LETTER FROM ANKARA

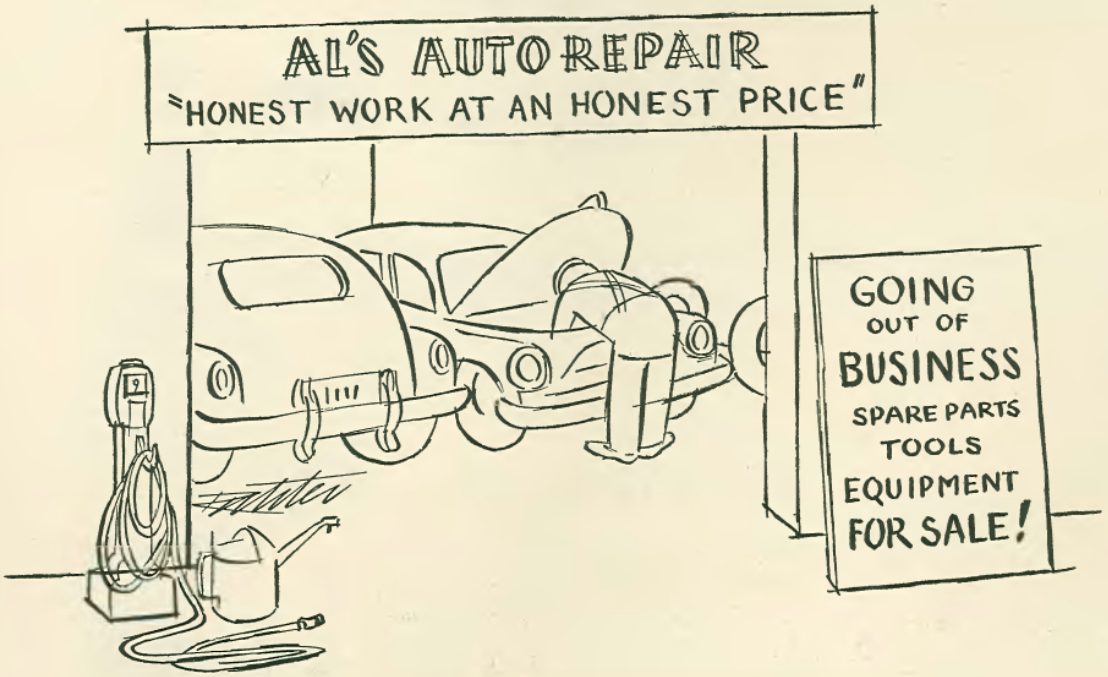
TURKS visiting their modern capital for the first time are likely to get quite a shock. So are American tourists fresh from the minarets and mosques and arabesque façades of Istanbul. Ankara, with its functional buildings, its tree-lined avenues, its soccer stadium, its up-to-date buses, and its opera house (where enthusiastic music lovers listen to Turkish versions of "Die Fledermaus" and "Tosca"), looks about as Turkish as the prosperous capital of some South German province, which is exactly the way its German architects wanted it to look. When Turkey's first President, the late Ghazi Mustapha Kemal Pasha, who came to be known as Atatürk, or Father of the Turks, imported those architects in 1924, Ankara—or Angora, as it was then called—had a population of thirty-five thousand. Today it has three hundred thousand—not bad, even by a Long Island real-estate man's standards.

Except in Ankara, however, and to a lesser extent in a few other cities, Turkey's Westernization is still largely unfinished business. A ten-minute drive from Ankara takes one back ten centuries. A Turkish girl who works here in one of the offices set up by JAMMAT (Joint American Military Mission for Aid to Turkey) and who looks and acts like a Manhattan stenographer, told me that at her home, in a small town nearby, she wouldn't dare sit with her legs crossed. Many of Turkey's forty-three thousand peasant villages are located far from all but the most primitive lines of communication; the villagers have been set upon by so many invaders over the centuries that they are anxious to keep away from roads. The peasants—seventeen million of them, representing eighty per cent of Turkey's population—are incredibly poor. Most of them live in mud-brick huts and they sleep on the floor; they are racked by rheumatism and tuberculosis; and they get along on less food than any European people.

For all its modern appearance, Ankara is really a very old town. Situated in the center of Anatolia—the part of Turkey that lies in Asia Minor—it was founded three thousand years ago by the Phrygians. During the early centuries of the Christian era, the city (it was then called Ancyra) was the wealthy capital of the Roman province of Galatia. Later, it fell to, successively, the Persians, the Arabs, the Seljuk Turks, the Crusaders, and the Ottoman Turks, all of whom coveted it because it stood at the intersection of several important trade routes. As those routes gradually lost their importance, Ankara also declined. Then, in 1923, Atatürk came along, and he made it a place of some consequence on the map of the twentieth-century world by moving the capital of Turkey there from Istanbul, where the Sultans who ruled the Ottoman Empire for so many generations had lived.

THERE is an epitaph on an old tombstone in a graveyard here in Ankara that reads, "HE DIED WITHOUT FIGHTING THE RUSSIANS." For a Turk, this distinction is a personal tragedy, and there are few Turks who possess it. Most of them, living and dead, have had their chance at the Russians; there have been thirteen such opportunities in the past four hundred years. In Sarikamis, a town in northeastern Turkey, the older people remember the winter of 1914-15, when thirty thousand Turks and Russians killed one another in a single fearful engagement of the First World War. All along the eastern border, where Turkey and Soviet Georgia share three hundred and sixty-seven miles of uneasy frontier, stand the burned-out ruins of Turkish houses. The Turks have hated Russia for centuries. To be sure, the hatred is reciprocated, but it is doubtful whether the Russians' feelings have ever reached the intensity of the Turks'.

The Turks' hatred is directed against the Russians in general, not just against the Russian Communists, and it is emotional rather than rational. Hatred of Russia is common to all classes of Turkey's population. In several of the villages east of here, I have talked with white-haired patriarchs who were forced to flee the Czar's police in the Caucasus Mountains fifty years ago and feel as bitter about it as though it had happened the day before yesterday. At Edirne (formerly Adrianople), across the Bosporus in western Turkey, I have met Moslem immigrants from neighboring Communist Bulgaria, who are arriving on Turkey's tiny segment of European soil at the rate of five hundred a day. (The seventeen million Moslems living in the southern belt of the Soviet Union itself are less fortunate; they are not permitted to emigrate.) At this writing, two hundred and fifty thousand refugees have made their way there, and some fifty thousand more are expected. The Turkish authorities put them up in camps and, mindful of the Bulgarians' skill at truck farming, do their best to resettle them in the Anatolian countryside, but the immigrants are quite a strain on the Turkish economy; it is as if the United States were to admit two million destitute refugees in a period of two years. The Turkish au-



thorities are confident that in time most of the Bulgarian Moslems will make good citizens, although they are aware that a few of them may turn out to be Communist agents.

The Turks are not particularly afraid of Communist agents. Turkey is the only neighbor of the Soviet Union that has no sizable internal Communist movement to contend with. Yet by all the rules, Turkey, because of its low standard of living, should be the perfect breeding ground for Communism. There are small and illegal Communist Party cells here in Ankara, and in Istanbul, Adana, Izmir, and a couple of other cities, but the Party members do not seem to follow a very practical or well-integrated program; pro-Communist Turkish students in the past two years have demonstrated against a White Russian bookstore in Istanbul, in favor of the return of Cyprus to Turkey, against a Greek soccer team, and for and against other totally unrelated causes.

Communism is virtually unknown among the peasants. Peasants anywhere are hard to convince of the blessings of Stalinism, but Turkey's peasants, although their per-capita yearly income rarely exceeds a hundred dollars, are probably the most violently anti-Communist of all. "If they come," an old man in a remote Anatolian village said to me, pointing to the north, "I will kill my wife and children first, and then I will go out and kill the Moskofs." This, I discovered during many subsequent conversations with Turks, is not an exceptional attitude; nor is it merely a boast. Stories of heroic deeds against the Russians have become part of Turkish folklore, and the people refer to them constantly.

The Soviets have launched several wars of nerves against Turkey, all of which have flopped. Seemingly, the Turks have no nerves. In Washington and New York, a good many people are worried about a Soviet air attack, but in Ankara, which is only about six hundred miles from the Soviet border, and in Erzurum, which is fifteen minutes from it by jet plane, no one seems to be concerned about the possibility, even though the Turks well know that their country has a high priority rating on Moscow's list of potential satellites. The Soviet has more than once laid claim to the Bosporus and the Dardanelles, because as long as the Turks have control of them, the Soviet Black Sea fleet—submarines and all—stands a good chance of being bottled up. The claims were followed by threats, but the Turks' answer was

"Nothing doing," as it has always been whenever the question of the Straits comes up. Turkey's present guardianship of the Straits is guaranteed by the Montreux Convention, of July 20, 1936—one of the great triumphs of ambiguity in international documents. It permits Turkey to close the Straits if the country is at war or threatened by aggression, but it also permits free passage at all times—in peace or war—to merchant vessels, provided they are unarmed and do not assist the nations that are at war. The way to close the Straits, it seems, is to leave them open.

The Turkish attitude toward Russia is based not on blissful ignorance but on a special Turkish blend of individual confidence and national pride, with some Oriental fatalism added for good measure. Roughly speaking, the feeling is "We don't want war with the Russians, but if they come, we'll fix them." Turkish generals like to dwell on their theory that Turkey is less vulnerable to atomic attack than countries with crowded industrial centers. It has few industries and only eleven cities of more than fifty thousand inhabitants, and it has an abundance of rugged mountain ranges and inaccessible valleys. While the generals admit that invaders might break through their outer defenses and occupy some of the Turkish strongholds, they insist that they would have a hard time taking over the forty-three thousand villages, where the peasants are determined to fight them with pitchforks, if necessary. The generals don't like to concede that the Russians could almost certainly occupy all of Turkey if they wanted to badly enough. Usually, discussions of this sensitive matter end with the flat statement "One Turk can whip half a dozen Russians."

Throughout the Balkans and the Middle East, the Turks have for centuries been known as excellent fighters, but the rest of the world first took notice of them in this role during the First World War; more recently, the fine performance of the Turkish brigade that is attached to the 1st United States Cavalry Division in Korea has bolstered that reputation. Casualties in the brigade have been heavy, but since my arrival in Turkey I have heard no this-isn't-our-war talk. Indeed, the Turks appear to feel that this *is* their war. The old Anatolian peasant who was all ready for any invading "Moskofs" said to me, speaking deliberately, as though he had figured the problem out for himself, "We Turks would help anybody who

was attacked by the Russians, even if we were not bound by the Atlantic Pact." How he had learned about the Atlantic Pact I have no idea, since there is no newspaper in the village, and no radio, and the nearest highway and railroad are fifteen miles away; besides, no one in the village knows how to read.

ARRIVING in Turkey after a journey through the Middle East is like stepping into a clean and comfortable, if modest, house after a long walk through a run-down neighborhood. Turkey isn't quite the "model democracy" and "ideal ally" it has been called on occasion, but in comparison with the countries of the Arab world it is sturdy, active, and reasonably progressive. The Americans here (there are three thousand of them in Ankara, and several thousand more in Istanbul, Izmir, Adana, Golcuk, and other places—most of them military personnel and civilian technicians and their dependents) find it pleasant to be stationed in a country where one isn't envied, snubbed, or hated just for being an American. Not that Turks particularly like Americans; it isn't easy to say whom they do like, except other Turks. However, it is quite plain whom they dislike—Russians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Iranians, and Arabs, in that order, followed by nearly everybody else. It is probably safe to say that they dislike Americans less than they do a lot of other people, but that's about all.

The Turks are shrewd judges of other nations. Since the days of Peter the Great, practically every European power has wanted a defensive military alliance with the Turks, as the guardians of the Straits area, to counter the threat of Russian aggression. The Turks' observation of the European powers during nearly two and a half centuries of negotiations or attempted negotiations has left them with certain definite views. The French are admired here for their culture, and French is still the second language among the older educated Turks (English is becoming popular with the young people), but France's prestige has dropped in recent years because of its international troubles. The Turks respect the Germans for their technical skills and their genius for system, but they don't trust them, because they still remember the Kaiser's *Drang nach Osten*. They are also wary of the British. For one thing, in 1939, shortly after the Stalin-Hitler pact was announced, the British, together with the French, signed an alliance with Turkey,

and then later, when Britain and the Soviet were on the same side of the fence, the British began to echo Russia's demands that Russia be made a partner in the guardianship of the Straits. (The Turks, as always, said "Nothing doing.") For another thing, the Turks feel that during the war Britain attempted to use American lend-lease matériel as a bribe to get them into the fighting.

For one reason or another, the Turks have decided to attend strictly to their own business. Turkey was the only nation in the Moslem world that was not swept by wild emotions during and after the Arab-Israel war. Being realists, the Turks simply took note of the incontrovertible fact that a country with a population of six hundred and fifty thousand beat half a dozen countries with a combined population of forty million, and adjusted their sights accordingly. The Turks are convinced that the Arabs will never form a united front against Soviet aggression. They may have little sympathy for Israel, but they suspect that it is here to stay and they have therefore started to do business with the Israelis. (Simultaneously, they are doing business with Egypt, which buys much of Turkey's tobacco.)

As recently as 1950, foreign residents in Turkey were trailed by the secret police, but since then surveillance has been less severe, possibly to make life simpler for the many Americans now stationed in Turkey. The Turks apparently don't mind having the Americans around for a while; they seem to approve of the way they operate. When Major General William H. Arnold, the chief of JAMMAT, arrived in Ankara in 1950, he put his cards on the table. "If you don't like what we're doing here, tell us," he said to the Turks. "We'll do the same with you. We are here to aid and advise you, and when the job is done, we'll get out." That's the kind of language the Turks understand and approve of. The Turks wish, however, that stay-at-home Americans would learn a little about Turkey. Turks who go to the United States as tourists or students return dismayed by American ideas of their country. "People in New York seemed to think we Turks are just a lot of polygamists living in desert oases surrounded by harems, belly dancers, and camels," one young engineering student told me. "In your dictionaries, I guess, 'Turk' must mean 'polygamist.' And polygamy, of course, was abolished twenty-six years ago. I told the Americans that we resemble them

in many ways, but they wouldn't believe me."

What the young man noticed during his stay in the United States, I have noticed here: Americans and Turks do share certain characteristics. Like Americans, Turks are often erratic and naïve, inexperienced and suspicious, but, again like Americans, they are also enterprising and energetic, hospitable and generous. They believe in opportunity for everybody; today it is not impossible for the son of a Turkish peasant to make a prosperous career for himself. Although there is not enough education in Turkey, what little there is belongs to everybody. The Turkish sense of humor is strikingly similar to the American; Turkey is one of the few countries east of the Atlantic where people laugh at American jokes. Turkish taxi-drivers love to get into arguments with cops and have an even richer vocabulary of vilification than their opposite numbers in Times Square. Turkish waiters are almost as bad as American waiters. Once, Kemal Atatürk accompanied some foreign visitors to a Bosporus hotel. At dinner, a waiter spilled a tray laden with food over several of the guests. Everybody was angry except Atatürk, who seemed rather pleased. "The Turks don't want to be good servants," he said. "They want to be good bosses."

TURKEY did not get into the Second World War until it was almost over, but in 1940, feeling that there were potential enemies on every side, it started spending forty per cent of the annual budget to build up a defensive army, in spite of the burden to the national economy, which was already in a bad way because of the loss of trade with Germany. This rate of expenditure continued until 1948, when, it having become apparent that cuts would have to be made, JAMMAT was set up, in accordance with the Truman Doctrine, "to increase Turkey's defensive capacity through education, modernization, and mechanization, without further burdening Turkey's economy." Since then, Turkey has signed up with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, thereby assuming responsibility for covering NATO's exposed southern flank, and JAMMAT, whose work is supplemented by civil improvements sponsored by the Mutual Security Agency, has grown to be the largest military mission the United States now maintains in any foreign country. So far, more than three hundred million dollars has been spent in Turkey on non-military projects. More than a hundred American spe-

cialists are busy modernizing such divergent operations as the nation's telephone system, its locomotive-repair shops, its census-taking methods, its meteorological service, and its Finance Ministry. The M.S.A. is putting up the money for the construction of a large hydroelectric plant near here, which will supply power to the entire Anatolian plain from Ankara to Istanbul. Other funds are going for agricultural and health programs and for bettering the nation's roads. When the Americans arrived, they found Turkey's roads in terrible condition, and they are still far from up-to-date. With the exception of a few main highways, hardly any roads are passable in the winter months, which are every bit as severe as those in the northern United States. The three-hundred-and-twenty-mile trip from Istanbul to Ankara, over one of Turkey's best highways, used to take fifteen hours; now, after American-financed repairs, it takes eight, but even so it is no pleasure drive. Turkish military thinking in the past has looked upon the lack of roads as a defensive weapon; without roads, it was argued, an invader would have a hard time invading. Our people had to do a lot of talking to convince the Turks that the argument also operates in reverse, and that a modern fighting force such as their country has been building up must be able to get around.

Turkey is vastly underdeveloped. It has deposits of lead, iron, zinc, copper, chromium, antimony, cobalt, and coal, but it has neither the money nor the technical experience to get the minerals out. Two million acres of arable land are lying idle. The peasants till, seed, and harvest their fields with antiquated equipment pulled by underfed animals, or do the work by hand. Their pastures

are overgrazed; it has been calculated that if they were better cared for, they could produce fifty per cent more feed. An agriculturist from Montana told me, "In Turkey, there is one cow for every seven acres of grazing country. In my home state, there is one for every thirty acres. But the soil of the Anatolian plain is better than our soil back home, and the cattle would be just as good as ours—maybe better—if the peasants would just use fertilizer; instead, they collect and dry their animals' dung and use it as a substitute for coal. They also need more tractors, combines, dusters, insecticides, seed cleaners, irrigation pumps, spare parts—everything. Above all, they need people with know-how. The trouble is that Turkey is self-sustaining right now, in a sense. The peasants have all they need for bare subsistence, and they're inclined to be satisfied with that. We've got to go to work and create a demand for a higher standard of living before we can make them produce the goods to attain the higher standard."

REVERSING a worldwide trend, Turkey is now in the process of turning from a planned economy to private enterprise. Twenty-nine years ago, when the Turkish Republic was founded, foreigners controlled all the nation's business and what little industry there was. The foreigners were made to leave, but there was no private Turkish capital forthcoming to shore up the economy. So the government had to take over, and, as elsewhere under similar circumstances, a good many enterprises went into the red. The government is now trying to get rid of its textile mills, paper mills, steel plants, sugar refineries, cement factories, and so on, but there are few buyers. There are, however, some signs of an economic revival. In Adana, cotton production has risen from sixty thousand tons a year to a hundred and sixty-two thousand tons since 1948, and the place has become a boom town; in Izmir (better known as Smyrna), American tobacco buyers have brought prosperity. Last year, Turkey's national income rose seventeen per cent. All over the country, indeed, one senses a vigorous drive toward self-improvement, which contrasts vividly with the sullen lethargy of the Arab countries.

It was Turkey's good luck that the right man came along at the right time. Atatürk was the sort of leader that a few fortunate nations produce once in a thousand years and most nations never. He was not an idealistic reformer

but a hardheaded nationalist with honesty, vision, and the ruthlessness necessary to back up his ideas. At the time he took over Turkey, the old Ottoman Empire had shrunk to a third of its pre-First World War size, having lost the territory that now makes up Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Iraq, and Iran. Turkey's finances were shaky, its neighbors were hostile, and its morale was shattered by having been on the losing side in the war. Atatürk, a political realist, didn't try to change Turkey into a democracy overnight, but he did lay the foundations for a constitutional form of government. He turned down a chance to become the leader of the Moslem world, and instead concentrated on making Turkey a sturdy, self-respecting nation. He separated the Church from the State ("Before Atatürk, we were Moslems first and Turks second," a Turkish teacher told me. "Now it is the other way around"), instituted clothing and marriage reforms, adopted the Western alphabet, and emancipated the women.

Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go, and it is not only a matter of getting rid of disease and poverty. No more than half of Turkey's villages have even primary schools. The bottleneck is the lack of teachers, rather than of schoolhouses. About two thousand new teachers are being graduated each year, and it is expected that a decade from now every Turkish village will have some sort of school. I have visited a number of the schools here, and they seem pretty much alike—primitive stone buildings with crude benches and tables, and unpainted walls covered with newspaper pictures of Atatürk and other Turkish leaders. The children, most of them barefoot and dressed in rags, look poor, but they all seem bright and attentive and exceedingly interested in the history and development of their country. They know about Atatürk and are proud of him; most of them have never been to Ankara, but all of them know it is their new, modern capital, by order of Kemal Atatürk, and they are proud of it, too.

LIKE other national capitals, Ankara has its share of bureaucrats, and they are just as skillful in the arts of pigeonholing and weaving red tape as their counterparts in the paper-clip warrens of Washington, Paris, and Moscow. There is the same reluctance to make decisions and the same loving attention to protocol. When a group of American newspaper editors stopped off here and asked for an interview with the

Turkish Army's chief of staff, the request had to be made by the American Ambassador to the Turkish Foreign Office, which forwarded it to the Ministry for National Defense, which passed it along to the General Staff, which saw to it that it reached the chief of staff, who eventually gave the interview.

Almost all Turkish newspapers of any importance are subsidized by one or the other of the nation's two political parties—the Democratic (now in power) and the Republican People's. Most of the independent papers are small provincial ones, printed by hand. (For that matter, hand printing is not uncommon in larger communities. Adana, with a population of a hundred thousand, has five newspapers but only one Linotype machine.) In Ankara, the paper with the biggest circulation is *Ulus* (*Nation*), which sells seventy thousand copies and is the voice of the opposition. *Zafer* (*Victory*), representing the Democratic Party, has gone down since the Democrats took over and is now at twenty thousand. Turkey never joined the International Copyright Union, and in consequence Turkish editors help themselves liberally from foreign publications. Advertisements show pictures of American movie stars recommending Turkish products they've never heard of. The same sort of thing is common in other fields. Some time ago, Coca-Cola applied for permission to set up a bottling plant in Turkey. The Turkish authorities demanded to know what the drink was and whether it would conform with Turkish health standards. The information was supplied (not in great detail, presumably, since the formula is secret), whereupon the application was turned down. A few months later, a Turkish soft drink called Cola-Coca turned up on the market.

For the Americans in Ankara, daily living has its complications. Housing and heating are expensive, the water is bad, electrical appliances work only with the help of transformers (and a good deal of the time there is likely to be no current anyway), there is little fresh meat during the summer, and good shops are few. There is not much in the way of entertainment, either. On Sundays, many Americans go to the horse races, and at night they have dinner at Karpic's Restaurant, a famous rendezvous for high-class spies during the Second World War, when everybody was operating in neutral Turkey. Papa Karpic, an old, bald-headed White Russian with the face of a tired eagle, was a protégé of Atatürk's. He still serves

good borsch, karsky of lamb, and bœuf à la Stroganoff, but the table that was reserved for Franz von Papen is now occupied by American office girls and first lieutenants. Whatever Papa Karpic may think of the substitution, it's clear that his new guests are satisfied, for his place is one more reason they are glad to be stationed in Ankara rather than almost anywhere else in the Middle East. —JOSEPH WECHSBERG

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First let us mention a unique dinner given by the honorary president to his loyal and enthusiastic board of governors, headed by Mr. Henry Powell Hopkins—remember his name.

There had been a great deal of secrecy about this affair. Invitations said nothing about the theme or motif of the dinner—a curious departure from the usual Stieff-staged function. Guests were led into the drawing room and given a small "jolt" of Mexican tequila, with the usual lime and salt. Still no hint of what was coming. Then they went into the dining room, at the Stieff's charming home. The dining table from end to end and across the center was decorated with grass mats and rattlesnake skins. Weird cacti supplied the centerpiece decoration. Hand-colored menu cards were covered in snakeskin and tied with decorative cord trimmed with two sets of rattlesnake rattles.

Small live green turtles beside each plate strained at their tethers fastened from one hind leg to the table mats and on each little fellow's back was painted the guest's name. All but the place of Mr. Hopkins—"Hoppie" to his friends. "Hoppie" is one of the few remaining experts on Maryland terrapin and his special place card was a small diamond-back in a casserole with "Hoppie" painted on its shell.

The theme unfolded: This was to be a Reptilian Dinner!

"Alligator pear," of course. And Rattlesnake meat from Florida, followed by alligator meat soup, then the Maryland terrapin, the snails, French style (by this time no novelty to the guests but twice-welcome), Venezuelan iguana (it tasted like chicken), frogs' legs, dessert and coffee.

What would YOU serve with such an unusual repast?—*Brochure from Almaden Vineyards.*

A stomach pump.

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ANTICLIMAX DEPARTMENT

[*Letter in the Chicago Daily News*]

I am writing in regards to the trees and bushes on Milwaukee Av. between Peterson Av. and Meldina. It is so bad there, when you get off streetcars at night, that you can't see a thing, and to make it worse, the lights have been off for some time. There have been four women held up and attacked. A person is afraid to go out nights.

My husband works nights and as he walks past the trees, the branches scratch his glasses. READER