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The Wisconsin
Literary
Magazine

Volume XVII



Number 1

Liberation

The Miracle

What Sunken Meadow Saw

The Grown-Up World

The Listener

PUBLICATION OF THE STUDENTS OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

TEN CENTS A COPY

October 1917

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The Wisconsin Literary Magazine

VOLUME XVII

Madison, October, 1917

Number 1

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THE reception accorded the Wisconsin Literary Magazine last year justified the belief of its founders that there was in our university a feeling for things of the spirit that demanded expression. Students recognized in the "Lit" a vehicle for the broadcasting of personal spiritual experiences whose publication previously had been confined to a narrow circle of friends, or, perhaps, to the limits of the classroom.

"Things of the spirit," as we define it here, has no "high brow" connotation. It includes merely one's personal reaction towards life as one sees it or imagines it, and seeks to make it more intelligible. The reaction may find its expression in stories or sketches, essays or poetry, but always the primary purpose is to analyze human thought, feeling, and conduct and project the analysis into a form that is at once entertaining and illuminating.

The editors of the "Lit" feel that the magazine has met a real need in the life of the students. Their goal is to make it "an exchange of ideas" this year as in the

past, and to achieve this end the co-operation of every student is urgently needed.

It has been the experience of the editors that there is among the students a marked hesitancy to submit written work to the scrutiny of outsiders. There is a large modest class which would rather whisper its opinions in the seclusion of a sound-proof closet than shout them from the housetops. The "Lit" extends to these bashful individuals an earnest invitation to send in their manuscripts, for experience has proved that their rank contains many of decided talent. It is the aim of the editors to make the "Lit" as representative of the University as is possible.

And—just a caution—write legibly, on one side of the paper only, and address all communications to the Wisconsin Literary Magazine, Madison.

WE HAVE been awaiting the literary renaissance which has been promised as a direct result of the world war. At the outset of the conflict and ever since, prophets forecasted that an impulse would be given to man's imagination, and that his idealistic self would be lifted out of the rut into which, they charged, it had fallen.

Their arguments were varied, but centered themselves about two main contentions; firstly, that in war time humanity turns from the materialism of the actual conflict to spiritual considerations as a mental and emotional balance. Secondly, that in war time there is a rebirth in national ideals and common purpose without which no literature of enduring value can be created.

Yet the actual result, thus far, has been disappointing. As was expected, there has come from the press a deluge of imaginative work growing out of the turmoil. Far from having a spiritual or even a constructive tendency, the bulk of the output is saturated with an almost terrible materialism. Much of it has the direct or indirect effect of glorifying destruction. We have in mind the dozens of volumes that describe modern warfare with a zest that is veiled by a nonchalant style and affected aloofness, and apparently the popularity of the work is in direct ratio to its photographic

representation of the carnage. To satisfy a morbid curiosity seems to be the sole object of the author.

A survey of the "war literature" establishes one fact: that to the men actually engaged in fighting, "ideals" and "national consciousness" are mere words. They may have fired the blood in the early stages of the war, but today in the European trenches idealistic purposes and high aims have been submerged beneath the actual business of fighting. The ideals and aims of the man in the trench have settled down into one transitory purpose: to shoot at whatever moves and keep from being shot. His concern is all for the flesh. The business on hand is all-important, and he leaves the moralizing as to why he is there and where he will be next to the careful consideration of the onlookers, the non-combatants.

Real works of poetic imagination, such as Seeger's, "I Have a Rendezvous With Death," have come out of the trenches at such wide intervals that their advent is hailed with as much furor as is the news of a great victory. They are infrequent because under the stress and drain of modern warfare the fresh imagination and outlook upon life of the man on the firing line have been dulled and warped. The note of much of his writing is a fatalistic note, and it is most often a fatalism so inert that it fails to rise to the imaginative levels of Seeger's, "Rendezvous."

It may take years after peace is declared before the normal, buoyant tone is restored. And then, if poetry is really "emotion recollected in tranquillity," we may look for the literary renaissance which prophets of the quill have promised us.

—E. L. M.

LAST YEAR the Wisconsin Forum came into being with a flourish and a clatter of cymbals which was regarded with distrust by many who were in sympathy with its aims and wished the organization to succeed. They were afraid the commotion was little more than the popping of a champagne cork, caused by a little froth and sizzle, and going into the air amid much hand-clapping. They knew that a cork can pop but once, and were alarmed.

Fortunately, both the fears of its friends and the hopes of its enemies proved unfounded. After the flurry attendant upon the initial Max Eastman meeting had subsided, the Forum settled down to sober, hard work along the lines of the constructive platform laid down in its manifesto. For the benefit of the new students, and to refresh the memory of the old, it may be well to recall the plans and purposes of the organization.

"The Wisconsin Forum aims to emphasize the true meaning of education," says the proclamation. "It

means to bring culture to the student body, to awaken in it the dormant æsthetic senses, as well as the social and intellectual interests.

"The Wisconsin Forum will conduct lectures and convocations where national leaders will bring to the students the living significance of contemporary social, political, and religious problems. By organizing, with the co-operation of artists and critics, musical and dramatic performances, the Forum hopes to awaken in the students an appreciation of the beautiful, and to keep up a general interest in art.

"By establishing a center for the exchange of ideas, by encouraging freedom of utterance between professor and student, the Forum hopes to promote a mutual understanding between the two, and a better realization of the purposes of education."

Broad and constructive as is the scope of the foregoing statement of purposes, it was adhered to as conscientiously as the means at the disposal of the Forum during its first year would allow. The support it received by both students and faculty proved that it filled a want in the outside life of the university colony that no amount of ordinary interests could satisfy.

For its convocations last year the Forum secured such speakers of national repute as Prof. John Dewey of Columbia. Its Sunday morning discussions were led by a number of the leading members of the University faculty, including Professors Campbell, Paxson, Commons, Fish, and Pearse. The æsthetic committee of the Forum invited to Madison the Portman-teau and Washington Square Players, who brought the students into personal contact with the new movements in dramatic art. The activities of the organization showed a sincere effort to adhere strictly to the purposes it had outlined at its inception.

At this writing, the Forum's program for the coming school year has not been completed, but it is understood that its platform will remain primarily the same. Its fundamental belief is that matters of national importance should be illuminated by free and frank discussion, a belief which is boldly inscribed in that famous bronze tablet on Main Hall: "Whatever may be the limitations, which trammel inquiry elsewhere, we believe that the great state University of Wisconsin should ever encourage that continual and fearless sifting and winnowing, by which alone the truth can be found."

—E. L. M.

EDITORS

PHILIP A. ADLER
MARJORIE KINNAN

AGNES DURRIE
ERNEST L. MEYER

Liberation

JESSICA MARSH was not aware that she had experienced tragic enlightenment. As a result of her own life and her naturally reflective mind she had early cast out illusions and reached a rather pessimistic philosophy. But her convictions about the world and the ultimate did not effect her practically,—she found real joy in living. The twins were a problem; they had thrived under her care, and now at the age of ten, were developing a power of discrimination and judgment that was unfortunate in a household with Mr. Marsh as master. Jessica thought whimsically that these two little engines of health and activity had come and stolen all her mother's vigor—she had lived only a few months after they had entered the world to demand sustenance and guidance. Little Alice, who would always seem the baby, on account of her fragility, at once troubled and comforted Jessica. Little Alice's docility and clinging sweetness were a refuge from the turbulent family, but Jessica yearned to protect the child from her father. Mr. Marsh's misfortunes and moods called forth great floods of sympathy from the frail twelve-year-old girl; she was often found weeping in a corner after her father had confided his literary failures to her. Magazines failed to recognize the strength in his lines of poetry * * *

Jessica kissed the children good-night, and after requiring extra prayers from the twins, who had been unusually recalcitrant during the day, she wrapped herself in a long, dark coat. She buttoned it to the chin and than ran swiftly down the front stairs to the door. Her father's imperious, "Jessie, Jessie, where are you going?" she disregarded and danced through the yard and down the street with no remorse over her temerity. She had learned to fashion her life after her own choosing—else she would have been utterly smothered with restriction.

It was a lovely winter evening, with more promise of spring than snap of cold in the air. The moon was a clear, round circle, and frequent black clouds were blown over it, darkening the world for the while. Jessica's hair blew back from her face and she would have been exultant had she seen the waves which the dampness provoked in it. She had always sighed for curls, curls that would dangle and frisk about over her ears. At the end of a long and serious argument about immortality, she had once declared to Prof. Haegel, the only man who brought her fresh and fascinating ideas, "Well Prof Haegel, you can believe in a God if you want to; but—you see—I wasn't given curly hair." Her music teacher had thrilled at this modern, reckless coquetry; but Mr. Marsh, who was reading in the

adjoining room, had rebuked his frivolous Jessica for her levity. His was not a deeply religious nature, in fact he prided himself on his freedom from popular theological beliefs, but such flagrant irreverence frightened him.

Jessica joined Prof Haegel at the corner and in an ecstasy of spirits, evoked by her defiance of parental authority, she started off for the concert.

* * * *

Mr. Marsh was very angry at his daughter's lack of respect for him. He went immediately to little Alice's room and endeavored to learn Jessica's whereabouts from the child. She was as ignorant as he, and could only lean out of bed and pat his cheek soothingly. "Never mind, father, Jessica will be all right. Why, she takes care of us all!" But Mr. Marsh was not comforted; he protested to his little girl in a tone of self-righteous indignation.

"I have no authority in my own household. My children utterly disregard my wishes." Then he left Little Alice puzzling fruitlessly over the debt of children to parents.

Mr. Marsh went to his study and gave himself up to mental prognostications. Jessie would disgrace them all with her headstrong behavior; she would surely come to some harm; she had had too much power in the household * * *

And then, when her buoyant young figure dashed into the room and she leaned over him to awake him to send him to bed, his first reaction was one of impatience, of injury. Jessie in the flesh was outrageously innocent, sensible. Mr. Marsh disliked having his fatalisms invalidated. And he would so much rather not have been found dozing * * *

Jessica sat down on the sofa beside him, hoping to disarm him with affection. Mr. Marsh's position of defeat melted her; she saw that his nap had placed him at a disadvantage and she yearned to comfort him. She felt that she had been a bit cruel to catch him thus * * * She patted his hand and laughed. "Father needs me to look after him. He ought not to have been asleep sitting right up straight. Come, I'll turn down your bed and then you can jump right in." His weakness was appealing to her. He struggled to resume his dignity; he drew away from his offending daughter and faced her accusingly.

"Where did you go tonight? It's eleven o'clock, disgracefully late for a nice girl to be on the streets. And I have been worrying every minute." His voice, which was always too treble for disciplinary purposes, annoyed him, for it broke with huskiness from his nap. Jessica still felt kindly toward him.

"I went to Baver's concert at Judge Martin's."

"Did you go alone?" Mr. Marsh possessed a woman's intuition which was startling at times. Jessica wished that she had told everything or nothing, in the beginning. Now that she had been trapped she bridled in self-defense.

"No, father," she walked over to the mantel-piece, and stood stiff and tall before the dying fire, "I went with Prof Haegel. I did not speak to you beforehand because I knew that you would object. And I intend to see him whenever I choose."

Mr. Marsh flushed as he spoke. "So this is what things have come to. No regard for your father's judgment. When I was young children obeyed their parents; they had a wholesome respect for authority." His voice was eloquent. Jessica twisted about impatiently.

"I'm tired of hearing about authority. I am old enough to care for your house and the children, and I feel that you should trust me. And you must remember, father, I am no longer a child."

Mr. Marsh was hurt; his voice lost its accusing tone and became protesting.

"Are you going to repay all my devotion this way? If your mother had lived, things would never have come to this. You would not have been given all the power you have in this household, and then you would not have dared to defy me." Jessica looked at her father half scornfully and then left the room hurriedly, that she might not hurl at him the just retort that was ever ready. What her father called her "power" was a great responsibility which had deprived her of the natural opportunities of girlhood, college and young friends. It had over-developed her sympathetic and motherly instincts. She had endeavored not only to rear the children properly, but to protect her father against himself. As she brushed her long hair savagely before the mirror that night, she thought hard of the times she had glossed over her father's unfortunate remarks in company; of the many delicate misunderstandings between him and the children which she had smoothed out, ever careful to keep the children respectful and thoughtful of him * * *

Tonight Jessica was unusually perturbed over her domestic tragedy. A certain compassion for her father's ineffectualness, all the more pathetic because he was blind to it, had heretofore rescued her from deep resentment. She had been forced to bully him at times in order to keep him from domineering; but it was always with sincere regret that she had done it. But now things were different, for she had something to hide. She held lonely council in her room, she catechised herself soundly, searching for mistakes, misdemeanors, cruelties. As she turned out the light and opened the

glass door to let the moon-light and cool air rush into the room a sense of vast loneliness, of isolation possessed her. The night was so big that it awed her, all the noise in the city and largeness of the world could lend her no counsel.

As she crept into bed she was overwhelmed with a desire to cast herself upon her father, ask his advice about Prof Haegel's proposal to her, and even beg his forgiveness for her behavior. But she recoiled from the idea instantly, partly from an aversion toward her father and partly from a selfprotective instinct. Revealing her secret to her father would place dangerous cards in his hands. His nature was impetuous—in a burst of paternal conscientiousness, at one of those times when he became vigorously a father, he might go to Prof. Haegel and dismiss him peremptorily. Jessica had learned that vacillating natures sometimes assert themselves dangerously, unreasonably. And so she tossed fretfully off to sleep, harrassed with her own problems, while the moon was chased over with clouds, that made strange figures over the little white bed and the carpet and the muslin curtains.

* * * *

Jessica awoke early the next morning. From the nursery her brothers' suppressed giggles and grunts announced their readiness to be entertained with fairy stories until time to get up. A night's sleep had obviously blotted out the past for them—yesterday and its tribulations were forgotten. Jessica lay inert; she would not attempt to quiet the children to keep them from disturbing their father this morning, she could not throw herself into the story telling. She thought over her experiences of the night before: how she had met Prof Haegel breathless from running, and how with no warning he had told her as they walked briskly along, that he wanted to marry her. She had been startled, for he had created no atmosphere of hovering romance, he had burst upon her unexpectedly. She had remained quiet for some blocks as they walked, and then in a strained voice she had pointed to a lion-shaped cloud and remarked upon its beauty. And they had listened to the music and behaved as usual, talking lightly with all their friends. As she and Prof. Haegel had emerged again into the night she had felt that she must have been mistaken, that he had really not spoken. But he had reminded her quietly when he said good-night, and she had left him without a word.

She had welcomed Prof. Haegel into her life because he brought her charming, new ideas. She had wanted passionately to go to college, but she had a family to care for * * * She read extensively of modern writers, authors who shocked her father; but she wanted to discuss these problems about which she felt so strongly. She needed a balance to help her

reach conclusions. Prof. Haegel had come at just the right time. He was a strange mixture of genius and egoism. His compositions in music were charming and fanciful, but they lacked the strength of objectiveness. He was a little too old and a little too egotistical to be attractive personally to Jessica; but she loved the ideas he brought to her. And she had gained tremendously in music under his guidance. She preferred not to have him touch her hand when he showed her positions on the key board * * * She could talk with him, too, better when he sat on the other side of the room. She thought of this as she lay in bed. But it did not guide her in her decision, for she was troubled about it. She realized guiltily the same repugnance for her father. She drew away from him more and more, disliking his caresses—and she blamed herself for the feeling. Was there not, she thought, something wrong with her to feel so toward her own father?

When she finally finished her thinking about the matter, she had concluded that she ought to get away. Such dislike, such repugnance for her own father was wicked. She needed a rest and a change * * * And she went down to breakfast searching for a way to get it. There was Prof. Haegel. . . .
* * * *

Jessica's morning wore away with various household duties. But through the whole process of preparing the twins for school and marshalling the feeble-minded Norwegian maid through the details of the morning work she was thoughtful. The apparently insurmountable task of gaining order from the chaotic house, which everywhere bore traces of the children's raid, she accomplished mechanically. Her hands were aware, from habit, of what had to be done, her work needed no attention.

Lunchtime brought the twins home rollicsome and engrossed in their own interests—Little Alice arrived furtive. Her father was remarkably tender with her, but intuitively she understood that his caresses had a double meaning—they were meant to rebuke poor Jessica as well as to comfort her. When he placed Little Alice on his knee and asked her sympathetically all about her morning at school, the child wanted passionately to have Jessica on the other knee—then everything would be all happy and nice again.

Mr. Marsh's attitude reinforced Jessica's decision to see Prof. Haegel that night. As she wished to avoid another *tete a tete* with her father she announced her intention as the children were leaving the table.

"John and Henry," she said to the twins, "I am going to have your supper a little early as I am going out tonight. Alice, dear, you may sit up and have dinner at seven with father." And then quite casually she added turning to her father, "And I shall be here later on in

the evening with Prof. Haegel." She escaped immediately to her room leaving her father non-plussed. Here was Jessica repeating misdemeanors consecutively! He was astounded, for such an attitude of self-resignation to the cruelty of life as he had shown the past few days usually won Jessica over and melted her into passionate self-blame.

Prof. Haegel came and carried Jessica away for dinner. In a glory of light blue fluffiness which intoxicated Little Alice Jessica ran down the stairs to meet him. And through the dinner, which they ate at a large and brilliant hotel Prof. Haegel fascinated Jessica. He was at his best, as impersonal as he was capable of being, telling of unique experiences rather than of his own reactions toward things. And except for his eyes, Jessica thought as she watched him across the table from her, he was remarkably handsome. His immaculate full dress made him younger than his thirty-five years. But his eyes seemed to drink her in, and when she met them she felt lost, almost caged. So she evaded his eyes and watched his delicate, nervous hands which he used continuously to emphasize and punctuate as he talked. In her almost unused evening dress, which replaced the practical house-gowns she usually wore—in the lively, free atmosphere of the strange hotel Jessica felt emancipated. It was all new and refreshing, the difficulties of her household, the restrictions of her father were remote. She felt recreated, unjailed—except when she looked at his eyes.

As Jessica turned on a soft light in the living-room at home and motioned Prof. Haegel to a seat across the library table she felt an atmosphere of intimacy and of approaching doom. The hotel was left behind and all the impersonality of Prof. Haegel's ideas were also left there. She felt more poignantly than ever before a certain recoil from him. But a squeak of slippers in the hall, witnessed that her father was hovering on guard; and drove her back to Prof. Haegel for refuge. He said nothing, but he turned his intense, eager eyes upon her; she felt possessed in his gaze and she breathed sharply with the determination to escape. Her ideas shifted in a second—her own room, her own home without Prof. Haegel seemed suddenly a refuge. But he had mistaken her harsh breathing for passion for him and in rapture over her surrender he seized her and held her to him. She felt suffocated under his caresses; in a moment she had disengaged herself roughly. With the table between them she looked up confused; she was ready to send him away, to free herself from him forever, when she beheld her father, rebuking and stern in the door-way. He spoke with parental authority in his voice, "Jessica, what does this mean? Is this the way you behave with your

gentlemen friends?" Mr. Marsh had the cards in his hands and he was determined to use them.

Jessica flushed indignantly, but she could think of no salutary explanation. Prof Haegel came to her rescue, "Jessica had nothing to say in the matter, Mr. Marsh. It was I, naturally, who took the initiative. I have asked her to marry me." Jessica was grateful for her lover's championing of her. She felt something akin to hatred for her father—he had trapped her so unjustly. And partly to defeat him in his plan to hu-

miliate her, partly because the situation forced her, she said:

"I am going to marry Prof Haegel, father." Her voice became hard, "You will have to find another housekeeper." And then she turned to her betrothed and spoke with no show of emotion, "I am very tired—so I will leave you to talk with father." Jessica passed her accepted lover without looking at him, for fear that she might meet those eyes. She closed the door steadily behind her, and as she went to her room she crowded down a rising sob.

HELEN KNOWLTON.

When the Muse Knocks

MY MUSE has no sense of the fitness of things. She knocks at the door, boisterously, regardless of whether I am ready to receive her, or am in my kimono and curl-papers—intellectually speaking. She is like relatives; she knows neither when to come nor when to go; a nuisance all around. On the whole, I prefer poison ivy to the literary itch; the results of scratching are more gratifying; and once one has had it, one avoids it ever after. But the Muse returns anon and anon, like the meat bill.

She called on me the other night in a harsh mood. She inflicted me with a yearning to write a poem about digitalis. It was a passionate yearning. Digitalis is a purplish-blue flower, arranged at irregular intervals (like rain) along a slender stalk. It is a quaint, romantic-looking herb, connotative of old-fashioned gardens and soft young things in lavender cretonne. Just the sort of subject that arouses my sentimental spinster nature; and look at the name! Digitalis! It sounds like a Kentuckian asking, "Did you tell us?"

I have thought that perhaps my Muse, contrary to the custom of muses, was on the side of law and order, and was punishing me for a legal offense which I have hidden from the legals. For the digitalis which stands stiffly before me as I write, was pilfered from a "No Trespassing" garden. Agnes led me into it. Agnes is young and beautiful. And when I said to her, "Agnes, this is stealing, and we could be prosecuted," she only laughed and answered, "They'd let us off, we're so attractive." I resented that "we". It was editorial in that it was cutting. And I plucked a great armful of digitalis by the roots, and vowed viciously, then and there, that I would write a very modern poem about the blue spikes, to show Agnes that there is something in the world besides beauty. At that time I was ignorant of the name of my poetical subject; and when I sneaked home without being caught, arranged my plunder in wobbly art-craft baskets, and got out my floral dictionary, I saw that the Muse had distinctly "wished something off on me." Digitalis! I set womanfully to work. There were rhymes enough. Ye

Gods! there were *rhymes!* The ballad must be sweet and sentimental. So far, so good. I glued my eyes on the indifferent posies before me, and crashed down on the typewriter keys as if I had studied music abroad.

"O digitalis,
Raised by Alice,
In the garden
Of her palace,
Down in deah ole
Texan Dallas,
I can-not but
Be-come j'alous
Of thy bluish
Purple chalice.

Though my malice
Is for Alice,
Who is so in-
Fernal callous
That she's willing
Just to "pal" us.
Is such conduct
Not a fallac-
Y for Alice,
Digitalis?"

When I came to, long after, a Grecian petticoat fluttered around the corner of the door, and I heard a silvery giggle in the clematis vines outside my window.

Why do I yearn to write poems about unpoetical things? I remembered one of the twenty-five questions which Robert Frost prepared on himself for a class in Contemporary Poetry. "Are a 'hundred collars' un-beautiful?" he asked. "If so, are they fit matter for poetry? Does calling them 'reality' help any? "Un-beautiful" things are not fit for poetry; but when the Muse knocks, we tie up whatever we are thinking of, into some sort of rhythmic language; and the damage is done.

I realized with a melancholy consolation, as I sat looking at my stolen digitalis, that I was not alone in yearning to sing of unpoetical things. I would become an Imagist. I would chant passionately and freely of digitalis, and Miss Lowell would take me by the hand as one too exalted to be confined by the poetical; and Miss Monroe would give me many pages in "Poetry." Perhaps Mr. Masters began his career by obeying a yearning to sing of the unsingable. Oh gloomy prospect! But at any rate, when next the Muse knocks, I intend to—knock back!

MARJORIE KINNAN.

Verse

THE MIRACLE

I lay with half-closed eyes, worn out with pain;
 And day was night, and life a fearful thing.
 I heard a stirring, as of flowers in rain,
 Or little birds that move before they sing.
 And by my side I found a fairy form,
 "Your own. A sturdy son," the kind nurse smiled.

A bundle of pink rose-leaves, soft and warm—
 And unbelievable! A mystic child!
 The white-garbed angel placed it close to me,
 Showed tiny face and dimpled fingers bared,
 And smiled again, and "Hush"-ed mysteriously;
 Then tip-toed 'round the room. And still—I stared!

* * * * *

In dashed an interne with a tragic face.
 "My God!" he cried. "My God! What have you done!
 The infant here? This girl's a tonsil case!
 It goes to Mrs. B—, in forty-one!"

MARJORIE KINNAN.

CHALLENGE

You, North!
 Rugged, wind-swept, free—
 I hear the laughter of your torrents in your voice,
 I see the twinkle of your stars within your eyes,
 And stamped upon your brows, the brooding of the centuries.

What can Spring,
 Bubbling, boisterous, wanton!
 That wind-swept fleck of cloud,
 That spray-tossed sun-beam, vanishing—
 Mean to you?

SYLVA BEYER.

TRUEBER TAG

Kalt weht der Westwind;
 Grau ragen die Wolkenberge empor;
 Feurig lodert im Westen der Abendrot
 Wie eine brennende Stadt.
 Kaltgrau und mit Nebel bedeckt steht einsam der Bergspitz;
 Dunkel wird es im Tal, und traurig zu Mute.
 Die Bäume biegen sich vor dem Sturmkönig;
 Böse Geister schenken den Gifttrank aus,
 Und der Mond sieht blass und gekränkt aus, wo er hinflüchtet.

Kaltgrau ist alles und finster,
 Und finster wird's mir zu Mute,
 Fast als wär' ich in ferner Wüste verlassen.
 Komm, süßer Schlaf, damit ich's in Träumen vergesse!

CLIFFORD FRANKLIN GESSLER.

THE GOLDEN DAYS

Do you remember the golden days,
 When the sky was bent in a deep blue cup,
 And the sun mites danced in the shimmering haze
 To the magical music the bluebell plays
 When the dew-drops melt and the mists rise up?

Those were the days of our gypsying;
 Like a ribbon of steel the road ran long,
 And sheltering hedgerows, green with spring,
 Hid the fluttering tip of a crimson wing,
 And the whole, wide world was a maze of song.

Do you remember the wind-blown crown
 Of Castle Rock, where the roadways meet?
 Do you remember how we peered down
 To the sun-washed roofs of the drowsing town
 And the shadowy waves of the blowing wheat?

Those were the days of our wanderlust,
 Of sunlit paths that never shall end;
 Untrodden highways are white with dust,
 Voices are calling, and walk we must—
 Romance is waiting beyond the bend!
 ERNEST L. MEYER.

THE SINGER

I have a lute that sings sad, sighing numbers—
 None loves my songs save my lute and I—
 I play on the hills when the windy world slumbers,
 Spinning out melody under the sky.

Plaintive old melody, ancient as folly,
 Built from the tinkle of sheep-bells in rain,
 Throbbing with musical, lost melancholy
 Finding her old home, her old haunts, again.

Here with my lute and me, dreaming and singing,
 Here may the sorrows of ages find rest,
 Rustling across my songs, like thrushes winging
 Their tired, homeward way to the hedge-hidden nest.

Far goes my melody over the rivers,
 Farther than gypsy tents under the sky,
 Far as the loneliest last star that shivers—
 And none loves my songs save my lute and I.
 MARJORIE KINNAN.

What Sunken-Meadow Saw

The scene and how it happened

—:—

A NARROW stretch of ground lies in the foreground, and beyond, as far as one can see, a swamp, glassy and pale, shimmers frosty white in the moonlight. The twisted boughs of a black cypress throw their gnarled silhouettes against a starry sky, and the gruff croak of a veteran bull-frog breaks the silence of the night. A mist of blue vapor overhangs all.

A voice is heard, at first indistinct, then growing high and clear. It croons, and laughs, and slurs, and finally we hear the words of a strange and dream-like chant:

“Swing high, Swing low,
The wandering mischief-maker am I,
Who laughs in the mists that rise from the seas
And mocks the wind that kisses the leaves.

“Swing high, Swing low,
The world is round and so is the moon,
But the opal dawn will come too soon,
Swing high, Swing low.”

Close upon the last note there follows a long sighing yawn, and down from the black cypress boughs slips a grotesque little figure clad in the deep green of a forest pool and veiled in tints of amber and blue. Here and there the moonlight catches the glint of a scarlet maple leaf.

The Spirit (lazily stretching his arms and throwing back his towseled head to the breeze): “Ho-hum”— (then espying the audience): “Well, upon the word of my step-brother, the glow-worm, I was so busy napping that I never heard one of you come in. Now you’re all wondering who I am (laughs softly), but you don’t know—no mortal has ever seen me before. But I’ve seen you, millions of you, and upon the word of my god-mother, the moon, you can’t imagine how funny you are.” (Goes into pealing, hilarious laughter.)

Just then an owl from across the swamp cries out into the night: “To-whit, to-whoo-o-o.”

The Spirit: “That’s the wisest owl in the world telling me how ill mannered I am. But I don’t mind him; he hates me worse than daylight.” (In a whisper.) “Once I stole a pet tail feather of his and put it in a fool’s cap that very night.” (He shrieks with mirth, while the old owl calls again):

“To-whit, to-whoo-o-o.”

The Spirit: “And now, listen, I’m the reason why

you quarrel with your wives, and spank your babies. I’m what’s wrong when your biscuits burn and your roast won’t brown, and the milk turns sour and the soup boils over, and the cat falls into the well. I’m there when the white hail falls and the forked lightning strikes. I am Kiff,—Kiff, the Mischief-Maker!”

There is a silence, and then a voice, from the shadows of the road wails out, half in terror, half in despair:

“Kiff, the Mischief-Maker! Oh dear, Oh dear! And I thought I had found some kindly soul who might help me.”

Kiff turns about to see the tear-stained face of a slender girl who comes slowly from the darkness into the moonlight. Her short black hair curls about her shoulders and her red lips are quivering.

Kiff (running forward impulsively): “Oh, but I would’nt harm you. I couldn’t; not anything so lovely.”

The Girl (shrinking back): “Go away. You’re the wickedest spirit abroad and you’ll only make things a hundred times worse. Why, I’m more afraid of you than all the mice in the world. Go away, I tell you!”

Kiff, at a loss, steps back and looks at her sorrowfully, then suddenly is revived with a bright thought.

Kiff: “Bull-frogs and tadpoles! I’ve got a famous idea. You tell me your troubles, all of them, to the last word, and, who knows but I might be able to do something after all.”

The Girl (hesitatingly and between sobs): “Well, I couldn’t be much worse off than I am now, so I might as well tell you how entirely miserable I am.”

Kiff (twinkling with anticipation): “That’s right. Go ahead. I knew you’d be sensible. But would you please mind not gulping so much? A tear or two doesn’t faze me, but when you gulp like that it upsets me terribly, and besides I can’t understand a word you’re saying.”

The Girl (seating herself on a broad pine stump, while Kiff curls up at her feet): “Very well, I’ll try to stop crying, but it’s all so very tragic. To begin with, I have run away from home—” (defiantly) “Yes, I have, and, what’s worse, I’ve lost my lover forever and a day. You see, he is very tall and handsome, with hair that’s as curly as mine, but the color of sunshine, and eyes so blue that they put the sky to shame. His name is Melvin, and he’s asked me to marry him every day for three months.”

Kiff (puzzled and seriously): “Well, why in the

name of everything that creeps don't you go ahead and marry him?"

The Girl: "That's just it; my family objects and—"

Kiff (breaking in impatiently): "But why in the name of—"

The Girl: "If you'll please be so kind as to stop interrupting, I'll tell you why. It's because my father is two pigs and a spotted cow richer than his father."

(*Kiff* rolls on his side in a sudden fit of laughter.)

The Girl (indignantly): "Well, if you imagine for one moment that it's funny, you're the very villain I suspected you of being."

Kiff (containing himself with marked difficulty): "I'm sorry. Of course, it's not funny. That's one of my bad habits—perhaps my worst."

The Girl (resuming her story): "So at last, one fine day I met Melvin by the mill-pond in the forest and we agreed to elope. In covered whispers we set the time for this very night and saw nothing further of one another for seven days. My mother and father grew less wary and suspicious for they believed Melvin and me to have had a falling out, and so tonight they actually left me alone in the house while they hitched up old Daniel and drove off to town after a new kettle."

Kiff (singing out triumphantly): "Ah ha, now I see. It's as plain as the spots on your cow."

The Girl: "Don't be too sure; I haven't finished yet. Listen; I wrote a note, with my quill shaking so that every other word was a blot, and this is what it said:

'You have never trusted me, so now may you find good reason for your wicked suspicions. Never will I darken your door again.'

"Wasn't that terrible? Well, I left the note in a big blue sugar-bowl, and didn't even stop for my Sunday shawl, but ran like a frightened rabbit to the oak tree where Melvin was to be waiting. He wasn't there though, and it began to grow darker and darker. But finally he came, and what do you think he said—?" (At the last words she begins to sob again.)

Kiff (suddenly very ill at ease): "Why, I can't fancy. But, watch out now, no more gulping mind you."

The Girl: "He said that, all in all, he thought it would be best not to elope, and just to go on having faith in the future. He said he didn't think it was worth rowing with one's family over, and that if we really loved each other, things were bound to turn out well in the end—" (pause) "and all the time there was I with that terrible note in the sugarbowl and no home left to go back to."

Kiff: "So you ran away from him too?"

The Girl: "Indeed I did; there wasn't anything else to do, but I let him know a few sound facts first, and then—then he said that the Fates were with him, and that he was glad he had found out what a fiendish disposition I had before he married me. He said that if I was like this at twenty, the Almighty himself would be able to make no impression on me by forty."

Kiff (infuriated): "He did! He said all that, did he? Well, you just wait. I'll fix him quicker than a periwinkle. They'll have a hard time to find even his coat-tails by morning." (He begins to run swiftly from the stage, but the girl clutches him wildly by the sleeve.)

The Girl (pleadingly): "Oh no, don't harm him; don't touch him, please. I still love him, indeed I do, more than ever before."

Kiff (turning back sullenly): "Oh, very well, but what's to be done?" (Irritably) "Sh-h-h-h, don't talk to me. I want to cogitate." (Then all at once he runs forward, raising his arms to the moon.) "Lady Moon, listen now to the voice of *Kiff*, your wandering god-child. Send him but one of your thousand rays of palest silver down past the frosty stars, down through the purple mist, send him but one with message of help, for he needs you."

Scarcely has *Kiff* completed his prayer when it is answered, for from afar a voice is heard calling, "Yolande, Yolande." A long silence follows in which neither *Kiff* nor the *Girl* moves. The cries come again and again; this time at but a short distance: "Yolande, Yolande."

The Girl (trembling like an aspen and in an excited whisper): "That is he; that is Melvin calling to me."

Kiff (quicker than a twinkle takes her hand and runs forward to one corner of the stage): "Listen to me, fairest of all maids. So great has been the effect of your sad tale that I am about to reform,—yes, reform. There is enough mischief abroad as it is. I, the master of ten thousand horned goblins; I, the ruler over dingy gnomes that work by night; I, *Kiff* the all-powerful, shall renounce my Kingdom of Darkness—for you. And now, hide yourself behind that ragged boulder there that juts out into the road. Do not fear, Yolande, the god-child of the Moon is with you."

A third time Melvin is heard calling anxiously, and *Kiff*, with one flying leap, disappears into the grey-green weeds which fringe the margin of the swamp.

There is scarcely time to wink, before stumbling foot-falls break the silence and Melvin staggers in, panting and groping. In one hand he carries a smoky copper lantern which flickers unevenly, as though it too were gasping for breath.

Melvin: "Oh what a fool I am! Why *did* I let her go? May the Saints curse me to my dying day and in the world to come. Surely I would have over-

taken her by now had she gone this way. It must have been that she has taken the winding road over the pine-ridge to the southward and past the village of Camden. It's no use to look farther here."

Then suddenly the boy starts back, pressing one hand to his throat.

"Oh--O-O-O-Oh-h-h----"

Melvin (in a hoarse whisper): "What was that?"

It is a wailing, sobbing moan that rises and falls in dismal vibrations as it drifts in from the ghastly calm of the unruffled swamp. A gray bat hurried across the moon, and the cry comes again.

"O-O-Oh-h-- Melvin-O-Oh-h----"

Melvin (rigid with terror) "The voice of Yolande? She is drowning!"

His fear suddenly spent, Melvin prepares to throw himself into the swamp in search of the misleading voice, just as Kiff, with a ripple of diabolical laughter, springs lightly out from the rushes, catches the lad by the skirt of his leather jerkin, and whirls him about in a dizzy circle.

Kiff (kicking the lantern from the bewildered Melvin's hand): "Oh ho, what do you need of a lantern? That's a deadly insult to my Lady God-mother, the Moon."

Melvin (still tottering and blinking from the onslaught): "What are you?"

Kiff: "A great deal more important than you, my boy. And now I trust that you've been frightened within an inch of your worthless life."

Melvin: "I have, indeed. But who are you to detain me when my betrothed lies drowning?"

Kiff: "Poof! Betrothed hickory nut! That was I, you young parsnip. Whoa, there. Ask no questions. I know your past, your present, and your future. To me the workings of your mind are transparent, though your thoughts be as black as night. Have a care!"

Melvin (wide-eyed and wondering): "You know, then, of our quarrel?"

Kiff: "I know of your outrageous behavior towards the fairest of mortal maidens, if that's what you term 'our quarrel'."

Melvin (desperately): "Yes, that's precisely the kind of a fool I was; and now I've lost her."

Kiff (in a low, mysterious tone and running close to him): "If by some chance,—mind you now, if you were to find her again, would you promise to go before her on bended knees, to buy her a silver chain and a blue silk kerchief, to swear fidelity to the end of your days—"

Melvin: "Gladly! Gladly!"

Kiff (sternly): "Wait, I'm not nearly through yet. Would you build her a green thatched cottage in a shady glen and never let her soil her hands?"

Melvin: "Yes, yes. All that and more. But tell me, tormenting sprite, which way has she gone? Where will I find her?"

Kiff (waving aside his eager questions): "Would you never speak another harsh word, and save the thickest cream of all for her strawberries, and marry her before the break of dawn?"

Melvin: "I promise any possible thing under the stars."

Kiff (quizzically tipping his head to one side): "Upon my word, I almost believe you. It's hard to realize sometimes how atrociously bad you've been."

Melvin (pleadingly): "I know. I must have been mad tonight. But now my reason has returned and I see clearly what a fool I was."

Kiff: "Are, you mean." Then he turns swiftly, as Melvin bows his head despondently, and cautiously brings the girl from her mossy hiding place, so that when Melvin raises his head again, he finds himself looking straight into the black, shining eyes of his sweetheart. For a time they gaze at one another, held in the spell of the moment, and then Yolande slips gently into Melvin's out-stretched arms, while Kiff's wild laugh rings out in triumph. He leaps and bounds from one side of the road to the other, turns whirling hand-springs and goes spinning up into the air like a stormy pin-wheel. All the while he chants a weird refrain:

"The glow-worm gleams
And the bull-frog croaks,
While the cricket laughs
At the hop-toad's jokes.
Ha, Ha - Ho, Ho - - etc. -"

Kiff (finally ceasing his mad cavorting, approaches the reconciled pair and beams approvingly over the successful fruits of his labor): "Allow me to wish you both all the happiness of ten thousand worlds—"
He is suddenly made most uncomfortable in the

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midst of a grand flourish by the very evident fact that no one is paying him the slightest attention.

Kiff (beginning his speech again): "I was saying, my dear young people, allow me to wish you all the—" (And still no one takes notice of him.)

In sheer bewilderment, the mischief-maker falls back a pace to watch further proceedings with a troubled air. At length, Yolande untangles herself from Melvin's embrace and surveys him critically at arm's length.

The Girl (pettishly): "Melvin, why did you wear that detestable waist-coat? You know how I hate it."

Melvin: "But, Sweetheart, I didn't know anything of the kind, and besides, I never wore it before."

The Girl: "Well, you *might* have known I *should* have hated it. And then to wear the horrid thing at this of all times, our wedding day."

Melvin: "Indeed, I'll take it right off. But you see, I hadn't planned on getting married quite so soon."

The Girl: "There you are, trying to get out of it again. You've thrown me into the cold world once, and I don't doubt for a moment but what you enjoyed the sensation immensely."

Melvin: "But, darling,—"

Yolande, however, stamps her foot, turns away and begins to walk off down the road.

Melvin: "Oh very well, then. You don't *have* to marry me. This world is full of pretty girls, and with decent dispositions in the bargain. Moreover, I intend to wear this waist-coat till my dying day—"

During this indignant outburst he has followed Yolande down the road and at the last words disappears from the stage. Yolande's voice is heard tearfully in the distance—"Melvin, Oh-h- Melvin—"

Kiff (comes slowly into the moonlight, his little face bewildered and disturbed, to watch them fade into the fog overhanging the swamp road): "I don't understand—when I tried so hard—" (He frowns thoughtfully, and then, shrugging his shoulders, runs forward with a peal of reckless laughter)

"Why, I know what's the trouble. It's this patching up business. It isn't my line. But to think, they never even thanked me, when I was on the very point of losing my pet green-eyed goblins, just to help them. Grasshoppers and periwinkles! What a narrow escape!" (He shivers and hugs himself.) "I've learned two things, however, that I shan't forget until I do either. You'd better remember them too.

"In the first place, 'stick to your own trade', and in the second place, 'it doesn't pay to be good'."

Seized by another outburst of mirth, *Kiff* swings himself into the boughs of the cypress, for all the world like a brown and grey squirrel, and presently there comes, as though from the stars, a sound of laughter and tears, of mischief and dreams from all the ages of man,—the Song of *Kiff*.

—BERTHA OCHSNER.

Curtain.

The Listener

THERE were five of us; we were old, but because we once were young we talked of love, and adventure, and the things that belong to Youth. Tales that were crowded with the glamor and the thrill of romance we related in wheezy voices, and were conscious of the decay in us—and saddened by it. We were saddened, too, by the stolidity of Parkman's face, which looked at us from the shaded recess of an alcove and expressed in its seams and fissures the age and the hopelessness that weighed heavily on us all. It was yellow; it was sunken; it was twisted about the mouth as if he perpetually were cracking a nut, and his eyes held in them a dispirited, tired-to-death expression, as if he found the kernel tasteless. And when it came his turn, and we leaned expectantly towards him as he spoke, his voice, too, seemed laden with weariness.

You have spoken of Romance (he said) as if it were ready-labeled, to be recognized at a glance, like a bottle of tonic. You, Hodgson, just now related

your South Sea adventure. Admitting it was strange and fearful, did you, at the time, feel that you were experiencing real Romance. I do not think so. It was part of your every-day life, part of the routine to which you, as a sailor, had grown accustomed. Not until you had found your audience to whom such events were unreal and fantastic; not until your experience had been glorified by the light of retrospection, did you come to feel that there was anything romantic in the dangers you had survived. Romance did not originate with the first strange adventure, nor with the first exotic love affair, but with the first minstrel who could sing about them, and the first audience who would listen. To do, to feel, that is the adventurer's part; to impart the flavor of Romance to that which has been done and felt, that is the listener's.

I lived, until my nineteenth year, in a drab little town in New Hampshire: a worn-out village, surrounded by worn-out farms, and filled with worn-out people. Its stagnation was contagious, perhaps even

congenital: people were born regretting they had been born, and this regret, unspoken, but visible in every line of their tired faces, remained with them till the day of their death. I lived in a household of womenfolk, with my aunt and three sisters. Had God, in his forgetfulness, left a spark of youth anywhere in my carcass, they would have sought it out and killed it. At nineteen, I was an old man, a vegetable, insensate as a doorknob; my soul, had it taken tangible form, would have resembled a shapeless bit of soggy bread, with the mould just beginning to form on it.

. . . I worked in a grist mill.

And then, one day, I had a letter from an uncle, who had gone West years ago. He was now interested in an irrigation enterprise in Washington State. He offered me work as flagman on the surveying crew at a wage that seemed fabulous in the eyes of my aunt. "Go!" she said, pointing at the open letter, just as she said "Go!" on Saturday nights, pointing at the steaming tub in the kitchen. I went, unquestioning. We parted without tears, without regret.

During that ride, that long ride across a whole continent, I felt no exultation, no thrill, not even a hope or a doubt. At Chicago they unloaded a carload of cattle. They left me on board. . . . An oversight.

Five days later I stood blinking on the platform of a lone red station in the very heart of the desert of eastern Washington. Round about was sand, brush, sand—gray sand that dazzled under a brassy sun, blinding one like new-fallen snow—stretching to the north, to the east, to the west, and meeting the cloudless sky in a sharp, curved line, like the edge of a saucer. And to the south, on the horizon, streamed a long, black smudge: the Saddle Mountains, sixty miles as the crow flies—only there were no crows, no birds or beasts, no visible signs of life in all that parched expanse of sand and withering brush. Had I been conscious of an ego, it would have shrieked with humility, so crushing was the immensity of world-space that lay flattened out before my eyes. But I was conscious of nothing but the oppressive heat, the sweat that trickled down my face, and the tense silence that seemed to be awaiting the crash of a cannon or the cry of a child.

A buckboard with a driver waited for me in the square of shadow that the station flung across the blistering road. It was thirty miles to Caldron Lake, where the camp lay. My driver was a Russian, with the face of a Judas and the breath of a gin-mill. He swore in a foreign tongue when the road was bad; he drank native whiskey when it was good; but good or bad, he glowered at me with his red eyes and chewed his black beard savagely. We came at length to a stream, swollen by the winter snow and spring rain,

along which, on a sandy ridge, the narrow road ran. I marked how the hoofs of the team sank deep into the powdery sand, and even as I looked, the earth seemed to slide away from beneath them, and the river rose up to swallow team, buckboard, and us. I threw out my arms and became entangled in wet blankets; I felt the cold sting of the water, and heard the river rushing into my ears—and that was all I felt or heard.

. . . Don't tell me a drowning man reviews in a flash the events of his lifetime. All I saw was a face; the bearded face of a Judas, now whirling around and about with red fire spurting from the mouth, now pronged like a devil's and gazing fixedly at me; and when my dazed senses emerged again into consciousness and I opened my eyes, that face was pressed close to my own, and heavy hands were pummeling my chest. . . . The buckboard had been wrecked, but the horses had escaped without a scratch. We rode in on their backs, under the cold stars, and sick and stiff with pain, we came to the camp at midnight.

I shall not weary you with an account of all that happened during the next six months. Those were early days in the outposts of the new Northwest, days when the roughs and toughs of the world's four corners were abroad in the land. That rude, vile bunkhouse on the shore of the slimy lake was a melting pot, and a boiling pot, too, for it simmered with rebellion, and riots, and crime. There were bushwhackers from Australia in it; there were black-sheep remittance men from England, lumber-jacks from Oregon, scum from the mining camps of Alaska—all working as ditch-diggers, and teamsters, and surveyors, and what-not. In the space of a week I saw sights that would make you marvel and sights that would make you sick. They hung up the bull-cook by the heels one night for some slight blunder, and the poor wretch flapped and crowed like a rooster strung by its legs to a butcher's beam. That was funny. And then, one night, an alcohol-crazed Finn ran amuck with a pick-axe and transfixed a harmless Bohunk, pinning him to the side of the bunkhouse. That was horrible. I saw neither humor, nor tragedy, nor strangeness in it all. It was part of the new life, the new work, I thought—and I worked. Worked hard, too, tracking the desert from daylight to dusk with a painted rod, and a huge canvas water-bag, and two dinner buckets, and an extra bundle of sharpened stakes. The first day I wore blisters the size of a button on either heel, and the sun planted still bigger ones on my scorched face. There were days when the water-bag leaked, and the four other men of the crew cursed me, and we labored with parched throats and seared brains, while the heat pressed down on our brows like a heavy, feverish hand.

(Continued on page 20)

The Grown-Up World

(Note: Winner of the 1916-17 Lewis Prize, awarded to the best essay written by a member of the freshman class.)

WHEN I was a child, the grown-up world was far different from the world in which I lived. It scarcely existed. Grown people were apart from my life—vague, hovering shadows, which moved above me and seldom noticed me. My child friends played with me, and we were happy. Childhood is complete in itself. I did not long to have older people play with me. Sometimes they did, and it was very pleasant to play double solitaire with my father, or "Simon says, 'Thumbs up!'" with my grandmother. Still, grown people could neither run so far nor play so hard as Jacky or his little tomboy sisters. Jack never said, "I'm getting tired now, and besides, it is time for your nap."

I thought it rather odd that the grown-ups wanted to play with me. They tried to enter into my games; I was polite and let them. But I never really enjoyed their playing with me. I did not think of them as play fellows. And because I could not bring them down to my level, I left them where they were and had no regard for them. Only in particular instances did I try to reach up to them, and find companionship there. They were beings remote and foreign to the child world about me. This does not mean that I disliked grown-ups. It was simply that I did not and could not treat them as I did children. Perhaps older people misunderstood me. Perhaps they thought I was fastidious and partial to friends of my age. I think that I considered two classes of friends—children and grown-ups.

Other children were great fun to play with because they were like me. There is a marvelous understanding among children. The child world is closely knit together. Little lives have much in common; all of them are strangers in a strange land where everything is somehow marvelous to them, and filled with child like wonder and surprise, they explore it hand in hand. It cannot be otherwise. Children are not selfish when they seem to prefer to play with other children. No matter how full of understanding and sympathy for childhood older people are—and they delight in boasting of it,—they cannot wholly enter into the life of a child. There is more poignant feeling and interest in childhood than in any other period of life. In a very simple and sincere way children are conscious of themselves and of the world about them.

Grown people, from another point of view, were my friends. They lived in a world far beyond my

understanding, and for that reason alone they were interesting to me. Apart from the love that I naturally had for those who took care of me, and from that sense of unity between mother and child, I think that my friendships with older people were engendered by the very distinct difference between my interests and theirs. They were so wise—the whole world was known to them. I felt unconsciously drawn toward these springs of knowledge.

Somehow I looked upon the postman as a blue-coated, brass-buttoned angel, who had the power of bringing happiness or sorrow. He always spoke to me, and sometimes, if I were playing in the street, he would give me the letters to take home. I was overwhelmed with joy at the responsibility. Officials of every kind impressed me. What policeman, dark and strong, and proverbially fat, did not thrill me? Every time I passed one on the street, I would say to myself, "I'm not doing anything wrong. See how straight I walk! Don't I look honest?"

I had many friends among the merchants. Mr. Clegg, who had a candy store, was no more agreeable than his wife. They both chatted with me, and were so fond of each other, that very often in our conversation, they left me out altogether, while they talked affably with each other, entirely forgetting me and the candy I wanted.

I was a very democratic child—most children are. One of my intimate friends was the wife of our caretaker, who lived in a tiny white cottage not far from our house. I knew that compared to my mother or aunts she was ignorant and unkempt, but I liked her. She had such an interesting past! Every now and then she would break forth with a subtle remark, and then would stand, arms akimbo and eyes winking, while I asked her to explain what she had said. With great satisfaction she would nod her head significantly and say, "When you get older you will know." Such wisdom could not fail to impress me. I was proud to have a friend who knew so much and who condescended to be friendly with me. I found interest enough in that little cottage to keep me there for hours unlikes she called them—clove apples and pewter candlesticks.

Then again, the old German gardener fascinated me. He was cross and disagreeable to everyone, but I learned how to keep him good-humored by always agreeing with him. I felt very superior to him because he spoke English brokenly. For hours I would solemnly stand in the garden with him while he told me what seeds *ought* to have been bought for this flower

bed, or why he disliked that fertilizer—all the pent up wrath in his wrinkled old soul was poured forth upon me, who silently assented to his impossible invectives with continuous head shakings.

There was an old priest who lived near us. Every day he paced back and forth on his porch, saying his breviary. There was something so mysterious and saintly about him that I imagined he would never die. Being a Protestant child, I was proud to know him well enough to speak to him on the street before my other Protestant friends. They thought my acquaintanceship broad, and that pleased me. I liked to have young friends and old friends, Protestant and Catholic. So my life went on.

I had one grown friend who very nearly approached the realm of child play. He was an old bachelor who often came to our house. He was deliciously embarrassed by the advances of us children. He could not quite understand why we existed. But he rather liked having us climb up on his knees and play with him, although he never showed it. He was continually making faces at us—it seemed to be his only method of amusement. We children realized that here was one person who “had the stuff in him” to make a good playfellow. So we worked over him until finally we had him trained, and he was remarkably good-humored through it all. Children have a certain understanding of human nature that is unerring. They seem to be able to see deep down into one’s being and to discover hidden sources of playfulness, even in grown-ups, which they immediately develop and turn to their own enjoyment.

Children can be unreasonably cruel. The trials I endured at the hands of the bold neighbor boys bear witness to that. But children show an opposite characteristic to older people—submissiveness. It is necessary, of course, but often the discipline which is the mother’s duty, separates her from full communion with her child. If only someone else could administer the spankings and scoldings! It is merciful, though, that the child soon forgets punishments, and remembers only the blissful happiness beforehand, when he knew he was doing wrong, and yet had an unconquerable

desire to invade farther into the jungles of “*verboden*.” This humble attitude of a punished child is so unnatural and unchildlike! I believe that is one of the reasons why the child world and the grown-up world are so separate. The child feels that he is playing with matches when he plays with grown people. He feels, on the other hand, much more free and natural when with children. They take him for granted, just as he is.

I found many grown-up friends. Each one was a part of myself, and each one showed one phase of my child character—superiority, wonder, admiration, playfulness, and the vague attraction of knowledge beyond my grasp. Friendly as I was toward particular grown friends, I felt a certain reserve toward grown-ups in general. It was not that I was shy, but that I felt that grown people did not understand me. The ways of the world are often very puzzling to a child.

I wondered why it was that mother always knew exactly what to do. She never erred. I had the same trust in grown people in general. They were supreme beings, regulated by a high law, and in turn regulating us children. Although I could not fully understand why some things happened, I never imagined it was because grown people made mistakes. They *could* not but be right. I had full confidence in my masters. Later, as I grew older, it was sad to realize that grown people have the same faults as children—pettiness, selfishness, and anger. Everyone in the world, old and young, is alike in these respects. My faith in grown-ups was broken, and I was distressed.

Childhood was a happy dream, full of sweet unconsciousness. How many times, after a fall or other heart-breaking occurrence, would some grown person pick me up, and pat me, and still my crying. Then the world of grown-ups seemed a veritable haven of love and sympathy. Its strong, encircling arms folded around me and lifted me above the world of sorrow and trouble. It felt good to lie on mother’s shoulder and chokingly sob away all the misunderstandings of one little life—a life trusting and simple, which saw the Light and lived in it.

DOROTHY E. BRIDGE

The Evolution of Sadie

GEORGE and Sadie were going to the County Fair. They had hesitated a little about taking the baby away from home,—he was so tiny—but, after all, it was their first holiday since they were married, and, anyway, as Sadie said, how could they bear to miss it after the good time they had had last year! Of course, a day at the fair wouldn’t be quite the same

now without Ed and Irene. How they had bubbled with gaiety last year, these two pairs of lovers! Ed and Irene weren’t keeping company anymore, and George and Sadie, though, of course, they would miss their old friends, were determined to enjoy the fair without them.

So George closed the harness shop, and hitched up

his team, and put on his wedding suit and Christmas tie. Sadie's pink lawn had been washed twice since last fair day and had faded a little. The puff sleeves did not fit her arms so well either; her arms seemed a little thinner now, though surely they were stronger from the washing and carrying the baby and all. Still, there was always an exhilaration in dressing up, and Sadie was quite prettily flushed with excitement when she came out to the wagon. Before they started, George and Sadie packed away a little lunch under the wagon seat,—last year, with all the magnanimity of young lovers, Ed and George had told the girls not to bother with lunch—they'd buy it in the Ladies' Aid Tent,—but this year George had said it was much cheaper to carry their lunch, and Sadie had agreed with him.

The ten miles over to the county seat were hot, dusty miles—this September was hotter than last, Sadie thought, and the young mother's arm became rather cramped from holding the umbrella so long to shade the baby. But Sadie was very gay—she thanked her lucky stars that she and George hadn't become *settled* just because they were married—, and she talked laughingly to George all the way.

"Will I ever fergit last fair day, George? You an' me had ten rides on the ferris wheel till we were so dizzy we 'most dropped. And red pop! My soul, I couldn't look pop in the face for weeks afterward."

"I spent a week's wages that day!"

"An' havin' our fortunes told, George, remember? An' how the gypsy said you was goin' to marry a girl with the initial S, an' how Ed laughed! Oh dear, I'd like to died!"

When they reached the fair grounds, George helped Sadie off the wagon and said:

"You can go over to the fancy work buildin' while I'm puttin' up the team. I'll meet you there later."

Absolutely unconscious of making any comparisons, Sadie suddenly recalled how last year George had not allowed her to leave his side for a moment, how firmly his hand on her elbow had guided her through the crowd all day.

Sadie made her way carefully through the thronged spaces between the rows of ice-cream stands and carnival shows. Sometimes, to avoid the mob, she walked away around a tent, for she hated to get in a jam with the baby. The poor little fellow was crying—no wonder, though, with all these rough boys blowing squawkers in his ears! Would she ever get the baby quieted in all this noise? Sadie was almost indignant at the boisterous, smart-acting boys and girls who ran back and forth striking each other with whips—to be sure, George and Ed had bought whips for Sadie and Irene last year, but these youngsters might be a *little*

careful when they could see perfectly well that there was a little baby in the crowd.

To Sadie, the fancy work display was rather inferior to last year's. Of course, she didn't examine it so carefully now, for the baby cried a great deal. Last year she had been able to find many new embroidery ideas for her trousseau.

At lunch time George found her fanning the baby in a secluded corner of the fancy work building.

"Sorry I'm kinda late, Sadie. I run on to some of the boys from home, and we got to talkin' business, and forgot the time."

Lunch-time today was scarcely more exciting than it was everyday in their own little kitchen, except that the baby cried more than usual; and although Sadie wouldn't have dreamed of comparisons, still she couldn't help reminding George of the fun they had had last year in the Ladies' Aid lunch tent. Ed had put olives in George's coffee, and it had been just killing.

In the afternoon, since the baby was ready for his nap, George said he guessed he'd go and shoot a few "nigger babies" with the boys from home. He wouldn't be gone long. Sadie found a comparatively quiet corner in the big tent where the automobiles were being displayed, and she sat down on an uneven camp chair, fanning the baby. When it was time for the horse-races, George came after his family, but the baby was quietly sleeping now, Sadie told him in anxious whispers, and since she wasn't fond of races anyway, she believed she'd just stay here.

"If you don't mind, George. Anyway, it's so awful hot."

Sadie sat in the automobile tent all afternoon, fanning the baby, and remembering last year, and Ed and Irene, and the four of them, and how they had laughed at Baza, the wild man who ate nothing but raw meat, and how Sadie had exulted in George's radiant smile, and in his undivided attention, and in the unmistakable gleam in his eyes. Sadie smiled tenderly as she thought it over.

They drove home in the sultriness of the evening. Sadie's tired, little arm still propped up the baby's head. Sadie and George were both too tired to talk—and the young wife couldn't help thinking of last year and how they had driven home slowly in the moonlight, with George's arm around her, perfectly unabashed before Ed and Irene, too.

Although she wouldn't have let George know for anything, Sadie really thought the Lafayette County Fair was not quite so good this year as it was last year.

Sadie had grown up.

BEATRICE H. HUMISTON.

Rise of the Female Rough-Neck

WITH fervent prayers we thank the gods, even while we still look half askance, that here at school the old order changeth. A girl is no longer either a butterfly or an embryonic home-maker, but she is a—well, to flatter the men a bit,—she is getting to be a *regular fellow* with half a brain. Of course the men are responsible for this evolution, since it was they who so graciously gave to women their right of equal suffrage. But the men never foresaw the rise of the rough-neck, or they would have ended co-education, and equal suffrage, and such irrational things, in their first stages. For of course men do not like the term “rough-neck” applied to their women; they do not like to contemplate the disturbance of their own traditional place as political, moral, and family boss, by the growth of women with personalities and individualities—and the rough-neck is such a disturbing element.

From a girl who still plays the butterfly game I have the opinion, voiced with some disgust, that the rough-neck university girl is “horribly highbrow, don’t you know, without the *least bit* of social tact, and men do love social tact.” From a girl verging on the domestic plane I hear that the rough-neck lacks the essential qualities of womanhood, and isn’t always modestly conventional. Who is this upstart creature, then, for whom we thank the gods? She is the girl who has developed the art of living.

Inasmuch as I am myself partially a rough-neck, I can reveal some of the species’ rules of life. It is necessary, first, that this type study philosophy, literature,

and economics. Whatever of good and evil is not gathered from these, the rough-neck strives to conceive by experience. Then, it is necessary that she hear all the lectures and concerts tabooed by the socially elite, see all the plays. Whether or not she is masculinely escorted is optional. It is in going to such things, especially to the theaters, that the “rough” quality appears, for chaperons are omitted as expensive bores. Then, most delicious of horrors, the rough-neck shocks the public by going in this unchaperoned state for food at night, not tamely to the customary candy or chocolate shop, but to Frank’s. “Oh!” shudders the butterfly, “*think* of going to that *awful* place, and sitting right where people can look in and see you drinking coffee out of shaving mugs!” The butterfly forgets the prices and the filling qualities.

The rough-neck is not a revolutionist; she is not always radical; but she demands and cultivates freedom and joy in living. Her religion, if she has any, is of her own choice and not of her mother’s; her joy is æsthetic. Because I am still bound by convention, and thrown with anti-roughneck elements in society, my growth is hampered. But gladly I am watching the rise of the rough-neck, and sometimes I meet some of them for tea, to talk socialism or war, and sometimes—oh, just now and then—to feel the soothing smoke of cigarettes creep down my throat. The rough-neck is the basis of a new era, and I am glad that she has been born.

MARY F. LERCH.

Tag Day

TAG DAY for the Associated Charities”, said the front page of the morning paper. I peeped into my pocketbook and all I could see there was one single, solitary dime.

“I’ll be damned if you’ll tag me today,” I said to myself, as I left the house on my way down town.

I did not get away two blocks, when I noticed ahead of me two benevolent looking, middle-aged ladies, one holding a big white box—the other a bunch of red tags, and both staring directly at me. I turned around. Behind me was walking a well dressed gentleman. I slowed down so as to let him get about a dozen steps ahead of me, and followed him, trying to keep the same distance between us.

“Will you have a tag, Sir?” said one of the ladies to the gentleman, as he approached them.

He stopped. This was my chance. While one lady was fastening the tag to his buttonhole and the other was receiving his contribution, I passed quietly behind their backs, happy at the thought of my saved dime.

I had hardly passed a block from the two charity collectors, I had not stopped praising myself for the successful trick, when suddenly two bright, smiling young faces appeared before me, as if they had sprung up from under the ground. One holding a big white box, the other a bunch of red tags. For a moment I tried to look grave, but it did not work. Those bright blue eyes, and gleaming teeth were too contagious, and my frown turned into a smile.

“Have a tag, please,” said one of them, stopping directly in front of me, and cutting off my chances for an escape.

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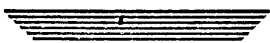
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I did not feel like escaping. Before I could reply a word, her hands were busy playing with the lapel of my coat, her golden hair blown by the morning breeze was brushing my face. I did not want to escape, and said:

"I'll see if I have change."

I pulled out my pocket book slowly, and searched inside long thus giving the girl a chance to fasten the tag on securely.

"Nothing but dollar bills," I lied. "No, here is a dime. Will a dime do?"

Bitter Sweet

HE WAS going down town with his mother. But what was more glorious was the fact that he was going to stay out of school. Hardly ever was he allowed to do this, and so today was a red-letter day. He was all dressed up in his Sunday suit. He hated to wear it on Sundays, but that was because it was Sunday. But to be dressed up on a school day was quite a different matter. He thought it queer to be allowed to stay out of school, just to go shopping with his mother; as he sat beside her in the car, however, he asked no questions. His little fat legs with their white socks stuck straight out from the seat. He was so happy! He was going down town on the street car with his mother, on a school day. They got off at a toy shop and to Dick's surprise, his mother took him by the hand and they went inside. Immediately Dick ran to a little horse that trotted when it was wound up. How he had wanted that horse! If he could only have it, he would be good always!

"Do you want that little horse, Dick?"

Dick nodded and held the horse tight. He did not wait for it to be wrapped up; he immediately sat down and set it trotting.

Beauty and Ideals

I CAME down the hall and saw her bending over a pail, her worn hard hands wringing dirty water out of a dirty mop. She was forty-five or fifty perhaps,—for her hair was thin and streaked with dull gray. And short uneven strands of it fell about her thin, wrinkled, yellow neck.

I passed her and went into a class-room. The instructor came in and closed the door. At once we began a discussion of Keats' ideas of Beauty as compared with Shelley's. And all the while that we were saying "Beauty is the means by which we can realize an ideal"—"Beauty is an ideal in itself",—I could hear the sound of a mop splashing through dull muddy water; I could see the old woman with the hard worn hands bending over her pail. BEATRICE UTMAN

"Why certainly," came her reply.

"Thank you, Sir," both added simultaneously, as I parted with my only dime.

Having walked off a few steps I turned around to get another glimpse at the two girls. They were gone. They had disappeared just as mysteriously as they appeared. I could see only the two elderly charity ladies, who stared at me with a sarcastic smile on their faces.

PHILIP ADLER.

"Come, Dick, let's go and get some ice-cream."

"O, can I? Mother, can I have chocolate?"

"Yes, dear, anything you want."

Dick's curiosity passed all bounds.

"Mother, why are you getting me so much today? It isn't my birthday, is it?" Dick looked up at his mother and smiled. But he saw her turn away and when she didn't answer, he said nothing. After all, he was going to have some chocolate ice-cream.

He ate his very slowly, because he didn't want it to go so fast. He made figures out of the little mound and didn't spill any; whether this was because, as he was so happy, he did not want to displease his mother or because he didn't want to lose any, I don't know.

"Now, let's go and do some errands with mother. Shall we?"

Yes, he was willing. They went to a store and up a flight of stairs between two stores. Dick was out of breath when he reached the top and they opened the door at the head of the stairs! He looked at his mother, at the dentist's chair, with its white head-piece and red plush cushion and started to cry. His little horse fell to the floor. GERTRUDE KNOWLTON

The Little Things

It is the little things that count, but it is exceedingly difficult to count the little things. It has been estimated that if Adam had started to count the nematod worms in his back yard and had counted 5,000 a day every day in the year, he would, at this day, still be standing in his cabbage patch, forty feet from where he had started.

Some men try to fool people into the belief that they are thinkers, or philosophers, or poets, and not mere receptacles for food and drink, but the nematod worm shuns deception. He consists merely of a mouth and an intestinal canal, nothing else. No one has ever met a nematod worm who wears horn goggles and uncultivated hair in the attempt to prove that he does *not* consist merely of a mouth and an intestinal canal.

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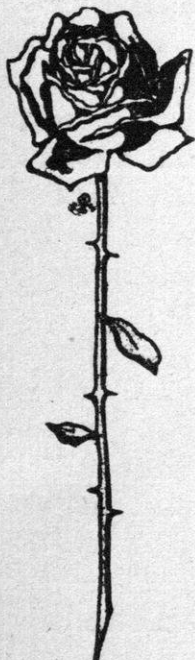
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There is nothing so tiny in the world that man may not profit by the study of it.

The nematod worm teaches guilelessness.

JOHN REEDY.

THE LISTENER

(Continued from page 12)

There was a day when we worked in the great, black sandhills at the west end of the lake. That day a sandstorm blew out of the furnace door of the south, and the black hills flew up into our faces and overwhelmed us. For an hour the rain of sand continued; day turned to night; the whole world was filled with the sound of the roaring wind; and when the storm swept onward to the north, it left us rolling painfully on the ground, our heads muffled in our shirts, blind as bats and all but dead. . . . There was a day when the Portuguese herders came down from the distant, grassy hills with their flocks of sheep, thousands upon thousands of them, rolling like a great, gray wave over the flat plain—a hungry wave that left in its wake not a vestige of brush or bunch grass. Down towards the lake came the herders, and the camp boss rode out to meet them, threatening. He ordered them to swing to the west, wide of the lake, for the bunch grass was sparse, and we had twenty horses to pasture. The Portuguese did not understand a word of the harangue, but they glared at the boss darkly and put their hands on the huge, black revolvers, that dangled in homemade wooden holsters at their hips. There were only five of them, but big men all, and powerful. The boss rode back to the camp. The men were gathered in the bunkhouse, for Sunday is a holiday even in hell. There was a brief council of war, and ten minutes later we were piling out, howling like madmen, and armed with shotguns, and rifles, and long Colts. The fight took place on the first ridges of the great dunes. The Portuguese had rounded up the sheep in a black pot of a valley, where they scuttled to and fro like restless gray foam on a bucket of pitch, and bleated their woes to the white-hot sun. We flattened out on the crest of one of the dunes, behind huge clumps of prickly pear, whose steel-like prongs cut into our flesh when we moved incautiously. For nearly an hour the air was filled with the whang and the whirr of bullets, the bleating of sheep, the frenzied barking of the herders' big dogs, and the frightened cackling of waterfowl that arose from the reeds in the lake and flapped in black circles high over our heads. The odds were against the Portuguese. We killed one when he shoved his bronzed face over the crest of the opposite ridge; we wounded another, and slaughtered a dozen

sheep. The Portuguese hoisted a blue shirt as a signal of surrender—God knows where they learned the trick. At the direction of the camp boss, they moved to the west, wide of the lake, with the cook-wagon rattling up ahead, and the tossing, woolly wave rolling back of them. A thick, gray cloud of dust marked their passage over the hills, as they moved slowly into the face of the dying sun. . . . We buried the dead man in the sandhill, marking the grave with the wooden holster, and we dragged the slaughtered sheep back to the camp, as spoils of battle. . . . That night the lid popped off of the hell that had smouldered in the bunkhouse for a month. On the clearing in front of the building, we built huge sage-brush fires, that later sank into glowing heaps of embers, over which the sheep turned on rough-hewn spits. The leaping flames painted scarlet the faces of the men, who danced, and drank, and gorged themselves, while beneath their feet the camp dogs fought and snarled for the bones and offal. The barbecue lasted far into the night; then the men fell over, one by one, flat on their backs, and lay where they had fallen. I had been the first to sink senseless; I was the first to arise—and when I saw the ring of distorted bodies, saw the savage, bloated faces turned upward to the clean, morning sky, something revolted within me, and I felt abashed and ashamed. It was a new feeling, and unpleasant—I was not altogether a vegetable, a door-knob. I swore to quit the crew on payday, but I never got the chance. . . . All things came to an end a week later, when two agitators came down from the coast and fed the men whiskey that burned and words that maddened. The mob went on the rampage, wrecked a costly pumping outfit that had come down from Seattle, set fire to the bunkhouse, and walked out of camp in a body, led by a lumber-jack Swede, who waved a red blanket, and roared holy hymns in the voice of a cracked bassoon.

I went to a little village in the great wheat fields near Ritzville, stopping because my money would carry me no further. There was law and order there, and a church and schoolhouse. It was harvest time. I obtained work in the grain elevator, and earned good money. I was satisfied; I bought decent clothes and ate decent food, and went to church on Sunday. There, at a "box social" one night, I met the Listener. Let me give her that name—I have forgotten the real one. She was the village school-mistress. She was frail and slim; you could have broken her in two with one hand, like the stalk of a flower. She had wide, dark eyes that seemed to wonder at everything they saw, even if it were only the corner lamp post. And here is the mystery of woman: this pallid lily, who would shudder at the sight of a trapped mouse, and swoon away at the glimpse of a drop of blood, loved

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Romance—the type of Romance that makes heroes of swashbuckling pirates like Morgan, and glorifies the ruthless butcheries of a Cortez. She had come from a sleepy village in Wisconsin in search of it—God knows she would have died on the day that her quest bore fruit. I came to her fresh from scenes of bestiality and sin, the breath of which still hung about my clothes, and she welcomed me—more, she admired and envied me. I recall the excited tremor of her slim body, and the flash of delight in her dark eyes, when I, by the merest chance, let drop something concerning the bubbling bunkhouse at Caldron Lake. She begged me to go on, and when I did she shed tears, real tears, while I marveled that she should be thrilled. “You men,” she said, “can see so much, can achieve so much, while we must sit high in a tower, like the Lady of Shalott, and watch the world in a mirror.” The allusion went over my head, but her warm glances didn’t—and I talked on.

Looking back at it now, I wonder not so much at her as at myself. Events of my recent life that had not impressed me at all, and some that had sickened me, presented themselves again, all painted over with a roseate tinge. For me, Romance began the first time I talked to her; the first time she listened. Unconsciously, at first, I enlarged on the little escapades at the lake, and when I saw the renewed interest kindle in her eyes, I began to lie deliberately. I killed off three-score shepherders instead of one; I told her of nightly battles with bowie knives, of being buried alive for six hours under a sand dune, and in a flash of imagination I introduced a turbanned Malay, who continually whetted a crooked crease on the flat of his sole and swore to have our livers. At each sanguinary allusion, she shuddered deliciously, and looked at me with an intensity of admiration that made me feel like a hero. Under the spell of that look, I vowed to pursue Romance to the ends of the earth for her—only for her. One night when the spell was unusually strong, I determined to go to Seattle. She was delighted. She had a firm belief that Puget Sound was filled with sharks and pirates, and that I would return to her covered with glory and gore. “When you come back—” she said, and never completed the sentence, but there was a promise in her eyes that warmed my blood. We parted that evening under the tall lilac bush in the school-yard, and she pinned a flower on my coat, and said she would pray for me. . . . Next morning I left for Seattle.

You, all of you, have been weighed down by the depressing ennui of a great city, and have searched for Romance in its crowded streets. You looked eagerly into the multitude of faces, seeking for the smile or listening for the word that would lure you on to adventures undreamed of in the Arabian Nights. And

always you came back emptyhanded, sick at heart, to the appalling sameness of your own fireside. Just so did I search in all the crooks and crannies of Seattle, thinking of the Listener, never of myself. I mingled with the pressing mob that swelled Washington street, studying faces that moved in an endless, ghastly procession under the arc lights. I stood for hours at a time in a boozing kennel on the waterfront, where sailors met, waiting for the man who would lead me to Romance. I haunted the docks, the police court, the silent byways on Beacon hill. Romance eluded me. Three weeks passed, and my money ran low. Rumors came of a new strike in Alaska. I determined to work for a stake and buy an outfit, hoping to join the thousands who packed the north-bound summer steamers. I found work in *The Horseshoe*, a vile restaurant on the waterfront, wedged in between a Japanese fish shop and the entrance to the old Alaska docks. It was long and narrow; its front door opened on the switchyards of Railroad avenue, where engines ran screaming over a network of glistening tracks; its back windows looked out over the harbor and across to the white streak of Coast ranges. On damp days the view was obscured by a blanket of mist, that resounded with the throaty voices of fog-horns, the clanging of bells, the rattle of winches, and the shouts and clatter of laboring stevedores. In this place, for thirteen hours a day, I cleaned clams, peeled potatoes, scrubbed counters and floors, and waited for Romance. Sometimes, leaning over the steaming tub, I heard men at the counter back of me tell strange tales of adventures in the far stretches of the north, of travels and trade and combat in South America, of beautiful girls in Japan. I listened and watched. . . . A month passed.

One day there came into *The Horseshoe* a huge-shouldered fellow with fists like hams, a broad, bronzed face, and black eyes that pricked you, when you looked into them, like a bee-sting. He told me a story. It concerned running the Mexican blockade with carbines. “Another one of those stinking rebellions,” he said, “and they’ll sell their souls for guns.” He had a boat, a leaky tub. He needed a partner, one with capital—say a few thousand—for supplies and repairs, and he would wait in Seattle till the right mate showed up. “There’s a small fortune in it,” he said, “and if you meet a chap in here who wants adventure to boot, why pass the word to him.” He left me his address. Lord, how I hung on his words, and hoped, and counted my few goldpieces over many times, wishing they could reproduce like rabbits.

The Horseshoe brought me luck, wonderful luck. Do you believe in fairy god-fathers? I do—now. No, he didn’t appear in a puff of smoke when I shouted *abra-cadabra*. Nothing like it. He came in

Picture Framing
of the
Highest
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naturally, through the front door, and he was drunk. He was shrouded in an invisible overcoat of alcohol fumes, mingled with the smell of fish and of the sea. I never knew that a gaunt-limbed fisherman, with the face of a puckered pippin, could smell so strong. He was owner of a smack, a black, greasy pigsty, that I had often seen bobbing alongside one of the piers. He came in one foggy afternoon when I was alone in the place—I had sole charge when trade was slack—and he carried a package done up in a clammy newspaper. He ordered a bowl of chowder in a voice like a broken gong, and in the same voice roared a doggerel song to the smoked ceiling. "A gold mine!" he broke off to say, and he slapped the filthy package affectionately. "A gold mine a-floating on the sea off Juneau. High times in the wind for an old sea dog." His muddy, little eyes rolled. He teetered back and forth on the stool like a silly child. As I leaned over the counter to set down the bowl, his reeking breath smote my cheek and sickened me. He gulped down a few spoonfuls. I looked suspiciously at the bundle. "Ambergris!" he barked. I stared. He thought I doubted and in his drunken pride he became furious. "Ambergris!" he roared. "I know—an old sea dog—I know!" He relapsed into moody silence and stared into the steaming bowl. I heard steps on the board walk outside, and a face with chin whiskers and a sagging mouth glanced in at the window. My fairy godfather turned on his stool, saw the face, and waved his spoon at it, beckoning. The man outside turned and passed on into the fog. "Davis, you hound!" shouted my fisherman. He scrambled unsteadily from his stool, and without taking the bundle, opened the door and passed outside. I heard the clump of his heavy shoes for a moment after the mist had hidden him. . . . I waited, but he never came back. It was only ten paces from *The Horseshoe* to the end of the dock, and only one pace from the end of the dock into the harbor. He took that last pace. In he went, like a sack of bran, howling like a madman as he dropped, and when they pulled him out he was stiff as a plank, and the spoon was still gripped in his hand. . . . I hid the package under a heap of dirty aprons in a corner. I waited a day, a week, feeling somehow that I had murdered the fisherman and that the stuff was cursed. Nothing happened. I cut off a piece: it was dark brown and greasy, like dirty beeswax. I took it to a firm of chemists on Columbia street. It was simon-pure. Next day I brought them the whole block; no questions were asked, and I walked away again with \$4,300 in real, clinking gold and yellow bills.

Consider me now, please, with riches that had dropped from the sky, with a wish for Romance, and the bronze-faced fellow to lead me to it. I found him in a lodging house on King street, and in his room that

night, with a new, crisp map spread out on the table before us, we hatched particulars regarding the Mexican venture. "Will there be danger?" I asked. He watched my face for a moment. "Heaps of it," he replied. "There'll be black nights on southern seas, with sure death stalking at our very stern; there'll be burro trips on windy mountain trails, and dickering with damned savages who'd as soon run a knife in you as shake your hand." I thrilled. Already, in my fancy, I was relating these things to the Listener; already I was returning to her, covered with glory, to claim the reward she had vaguely hinted at that last night together. . . . And oh! my dreams that night.

Well, I see by your eyes you have guessed how it came out. Everyone knows how a story's going to end—everyone but the people in it. I tell you when the letter came—that letter telling me my Listener was no more—I felt like a man who had fallen into a coal-hole and saw no immediate prospect of ever getting out again. The whole world turned gray and bleak again; all my roseate dreams of Romance were swept away by the chilling blast of a fact: there was no Romance unless she listened. . . . Next day I called on the man of King street and withdrew from the gun-smuggling compact. He cursed me, and his eyes never stung me so deep as on the instant when he seized me by the shoulders and heaved me down a flight of stairs. I was not thrilled by this adventure; saw no Romance in it. It was my last. . . . I sank my little fortune into a suspender factory; I prospered; the ultimate fact entered my life—a woman turned out of the same mold that my aunt in New Hampshire had sprung from. I am ending life as I entered it, with the bootless regret that a blind providence should have thrust me on the face of a bleak earth. I am a doorknob again.

Parkman stopped. His voice, which had vibrated huskily during the livelier points in his narrative, was again heavy with weariness. We were silent for a time. Then someone said:

"Had the Listener not died, you would have gone, no doubt, and—"

The little old man looked up in surprise.

"Did I say she died?" he interrupted. "Oh no! This lily-like maiden went out one evening to watch the stars, and she caught a terrific cold, and became deaf over night—deaf as a post. . . . Think of it."

We did, and were inclined to laugh, but the somber look on the little man's face checked us. His mouth was again twisted, as if he were cracking a nut, and there was a pained, much-suffering look in his eyes, as if he found the kernel bitter.

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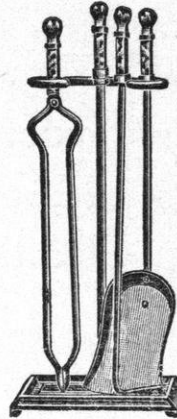
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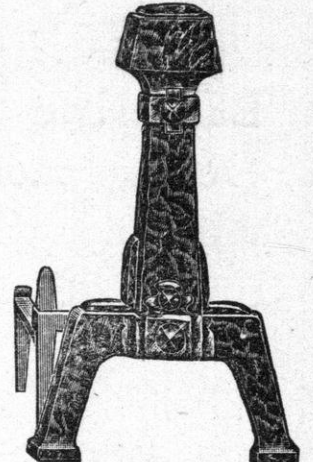
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