



Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

Here's one of those "I wish I had written that" columns from an anonymous author. It's a reflection on Mother's Day.

"I had the meanest mother in the whole world! While other kids ate candy for breakfast, I had to have cereal, eggs, or toast. When others had cake and candy for lunch, I had to eat a sandwich. And, as you can guess, my supper was different from the other kids, too! My sister and two brothers had the same mean mother as I did.

"My mother insisted upon knowing where we kids were at all times. You would think we were on a chain gang. She had to know who our friends were and what we were doing. She insisted if we said we'd be gone an hour that we'd be gone an hour or less; not one hour and one minute. I am really ashamed to admit it, but she actually struck us, not once, but each time we did as we pleased. Can you imagine actually hitting a child just because he disobeyed? Now you can begin to see how mean she really was.

"The worst is yet to come! We had to be in bed by nine each night, and up early the next morning. We couldn't sleep until noon like our friends. So while they slept, my mother actually had the nerve to break the child labor law. She made us work. We had to wash dishes, make beds, learn to cook and all sorts of cruel things. I believe she laid awake at night thinking up mean things to do to us. She always insisted upon our telling the truth, and the whole truth and nothing but the truth, even if it killed us—and it nearly did.

"By the time we were teenagers, she was much wiser, and our life became even more unbearable. None of this tooting the horn of a car in front of the house for us to come running. She embarrassed us no end by making our dates and friends come to the door to get us.

"I forgot to mention, while my friends were dating at the "mature" age of 12 and 13, my old-fashioned mother refused to let us date until the age of 15 and 18. Fifteen, that is, if you dated only to go to school functions, and that was twice a year.

"My mother was a complete failure as a mother! None of us has ever been arrested or beaten his mate. Each of my brothers served his time in the service of his country. And who do we have to blame for the terrible way we turned out? You are right, our mean mother! Look at all those things we missed—we never got to march in a protest parade; nor take part in a riot; nor burn our draft cards, and a million and one things that our friends did. She forced us to grow into God fearing, educated, honest adults.

"Using this background, I am trying to raise my children. I stand a little taller, and I am filled with pride when my children call me 'Mean.' Because you see, I thank God He gave me the meanest mother in the whole world."