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# The Wisconsin Literary Magazine

Publication of the Students of the University of Wisconsin

Volume XXI

Madison, November, 1921

Number 2

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interested in good reading and writing can meet. Therefore it has a mission; if the LIT does not articulate, nothing else will, and there would be no exchange of ideas, no reciprocal stimulation. A young lady meditating great things in her boudoir in Barnard Hall would never learn that a kindred soul is struggling to re-arrange the universe after her own fashion over on Orchard Street.

When the interest in writing flags in the University, it becomes immediately perceptible in this Magazine; when football or politics or dances, any one of the thousand and one things beside cultivation of the brain which take up the students' time—draws all the energy that we have to give, the quality of the material in the LIT is lowered. It ought to be kept up under any circumstances; Wisconsin gains much by this literary interest. It is one of the fields of endeavor in which a University student should delve, and the magazine which expresses it can be made a credit to us beyond the borders of Dane County.

### DANTE.

This year marks the sixth centenary of the death of Dante. In commemoration of the event, we print here the words of Charles Hall Grandgent, of Harvard University, the greatest American authority on the *Divina Comedia*. Dr. Grandgent, who will speak here in November on Dante, has as a recognition of his great work on the Florentine poet, been made a *Commendatore della Corona d'Italia*.

### DANTE.

CHARLES HALL GRANDGENT.

I have declared that the sixth centenary of Dante's death is a memorable event for all the nations. The

A WISCONSIN TRADITION. Every year an attempt is made to bolster the artificial restrictions on freshmen, which we chose to call traditions. And every year these are given great prominence and made to play an important part in undergraduate thought. Most of those who use the word "traditions" in this connection, though they inveigh never so wildly for or against, are blissfully unconscious of its meaning.

Wisconsin has certain real traditions which do not require the intercession of the student senate in order to survive. There is, for instance, the tradition that our football teams fight hard, which sustains itself. There is another tradition, one which is more pertinently referred to in these columns: namely, the tradition that our literary interest is vigorous, and that the University fosters writing and thinking of a high type. The LIT is the expression of this literary interest and talent; it is practically the only expression, the only point at which all the people in the University who are

great Florentine is, indeed, a world figure. In the eyes of the universe of letters he is a supreme and eternal representative of much that men esteem highest—of love, of righteous judgment, of religion voiced in poetry.

For sheer beauty, for grandiose imagination, for sweetness of concept and phrase, he has in all time no rival but Shakspeare. Yet, despite these universal qualities, he remains a man of his era, the interpreter, the sage, the prophet of the Middle Ages.

Medieval is his background, medieval his concerns, his ideas, his life. Medieval is the material he uses, the stuff—be it earth or hell or heaven—which his genius transmutes into timeless gold. In him and in him alone, the vast formative period between Charlemagne and Petrarch finds its complete expression.

Partially expressed in the Gothic cathedral, partially in the great schoolmen, partially in the French epic and the Provençal lyric, partially in the Crusades, partially in feudalism, partially in the growth of boroughs and trade unions, partially in the development of nationalities, partially in the long strife of Guelfs and Ghibellines, the age becomes fully articulate only in the Divine Comedy. No other man—not Shakspeare, not Cervantes, not Goethe, not even Homer—has ever so adequately epitomized the society of which he was a member.

My dear Mr. Editor:

Don't you think the readers of the Literary Magazine would be interested in this letter which I received last summer from one of my students? Catullus still charms his readers as he has done for two thousand years.

M. S. SLAUGHTER.

My dear Mr. Slaughter:

I was a reporter on the Milwaukee Leader and my assignment was to go out to the House of Correction

and interview Ned Hogan who was serving his 105th term out there. The House is in the middle of an almost roadless forsaken stretch of country, a mile and a half from the end of the North Milwaukee car line.

It was warm and windy,—and there was that long walk before me. So I began to think:

"*Iam ver egelidos,*"—perhaps I thought it out loud. Why not? There wasn't anybody but wind and trees and bobolinks, and, in the distance, that terrible building. So I said the rest, and I liked the sound of it—"Diversae variae viae reportant."

"But surely," said a voice from behind, that was neither wind nor tree nor bobolink, "These strange and different roads are not taking you home?" And a manly arm waved sadly toward the House of Correction.

"Oh, Mercy no!" I said, and laughed. He walked along with me, and pretty soon he proved, with great gusto and gesticulation that he knew our Catullus poem but not Professor Leonard's version, so I gave him that.

And then, suddenly, we were at the House, and he went in to visit his wife (I saw them together later) and I got my feature story about Ned Hogan.

Now what do you suppose that man's wife had done? I liked him.

Sincerely,

MARGARET EMMERLING.

#### EDITORS

PAUL GANGELIN

HORACE GREGORY

EARL HANSON

MARGARET EMMERLING

# The Ballade of the Younger Dons

OSCAR WILDEST.

I wish that I could sip my tea  
And stir it with unconscious care,  
Preoccupied, in manner free  
As Chesterfield who taught his heir  
How to behave and what to wear  
When out among the chosen few,—  
To drain a cup with gestures rare,—  
Just as our young instructors do.

I wish that I could always be  
As tactful and as debonair  
As he who quotes with jeux d'esprit  
Choice passages from Baudelaire,  
Those rakish things that poets dare  
To slip between a line or two,—  
A mild suggestion here and there,—  
Just as our young instructors do.

I wish that I could talk from three  
Till six on ancient silver ware,  
On little trips across the sea,  
On how I held a single pair  
Of queens, on how to brush my hair  
So that my baldness fades from view,  
On how to meet a lady's stare,—  
Just as our young instructors do.

Prince, you've the graces of a bear;  
Take counsel from my pen, and you  
Will catch a certain social flair,—  
Just as our young instructors do.

# Thirty Years Old

PENNELL CROSBY.

Lenore was a school teacher; she had been teaching sixth grade for eight years, and now she was thirty years old. Some of the years had been gay and some of them had been kind; now they were becoming a little humdrum, but good enough. The color in her cheeks had faded a little, and wrinkles had come around her eyes and mouth, but her dark hair glowed as softly as ever, and her gray eyes were still lovely. Only some of the savor and the interesting taste had gone out of things. She was thirty years old that day, and she remembered that she had read somewhere that a woman's prime is between twenty-five and thirty-five.

"I am at my zenith now," she said. "The top of my life—but I feel more like an apple tree that was nipped by frost and couldn't bloom—I wonder why?"

This was after school on an October afternoon. The spelling and arithmetic papers seemed, somehow, more of a bore than usual. The soft dusk had closed down, for it was late. It looked dark blue outside the windows. Passers by were only moving shadows in the darkness beyond her yellow-lighted schoolroom. She wondered who they were and where they went—flat inky brush-marks on a flat wall of dusk.

\* \* \*

At the boarding house at dinner that night there were three newcomers. Everyone surreptitiously looked them over when they sat down at the end of Miss Holbrook's table, and Lenore, too, gave them a friendly, curious glance.

Dorothy McCarthy seemed to know about them.

"They live near us," she said, "and the men both

work in the steel plant. The dark one and the girl have just been married—about a month ago, I think. Isn't she sweet?

"Who's the other man?" inquired Lenore, casually enough.

"Getting interested already? Oh, he's a cousin or some kind of a relative. I don't know very much about him. They say he was a sophomore at the university, but he had to quit school when his father died."

That night Lenore's usual ready flow of Irish wit was missing. She was wondering how a frost-nipped apple tree might feel when it couldn't bloom.

After dinner Dorothy introduced her to Mr. and Mrs. Ericsson, and they introduced Mark Olson to her. Lenore was small, slight and quick; Mark was very tall and blond; with blue eyes, behind shell-rimmed glasses, whose kindness seemed incongruous with the huge, hard muscles of his shoulders. Lenore looked up at him with a quizzical smile; and at once they were tremendously good friends. Her clever banter filled him with admiration; while his slow replies gave her somehow a sense of fierce delight. But she was thirty years old and he was going to be twenty-one in November. In spite of that, he was a man and not a boy.

\* \* \*

And so began a wonderful comradeship. It seemed quite natural that they should sit together at meals; and while Lenore kept the table laughing, Mark sat by and smiled appreciatively. She thought that no one had ever appreciated her as he did. After dinner they would stand in the hall and talk for a little while and then Mark would walk down with Lenore two blocks to the corner where she turned off; sometimes he walked home with her; and at least once a week he would say, as they left the boarding house:

"What about some movies?"

"What, indeed? You mean that you wish me to assist you to witness some silent drama?"

"Yep. Come on—there's a car coming." And they would run to the corner.

And in the movie theatre Lenore would steal small glances, in the gloom, at Mark's serious young face; and sometimes her eyes rested only on his strong, clumsy hands. He would watch the screen, often very bored, and sometimes he would bend over and whisper to her. He thought that she liked movies, because she liked to go to them with him; she always said that she had enjoyed herself immensely.

On the way home she would chatter drolly of hero and villain. Mark often wondered at his attitude toward her. He could not feel conscious of her fem-

inity. He thought of her as a quick-witted boy, masquerading, for a joke, in a disguise of skirt and wig.

And so fall passed into winter, and Christmas came and was gone, and at last it was February.

\* \* \*

It was a very cold night. Lenore came late to dinner, after everyone else was already in the dining-room. Shuddering from her cold walk she stood in the chilly hall taking off her coat, hat and overshoes, and trying to find places for them among piles of other coats and hats and overshoes. She hoped that Mark had saved a place next to himself, for she was low-spirited, and felt an almost physical longing for his warm friendliness.

When she entered the dining-room she saw at once that his place was empty, and she was first disappointed and then angry, for it seemed that he should have been there when she wanted him to be. The Ericssons were gone, too. Some family party, she thought. Dorothy McCarthy gave her a look from another table that tried to say something, but Lenore was buttering her bread with her eyes on the tablecloth.

Dorothy was waiting in the hall after dinner when she came out, and Lenore read calamity in her face.

"Do you know what has happened to Mark Olson?" she said. Lenore's eyes grew dark and staring. "He was hurt today at the steel plant—badly—they say he will lose his right hand."

"Not my Mark!" said Lenore, slowly, and then, with a hysterical laugh, that tried to be trivial, "No, no, Dorothy—it can't be so—you know you can't believe everything you hear!"

Mechanically Lenore put on her hat and coat and went away, forgetting her overshoes. Dorothy McCarthy called after her about them, and Lenore shouted "Golosh yes!" but she did not go back. She did not even wonder what Dorothy was talking about. She felt dazed and deadened, and her throat hurt strangely, but she kept thinking, "Dorothy's mistaken. She's always repeating gossip that isn't true. I'll see Mark at breakfast tomorrow—I'll go early and stay until he comes so I shan't miss him—I wonder what the Ericsson's phone number is? But it can't be true." And all the time a sinister inner consciousness was saying, "You know how many accidents there are in the plant. You know that he has one of the most dangerous jobs. You know that it's all true."

She hurried along in the icy air with the hard snow squeaking under her shoes. She did not know where she was going, but it seemed imperative that she should get somewhere. At intervals she moaned under her

breath, "My Mark!" and she thought of his hands—his strong square fingers, cut and calloused palms—and now, his right hand—crushed, broken, throbbing—oozing bright red drops of his young blood. And then, smiling pitifully, Mark trying to hide in his coat sleeve a wrist that lacked a hand. She wondered what he would do, and she wanted to put her thin arms around his big shoulders and cry, "Mark! Mark! I'm with you—everything I've got is yours." But she felt that she would present a ridiculous spectacle, and that it would be much better and more natural to tell him cheerful little jokes.

Somehow she found herself in a familiar street and knew she was on the way to the house where she roomed. She wished to be alone, with the door locked, in that warm small place among her own intimate possessions, walled away from the empty black street with the interminable stretches of impersonal gray snow. Her quick hard foot-falls clattered on the porch. She did not speak to the others whom she met in the hall. When her door was closed and locked she leaned against it breathlessly, and saw her own face in the mirror, as gray as a clay death mask with deep old lines on either side the parted, agonized lips and tears she could not explain rising in misery-widened eyes. Then, like a blinding light in darkness, came the knowledge that she loved him.

"How wonderful—how wonderful it would be," she thought, "to take care of him—to make him happy!"

\* \* \*

"Lenore!" said Mark, "What should I have done without you?"

Lenore sat beside his narrow hospital bed, and could not think of one clever word to say. It was the first time they had allowed her to see him.

"Your letters have been so good," went on his weak voice, "why, ever since I have been conscious there have been letters. When I first came to there were three of them—the nurse read them to me. They keep me morphined most of the time, but whenever I come out I read your letters. Old pal, you've been awfully kind to me."

"Don't speak so, Mark—you'll make me cry, I think, and that would be too silly. The letters are nothing. You would do the same for me, I know. But Mark—tell me—you're better, aren't you?"

"Oh, Lenore—I've found out something that's like the breath of life to me. They're going to save my hand. I'm glad that you are the first person I am telling—that sounds like announcing an engagement, doesn't it? It will be a messy looking hand—but I shall be able to work with it. Oh, I couldn't see any

way out before—except crippled, maybe dependent upon someone, and it was hard to think about that—but, Lenore, aren't you glad?"

"Oh, Mark, I am!" she said. It would be too selfish not to be glad for him. But somehow it seemed that there was reason for her to be sorry for something that she herself might be going to lose.

\* \* \*

In April Mark was convalescing, and almost every day after school Lenore went walking with him. At first there were only short walks just outside the hospital, with a nurse in charge of it all, but after awhile they could go for half an hour or even an hour by themselves. April in the north is not yet spring, but the snow was gone, leaving the streets an ugly gray grimed with smoke. Yet April means spring, although one fares abroad in a sheepskin lined coat, and the moon is frost-bitten at night.

At last they said that Mark could go for a longer time, and at ten o'clock on a Saturday morning that beamed with bright new sunshine, Lenore came to the scarred and battered door of the hospital to meet him.

"Isn't this grand?" he cried. "Why, Lenore, how well you look—how young!"

She had borrowed a pleated woolen skirt from the daughter of her landlady, it was frivolously short, and gave her short fur coat an unwontedly jaunty air. Her brown oxfords shone with polish, and she wore thick woolen stockings on her pretty legs, while for her head she had somewhere acquired a bright red tam o'shanter. Her face was flushed and eager—she did look young, much younger than poor Mark with his hollow cheeks.

"I've got everything ready!" she cried, "It's all in a basket at the butcher shop, where the man is picking out a wonderful steak for us, and we'll go gather it in."

When they reached the shop Mark insisted on paying for the steak. Lenore looked away while he fumbled left-handedly in his pocket for the money. She wished fervently that she might carry the basket, but she could not for fear of shaming him. He slipped it on his left arm and managed somehow, awkwardly, to open the door for her. And Lenore gloried in his pride.

There was a road leading up and around the hill that overlooked the city, and they climbed up a long way. The raw red rocks of the hill were shining with morning-melted frost, and chinked with wet red mud. Along the edge of the roadway, flaming high up against the clear blue of the sky, were glistening red and yellow willow bushes, with their slender twigs upstanding ardently.

"Spring's fine, isn't it Mark?" said Lenore, shyly. "Only to appreciate it fully they say one must be in love."

"Love!" cried Mark, scornfully. "Do you believe in that, Lenore? I used to, but I think now I am getting too old. It's better to have just good friends, like you. I'll show you a letter I had from a girl I used to go with at home—tell me what you think about it."

The letter was typewritten on a large sheet of stiff white paper—one small paragraph in the middle of the sheet.

"My dear Mark," it said, "So you have hurt your hand? Isn't that a shame! Everyone must feel terribly. I wish that I could give you more sympathy, but writing letters is such a bore, and besides I am very busy."

"Well, what do you think of that?" said Mark, indignantly.

"I can't quite make out," said Lenore, slowly "but I think that she cares for you—I guess I just feel it."

"Huh!" Mark said, shortly, "I certainly don't feel it. We had a scrap about a year ago—and now she's rubbing it in."

"I think you wish she would care," mused Lenore.

"No!" cried Mark, violently. "I don't give a damn about her—she's nothing to me, or ever will be."

"Come on, let's walk a little faster," said Lenore, "I guess I'm getting cold."

\* \* \*

It was the middle of June and the night before Lenore left for her home. School was over and she dared stay no longer. Her train was the next morning, but Mark was working and this would be the last time that she would see him until fall. They had been to the movies again and now they walked slowly home in the warm darkness under the stars—there was no moon. Lenore was framing words and sentences that would not be said, and Mark was thoughtfully whistling the air of a popular song—"I never knew I could love anybody, honey, like I'm loving you." He gave a certain plaintiveness to the melody—at least it seemed very sad to Lenore.

Suddenly he stopped in the middle of his tune. "Do you know, Lenore," he said, "I never believed that a man could have a woman for a *friend*, the kind of a friend that you have been to me. It's been wonderful—a revelation."

They had reached her rooming-house now. She knew that she must not stop too long talking to him, for he had to be at work early in the morning.

"Mark," she said in a voice that sounded to her strange and flat, "I wish you'd kiss me good-bye—

why, I haven't been kissed for an awful long time—nope, not since the last janitor left, and I keep wondering whether it feels the way it looks in the movies."

"Aw, Lenore, now stop your spoofing. Of course I will if you don't think me too amateur." And he did so. "There—was that all right?"

"Yes, you did just fine, Marky. And now I must go in."

"Oh, linger a little longer, won't you—you don't have to go yet!"

"Yes, I'm afraid I do—good-bye, Marky, take awfully good care of yourself—and—you *will* write to me, won't you?"

"Of course. Have a good summer. Good-bye, Lenore—good-bye!"

"You fool!" said Lenore to herself as she went up the dark stairway. "You can't hope any longer *now*, can you?" But she knew that she would.

\* \* \*

In July Lenore had appendicitis, and was operated upon. During her illness Mark did all the small friendly things, a matter of pale pink roses, a bright little note, and later a book and candy when she was convalescing. Lenore was thrilled by these things in spite of herself—she found that she was attaching undue significance to them, but, after all, it was very comforting to allow herself to think that he cared, even though she knew she was believing a lie. She saved the roses when they fell, and contrived to have a friend buy her a rose-jar of shining blue porcelain, patterned with a tiny tracery of flowers and leaves and birds, and in this she kept all the dried petals of his roses.

She wrote him a clever, impersonal letter. There was another one—she knew before she wrote it that she would never send that one, for it ran:

"Mark, my dear:

"Summer night, and deep music throbbing outside my windows. There is a tiny wistful moon, slipping fugitive behind the scraps of cloud, like one whose eyes are too bright with weeping, she veils her face.

"Music is emotional—it makes me think too much of you Mark. Oh, Mark your proud young head and yellow hair; the kindness of your eyes; and your mouth, dear mouth, like vermilion roses. I have built a hard, barren wall of sticks and stones—for they are all my scheme of things—to keep me from thinking too much of you, but tonight the melody from a weeping violin pushed them down into a heap, and I shall have to build up the wall again, to keep me from looking into gardens of flowers that I shall never have.

"But I cannot be the white stone image of Friendship any longer. I am a living woman, Mark, and I . . ."

Suddenly she tore the paper into shreds. "I can't write it—I can't!" she whispered with dry lips. Wry-mouthed she smiled. "I must have some shame."

\* \* \*

"Hello, Mark, hello! Yes, this is Lenore." Her heart pounded frightfully, and the hand that held the telephone receiver was trembling.

"I know you think me an awful piker," said Mark's pleasant voice, "but Lenore, I'm on a thirteen hour night shift now, and I sleep almost every day. So *that's* why I haven't seen you yet. How are you, and how's school?"

"Fine as silk, Marky. Yes, I wondered why I didn't see you."

"Let's take a little walk next Sunday," he suggested, "out by that bridge—you know. I'll be around at half past two or something like that."

"All right, Mark. I—I want to see you very much, you know."

At first she was angry at him for not calling her up sooner, since she had been there for fully two weeks—two terrible weeks for her—but then, almost immediately she began finding excuses for him. She remembered the awful moment when she got off the train and her eyes searched frantically among the crowds for him, among the blurred faces of strangers that passed ceaselessly under the lamps—and then there was the maddeningly cheerful face of Dorothy McCarthy, come to tell her that Mark would not be there. He was out of town, Dorothy had said, and had called her up before he left to ask her to meet Lenore, since he could not. And after that she had waited, with nerves that jumped at the telephone bell, or at footsteps on the porch. He was not at the boarding-house any more. The Ericssons had taken an apartment and he was staying with them, said Dorothy, who seemed to know everything. "If this is a Greek tragedy," thought Lenore, "Dorothy is the chorus, for she furnishes all the explanatory matter."

The jolting, jangling course of the rest of the week was like the winding tight of a tremendous spring. As the tension grew, Lenore dimly realized that on Sunday something would happen—something important, but she did not know just what. And as she sat by the window on Sunday afternoon, watching for Mark to come up the street, she felt that it would be a terrific happening, something strong enough to snap her into pieces as easily as one snaps an old, dry stick.

And then he came. Lenore found it very hard to talk, hard even to smile. Mark, too, was silent. At last they stopped under the bridge where they had been used to rest sometimes in April, when Mark's hand was in a sling, and covered with white bandages

that sometimes had red stains on them. Then there had been only dead brown grass under the bridge, and now there were tiny wild blue asters and golden rod, and one sumac bush with tattered leaves of passionate vermillion. Lenore picked one leaf and stroked it with her finger.

"Mark," she said, "how poignantly sweet life is! I have come to the fullness of mine, but it seems that I have never really lived till now. And now I have tasted a little of the flavor of it, and I want it all—the richness and spice and warmth of it—and afterwards I would be glad to wash the dishes and scrub the floor. I want it all—love, a husband, children, a home."

He did not speak, and so her voice stumbled on.

"Why are things changed between us, Mark? Tell me, I don't understand—have I done anything?" And then he saw that she was crying. He had never seen a grown person cry, and to see her cry shocked him.

"Why Lenore!" he said, taking her hand, "What is the matter? Are you tired, or sick? Please, please stop—you musn't cry, Lenore. What is the matter? Tell me! You must tell me."

"Can't you see, Mark?" she said with appalling clearness. "I love you." And although she had not intended to say them, now that the words were out, she was glad, for there was nothing more to hide. And then she wondered if she had said them aloud, for Mark did not seem to have heard. She wiped her eyes and said firmly. "I love you. I want you to marry me."

Mark was thinking to himself in agony, "This can't be true—it is all a nightmare, or else I'm going crazy." And then he looked at Lenore's flushed face and realized with a dreadful finality that it was indeed true and that he had heard aright. And then he could find no words.

"Lenore! Lenore!" he said, and again, "Why Lenore. I never dreamed that—" He could not finish.

She had lost all sense of shame, and she spoke with a terrible earnestness.

"You don't know, Mark—I could give you so much—devotion, loyalty, unselfishness, and a fullness of love such as no one has ever dreamed. I've seen life and I know it—but I have never known love before, and now that it has come it is greater than life, and stronger than death. I don't ask much, Mark—only to be near you, and to do things to make you comfortable—and sometimes to touch you."

She was waiting for his reply. He found that he could hardly speak. "I'm sorry," he said, and her



face went very white. "Oh, Lenore, you've been so much to me as a friend, but it can't be as you wish—I can't love you." He wanted to be kind to her, but it seemed that he was saying very cruel things. "Lenore—you wouldn't really want me—I'm too young—awfully young, and not so much of a fellow—and you—I've always thought that you were wonderful, and I've been glad and proud to be with you. But you would be unhappy married to me—and I couldn't marry you, anyway, dear." That "dear" came out instinctively, and Mark was surprised to hear himself say it.

"Youth goes to youth," he went on. "Even if there were no one else, we should be mismated. But do you remember the letter I showed you last spring from

a girl at home? I hated her then, but I saw her—two weeks ago—and I love her. She doesn't love me yet, but perhaps she will—I'm hoping." Lenore saw that his eyes held pain and longing. "So you see, my dear—and, oh, it is terrible for me to have hurt you."

She did not feel hurt, however, only numb, somehow, and tired. She noted that it was nearly dark, and was glad that it was time for them to go back. There would be school next day, and she was getting old. Spelling papers to correct—It was strange that things could go on after this had come to an end, but she was thankful that there would always be something that had to be done.

## Conciliation

MILDRED S. HILL.

Grey days pile one upon another,  
 And the sullen sun sulks  
 Too early across the lead river  
 Behind the hulk of the hill.  
     Garish arc lights—  
     Gaudy ten cent stores—  
     Gliding motor cars—  
 Prodigal moon, uncommon high.  
     It is Christmas season  
     You say.  
 My love came not  
     Today.

Low lights flit fitful on a stranger.  
 My fat jade Buddah,  
 'Most hid in grey-green vapor  
 Grins, the gargoyle spirit of incense.  
     Blue-green fumes—  
     Stilt, frigid phrases.  
     Like emerald-eyed jealousy  
 My green luster bowl—rare perfection.  
     It is Christmas season  
     You say.  
 Only a stranger came  
     Today.

Red hearts beat close for one another.  
 Rose lights soft glow—  
 Shades drawn, and in my luster bowl  
 That I so loved to see—  
     High lights, burning gold—  
     Red gold highlights—  
     Deep highlights, sobbing  
 For grey days' wait—conciliation.  
     It is Christmas season  
     You say.  
 The stranger is love  
     Today.

# The Fond Obsession

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

BY

JOHN H. CULNAN.

Characters:

O'Carolan  
The Fond Obsession  
Madge  
Clarence  
A Warden

*Scene.*—The fork of a highway, of which the trunk and the right branch traverse the stage from right to left. The left branch is concealed from view by a triangular wood, at the point of which, in the centre of the stage, stands a rustic bench. A rather diminutive balloon has come to rest at the edge of the wood, but is concealed from mid-stage observation by a large bush. The gas envelope is in a state of collapse alongside the basket. O'Carolan, an exuberant youth, clad in a blue Norfolk suit, is perched upon the edge of the basket. He is lunching upon a sandwich and a glass of wine, and complacently regarding, the while, his erstwhile steed. The hour is toward sunset, and the dusk is already gathering about the wood. O'Carolan tosses his glass away, dries his lips with a small napkin that he had tucked beneath his chin, tosses that aside, stretches, vaults over the edge of the basket, and gazes hilariously about him.

O'Carolan

Well, I'm ripe for anything,  
Be it pottage in a cottage  
Or a banquet with a king.

The Fond Obsession

*(merely a gentle, murmuring voice that O'Carolan is positive that he hears)*

Did you think to lose me thus?

O'Carolan

*(suddenly downcast)*

I can't see you.

The Fond Obsession

*(playfully mocking)*

I'll not free you  
Till you find me luminous.

O'Carolan

Candidly, I took to flight,  
Tired of hearing the endearing  
Paeans of a satellite.  
Come, now, won't you leave me, Voice?

The Fond Obsession  
Nay, I'll fly not.

O'Carolan

Pray, and why not?

The Fond Obsession

Why, because I have no choice.  
We must travel as a pair  
On this planet. Who began it  
We know not, nor need we care.  
Am I right?

O'Carolan

*(rubbing his brow despondently)*

It may be so;

I have wondered, aye, and blundered,  
From the state of embryo.  
*(brightening after a moment's pause)*  
Voice, I saw the open sea!  
How the breakers shower the acres  
Of the shoreland in their glee!

The Fond Obsession

Did you hope to sound the deep?

O'Carolan

It looks charming.

The Fond Obsession

And alarming.

Better look before you leap.

O'Carolan

I'm a thrall to happenstance.

The Fond Obsession

By volition? Eh?

O'Carolan

Submission

To the dictates of romance.

The Fond Obsession

Bravo, mate! And yet a dread  
Sets me doubting if this outing  
Be of happy motives bred.  
Tell me this—why do you strive  
Thus to flee me? In your dreamy  
Way of living could you thrive  
Were I not forever near

With a pretty, loving ditty  
To be chanting in your ear?

O'Carolan  
(*hand on cheek*)

My! Your breath is sweet and warm!—  
Would but Nature only mate your  
Melody to human form!

The Fond Obsession  
Would you then be flying away  
In abhorrence?

O'Carolan  
Nay, the torrents

Of my passion would betray  
What I've guarded hard and fast.

The Fond Obsession  
Don't dissemble. See, you tremble  
At a whisper of your past!

O'Carolan  
(*rubbing his brow*)  
There's a word I can't recall—  
(*drowsily*)

Peccadillo—'neath a willow?  
Nay, that isn't it at all.  
Lovely Voice, would you be sad  
If your singing, every ring  
In my ears, should drive me mad?

The Fond Obsession  
You're already quite insane  
To be drifting on the shifting  
Elements of hurricane.

O'Carolan  
Fiddlesticks. We left the sea  
In descending.

The Fond Obsession  
Comprehending  
How your base apostasy  
Would terminate, I could but laugh.

O'Carolan  
You're a sybil?

The Fond Obsession  
Well, I nibble  
At the art, but only half  
Understand it. In my mirth,  
Here I'll leave you, for 'twould grieve you  
If I followed you to earth.

O'Carolan  
Chide me long, for I deserve  
Nothing better.

The Fond Obsession  
Nay?

O'Carolan  
I'm debtor

To your love, and if I swerve  
From the pledge I make you now,  
May I perish.

The Fond Obsession  
Let no garish  
Colleen charm you from your vow.

O'Carolan  
Save for yours, I'll have no love.  
I was aiming at the flaming  
Beacon of that star above,  
Which the drowsy sun invites  
Forth to glimmer in the dimmer  
Reaches of the welkin heights.  
Goal aside, I'm on a lark,  
And, this splendid voyage ended,  
I shall make the earth my park.  
How I wish that you had shape!

The Fond Obsession  
(*laughing softly*)  
You would only leave me lonely—  
At my plainness you would gape.

O'Carolan  
After all, no corporal grace  
E'er could match your vocal stature—  
You are of another race.  
(*suddenly*)  
Hey! A mortal pair I spy.

The Fond Obsession  
Out of shyness, then, Your Highness,  
I'll take loving leave.

O'Carolan  
Good-bye.  
Aye, she makes my cheeks to burn.  
I'm tormented with these scented  
Kisses that I can't return.  
Oh Voice!

(*he listens*)  
Glory be, she's gone.  
(*his demeanor becomes defiant*)  
I was thinking that the blinking  
Phonograph might stay till dawn.  
No! I can't remain a slave  
To a murmur that's no firmer  
Than the echo of a wave.  
Why, I've sacrificed the truth  
To a magic that's grown tragic  
With the passing of my youth.

*(He has been peeping furtively around the bush, and draws back to the balloon as Madge, an audacious-looking girl, pretty though ill-clothed, enters from the right, barely a step in advance of Clarence, a washed-out, long-haired youth engaged in unfurling an impressive-looking manuscript.)*

Clarence  
(*darkly*)

You had better know my past.

Madge  
(*scornfully*)

And to hear a tirra-lirra  
I'd walk twice as far and fast.

*(She seats herself upon the bench and registers utmost scorn.)*

Clarence  
(*reading solemnly*)

I was born with pen in hand,  
And my parents named me Clarence  
As a sort of reprimand.  
In two decades I had earned  
Not a penny, although many  
Of my rhymes could be discerned.

Madge

If you'd spent that many years  
On the highways and the byways,  
You'd be over all your tears.

Clarence  
(*not perturbed in the slightest*)  
Driven thus to drunkenness,  
I was anchored to the tankard—  
Penless, then, and penniless.  
Penitence I felt, at length,  
And a sonnet written on it  
Showed no penury of strength.

Madge

Now I thank the Lord on high  
That I'd sooner sail a schooner  
Than to write an inkwell dry.

Clarence  
Epics in pentameter.  
Penetrating, scintillating,  
Spoke my soul's diameter;  
But my muse a penguin grew,  
Whereat, pending the unbending  
Of its wings, I hunger knew.

Madge

It's a wonder you're alive—  
There's no haven for a craven  
In the castle or the dive.

Clarence

I have paid the penalty  
Of a penchant for the trenchant,  
Which is barred in poesy.  
Pensioner have I become,  
Yet my metre still is sweeter  
Than the throb of pendulum.

Madge  
(*exasperated*)

Where's your dwelling?

Clarence

In the park.

(*pointing*)

There's the gable.

Madge

'Twill enable

You to find it ere it's dark.

Run along now.

Clarence

(*still impervious; waving his manuscript*)

Here's a theme

That the critic, analytic

As he may be, will esteem. (*Exit R.*)

*(Madge laughs lightly, then falls into a mood of depression. O'Carolan, who has been mimicking Clarence in pantomime, now makes a few little self-conscious preparations to present himself. Madge pushes a roadside stone about with her foot.)*

Madge

I would sooner be a stone  
Than to grovel for a hovel  
In the world that I have known.  
It's a sphere of sore distress,  
And old Friar Jim's a liar  
When he sings of happiness.

O'Carolan

(*stepping forward*)

Pardon me, do I intrude?

Madge

*(Leaping forward from the bench and staring alternately at O'Carolan and the balloon)*

Lord abiding!

O'Carolan

I was riding,

But my sky-horse buckarooed.

Madge

Are you man or are you elf?

O'Carolan

'Tis so mooted and disputed  
That I scarcely know, myself;  
But if man's a baffling blend

Of the bestial and celestial,  
Then I am a man, my friend.

Madge

And what county are you from?

O'Carolan

(*pointing*)

Over yonder—but I'll wander  
Constantly till kingdom come.  
I've been trying to run away  
From a fancy.

Madge

Now I can't see

Why you should—when I was gay  
I designed just such a ride  
To the regions where the legions  
Of the pixy-folk abide.

O'Carolan

You're acquainted with those realms?  
Let's go to them!

Madge

Nay, I'd view them

In the clouds above the elms—  
Just like stately ships they'd go.

O'Carolan

What! Imbedded in those dreaded  
Banks of unborn rain and snow?

Madge

They looked wonderful from here.

O'Carolan

All existence, from a distance,  
Wears a charming atmosphere.

Madge

(*satirically*)

We're the disillusioned pair!

O'Carolan

Let's join forces! Let our courses  
Flow as one!

Madge

(*still playful*)

And seaward fare?

O'Carolan

Aye, to sea! That's been my dream!  
Swelling billows for our pillows—  
Gentle trade-winds on our beam!

Madge

(*serious again*)

But the yachts, lad, canvas-strewn,  
Aren't a-plenty.

O'Carolan

Fully twenty

Did I count this afternoon

Madge

Aye, the nabobs' pleasure craft.  
With a vessel, would I wrestle  
Here in vain? Why e'en a raft  
I have thought to commandeer,  
Just to sever, once forever,  
All the chains that bind me here.

(*Regarding him thoughtfully for a moment*)

You're another who's forlorn.

O'Carolan

(*assenting*)

I've been jilted, and I wilted  
Like the fairy flowers at morn.

Madge

Ah! Some maiden broke your heart?

O'Carolan

All to pieces.

Madge

Passion ceases

When perverseness plays a part.

O'Carolan

She is nothing but a voice.

Madge

Why, how can she—

(*awed*)

It's the banshee!

O'Carolan

(*dejectedly*)

If it were, then I'd rejoice—

But you've sorrows of your own

That you nourish.

Madge

Yes, they flourish

Even deeper as I groan

At the hold they have on me;

And I'm hither and thither

In my mortal agony;

For my bonny boy was slain

By a rival whose survival

Is my curse—it was in vain

That I vowed a vengeance like—

All my valor turned to pallor

When the moment came to strike.

O'Carolan

Is it human to deplore  
That your record is not checkered  
By a deed that we abhor?

Madge

(weeping)

Just an hour of love I had  
Ere the whistle of the missile  
Came that robbed me of my lad.

O'Carolan

For that hour of ecstasy  
I would suffer even rougher  
Forfeiture. It seems to me  
That the memory of that hour,  
With its pathos and its bathos,  
In my loving heart would flower  
Through a life of misery,  
And its glamour would enamour  
Me forever.

Madge

(bitterly)

I can see

It is little that you know  
Of the passion, for the ashen  
Recollections do not glow  
If there's no more fuel to burn  
While we're youthful.

O'Carolan

To be truthful,

I have everything to learn  
Of these matters. Half my life  
I've been guarded and retarded;  
And a magic voice alone,  
Singing gaily, for my daily  
Tribulations did atone;  
But I flew the coop today!  
Give me sportive and abortive  
Romance. It is as you say—  
One has got to feed the fire.  
'Tis a pastime, love, and fast I'm  
Yielding to its warm desire.

(Madge sobs, and covers her face with her hands.

O'Carolan gently caresses her.)

Have I hurt you?

Madge

(faintly)

No, not that.

O'Carolan

Catapulting and exulting,  
We'll desert our habitat  
For the gayer lands afar,  
And we'll tarry on the airy  
Heights to greet the morning star.

Madge

(lifting her head)

I would like to go with you,  
But the older love would smoulder  
In my heart.

O'Carolan

We'll both be true

To the lover of the past.

Madge

That would place us on a basis  
Too precarious to last.

O'Carolan

(persuasively)

We'll be fellow nomads prime.

Madge

(softening)

You're forgetting that the setting  
Of the sun is scarce the time  
To be searching for a mate.  
Such a tandem, formed at random,  
Is a challenge to one's Fate.

O'Carolan

In the dusk I need the touch  
Of a pensive, apprehensive  
Little hand, and yours is such.

Madge

(yielding with a laugh)

The moon is full this night,  
And you'll see a Dulcinea  
Who may give you small delight.

O'Carolan

(reassuring her with an embrace)

My balloon I'll hide away—  
'Twill be overgrown with clover  
Ere I leave this island gay;—  
It is but a moment's work—  
You'll excuse me?

Madge

You may lose me

While you're at it.

O'Carolan

(striking a grandiloquent attitude)

I would lurk

In the forest and the glen,  
And I'd languish, love, in anguish  
Till I found you once again.

(He has tucked the prostrate gas-bag into the basket, and goes off at the left, rolling the conveyance before him.)

Madge

(gazing after him)

'Twixt the bard and aeronaut,

I'll hear laughter ever after  
 From the sport this day has brought.  
 Yet the sky-boy's silhouette,  
 In the twilight's mystic highlights  
 Sets me dreaming. I forget  
 That O'Carolan is dead—  
 Oh, I'm weary of the dreary  
 Life of longing that I've led.

*(The warden enters, breathless, from the right, and stops short, looking about him.)*

Warden

I'd have sworn 'twas here he fell,  
 For we reckoned to a second—  
*(Madge appears around the bush)*  
 Ah, good evening, mademoiselle.  
 Have you seen a crazy lad  
 Out a'flying?

Madge

*(after a pause)*

Are you trying

To beguile me?

Warden

He was clad  
 All in blue, and his balloon—

Madge

*(slowly)*

Was it scarlet?

Warden

Yes. The varlet

Stole it just this afternoon.  
 Then you've seen it? Say at once,  
 For it's very necessary  
 That we overtake the dunce.

Madge

*(in a low, deliberate tone)*

'Twas some while ago, I fear,  
 That he landed single-handed  
 On the second hill from here.

*(She points down the left branch of the highway, behind the trees.)*

First, they say, he burned the craft,  
 Then he scampered off unhampered.  
 You don't mean he's really daft?

Warden

Don't I! I'm his keeper, child.  
*(seating himself)*

'Twas the devil of a revel—  
 That's what made the boy go wild.

Madge

Do you mean a drinking bout?

Warden

No. A hoyden that he joyed in—  
 She's to blame.

Madge

I have no doubt.

Warden

Well, I'll run no more tonight,  
 For I'm jaded.

Madge

*(anxiously)*

He's evaded

You by air, but now you might  
 Overtake him on the trail  
 To the city.

Warden

It's a pity

That our motor-car should fail  
 Just when we'd caught up with him.

Madge

Was there reason for his treason?

Warden

No. 'Twas just a madman's whim.  
 He's delirious of late—  
 With a bludgeon some curmudgeon  
 Gently thwacked him on the pate.

Madge

*(blurting)*

It was just a month ago!  
 'Twas a gypsy!

Warden

Yes, a tipsy,  
 Swearing knave. You seem to know  
 Just what happened.

Madge

But the lad,—

He was dying.

Warden

No, just lying  
 Lifeless-like, though 'twas as bad  
 As a death-blow, for his head,  
 Once so agile, now is fragile—  
 Amnesia, the doctor said.—

*(condescendingly)*

—Means his memory's asleep.—  
 And he's haunted and he's taunted  
 By a voice that makes him weep.

Madge

Will this lunacy endure?

Warden

Yes, they fancy necromancy  
 Could alone effect a cure,  
 Though I've also understood  
 That by question and suggestion  
 They can do the patient good.—  
 I'm to blame for his escape—  
 I was yawning 'neath the awning—  
 It's the devil of a scrape.

Madge

But the airship—it's not plain—

Warden

'Twas a neighbor's. All his labors  
 In pneumatics are in vain  
 If the vehicle is lost.  
 I reiterate, 'tis bitter  
 Being the source of all this cost.

(rising)

Well, I'd best be going now.  
 If there's merit in the claret  
 At the next inn, I'll allow  
 That there's some joy left for me,  
 And the babble of the rabble—  
 It will sound like harmony.

(He disappears down the left branch of the highway.)

Madge

(clasping her hands)

It's O'Carolan once more!  
 Master Cupid, you were stupid  
 Not to let me know before.

(O'Carolan reappears on the right branch, in better spirits than ever.)

O'Carolan

Well, it's in a hiding-place.  
 They'll be never quite so clever  
 As to find a single trace.

Madge

(going to him)

Dear, O'Carolan, my love,  
 I've a query.

O'Carolan

Yes, my dearie,—

But by all the stars above,  
 How'd you come to guess my name?

Madge

(sadly)

You're enchanted.

O'Carolan

(gaily)

That's it, granted

That to love you with a flame  
 Everlasting is a charm.  
 Into drunkenness I've sunken—

(hastily)

Of the sort that does no harm.

Madge

Darling, look into my eyes.

O'Carolan

(confronting her squarely)

How you thrill me, dear. A filmy  
 Sort of vision in disguise  
 Settles o'er you like a mask.

Madge

(keeping him at arm's length)

God! Already I'm unsteady  
 At the prospect of my task—  
 Where were you a month ago?

O'Carolan

In a cloister—like an oyster—  
 'Twas a life malapropos.

Madge

(shaking him a little)

Where were you a year ago?

O'Carolan

(rubbing his brow)

I was pestered and sequestered  
 In the selfsame house of woe.

Madge

(sharply)

Nay, you're dreaming.

O'Carolan

(musing)

There's a word

That's a token of my broken  
 Dreams.—You'll think me most absurd.—  
 It's eluded me for years.

Though I'm human in acumen,  
 When I reach—it disappears.

(brightening)

But the devil take the past.  
 If the present moment's pleasant,  
 Hang the bygone! It will last.

Madge

(desperately)

Don't you mind the day we met?  
 You were dozing at the closing  
 Of a merry minuet.

O'Carolan

(lighting a cigarette)

Nay, I'm sure I can't recall.



Madge

It was Mayday, why, the heyday  
Of our lives! You caught a ball  
That I tossed with all my might  
Through the gateway, and you straightway  
Smiled, and, to my deep delight,  
Joined me in the laughing throng.  
'Twas a frolic more bucolic  
Than refined, and all along  
I could see your mild dismay  
As we reveled, half disheveled,  
On the village green that day.

O'Carolan

(yawning)

Nay, it's all like Greek, I fear;  
But your lyric panegyric  
Is entrancing stuff to hear.

Madge

(with increasing tenseness)

Your ennui prevailed on you  
To suggest a sweet siesta,  
Far from all the noisy crew,  
And we sauntered hand in hand,  
To philander, lacking candor,  
On a beach of silv'ry sand,  
And we watched, while we reclined,  
The Atlantic's lusty antics,  
But we could not speak our mind.

O'Carolan

(nonchalantly)

What a charming liaison!  
'Twas a jolly bit of folly  
By the seaside. Pray go on.

Madge

(fervently)

Oh, it may have been the sea's  
Fresh aroma, but a coma  
Fell upon us, and a breeze  
Cooled our faces, and I dreamed  
Of seeing yourself in every elfin  
Lover I had e'er esteemed.  
Then a horde of sprites began  
To salute us with arbutus,  
Shouting "Vive O'Carolan."

O'Carolan

(laughing)

All my incredulity  
Will diminish ere you finish,  
Through your sweet cajolery.

Madge

(crying now)

Oh, you fill me with despair!

O'Carolan

(caressing the arms that are standing him off)

Are you choosing this amusing  
Sport to rouse me, love? Beware!

Madge

(with fresh determination)

We awakened, and we sang  
Of the errant strain inherent  
In our natures.

O'Carolan

(rubbing his brow)

Ou! A pang

Seems to seize me right up here.—  
But I glory in your story,  
My beloved.

Madge

Listen, dear,

This you'll surely recollect—  
'Twas a flimsy little whimsy  
You suggested—

O'Carolan

(raving)

Retrospect—

It's an awe-inspiring thing—  
A narcotic—an exotic  
Drug that makes my temples ring!

Madge

(with all her power)

You suggested that we play—

O'Carolan

(wildly)

Memories flay us in a chaos,  
And we cannot break away.—  
There's a word I can't recall—  
Peccadillo? Neath a willow?—  
Nay, that isn't it at all.

Madge

(shouting)

We were going to play a game—

O'Carolan

Play it? Yea, mate, with a playmate.—  
There's an island with a name  
Something like it. Let me see—

Madge

Why, I mean a—

(She pauses for the word)

O'Carolan

(leaping high)

PHILOPENA!

Madge

Yes!

O'Carolan  
(*more rationally*)

My God! What ecstasy!  
(*Turning Madge's face to the moonlight, which  
now permeates the scene.*)

It's my lovely Mayday lass!  
Oh, it's early o'er the pearly  
Pathway to the sea we'll pass.  
And that forfeit, by the way,  
'Twill be better if my debtor  
Pay her score without delay.

Madge  
(*proffering a flower*)  
Here's a flower from my hair.

O'Carolan

Nay, love; losers can't be choosers —  
I'll decide a price that's fair.

Madge

Name it, then.

O'Carolan  
(*embracing her*)

I'll have for pay  
Your devotion.

Madge

Such a notion!  
Why, you've had it since the May.  
(*It's time for the CURTAIN.*)

## The Adventures of Gaucelm

IRVING M. RAMSDELL.

### Chapter IV. Concerned of what befell two Shipman rogues.

For in this dream Gaucelm kissed many maidens with shapely bare ankles and recked not of his wickedness. And why? Indeed, his fat wallet was well burdened with holy scrolls that such pleasant sin might be speedily written away. But lo, as he turned from these maidens his wallet contained no pardons but only gold and silver pennies. Then he shrieked with dismay at the surety of his damnation, whereupon a burly hangman with the look of Friar Bartholomew trussed him well, hand and foot, and made forthwith to hang him on a stout gallows-tree. He shrieked again, and suddenly he was wide awake, looking upward from the moss at the green leaves overhead.

He lay quiet a moment, thinking on his dread dream, then made to rub his eyes but could not for reason of a stout leathern thong about his hands. He tried to move his feet and rise but could not for reason of this same leathern thong wrapped securely about his legs. Then he felt a strange cold in the marrow of his bones, and closed his eyes that he might not see the hangman with the look of Friar Bartholomew, the butcher, standing above him. When he would cry out the cry stuck fast in his throat like a fish bone. His mouth and tongue were dry as though a stout hempen line already bound his tender young neck. Then he heard a voice. Strange too, this voice was high and sing-song, entirely unfit for one of the trade concerning of ropes and necks.

"For thee and for thee and for me and for me," said this voice, "and there is yet one of silver."

"Which shall be mine," said another voice with a

sound as of coming from a throat seamed and cracked like a wooden butter pipkin too long in the weather.

"And why, prithe?" asked the other voice.

"Firstly, Black Gil," said crack-throat, "Because I like not your manner of reckoning, here two and there two, and I doubt now the tally; secondly, it was I who trussed yonder good youth so neat for reason the aforesaid penny was justly earned; thirdly, and you like it not, I shall put me this bodkin through your ugly neck. Now, the penny, Black One."

At this time Gaucelm turned his eyes toward these voices to see what manner of men bound travellers on the king's highroad. Firstly he beheld one small and swart, clad in loose white breeches fashioned rudely of sail cloth and streaked with pitch. These breeches were topped by a silken doublet of finest China, but likewise streaked. His feet were bare as was his head, and hung across one eye was a patch, greasy as his skin. As Gaucelm looked this one thrust a silver penny sullenly to the other. That one, huge and red received it with great good nature.

"They follow the same trade," thought Gaucelm, for indeed, the red one favored his patch eyed companion in dress. His breeches were similarly sewn and filthy, as was the leathern jerkin he wore above them. And now, as Gaucelm cast his eyes about further, he took note of his wallet, empty and cast aside, knowing then whence came the debated pence. His book too, was being fingered curiously by him called Black Gil. Of his fine dinner he saw only the napkin cast carelessly upon the moss. Perceiving this he

sighed long and deeply, for feeling no further fear of straightway hanging, he discovered that he was passing hungry.

Meantime, the patch-eyed one examined into Gaucelm's book with flagging interest, at last tearing a page roughly and throwing the volume impatiently from him.

"I weary of this learning, Wilkin," said he, "here are nothing but black marks; no pleasing thing to look upon. Methinks these clerks are odd fellows and would make but indifferent shipmen."

"That is as may be," observed he called Wilkin, "moreover I call man a fool who tears such a book and recks not. And it be a holy book and heaven should smite thee? Art not filled full enough with sin but to tear holy books?"

"Bah!" said Black Gil, but set the book aright upon the moss nevertheless.

"And touching yonder clerk," continued Wilkin, "I have seen such as he to climb a ship mast with you or any other, Patch Eye."

"Nathless," persisted Black Gil, "it is half a league full to the ship and we pass a bold yeoman with this trussed clerk clerk he will doubtless misgive our purpose. . . Come Wilkin, a slim sharp bodkin through his tender young neck will save us grief to come."

"Art not filled full enough of sin but must be slitting clerkish throats?" cried the Red One. "I have said that he shall come aboard the ship, an I am gain-said, I shall crack thy pate!"

Now at these words Gaucelm felt it meet that he put forth his judgment. He looked upon Black Gil who had drawn a knife that hung from a lanyard within his doublet.

"Indeed, good sir," said he, eyeing the knife with some misgiving, "put up your whittle. I would as soon go upon the sea though it is passing strange that to see the world in peace must make such choice."

Black Gil looked down at him evilly from his one eye, but the red Wilkin made answer.

"You are exceeding fortunate, youth," said he, "for now you shall see not only the land but the sea as well. This very even shall you be a shipman."

"Alas," sighed the Gaucelm, "and even without dinner."

"Look," said Black Gil with great fierceness, "shall we burden us on a long road with an unwilling youth?"

"And did he not say himself willing?" replied Wilkin in heat. "Again I charge you, put by your bodkin." But the patch-eyed one stood sullen and still he made no move to sheath his dagger.

"Good sirs, good sirs," wailed Gaucelm, "has it always been that peaceful travellers must become shipmen to keep bodkins from their necks?"

The two pondered on this awhile. Then with an evil glitter in his lone eye Black Gil made answer.

"No, Clerk," said he, "there are countless things one must do to keep his throat sound. Indeed, there are the times when nothing avails against a slim, sharp bodkin. . . . And," he continued after looking fondly to his knife, "as the sun is low and the ship far, methinks that now is some such time!"

At these words he rose up suddenly and moved upon Gaucelm. At this the other cursed and threw himself after, receiving a vicious knife blow for his incautious haste.

"That for thy extra penny!" cried Black Gil and then they grappled fiercely.

Gaucelm who misgave how it should go with him however the fight might turn, shouted lustily for help.

Wilkin had no weapon within his hand when the evil Black Gil turned upon him, but he fell to with none the less good will. The struggle was swift and fierce. The fighters trampled to and fro on the moss, upon the trussed Gaucelm, upon the book, upon the snow white napkin. Black Gil thrust vainly with his knife till at last Wilkin laid him upon the moss with a knee in his midriff, and he gasping sorely for wind. Then as Wilkin plucked at his jerkin to draw forth his own long dagger, the patch-eye squirmed from him like an eel, and, striking upward, dealt him a deadly blow under his ribs. Wilkin groaned and fell coughing blood from his mouth. Black Gil bent over him, prodding with his knife until the red one lay quite dead of many grievous wounds.

"Thy silver penny cost thee dear, Red Wilkin," said he, starting up from the corpse.

He gathered all the coins, two gold and seven silver, thrusting them in his silken doublet. Then he turned to Gaucelm who had been still of fear since Wilkin fell.

"Ah, sir clerk," said he, "I had near forgot of you. How meet to lie beside your doughty champion," and he reached for the knife that had done Wilkin so ill.

On perceiving this Gaucelm bellowed his best, first for mercy and then for help. Gil glared in rage at this frightful uproar, and then, regaining his knife, leaped toward Gaucelm to stop it forever.

But Gaucelm's lungs served him well that day. Black Gil stopped half way in his progress with sore dismay in his eye and a gurgle in his throat, all for reason of a cloth yard shaft put neatly through his

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neck. And so he fell, breaking the arrow in falling.

"Robe of St. Dunstan, these are evil doings for the king's highway! And curse me, an the indecent rogue has not snapped my gray goose shaft with good arrows at eight pence. Truly, 'tis a hard reign for a freeman."

All this Gaucelm heard of a tall fellow, leather clad, with strung bow in hand, a huge bill belted on thigh, and a bristling quiver slung across the shoulder.

"Good sir," said Gaucelm, "an you but untruss me here, you shall have what arrows two gold and seven silver pennies will buy."

(To be continued)

## Open House

PENNELL CROSBY.

Yesterday

Many people about whom I do not care,

Thronged this room,

Drinking orange-golden tea,

Talking of nothing.

Let us open the windows and throw away the withered  
flowers.

There are many disturbing presences, and the room is  
crowded.

Harsh voices are hard to forget, and

Forced laughter, awkward gestures,

Words, hands, faces.

Let us sweep up off the floor, along with the crumbs  
of macaroons,

The tattered scraps that souls have sloughed off

Brushing against each other.

Scraps of gray and dark red and mud-color.

But, look! There is one silver thread shining on the  
floor,

Because you, too, were here.

## Three Men and a Concert

JOHN WEIMER.

Two young men were going to a concert. They persuaded a third to go with them. The original two knew a lot about music. They had studied the great masters and were familiar with their work. The third knew nothing of music, but he loved nature as he loved few other things in the world.

So they went to the concert. The first two pounced on the program and studied it. The other looked at it once or twice, but that was all, for it was largely foreign, and he knew no languages. More than that, he did not know music.

Soon the first two began to criticize the order of the program, saying that the wrong thing was placed first, and the wrong thing was placed last, and that either might well change position with the middle.

But names meant nothing to the third; so he sat quietly back, waiting for the music.

After the first number, the original two applauded loud and vigorously, expressing their entire approval and satisfaction by generous smiles and significant nods of their heads. The other young man did not applaud and was respectfully silent, but not from any studied purpose; he hardly knew why.

The second number brought forth not so much applause from the first two men, but the third now knew why he did not applaud; it seemed almost sacrilegious to him to despoil by a barbarous clapping of one's hands the emotion and calm which the artist had just inspired.

But there was another reason why he did not ap-

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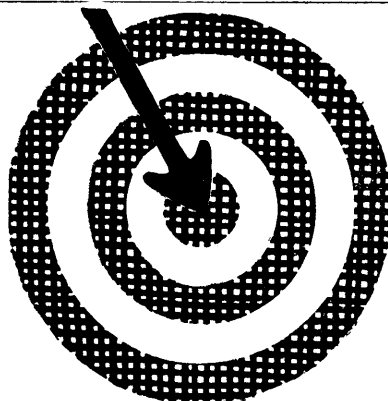
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plaud. He did not think he would tell the other two about it. He had noticed during the last number that if he closed his eyes and no longer worried about the applause, the music was painting pictures he dearly loved. He had seen the story of the year in that piece of music—how she dressed her youth in tulle and chiffons of living green with here and there a splash of color, how she made her summer clothes of the well-chosen colors of advancing womanhood, with always a touch of green to remember her youth, how in autumn she marked her wardrobe with sombre hues of deep brown and deeper red, with the green ever less evident, and how at last in winter she assumed garments of white velvet with here and there the brilliant green of a fir tree which seemed to say that the spirit of youth could never die.

A dashing number followed, and in that he saw the stream of water near his boyhood home tumble and dash over a steep ridge, leap down—majestically down—and then rush away in a torrent below. He could see the sweep, the grandeur of the spectacle. The mist and foam at the bottom rose for him just as it had done so many times before. The water rumbled and splashed as it had always done. Then the

music stopped, and thunderous applause shook the concert room. The musician bowed. But the young man thought only that the artist's hand had been rudely snatched from the canvas.

Other music that night revealed to him things he had always known and loved—the whistle of the wind around a pine, and the melancholy of a tree dropping its leaves of brown and orange. The last number was rippling and quiet and infinitely sweet. It seemed to him a tranquil valley through which a little stream was flowing.

He was glad the other men did not talk to him on the way home. They were too busy with an affair of their own to bother with some one who knew nothing of music. But the young man was seeing new beauty in the indigo sky and sapphire stars. The other two were growing angry over an argument about the artist's technique.

When they came home, the first two stayed up late, still arguing technique. But the other slept. He was so happy, for he dreamed of the wind whistling around a tall pine and carrying a message from it to the oak below, and of a tranquil valley in which sparkled and played a little brook.

## Dust From a Bookshelf

DIASKEUAST.

"Well, Dye," said the editor to me as I came out of a rather good cafeteria. "The contributors have fallen down again. Give us two pages this month."

It is no compliment to be treated thus even by an editor, and I strenuously object to being mere filler. Therefore I call again upon all who write to come to the aid of Dyaskeuast and crowd him out of print.

To get down to business, I was intrigued by the following comment in the *New York Nation* upon—but let the *Nation* speak for itself—"That Pollyanna of the Trenches Lieutenant Coningsby Dawson has reviewed John Dos Passos's brilliant novel 'Three Soldiers' for the *New York Times* to the tune of Insulting the Army.

"How doth the little Conings-Bee  
Improve each shining hour!  
He gathers honey from a book  
And sweetly says it's sour.

It's gall, he says, remembering  
That truth is never bitter;  
And makes the parlor patriots  
Agree, approve and titter."

"The Penny Whistle," a collection of what Bert Leston Taylor considered his own best verse during the last eight years, has just appeared. It brings B. L. T. back to us wonderfully, for it contains many of the things which made us all love that genial column conductor.

Doubleday, Page has just published the most gorgeous edition of Mr. Gay's "Beggar's Opera" imaginable. It is illustrated with colored plates by Claude Lovat Fraser. The entire work is beautiful.

Since I was interrupted last month, I have read both Floyd Dell's "The Briary-Bush" and Tomlinson's "London River." I was disappointed in neither. "The Briary-Bush" surpasses "Moon-Calf" in many ways; while "London River" gives me a feeling of having recently been abroad, investigating the shipping of London Town.

Gerhart Hauptman, well known to all students of the contemporary drama, is said to have refused the Presidency of Germany on the simple grounds that he was too busy writing a play to attend to the business of that office. The play is a trilogy, "Der Grosse Traum."

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"He held his pen in trust  
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The passing of Henry Austin Dobson recently at the age of seventy-one years, may well bring these lines to the minds of all who loved his delicate work.

W. L. George has been cogitating the question of how far a woman can follow "advanced ideas" with safety to herself and others. He has just published a novel dealing with this problem entitled "Ursula Trent."

W. Somerset Maugham has written another novel about Tahiti and an artist: "The Trembling of a Leaf."

There is now a second volume to the Monroe and Henderson anthology *The New Poetry*.

A book of verse by Zona Gale is announced by Macmillan. "The Secret Way," in verse form, is

said to vary from Spenserian stanzas to free verse with many intermediate forms. This book should be of particular interest to Wisconsin people.

"Another book I think is slick  
Is 'Mr. Waddington, of Wyck.'" sings F. P. A. in "The Conning Tower," of May Sinclair's latest effort.

In imitation let me say  
Although I'm not a Hamsun fan  
I rather like his book called "Pan."

Macmillan has added another volume to the Chekhov translations: "The Schoolmaster and Other Stories."

If I were to be cast on a desert island and could take only one book with me, I should have no hesitation in choosing a Sears and Roebuck Catalogue, unabridged.

## Mors Amoris

GUY K. TALLMADGE.

When the low moon  
Dreams o'er the sea of night  
And the stars swoon  
Through their cycles of light,  
When from the vale,  
Laden with odours rare  
Soft breezes fail  
In thy beautiful hair;

When sleeping flowers  
After the ardent day  
Make sweet the hours  
That slowly drift away  
And on the waters,  
Sapphire, and murmuring,  
The sea-god's daughters  
In the cool moonlight sing;

When on the sand  
Where my sadness lies dumb,  
Thou, hand in hand  
With thy new lover come,  
The moon no more  
In her slow wandering  
Shall kiss the shore,  
Nor the sea-maidens sing.

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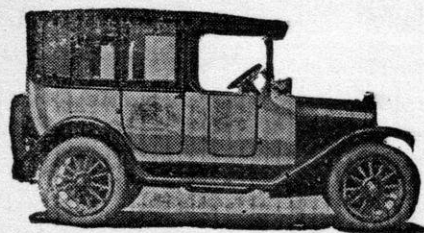
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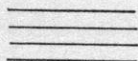
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