crying, and I was, too. The boy went back to school and has been getting along all right ever since.

"I take two children home with me each weekend -- boys one week, girls the next. My wife and I have no children. We go on a hike Saturday, or to a sports event; we take them to a movie, and we go to church on Sunday. It's their first experience away from home, for most of them."

The children adored this man. He went on to larger teaching positions, but they haven't forgotten him. I haven't.

* * * *

Upon entering a residence one summer afternoon, I found my customer seated at her grand piano, playing, while her house guest, obviously a skilled artist, was doing an oil sketch of the interior, with the instrument and player as the central subject. The player arose and said to the artist, "You will not object if Mr. Chase tunes the piano while you work?"

"Not at all. I shall keep on."

So, for the first time, I substituted for one who was sitting for an artist, and was recorded as a lady of graceful proportions in a long yellow dress. The tuning and sketching ended almost simultaneously, and I was invited to stay for iced tea. There were present my customer as hostess, her sister, Mme. --- ---, the artist, and I.

The artist held my attention. She was past middle age, spoke with an accent, and by her deft and sure command of the brush was obviously a painter of distinction, an estimate which was later confirmed when, by request, she brought out a portfolio of photographs of her recent works. Her seamed face and gnarled hands indicated that her life had not been an easy one, yet I felt in her manner a great kindness and patience, rather than bitterness. We all had a most agreeable visit over the tea, and the artist shook hands warmly as I was taking leave.

A few days after this, I saw the caretaker of the place, whom I knew slightly, and mentioned sitting for the painter.

"Did you hear the artist's story?" he asked.

"No, but I did observe her closely, saw photographs of her work, and I could see that she has a fine talent. She has had some good commissions."
"Yes. These people I work for are in the diplomatic service, and they have been able to help her to get established here in America. They were stationed in Egypt, and found this woman barefoot and in rags on the street in Cairo. She had been robbed by the Germans in World War I, and by the Russians in World War II, who also killed her husband, and herded her with many others into a box car for twenty-five days of travel. Her wanderings brought her into contact with these people I work for. I could tell you a lot more about them, but what they have done for this one person is all you need to know in order to understand what kind of people they are."

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Told by telephone how to reach a place in Dublin, I arrived at a house perched high on a craggy hill. Large and sumptuous, it appeared to be an estate, but as I stood waiting for someone to answer the bell, I got the feeling of a most untypical atmosphere. There were sounds of carpentry, and people talking back and forth within. A white-clad chef swung open the door and called to a woman upstairs, "Oh Kasha, here's your piano tuner." The piano, an old painted upright, stood near the door, so I went to work. Soon "Kasha," who had called me by telephone, came downstairs. She spoke understandingly of music and pianos, remarking, "I have two Steinways standing neck-to-neck in my living room at home."

"Then this is quite a come-down," I said, indicating the object of my ministrations. "You must have had a lot of music study."

"Yes, I studied for some time with___ _, _ _, _ _, _ _ _, " she replied, mentioning a name familiar to concert-goers, "until my family found out that the 'lessons' consisted less and less of music and more and more of eating caviar and drinking vodka, then they put a stop to it."

"Who operates this place?"

"A.A. -- Alcoholics Anonymous. But you can't come here when you have a drink in," she added vehemently. "You have to go to a hospital and get properly sobered off, then you can come here, if you're a member. The members can come and get built up if they slip a little, and some bring their families for vacations, in order to stay away from temptation. We help one another by telling of our experiences."

This I observed to be the case. I overheard a woman with a Scotch accent, who was working around the rooms, telling another some of her story: "I did domestic work, and earned very good money, but it got so I was paying more for doctors and hospitals than I earned. A friend got me to come up here and paid my expenses for two weeks, then when I thought I would have to leave, she sent enough money for two weeks more, and by then I was able to go back to work, and they gave me a job here. The work is light, the members are wonderful to me, and I can stay sober." Everybody was on an informal first-name basis -- part of the anonymity. I heard "Don" telling "Izzie" about the breakup of his marriage: "And she wanted the solid mahogany living room suite and the Oriental rug that was under it, and got them, and she wanted the mahogany bedroom set, and got it. So I went through all that."
The esprit de corps was inspiring. Everybody was cordial and friendly. They insisted upon my having lunch with them. You just took your plate from the chef at the kitchen door, sat with a group at a table and visited, or read a paper during the meal if you preferred that.

Later, at another place kept by the same organization, I again saw "Kasha," who told me a lot about the workings of A.A. "Our whole effort is based on prayer. We always think of ourselves as alcoholics, and ask God for strength to meet temptation just one day at a time." I expressed the conviction that anyone who has experienced benefit through prayer should not accept it as a selfish gain, but should clinch that gain by helping others, pointing out that St. Paul says, "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." (Romans 15:1).

"That's a lot like our teaching," Kasha said approvingly. "We are always on call to go and help another member who has gotten into trouble. We alcoholics help one another. We can feel another person's problem because we have been there ourselves. That's why it's so hard for a non-alcoholic to understand us or to be of any help to us. We talk straight from the heart, and that reaches another person where theories fail. I have heard people speak most eloquently who had no reason to do so, as far as their education would account for it.

"We have twelve steps to take. One of these steps is to take a complete moral inventory. Drinking is always a retreat from actuality. My husband is very successful in his profession, the children are swell. I had to face the fact that when someone crossed me I would start on a binge; then I would fall flat on my face, feel very penitent for a day or so, then, back into the harness again. The time came when I fell flatter and harder than usual. I had to face the situation, and that brought me up here. We just can't go back and pick up where we left off.''

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A family well out in the country had a piano that had been wet. It took a long day to put it into even passable shape. A tuner doesn't like such an assignment, but in this instance the people were worth knowing. At dinner time they asked me to sit down with them. "Everything was grown on the place except the bread," the woman explained. It was a good dinner. We talked of dousing veins of water, and I heard of their convincing experience.

I commented on the old house with exposed hand-hewn timbers in the ceilings. They had bought the place during the depression of the 1930's for $400, most of which they had, and they made up the amount by borrowing from a friend for a short time. When they tore off a ceiling, they found authentic hand-dressed framing underneath. "We just had to leave them exposed," the woman explained, "they're just the sort of thing people are crazy about nowadays."

Her husband and I mentioned a man we both knew who had come originally from Vermont, and this brought out a remark that I could not entirely endorse, but which ought to be recorded in the annals of interstate sniping: "All the Vermonters I know are very loyal to Vermont, but they all left there because they couldn't make a living."
Always of interest to the native is the degree of success achieved by people from cities who settle in the country. Some give up after a trial period and return to their cities. One fine woman, Minnie McKnight, who came with her husband to live in retirement in Francestown, said after twenty-five years, "None of our people back in New York can understand why we still love to live here. But then, they are all sidewalk people."

The matter hinges on the resources the individual has within himself, and on his ability to adjust to the local environment. This does not mean to "go native," for scarcely any traditional native way of life remains. New settlers, retirees, frequently tell me, "Our friends back in the city ask how we can find enough to do up here. We laugh. We were never so busy before, there are so many things to do -- clubs, the Sharon Arts Center, plays, Great Books. We just have to call a halt."

Not that New Hampshire has what everyone wants. One fine spring day I saw my neighbor, Jim Dechert, who had put in one very easy winter here. I commented on the pleasant day. "Yes," Jim said tiredly, "it's fine today, but you know very well it won't stay this way." He sold out and moved to the California desert.

A couple whom I had seen occasionally at auctions when I did part-time work for an auctioneer, were otherwise unknown to me. They were good but judicious buyers, and reserved in manner. The woman approached me about fixing up an antique piano they had bought at an auction, and I made an appointment to look at the piano at their summer home. Following from Hillsboro village the road directions given me, I came at dusk in early October to a fine old brick house where a post lamp lighted up the flaming maples overhead. It was all New England-y enough up to this point, so I was a trifle taken aback when my alarm at the door brought a dignified French-speaking black houseman, a Haitian, as I later learned, who conducted me to the instrument I was to see.

On the way through the rooms, I could see that the place was furnished in choice antiques. The piano proved to be of English make, by James Henry Houston, and had a fine Sheraton case, but was musically unpromising. The tension of the strings had pulled the pin block loose from its anchorage, and the sounding board had been hopelessly broken up in the process. The strings were fine, like zither wire, with tuning pins at the right-hand end of the case, practically opposite to the layout of the early American pianoforte. The instrument was mostly scenery; it looked just right in that setting. Not much of the action acted. After sizing up the situation, I told the lady that even if put into working condition, it would never have much tone, due to the small sounding board area and the delicacy of the strings. But she would have me do what I could to improve it. So the following spring before the owners returned from Haiti, where their business was located, I made several efforts to locate Joe Garofoli, who took care of the summer residence, as I would have to have the instrument moved to a shop near my home in order to do such extensive repairs. So I wrote to the lady in Haiti and told her that I had not been able to find her caretaker, and would rather not
undertake the job anyway. Evidently she wouldn't take "no" for an answer, for about three days later Mr. Garofoli appeared at my door early in the morning, gesticulating, with his mercury at an all-time high.

"Can't-a find-a Garofoli in-a Hillsboro! Dass-a nonsense! You get-a dat woman scare to death!" And so on, through quite a tirade. Then I told him, calmly, that I had tried three times to find him, and couldn't; that I didn't want to do the job anyway, but they were such nice people that I would work on the little piano as soon as he could move it for me. The next minute, we were friends; he simmered down, then expended genially and assured me, "They're more than nice people. They are WONDERFUL people!"

So we got the antique moved to my neighbor's shop. I worked days on it. There were only about four moving parts to each note. The hammers were wooden, leather-faced, and they swung on rawhide hinges. The old damper springs were of whalebone, mostly eaten away, and had to be replaced with metal springs adapted for the purpose. I replaced the sounding board with part of the board from a square piano I had dismantled earlier. When it was all put together, it tinkled pleasantly, and Mr. Garofoli moved it back again. The owner seemed pleased, and paid the bill without wincing a bit. As Mr. G. had said, "Wonderful people!"

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I could not discourse under this head without mentioning my admiration for schoolteachers in general. Often forced by the conditions of a rapidly changing society to serve as stand-ins for both parents and policemen in addition to their regular duties, I see most of them doing a grand job, and better still, enjoying their important work.

Waiting in a school until I could work on a piano, I was impressed with the work of a young teacher drilling a class of beginners on wind instruments. The trumpets gave forth "an uncertain sound," and the tone of the clarinets was anything but clarion, but the young man kept on resolutely beating time, teaching the note values, and encouraging a better consciousness of pitch. I loved him for the patience and long-range hopefulness he expressed, but rather than say so frankly, I remarked, "Evidently you can see in these gawky seedlings the promise of a fine tomato salad some time in the future." He looked pleased and replied, "Thank you. You have set me up for the day."

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Going over a period of years to a residence in Peterborough which conveyed a sense of settled affluence while avoiding anything like ostentation, I came to know Mrs. George E. Clement. She painted well, but was not immersed in her art; could move in the most select social circles, but chose to spend an occasional holiday helping at the local hospital in order to give some of the regular workers a day off. An active Director of The MacDowell Colony (she was the "dear Margaret" often mentioned in Mrs. MacDowell's letters to mutual friends), once when driving through the Colony grounds she noticed me about to enter a studio, and stopped to speak kindly about a small part I had recently taken in a play. If I were working in her home when lunch time came she would invariably ask me to have lunch with her family, or would bring me a tray if they were not getting together.
It is not one's privilege in a lifetime to know many people so reticent about their talents, so unassuming in a secure social position, or so quiet about their charities. In her later years, I once asked Mrs. Clement about her painting. She replied, "I have not been doing any painting for a long time. It takes a certain amount of energy to get the materials together and go out and paint, but since my husband passed away and one of our sons was lost in the war, I have not seemed able to muster enough energy to paint." However, her other activities continued for several years after she made this reply, in fields where she could do good, and uphold standards. After her passing, the weekly newspaper in her town had to exceed its usual conservatism in order to do her any sort of justice, and referred to her as "a very great lady."

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I learned that a family for whom I was doing some work had lived in a neighborhood I had known, and at nearly the same period, some years earlier. The mother in this family, a person of poise and distinction, talked with me of people we both knew. One family that had some pretty daughters came into mention. "Yes," she remarked, "they were pretty children, but it takes more than a pretty face to make a beautiful woman. Character, dignity, and graciousness are also needed." The mother who made this remark had daughters of her own, and I felt they were fortunate.

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A pert oldster, Dad Broeg, a member of the family, came in as I was tuning in a residence, and struck up a conversation, mostly one-sided: "I used to be a musician -- played French horn in some of the best bands in the country. I've moved around a lot. When I was a young fellow, a bunch of us used to run from East St. Louis to Belleville every Saturday night -- sixteen miles. We had a wagon sent on ahead with a lot of sandwiches and beer, and we would have a picnic. I haven't played for years now. I'm eighty-seven and a half. People ask me how I have managed to live so long. I tell them I don't know, except that my parents gave me a strong body and taught me how to take care of it."

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Memorable utterances about music have not always come from the musically famous. Winnie Stevens, who by practice, observation, and hard work became an excellent bandsman, had this to say: "Anyone who starts in with music has a long row to hoe, and he needn't think he is ever going to reach the end of it." Winnie used to help several of us boys who played band instruments, and in only one respect did he ever get out of patience: When we were trying to get the horns into perfect tune with one another, and knowing how much the instruments could be lipped into tune or out of tune, he would endure our maneuvers a little while and then say abruptly, "I guess that's as close as we'll play."

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Trevor Rea, a fine musician whom I met through his teaching in a public school system, made some statements that have remained with me:
"When I was a boy growing up in small towns in Pennsylvania, one of the attractions of the summer season for the small fry, besides circuses and carnivals, was the medicine show. It is now a thing of the past, but I am convinced that a lot of the charlatanism formerly attached to the medicine show has been transferred to the field of music.

"After getting out of Special Services at the close of the war, I decided to take some graduate courses in music. I went into a university office and mentioned my intention of working for an advanced degree. The man behind the slab said, 'Oh, you’re after a Master's -- or would you like a Doctor's? We can give you a Doctorate.' I made up my mind that such a degree could be just something sold over the counter, so I took graduate courses for four years without taking any degree.

"It is regrettable that the best composers of the present day are not writing for the church.

"One day at the close of one of my periods in a special class, a little girl who might have been thought one of the least attractive children in the class ran up and threw her arms around me. I was so pleased that my teaching had reached her."

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In response to a call to work at a home in the country, I found the house and was admitted by a slender, quick-motioned woman. Her manner conveyed a great sense of alertness and perception. I immediately thought of her as birdlike, and to my satisfaction I learned that her given name was Avis -- Avis Turner French. As I tuned, I noticed about the room many indications of an interest in poetry, and when I mentioned this to the lady, she opened a chest and took out scrapbooks for me to look through. These contained clippings of her many published poems, often mounted with a picture that expressed something of the thought in the verse. She called them "heart poems," and I found this true in a distinctive way. She deprecated her vocabulary and disclaimed having much originality, but I was impressed by her talent for conveying true feeling and expressing good sentiment. I met the poet’s husband, and could sense his appreciation of her attainments. I left with a warm invitation to bring Mrs. Turner and read more in the scrapbooks. This meeting was one of the most rewarding of my years of dealing with genuine people.

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Atop a high hill in Deering with views in every direction is an old farmstead long used as a summer home by a New York physician and his family. There was a garden consisting of an inextricable tangle of tiger lilies and asparagus. The house, comfortable for summer use, contained a suitable period piece in the form of a square piano. In this piano I found a large mass of blue shreds.
"Oh," said the doctor's wife, "that's what became of the fringe on my rug," pointing to an edge where the fringe was missing for a few feet. "It happened when we were away for a few days one summer. We caught the mouse, but until now I never knew where he had carried the fringe."

"You must love to spend the summers here."

"We all love it, although my husband is back and forth a lot. It's good for him to come up here and get away from his practice. Even if we go to a social gathering in the city, he gets off into a corner with another doctor and..."

"Talks shop."

"Exactly. My husband is a medical man, and when he meets a surgeon, they compare notes. My city friends wonder how I can stand it to stay up here, alone some of the time, but actually, I need six months up here to enable me to live the other six months in New York."

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A customer of mine over a period of years was Bernard W. Shir-Cliff of Sutton. Obviously urban in background, he and his wife nevertheless responded to the appeal of their place overlooking Blaisdell Lake and surrounding mountains. I could say of him as was said of a noted American jurist, that he never allowed his reserve to become thawed nor his geniality to become frozen. After I had known him for some time, I thought to ask him how hyphenated family names came about. He replied with a glint of a smile, "I'm sure I don't know. I got mine from my father."
AROUND MONADNOCK

Long esteemed by people of means for its pleasant summer climate and high elevation, much of the country around Monadnock has been built up by people of good taste and sufficient means to express that good taste attractively, or even lavishly. Hence Dublin is extensively blessed with fine estates, many of which look toward the mountain, over Dublin Lake, or both. There are also extensive views in other directions. Most of the largest places were built when guests came from the railroad stations in Keene or Peterborough in horse-drawn rigs, so that many guest rooms were needed. A few of such estates are kept up and enjoyed.

One place has seven acres of landscaped grounds around a house that it takes minutes to walk around. Entering through a reception hall, I was conducted through a dining room of banquet hall proportions into a library where grandmother's old Steinway upright stood. As I worked, I observed the details of the room. Along most of one side were a few continuous steps leading up to a series of full-length windows that overlooked a sunlit terrace and another wing of the house. This library I estimated to be 36' x 40'. Along the side opposite the windows were book shelves and a suitably massive fireplace. Across the end opposite where I was working were more book shelves and a stand-up reading desk under a window placed high in the wall. Groups of rather distinguished furniture made the room livable and attractive. One piece I remember was a large coffee table in glossy black, just a wide board supported by two trestles like little carpenters' horses. Toward one end of the top was a painting in gold of bamboo stems and foliage, the whole adding up to something simple, striking, and elegant.

There were, on the wall where the piano stood, a number of paintings that I admired. One canvas by Joseph Lindon Smith depicted a detail of Egyptian sculpture against a vivid blue sky.

The ceiling of this room was a study in itself, with an overall decoration of deep plaster moulding in a magnified cloverleaf design. I later learned that Italian artisans had been secured to do this work.

The lady of the house crossed the far end of the room and paused to speak pleasantly. I commented on the size of the house and the furnishings and pictures. "This painting of Joseph Lindon Smith's must have been done before he developed the dry pigment technique that represents stone so faithfully." "Yes," she replied, "that is one of Uncle Joe's earlier works, and is not one of my favorites.

"My husband's parents had this place built; his mother superintended the building of this wing, using lumber cut on the place and seasoned two years. My friends used to wonder how I could live with my mother-in-law, but I told them, 'She is like an aunt of mine; she has the same prejudices, and the same virtues, which are many.' Recognizing that her attitudes belonged to her generation, we
got along fine. We'll keep the place as long as we can keep it up; I wouldn't allow a place to run down. The children love to come back here summers and weekends. We couldn't give it away -- even an institution wouldn't want it, it would cost so much to heat it in winter. We do the cooking among ourselves. During the war time, we would often have fifteen or twenty of family and friends over a weekend, and after they left I would wash the sheets in a bathtub, but since the war we have been able to get a washer, which is a big help."

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Another Dublin mansion provided an opportunity to study a subtle color scheme in its living room, perhaps fifty feet square. Soft grays and gray-greens predominated, on walls, finish, rugs, the fine Italian gold-decorated furniture, and a large landscape in oils "done by a friend of ours especially for this room," I was told. Two large framed mirrors on opposite sides of the room were ornamented across their tops by intricate carved or moulded festoons. The general effect was one of cool elegance, but in no sense cold; the room was amply lighted by French doors on three sides, some of which stood open and afforded glimpses of a lovely rose garden. Two matching pier tables symmetrically placed against wall spaces each bore an Italian ice-pail -- attractive ornaments, with their fluted rims and bold designs. Nothing appeared to be superfluous.

The lady of the house kindly invited me to lunch with her and her children. It was a pleasant, informal meal with conversation about things familiar to all of us. My advice was asked about a trumpet teacher for one of the boys. During the talk, some mention was made of a local builder who had been very active around Dublin during boom days. A teen-age boy remarked rather disdainfully, "Now he's living in that little two-room house he built for himself." His mother eyed him coolly and asked, "Could you build even a two-room house? I couldn't." "No," he replied quietly, obviously set down a peg. I felt that those children would grow up with some sense of values.

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A house that gives the impression of a chalet hugging the crags, but actually a rather elaborate one, is reached by a driveway that climbs by switchbacks up and over a steep ridge. This estate affords the closest, most rugged view of the mountain as seen from the Dublin side, and also looks over many New Hampshire hills to a far horizon of mountains in southern Vermont. The grounds about this place are a tribute to years of thoughtful care, planning, love, and expense in fairly equal proportions. During azalea time it is a place of special distinction. The phrase "the idle rich" has no application here, where the hands of a very capable lady may preside over perennials, teacups, and the keyboard, all in the same afternoon.

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In Jaffrey Center, where one gains some of the finest impressions of the bulk and ruggedness of Monadnock, during the week after Christmas I tuned for a genial mother, Margie Shattuck, who has two very rangy sons, of high school age at the time. "Those boys climbed the mountain and slept up there last night," she told me. "There is a cave up there where they can sleep. They took along a
steak for supper, and other food. They're always climbing that mountain. In the summer time, when they work at the State Park, they climb it on their days off."

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By telephone I was directed to take the road that loops around Dublin Lake and enter a driveway flanked by a pair of cement urns. This drive wound through a bit of woodland, then among gardens ornamented with Japanese stone lanterns and other ponderous sculpture. The piano was in a studio building near the lake. During the process of raising a small upright a half-step or more to the specified orchestra pitch, I took an occasional breathing spell to look around. I was in the studio of Joseph Lindon Smith, who early in his career gave up painting portraits and turned to depicting ancient sculptures. He was reported to have explained that the statue of an Egyptian king was punctual, kept still, and had no relatives present to criticize the treatment of the nose or chin. A few paintings in this studio were of sculptured figures, but more represented bas-reliefs -- portions of a frieze which appeared to be a ceremonial procession of cattle and humans. Each work was labelled "XXIst Dynasty," or the like. The artist's dry-pigment technique represented stone with the utmost fidelity both as to color and texture; every chip and crack was faithfully portrayed, as were also streaks of discoloration.

There was a lot going on around the place that day; preparations were being made for an anniversary celebration which was to include musicians from Symphony, and dancers. A platform was being built outside. Yet whenever I took a break and toured the inner rooms of the studio, I was fascinated by the sense of eternal peace and tranquil beauty those paintings evoked. The carpenter work and bustle went on outside, but I could "stand amid the eternal ways." It would be worth a lot to be able to attain that mental state at will, when in need, and without a noted artist's work at hand to inspire one.

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Some work, tuning for a plant grower on the Brewster estate, led to an opportunity to see some distinguished and extensive gardens. Daisy and a friend, Ethel Alexander, went along on this tour. Below one end of the large residence was a terraced area with a large ornamental tree in the center and floral borders around the ends. At that season, late summer, exotic lilies were conspicuous. A few steps led from the edge of this terrace down to the next level, where at either side was a pleasant outdoor living room with elegant metal furniture; each of these rooms had its lawn areas and floral borders, semi-shaded by nearby trees. Below here, the layout was in pairs. A central slope of fine lawn led down between perfectly clipped evergreen hedges, with entrances at either side which led into the formal gardens. Each of these was perhaps 18' x 36', and was surrounded by the high hedge. Each had a long central pool with a flagged path around it, and a stone bench or other appropriate seat at the end opposite the entrance. Around the area outside the pool and path were plantings, all perfectly regular, with scarcely a withered leaf, nor anything out of place. We had been told that the upkeep of these gardens and grounds provided work for six men.
The plantings in these pairs of formal gardens were all different. One had tree-type fuchsias at intervals, with a bedding of begonias between. Another had the same arrangement, but in different colors. One was all tuberous begonias. Upon entering one which was all heliotrope, both low bedding type and tree-type, Ethel held up her hands in utter astonishment; coming from New York, where flowers are mainly a florist shop proposition, the impact was overwhelming. "Why," she exclaimed, "I never expected to experience such richness in this life!"

At the foot of the sloping lawn and the paired formal gardens, the whole area was bounded by a high stone wall banked with laurel and rhododendron, with a lion's head fountain in the center. The lawn at this bottom level extended beyond the hedges in either direction, so that one could take a woodland path up the slope outside the formal gardens and enjoy wildflowers and naturalized plantings while returning to the point of beginning.

We also strolled along the edge of a large acreage of lawn, and enjoyed a great variety of colorful annuals in a border about three hundred feet long. The mass and vividness of colors in this planting were such that I was able to locate it with the naked eye from the summit of Monadnock a few days after our garden tour. We felt highly privileged to have been permitted to see these gardens.

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It is not always beautiful landscaping without, or rare furnishings and distinguished people within that leave the most lasting impressions. A single picture is what I recall most vividly in the residence of W.R. Brown, which was by no means lacking in other outstanding features. This was a large canvas representing in detail a gnarled old beech tree in newly fallen snow. Enough was indicated of other trees to suggest a grove, but the principal subject held the attention. Each limb and rough bump, of the characteristic bluish gray color, softened by the clinging snow, was most faithfully represented. The touch that saved the picture from monotony and elevated it immeasurably in the realm of art was a faint flush of sunset sky that was revealed among the upper branches.

As I arrived to work at this house on one occasion, stately and agreeable Mrs. Brown, in passing through the room, indicated a dish of delicious-looking chocolates on a table near the piano and said, "Oh, Mr. Chase, won't you eat some of those chocolates and help to save my figure?" So, feeling nobly chivalrous that day, during my tour of the 88 notes, twice over, I saved her figure several times.

Some of the good people of Dublin have been such models of correctness that their neighbors have seen humor in their very propriety. Once when tuning at the Dublin Lake Club -- romping and stomping ground of tycoons and their satellites -- I was privileged to overhear the assignment of bathhouses for the season by a matron of unquestioned authority. She marched in at mid-morning, clad in black from her plain squarish hat that would have done credit to the Plain People of Pennsylvania, to her flat-heeled, practical shoes. She was attended by a young woman, possibly a relative or secretary. After adding the club hostess to her train, she swept along with the intrepidity of a battleship with destroyer escort. As one of her assistants read off names, the commander delivered de-
crees, firing an occasional broadside of disapproval: "Yes, they are entitled to No. 18 again this year -- they are still in good standing -- but I am moving them to No. 6; the people who were next to them last year requested a change....She and the children are in good standing, and may keep the same bathhouse, but it will be a long time before he is a member of the Club again, if ever; I don't like the kind of divorce he got."

A fine gentleman and a cultured musician was the late George L. Foot, who used to have his large Mason and Hamlin moved from his studio into his dwelling for the winter, then moved out again for the summer. I once asked him to compare the relative merits of the Steinway with those of the Mason and Hamlin pianos. He responded with, "I think the Steinway is a very fine piano for one who likes to play emotionally -- who likes to bring out a strong melody in the middle register -- but to me, the Mason and Hamlin is much evenest throughout, and I am interested in acoustics, not in emotion." I thanked him, and came away with the feeling of having heard a decree of the first rank from a standpoint of the most impeccable orthodoxy. Later, in talking with a Dublin woman who knew this man, I attempted my best Yankee imitation of his near-British, exact diction. She appeared vastly entertained and inquired, "Do you mind if I use that for the punch-line for my next party?"
TO -- AND FROM -- THE LADIES

Upon entering Robb Sagendorph's house, I noticed that the cook was a rosy-cheeked little woman who got around the room by using a tea wagon for a walker. On the way out, after I had finished my work, she struck up a monologue in a British accent: "People ask me what I do for my complexion. I tell them nothing but soap and hope -- soap to wash with and hope I get clean. I don't use lipstick because it calls attention to the teeth, and unless one has beautiful teeth it shouldn't be used. I don't wear jewelry because jewelry draws attention to the neck and my neck is bony, and being a cook, I say the place for bones is in the stock kettle."

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An advertisement had been entered in a nearby paper by a woman who stated that she would accept pupils, and that she taught "the art of singing in all its branches." When a call came to tune for this party, I was interested to see what sort of person proposed to fill this large order. An active elderly lady conducted me to a Chickering grand in golden oak. "This piano was used by Symphony on tour one season, about 1904, and when we learned that it was to be sold at auction, my husband arranged with someone who knew all about such things to buy it for us."

This was all very Bostonian -- the reference to "Symphony" only, and the idea that it would never do for people of quality to bid at an auction for themselves. Everything in the room bore this out; nothing was new -- having new things simply isn't done. Another customer of that background once explained to me that the furnishings in her newly built living room were "all inherited, nothing is new; these things have been in storage until we could get this room built." Still another Bostonian explained to me that her Steinway had been "owned by Louise Homer's sister, and we bought it from her estate, so it has been in only two ownships." Every piano genealogy is important to these people. One doesn't even smile; it is one of the fixed facts of nature, like the wetness of water.

But back to the Chickering, which had been bought "in preference to a Steinway." Steinways were not built in Boston. She still saw it as the same piano it was when Symphony had disposed of it 40-odd years before. As I prepared to work on the piano, I saw that I would have to raise the lid. An oil painting hung in the way. This old lady, agile as a chipmunk, climbed up on top of the piano and passed the picture down.

Part way through my job, a voice pupil arrived, so I knocked off for lunch, within hearing distance, while the lesson took place. Such a mixture of cajolery and praise I had never heard. The phrases sung by the teacher, in a quavering tone that had once been a voice, were nothing short of pathetic, but she got the points across somehow by so doing.
Everything about the room expressed discretion. Even the moth nibbling in
the piano had been done in discreet places. The total effect was considerable
damage, but I found that I was expected to restore it to the condition of forty
years earlier, and at a price that would have been current at that period.
Mme. Molto Agitato and I didn't see alike; there was a conflict between our dif-
ferent class outlooks and periods of thought. The older upper-crust Bostonians,
or at least the uptight and more crusty among them, recognized no kinship or symp-
athy with a tradesman. The ichor that coursed in their veins had an exalted
status not to be confused with the mere blood of the masses.

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In Henniker village I had to look at an early upright first, then arrange
to tune it at a later date. There was a reason for this procedure: in this way
Mrs. Hunttoon got an additional chance to talk. Keen, bright-eyed, somewhat con-
fined to her chair, she launched into a play-by-play account of her hip injury.

"I had to go back to the hospital to have the pins reset. As I was being
wheeled to my room, we were stopped by a nurse who wanted some case history; I
told her they had all that from my earlier stays there. The man who drove me in
was following along. He shouldn't have been, but then, he was a good man, but,
I always said, good for nothing. The nurse said something about my husband. I
told her, 'This man is not my husband,' and she asked, 'Where is your husband?'
I replied, 'In heaven,' and a voice from a nearby room inquired, 'How do you
know where he is?' I said, 'Because he was a good man; I lived with him for
forty-two years, and I know.' Later, after I got to my room, Doctor ___ ___,
whom I have known for a long time, came in and apologized for asking that ques-
tion, but he said it was too good a chance to miss.

"As they were putting me to bed, they drew a screen around. I saw there was
a rubber sheet on the bed, so I told the nurse 'I want a regular sheet, I can pay
extra for the laundry, but if I lie on a rubber sheet, my bottom gets all par-
boiled.' I wouldn't tell you this if you were a very young man, but you're not.
I saw Dr. ___ ___ looking over the screen while this was going on. A year later,
when I returned to the hospital again, he came in to see me, and asked, 'How's
your parboiled bottom?""

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A dignified elderly lady, Miss Abbie Wyman of Hillsboro, who, I had been
informed by a mutual acquaintance, had taught the piano very well, had on her
table an autographed photo of Isidor Philipp, inscribed, "Pour Mile. Wyman, avec
bien sympathetique souvenirs." She was obviously one of those who would benefit
her pupils in manners and morals as well as in her special field of teaching.

It was a wet day in early summer; she lighted an open fire in the room "to
keep your back warm," she said. Everything in the house expressed quality. The
grandfather's clock had actually been built to order for her grandfather, which
dated it as definitely "early American." The other furnishings were mainly ant-
tiques which had come down in the family. When leaving, I noticed a little
primitive iron lamp, and asked about it. "Oh, I bought that when I was living
in the Latin Quarter in Paris, when I was over there for study -- about a hun-

- 120 -
dred years ago," she finished, with a smile. She had me wait while she picked a bouquet of roses for me to take home. The fragrance of her thoughtfulness, symbolized by the flowers, lingers in memory.

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Two retired teachers in Jaffrey, the Doran sisters, gave hearty hospitality. Just before noon, one came to the doorway and said, "Come and wash your hands, Mr. Chase, and then you'll be ready to have dinner with us. We're farmers, and have our dinner at noon." So I quit work and did as directed; my mother had been a schoolteacher. At the attractive table, one of the sisters explained, "We grew everything that went into this meal except the meat and the flour. We grow a big garden over in Rindge, and can and preserve all summer, then come down here to the village for the winter and eat it up. We built this place for our old age." It was wonderful to observe that old age was still considered to be far in the future. The large, friendly collie, waiting not very patiently near the table, came in for frequent remarks and endearments, and finally received a reward in the form of a plate to lick, out in the kitchen. "When we go to service at All Saints', Tippy just has to ride along, and she waits in the car during the service. So after church, she just has to have a run -- don't you, dear? -- Yes -- and near where we park an auctioneer lives and sometimes she runs on his lawn. One Sunday he came out and said very gruffly, 'Hey, can't you find any place to run your dog besides on my lawn?' Now (very much hurt) I'm going to put instructions in my will that after I die, that auctioneer shall not sell my goods. He didn't love our dog."

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Noticing some good classics on the piano of an elderly lady customer, I asked if she played that sort of music. She replied, "Oh, I just play for my own amazement and other people's despair."

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A young woman in Weare had a baby grand of the period of the 1920's. She told me, "I started buying this piano by installments just before the depression, and had an awfully hard time paying for it. Before I was done, I felt like the Ancient Mariner, and this piano was the albatross around my neck."

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A grandmother on the outskirts of Concord called for me to work on the family piano, and was very insistent on my coming promptly. I found out why when I got there: she had removed the keys in order to clean out the dirt under them, had put them back in the wrong order, and had one left over. My first step was to get them back where they belonged -- not difficult when one knows where to look for the consecutive numbers or witness marks. The grandmother looked on and inquired, "How come they go in place so easy for you, when I had such a hard time with them?" She had waded far beyond her depth and then hollered for help, so I felt impelled to rub it in a little and replied, "There's such a thing as knowing how."
ROADSIDE GARDENS

One of my never-ending delights is the plant life along the verge of country roads. The first conspicuous signs of growth in spring are the neat coils of fiddle-head ferns, as typically associated with New Hampshire as the classical acanthus with lands of antiquity. As the coils unfurl and a general greenness spreads along the irregular strip between road's edge and stone wall, a great variety of blooms appear in a succession that continues until late fall, although nature, skilled at effective composition, does not present fortissimo passages throughout. The display crescendoes and diminuendoes with artistic finesse.

Two observant teachers, one of them a botanist who summered in our neighborhood in West Campton during the 1920's and '30's, took a walk of a mile or so along country lanes at a time when local people did not expect to see things in bloom -- in the lull between the flush of spring flowers and the showy blooms of autumn -- and found and identified 32 species of wildflowers, most of them inconspicuous enough to escape the notice of any but the trained observer. I would not aspire to scrutinize the scene so minutely, but just to comment on the effects that impress the relaxed driver who would not wish to have every road "improved." The present natural condition of the verge has enabled me to store memory with unforgettable scenes: down a run in a neglected hayfield flowed the strangest river ever seen, between banks of robin's plantain -- a million or so blossoms of foamy caraway, tossing up creamy spray with every passing breeze; tall Solomon's seal nodding in stately groups under over-arching trees; on sunny banks in June, drifts of blue vetch vieing for attention with stands of devil's paint brush and its taller cousin, the golden hawkweed; the mauve fuzz of rabbit's foot clover edging the wheel tracks, with other clovers -- yellow, white, crimson -- a little farther back in the verge, gracing the roadside in artless abundance. Come July, an elegant Canada lily rears proudly above the surrounding growth, with bouncing bet and yarrow supplying humbler accents.

I think back to the days when old white Dick plodded up the West Campton hills, and could be reined near enough to the overhanging blackberry canes so that I could pick luscious fruit by leaning over the buggy wheels. Often the musk of milkweed bloom was wafted pleasantly during those leisurely trips, a change from the horse smell that was never far away.

And let us not neglect the escapees from country gardens that have naturalized in the verge, often attaining a size and perfection seldom seen under cultivation -- veronica, coreopsis, sweet williams, harebells, to mention only a few.

What a blessing that many wildflowers, unconscious that they are classed as weeds, are left free to express whatever beauty they are endowed with!
Years before I got to tuning full time, I was asked by Carl Abbott to help him yard out some pole wood for a woman named Nettie who lived in the neighborhood. She had been quite a bird in her day, but in later years had become quite pious, had joined a church, and some neighbors carried her to Sunday church and midweek prayer meetings. In the exchange that follows, my greatest entertainment lay in watching Carl's suppressed amusement at her show of late piety, knowing as he did all the old neighborhood lore.

It was a cold, blustery day in February, snowing a little, and when we met at Nettie's place in the forenoon, Carl and I put our dinner buckets into the kitchen to keep them from freezing. We yarded out wood until noon, then Carl headed the horses up into the lee of the buildings, blanketed and fed them, and we went into the kitchen to eat our dinners. Nettie flitted in and out from time to time, and we had bits of talk. One of her remarks was, "It's so kinda cold and mis'able I dunno's I'll be able t' get t' prayer meetin' tonight."

"Well," sez I, meanin' to be helpful, "this 'ould be a good night t' do your prayin' t' home."

"Why," sez she, sort of startled-like, "I can't remember when I've prayed t' home!"

Being on the subject of prayer, I thought it might be of interest to one of my customers, a highly esteemed retired minister, Dr. Arthur H. Bradford of Jaffrey Center. He heard me through attentively, obviously enjoyed it as a native story, then remarked in his quiet way, "No doubt she felt the need of the fellowship."
Tuning is most practically learned by rule of thumb. Some manuals on the subject would apply so many tests for accuracy that one would never get a job done. One person who thought he might learn tuning had read something about acoustics and could always catch me on questions of theory, but he never got as far as actually tuning a piano.

Even temperament is the only system now considered. Briefly stated, this is the scheme of controlled acoustical compromise which makes possible a workable keyboard. It would obviously be impossible to provide for every tone that exists within the octave, if recognition were taken of the slight difference that exists between C# and D-flat and so on, in playing perfect scales, as this would result in an unwieldy keyboard and an impractically complicated mechanism devoted to minute distinctions of pitch which would be lost on the average listener. Even temperament is the practical solution; it enables the performer to modulate into all keys with an equal-sounding effect. Bach produced his "Well-Tempered Clavichord" to prove the practicality of even temperament or a similar system of tuning. This puts the tuner into the position of having to maintain a falsehood with the greatest possible fidelity, or so it would seem, from the standpoint of pure theory, but actually, the original sound of the string is just a starting point. The tone is so amplified and altered in quality by the sounding board, the resonance of the casting, and the sympathetic vibration of all the strings, that the resulting effect which we hear is much pleasanter or at least more bearable than a perusal of a work on the theory of the subject would lead us to believe.

The "beat" or waver in the sound of an interval is what the tuner works by; it slows to the vanishing point in tuning unisons and octaves. The octave is the only perfect interval in piano tuning, and some octaves may be stretched a little. In general, the temperament requires the narrowing of the fifths and the widening of the fourths in the temperament octave, the fifths being not far from perfect, with a long, slow beat, and the fourths having a countable beat, but not rapid. The remainder of the piano is tuned by octaves in both directions from the tempered octave, checking for accuracy by sounding certain intervals. The bane of the tuner's early experience is the false string -- a wire that is not perfectly cylindrical, so that its partial tones are given off in an improper mixture which produces a beat all by itself. It not only fights with itself but also with any other wire that one attempts to tune with it. One of the advantages of having unisons of three wires above the bass section is that this makes it possible to average the disagreement of false strings so as to bring about a bearable compromise. In many old pianos the wires are so rusty and stretched out of true that there is a long, slow beat in the tone of many of the individual wires. It takes the wisdom of Solomon and the patience of Job to distinguish between the unavoidable inherent beat of false wires and the beat that is required by the temperament.
If you had some little rods of even length and should arrange them in a staggered line thus: \underbrace{\ldots}, and other rods of even length, but longer, that you might lay out in a slightly staggered line thus: \underbrace{\ldots}, you would have a rough visual representation of what the tuner does, directed by his hearing, in tuning fourths and fifths. The same comparison could be extended to represent the tuning of octaves, in which case the rods would be halved in length with every ascending octave, and doubled in length in descending.

In the tempered scale each interval has a distinctive rate of beat, and this gives to piano music its peculiar character. Dissonances which are lovely on the violin because of the possibility of playing them in perfect tune, are less agreeable in the tempered scale, but this makes the piano especially adapted for the expression of certain moods.

Added to the imperfect condition of the wire in most old pianos is the fact that old hammers are generally worn off flat at the striking points and beaten down hard, which contributes to a metallic or "tinny" quality of tone. But it must not be assumed that everyone wants this condition remedied, as I learned the hard way. I was called to tune a piano for a concert -- a mediocre grand with a most unpleasant, hard tone. I decided to do the noble thing and reshape and needle the hammers to bring out a more gracious quality. I got it into much pleasanter-sounding shape, only to be called a day or so later by the player who was to use it. He was in great consternation, and wished to have the voice right back where it had been before. So I went back before the concert with Daisy's flatiron and ironed the hammers down hard again. This player had a very delicate touch, and was lost unless the piano was brilliant. So now I let the hammers alone, unless a change is requested.

The scale, in piano designers' terminology, is the complicated mechanical plan of the harp or casting and supporting frame, graduation of string lengths and wire sizes, balance of stresses, and other technical features of design. Scales may be faulty in several ways. The bass may overbalance the treble in volume, for example: I had a customer with an upright in this class. He had me sharpen the tuning progressively all the way up the treble, and flatten it all the way down the bass. The effect was better than normal tuning with this particular scale. Another fault is improper graduation of wire sizes in relation to the tension. This results in a strained effect, so that the instrument never tunes with a good blend -- it is ungracious, apart from the condition of the hammers.

Added to these problems is the matter of regulating the touch evenly, often necessitated by extensive moth damage to a piano action -- due not so much to damage to the larger parts which are fairly easy to replace, as to smaller glued-on felt pads and punchings, the replacement of which is very time-consuming.

A fairly good grand that I worked on for years used to need three tunings a year to keep it decently playable. Then it began to hold up much better, so that two tunings a year kept it in playable condition. I learned through the housekeeper that a humidifier had been installed in the heating plant for the benefit of the health of some member of the family. It did have a beneficial
effect on the piano.

A small modern piano had kept playable on a tuning a year, until one winter I was called back about three months after my regular visit; tuning was very much needed. I found the piano dried out and let down in pitch. I asked if the heating plant was equipped with a humidifier. "Yes," the owner replied, "but it was out of order all winter until a few days ago, when we had it fixed." This explained a lot.

A good many times I have had to tune pianos swelled up with summer dampness, which had to be let down to pitch, in the tenor area particularly. Then, when the early winter shrinkage took effect, I would have to re-tune them, sometimes for free. But it is impossible to do all the work at the ideal time, and people are not pleased to be told that the condition would right itself somewhat in a few months, after the uneven sharpness had a chance to subside. Oh, the heat and the humidity! But what would we do without them? They're the best little old explainers in the whole bag of tricks.
IN SCHOOLS

It gives one who has been out of school for some time an improved perspective on progress to see what school buildings are nowadays, where located, how equipped. Daisy especially likes to go along on a Saturday when I have work to do in schools. She marvels at the sense of abundance represented in them, and admires their attractiveness and convenience, books and equipment. A schoolroom on a Saturday is like an Andrew Wyeth painting — full of suggested activity that doesn't take place before the eyes.

A contrast was furnished until recent years in a town of considerable wealth that got along with an old grade school building after less affluent communities had built modern structures. Working on a piano in the lower corridor of this venerable edifice just after the afternoon session had started, I observed the constant passing of little boys going one way, and little girls going the other way, toward their respective basements. This involved a flight of about twenty stairs, or, if they came from the second floor, two such flights. I suppose a teacher's day is made up of a multiplicity of such interruptions. I can even remember when playing outdoors seemed more important than making these necessary trips during the noon hour. In one school I dipped into a teacher's book on child behavior, wherein this phenomenon was termed a sort of internal perspiration. Nowadays, with plumbing accessible to most lower grade rooms, the attractions of dawdling on long journeys are eliminated, hence the elementary physiological functions are not worked up into as much of a production as formerly.

While working in the same corridor just referred to, two incidents occurred which illustrated a shift in teacher attitude that is as radical as the shift from old buildings to new, and even more commendable. One teacher, an old style disciplinarian, stood by her room door at recess and shooed the children past me, saying over and over, "He doesn't need any of your help." The children's natural curiosity was squelched, and they looked downcast. A more progressive teacher asked if she could bring her class out to watch me work, as many of them had never seen a piano tuned. I was glad to have them look on quietly and interestingly for a short time. They all looked happy, and at no extra cost.

The displays arranged by school children often indicate a commendable sense of values, as well as ingenuity and imagination, not only in art, but in nature study, manufacturing, and several other fields. These exercises in discrimination are bound to have a leveling and balancing effect on a generation growing up amongst a bewildering array of products, many of which are advertised for the wrong reasons.

"A little nonsense now and then is relished..." even by a piano tuner. Working in an intermediate grade room in the old Hillsboro school on a Saturday, I noticed that the teacher had listed on the blackboard a schedule of classroom chores, with a child's name opposite each. Probably with children at her elbows taking half her attention, she had printed "SHARPNER" as one duty, so I
was persnickety enough to take the chalk, make a caret, and insert the "E" where needed, giving it no further thought. The following Monday I returned to this school to finish some work after classes had been dismissed for the day, and was met at the door by a very determined Mrs. Hutchinson who inquired, "Mr. Chase, do you know how to spell 'sharpeners'?"

"I hope I do," I replied. "At least, I know how it used to be spelled when I went to school."

There was a gale of laughter from several teachers, all listening for this exchange. Later, one of them told me, "We have been trying all day to pin that onto someone. The janitor and the superintendent were the only other people in the building during the weekend, and it was neither of them, so we decided it must have been the piano tuner."

What the art teacher would do, in the early grades, without our traditional symbols, I cannot imagine. The succession of painstakingly colored pictures and cutouts that dangle against windows and walls serves as a reliable calendar of seasons and holidays. You never see pussy willows in September, nor rotund Santa Clauses when it is time for hatchets and cherry trees. Possibly a teacher who has been at the trade for some time recognizes an element of periodicity in all this, but, as in my own trade, success is measured by results brought out, not by supplying fresh material for the onlooker. Still, a kindergarten teacher in Eastman School, East Concord, brought out welcome freshness by listing what the children thought of spontaneously as a Thanksgiving season approached. A placard was headed:

I AM THANKFUL

That God made me and I can see much of the world. Matthew
for my dog  Jean
for a kitty  Dorothy
I can see so much of a view  Steven S.
that I can play  Roger
for TV  Cynthia
for my big jacket  Diane
that Daddy fixed my gas station  Paul
for steak and eggs for breakfast  Wayne J.
that I have Brian  Terri
for my warm bed  David
for my Daddy  Charles
because I eat hot dogs and beans and corn  Steve V.
because I have a house  Beth
and glad I have Fluffy and Roxanne in my big bunk bed  Scott
for clothes to wear  Billy
for chicken, steak, turkey, pork chops and corn  Mary Lou
-- and my mother and father
that I can see  Roger
for beans to eat  Dennis
for toys  Joseph
that nobody died  Jayne
for cows because they give milk
for our baby we're waiting for
for horses
for kids to play with
for my house
for our hands
for feet
for snow to make snowmen

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One spring day, as soon as I had finished tuning in a classroom in Lyndeboro School at recess time, the teacher sat down at the piano and started playing the accompaniment of "Trees," which the children were to sing at their forthcoming graduation. I sang along with her, for fun, and afterwards she said, "I'd like to have the children hear you sing that. Would you mind?" I was glad to, so she called in her class and we went through the song again. The children gave me a big hand, and were unanimous in voicing the highest compliment within the grasp of the modern child: "You ought to be on TV."
SMALL FRY -- AND THEIR ELDERS

Children are a source of endless interest and delight. Sometimes they are pests, but suddenly their interest turns toward something else, and they are off like leaves in the wind to follow the new impulse. Oh, there are doubtful ones who look on until I start removing lumber from the piano, then scurry away to report, "Mummy, the man is breakin' our pinnano," but usually they interest me longer than my operations appeal to them. I have found that dogs manifest some of the attitudes of their owners, and this is even truer of children as mirrors of their parents.

At the Baghdoyans' in Deering, I raised the lid of the grand piano as I started to work and soon three delightful children were standing along the rim facing me -- a medium boy, a medium-small boy, and a small girl who had to stand on a stool to see over. The boys were frankly interested in what I was doing, and asked some bright questions. I asked about their pets and animals, and learned how many there were, and heard about the swallow's nest under the corn barn. The brothers let the small sister talk some of the time, and we had a wonderful visit -- over mild protests from their mother and assurances from me that I was happy about the situation. After a reasonable time they scattered, and I had comparative quiet for the fussiest part of my tuning.

Occasionally I find a child with a furtive manner that suggests iron discipline or regimented thinking, but even such a child, in the short time I am present, will respond to a different approach. Regardless of what their environment has forced upon them, children are more responsive to the way others think about them than most adults are. I drove into a customer's yard and was met by a bespectacled boy who tersely directed me, without greeting, to the scene of my labors. A prep school student, I learned. Not a very promising start, but I started thinking about the normal characteristics of a boy -- curiosity about mechanical things, friendliness, and humor -- and gradually these were manifested. As the boy passed through the room on woman-sent errands, he stopped longer and longer on each successive trip, chatted and asked questions, and by the time I was ready to leave, he walked out to the car with me and was in no hurry to have me go.

There are youngsters who are primarily concerned with what my father used to describe by the old-fashioned word antics. Two siblings attached wads of cotton to their clothing at a suitable place and sang a song about Peter Cotton-tail, with appropriate hoppings. Then they suddenly became chamois and leaped from chair to chair to sofa all over the big living room.

A very serious blond child asked me if I had any children, and upon learning that I have none, asked, "Are you going to have any?" She demonstrated for my benefit the first steps in ballet, with grave decorum, then reverted to type when her mother returned from the food store. She joined her sister in begging
to open all the cereal boxes to get all the "prizes," which they were allowed to do. "But remember," the mother warned, "you will have to eat this all up before I buy any more."

Sophistication appears early in unexpected places. In a home where the children were absent at the time of my visit, I saw a jack-o-lantern neatly tricked out with lipstick.

As I worked along in one family home in Henniker, my customer's sister, who lived nearby, came in. After a little talk there was a burst of laughter. One of them asked me if I knew about children, and I replied that I had seen a lot of my nephews and nieces while they were growing up. Then the woman went on to explain that her little girl had reached the stage of wearing a diaper at night only, and that her brother-in-law had come over to baby-sit the previous evening, which included putting the child to bed. In the morning, the child's mother found that the diaper had been sewed on with coarse black thread. At this point the man himself walked in, and came in for some good-natured kidding about a man's way of doing things. "Well," he said, "I couldn't find a safety pin anywhere around this place, but there was a needle and thread, and I'll guarantee the didee stayed on."

Dick Edmunds, a small boy at the time, asked me a question I couldn't answer. He looked at the jumble of stuff in my tool box and inquired, "Why don't you put those things in the next way?"

Add unsought emoluments: a free and friendly girl of five dashed up and planted a soft little kiss on my cheek as I was leaning over to get something out of my tool box.

Katie Sprague, demure but articulate, was staying home from school the day I arrived to tune the family piano, but she was plenty well enough to show an interest in what I was doing, and why. I asked how her younger brother was getting along with his piano lessons. She replied airily, "Oh, pretty well. He plays several book pieces." She herself had progressed into sonatinas. I had to remove the piano action for repairs, and the girl tried singing, talking, and squealing just to hear the sounds echo from the undampered piano strings. Then she remarked, "Those strings are just like gossips -- they repeat everything that is said to them."

A mother told me, "My daughter is inclined to be overweight, and every year when Dr._____, who is young and slim, examines the children at school, he sputters about it. These string beans don't know how hard it is to cut a child down to one half or one third of what she would normally eat. Believe me, if I ever have a problem of overweight, I'm going to hunt up an old, fat doctor, one who has some understanding."

Seeing the earnestness of many young people and the sort of interests they develop, I entertain no doubts about the future welfare of the country. One year a lengthy boy named John was playing with his younger brother and sister and their toy walkie-talkie set. The following year he was immersed in building a complicated electrical device, and knew what he was about.
An elderly single lady told me, "I let my neighbor's little girl come in and play on my piano, as long as she plays nicely. If children are not allowed to touch a piano at all, how can we find out which ones have promising talent?"

As I was doing some extensive repairs, pre-school Douglas Shattuck came in and showed an interest in my small parts boxes. He was not being meddlesome; he carefully took one out of each item, asked its use, and put it back in the proper place. I could go along with such controlled curiosity. We both had fun.

In a Jaffrey Center home well stocked with antiques, the only modern thing was the small piano. I sat on an Empire stool as I tuned, and part way through the job, the old stool crashed under me, with no harm to myself. A tuner stands -- or sits -- ready for the unexpected. The grandmother in the family heard the crash and came quickly to the door. Relieved to see that it was only the mechanic, she breathed a sigh and said fervently, "I'm glad it didn't break under one of our children."

In Marlboro, a sturdy Boy Scout, the son of substantial French-Canadian people, was preparing to go on his first overnight camping trip with his troop. His mother, very long-faced, confided in me, "It'll be his first night away from home. I s'pose we shouldn't mind, but he's our youngest one." The boy kept on reading aloud the instructions for packing eggs in cereal and how to carry the bacon, all unaware of the parental emotions. The father came home from his business, right in the middle of the morning, on some weak pretext, and hung around awaiting the boy's departure. They managed a few jokes about the boy's having to eat his own cooking, but their utter misery showed through all the while. I loved their tenderness. The boy who was the object of all this covert devotion was self-reliant, robust, frank -- just what one likes to see in a boy.

Working in a littered playroom in Dublin where orderliness did not appear to be the prime consideration, I had taken off my coat and draped it over a battered rocking horse. When the young daughter of the house entered, she took a quick look around and commanded, with a queenly gesture, "Take your coat off our rocking horse." I did so; it was her domain, but I thought it barely possible that she might eventually learn to moderate her haughtiness through contact with the workaday world.

In a farm home, two young children returned from school, watched me work for a short time, then got into their farm clothes and went outdoors. Their mother motioned toward the silent television set and said smilingly, "You can see how TV is spoiling my children. They do have a few programs they enjoy, but they have too many interests to sit and watch for long at a time. I can't see any problem in TV as long as it is balanced by other interests." I could see how this sensible approach worked out with her family, but I told her I had been in a good many homes where the children were dismayed when their parents insisted that they would have to shut off the sound, at least, while I did my tuning. A lot of grownups seem to have built their lives around the little barking movie. When arranging a day's work, I telephoned to one house where tuning had been requested, and the woman asked me to come on a different day, explaining, "My husband wants to watch a game this afternoon, and the TV is in the same room with the piano." So I did that job another day, and as I was working, the husband came in, remarking, "You could have come last Saturday just as well as not.
I wouldn't have minded. I could have turned the volume up good and loud."

A young woman remarked to me, "I took piano lessons for some time, but didn't get very far with them. At nearly every lesson my teacher would remark, "Here I am, a pupil of Edward MacDowell, wasting my time on you."

Antics of small fry have furnished backgrounds of variety for my familiar journeys up and down the eighty-eight keys. One summer day a little man-cub, the cutest thing on two feet, was having the run of his home au naturel, peeking around corners at me as I worked... a small girl was very earnestly doing dolls' laundry in a basin... A more sophisticated girl was indulging that perpetual delight of childhood -- dressing up in outlandish old clothes and parading clumpily around the house in her mother's old shoes.

In the home of art-conscious people, the Filbins, a reproduction of Botticelli's "Primavera" hung over the piano. I studied the artist's conception of Spring as a stately goddess attended by her graces in their gauzy aesthetic draperies. A daughter in the family, Christine, about nine years of age at that time, came in and made a remark that pointed to the need of nearly every generation to have things restated in terms comprehensible by the measuring-stick of its own experience. Noticing that I was studying the picture, the child said thoughtfully, "I don't see why those girls bothered to wear their nylons, when you can see right through them."

As I was tuning a spinet piano for the Johnsons in Hillsboro, Rob, the small toddler in the family, came in and was eager to watch. This lovable small boy, almost as broad as he was tall, just couldn't see my actual moves, and was impatient about it, so with his mother's consent I took him up on my knee within view of my operations. He quieted down and watched with interest until I had to move. I could not know what impression the incident made on the boy, but it brightened my day beyond measure.

Recalling a bygone day when a mother's apron strings were tied to her children, I marvel at children's ability to adjust to any tolerable situation and accept it as their norm. They may spend a good share of their waking hours with a teen-age sitter, live in modest or sumptuous surroundings, and still be normal, wholesome youngsters. The only child often has a surfeit of little-used toys, and several studio photos (generally displayed on the piano), while the large family gets along happily with a few battered playthings, and is glad to settle for an occasional snapshot. But through it all, the kids come bouncing and bubbling with amazing energy, enthusiasm, loyalty -- tireless in their pursuit of happiness. A mother of four, Moira Smith, summed it up rather well when she told me, "We haven't got fancy furnishings, nor a lot to do with, but if children have a comfortable home, good food, and love, they can get along and be happy."
TRENDS IN THE TRADE

People have been asking me for years, "Who is going to tune the pianos in the future?" My immediate reply has often been, "That is the least of my concerns. There is no agency in our sprawling bureaucratic system that concerns itself with ensuring the perpetuation of the less common skills, especially those not related to the assembly line. I am convinced that the high value of many antiques today is not that the materials are so rare and costly, but that the skills that went into making them are getting increasingly rare -- people who can lay gold leaf, do the exquisite turnings and carvings, and who as individual craftsmen have a sense of good proportion and design."

I see this as part and parcel of the surrender of individual responsibility and initiative to the guidance system -- the computer-knows-best takeover. Actually, it began as long ago as when the individual hunter quit shaping his own bow and arrows, which had to be dependable, and he a straight shooter, or he wouldn't eat. When the assembly line firearm came along, he could do without developing some of the skills.

So when someone asks, "Why don't more young people take up this trade?" I can only reply, "I have thought a lot about that, and have concluded that it is out of keeping with the temper of the times. It requires more than most people want to put into an occupation today -- more responsibility, flexibility in dealing with people, adaptability in meeting situations. You don't get a union wage the first week, nor automatic pay raises with fringe benefits."

To be able to perform adequately in any line, and to teach the same subject, are two different things. When a boy, my first pupil in 30 years, wanted to learn tuning, I had to develop my own approach and method of teaching him the rudiments. The lad was eager, and accustomed to doing work that demanded much energy and sweeping motions, so his initial tendency was to overdo it. If a string needed to be sharpened a little, he would yank it up a lot, so in order to keep him within bounds I would say, "If you were up on a ladder picking apples and some were just out of your reach, you wouldn't go up three or four rungs and then come down again; you would go just far enough to reach them the first time." Also, "If you had a pan of biscuits in the oven and you looked and saw that they were still white-livered, you wouldn't leave them until they were burned black, but just until they were brown enough." When he got impatient and applied too much muscular force, I would say, "You're burnin' your biscuits, boy." All this was slanted toward getting the point across that we work with very small, controlled motions.

The competent, established tuner today is likely to be also a piano dealer, hence is mainly interested in servicing the pianos he sells, which is understandable. But this leaves a good many pianos with potential musical mileage left in them with no adequate service man; their owners get the brush-off-and-
brochure routine when they apply for a tuning job. It may be just one side-
effect of the rise in the apparent prosperity index, but it leaves a gap -- a
dissonance gap -- which I regret.

The responsible experienced tuner who has not taken a dealership tends to
stay with his old customers and not spread his activities thinner and thinner
over larger areas. He has little need to advertise; his customers do that for
him. A party in Marlborough for whom I did some tuning years ago told a friend
in Temple about me, and this drew me into a neighborhood where my services were
welcomed, and so it goes.

Daisy says I can't attend a concert or shop in a supermarket without getting
tuning jobs, and this proves true. What should I do, run and hide? Why not go
and tune 'em up, and keep as many happy as possible?
CLOSING IN

We built the roof on the stone house in '57, got window and door openings covered with temporary closures, then I could have an open fire and work inside during the following winter. It had become a perennial project by that time, and we had become accustomed to certain standard questions: How many rooms are you going to have? Will you have a cellar and an attic? Are you going to have a dining room?, and so on. So we developed a standard reply: We haven't yet decided how we are going to chop it up.

Most of the details of finishing the inside we worked out together. In a stone structure, you have to decide how to treat the thickness of the walls -- whether to recess the windows from the outside or from the inside -- and some collaboration was required to reach a compromise between appearance and practicality. I laid a cement slab in the principal room, later to be covered with random slate for a finish floor. Only the bedroom floor had a wooden frame.

Besides failing to look ahead in the matter of leaving holes in the stone-work for pipes and cables, we made a few errors in design, such as ending with a bathroom space 4' x 9'. Try as we would, a standard 5-foot tub would not fit handily, so we settled for a 4-foot square tub in one end of the space -- a neat fit, which cost $280.45, nearly double the price of a standard tub at that time. But living with one's own mistakes is more fun, and far more instructive, than having a convenient whipping boy in the form of another person.

Many friends brought us souvenir stones to work into the structure. Mrs. Barnes, a teacher's wife at High Mowing School, gave me a piece of rose quartz picked from the scrap heap at a feldspar quarry in Alstead, N.H.; this I placed in a central spot in the chimney. Donn and Doris Purvis brought a smooth slab from Pictou Beach, Nova Scotia, also a stone from Jasper Beach, Machias, Maine. Mrs. Luzora Waterbury gave us a choice white stone. Hugh and Dorothy Palmer brought a piece of sea-beaten coral from the beach of Iwo Jima and a fragment of lava from Kilauea, Hawaii. Michael Worcester guided me to the site of the gold mine in Dublin, where we secured quartz-like scraps dug out by earlier generations in a feverish search for pay dirt. John and Ila Ballard sent red granite pebbles from Frankfort Coast Guard Station on Lake Michigan. Jimmy Yakovakis brought a honey-colored chip from a ruined marble at Athens. Our neighbors the Bonnels brought stones from Alabama, and Natural Bridge, Virginia. Most of these special stones, and many more, we used in the fireplace chimney and in the interior trim around the fireplace itself.

With the house approaching completion, we had to secure a water supply. A friend who had had some success with the divining rod came over to see what the prospects might be. He found a vein of water about 30 feet from our front entrance, and estimated that I would have to dig about 15 feet to reach it. So, in odd moments, I started in, picking my way through dense hardpan most of the
way. No danger of a cave-in in such bony digging. We learned later from this friend's wife that after he had dowed for us he went home and scarcely slept that night, apprehensive lest he had given me a wrong steer. He should have rested comfortably. I struck water at 16 feet in the exact line he had indicated, and dug another three feet to make a storage pocket. Then the task of walling it up began. Good well stone are not like good wall stone; a longish, tapering stone is best for a well. You lay them with the big end out, backing with small cobbles all around, and succeeding courses wedge the structure quite securely, without the use of mortar.

It was during the time I was working on the well that Bernard Lamb wired the house for electricity, and evidently liked the whole concept pretty well, for he brought a few people over to see the effort. One afternoon I was working in the bottom of the well, when Bernard hailed me from above. I looked up, and saw that he had an older man with him. He said, "I brought my Gramp over to see your place; he came down from Vermont to visit." So I asked, "Is this your Grandfather Lamb, or on the other side?" Gramp replied, "We both blat."

About this time, Daisy found the right name for the place in her favorite book, The Bible: LIVELY STONES.
LIV

THIS PLACE REMINDS ME

I should feel little response from living where there are no landmarks of significance to me. Happenings around the countryside linger in memory, and many a spot that would look undistinguished to you is enriched for me by associations and local lore, and I seldom pass these places without being reminded.

On the road leading from Hancock village to Bond's Corner, Dublin, is a brook spanned by a small cement bridge. At this same place, years ago, was a common plank bridge with a cut pole railing. Artist Lilla Cabot Perry saw it as a proper setting for a genre painting. She enlisted the cooperation of a boy, Robert Richardson, who lived nearby, and on summer afternoons when she wanted to paint, she would have her chauffeur bring her to the site, and the boy stood on the bridge fishing with a sapling pole, for which pleasant pastime Mrs. Perry paid him ten cents on each occasion. He was a lad about 12 years of age, barefoot, wearing knee-length pants and an old shirt, and had an ample mane of tow hair. The boy was thrifty, and had ideas of how a boy ought to look at that period — far different from our current shaggy vogue — so he saved his dimes until he had forty cents, then got to Peterborough and bought himself a haircut. Mrs. Perry was greatly displeased with the change in her model's appearance, and regretted having paid him the dimes. A good painting came out of it, however. The boy's mother showed me a print of the picture and told me the story, many years later.

On the outskirts of Bennington village lived a couple who kept wood fires. One winter day along toward dusk, they took out a peil of hot ashes, set it in an unused hen coop, and put a piece of tin over it. But the tin did not fit closely, the wind was strong, and the coop was drafty. Evidently an ember was blown out of the ashes, landed in some old litter, and during the evening the coop began to burn. It was reported to the local fire department, and the men arrived promptly with the chemical tanks they used for putting out small fires. But the tanks were frozen up, so the men threw them into the fire and thawed them out, then used them to put the fire out. By that time there wasn't much left of the coop.

Down a beck road out of one of our villages, several single men kept bachelor establishments, and in driving through this neighborhood, I think of these characters, individual as all get out. There was John, diligent and sober, who had a small farm and was full of dry observations. One day he was odd-jobbing for one of the neighbors, and knocked some hide off one of his knuckles. The woman he was working for offered to bandage the place, but John said, "No thank you, I heal up jest like a dawg." Another denizen of batch's hollow was Ben, the opposite of John in industry and sobriety. John's comment was, "Ben ain't much comp'ny. When he's sober he won't talk, and when he's drunk he says the same thing over and over."
Along the turnpike between Francestown and Mont Vernon is a place, formerly a farm, bought years ago by down-country folks. In the process of fixing up the barn for a rumpus room, they wanted a large stone fireplace and chimney, and Brother Steve got the job. I was working for him part-time in those days, as was also a Francestown resident, George Hoyt, a first-class mason, and resourceful in every way. As a week-end hobby, the owners of the place had planted a garden, providing for its protection during their absences by setting up a rather fancy scarecrow clad in a stuffed shirt and a pair of blue denim overalls that were only slightly worn. George had cast an appraising eye at this get-up from the start, especially so as the days of stone-work continued and his own overalls wore through in more and more spots, until one noon during the owner's absence he ate his lunch without much palaver, then got up and carried the scarecrow off into the bushes. When George reappeared and restored the scarecrow to its guardian position, Brother Steve remarked, "Now the scarecrow looks more like a scarecrow, and George, more like a man."

Francestown, like several of our New Hampshire villages, has an impressive white-painted church which faces a common. At the southerly end, giving access to the entrance doors, are two stone steps which extend across most of the width of the building. The lower step is composed of three granite slabs, the upper step of two, which were transported by ox teams from Weare, a week's journey at the time the church was built. How many people today realize the effort and planning that were required for such a project?
WE BROKE AWAY

When it became clear to us that one year-round home would be more practical than our semi-annual shifting from Hancock to Concord, we faced the issue and admitted to each other that the stone house met our need for only part of each year. We still enjoyed it, and loved it as a monument to the effort and satisfaction we had in building it, but the character of the locality had changed over the years. The country was no longer rural, but more and more had come to be regarded as a recreational area. Most of the recreations produced new and different noises, even though no one could build very near us.

The original tract of "78 acres, more or less" had been reduced by the purchase of nearly sixteen acres by the State for highway construction, and the old meadow had been taken over by beavers; they engineered the impounding of a large body of water by constructing a relatively small dam. This increased interest in the property as a whole, so we felt it should be sold as one tract, rather than to be cut up into smaller parcels. This proved to be a right decision, as the eventual buyer wanted all of the land.

Between the intent to sell and the consummation of a sale we had several opportunities to observe human nature. What we had brought out as our ideal at the time of building was not someone else's idea at all. We put in part of a summer with agents and prospective buyers. One man walked through the stone house and uttered just one word: "Substantial." Others enthused but did not return. I had been alerted to the vastly differing outlooks of real estate buyers by a customer of mine, Guy Murchie, who had sold a country property. Being a writer, he had felt competent to write his own advertising, and in describing the tract had included mention of "three swamps." His agent wanted to change the phrase to "lowland areas," but the people who finally bought the property wanted swamps; they were naturalists interested in studying wetland life. So Daisy and I prayed over it, and were confident that the right party would come, one who could see virtues in our unique place, and in time, that occurred.

One fine couple who came were very much taken with the place, were appreciative of it, and we enjoyed them. I said that possibly the reason the property had not sold sooner was that the house couldn't be classified in any of the terms of real estate jargon; it was not a ranch, or a cape, or a split. The man smiled and said, "It's a CHASER."
A SPECIAL KIND OF CITY

A tunes of any competence cannot stay out in the country altogether, so when a sufficient volume of work developed in the Concord area, Daisy and I started living in town during the winters. No other community has the caliber and feeling of Concord. Not a fast-paced modern city, it has more of the character of a staid village of a generation or more ago. Few places could be found with so high a percentage of native population -- conservative, highly respectable, attentive to residential upkeep, and consciously or unconsciously loyal to Concord. This is much to our liking, and we have found friends who wear well, but the Concord attitude is illustrated in these experiences:

A young man with whom we had dealings in connection with a winter rental appeared to be cosmopolitan and was certainly well travelled, having served overseas with the armed forces. Yet when I asked him, "Did you come from around Concord, or from away somewhere?" he stiffened instinctively as if affronted and replied, "Oh, Concord."

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Daisy and I enjoy choral singing, and have been situated so we could sing in the chorus of "The Messiah," some portions of which have been performed annually in Concord for many years. After we had wrangled our way through Handel's stately phrases for a few seasons, we attended a first rehearsal for one of these productions, and I sat beside an affable chap who gave me the glad hand and introduced himself. We were "Jim" and "Howie" right away, and had pleasant casual conversation during the breaks, all of which was most agreeable, but during the following week as I pondered this unique encounter, the thought came to me, "Concord was never like this!" At the next rehearsal I made it a point to sit beside this man again and opened with "Jim, you're not a Concord native. You are from the West, or Canada, or Australia."

"Why, what makes you think that?"

"Now don't get me wrong. These Concord fellows are good fellows, under their chilly exterior, but here I am coming to chorus for the third year, and a few of them are just beginning to nod to me when I come in." After he had recovered enough so he could talk, he told me, "I was originally from Massachusetts, but I lived in Texas for seventeen years."

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When a Concord customer would ask me where I was from, and I would state that I had a place in Hancock, there was little response or show of enthusiasm. But when I added that we had been living in Concord during recent winters, there was a perceptible warming of manner which said more plainly than words.
"So you are almost one of us."

* * * * *

Every state capital is replete with headquarters of organizations, as well as with state departments and institutions. I got a little insight into the latter when I was bidden, at a period when their regular tuner was unable to work, to do some tuning for the New Hampshire Hospital (which was paid for, by the way, out of the "Piano and Pool Table Fund"). I got locked into wards all over that place, tinkered on old handed-down pianos that were graded to agree with the classification of patients in each ward, and found the most unexpected things inside them. For example, one contained the dried remains of what had been a lovely bunch of carnations some years earlier. Most of these old klunkers hadn't been worked on for years; after their regular tuner returned to work, he told me, "I never go near the ward pianos." The attendants were agreeable about letting me out after my work was finished, and they were most considerate and tactful in dealing with the patients, as I was called upon to be on short notice on one occasion:

I was working on a piano that stood in a wide corridor in a ward of aged women. One tall woman kept pacing back and forth, muttering about "down-country folks," which phrase, along with her nasal speech, marked her as a native. On one of her trips she came up behind me, parked on my shoulder with an eerie clutch, and inquired, "Say, has Guy Haskins been down here to the village today?"

I turned with relaxed friendliness and replied, "I haven't seen him yet today, but you know I'm not very well acquainted around town."

"But you do live here part of the time, don't you?"

"Yes, but only during the winter."

Apparently satisfied, she relaxed her clutch and went along. Any place where she was passed for "the village" she was familiar with, but she had an uncanny shrewdness.

* * * * *

Besides our State House, the building of the New Hampshire Historical Society is an architectural monument worthy of study. Its distinctive rotunda is harmonious in design, of agreeable proportions, and of sumptuous materials.

The devotion of earlier citizens to the community and its betterment is evidenced in two fine lecture and concert series which are so endowed that Concord residents may enjoy them free of charge.

Coupled with an almost unerring ability to detect a phony, Concord is deliberate about accepting change. I couldn't imagine a place more resistant to high-pressure salesmanship, or even to a newcomer who has a legitimate product or skill. Quint told me, "I've seen tuners come to town, do a house-to-house canvass for work, and they were goin' to run me out of town. They have all left, and I'm still here." He kept active up into his middle eighties, and his customers remained loyal.
LIVE AROUND THE YEAR

You might as well sniff at the kitchen door and think you know all about hot rolls as to assume that you can really know a region by driving through it, or know its people from a single season's stay with them. Live around the year, see the scenery and observe the people under all conditions, in all weathers, and you begin to comprehend a lot that does not appear on the surface.

Thinking about the generations who resourcefully tilled the thin soil, tended livestock, and carried on the traditions of an existence that yielded more satisfactions than monetary rewards, I was reminded of a friend whose contribution to our heritage is so typical that it stands as a model, and I tried to celebrate it in angular rhyme:

His Kind of Love

'Twa'n't a word he used much --
few times, mebbe, courtin' her,
an' when the girl an' boy came, an' such --
but mostly you'd hafta infer;
ketch it or not, he'd never let on,
still, 'twas there, you could bet on.

Y'oughter see him lug in, gentle-like,
a pastur'-dropped calf when
a cold quick squall blew up. He'd hike half a mile in the wet, but then,
he could stan' it better'n such young soft critters. Cold never stung.

Nobody druv 'im on his fourteen-sixteen hour
day. You'd drop in, he could stop,
gaze at those hills, watch that maple shower gold on the pastur' wall. P'raps he'd prop a foot up on the ex, chat a bit, not melt to chummy, 'xactly, but little said, much felt.

The stone walls and cellar holes now in deep woods are only a more advanced stage of the rough hill farm with run-down buildings, and back fields growing up to brush. I did some tuning, in winter, for a farm family in Weare, and noticed an extensive treeless expanse of snow-covered landscape in view of the house. "Is that all tillage?" I asked. "Yes," one of the men snapped, "but we don't till it." He had found something better to his liking than hardscrabble farming as a means of livelihood. We can be grateful that down-country folks have
bought up a good many of our hill farms and at least have saved the buildings and surrounding lots from reverting to wilderness. Never a lush countryside, it yielded reluctantly whatever could be wrested from it. My calculating, frugal neighbor, Eldred Berry of West Campton, had a sound reason for taking off a big potato and putting on a small one so that the scales would just balance when weighing out his crop for market. Living came hard, and in a couple of seasons he might gain an additional bushel to sell by saving the overbalance.

Seasons in New Hampshire never have a clearcut start or finish; they merge. I love the overlap of the seasons. The puckery fruit of a seedling apple tree, golden, hard, and gnarled, hangs to be decked with early snow and to gladden the foraging red squirrel and browsing deer. When summer seems a settled thing, a nook that was retarded because of its shaded northerly slope will offer blooms of species that have gone by in earlier locations. At the season that impresses those who like to have color thrown at them in masses, you can still find lingering blooms and bits of vivid green that are reluctant to yield to the approach of cold. Driving around this region, now gone back to nearly as high a percentage of woodland as existed in colonial times, you can feel both ways from the things you see. In the creamy bloom of wild cherries you can look ahead to ruddy riches spilling along the roadsides in late summer. In autumn, stave pods and winged seeds take you back to lazy days of summer fragrances and humming bees. In these and countless other ways, living around the year reassures you about continuity and fulfillment.

Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as a single foliage season. We have foliage right around the year; it is simply more conspicuous at some seasons than at others. Now take evergreens: never without foliage in some condition, they vary observably with the weather and their stage of growth. In winter, their color varies with the temperature. At sub-zero they turn grayish or duller green -- stiff with the cold -- then a mild spell brings back the usual brightness. In late winter, pines and hemlocks appear wan, a bit yellowish, but by the time of birdsong and bursting buds, they take on a rejuvenated green, to be followed shortly by the tender hues of new growth, varying in conformation and amount with each species. The new growth gradually darkens to match the hue of the mature needles, and soon after this stage is reached, the needlefall occurs, most conspicuous in white pines. The older needles turn pale and golden, making a pretty frill for a few days, then change to light brown and fall to renew the carpet.

An oak is hardly ever without a leaf, but throughout the winter the beeches carry even more of the dried foliage of the previous season, as if to show forth in these tenacious tatters of last summer's dress a cheerful defiance of winter.

You can observe in the mixed stands of hardwoods and evergreens pleasing contrasts at all seasons, but for subtle variations in color throughout the growing season, our many hardwood species offer rich material for study. Leaving with only passing comment the beauties of form, outline, and color of this class of trees during the dormant season, one of the first changes you may note in early spring is a haziness in the tops of elms, which develops into a golden tan fuzziness as the blossoms open. Several kinds of maples come into ruddy or tawny bloom directly, with poplars, butternuts, and oaks shaking out their catkins as the spring progresses. We can hardly do justice to the purple pompoms
of white ash, the many meadow shrubs, dainty shadbush, and other things of individual charm, but we can at least touch upon some of the larger effects and slight but observable day-to-day changes. From a vantage point that overlooks an area of mixed woodland, you can for a short period spot every rock maple in bloom, distinguished by its typical color, a sulphur yellow tinged with green. This phase passes, and you begin to notice the tender new green of birches, poplars, and so on through many other species.

The oaks, one of the most cautious of trees to put forth leaves, and one of the latest to attain full summer foliage, will have scarcely reached that condition, when you can discern subtle indications of approaching autumn. The foliage on a weak maple branch here and there begins to show reddish color as early as mid-July. Then, the greens by almost imperceptible degrees lighten and take on a tint of yellow, well before the swamp maples turn crimson. You have felt the approach of autumn all along in longer and cooler nights, decreasing birdsong, in the background music of insect hum. Then, suddenly, everybody else recognizes that "the foliage season" is in full swing.

When the shouting is all but over, you may find the meroon foliage of high-bush blueberries enriching the scene along old pasture walls, often mingled with glossy green mountain laurel in pleasing contrast, and nature rolls out warm red carpets where low blueberries grow under roadside pines. You may grow to appreciate lichens on rocks and tree trunks, their soft gray-greens and medallion-like designs becoming most conspicuous in late fall. In going about the countryside to some of the half-hundred communities in which I work during a year's time, I enjoy looking through naked deciduous woodlands toward extensive views which were masked out by summer green during the warm months.

November is one of my favorite months, despite the deceptive appearance of many of its days. You look out of a morning and the day seems cheerful and promising, but after you go outdoors, the sun shines mostly on distant hills; wherever you are is shadowed by cloud, and the wind has a keen edge. Still, it is a time of unhurried waiting for the inevitable; it ushers in the long evenings and times of fireside repose. As I drive home in the dusk or early dark, the lights in dwellings along the way look very inviting, suggesting food and warmth. Practically everything in human experience is appreciated on a basis of comparison; shelter is doubly welcome when the outdoor aspect grows bleak. The variety of our New England weather certainly promotes a zest for living. November brings a few mild Indian summer days, a welcome delay in the arrival of cold. The few cattle that are turned out to graze seek the sun in November as gratefully as they sought the shade in July, as if hoping during this brief return of summer to store up enough warmth to last them through the short days and long nights when they will be confined mainly to stanchions and tie-ups. The lower angle of the southward-swinging sun brings changes in accent of light and contour. It reaches farther into our houses as autumn draws on. The amber afterglow that follows a clear sunset is reflected on still ponds in a way we seldom see at other seasons.

I could not discourse under this head without mentioning the country roads that ramble among

"The hills
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun,—the vales
Stretching in pensive quietness between,"

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to borrow a poet's apt phrase. Driving along such by-ways by preference when
time and itinerary permit, I would single out for mention the intimate glimpses
of roadside growth and wildlife. Anyone concerned primarily with getting from
here to there is likely to miss a lot along the way, and back roads cause such
drivers to chafe at the steering wheel. But being country-raised, and having
ridden for years behind old horses whose method of locomotion was to make sure
each foot was well placed before advancing another foot, I love to poke along
and observe the scene. All summer long there are roadside riches, not only of
bloom and fruit, but also of the many ferns that grace the damp, shady spots
with their cool elegance during the growing season, and in autumn delight the
eye with russet-golden hues, the nostrils with spicy aromas.

Taking time to meander along the less travelled roads, such as the route
from Hillsboro through East Washington to Bradford, you drive with car windows
open when the weather permits, and birdsong will cheer you on your way. You may
glimpse a fleet hawk gliding ahead of your car along a country lane, soon to
swerve expertly from sight, or pause to admire a scarlet tanager's nest brill-
iance. At dusk you may recognize a whippoorwill perch'd along the road's edge,
the flashing ruby of his eyes reflecting the car lights. You may take the same
delight I do in seeing deer along the way, browsing in clover patches, or dis-
appearing into the brush with white flag up. In early summer, you will learn
not to be fooled by a mother grouse "playing hurt" in front of a slow-moving car
in her instinctive wile to draw attention away from her brood.

Besides these observations of nature, the human species affords some season-
al interest. You notice that the small fry hopefully drag a sled over bare
ground in late autumn, while in late winter, when snow still abounds, they search
out the first patch of bare mud on which to sit and play marbles. I would dis-
course more amply on the brave, hungry men, garbed in gaudy outfits, who sally
forth in quest of the wily deer. These brighten the landscape almost as soon as
fall foliage wanes, and in such number, and variety of color, that the foliage
is scarcely missed. But most of them do not venture far from the travelled ways.
These fellows are smart: they have heard that dragging a deer three or four
miles out of a swamp is work, and they are not going to get into that pickle.
So within my time there has arisen a class of "highway hunters." Their technique
is to get some eager boys to beat the bush and drive the deer out so they can
shoot it handy to their car and load it on. There is one village where all the
traffic has to pass through a crossroads known as "the square." Here I see the
"square hunters" appear as regularly as the seasons roll around. They have most-
ly dispensed with guns years ago. Their plaid outfits have not been snagged on
the brush, just a bit faded in front from long exposure to the sun in a standing
position, and somewhat worn on the seat from sliding into booths in the nearby
public houses. But more deer have been shot, orally, on "the square" than any-
where else in the county.

Having a trade that is plied indoors, dates to meet that do not wait for
ideal weather, and living in a state where winter roads get such prompt atten-
tion that my driveway gets filled in by the highway plow several times after
each major snowstorm, winter driving is a matter of course and of necessity. I
have experienced some heartwarming expressions of helpfulness. Coming home
through a surprisingly "greasy" wet snowstorm, I reached a downgrade a mile or
two north of Antrim, and found the road blocked by cars in all positions that
had failed to make the grade coming in the opposite direction. I had to stop by nosing into a snowbank. A half dozen or so stout fellows left their grain trucks and other vehicles, pushed cars over the hilltop, straightened out others, and finally, when there was a way through, lifted my front end back into the road, and everybody was moving again.

Memorable scenic effects reward my all-weather driving. Days that cloud in with approaching snowstorms often bring a few hours of exceptional clearness. On one such day in midwinter I was dismissed early from petit jury duty in Manchester, and as I had some tuning to do in Contoocook, I drove to Goffstown, then north along the Dunbarton ridge, always a fine road for views. That day the hills and mountains stood out with a clarity that even I, a native, have rarely seen. Beyond a few miles, the wooded areas appeared blue, varying in intensity according to the distance, the snowfields affording a great variety of pattern all the way to the horizon. A high sheet of pearly gray cloud, luminous rather than ominous, domed the scene. Toward the northerly end of the ridge, which commands a fine prospect of the White Mountains, the caliber of the view increased to distinct grandeur. A thin haze of smoke from kitchen chimneys and from factory stacks veiled the foreground, carrying attention toward the distant elevations, but at the same time relating the scene to human activity.

During a snowfall, when distant views are obscured, you may enjoy, as I do, the effects along the roadsides. A driving storm builds drifts of the most advanced streamlined design if the snow is dry, but if damp, it coats trees and other standing objects on the windward side. A still, dry snowfall piles up on evergreens, while a damp storm free from wind -- New Hampshire is one of the least windy of the United States -- transforms the commonest brush patch into sheer daintiness and intricacy. When clearing occurs toward sunset following such a storm, you may share in the rosy glow that overspreads the scene, and be thrilled by the inspiringly clean smell of the snow-washed air. The intense blue of distant hills, momentary changes in lighting and other subtleties never quite captured by brush or camera, combine to justify a preference for year-round living on the part of many who could migrate to any climate of their choice. To a native like me, this is a built-in preference.

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Dooryard flowers, of which almost every dwelling has some, are a delight all summer long. I used to pass one place that had a stained glass window incongruously placed in the cow stable, and a lot of old gear lying around in a lot grown to weeds. Most of the paint had weathered off the house, but in a shady angle between house and elli was a nook of floral loveliness, a bank of red tuberous begonias and blue ageratum, which told me something favorable about the people who lived there.

You may be sure that settled warm weather has arrived when householders move their sturdier house plants out-of-doors, or at any rate onto an open porch. Often you see an old table or bench placed under a dooryard tree bearing an assemblage of cacti, geraniums, and begonias, or an oleander in a tub, all of which produce on their own unhurried schedule blooms to repay the owner for months of tending and watering.
When I see window boxes and flower beds draped with sheets to fend off the first frosts, I think back to the days when my mother did the same. She also went through her garden at dusk and filled vases and pitchers with cosmos, petunias, and other blooms, which we placed in a cool room, whence they could be brought out, enjoyed, and shared for some days after their garden mates were brown and wilted -- pitchers brimful of summer, lengthened pleasantly by her thoughtful care.

You may find such joys as I do in weeping willows: the cheerful aura of their twigs hovering over village houses on a bright winter day; their bloom in spring; their summer rustle and sweep; but above all, if the fall is mild and free from severe freezes, the stately arboreal hula which they execute when moved by light breezes, swaying in gauzy golden gracefulness throughout balmy autumn days.

The satisfactions of living around the year at "Lively Stones" were many, but on a calm moonlight night in winter the prospect pleased us most. We would look down the frost-spangled, tree-bordered corridor which we kept cleared of tall growth and see Crotched Mountain standing serene. Under snow-laden pines, intricate patterns of light and shadow, unworidly in the bluish light that pervades such a scene, always deserved more attention than we could bestow in a moment. A Yankee neighbor who liked to roam around his house at night would sometimes be asked by his family what he did at such times. He would reply, "I look out of the windows." That is just what Daisy and I like to do. The peace of mind that we realized through indulging this mild pastime repaid us for much of the effort we had put into this unique building project.

Certain conditions of the atmosphere throw into relief the ridges and low hills that lie below the horizon -- contours that merge in the glare of day. When stillness broods over the land and a light haze, fog, or the smoke of autumn leaf-fires has settled into the hollows of our furrowed terrain, each knoll and ridge stands out in relief against the low area beyond it. Then, of all times, we feel a great sense of belonging to this land, rough, ornery, and agriculturally impractical though much of it is, and feel, too, a strong sense of kinship with the people who have lived on it, wrested a living from it and, through all, loved it.
HINDSIGHT

It was a long time before I learned that the old system of tempering the scale by fourths and fifths is only one method of setting a temperament; the result is what matters. The system that Ned Quint taught me has served well during my time at the trade, as it did for Ned in his time. Doing the best job you can with whatever knack you have made your own is generally accepted.

When S.W. Farwell signed his name in Henry F. Miller piano No. 23234, he had no idea that it would be read and appreciated by me many years later. The same holds true as to A.C. Carter and J.P. Downer who signed Henry F. Miller No. 131127, and M.F. Tobey and J.B. Warren who signed No. 24484 of the same make, and J. Balogh who signed Steinway Vertegrand No. 109386. They were artisans who stood responsibly behind their work, much as an artist signs his painting; they had not been blanketed in under the anonymity of mass production. Even so, one who has contributed in a semi-mechanical way to carrying on the divine art of music finds a satisfaction that is beyond measure.

When Daisy and I toured the Bell Telephone exhibit at the New York World's Fair in 1965, we enjoyed the standard tour, well worked out on the evolution of communications, then were turned loose in a products area where several devices were demonstrated. One device tested one's aptitude in the field of musical pitch. Daisy went through the paces, and got a rating of "Amateur" on the answer panel. My effort brought out the astounding information that I was qualified to be a "Piano Tuner." At least, it was comforting to learn, after thirty years, that I was not a square peg.