Jerriann paused in front of the glass-fronted store window and looked inside. Pottery, shoes, dishes and baby garments, all attractively and neatly arranged, met her gaze. She paused for a moment, looking over the numerous pottery objects, then she hurried inside. Dresses hung from clothes racks; curtains, doilies and other odds and ends of cast-off linens and
bath mats rested on enormous square tables while books reposed in neat row upon row on cast-off book shelves.

She smiled, recalling her Aunt, Millie's words: "Why do you ever go into those places, Jerriann?" Aunt Mildred had asked the question on more than one occasion. "I'll buy you anything you want; you know this. I'm too well-known in this town to have it said that my niece patronizes the thrift shops; the second-time-around shops." And Aunt, Millie had waved her jewel-bedecked hand in front of Jerriann with a grand flourish and an elaborate display of rainbow colored hues as the sun's rays played upon the diamonded fingers. "I can buy you anything you want, my dear, Anything. From the best stores! The best, Jeriann!"

Still smiling, Jerriann walked to where the pottery pieces were displayed in the window. "Um-m. Nice!" she exclaimed half-aloud as she picked up a vase and turned it 'round and 'round in her hand before checking the bottom. A pleased smile creased her mouth. "Rosewood!" She was "almost breathless with excitement and happiness, "Rosewood!" she exclaimed softly, again, as she clutched the vase to her bosom.

With her treasure in her hand, she scanned the other odds and ends in the window. Finding nothing more that interested her, she walked to a sturdy table at the far end of the store where dishes of every size and description were stacked or just sitting wherever room could be found for them. Handling them carefully she sorted through the ill-matched pieces, hoping to find something in the blue bird pattern and design. It had been a favorite of hers; mainly, she was sure, because of her fond and pleasant childhood memories at, her grandmother's house. Always, for so long as she could remember. Grandmother Kelly had served all her Thanksgiving and Christ, runs dinners in the blue bird designed dishes. They were old, old dishes, and Jerriann loved them more and more as she grew older. The birds always sent a thrill of happiness into her heart as she ate from the plates or drank from the cups. Bluebirds were harbingers of happiness, weren't they? A t least she had thought they were.

She was ecstatic with joy when, at the far end of the table in a corner behind a stack of plates, she found a saucer wearing the pretty blue birds around its extremity. True, she didn't have a cup to match the coffee saucer, but the plate would look beautiful "standing" on its rim inside the china closet alongside the other five which she had. Besides the saucers, she had two
dainty and beautiful little pitchers: one, a cream pitcher; the other, taller one, a milk pitcher, she was sure.

When she was sure that there were no more pieces that interested her, she took her treasured finds to the check-out counter, along with a delicate silk scarf which she spied on one of the high-piled tables. The scarf would be the perfect complement for the taupe dress which she had gotten on sale in one of the department stores recently.

She smiled as she carried her un-fancily "wrapped" package home. The prices were too modest to allow for any fancy, expensive wrappings; the paper bags suited her fine.

"Hi, Jerri," Mrs. Beerler greeted her daughter as she came through the kitchen doorway.

"Did you have a good time?"

"Oh Mother, wait till you see what I found!" Mrs. Beerler smiled. "I can guess where you've been without you telling me, honey," she remarked, looking at the paper sack. "Grandmother Beerler would be mortified."

Jerriann giggled. 'I know. But Mother, look what I found today! A Rosewood pottery vase! Real Rosewood! See?" and she drew the lovely vase out of the sack and held it up for her mother to see. "Isn't it lovely!" she exclaimed, her eyes beaming.

Mrs. Beerler took the vase and looked it over carefully. "It is beautiful, Jerri!" she remarked. "And, except for the chip along the bottom base, it's in perfect condition. This will make a beautiful addition to your collection. Anything else?" she asked.

"This," Jerriann said, handing her mother the lovely blue bird patterned saucer. "I have six of these now. I wish I could find a few cups to match. But cups are usually the first things to get broken. I realize this. I found this pretty silk scarf, too. This will give a bit of color to that dress I found at Harters. Like it?"

"Oh, it's really lovely, Jerri. And, yes, it will indeed help to brighten that dress up."
"Twenty-five cents, Morn. Imagine! Not bad at all." and Jerriann held the scarf up to her face.

Mrs. Beerler hugged her daughter in a tight little clasp. "You're quite a girl, Jerri," she declared.

"Look whose daughter I am!" Jerriann answered as she kissed her mother on her cheek. "I have a wonderful mother and father. I guess I'll never get over the wonder of Daddy's conversion. Coming from the affluent Beerler family, I mean."

"It is a miracle, honey; this is true. But here is where choice enters into the picture. Your grandmother and grandfather Beerler heard the very same gospel message which your father heard. Truth of the matter is, they took your father with them to the meeting. Your father responded to the altar call by going forward and praying clear through to a wonderful conversion; your grandparents spurned and rejected the plea and the call to get saved and became increasingly involved and entangled in worldly affairs. Today, they have no time for church or spiritual things. But God can move upon their hearts even yet."

"So that means we'll keep praying and holding on for their salvation, Mother dear. I love them so very much. I know Grandma Beerler isn't happy that I'm going to Bible School. She said she had hoped I'd go to a "regular college," her words. She had hoped I'd study drama and acting. When I told her I felt called of God to be a Christian school teacher she turned pale and said I should pursue something more in keeping with the Beerler name. I hugged her and kissed her and promised her that, by God's grace, I'd never bring dishonor to the name. Then I told her that I must obey God and follow His Divine leadership for my life."

"Above all else, yes, Jerri dear; God's will. My one brother, your Uncle Lee, failed to mind God in his younger life and oh, how he has paid for it! True, he's been living a devout Christian life since his return to God; but that call to be a missionary can never be realized or fulfilled, due to his age."

"He's winning souls, though," Jerriann said. "God will surely reward him for these."
"Without a doubt, yes. But God alone knows what all he could have done on the mission field had he not disobeyed the call and gone back on the Lord. Oh, the wasted years! Long, lonely, unhappy and unfruitful years."

"I was thinking of Merlene Winters when I picked up this piece of Rosewood pottery and saw the chip on it, Mother. You remember me speaking of Merlene, don't you? She was the girl whom I admired so greatly in my sophomore year in high school."

"I remember, Jerri. What made you associate her with this vase?"

"Well, Merlene was a beautiful and shining example for Christ that year. She was a Junior. My sophomore year of schooling was so much easier for me because of Merlene's clear Christian testimony and her day by day, moment by moment Christ-centered living. I felt I was not alone in this walk with the Lord: besides God, I had a strong and supportive ally in my upper classmate, Merlene."

"She moved away before you graduated, right?"

"Her father was transferred, yes. Oh, how I did miss her, too! One day in school she told me about a cousin of hers who one time knew the Lord. The cousin's name was Brenda. She, like Merlene, was gloriously converted and, unlike Merlene, Brenda was called to be a missionary.

"She went away to Bible School in preparation for her calling and met a young man while there, and married him. Merlene said she guessed Brenda just assumed that her husband, being a Bible student and having a call to preach, would go to the mission field."

Jerriann's mother sighed a great, heavy sigh, almost knowing what happened before her daughter finished.

"Before each had graduated," Jerriann continued, "the young husband backslid, dropped out of Bible school, deserted his young wife Brenda, and went to parts unknown.

"Merlene said Brenda remained true to God, though she was both broken-hearted and devastated and by now had a dear little baby daughter."
"With no support coming from the now-disappeared father, Brenda had to leave Bible School and find a job. She got on at a Christian Day Care Center. Her baby went with her to work. The pay wasn't much but she had the satisfaction of knowing where her child was and that she, herself, was caring for the little life and soul which God had entrusted into her keeping."

Tears stood in Mrs. Beerler's eyes. She took a tissue and wiped them away. "I wonder if she's still serving the Lord," she said softly.

"I'm sure she is, Mother. Merlene said Brenda told her that she was going through with Jesus regardless of the cost or the cross, even though she was 'just-a-second.' Her words, Merlene said. God's second best, I guess she must have meant. That's why this vase reminded me of Merlene and of her story about Brenda. The sign above the door of the store where I bought these things is quite fetching, when one aligns it with Jeremiah's account of the potter and the clay!"

"'So he made it again another vessel,' "Mrs. Beerler quoted sadly, recalling her own beloved brother, Lee. "'As seemed good to the potter to make it,'" she added. "Not the first choice; 'another vessel.' Yes, that's what my brother is."

"And Brenda, too, Mother. Merlene said she told her that to God, she . . . Brenda . . . was far more than her 'just-a-second' rating of herself. Like you quoted, Merlene said, 'God will still use you, Brenda: He has made you another vessel, as seemed good for Him to make you.'"

"I think we should put Brenda and her little daughter on our prayer list, Jerri. She must be a courageous and strong young woman, to have stood so firmly and wondrously when her husband did what he did and then deserted her.

"I have often prayed for her, Mother. And also for my dear Merlene, whose light has helped Brenda, I'm sure. This lovely vase and blue bird saucer will be constant reminders of those whose lives have been fashioned into 'another vessel' by the Divine Potter. Well, I'd better wash my 'treasures' and then put them up where they can be admired by all of us."

"And serve as a reminder, too, Jerri."
"Amen," Jerriann said softly and reverently as she hurried to the kitchen sink.