



HACK'S DIGEST

BY

BILL FENDERSON

The Tree

As you stand for the first time in the forest cathedral and behold The Tree—this ancient giant of the Sequoias—you seem to sense the presence of unseen beings. It's not a spooky feeling—rather it's a warm, secure feeling that whoever these products of your imagination may be, they are friendly. Or maybe it's not imagination — maybe those unseen beings are really there.

No raucous reminder of "civilization" is there to shatter the sacred silence of that moment when you first gaze upon The Tree. For in its presence there's no room for thought of petty things.

Somewhere in a far away place called Vietnam there's a war going on and men are killing and dying. But in the presence of The Tree there's no thought of death or destruction or fear—not even of that awesome dust-bubble called the nuclear bomb.

In the presence of the oldest living thing on this planet there is only the thought of life.

For more than 3,500 years The Tree has stood tall

For more than 3,500 years The Tree has stood tall and proud against the combined onslaught of weather, fire, and man, producing countless offspring from its tiny seeds.

A mere seedling 1,500 years before the birth of the Man of Nazareth, this majestic giant of the forest stands an eternal bulwark against the ravages of time.

During its lifetime emperor and king and potentate have reigned in all their momentary pomp and power only to fade into the oblivion of dust and decay in the molding pages of history.

During its lifetime tyrant and conqueror have drenched the face of the earth in rivers of blood only to be swept from their instant of glory into the nothingness of time and space.

During its lifetime great nations have risen only to fall into ashes and decay.

During its lifetime great men have been born to bring about tremendous changes to all nations upon this planet, linking them by speed of transportation and communication into one world now seemingly bent on its own destruction.

During its lifetime there was born the Man of Nazareth who walked upon the earth with a message, only to be crucified because so few could understand the truth He spoke.

During its lifetime the message left by the Man of Nazareth has survived the fury of human hatred because it speaks of life even as The Tree exemplifies life.

In the presence of The Tree the still small voices of unseen beings seem to whisper again that message and one can almost hear the sound of music never written by human hand as it is carried through the massive branches on the singing wings of the wind.

As you silently and reverently tiptoe from this giant of the forest—this oldest of all living things—to return to whatever your own little world may be, you never again feel quite the same.