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## **The Wisconsin literary magazine. Volume XXV, Number 3 December 1925**

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# The Wisconsin Literary Magazine



December, 1925

## CONTENTS

### PROSE:

The Elf .....	<i>Helen M. Ricket</i> .....	3
"The Year's at the Spring" .....	<i>Viola Wendt</i> .....	9
Music and Myself .....	<i>William L. Doudna</i> .....	13
The Bluffs .....	<i>L. T. Melendy</i> .....	19
On a Colored Etching by W. Unger .....	<i>C. Gibson Scheaffer</i> .....	26

### POETRY:

The Church Bells .....	<i>Russell W. Jones</i> .....	7
Nocturne .....	<i>R. Waldo Izard</i> .....	8
My Cavalier .....	<i>E. Romayne Rowe</i> .....	12
Matin Song (From the Italian) .....	<i>J. M. S. Cotton</i> .....	14
Despair .....	<i>L. L. Schoonover</i> .....	28

Editorial .....

Book Notes .....

THREE ETCHINGS—Impressions of The House of Usher .....

ETCHINGS BY	
<i>Ida O. Nicholson</i> .....	16
<i>Mary A. Brownell</i> .....	17
<i>Betty C. Worst</i> .....	18

Volume XXV

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Number 3

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# The WISCONSIN LITERARY Magazine



Volume XXV

December, 1925

Number 3



## THE ELF

By

HELEN M. RICKET

ON THE evening of my arrival in New York I set out to visit my old friend Edith Rogers. It was just two years since the January day when I had left the city, and since that time I had neither seen Edith nor heard from her. In the old days she and I had worked together, roomed together, and shared one another's ideas; we had been real friends. I have never had a more genuine comradeship with anyone. In spite of all this, Edith had not written to me; some people will not write letters, and Edith was one of these.

So I was not certain, when I climbed the five weary flights of stairs to the apartment where she used to room, that I should find her there. I did, however. She came to the door, looking the same as ever—except that her bobbed hair had grown thicker, and wilder. It was a great, fluffy, light-brown shock of hair, under which her little face, with its skin darkened by sunburn which never wore off, its pointed chin, humorous mouth, and mischievous grey eyes, had an elfin appearance. Indeed, her whole aspect suggested something elfish. She was small, and slender. Her hands and feet were tiny. But her handshake hurt—and I knew the strength of her grip from

old-time struggles. I knew, too, of her remarkable agility, and of her tirelessness.

She greeted me merrily, and pulled me into her room. "Well, old top," she said, "welcome home! Looks familiar, doesn't it?"

She referred, of course, to her room; and it did indeed look familiar. It was a small room, furnished after the boarding house manner, but with a superstructure that was Edith's own. A card-table jutted out between the bureau and the door. On it were a jar of marmalade, a box of crackers, and empty cup and saucer; a book—*Huckleberry Finn*—a half-finished water-color sketch; paints, brushes, erasers, pencils, and sheets of paper. In another corner of the room was a little electric stove, on an up-ended soap-box. A pair of skates hung over the end of the bed; a hockey stick leaned against the wall; and over the rest of the room were scattered clothes, more papers, more books.

I carefully removed a sketch of a child from the most available chair, and sat down.

"What are you doing now?" I asked.

"Still at Pussy's." ("Pussy" was an estimable lady who conducted an ex-

pensive gift and hat shop. She employed Edith to decorate various knick-knacks and articles of furniture.) Edith snorted sarcastically, "Pussy has got a new place—on Fifth Avenue. I'm boss—so-called—of the paint room. Pussy's temper does not improve—but she can't make *me* mad."

"Do you still go home to Mount Kisco week-ends?" I asked.

"Oh, sure! Couldn't live without that. You know my kid brother's grown *enormous*—twice as big as I. He and some other kids have a baseball team, and I used to play with them, until it got too cold. He has a motor cycle, and he takes me on it."

"Side-car?"

"Oh no—I hang on behind him. Great fun! I wear his Boy-Scout breeches that he grew out of, and shock all the good ladies of Mount Kisco. Say—do you remember my sister Belle? She's engaged to a perfect *Thing*." (There Edith imitated a gushing flapper.) "My dear! He's the best looking *thing*; he parts his hair in the middle, and has the *sweetest* little mustache, and dances *beautifully!* *Ugh!*" she added, relapsing.

Then she jumped up, seized with a new idea. "I tell you what," she said, "let's walk 'round Central Park, like we used to! Want to?"

I thought this a good idea; so we set out, Edith equipped as if for a country walk. The driveway around the Park was almost deserted; the night was pleasant, not too cold. We walked in step, at a good stride, talking as we went. This had been our favorite diversion after stuffy days of work.

As we rounded the corner at 59th Street, a gentleman passed us, who touched his hat and said "Good evening" to Edith.

"That's Victor's brother," she said when he had gone. "He's the 'thing'

my sister's engaged to. He doesn't like *me*."

Victor! Thinking back, I remembered a similar occasion when we had met Victor himself—a tall, powerfully built young man in the uniform of a naval officer, whose deep voice boomed a "Hello" from the other side of the wide walk. I knew he had been a friend of Edith's. He had brought her gifts from India and China, and had spent his vacations fishing and hunting with her in Mount Kisco.

"What's happened to Victor?" I inquired.

"Why, he's a lieutenant in the Merchant Marines—I don't know where he is, now."

"Has he tried to bring you any more monkeys?" I asked, remembering the sad story of one that died.

"Er—no." Edith lapsed into silence—a rare happening.

"What's the trouble?" said I.

She gave a little laugh. "I suppose I should tell you about it," she said. "You'd have such a good time laughing at me. Far be it from me to spoil anybody's fun."

"Goodness—I don't want to miss anything. Tell me about it."

"Um-m—it's a long story. Wait until we get home."

"All right," I assented. So we quickened our pace and talked of other things. Occasionally, coming to a long straight stretch with nobody in sight, Edith would shout "Come on!" and tear madly along the pavement, leaving me trailing behind.

Back in the messy little room, Edith settled herself on the bed and began the tale which was to make me laugh.

"Well," she said, "you remember that before you left I told you that Victor had been offered a very good position in New York, in connection with the Merchant Marines? He had a month in which to make up his mind about it. You know how Victor loves the sea—

I've never known him to be happy on land for more than three weeks. All the same, he thought he might take this job. It was very well-paid—and his mother wanted him to—"

"Well, did he take it?"

"Ah, *that's* the question! I used to tell you, didn't I, how every once in a while he would try to make love to me?"

"Yes. *And* how you would laugh at him—and how he would sigh and mutter 'hopeless!' And then you'd say to me 'Me married? If I ever get married, I'll invite you to the funeral! No, sir, not for me!'"

"I know it. Well, after you went, that January, things were awfully dull here. It was before Pussy moved, and everyone down there was bad-tempered. And there were so many blizzards that I didn't dare go home week-ends—and oh! I was sick of the city. Victor was in town most of the time, and he took me out every evening—skating, or to the theatre, or something. And he proposed to me almost every evening. Sort of habit—evening wasn't complete without it. He said he'd have a motorcycle, and a horse, and as many dogs as I liked. He said I would be able to make drawings all I wanted, and do exactly as I pleased—ride the motorcycle by myself if I wanted, and *he* wouldn't care what people said."

"Sounds good," I put in.

"Yes, doesn't it? Of course, I laughed at him. It wasn't worth while being married even for that. Besides, at the back of my mind was the idea that I would have to 'settle down', and pay calls, and entertain *things*. And I'd be invited to tea-parties and sewing-bees—Br-r-r—!"

"So you turned him down?"

"Wait a minute, can't you? It would have been all right if I hadn't had a big row with old Pussy. You know, generally I laugh when she gets mad, and

let it pass. But *this* time things went too far."

"What happened?"

"Why, one Saturday morning she went on the rampage—came fussing that we didn't get enough work done, and that we talked too much. I didn't take any notice—what's the use? I was telling Mattie about a midnight fishing party I had once. Well, Pussy kept bouncing in and out—and at last came in with murder in her eye. She began—"I can not have it. These things *must not be!*"—and went on to find fault with everything possible. She kept it up for about half an hour, and then I told her that as far as I was concerned, she could find someone else. I was mad. I had about doubled that woman's trade—her painted things didn't amount to anything before I came—you know they didn't. I stayed till noon to get my pay, and then walked out.

"Victor met me as I was leaving, and suggested that we go out to Bronx Park for the afternoon. 'Anywhere from here,' said I, and we went. It was lovely out there—snowy, and too cold for the crowds. We looked at some of the animals—the great big brown bear was walking in the snow, having a glorious time. Then we went into the woods. Victor was exceptionally nice that day. He didn't ask me any questions—though he must have known something was wrong. He talked about all sorts of things—China, and dogs, and experiences at sea. I liked him better than I ever had. The woods were lovely and quiet and snowy—"

"Well?"

"Well, we stayed out there a long time. We didn't turn back till the sun was setting. For a while we just watched the sunset through the trees and said nothing; then Victor began to talk. He began outlining a trip around the world, for himself and me. He would go through the Panama Canal, and up to Japan, to begin with—he



told me something about each stopping place. I think he must have hypnotized me. Anyway, when he said, 'Wouldn't you like to do that?' I answered, 'Yes, of course I would.' 'Well, then, let's do it,' said he. 'We'll start in May. By that time I'll be able to leave my new job for a while, I think; and in the meantime'—he began outlining a delightful program of what I might do in Mount Kisco. I was too dazed to argue—I didn't seem to want to argue—. By the time we got in the subway to ride back, it seemed to be quite firmly established that we were engaged. By the time he brought me home, after dinner at the 'Marseilles' and a theatre, there was no doubt about it. But I don't know yet how it came about. As I climbed the stairs I wondered a bit, as Alice in Wonderland did, if I was myself or somebody else. It was rather a joke, anyway, I thought.

"There was a letter waiting for me on the bureau. I read it. It was a most curious epistle—wonder if I have it still?" Edith rummaged in an untidy box of letters—"No, I guess not. Can't find it, anyway. It was from Pussy. She said that perhaps she had been 'a bit hasty'—that possibly she expected too much—that she had not meant to offend me, and if I wanted to reconsider, she would be very glad to have me back, in spite of the fact that it was contrary to her usual policy. Evidently she wanted me back very badly and was trying to apologize.

"Well, I was very sleepy, and I put off thinking about it. Pussy could wait. I seemed to be engaged to be married. Sounded improbable, but still—"

"Then followed the most curious few days I have ever spent, or ever expect to. I seemed not to be an independent being any longer; everything I did had some reference to Victor. And he was *always* around. He was nice—I really

had quite a good time. Of course, I told him about the Pussy affair, and he said to write and tell her I didn't want the job. But I put off doing it.

"Then we both went to Mount Kisco to our respective homes. And we had to tell people about ourselves, and *then* the fuss began. I hadn't thought of that end of it before. I was all for skiing and skating with Victor and kid brother Tom; and Mother said I ought to stay home and see to my clothes, and what not. And my sisters just naturally expected to be bridesmaids at a church wedding. I was *quite* sure they were going to be disappointed. When Victor came over, I asked him about it. 'I guess Mother would be upset if we didn't have a regular wedding,' he said. 'Would it bother you very much?' 'I won't do it,' said I, 'and that's that. I'll come to the church in an old ragged shirt, Tom's Boy Scout breeches, a fish-net for a veil, and a wreath of dead dandelions.' 'All right,' said Victor. 'It doesn't matter to me. We'll elope.'

"But at home the fuss continued—about clothes, and announcements, and goodness knows what. One day Victor went to town, and I ran away by myself. It was a warm day—the snow was melting. I climbed to the top of a hill and sat on a rock and thought. I believe it was the first time I'd done any thinking since my row with Pussy. I began to wonder what I was doing, and why I had agreed to marry Victor. It was, so far as I could make out, because he was a nice boy, and I liked him; and because he had drawn very attractive pictures of things we could do together, and of the advantages to *me* in being married to *him*. Also, because he had been tactful, and had caught me in a non-resistant frame of mind. I *wasn't* in love with him. I supposed I ought to be, but I didn't *want* to be. Then suddenly it dawned on me that I was increasing all sorts of responsibilities that

I wasn't prepared for, and didn't want; and that I was about to link myself and my fate more or less irrevocably with another individual. The *permanency* of the arrangement had not struck me before. I began to see an endless procession of meals, with Victor sitting opposite—meals that I would have to plan to suit him. I would belong to that man—he would want to know everything I did—I would have only *his* money to spend.

"No—Victor was very nice, but I didn't think I could *stand* so much of any one person. Besides, I would be a married woman—there was no getting away from that and I would be in Mount Kisco, where the family and the neighbors would criticize if I didn't behave exactly like all other married women.

"Having come to this conclusion, I realized that I must get out of the affair somehow. Oh yes, I felt guilty about Victor—but I thought that in the long run it would be best for him, too, if I *didn't* marry him—don't you think so? And I sighed as I thought of the horses, and dogs, and the trip around the world; but *that* couldn't be helped. I went down the hill thinking up a plan of escape. I could think of only one thing to do,

and that was to run away. I couldn't see the sense of waiting for all the arguments and tears; the final result would be the same, and I just cannot *stand* being wept over! The earliest morning train to New York left at six; I got up at four, crept out of the house, feeling like a criminal, walked the five miles to the station, and walked up and down the platform till the train came. About nine o'clock I went up to Pussy's. She greeted me with open arms, as it were. She had tried three girls while I had been gone, and fired them all. And there I am still."

"What became of Victor?"

"He went back to sea. I wasn't nice to him, was I? But what else could I have done? Besides, I doubt if he'd have been happy for long on shore, anyway. He *has* such a passion for the sea. I meet him sometimes on his visits home. We're quite good friends again—that is, almost—and he seems happy enough."

"And oh!" Edith continued, shifting to the edge of the bed, and stretching out her legs, "I'm glad I got out of it. Can you see me married? If you ever catch me getting engaged again, I'll give you permission to laugh at me for the rest of your life!"

## THE CHURCH BELLS

By

RUSSELL W. JONES

THE bells toll, toll solely  
For your life and mine;  
And they grow more holy, holy,  
More sacred, more divine.  
And their timely invitations  
Are calling us to come  
From a land of great privations  
To the lands of Christendom.

# NOCTURNE

By

R. WALDO IZARD

THE spectral trees  
Dance fantasies  
Beneath the mad grey moon.  
With stealthy pace  
And muffled face,  
The Shadows dance and croon,  
"Where  
Have you hidden the Golden Lyre?"  
'Tis ashes of dreams  
Dust of desire.

And old loves creep  
From fevered sleep  
Beneath the weight of years  
Till my heart again  
Is filled with pain,  
My eyes with unshed tears.  
For down—  
deep down in the dead year's mire  
Lie ashes of dreams  
Dust of desire.

With pale wan lips  
And fingertips  
Bruised by the grey tombstone.  
With embered eyes  
And soundless cries  
They come where I brood alone.  
All, all—  
that remains of youth's sweet fire  
Is ashes of dreams  
Dust of desire.

And all Life seems  
But empty dreams,  
Heart-ache, heart-break, and sorrow. . . .  
All dreams will pass  
Like blown grass  
When dawns the dim, grey morrow.  
So. . . .  
Make for my Love a funeral pyre. . . .  
Ah. . . . ashes of dreams  
Dust of desire. . . .

# "THE YEAR'S AT THE SPRING"

By

VIOLA WENDT

**A** SPLENDID noonday sun shone over the freshly plowed fields and green woodlands. From the damp furrows rose wavering lines of heat, and the air was sultry and motionless. It was the height of the spring, and the days were merging into June.

As he came to the end of the field which he was dragging, George Weiman turned his horses, and stopping under a great red maple, rubbed his shirt sleeve over his sweating brow. He looked at the sun. It was high in the sky at noon now, and the season was far too advanced to be preparing the ground for potatoes. Even Irish Danny O'Mallory, whose farming abilities the neighboring Germans despised, had gotten his potatoes in six days ago. George took up the reins again and shouted to the horses. He must finish another length before noon.

Soon the sound of factory whistles came faintly over the fields from the little city beyond the horizon. At once the dinner bells from the houses in the section clang out loudly, each with its own peculiar tone. From the surrounding fields rose the shouts of hungry men as they unhitched their horses and urged them homeward, or hurried to finish the row with their tractors.

George drove his team slowly home. He was very tired, for he had stayed up late the night before to mend the drag. He was always tired in spring, of course. "It's the weather," he said patiently; but he knew that this was not true. It was because he worked too hard, had always worked too hard. Still the sun was many days ahead of him in his plowing and seeding. Each morning a feeble hope rose with the dawn that the day would bring his work nearer within the schedule which the season and the soil as well as the punctilious habits of the German farmers, demanded. But the sun rode always too swiftly into the horizon, and late evening found George putting

away with trembling hands his rickety implements, repaired almost into second being. Of this ceaseless, unrewarded toil had come the furrows in his brow, the gray in his hair, and the weighted stoop of his slight frame. In his eyes and mouth, perhaps, lay the explanation of his inability, of his unavailing activity; for his large brown eyes were always asking and wondering, and his drooping lips hesitating and fumbling in doubt.

George bent wearily over the reins as he plodded along, flicking his horses listlessly with a leafy branch. Two of his neighbors who had been working just on the other side of the swamp watched him and shook their heads. Their potatoes had been in ten days ago.

"Poor Georgie. He's got tough luck."

"It ain't so much luck. If I were so dumb as to believe all these mail-order catalogs say about farm machinery, why I—well, they're just rotten. He spends half his time, mending them, and the other half of the time he pokes around getting his winter work done in spring, and his spring work in summer. He ain't downright lazy, but he don't know how to take hold of things."

"He's got a good farm there, but he's letting it go to pieces. Imagine putting potatoes on that lower twenty again. He's crazy!"

George put up the horses and sank down in fatigue into the old buggy seat on the back porch. His wife appeared at the door, a rather tall woman, thin and bony, with sharp gray-green eyes, her hair combed in a straggly knot upon the top of her head with a pompadour she had retained from her girlhood.

"Dinner's done."

While he washed his hands at the rickety wooden stand he spoke to his wife, who was gathering up heaps of cotton goods, patterns cut out of newspaper, and little half-sewed dresses and

blouses upon which she had been working.

"Well, Ernie, the north end of the lower twenty'll be done about two o'clock, and we gotta put the potatoes in tomorrow. I don't care if it is Sunday. It's all right for them as have got their debts paid to take a rest. We can't."

Ernie flung the pile of cloth on the battered sewing machine and said petulantly, "I suppose that means me and the children have to cut potatoes this afternoon. I ought to sew because none of us has a thing to wear. It should have been done last winter, but I couldn't get at it somehow, me being sick all the time and the baby always catching colds. Sarah can't go to that swell party the school teacher's giving. That's all there is to it."

The oldest child, Sarah, a tall, awkward girl of fourteen, who had been setting the meal on the kitchen table, turned sharply to her mother and cried, "You said I could; you said so, Ma. I ain't going to cut potatoes. I don't want to."

George looked up questioningly at his wife. Maybe she ought to let the girl go. Sarah had never gone before and this was her last chance now that she was finishing eighth grade. Girls ought to have good times.—Nevertheless, he was relieved when Ernie answered impatiently, "Don't you cry now. Your Pa ain't such a rich man he can let you go flying around where you want. We got a lot of debts to pay, and it's spring now."

It was truly spring. The trees and grass were of the verdant glory which is spring's own, and which only rain can bring for brief moments to summer. The yards and gardens were filled with purple masses; and the fragrance of the lilacs was everywhere. The sunshine was hot and yellow on the fields, but it lay in golden glints on the orchard floors where it crept through the new-formed leaves. Even then a martin was singing madly on the box elder by the window; but only the four-year old baby heard it,

and stopped to listen, with her bright, winsome face upturned.

The father mumbled a long grace in inarticulate German; and Freddie, the eleven-year old son of the family, responded with a reluctant, "Abba, lieber Vater. Amen."

The meal went on in silence. They were hungry, and they must hurry. Only Sarah did not eat. Her sobs choked her, and she sat stiffly at the table, the tears falling swiftly on her clenched hands. She should have known better than to plan about going; something had kept her from the annual school party every spring. Why should she have supposed that this spring would be different? She knew that she would work that afternoon, in spite of her threats; she always had to work.

After dinner, George spoke, "I guess the seed potatoes are over near the cistern—or maybe they're in the south bin. I don't remember where I left them. Things are always getting lost around here." Something of the petulance of his wife's tone crept into his words.

George returned to the field. As he walked over the plowed land he felt the soil working into his shoes through the gaps in the soles. He'd have to put cardboard in them when he got home. They had to last two weeks longer. He couldn't have Ernie send for some more until the interest on the mortgage that Ertz held was paid. That would be in one, two, three,—he counted on his fingers—four days. Spring always meant a lot more expenses; it was only a time for making more debts and a time for working to pay them off again. The first few years of his marriage, the mortgage he had contracted with the purchase of the farm had not seemed very much, and each spring he had hoped to pay it off. But it had grown larger. It was too big for him now; he could never pay it. Perhaps his son would have better luck. He was getting better educated, anyhow. George had gotten through the fourth grade. Freddie was already in

fifth, and the school board would make him go through eighth. They said it would help him earn his living better. George didn't know. He gripped the reins again and trudged behind the drag.

The odor of the poplars along the road was sweet and fresh. A wisp of wind sprang up and rustled the silver-veined leaves. A blackbird with scarlet wings flew from the swamp and rested on a hazelwood bush, singing the gladness of spring. George's eyes were on the brown earth, and his ears were deaf. It was four days until the interest was due.

At the house Ernie dragged the heavy sacks of potatoes from the cellar where she had found them in the north bin, while Sarah washed the dishes and Freddie dried them. It took a long time to finish the dishes, both because Sarah's hands trembled so, and because the pantry was so far from the sink. George had promised to build a little pantry very near, but there had been no time. They still had to walk across the kitchen and down a treacherous, loose-boarded step.

Ernie brought pails from the barn and sheds, and carried her wash tubs to the back porch. Then she and the older children brought knives and sat on the steps, cutting the potatoes into pieces for planting; while the baby played with a rattly, rusted wagon which had been her father's plaything in his childhood.

George's seed potatoes were a frequent topic of discussion and ridicule among his neighbors. "You can tell whose son he is. Old Weiman was a sort of kind old fellow too, when he wasn't rattled; and he did the same foolish things. He always cut at least three eyes to a piece for planting. Sometimes he even left as many as six. George could plant five acres with what he is planting that two and a half. But he's always so scared something's going to happen."

They laughed to think of their own economically planted fields which would yield them an abundant harvest.

Ernie and the children worked silently, Sarah sullen and disappointed, still shaken

by occasional deep sobs. Ernie sliced frantically. She ought to spend all this time in sewing, for Freddie had no blouse to wear to school Monday, and the baby's clothes had been so swiftly outgrown. She was glad they couldn't go to church tomorrow. In her nervous hurry, Ernie gashed deep into her left thumb, and the blood stained the white surfaces of the potatoes. She bound it clumsily in her handkerchief and kept on working. Everything came at once in the spring, and there was nothing to do but work and work and work. That was spring. She remembered the springs of her girlhood days. She had gotten a new dress each year and a new hat every two years. Now the dress she wore to Lord's Supper was four years old, and the one she wore on ordinary Sundays was six years old. She wouldn't have a new one this spring. The repair to the implements had cost a great deal, and the doctor hadn't been paid yet.

She looked up rather fretfully to the road which ran by the house. There was a continual stream of automobiles passing, flying on the wind, as if their drivers were gay and carefree, and felt the glory of the spring in their blood. They went gladly and swiftly into the blue, sunlit horizon, leaving behind them clouds of dust which settled on the grass and houses by the roadside.

"Those are city folks," Ernie said bitterly. "They don't have nothing to do on Saturday afternoon except have a good time and ride where they want to in swell closed cars. And all we get is dust."

George came home at three o'clock and unhitched the horses and let them run, leaving the drag in the barnyard. He was glad to get into the shade on the steps. He turned over a pail and sat down, taking his son's knife and bidding him get another. He worked as frantically as his wife, but the piles of potatoes grew slowly—his hands slipped so often under the strain of trying to make them go faster and faster. His usually mild brown eyes grew wide under the nervous

tension, and Ernie's gray ones became bright and hard.

After a while Freddie grew weary. "I'm tired. Besides, I got to learn a poem for teacher. I know most of it." He repeated in a monotonous tone:

"The year's at the spring

And day's at the morn;

Morning's at seven;

The hill-side's dew-pearled;

The lark's on the wing;—

"Teacher likes that, and says it's beautiful; so we got to know it."

George looked up, "What do they teach you that for?" Then almost fiercely, "You can't get no money on that; it ain't gonna pay no debts. You might as well not go to school—get more money by staying here and working. But that crazy school-board—"

They stopped a very few minutes for supper, then came back and worked until

darkness fell. The children went to bed, but George and Ernie lighted lanterns and kept on working.

The night was clear and quiet, soft and black under the fragrant trees in the orchard, a dim gold along the open lane where the moonlight fell. From the faintly outlined swamp the croaking of the frogs came over the fields and filled the night with peace.

Suddenly George stopped and let his knife and half-cut potato fall to the ground. "I can't work no more, Ernie," he whispered hoarsely. "I'm all in." Something like a sob shook him.

The tension in Ernie's body snapped, and she turned wearily toward her husband. The yellow glory of the moon lighted up her haggard face and revealed the tears in her eyes. "Ach, George, me too." Then shaking her head slowly, "That's how it is in spring."

## MY CAVALIER

*By*

E. ROMAYNE ROWE

I HAVE a gallant cavalier;  
I see him day and night.  
Although he's never fought for me,  
He looks as if he might.

He has a powerful, manly frame,  
He holds his head on high;  
His smile is sweet and worldly wise;  
There's daring in his eye.

I truly love my cavalier,  
I'm not so sure he's true,  
For though he sometimes winks at me,  
He winks at others, too.

Although he smiles, he does not speak  
Nor take me to the ball,  
For no heart beats beneath the lace  
Of a portrait on the wall.

# MUSIC AND MYSELF

By

WILLIAM L. DOUDNA

WHEN music is under discussion, mine is the unhappy fate of the uninitiated who waits outside the chapter-room for his first ride on the fabled goat: I can't decide on which side of the door I'd rather be.

That is because I am enough of a lover of music to appreciate the standard—what some are pleased to call the "classic"—compositions, and yet not enough of a musician to deplore jazz. Whether or not the latter is a fault, I am not sure. At any rate, I waver between the two types.

It is only partially true that music is written for the listener, not the player. I should like to believe in that theory, but my small training in the art of the resin-wielder has made me realize that it is impossible to limit the composer to the making of sounds for the auditor alone; he can not hope to convince the musician that there is more merit in the simple, one-voice melody, easily played, than in the composition which presents a limitless array of technical difficulties. But why inflict upon the ears of more or less innocent listeners the exercises of the Well-Tempered Clavichord, when there are so many other things one might choose? An expertness in counterpoint is not the only thing in which we are interested. If the musician must play Bach, why can't he be satisfied in doing it in the privacy of his studio? Of course, all Bach is not dull, but artists invariably, it seems to me, select his least interesting works for public performance.

Music needs not be dull simply because it is well-written. All the masters show us that. There is, however, the matter of modernity. These "triflers with art," as some critic has called the modernists, have something to say about this, too.

I have an unholy (as certain of my friends call it) love for jazz, which comes largely from the fact that it offers tech-

nical difficulties without making them as transparent as the "tum-tum-te-tum" of the three-finger exercise, nor as brutal as the brassy thunder of Wagner.

Jazz, it is true, is in an experimental stage. But it is a musical idiom, and there is no valid reason for condemning it on the ground of newness. Stravinsky, even, is now recognized, yet he was once hounded, and not so many years ago. If I were more thoroughly grounded in counterpoint and the other technicalities and mechanisms of the art. I might be admitted to the sacred circle of jazz-abhorers. Thank God, I'm not.

Traducers of jazz are extremely illogical. I suppose they are in much the same position as myself, for they must straddle. I am often cornered by people of the technically-musical class who insist that I can't like music since I know so little about it, and consequently am not in position to bridge the differences between jazz and, as they delicately differentiate, music. They must throw sizzling coals of disparagement at the originality and daring of the lively art, while they protect that of their own genii with asbestos shields. And it's not the easiest thing in the world to juggle red-hot cinders in one hand and a shield in the other, meanwhile smiling and speaking logically.

"Genius," a professor of music told me, "can afford to break laws. Look at this—here Beethoven does something different. He can do that because he's a genius."

Some day I shall ask that professor if it was Beethoven's genius which gave him an excuse for daring and iconoclasm, or if it was his originality that made him a genius.

Yet this same teacher deploras the writing of jazz, saying: "Why, it can't be good—its writers break all the laws of counterpoint, of harmony, of unity." And so on.

Still he can't see, or at least fails to



admit seeing, the illogic of his statement. And he is rather typical, I think, of the supposedly intelligent crew of which he is an honored member.

He who does not realize that the crowd wants what it can't get, what is forbidden it, is stupid indeed. Still, these apparently earnest and sincere haters of jazz give it publicity, try to secure its absolute destruction, saying "It's bad."

The proper way to make people flee from modernism and rally 'round the pennon of the classicists is to saturate them with jazz—make them tired of it. Give them so much they will reach a point of minus marginal utility.

But I shan't ever tell the masters that: I have too much love for jazz and the modernism for which it seems to stand in the field of music.



## MATIN SONG

*From the Italian of Giosue Carducci, 1800-1900*

*By*

J. M. S. COTTON

STRIKING against your window says the sun:  
 "'Tis time for love, dear, do not linger long,  
 The violet's passion I will make your own,  
 The roses carols for your matin-song.

In homage to you from my fair domain,  
 With the young year that flies so fast amain  
 On blossoms of your life's delightful spring  
 April and May to lackey you I bring."

Striking against your window says the wind:  
 "Much have I travelled over hill and plain,  
 To-day in all the world one thought I find,  
 And dead and living have one sole refrain."

The nests and verdant woods they seem to say:  
 "Time passes: let us love, today, today—"  
 And whispers from the flowering tombs arise:  
 "Love all ye people! Love! because time flies."

Against your heart, a garden fair, in flower,  
 My own thought strikes and asks to enter in  
 For I have travelled many a lonely hour,  
 Wearied I am and I would rest within.

Amid those gladsome walks I fain would rest  
 Dreaming a blessing never yet possessed;  
 And I would rest within that joy serene  
 To dream a blessing that has never been.

## IMPRESSIONS OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

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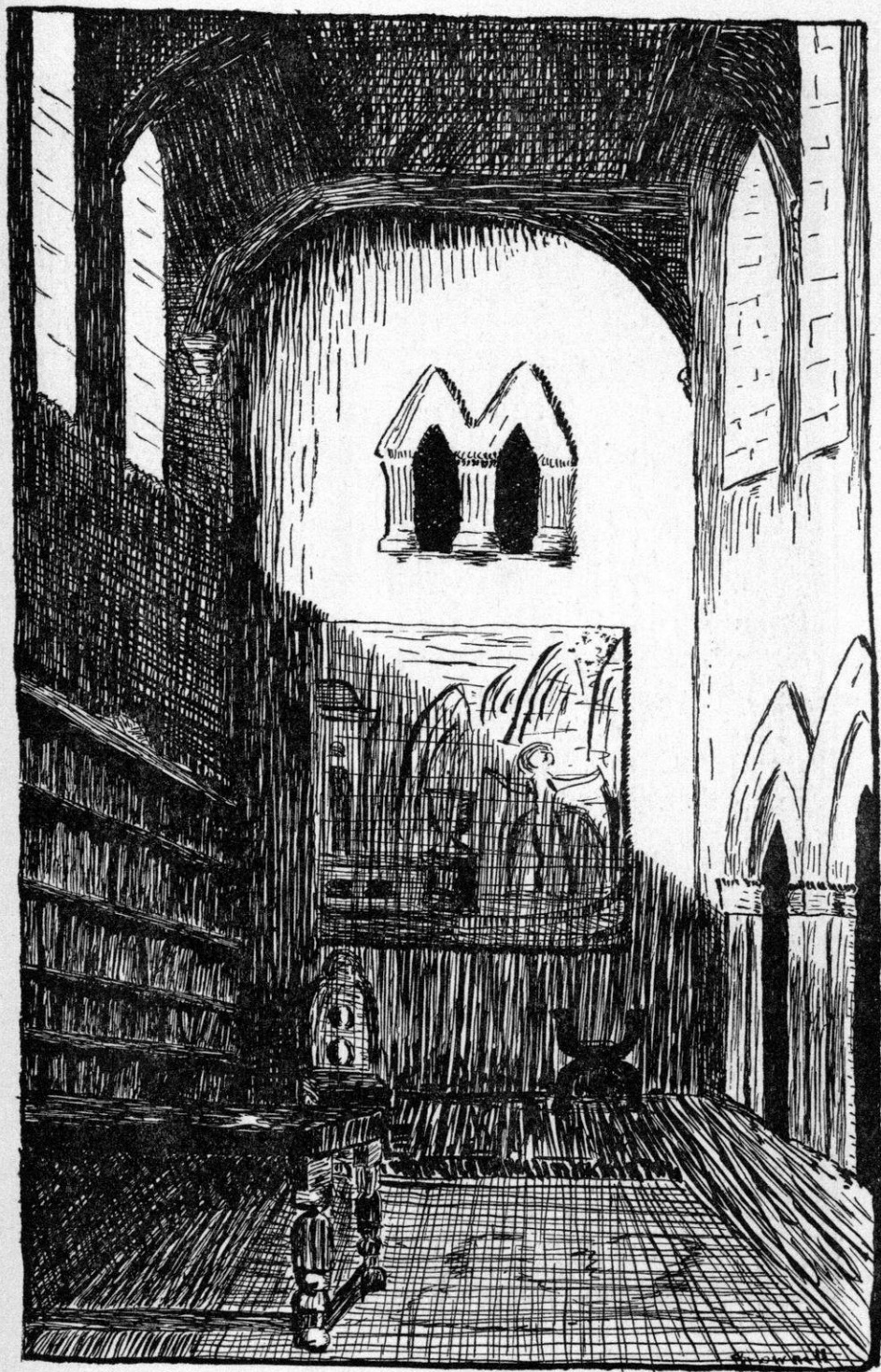
The room in which I found myself was very large and lofty. The windows were long, narrow, and pointed, and at so vast a distance from the black oaken floor as to be altogether inaccessible from within. Feeble gleams of encrimsoned light made their way through the trellised panes, and served to render sufficiently distinct the more prominent objects around; the eye, however, struggled in vain to reach the remoter angles of the chamber, or the recesses of the vaulted and fretted ceiling. Dark draperies hung upon the walls. The general furniture was profuse, comfortless, antique, and tattered. Many books and musical instruments lay scattered about, but failed to give any vitality to the scene. I felt that I breathed an atmosphere of sorrow. An air of stern, deep, and irredeemable gloom hung over and pervaded all.

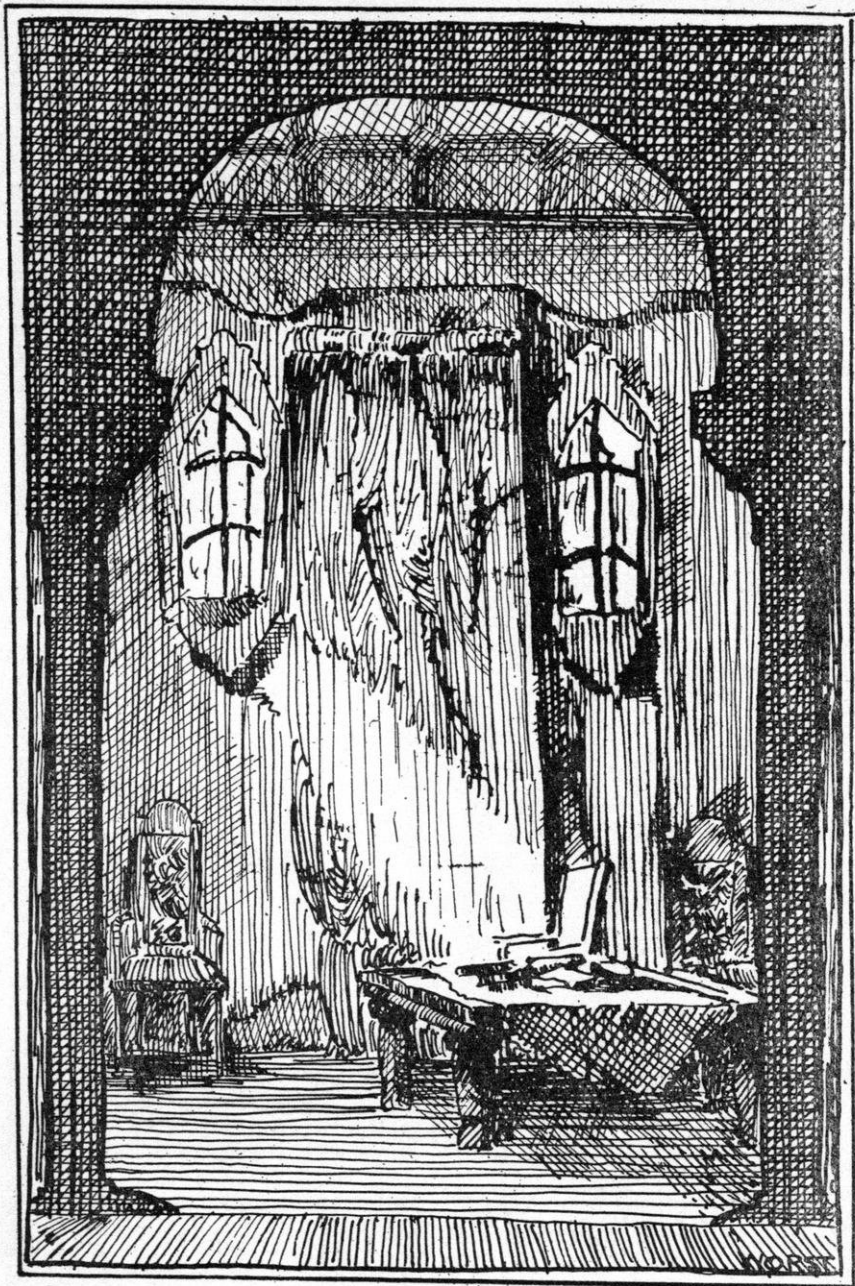
—Poe: *The Fall of the House of Usher.*

### Etchings by—

- I. Ida O. Nicholson
- II. Mary A. Brownell
- III. Betty C. Worst







# THE BLUFFS

By

L. T. MELENDY

LARRY Leigh inhaled deeply and glanced around the den at his fraternity brothers. He was thankful for the opportunity to think afforded by his being dummy hand in the bridge game. It was Friday night, and the conversation was concerned with three topics—class politics, the football game tomorrow, and week-end dates. Larry found that these subjects lacked their usual interest, as did the bridge game. His mind failed to respond to them, and kept reverting to his eventful morning.

He had risen early and cut classes to stand in line at the public sale in order to get an extra ticket for the game in response to a frantic wire from Bud. Bud was his roommate of last year, who had flunked out the second semester.

It was when the two girls in fur coats ahead of him turned to talk to each other that the morning became eventful. The first sight of the blonde had dashed all the sleepiness from his eyes. With difficulty he had disguised his eagerness, and, during the long wait, engaged them in conversation. The talk had practically been monopolized by himself and Dorothy. Yes, he should have been glad her roommate was there, because now he knew her first name. And, although her presence had made it too awkward for him to ask Dorothy her last name when he was leaving them at the Psi O. house, what did it matter? He would soon find that out, for Bill, the Chi Nu, went with a girl from that house. Gosh, she was a Psi O! Pretty nice; they rated sky high. And Dorothy——.

He thought of her as she sat next to him in the car, the three of them crowded together in the front seat of his "big open job," as she had nicknamed his collegiate wreck of an old Chandler. The nearness of her, her beauty, had shaken him so that, between attempting to drive and keep the good old line working, he had been unable to watch her much. But frag-

ments he remembered—that perfect golden sheen of straight bobbed hair that curved upwards like the tail of a comma to caress the clear beauty of her face and lend it expression. He recalled, too, the enhanced color, wind-given, of a flawless complexion and the boyish mouth. Her eyes—he couldn't recall their color, only that the most ordinary word became significant with a new and delicately shaded meaning when one looked in them.

"Set two, set higher than a kite! What the devil did you raise on—hope?"

Larry looked across the table at his partner in startled surprise.

"Guess so. We better go up and get ready for our dates before I pull another boner and we have to take up a collection. My mind's in a fog."

"I'll say! Nice time you picked to go into a trance." His roommate stood up.

In his room, Larry stood before the mirror, giving the last tug to his necktie. He looked critically at his reflection, light hair parted meticulously in the middle, blue eyes, even features and that "schoolboy complexion" that drew forth such sarcastic remarks from his fraternity brothers.

He hummed *Mighty Blue* in a pleasant, appealing tenor. It's feeling of loneliness suited him, for despite the noisy house, he was lonely. Yes, he knew why. He was wild about Dorothy, and wanted to be with her. Gee, the morning had seemed short, but so much had happened. He must call up Bill, and find out her name.

"Say, Carl!" He spoke to his roommate, who was tying his shoe.

"Yeah?"

"Was I in luck this morning! You should have seen the woman I bumped into. Beautiful, and personality,—out of your head right away."

"Who is she?"

"Don't know, got her first name, and

can get the rest from Bill; he goes with a girl at the Psi O. house all the time."

"Can't help you out. I knew a girl there in my Frosh year, but haven't seen her since. She was some little fusser, but I've forgotten her name now."

"Oh Lord! You seniors and 'the women I've forgotten' make me sick. You're bragging now."

"Well it's a fact. I gotta tear now. See you after the date at Tom's dump and we can get a bite to eat and a coupl'a drinks."

Returning from his date that night, Larry drove to the Rendez-vous Restaurant. Entering, he saw Tom the proprietor.

"Lo, Tom," he greeted him.

"Lo, Larry."

"Carl here yet?"

"He just went upstairs," answered the genial Tom.

Larry started upstairs with the feeling of importance that it always gave him to converse with the proprietor.

Upstairs he found Carl sitting at one of the little tables-for-two. Three tables were occupied, the rest empty. Larry liked this place. The small tables, the shaded lights, the scarcity of people at this time in the evening made it an ideal place to come and drink undisturbed. He sat down opposite Carl.

"Where'd you go with the date, Carl?"

"Up to Merriman's to dance. Hot music, and you should have heard that banjo-player sing *Lonesome Baby*. Um-m-m-m."

"Two bottles of Silver Spray and a bowl of cracked ice, Anne." Larry spoke to the waitress who stood at his elbow.

When a second pair of bottles of Silver Spray stood emptied, Larry leaned back in his chair and lit a cigarette. He and Carl had the place to themselves now, and the gin bucks were taking effect. He felt pleasant, dreamy, and in a mood to talk.

"Carl", he spoke slowly, carefully, because he knew he wasn't drunk, and didn't want a slurred word to give

that impression, "these heavy fussing parties are disgusting." He waited for the weight of this radical statement to register, and also to order his rather vague thoughts on the matter. Funny, he thought, how dim and distant Carl's face appeared; it must be because of the smoke from their cigarettes.

"Had a first date tonight with that girl in my French class, and we left the dance early. Drove to the Bluffs. And fuss! Lord!" His last words expressed a mixture of admiration and disgust. "You know, when a girl throws a heavy party the first night, it doesn't get by. You think she does it with everyone, and there's no kick to it. It's sort of like buying something rare, dirt cheap. The price you paid for it depreciates its value in your eyes. That's good economics. "Yes," he spoke more carefully now, "I'm tired of easy fusers. I'd like to find someone I could love in the good old fashioned way, someone like that girl I met this morning. There's a girl you couldn't fuss, not until you really made her care for you. She's different," he added with a burst of inspiration.

"Bunk," Carl grunted sleepily, "they're all the same, and those who aren't first nighters only wait longer because they know how to play their cards better, not because they don't want to."

"No, that cynical 'they're all the same' attitude is just as foolish as believing all women are the pure-white lily type. Nobody cares for a prude, and I despise them. But this girl—clever, an air of sophistication one moment, and the next a living expression of that French phrase, 'La joie de vivre', showing with frank enthusiasm a childish delight at trifles. And yet, she has a certain reserve that calls for respect. No, you could never fuss a girl like that the first night, and I'm glad of it. I've wanted to find someone I could fall in love with, and I have. Only she's so darned keen, I'm afraid I can't rate her."

"You must be drunk, Larry." Carl spoke humorously. "Why you're the

champion fusser of the house, and here you rave about a girl you think doesn't fuss."

"Apple-sauce," from Larry. "I'm serious. It has just dawned on me how common it is to be driving a girl out to the Bluffs the first date, parking, both putting up a pretense of sparring a few minutes before the clinch, and then coming out of it to hunt for the girl's hair-pins, or to hand her your comb after she remarks, 'Oh, my hair's just a wreck'. It's stale, and I'm all caught up with it. The pretense is so awfully shallow, the drawing away only to lean nearer when they say, 'Don't—that's not ni-ce, is it?' in a tone that's an invitation. No, it's common." He used the word with more conviction now.

Some of the lights went out. Larry and Carl looked up to see Tom. They took the hint and rose.

"Guess we'd better go, before Tom throws us out", Carl said good-naturedly.

"Well, it's late, and I have to get up at six", Tom answered apologetically.

They drove home, talking little, both tired, the effect of the gin bucks worn off. Carl complained of a bad headache, which had bothered him all day.

Larry was busy with his thoughts. His own discussion at Tom's had surprised him. And yet, he thought, it was true. Yes, he would find out Dorothy's name. He was through with the others.

Larry tumbled drowsily out of bed the next morning. He had just time to dress for lunch. He shook Carl by the shoulder, "C'mon, gotta step to make lunch."

"Owool!" Carl was awake, but sleepy. "I'm sick, an awful headache. Let me sleep."

Just before the game, Larry ran upstairs to see if Carl was awake. He found him still in bed, but half asleep. "Hey, what's the matter with you?" he cried, pulling the covers off his roommate. "You'll be late to the game."

"Damn it!—Don't," Carl shouted.

Larry clutched his roommate by the

pajamas and jerked in an attempt to pull him out. The buttons on Carl's pajama coat snapped, and flew in all directions.

"Damn!" said Carl half rising, and then he stopped, looking at his exposed chest. It was broken out with red splotches.

"Whew!" exclaimed Larry, glancing from his roommate's chest to his face which expressed frightened amazement, "You are sick."

"Gosh!" Carl's voice was awed, "I just felt sort of grippy, but this must be something else. Lord, if I have to go to the infirmary, I'll be sunk in my studies."

"Oh, it may be nothing," Larry's voice failed to carry the optimism he had attempted. "I'll get a doctor, Carl, and we'll find out."

"Measles," the doctor had announced after a brief inspection. "Two weeks in the infirmary." Larry was returning from driving Carl out to the infirmary, and was on his way to the game. Poor old Carl! he thought. He wouldn't be sick more than two days, and then he'd just have to lie around until there was no danger of spreading the contagion. It was a shame. Well, he would see him though, talk to him through his window, if the nurses didn't drive him away.

At the game that afternoon, Larry sat with his fraternity brothers. Between halves, he saw Dorothy a few rows back of him. He bowed and smiled, and she smiled back. Gosh, she looked great. He'd call her up tonight and get a date for tomorrow afternoon.

Sunday was a day of Indian summer, bright and clear, with the brilliance of the sun heightening the gay autumn colors of the foliage, and a pleasant coolness in the air that lent exhilaration.

They were driving along the lake shore. Larry turned off the road where the shore was high, stopping where they could look across the lake. He lit a cigarette. How easy it was to talk with Dorothy! Looking at her now, he realized that she was everything he had imagined. He sat half turned towards



her, with his arm on the back of the seat. A gust of cold wind from the lake made her shiver and draw away from her side of the car. She leaned back against his arm. This little intimacy thrilled him, he longed to kiss her, but remembered. No, a break like that would ruin his chances. With another girl, he would have been confident that this was his cue, but with Dorothy it was different. Just her easy naturalness.

As they drove home, Larry asked for two dates the next week with a non-chalance that surprised him almost as much as her acceptance.

\* \* \* \*

Tomorrow Carl would be out of the infirmary, Larry thought, as he dressed for his date. He experienced a prick of conscience as he realized that he had only been out for two short visits with Carl in the past two weeks, both of which had been cut prematurely short by the nurses' objections. Well, he had been awfully busy, with studies and seeing a lot of Dorothy. He wondered what Carl would think, when he told him how much he had seen of Dorothy, how great she was. He had dates with her both nights this week-end.

The banjo-player at Merriman's finished *Lonesome Baby*; the orchestra was playing the refrain over, very low. The haunting sadness of the words, the sensuous rhythm caused Larry to draw Dorothy very close, as they swayed with the slow time of the music. He wished they could be dancing alone to the piece, that he could crush her to him, tell her all those things he felt, but when they should be alone he wouldn't, because that was too prosaic. Besides, he must wait, he must go slow.

As they started home, he asked, "Shall we get a bite at the Rendez-vous?"

"I really don't care to, unless you do."

There was still a half hour left before she had to return to the Psi O. house. He drove out on Curly Pike, where the cold bright moon shone on the hard frozen ground of bare corn-fields, then along the

wooded lake shore where the moonlight filtered through the trees. He stopped in a little grove. They smoked. She smoked in a manner he liked, as one who enjoyed it, not as most girls, who covered their distaste with a highly sophisticated air. The music was still in his blood, but when their smoke was finished, he started the engine.

\* \* \* \*

Dorothy found her roommate engaged in writing a letter.

"Writing the Chi Nu at Dartmouth, honey?" she queried.

"Um-hum. Have a nice date?"

"Adorable! He's the sweetest boy. She slipped out of her coat, dropping on the bed, she pulled her feet up under her. "He's so much nicer than anyone I know, why he hasn't even tried to kiss me."

"Now Dee, don't be silly. You've had five dates with him."

"I know, honey, but he just makes you feel that he likes just to be with you, and isn't wondering all evening if you'll let him put on a party. And he isn't dumb, but every bit Joe College. But it's so much nicer. I'm tired of these men that want to paw you all the time. I could really fall in love with Larry." Dorothy's eyes became dreamy; she didn't listen to her roommate's reply. She was glad she would see Larry tomorrow.

\* \* \* \*

Larry and Carl were returning from the infirmary. The football game was out of town this week.

"Well, how does it feel to be a free man again, Carl?"

"Great! You can't realize what it means to lie around, just waiting to get out for two weeks. I wasn't sick after the first two days, but my legs are shaky from being in bed so much."

"Well, there's a good remedy for that; let's get something to drink and then go to the Orph. They'll have the reports of the game there."

"Sounds O. K. to me; haven't had a drink in a long time."

"Well, I can't even have a breath to-

night, so we won't hit it too hard. I have a date with that Psi O. I told you about before you went to the infirmary."

"Good enough, what's her name?"

"Dorothy Mercier."

"Mercier! Why Hell, that's the girl I went out with when I was a Frosh. Remember I told you I went with a Psi O?", Carl stopped as he recalled Larry's conversation at the Rendez-vous. He wondered if Larry still believed she didn't fuss. "How did you like her?", he asked.

"Oh, all right," Larry answered dryly. Then Dorothy was a regular fusser! The one Carl had spoken of. That fact stared him in the face, a cruel jester, mocking him. He thanked the gods he hadn't rushed on to tell Carl all he had intended about Dorothy. He would have been in for a razzing then; now he could bluff it out. But Carl must remember what he had said at the Rendez-vous. Yes, he sensed it now. Something about Carl's silence told him that. "But she certainly pulled the wool over my eyes," (he might as well get it over with now) "probably just because I wanted to meet someone like the girl I told you about at the Rendez-vous. I was in the mood for it, so I had a false first impression, and then interpreted all her actions in the light of that impression." This sounded pretty good, philosophical, impersonal.

"So you didn't think she fussed. I told you that night at the Rendez-vous that you were drunk when you talked that way about women." Carl felt that a joking tone would be best. He had committed a *faux pas* right. Why hadn't he been more careful? He should have remembered how serious Larry had been about Dorothy.

After the show, Larry and Carl pushed their way through the crowd to the car. The Alma Mater had won. Despite the victory and the empty pint bottle they had left in the smoking-room, Larry felt no elation. His mind was on Dorothy. So he had played the fool, the dumb, worship-from-afar fool! He tried to think of Kipling's phrase about a fool

and his lady fair, but it wouldn't come to his mind. And he was one of the smoothest men in the house. Oh, Hell!

Le's cel'brate — vict'ry," he said thickly. He had been drinking more than Carl, and too fast. It was going to his head. But he felt the need of more.

"No, let's go home and get ready for dinner." Carl saw in what direction the party was headed.

"Don't go dumb on the party," Larry retorted tartly. He felt disagreeable.

In the Rendez-vous they got a corner table, partly concealed by the orchestra. After a few drinks, they decided to stay for dinner. Carl was elated; the football victory over dangerous rivals and the golden fizzes combined to make him talkative.

Larry sat silent. The orchestra was playing something—it was *Lonesome Baby*. He smiled cynically as he thought of himself with Dorothy last night. He had a date with her tonight. He'd break it. No, he'd keep it, he'd take her to a dance, leave early, and put on a party. He must do that before he stopped going with her just so she could never say he was awfully dumb. His pride demanded this. He refused to see any other motive for keeping the date, but there was a smothered hope that maybe this was a mistake. But he must be careful, not let her see how drunk he was.

As Dorothy came down the stairs, Larry straightened and stood very quietly. She smiled. He wondered angrily why she seemed so attractive. As she stood beside him he felt her stiffen imperceptibly. She knew he had been drinking.

As they drove to Merriman's, the conversation progressed seemingly as usual, but something about her tone made Larry feel that she was merely talking as a hostess might with a guest, that all the while she was looking at him as a stranger, analyzing him.

After the fifth dance, they left. Larry was glad to leave; he had been worried for fear he might make a

display of himself on the floor. The heated room had made his head light again. In the cloak-room he tipped his flask once more. He would run through the old routine with Dorothy, put on a real party, then never see her again. Queer he should feel this way; after all, she was only like the other girls he knew. But—that was it—the disappointment.

They talked little on the drive. Both were thinking. Dorothy was wondering at the change in Larry and why he was drinking tonight; he had never done that before. And he acted so differently; to-night he was merely airing a collegiate line, reacting in stereotyped fashion to everything that was said. The car turned significantly toward the Bluffs. Then Larry was going to end the evening in the usual way; how mistaken she had been to think him different! She felt a little self-pity. So this was the way things turned out; she should have known it.

The car had stopped. Larry bent forward, and drew her toward him. She leaned back, her hand placed protestingly against him. But—what did it matter? She yielded suddenly, impassively. Despite her apathy, Larry's kisses stirred her. "Oh, my hair is just a wreck," she exclaimed as they started back.

Larry smiled grimly as she combed it. This was too good, too ironically complete. They were silent for a while.

Then suddenly, "You were so unlike yourself tonight, Larry. Why?"

"Was I?" He was noncommittal as he pondered this.

"You know you were; I liked you so much better before." Her voice betrayed just a shade of emotion, of disappointment.

"I suppose you think it's because I was drinking," he countered. He chose

to draw the conversation off on this tangent rather than let it continue in its course. Why did she speak like this? It sounded too serious for the roles in which they had been acting all evening.

Another perfect Sunday afternoon. Larry was driving along the lake, alone. The need of solitude had urged him out. He wanted to think over the events of yesterday; besides, there was a little tragic air to this driving alone that appealed to him.

The sun shone on the dark blue water of the lake under the clear blue of the sky. The bright colors of the leaves had faded; many of the trees were bare.

He thought of Dorothy's words, "I liked you so much better—before." Probably only part of a clever line, but his mind stopped at the thought of the sincerity of her tone of disappointment. No, he'd never see her again. A false first impression had made him think her something entirely different from what she was. Then he had misunderstood all her actions because of that. His mind skipped back to her words. Why—he paused. Why, maybe she felt the same way about him. Funny, if she had been sincere, then this was right; she was really as disappointed as he.

After all, life was more ideal than real. It was what you perceived in an object or a person that was important, not the reality. One's actions were controlled more by what one thought than by the reality. Of course, as some Frenchman put it, "No generality is true, not even this one," but there was a lot to it, this idea that it was what one thought that counted. Why not see Dorothy again? If they could think of each other once more, as they had until yesterday, what did the rest matter? . . . But, could they?



# The Wisconsin Literary Magazine

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## EDITORIAL

IT IS the purpose of the Wisconsin Literary Magazine to provide currency for the expression of what we are pleased to call creative thought; and from this purpose, whatever may be the temptation to do otherwise, we shall not divert our attention. We neither take the scorn's seat nor acquiesce to the evident maladjustments of university life; for where scorn predominates sympathy cannot enter, and where acquiescence prevails no independence can exist. It is false to think that the student whose interest lies toward creation lacks courage or independence; for upon sympathy and understanding

rests the power to portray the life that is. As always, the artist, however limited his ability may be, sees the spectacle of speech and act as the result, the consequence, of the secret world of emotion, sensation, and thought. Men and women are his subjects; he paints them as they are, let their faults be what they may and their glories however great. The finished portrait stands as criticism, exhortation, and judgment. Man is his own critic, take him as you will. Do but look at him: his motion, words, and gait tell his story, reveal his mind, lay bare his heart.

# ON A COLORED ETCHING BY W. UNGER

By

C. GIBSON SCHEAFFER

*Being an imaginative interpretation of a colored etching called "The Market Place of Lovrana," created by W. Unger in the name of beauty and of art.*

IT is market day. In the early morning, even before the eastern sky begins to grow pale with the first suggestion of a new day, a peasant starts on his short journey to Lovrana. He trudges along the hard, white highway, the bulging pack on his back giving him the appearance in the blackness of a hideously distorted dwarf. On either side tall poplars line the roadway, their outlines resembling soldiers, so straight and in such precision they stand, lifting their dark shapes to the sky as if pointing to the slowly fading stars. The grass that edges the long, narrow strip of highway through the darkness accentuates the white of the road running between the gloom of trees and fields on either side.

The clump, crunch, clump of the heavy shoes of the peasant accentuates the stillness in this hour before dawn. Far in the distance a dog barks, the sound penetrating only as a soft echo, the more eerie for this mysterious, half-silent quality. A rabbit scurries across the road, appearing out of a patch of blackness, is in sight for an instant, silhouetted against gray, and disappears as quietly as he came.

Grayness. . . . The dawn is approaching, and the scene is a study in pencil shades of gray upon drab colored paper. The eastern horizon shows faint streaks of light, an advance guard of Aurora, who has already driven the stars, with threat of obliteration, to the other side of the world. Gradually the sky clears. Now a great red-gold disk cuts the plane of the horizon, and the eastern heavens turn blood red as the sun raises its fiery head higher and higher until it is half in view. As if a painter were

wielding a mighty brush, changing colors at will, the heavens brighten to a yellow in the orient, and a pale blue, deepening to indigo, overhead. Thus comes the morning.

The peasant plods on toward his goal, which looms up before him through the trees. A thin curl of smoke rises from the midst of the blurred form of cottages which comprise the little town. The man, short in stature, well built with broad shoulders, dressed in brown homespun, a blue cap on his head being the only touch of color about him, quickens his step, for he must gain his favorite spot in the market place before some beggar of a cheese merchant deposits himself and his odorous product in this choice location. It was chosen many summers ago, (this is a secret) not so much for its pecuniary possibilities, but because this particular peasant has the vision of an artist.

From here he may look up and down the main street of the quaint little town of Lovrana, and revel in the beauty of its medieval atmosphere, for it has not changed much since the time of Jeanne d'Arc. Here is the village, larger than it appeared from the distance, charming with its green and white-shuttered houses, facing each other across narrow streets. The market place, a cobbled street wider than the others, is not yet teeming with life, and I doubt if such will be the case; but a few women are already making purchases, stopping to chat with the vendors,—idle talk, but characteristic of those who live from day to day in the quiet, uneventful existence of Lovrana on the Loire.

Pierre prepares his place, opens his pack, and piles the vegetables and fruits in neat rows before him. A few melons, some peaches, beets, and fresh beans are all that he has, but they are very choice, and Pierre knows that before noon they

will all be gone. His melons are the pride of his garden, for on their cultivation he spends much of his time. In return he is rewarded by juicy, yellow canteloupe almost as large as one's head.

So this is the spot from which a poor peasant satisfies his love of beauty each market day. Truly, it is well chosen. Across the way are two and three story houses, all with green and white shutters dotting the brown of the house fronts, reminding one of the countryside with its pattern of vari-colored fields. A doorway flanked by carved pillars opens on the street from the most pretentious home. Above it is an arch of blue stone upon which a white horse rears, as if attempting to escape from his unalterable position. High in one corner of the house, under the tiled eaves, a brilliant red plant droops from a room open to the air and sun, resembling a chamber of a Roman villa.

Farther along the street a red striped awning brightens the picture by breaking the monotony of a narrow, white-fronted building. Just beyond this a group of people are buying, possibly cheese or fresh vegetables for their noonday meal. To Pierre, everybody is happy in this

quaint old village market place, but it is Pierre himself who is happiest; for is not his son now in Paris studying art under the famous Cameliot? It is for this reason that old Pierre smiles, and is glad to be alive. This very morning he had heard the first glad song of the skylark as that "blithe spirit" mounted to the blue of heaven, and his pace had quickened unconsciously.

But here is a woman waiting to buy. Pierre smiles. "Bonjour," and offers her melons, peaches,—but there is no hurry. She leans on her beast of burden, and talks. "Such a warm day,"—"a band of wandering players here yesterday,"—"the celebration of Fete de France soon." Pierre talks too, of his son, of the fields and trees, the birds. . .

Etched in light, detailed strokes, colored and colorful; such is "The Market Place of Lovrana." It is a peaceful scene, devoid of the hurry of modern life. The simple townspeople are living, surrounded by soft, old beauty, in the atmosphere and color of their town, and they enjoy life. But the one who really senses the beauty and picturesqueness of it all is the old peasant, Pierre, whose son is in Paris studying art.



# DESPAIR

*By*

L. L. SCHOONOVER

**I**T IS night, and the world is sleeping,  
And the river flowing slow.  
Hardly I keep from weeping,  
But the time has come—will I go?

The night, 'tis a shroud of sable,  
'Tis meet for my parting, and  
I would not turn back were I able;  
Ah! The sun still lives in the sand.

But the moon is shining coldly;  
Dead are her rays, and chill.  
Come! I must do it boldly,  
And now—or I never will.

I hesitate—it is colder—  
I must do it now, or I fail—  
Ere the night is an hour older,  
Or the moon a shade more pale.

But one, just one glance around me,  
At the sleeping world I leave—  
I am glad that they never found me—  
I am glad I do not believe.

Am I vile and loathsome? Granted!  
But I was not always so,  
In the happy years ere was planted  
The seed of—enough! I go.

## BOOK NOTES

### The Novel of the Year

THUNDER ON THE LEFT by Christopher Morley. Brown's.

Doubleday, Page & Co. \$2.00

" . . . heavy thunder rolled like wagon wheels across a dark bridge of clouds. . . ." And it was ominous thunder, presaging a summer storm and a storm of human emotions.

The Picnic was to take place next morning down on the sea shore where the tide was now fast ebbing. George and Phyllis were irritable, agitated by their duties as host and hostess. Martin—who could tell his feelings? Naive and childish and haunting, he frolicked in the surf with the children. Ben and Ruth seem to be the only pair within the span of earth and what is earthy. And Joyce—shimmering and radiant as a dream.

There they are, in that summer house by the sea, acting a part in their varied relations to life and to each other. Phyllis thinks the naive Martin is an artist, and is drawn to him by his haunting eyes and his childish ways. George is a dreamer, yet he lives life, worshipping Joyce as only a married man can adore what so nearly approaches the perfection of his wife.

But could any of them be happy? Martin was irresponsible and happy as any one with no cares could be. Ben and Ruth are wrapped up in smug satisfaction with themselves. Those who saw the beauty and yet the utter futility of life and love could not be joyous. As George said, those who have dreams, and who want things that they never get are the most disappointed and unhappy people in life.

This little group had come together again for the first time since childhood. The Picnic was to be a grand affair—they would be children again. With the air surcharged with strange feeling and emotion, the guests were strained and tense; underneath it all we can feel the supernatural, yet this ominous evening

is held to life by the petty details of a household with children in it. Guests are to be entertained and sandwiches to be made.

Now it is the day of the Picnic. "The gradual summer dawn crept up the slopes of earth, brimmed and brightened, and tinctures of lavender stained the sweetened air." A little later all of life's cares are gone; George and Ben and Phyllis and all the rest are children at a birthday party, saying goodbye to their host, just as a few hours before they had bid him a happy birthday, prompted by the Grown Ups. Joyce has given Martin the mouse that won't run, and with that gesture we know the secret of their unselfish lives.

The children have played their game—to determine whether grown ups have a good time. They have solved the problem, and now have no desire to be men and women.

*Thunder on the Left* is a fantasy, a fairy tale, a dream, a tragedy of life. Christopher Morley has written a very real, very vivid story, beautiful, sad, grotesquely humorous. We live in the minds of its dream characters as we read, watching their lives unfold through their thoughts. The story is fantastic, yet tragically real in its minute detail of the common things of life made beautiful.

To understand it and to love it one must read *Thunder on the Left*. Truly it is the novel of the year, and although it comes at the year's close, it will live into the next carrying its glory with it.

C. G. S.

THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE by Willa Cather. Brown's.

Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.00.

Willa Cather has again bent her energies to the creation of a character, and this time we have Godfrey St. Peter—at once a university professor, the author of a book on Spanish adventurers, and a family man who grew away from his family.

The tale, which is divided into three



parts, begins with the family of the professor. We become acquainted with Lillian, his wife, who, as he says, "is becoming less intelligent and more sensible" in that she adapts herself to circumstance and to the fact that something has evidently come between her and Godfrey.

One sees Lillian putting her hurts behind her and becoming the idol of two doting sons-in-law.

And it is at the door of Tom Outland, a former student of the professor and a soldier now dead in France, to whom the second part of the book is dedicated, that Lillian lays the cause of her grievances; for it was in the company of this student that the professor first began separating his life into two distinct parts. But even then he had been able to appreciate the little niceties of domestic life and the atmosphere of home. It was the death of Tom, and the proceeds of the professor's book which changed the whole scale on which the St. Peter family lived. St. Peter's irritation grew to convictions and his convictions led to the creation within him of an inner life entirely separate from the lives of those whom he had really loved. He remained staunch only to the memory of Tom Outland.

The change, naturally, does not come about without much struggle within him. From the time that the professor begs to be excused from a trip to Europe he dreads the return of his family and the burdens of family life. When the return is imminent, he says, "Surely the saddest thing in the world is falling out of love—if once one has ever fallen in." Willa Cather comments, "Falling out, for him, seemed to mean falling out of all domestic and social relations, out of his place in the human family, indeed. . . ."

The author consoles those who would have nothing irregular or surprising occur on this earth, with the professor's acceptance of his fate. With a fortified soul, he meets the ship and his returning family who will be "too happily pre-occupied with their own affairs" to note

the right-about-face change in the professor's attitude toward them and the ordinary necessities of living. *The Professor's House* here reminds us vaguely of Walter de la Mare's *Return*, and of the stolid Englishman who, to all appearances, regained his customary niche, but who had opened up to his own vision, new and wider vistas.

Willa Cather's book is cruel, but beautiful and strangely honest. We beat ourselves of the complexities of a fate that places man between two fires: the urge to do what circumstances require or point out as easy and natural, and the urge to live, wayward and free, as an independent spirit. V. M.

THE VENETIAN GLASS NEPHEW  
by Elinor Wylie. Brown's  
George H. Doran Company. \$2.00.

As delicate and iridescent as Venetian glass itself is Elinor Wylie's incredible fantasy. Set in that most romantic and unbelievable of backgrounds, "Venice in the amber twilight of a dying century," is a story of such illusive charm that one almost fears to read on lest the spell be broken.

Strange and romantic personages go through the book like shadows on a Murano mirror. In the same stroke of the pen, the author combines the religious devotion of Venice with black and white magic of the most surprising forms.

The lovable and ingenuous Cardinal, Peter Innocent, who wanted a nephew so much that he resorted to magic to get him, remains throughout the course of the story as the embodiment of the innocence that persisted in Venice through all its extravagant splendor.

"The boy's skin was so fair as to seem almost translucent, and the luminous flax of his abundant hair had the fragility of spun glass. . . . The long gold eyelashes matched the hair; the eyes themselves were the colour of sea water, the pure Venetian aquamarine." Such was the nephew blown of Venetian glass by the old glass maker. It was this perfect, but

inhuman boy who loved and married Rosalba, the infant Sappho, whose mouth curled like a scarlet petal and who had "a score of golden freckles across her nose to make her human."

It was that very humanness in Rosalba that made happiness impossible for them. Flesh and blood cannot be a playmate to fragile glass. So again we find magic. Rosalba was burned in a fiery furnace into a beautiful figure of Sevres porcelain. Now they are fit comrades for each other, "Having forgotten fear and the requirements of pity their tenderness becomes a placid looking-glass in which each beholds the other; the mercurial whiteness which no longer moves them is fixed behind this transparent screen, lending brightness to the mirrored images."

It is a book of scintillating and sparkling adjectives. The style and plot are of the same fantastic character. One comes to the end of the book with a feeling of taking one's eyes away from an intricately designed piece of Venetian glass.

L. B.

SUMMER by Romain Rolland.

Henry Holt and Co. \$2.50.

Translated by Eleanor Stimson and Van Wyck Brooks.

"To strive, to seek, not to find, and not to yield" is the theme which dominates the second movement of Romain Rolland's great symphony. Although *Summer* is a sequel to *Annette and Sylvie*, it is an independent unit of strength, sufficient unto itself and worthy of comparison with *Jean Christophe*.

At the beginning of the story we see Annette Riviere absorbed in the coming of her child, and because she refuses to marry the father, and determines to support the child, shocks the bourgeois world in which she lives. She is left sans fortune, sans respectability, sans love. But

the courage of the soul enchanted does not falter. Even in the freeing of her own soul Annette was a slave to revolt; to be free was more of a duty than a right, and this makes Rolland's study of free souls depressing.

Annette's own heart finally betrays her to a love with Phillippe which would mean utter shipwreck, but for an effort of will and suffering, totally beyond the powers of a woman who is weak. But Annette is not weak. Her search has been for reality, and it is rewarded not by the thing sought, but by the strength and discipline coming from the search itself.

The skill with which Rolland focuses on the inner drama of the soul is almost uncanny. The narrative is a heroic biography of a free woman, vividly externalized, made real with many touches of poetry and nature. How well Rolland combines the simple and the subtle. The author is completely absorbed in the introspection which he is consciously handling. We wonder how he can so well express our inmost thoughts, and surprise us by the familiarity of their sound. What he has done is to dip down into the undercurrent of unconscious thinking which flows steadily within us, and fish up what is common to all. So when we feel the joy of recognition, at the stating of our own unconscious thought, we experience with Annette the reality of life in its elusiveness.

*The Soul Enchanted* is indeed an equal to the great beautiful structure of *Jean Christophe*. The epic quality of the latter has a twin in the former. The great cathedral of free souls which Rolland has built so carefully and truly is made beautiful by two towers; "*Jean Christophe* is a tower of strength for free men; Annette Riviere is a tower of aspiration of free women."

M. D.

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