

A Neighbor.

Mr. Fentress has a melancholy face and looks rather like Lincoln. He is very entertaining. On a place-card for him at a dinner party mother wrote:

"Philosopher whose sayings charm"

The neighbors and their little boys...

It describes him perfectly.

Usually on Sunday mornings he goes walking with us along the beach. We go over to his house at about eleven and find him dressing, or half dressed eating breakfast. The Fentress family is notoriously very irregular and disorderly. After a while Mr. Fentress is ready and comes out, and says, "Hello sport," to my brothers and me. Then perhaps he talks us all very tenderly, ~~but~~ with an occasional loud laugh, how the other day he ~~was~~ unwittingly embarrassed his sixteen year old daughter, Louise. (Louise is at a very sensitive age, so she is always ^{embarrassing} ~~doing~~ that and is always very contrite afterwards.) Or maybe he

So 5 ~~will~~ talk about his very industrious, ~~inefficient~~ New England wife, laughing all the while. (Mr. Fentress is a Southerner) Also he is reading a book on philosophy by some crazy fool, as he says, who denies the existence of nothing, ~~and~~ ^{and} he recommends ~~it~~ to daddy.

Always he has had interesting experiences the day before to tell us. This time all this family ate the day before at 'Marshall Fields' and the waiter simply would not bring Wendell any water. Mr. Fentress took hold of the waiter's sleeve and said: "I have a proposition to put before you. If you saw a boy dying right under your nose would you try to save his life?" The waiter, very much put out, probably murmured assent. "Well this boy is dying of thirst, (pointing to Wendell) and ~~you~~ can save his life if you bring him a glass of water." All this he said very gravely so that even Louise dared give only a half smile. Wendell snorted shyly and looked furtively at his father,

half admiring, half embarrassed.

After school every afternoon all the children of the Hill top go over to his house and cut up until he comes home. Then if he isn't tired, he talks to us about everything; about something strange he saw in town, about bacteriology, about the invention he ~~is~~ has made and is trying to perfect, about the sort of books we ought to read, about the day's news. There has been an automobile theft and the thief ~~has~~ ought. He points out the mistakes that the thief made, and shows us very elaborately, the proper way to steal an automobile.

He talks like the Bible, with modern slang mixed in that he picks up from Wendell. For a long time Wendell used to refer to everybody as a hunk of cheese, so his father would say. "Hello hunk," to Wendell, and then laugh at his expression.

But the most wonderful thing about him; the ~~the~~ most distinctive thing that we always tell other people who don't know him, is the way he spits. Mother, of

course, is afraid we give other people a bad impression of him, telling them this above everything else. But the way he spits — he stands ^{way} on the other side of the room, hawks very loudly and spits quite accurately into the fireplace.

Alltogether Mr. Fenters is the most lovable and best loved man I know, considerate, gentle, refined in a real way, humorous, and a philosopher.