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A

English Composition I
Mrs. Berall

Edith C. Falk
November 23, 1943

Memories of Long Ago.

Events of the last ten years have washed away so many memories of my early childhood, of my birthplace and my hometown that there remains very little concrete enough to write about. Yet in order to give you a glimpse, I shall try to look back many, many years ago to create the portrait of a small provincial town in southern Germany. Wiltberg on the Main had about 8000 inhabitants, it was surrounded by mountains and a countryside full of beauty with large fields, thick forests and winding roads. The main street with its medieval houses & front balconies had small side streets branching out from it. The streets to the left led to the river with its bathing facilities, play grounds and promenades and the streets to the right showed the way to the restful green pastures, the surrounding countryside.

My father owned a very nice three story family house, opposite City Hall in the

center of the town with the business premises on the ground floor. There were always people coming into my father's store, neighbors who were friends and customers at the same time and I delighted in standing behind the counter, imitating my father while selling tobacco and listening to the friendly remarks or the serious discussions. The town had three Boarding schools and a school for Forestry, all located on the outskirts. All the shops, including my father's, were located on Main Street, there were also two movie houses, a concert hall, several churches, two railroad stations. I remember the grocer a few doors away. Mother used to send me there as a small child to bring home milk and sugar or vinegar and oil. The grocer's daughter, Lissy, and I went to the same school and whenever I went to Mr. Braun's store I had the feeling that I should be treated with a certain preference. And indeed, I usually was. Mr. Braun first used to inquire how things were at school and after I had made every effort to remember my mother's shopping list by saying it over and over again, I hesitatingly repeated to Mr. Braun what I had come for. Although he employed clerks in his store, he always waited on me personally. He had a wonderful shop, his shelves were lined with cans of vegetables and fruits, cleanly wiped glass cases contained all kinds of cheese, fish and sausages. On the counter

were jars of neatly wrapped candies, of which he always gave me a handful before ^{leaving} his store.

My aunt Ethel's store was also on Main Street. She had the most beautiful things one could imagine as a child. Dresses and coats for children and for grown-ups, and I always wanted to visit her, so that I could stay awhile and look around. Why she made mother pay for things that we bought there, always puzzled me, since she was my aunt.

Wilttemberg was a busy town. Peasants from nearby villages came to sell their products, do their shopping. Boys and girls promenaded after school through narrow streets giggling and enjoying their free time. I was one of those who had banded together with a group of friends and it happened so often that I overstayed my time and came home late.

Father did a great deal of traveling and mother was always busy, either in the store, or upstairs, arranging with the household help tomorrow's task.

Our store had three clerks and they all ate with us, while ~~lodging~~ out. There was always laughter at the table; someone had a story to tell and it happened often that my aunt Mathilde, who had never married and lived across the street, dropped in for a little chat. There was something strange about her, I could never really feel at ease with her. She used to look at me with a serious look in her eyes and she had hardly sat with us for a few minutes, when she started to correct my table manners, my way of speaking, she commented upon my

ignorance of foreign languages, in short, there was very little about me, that really pleased her. She gave me a feeling of uneasiness. Aunt Mathilde was different from anybody I had ever known. She had lived many years in England, she ate oatmeal for breakfast and was always ready to criticize me, whether I was alone or in company. She was very ~~willful~~ and she had apparently made up her mind, how I was to be brought up.

Many years passed before I learned to understand and to appreciate aunt Mathilde and it was my fortune to spend quite a few happy and inspiring hours with her, before she passed away.

Nothing really exciting or worth recording ever happened in my hometown and it was only after I had finished my schooling in an other town that I returned to Miltenberg. I found simple storekeepers and townsfolk inflated with a new doctrine of hate, ready to embrace a germanic cult, while losing all their human qualities, their dignity. And ~~it~~ became true what I said in the beginning that "events of the last ten years have washed away so many memories of my early childhood."

English Composition I

October 19, 1943

Edith C. Falk

"Pacific"

Book Review.

Happy Land. By Mac Kinlay Kantor.
The Curtis Pub. Co. Philadelphia. Pa.

"If I had but one gift that I could give to everyone in this land, high or low, rich or poor, military or civilian, it would be 'Happy Land'." Thus speaks the Editor of the Emporia Gazette, William Allen White.

The sign above the drugstore windows had been there a long time. It said simply "Marsh's" and that meant a great deal to everybody in Hartfield. It meant gleaming old mirrors and white topped tables at which three generations of Hartfield people had eaten strawberry sundaes. It meant prescriptions faithfully filled, a place to lounge and joke and smoke and gossip, to read magazines on the rack.

Lew Marsh was ready to close up for his midday dinner at home. A year ago he could have stayed longer, talking to his wife or taking a little nap. But now he had to hurry back. Young Rusty Marsh had enlisted in the navy. The father was proud of the boy. Rusty's picture taken in uniform looked down from among the calendars, drug charts and doctors telephone numbers. Lew hurried along main street and entered his pleasant white house beneath elms and maple trees. Agnes, his loyal and admiring wife, sat waiting for him. They started eating and their thoughts went to Rusty, who had been with the Pacific Fleet for nearly two years and from whom they had heard in the last two weeks.

The doorbell rang and Lew went ~~to~~ to the door to answer it. In came the little telegraph girl with her pale face and staring eyes. Then came an envelope and Lew began to read. The Navy Department deeply regrets to inform you that your son was killed in action in the performance of his duty etc.

It took Lew weeks before he could grasp what had really happened. He sat home and his thoughts went back to the time when Rusty had been a little baby; he thought of his school years, his graduation, the times he helped out at the Drugstore and his days at the College of Pharmacy. It wasn't fair, it wasn't right. Death couldn't happen so blankly, so needlessly, to Rusty. He hadn't had a chance to live. He hadn't ever eaten at the Ritz, or watched the Brooklyn Dodgers play. He hadn't ever seen Hollywood or Radio City, he hadn't ever paid his own rent or made a scooter for his little boy. So far as Lew Marsh knew, Rusty perhaps had never even really been in love. That and much more went through Lew's mind when suddenly the door opened and "Grampa" who had been dead many, many years appeared. He took Lew by the hand, leading him through Hartfield, pointing out all the places, all the people with whom Rusty had passed happy and joyful times. Wasn't it true that Rusty had volunteered for the Navy, that he had chosen the thing he wanted to do, freely? And what is really happiness and contentment? Don't you get the satisfaction within yourself of knowing you're doing the task that you chose to do. Yes, it was Grampa, the memory of the dear old man that had helped Lew to understand that after all, Rusty's had been a happy life.

English Composition I
Mr. Berall

Edith C. Falk.
November 11, 1943

A Self Portrait.

A roundish face with well-colored cheeks, a high forehead with a few lines here and there, blue greyish eyes that look searchingly into the world, dark hair combed into ^{the} a pompadour style, leaving a curl or two on the sides or in back, that is me. Add to this a rather short figure, a voice with an accent that cannot be easily identified, (it might be French, possibly German, but it is an accent) and you will have a slight idea of what I look like. You will probably be not very much impressed by this description and you would certainly not try to make my acquaintance in a hurry. Yet, if you met me at my cousin's dinner party or on a nice summer evening at the Stadium listening intently to Paul Robeson singing "The Ballad for Americans" you might change your mind. ~~if you are over 21 years of age.~~ You might see a friendly smile, an understanding twinkle of my eyes while I listen to your ^{anecdotes} anecdotes, you can hear me pleading ardently for a worthy cause, discussing the state of the world or comparing notes on the best dramatic performance in "Angel Street." You will know that I enjoy talking to you and you might forget what I look like for the rest of the evening. I love people and I trust people and there is a good

chance that you will go home telling your mother, your sister that you were introduced to a rather well-informed person with a variety of interests, a warm and understanding heart and a great deal of enthusiasm. We might meet again on the following Sunday, taking a long walk through Van Cortlandt Park, and you will be telling me the story of your life, the worries of yesterday, while I listen patiently and sometimes wonder why it is that people always come to me for advice, why they tell me their secrets when I had never asked them to do so. You might know me for a long time, we might have become friends and yet you will ask yourself what things did happen in ^{her} my life, what is Edith really like. It was probably my mother's illness and her subsequent death that gave me the feeling that I had to rely on my own initiative, my own resourcefulness and that it was futile to count on other people's support. I was attached to my mother and her sudden parting taught me to have my feet on the ground, to be a realist. Yet, I am guided most often by my feelings and I undergo the greatest emotional strain when I realize that I am following my heart, rather than my mind. Life has been a wonderful experience for me. Since I never expect anything from people, I am always pleasantly surprised when I see individuals helping me and each

experience registers with a joyous ~~beat~~^{beat} in my heart and keeps me happy and contented for days. There have been disappointments in my life, people have misused my trust in them and I have known fear and hardships, sorrow and failure. But looking back on these happenings, it seems to me that I have mostly overcome them, that they are half forgotten and it is only occasionally that I reflect. There is no bitterness in my heart.

I have a thirst for knowledge, an urge to travel. Give me a good book, an interesting article and it will be difficult for you to drag me away. Let me speak to the Navajo Indian in Santa Fe, the Nova Scotia fishermen in Halifax, the Cowboy in Arizona and I will come away with a feeling of having learnt from them a little something from their lives, their joys, their hardships. I want to keep my ears open for everyone, friend and stranger alike.

There are many things I would like to accomplish and there is perhaps little that I will actually achieve. But there is satisfaction if I can do a job and do it well. And that is exactly what I am doing at the moment. It has taken me years of patient waiting and I am so happy about it that you too must feel my happiness as you read these lines.

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English Composition I

Mr. Berall

Edith C. Falk

Nov. 9, 1943

My Mother.

What a startling assignment, to portray one's mother, to describe the one person who has been ^{most} so closely associated with one's childhood. And it seems so utterly strange that I should find it so difficult to write about her. My mother passed away many, many years ago, but her memory is alive in me and people tell me that I resemble her a great deal. Yet I was only a child, passing my summer vacation away from home, when a telegram called me to my mother's bedside. She was a woman of great kindness, of understanding for her family, her friends and for people whom she knew only little. If one was in trouble and needed help, there was always an open door, an eager heart to act, an ear to listen. She was devoted to her family and attached to her friends. A broad cultural background, a vast knowledge of foreign languages, a deep appreciation of art made her the gathering point of the local intelligentsia and the unofficial tutor of the neighborhood.

children. If my father was strict and sometimes severe, my mother was the all-understanding and all-forgiving ^{one} person and her greatest punishment consisted ⁱⁿ of not speaking to me, ^{or} of ignoring me for a few hours, perhaps a day. If one judges loveliness and beauty by its physical characteristics, then I do not think my mother possessed either ^{one} of these. An up-swept hair-do with a roundish face, a wide forehead, altogether a rather heavily built woman, not at all tall. And yet, one only had to speak to her and her eyes sparkled, her lips turned to a quick smile over a witty or a simple humorous word. She made it so easy for people to feel at home with her and one soon forgot her physical disadvantages. Yes, she was loved by all who knew her and her fine reputation made life sometimes difficult and hard for me. It started in school where her old teachers still remembered her and where I had to hear day after day: "Johanna was our brightest student and we expect you to follow in her footsteps." I am not sure that I lived up to these expectations, but I know that I carry my mother's picture in my heart.

Defense of the Law as Evidence to the Court

There is candor and an universal
view of life in the Speech of Socrates
before his death against the accusation
that he is an evil doer, and a curious
man, ~~the~~ ~~accusing~~ ~~into~~ ~~things~~ ~~under~~ ~~the~~
with and ~~the~~ ~~name~~ "and ~~the~~ ~~name~~ making
the name ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~name~~ "and ~~the~~
~~the~~ ~~name~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~name~~ "and ~~the~~
With an eloquence and a force of argument
unusually high, and a depth of insight,
that will be the history of the world to
the reader in the conviction of the
integrity of his soul, that
can be reported to this world as
a masterpiece of his art, who
was aware of any part of the accusation
brought his charges to that only
of the justice of his case and saying
"by the Lord he is a good will, in
reference to the law, a small one
before." Did Socrates realize that
his life was at stake, when he had
so hard to place himself of the
charges brought against him? He
must have, because in reading
the speech one feels that it is
a searching of his soul, that he
is trying to answer every
accusation of his life, so he not
making the very the judge, the

could audience to be his witnesses
by saying "the simple truth is that
I have nothing to do with these
Indians. (meaning natural aborigines)
Very many of those here present are
witnesses to the truth of this and
to Herodotus. Great then, you who
have heard me and tell your neighbor
how whether any of you have ever known
me told truth in the world or in now
a matter of this sort."

And there is throughout the whole
the one outstanding characteristic
of a man's life, the yearning
for the truth wherever and the
honesty and simplicity of Socrates
and it seems incredible that the
jury and the judges should have
found it possible to condemn
Socrates. With a sincerity so great
as to make it impossible for anyone
to be indifferent to it, Socrates
is able to refute every charge brought
against him and to leave his accusers
innocent. Can a man who had
found his life as a ~~test~~ missionary
in attacking the pretended wisdom of
men kind be judged by a group of
people who listen to rumors and
think that and who never learn
to look beyond their own noses?
How the ^{game} people who administer

The law and who see in judgment
and Socrates. And why is it that
Socrates, despite his fighting spirit,
in his determination to see
the truth obeys the Athenian law
and is ready to comply with the
verdict of the court. It is in truth

that we see Socrates from an entirely
different light, not as the philosopher
fulfilling a divine mission, but simply
as the good citizen, who having been
unjustly condemned is willing to pay
in his life in obedience to the laws
of the state. But why, one would ask,
does Socrates not follow the dictates
of his own heart and soul, when
the logic has recognized that injustice
was done to him by the court of
Athens? One wonders if Socrates had not
been more willing to follow the
advice of his friend Critias to really
not to get out of the good, old
being 70 years old, he had only
been 50 or 60 years old - he not
denying himself the right to live
completely ⁱⁿ & receiving the law
of Athens. Socrates who has never
found the wealth or the position cited
as examples to guide others, he the
slayer of truth, the man of logic

The preacher of peace...
world and we should be educated by us.
Can you blame in the best place that
you are our child and slave, as you follow
here labor you? But if these are you are
not in causal terms with us, may you
think that you have a right to do so
what we are doing to you. Would you have
any right to strike or revile or do any other
evil to a father or to his mother?
And because we think right to destroy
you, do you think that you have any
right to destroy us in return and
your country as far as in you lies
for a child, as you failed to
discover that our country is more to
be valued and cherished and holier in
than matter or better or any necessity.
And when we are persecuted by the state,
the punishment is to be endured in
silence.

You have a problem that has occupied
the mind of man since times almost
immemorial. By Socrates answers that he is
completely in accord with these theories
the righteousness of the state. To me
there has always been the question,
do we agree with the statement: My country
is right or wrong, it still is my country
and is not even material that I am
involved to think of the German. The
German is the German on land that
Hullman is this outstanding category of
with it to be inconsistent, in secret
and that under a tremendous pressure

... would he have accepted
the judgment of the court rather
than seek writs? There is to my mind
a great distinction between the Apollon
and Criton in the first Socrates was
all the power of his intellect to defy
the Athenian law and in the
second Socrates denies himself the
right to die by blindly obeying
the law of the state.

Far be it from me to judge the wisdom
of Socrates' action. In some places he
went a few years back when Socrates
and Plato as well as Aristotle spent
thundered this outstanding obligation
to keep us to our own...
Socrates' action has been...
except the judgment of the court...
is that in our minds - one...?

One wonders whether Socrates, had he lived
in one of our modern authoritarian states,
would have been so willing and so eager
to accept the judgment of his judges?
...!

~~Frances~~

graceful,
a ~~long and~~ slender body with gracefulness
and a ^{poised} natural rhythm in her walk and
in every gesture, that is Frances at the
age of fourteen. Her brown hair coming
down in a long bob to her shoulders, &
parted on the left side frames her delicate
pale rose face, with a narrow forehead,
beautifully shaped eyebrows, Long eyelashes
enclose her deeply searching brown eyes,
There is her ^{classic} Grecian nose and a young
red mouth.

This is how Frances looked when I left
her after a seven year relationship,
in which there were moments of utter
despair and of exuberant happiness
and satisfaction.

Her parents, an elderly couple, wealthy
and independent had approached me
through an acquaintance of theirs and
mine to see whether I would be willing
to take ~~the~~ care of ^{Frances} academic needs.
The arrangement was that I was to come
in at 9 in the morning and leave
around 6 o'clock in the evening. ~~The~~ F's
mother told me very little about the
child, except that she needed special
attention.

There was something not quite to be
defined that attracted me about
the prospective job and although I
had always worked with a large
group of children, I decided to take
a try at something new and something
rather experimental.

It was a ^{gray} nasty October day when
I entered Frances house. She was a

child of 7 at the time and when she opened the door to let me in, I was somehow shocked about her ~~stare~~ look and the constant repeating of "what's your name", "what's your name?" I closed the door and while doing this mechanical thing I had automatically entered a new chapter in my life without knowing its meaning.

Frances room was very cheerful, white organdy curtains on the ~~left~~^{right} windows overlooking a very fashionable street in the better section of the town. Colonial Furniture, gayly checked covers on her bed, 3 on the chairs, a ~~book case~~^{library corner} filled with picture books and fairy tales and a closet over-loaded with blocks, games and toys of all sizes. The room was friendly, but I could not find any means of communication with the child. I spoke to her, asked her questions, there was no response. We had lunch together and ^{when} the meat came on the table she started to get terribly upset and went yelling and kicking down to the floor. I tried at first to reason with her, I begged her to come back to the table, but the more I urged her, the more excited she would become and ⁴ must have ⁵ ~~seen~~⁶ ~~passed~~⁷ a considerable time ³ before she decided to calm down. ~~The~~ Frances mother kept very much in the background. Could it have been a feeling of guilt that she had told me nothing of her child's real condition? The day passed and I left with a ⁸ ~~feeling~~^{sense} of despair, with a determination to

3 give the whole project one more day.
Weeks passed and I still hadn't made
up my mind what to do. Everyone told
me to leave and although I felt it
the only ~~the~~ sensible thing to do, my
sense of duty told me not to give
up and I made it my personal responsibility
to see whether I would be able to
master the difficulties and improve
the attitude ~~of~~ and the mental
condition of an abnormal, mentally
retarded child. It was my very own
inner conviction that prompted me
to make this decision, much to the
chagrin of my family and ^{my} friends.
What was the proper approach? There was
no answer to it in the beginning and
all the books that I had ever read didn't
help to find a solution. I was completely
on my own. I forgot my role as a teacher,
and as one who had come to achieve
something concrete and definite. Was it not
the great Russian ^{art} theatre director Stanis-
lawsky who demanded from ~~his~~ actors
not to play a role, but to live it?
If there were to portray a Dostojewsky
character they had to live in the
same environment, under the same
conditions as the persons they were
trying to play. And so it came that
~~the reputation of~~ Stanislawsky started
an entire new school of acting, ^{teaching}
a reputation that carried ~~to~~ still
carries his name throughout the
world for this one reason.

So if I really wanted to help Frances,
if I wanted to understand her and

be understood and liked by her, I had to live with her in the exact meaning of the word. This I arranged and did. We slept and ate together, we took walks and before long I had forgotten that I was to teach Frances. Slow by slow there were signs of affection, a holding of hands, a kiss at night, an understanding look in her eyes that seemed so expressionless on the first day when she had opened the door for me to let me in. Frances still didn't talk much, but she had learned to trust me and while walking through the park I used to speak to her about the flowers and the trees, about the birds and ^{the} sky and the grass. She listened and started to ask questions. That was a triumphant day for me! Later on I put my words into a song that I had made up out of nowhere and when we came home, Frances remembered the words and the melody. As long as Frances seemed to listen to a song, why could I not try to play for her? And I did, and it worked! Frances who never seemed to sit still for a moment, stretched out in an armchair & hummed my melody & whenever I was ready to stop, she asked for more, more, more. That was another triumph, a day of contentment! It wasn't much later that Frances imitated my hands

5 playing on the piano, she jumped from one key with one hand to another and shortly before I left, Frances ^{was able to} play a short minuet of Mozart ~~on the piano~~. Months had gone by, some of them just as bad as the first few days when I felt that the little that had been built had tumbled down completely & then there was another day when I saw & felt that little sparkle of light in Frances that gave me hope and courage to carry on. I had never tried to use force on the child or to urge her strongly in any way. She only seemed to respond to kindness and to the fact that I seemed to be always there when she wanted or needed me, formed an unbreakable bond of trust & attachment. There still were tantrums, but I ignored ~~it~~ ^{them} completely, never uttered a word & left the room. Only a few minutes had passed & Fr. felt herself alone & rushed to join me by calling my name with all the force at her command. Yes, I did teach her writing and arithmetic, I first held her hand for a minute at a time, my hand guiding hers formed the letters and it must have taken me at least a year before there was any real sign of success. But wasn't it worthwhile? I taught her to count by using her toy blocks, or even better some apples from the ice box or possibly some cookies & when ^{Frances} she had completed her work, there was the prospect of eating whatever we used. It might have been a brute

but it was also a reward for something well done and honestly earned. It must have been the encouragement, the little praise that I gave Frances, that gave her confidence in herself. The years passed & her whole attitude changed, she became talkative and alert, friendly and trusting. She learned how to be completely independent for herself in her daily habits and it was again a long and often tiring ordeal.

Frances and I rode on bicycles, she roller skated and there is nothing that gives her a better outlet for her emotional and mental difficulties than a good long walk in the open or a physical activity employing all her muscles and giving her room to use up her stored energy.

I have taken her to concerts and to musical plays, even to the opera. There are few compositions that she does not know by name or by ~~the~~ melody. and when I took her away to Boarding School shortly before I left her I closed a chapter in my life that I had started on that gray October day ^{14 years ago} and that had given me some blood sweat and tears, but also happiness & contentment and a broader understanding for that unfortunate group of humanity, the mentally retarded child. I know that F. will never be so really normal, but if I have contributed a bit to her development, it will give

her too, a better & broader outlook in her narrow existence.