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*The Wisconsin  
Literary  
Magazine*

Volume XIX



Number 8

Randolph Bourne

Vilas Prize-Winner

The Time Table of Destiny

Downdilly

PUBLICATION OF THE STUDENTS OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

TWENTY CENTS A COPY

June, 1920

Democrat Printing Co., Madison, Wis.

***I**F you don't believe in Co-operation, just observe what happens to a wagon when one wheel comes off.*

*The co-operation and service given to the University men and women in their many publications has created the GREAT GOOD WILL that the*

*Democrat Printing Company enjoys.*

# The Wisconsin Literary Magazine

Publication of the Students of the University of Wisconsin

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Volume XIX

Madison, June, 1920

Number 8

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WHO can name the date since which Senior classes have been greeted at the close of their last collegiate year by Senior editorials, reminding them that the springtime of Varsity life, the happiest season of their lives, is over, and that stretching before their eager eyes, past the summers, lie the winters of labor in the Great World of Work? These editorials are an invocation to the idealism of youth, a high calling to noble ideals, clarion notes to speed them out to reform the sad, mismanaged world, and to make all things new. The custom is covered with ivy from its age. Shall new tendrils of this ivy fail to stretch upwards, fail to unfold new leaves, because they sense the critical winds of this impatient age?

Much has been made of late, much has always been made, of the perplexity of those who stand on the Varsity threshold, facing outward, and find themselves puzzled, perhaps harassed by a sense of uncertainty, of indecision. Even now, they have not made up their minds; they are still asking themselves, What shall I do next? Yet, possibly we need not give ourselves

too much trouble about them. They will go out to seize the chance most likely, the first acceptable job, turning, should that fail to satisfy, to try another. They are not weaklings, these Seniors, but vigorous, quickminded, full of faith in their own abounding energies. We likewise have faith in them, knowing that each must and will solve his individual problem, individually; knowing, too, that none of them will be much swayed in that decision by parting words, as they pass outwards. Encouragement, yes. They, like the multitudes before them, will be cheered, will feel a glow of pride and gratitude, mixed, it may be, with some impatience and some humor at all the odd things said about them as they stand, feeling all eyes upon them, on this little Varsity eminence. It all suddenly matters much less than they supposed it would, four, or perchance six years ago. They have sucked this orange dry; the realization grows that they must wring their recognition of worth from a very busy world, somewhat careless of university graduates. Their vision looks beyond the walls, sobering them, because the call to their energies is greater; they may not be equal to its tasks, but it will be a splendid game, at least, and who, in his heart, doubts his capacity to meet its demands? There is in them the fire of youth; youth which often poses as blasé, but which is eager in its heart, and idealistic.

What, then, of this idealism? It is practical idealism with them, is it not? Its foundation is sound resolve to find a suitable place in the world's work for their distinctive energies' fullest expression, and, where altruism enters, to put through practical measures of alleviation in those fields of personal interest to each, which need remodelling. Those who feel a burning of some half-articulate, but deep-seated, religious instinct, seek for God most commonly now in the hearts of men and women; desire that somehow many other men and women shall be enabled to live a fuller, freer, more

splendid life because they themselves have lived. Their former youthful zeal to rebuild the world has been checked, sobered, and steadied by a perception of the intricate complexity of all problems in a world where the machinery seems to be running wild, the engineers at cross-purposes with one another, and too many impossibly utopian programs proposed for scrapping the old works and installing new models.

The majority have no high-worded theses of reform in their pockets. Such theses as they have worked out, they leave to be black-bound among the other ancient things for their successors to finger over. They desire to make a place for themselves among men, and who shall doubt the possibility? Amid the strife and din and dust of old things crumbling, new things still half-formed, the limit of their achievement is surely only the limit of their intelligent will and effort. In this dawning of a new age, opportunities are big—as big as any man can handle—and these, our Seniors, still on the Varsity threshold looking out, are big enough to see them, seize them, use them to the fullness of their powers. We believe in these Seniors; we expect of them that hard, intelligent work which has made the name of WISCONSIN known and respected all about the world. We believe in them because they believe in themselves.

D. B.

It is our interesting fortune on the Hill to hear parts of the "LIT" both praised and blamed. We wish that more of this could be given a wider public through our pages, for it is frequently amusing, and not seldom instructive. Always it stimulates, and we should like to share enjoyment, especially where specific contributions are involved. Why, for instance, do you like a certain story and not another? More particularly, what would you like to read in the "LIT," if you had the choosing? Write us about it with Caesar's point and brevity, then the publishing of your note may bring you what you want to see, for our contributors are a live group of people, able to create, and too broad-minded to be disturbed by criticism.

We are indeed interested in criticism of both kinds, destructive and constructive, so your opinions along either line are welcome; but the "LIT" must confess itself to lean more to the side of appreciation than depreciation, is concerned first and most eagerly with dis-

covery, encouragement, new possibilities and openings: in short, in criticism, the "LIT" is more concerned with the wings of the eagle than with its talons. But it welcomes the gift of the whole bird, so it be alive, with some fight in it.

Another thing. There are those who have had stories, poems, or articles accepted by this magazine, who are likewise contributors to what they call the "regular magazines." Passing the sensitive point there, we only wish to call the attention of our contributors, past and possible, to the fact that THE WISCONSIN LITERARY MAGAZINE is regularly brought to the attention of a number of periodicals of wider circulation who are thus cognizant of the work done in the University by coming writers, and to whom these writers are no longer entirely unknown when the time comes for a more personal relationship. It should be remembered that editors are just as anxious to get acceptable stories as authors are to find accepting editors! Do not feel, therefore, that in giving in material to the "LIT" you are immolating yourself wholly without recompense upon the altar of Varsity pride; all writers whose past work merits it are brought specifically to the attention of the editors who have manifested an interest in our publication, with the end in view of getting their work before a wider public. Our feeling is that prizes and other more or less artificial stimuli used to goad students into writing will never be quite as effective as a direct attempt to aid them forward with their literary ambitions. We admit that this is not wholly altruistic, for the result we expect is a steady improvement in the quality of work that the "LIT" is itself able to obtain. We are keenly interested in seeing how this works out.

D. B.

## EDITORS

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FRANCES DUMMER	VICTOR SOLBERG
JANET DURRIE	CHARLES L. WEIS
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# The Time Table of Destiny

**A**UTHORITIES differ as to exactly when it was that old John Fergus began meeting all the Tellbyville trains. Hank Smiley, who has smashed baggage at the depot for more than a score of years, affirms that old Ferg, shadowed by his forlorn dog, Beelzebub, commenced going regularly to the depot four times a day on the July morning in 1998 when the Tellbyville Times printed a Spanish war casualty list changing "killed in action" to "missing" after the name of John Fergus, Jr. But Harry Wilkins, dean of Tellbyville cabbies, vehemently insists Old Ferg started his punctual appearance at every train-time the morning after Company K came home from the war without Young Ferg in ranks.

When I took the place of ticket agent at Tellbyville the old man's depot visits had become town tradition. Everyone knew that he met the trains, winter and summer, fair weather and foul, as punctual as a clock, year in and year out. Everyone had heard why he met them, too; but with the exception of a few of Tellbyville's older citizens who went out of their way to offer a "Howdy do, Ferg," no one noticed him any more than they did the semaphore tower on the depot roof or the barber pole in front of Schaeffer's Shaving Parlors just across the tracks on Main street.

I had been on duty for the C. C. & K. railroad for a week or more before taking any cognizance of Old Ferg. Then one particularly rainy morning in May I saw him leaning against the depot under the eaves to escape the downpour, just before the Northland Express was due to arrive at 7:18. There were a few passengers buying tickets that morning, and as I looked out of the window I was particularly impressed with the forlorn appearance of the round-shouldered old man, hunched into a corner, with his hands plunged deeply into the pockets of a shabby overcoat, and a soggy slouch hat pulled far down, so that only a fringe of white hair was visible below the crown of his headgear. When he turned to look down the tracks, I saw a face that was long, and drawn, and sharp, with hard, deep furrows. Only the man's eyes relieved the impression of hardness. They were a light, watery blue, and although deep-set below shaggy brows in his thin face, they were shallow pools, in which hot, turbid emotions might have swum long ago, but which now merely mirrored

cloudless sky. They seemed almost unseeing eyes. When Old Ferg shifted them evasively there was no indication of perception registered by any alteration of his features. The contrast between the softness of his eyes and the hard, unflinching cruelty of the rest of his aspect struck me forcibly.

When the Express pounded in and came to a stop I saw him watching two or three drummers and Mrs. Jed Billings alight from the train. As Conductor Ike Martin bawled "all 'board," the old man uncrouched from the corner, and without any apparent disappointment or interest in anything about him slouched off down the platform. A brown, mangy-looking hound, blind in one eye, appeared from the region of the baggage room and trotted limpingly to catch up to his master. The man disappeared sloshing up the wooden sidewalk of Main street with the dog following closely at his heels.

The picture faded quickly from my mind, but was recalled when the 11:15 train came in and I saw the forlorn man and dog again loitering on the platform. They returned in the afternoon for the 3:20 train and at night, for the 6:43. After I had noticed that they were punctually present four times a day during the rest of the week I asked Jimmy Watson, the telegraph operator, who the old man was, and Jimmy told me. From that time on I went out of my way to have a cheery greeting for Old Ferg whenever I happened to pass him on the platform. He always responded gruffly, in an absent sort of way, as if he were disinclined to recall his mind from an empty contemplation that could not be ruffled any more than could the placid quietude of his eyes.

When Jimmy had related Old Ferg's story I began to take more interest in a certain dingy, squat little frame shop that hunched itself up to the sidewalk at a corner far down Main street where the business establishments of Tellbyville dwindle in size and in prepossessing appearance. Over the door a weather-beaten board bearing traces of gilt flourishes carried the words, "John Fergus, Signs," painted in large, bold letters, originally red with black shading, but now quite worn off in places. Another smaller board below bore the cryptic inscription, "Hiest Prices Pade fur Leetle Calves Skins Not Morn 2 Dase Old." I was puzzled that the town sign painter should be such an atrociously bad speller until I learned more about Old

Ferg's eccentricities. He knew how to spell as well as the high school principal, or any one else in Tellbyville. Queer orthographical combinations were merely his way of attracting attention to signs that he painted for customers who were not too fastidious in the matter of taking liberties with the alphabet.

Old Ferg's business declined after young Jerry Mills set up a rival sign painting establishment. One by one the older man's triumphs of letters and art disappeared from storefronts along Man street, to be supplanted by the more up-to-date products of the Mills Sign & Bill-posting Company. The Tellbyville Opera house and a few of the older business establishments still had their signs and placards painted by Old Ferg, so that he eked out a bare livelihood on slack employment. Schmidt's meat market continued to do business under a huge sign lettered with ornate blazonry and having representations of a large, red cow at one end, and a fat hog and a turkey with fan tail prodigiously spread, at the other. This sign would have faded with the other glories of Old Ferg's faded-out art if Gus Schmidt had not engaged him to retouch the flaring letters and the animals with fresh paint once about every five years. Another of his masterpieces appeared in the canvas streamer representing a weather-beaten Santa Claus about to descend a wobbly-looking chimney. Every year as regularly as December 1 came around, Solomon Viggs, of Vigg's Variety Store, climbed a ladder in front of his establishment and flung this banner to the breeze; every year his customers noticed that the Santa Claus looked slightly more faded and jaded, and that there were more holes in the chimney where Tellbyville small boys had thrown snowballs through it. But the banner was as much a town institution as Vigg's store itself, and there would have been an element appreciably lacking in the holiday season if the sign did not make its reappearance annually as it had done for thirty-odd years.

People said that in his earlier years Old Ferg had lived roughly and riotously. It was asserted that he could drink more and swear harder than any citizen in Tellbyville. I believe the latter claim when, on the one occasion that I ever really saw him roused from his apathy, I heard him loose a torrent of blasphemy that fairly seared and blistered the June atmosphere. That was the time his dog, Beelzebub, was killed.

It was characteristic that he should have given the dog that name—not that there was anything diabolical in the disposition of the animal; but Old Ferg was known to be an atheist, and in the days that were gone he had boasted of it, apparently delighting in attempts to shock the people of a generally pious New England community. It was said that he was accustomed to

affix his signature to many of the signs he painted as "Old Ferg, the Wickedest Cuss in the State."

When I first knew him he had not made that boast in fifteen years. The tempest had died out leaving only the hard lines of his face. It was related that when he received the news that his only son had been killed at Santiago he went on a drunk that lasted for a week, then never caroused or so much as touched a drop of liquor again to the day of his death. Sometimes grief may be so overwhelming and complete as to be a purge of character. Perhaps it was so in the case of Old Ferg. From that time on, it was said, he shrank within himself and lived alone in the back room of his little shop with his memories, and the dog that had been his son's pet.

The only occasions that roused him from his subjectivity were the Tellbyville celebrations of public holidays. An avocation in addition to sign-painting Old Ferg formerly had made drums. The sign on his shop advertising for calf skins was reminiscent of the times when he produced large, deep snare drums, for which there was great demand by bandmen in our county and a wide surrounding region. These instruments were the wonder and admiration of all the small boys. Occasionally one of the marvelous drums that Old Ferg made still is seen at a lodge picnic or G. A. R. reunion in Tellby county, but they have all gone from the town. The last one was Old Ferg's own. According to his wish, found scribbled on a scrap of paper among his effects, a muffled funeral march was beaten on his drum as he was borne to his final rest, then the instrument was buried in the grave with him.

Old Ferg as a member of the Tellbyville Fife and Drum Corps had played in every public celebration that the oldest citizens could remember since the Civil war. I heard him only once, but that one occasion, a Memorial day observance, left a vivid impression. The fife was shrilling "Marching Through Georgia." Old Ferg wore a suit of faded blue regimentals. The slouch was gone from his step, his shoulders were thrown back, and his fingers fairly flew in manipulating the magical drumsticks. There was the first glint of fire I had ever seen in his faded eyes. His head was erect and his gaze riveted unseeingly on the flag that old Major Bagley was carrying at the head of the procession. Perhaps Old Ferg was looking backward through the years to his own soldiering days, when he had drummed at the head of his regiment on Sherman's march to the sea. More probably, as some people suspected on such occasions, he was thinking of the time when all Tellbyville had turned out to speed Company K on its way to the Spanish war.

Old Ferg had marched proudly that day, because in the column that followed, John Fergus, Jr., was swinging along in the first squad with a bit of swagger to his gait and the laughter and pride of youth and adventure dancing in his light blue eyes. The hound, Beelzebub, hardly more than a puppy then, trotted along beside the young soldier as the company proceeded down Main street to the depot, with the whole populace swarming about waving flags and tear-dampened handkerchiefs.

The parting scene was just about as all such scenes are, with pride and sadness pulling opposite ways at the heartstrings. Old Judge Harris made a farewell speech for the town, and there was a good deal of embracing and forced gay bravado in the farewells. The flags waved more wildly than ever as the train rolled out; and when the fife and drum corps contributed a renewed outburst of martial music, Old Ferg beat his drum so vehemently that he drove one of the drumsticks through the head of the instrument.

When the crown had broken up, Harry Wilkins, who from the box of his ancient hack probably has seen more little personal incidents of town history than any other Tellbyville citizen, relates that he espied Old Ferg sitting on the platform behind the baggage room. His broken drum was beside him, and he held Beelzebub clutched tightly in his arms. Looking off with that faraway look that he had, he was cursing bitterly in the way that only Old Ferg could curse. It was his way of feeling grief. He drank all the rest of that day in Pete Palmer's saloon until he was as tight as one of his own drums, and he did not sober up again for the rest of the week.

When the news came that Young Ferg had been killed in action, Tellbyville people knew it would just about break the father's heart. They tried to keep it from him all day, but he read it in the Times next morning. The storm of his grief spent itself in a solid week of hard carousing. After that it began to be noticed that Old Ferg was changed. The lines of his face were deeper, his hair seemed, if anything, whiter, and he held more aloof from his few close acquaintances. The fire had been quenched in his eyes, and the former occasional faraway, unseeing look was always there. Some shook their heads when they saw that look, saying to each other that his sorrow had affected the old man's mind.

Young Ferg had been a wild youth lacking in filial consideration and possessing all his father's failings. But he had been all that Old Ferg had; and under the hard crust of "the wickedest cuss in the state," paternal love had smouldered more glowingly than anyone ever suspected. From that time on, Old Ferg and Beelze-

bub never were separated. Because the dog had been his son's he lavished a silent affection on the beast.

When two months subsequent to the first report of Young Ferg's death the Times received a dispatch changing "killed in action" to "missing," the town noticed that the sign painter straightened up a bit and walked with a quicker gait. Only a little while after this the Tellbyville volunteers returned. Old Ferg was in the drum corps, beating his deep drum with as much spirit as ever. He seemed nervously alert; there was an expectant look in his eyes. When Company K piled off the train into the open arms of the townspeople he was seen to be scanning the coach platforms eagerly. At last all the boys had detrained, and the order was given to "fall in" in Main street for the procession to the town hall where the welcoming banquet was to be served. Fifer Moses struck up "When Johnny Comes Marching Home." Old Ferg rattled off the first measure on his drum before he realized what he was playing. Then it hit him suddenly. His Johnny hadn't come marching home. He faltered, His hands dropped at his sides. He slung his drum over his shoulder, stepped out of the column which had begun to move, and elbowed his way through the marchers to the sidewalk. Those who saw him make his way home down Main street, with Beelzebub tagging at his heels, said that he cursed softly to himself all the way. Everyone knew he had dropped out of the parade, for the rattle of his snare drum immediately was missed, and although Doc Smithers pounded the bass drum with doubled energy, it was a flat sounding fife and drum corps that escorted the returned heroes to the welcoming ceremonies.

Harry Wilkins is sure that it was the day after Company K's homecoming that Old Ferg and Beelzebub began meeting all the trains. For the first few months Tellbyville citizens tried to humor the old man's hope by giving him encouragement that Young Ferg would be in almost any day. At these assurances he seemed to brighten a bit. After nearly every disappointment of meeting a train someone would overhear him talking softly to the dog.

"Never mind, 'Bub, never mind. Johnny will surely come—he'll come. And we'll be here to meet him, won't we, 'Bub?"

The hound would wag his tail and gently growl a reply. But those who overheard shook their heads behind Old Ferg's back. Sergeant Bill Ormsby had brought back a story that made the citizens of Tellbyville think Young Ferg never would reappear in his home town. Ormsby said the boy had been transferred from Company K to another company during



the stay in Cuba, and the word had come to him that Johnny had deserted from that outfit.

"Missing! Hump! I guess so," he would say with a sneer. But neither Billy Ormsby nor anyone else in Tellbyville ever let that version get to the ears of Old Ferg. He kept on meeting all the trains, day in and day out, month after month, seeming to grow just a little more bent, and pathetic, and hopeless from year to year. No one overheard him voicing confidence any more to the dog. Beelzebub aged, became partly blind and limped along behind his master. When I became ticket agent, man and dog had been making all the trains for fifteen years, and as I have related, no one was paying particular attention to them any more.

Then came the June morning that marked the separation of Old Ferg and his dog. They were standing on the platform, just as I had seen them scores of times, waiting for the 11:15 train to arrive. Old Ferg was leaning slouchily against a post, with Beelzebub curled at his feet, showing only occasional signs of animation by snapping at flies. I had not noticed a scrawny cat slinking along the platform, but the hound's head immediately went up as he sniffed the air quizzically. The next moment, with a loud bay he was on his feet, lumbering swiftly after the cat. She escaped in a flash by climbing one of the wooden posts supporting a depot arc light; but Beelzebub, with his bad sight, plunged blunderingly on, catapulting against one of the sturdy legs of City Marshal Dan Ryan. This the hound grabbed and shook, growling satisfaction at the capture. The teeth of the old beast were nearly all gone, so that his bite could not have been nearly as bad as his bay. But Ryan was quick-tempered and impulsive, far too much so, as I have thought, for the position he held. First he let out a hoarse yell, then, with the dog still futilely clutching his trousers leg, he pulled his revolver and shot the beast twice through the head.

The next moment I saw Old Ferg, shaken with rage, his features livid and his fists clenched, charging down the platform. His lips were twitching, and from them came a seething flow of oaths that withered and burned. I have never heard any creature so crowned with blasphemy as was Marshal Ryan in those few tumultuous moments when Old Ferg's anger and his grief mingled and burst into a combustion of searing, scornful phrases. Ryan turned from surveying the dead dog, his face purpling with anger at the lurid personal epithets. He steadied himself, ready to meet the rush of his assailant, as Old Ferg flung himself against the ample expanse of brass-buttoned blue coat and sought to sink his fingers in Ryan's pudgy, red throat. It was no even match. The big officer swung his club mercilessly. Perhaps he did not intend to treat the old man quite so roughly,

but it is certain that he did not stop pummeling until he had beaten his white-haired antagonist into insensibility.

The news of the affray at the depot spread rapidly through Tellbyville, as such things do in a small town, and nearly everyone had heard about it before it was confirmed in a somewhat flippant account in the Times. Judge Harris's court was full of expectant listeners next morning when Old Ferg, his head swathed in a wide bandage, was arraigned in the tier of chairs behind the rail allotted to "plain drunks" and other petty offenders. Those who expected a sensation of any sort in the court room were destined to be disappointed. The passion had died out of the prisoner's face, and although the lines of his visage may have seemed a little more rigidly set than usual, his pale blue eyes were as soft and unseeing as ever, as he gazed straight out ahead of him, at nothing in particular, although his glance might have taken in on the opposite wall the mocking words of the sign "Keep Smiling," which he had painted years before for Judge Harris. The crowd was even cheated out of the chance to hear Marshal Ryan, who blustered in pompously, tell his story of the affair on the witness stand, for Old Ferg entered an immediate plea of guilty when the assault and battery complaint had been read to him.

Judge Harris looked at the prisoner silently over his spectacles for a few moments. Some in the room thought he was going to be lenient. Both old men were members of the Tellbyville G. A. R. post. But the judge never allowed any personal matters to come between himself and his sternly interpreted conception of duty. He stiffened and frowned at Old Ferg, who stood a little stooped and unashamed, looking not at the judge, but vacantly, far away, through him, or back of him.

"Twenty days," said Judge Harris.

For three weeks Old Ferg was not seen at the Tellbyville depot. We all knew he was serving out his sentence at the neighboring city of Grantsburg, the county seat. Jimmy Watson and I were speculating upon whether he would continue meeting the trains when he had completed his term, or whether the humiliating experience would shame the old man out of coming to the depot, where he daily would have to meet Ryan. In fact, as a result of our argument, Jimmy and I put a small wager on the issue, Jimmy affirming that the depot visits would be discontinued, while I held that the practice of so many years had become a habit which Old Ferg could not abandon even if he should choose to do so. Jimmy thought he had won when on the morning of the twenty-first day after his incarceration Old Ferg did not appear to meet the 7:18.

"Wait, Jimmy," I said, "He'll come for the 11:15."

Sure enough, promptly at 11:10 he slouched down the platform, utterly ignoring Marshal Ryan, who with a disdainful sniff and a toss of his head stalked on toward the baggage room.

Perhaps I jollied Jimmy too much about his bad judgment, for he paid his bet rather peevishly and seemed anxious to change the subject.

"Did you hear that Mike Collins has been laid off as engineer on the 11:15," he remarked, somewhat irrelevantly. "Guess he was getting too old for a passenger run. I understand they've put him on a freight. New man takes his place today. Don't know who he can be. Don't think there's anybody on this division who can quite fill old Mike's shoes."

I did not have time to answer Jimmy's speculations, for the whistle of the 11:15 sounded, and a moment later we heard her throbbing up the track. Suddenly a woman screamed. There were a number of exclamations outside. I hurried to the window. Everyone was gazing down toward the end of the platform nearest the approaching train, where there was a mite of blue to be seen directly in the path of the locomotive.

"It's little Mary Ryan," someone cried.

There seemed to be no one near the child. I caught a flashing vision of Hank Smiley, the baggage man, sprinting with all his might toward the three-year-old tot. A rod or so behind him came Marshal Ryan, the child's father, running as fast as his girth would permit, his face a white mask of terror. The engineer had seen the child and was tooting shrill, short, frenzied whistle-blasts. It was certain that Hank was too late. Then suddenly another figure was seen lurching across the platform toward the little girl, nearer than any of the others.

"Old Ferg!" gasped Jimmy, but my sight seemed blurred in the excitement, and I could not recognize who the man was. I only saw him make a dive and a desperate attempt to scoop up the tot and toss her to one side and safety. It was too late. The locomotive loomed hideously tall and black above them and struck them both just as Old Ferg caught the child up in his arms. The deathly shriek of emergency brakes mingled with the hysterical cries of women, and I closed my eyes to the sight.

A moment later the locomotive had come to a grinding stop just outside the ticket office. Above the hiss of the exhaust I heard a torrent of curses poured

out in a familiar voice. It was the voice that had cursed the city marshal on the same spot when the dog was shot three weeks before. They were the same, round, ripping oaths. Certainly no two men on earth could curse with the withering fervency of Old Ferg.

"Then he isn't dead!" I thought, and the lump went joyously out of my throat, where it had risen in the moment of the crash.

But when I reached the platform, a tall, sandy-haired, middle-aged man in jumpers, cap and goggles was slouching down from the locomotive cab. His face was long, and hard, and deeply lined. His mouth twisted into an almost cruel expression as he ripped out oath after oath, including one particularly fearful one that I had never heard on any man's lips until Old Ferg uttered it as he assailed the city marshal. When the engineer removed his goggles I saw a pair of limpid blue eyes, looking quiet and undisturbed, although his whole nervous system had been unsteadied by the accident and he was venting his perturbation in the flow of blasphemy. Tom McGuire, the fireman, followed him shakily down the cab steps.

At the other end of the platform a small group was gathered about the two still forms of an old man and a little child. They said that death was practically instantaneous, and that Old Ferg was mangled beyond recognition. I never waited to see the spectacle myself.

Ten minutes later the train got under way again. I could hear the engineer still muttering curses in a somewhat subdued fashion as he opened the throttle and the wheels began to turn.

"Who was that new flannel-mouthed engineer?" I asked Jimmy, as the last coach swung past.

"Don't know him," Jimmy replied. "He never had a run on this division before. Wait, though, Snodgrass, the conductor, has filed a report here to be wired to division headquarters. I'll see."

He scanned the sheet of paper for a minute. Then he looked up at me with a queer light in his eyes.

"Bill," he said, and I thought there was a catch in his voice, for Jimmy has a little girl about the age of Mary Ryan, and I knew the accident must have shaken him. "Bill, you know how Old Ferg always used to say he'd meet the train his son, Johnny, came in on? Well, Bill, he did. Look here."

My glance went to the place on the paper where Jimmy was pointing to the list of the train crew, and I read the words, "John Fergus, engineer."

—TAYLOR MERRILL.

# Randolph Bourne

(An Essayist of the Past Twenty Years)

"Bitter-sweet, and a northwest wind  
To sing his requiem,  
Who was  
Our Age,  
And who becomes  
An imperishable symbol of our ongoing,  
For in himself,  
He rose above his body and came among us  
Prophetic of the race,  
The great hater  
Of the dark human deformity  
Which is our dying world,  
The great lover  
Of the spirit of youth  
Which is our future's seed-----  
In forced blooming we saw  
Glimpses of awaited Spring."

(From James Oppenheim's "Randolph Bourne")

"In the case of a positive living spirit like Randolph Bourne," wrote the *New Republic*, "death is an accident against which every feeling revolts. Bourne, by intention as well as necessity, pressed against the edge of life-----"

At the time of his death in December, 1918, Bourne was but thirty-two years old. A hunchback from birth, he had to overcome not only this initial handicap, but the burden of extreme poverty. Even as an undergraduate at Columbia in 1911, he had attracted the attention of Mr. Ellery Sedgwick, the Editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, by his brilliant and vigorous reply to Mrs. Comer's "A Letter to the Rising Generation." From that time on for several years, he was a regular contributor to the *Atlantic*. While he was getting his master's degree at Columbia, some of these essays were collected into a volume entitled, "Youth and Life." After a year abroad, he became one of the contributing editors of the *New Republic*. Those of his articles which related to education are gathered into a volume "Education and Living," which is being used in connection with University courses on education. He was immensely interested in the radical movement in economics, art and literature, and became one of the editors of the *Seven Arts Magazine*. This magazine was suppressed at the outbreak of the war. Meanwhile, he published a volume on "The Cary Schools,"

and compiled a series of contributed articles under the title, "Towards Enduring Peace."

A disciple of John Dewey, he had been forced to sever himself from the pragmatic school of philosophers at the outbreak of the war. His volume, "Youth and Life" is interesting as the most brilliant exposition of the pragmatic philosophy by a non-professional, and as the most challenging application of it to life. His heretical position on the war shut many doors to him, and he lived from 1917 to the time of his death on the returns from occasional book reviews and articles in the *Dial*. His death came suddenly, whilst he was in the midst of writing a tract on *The State*, which is now included in a posthumous volume, "Untimely Papers."

A short life and a slender literary output! And yet the tenor and course of his life and his writings indicate such brilliancy, such vigor and such courage that I chose him in preference to a number of far better-known writers,—the kindly Dr. Crothers, the piquant Miss Repplier, or any one of the brilliant group of contemporary English essayists.

For if all the glib platitudes we hear everywhere about education being the solution of this or that problem, if all the emphasis on youth as the hope of the future, mean anything at all, the work of a young man who could speak for his generation in terms of their hopes and aspirations, of their cultural and moral problems, is more than usually significant. Youth has had too often to depend for expression upon an older generation which is either too amused or too disinterested and disapproving to be trusted. And Youth itself is too turbulent, too beset with obvious failings for adequate articulation.

"How shall I describe Youth," asks Bourne, "that time of contradictions and anomalies? The fiercest radicalisms, the most dogged conservatisms, irrepressible gayety, bitter melancholy, all these moods are equally part of that showery springtime of life. One thing, at least, it clearly is: a great rich rush and flood of energy. It is as if the store of life had been accumulating through the slow, placid years of childhood and suddenly the dam had broken and the waters rushed out, furious and uncontrolled, before settling down into the quieter channels of middle life."

There follows on this introductory paragraph in his volume, "Youth and Life," description of the aspirations, the hopes, the struggles and the weaknesses of

\*Winning essay in Vilas Prize Contest, May, 1920.

youth, which show sympathy with it. That sympathy is marked by fairness to even those pursuits of youth with which we know he could not have had much in common. They show an understanding of youth's failings. "Nothing is so pathetic as the young man who spends his spiritual force too early, so that when the world of ideals is presented to him, his force being spent, he can only grasp at second-hand ideals and mouldy formulas." Bourne's educational works try to point out some system for coordinating education with life so that "the flood of life may be checked in the direction of pleasure" and burst forth in another—"in the direction of ideals."

Like most moderns, he explains a good deal of the failure of these youthful aspirations in terms of circumstances,—economic, moral and cultural. But he says in reply to an accusation on this ground, "I am aware that to blame your surroundings when the fault lies in your own character is the one impiety which rouses the horror of present-day moral teachers. Can it not count to us for good, then, that most of us, while coming theoretically to believe that this economic situation explains so much of our trouble, yet continue to act as if our deficiencies were all our own fault?"

"Explain," is the word Bourne uses; not "excuse." For his mind is ever the sympathetically analytical participant in the life of youth.

The youth which Bourne represents and idealizes is the incarnation in action of the pragmatic ideal. He acts on the assumption that if we are the result of a certain type of evolution, we can yet so affect our environment as to change its course and make it significant. In the struggle of ideals, Youth is "the incarnation of reason pitted against the rigidity of tradition." It "puts the remorseless questions to everything that is old and established, Why? What is this thing good for?"

The life youth advocates is the experimental life. Here there is no hierarchy or rule by formula. "It is good to be reasonable, but too much rationality puts the soul at odds with life. For the rational ideal we must substitute the experimental ideal. Life is not a campaign of battle, but a laboratory where its possibilities for the enhancement of happiness and the realization of deals are to be tested and observed. We are not to start life with a code of its laws in our pocket—but we are to discover these principles, as we go, by conscientious experiment."

Into that laboratory, the whole of life must be brought. Morals, religion, education, the economic system, our cultural present and past, all these must be and are subjected to youth's critical analysis. "We

must have the attitude of the scientist, but we are able to surpass him in daring and boldness.----Human nature is an exhaustless field for investigation and experiment. It is inexhaustible in its richness and variety."

And the experiment, if only we have the proper attitude, will be a great and good thing. "Faith and high courage as well as reason have a place in that experiment."

Indeed, in Bourne's early writings, the quality of faith and courage, of spiritual sincerity and candor, or devotion, makes him sound like one of the old crusaders. Life for him is an adventure: "Thus in its perils and opportunities in its satisfactions and resistances, in its gifts and responsibilities, for good or for evil, life is an adventure. In facing its evil, we shall not let it daunt or depress our spirits; we shall surrender some of our responsibility for the Universe, and face forward working and encouraging those around us to cooperate with us and with all who suffer, in fighting preventable wrong.---- We shall never cease to put our questions to the heart of the world, intent on tracking down the mysteries of its behavior and its meaning, using each morsel of knowledge to pry farther into its secrets and testing the tools we use by the product they create and the hidden chambers they open. To face the perils and hazards fearlessly, and absorb the satisfactions joyfully, to be curious and brave and eager,—is to know the adventure of life."

Bourne realizes that in this crusade, the newer generation no longer talks about unselfishness and self-sacrifice and duty. But that is because we no longer "tend our characters like a hot-house plant." This is a changing age, and the part youth plays must be in the struggle for the social good. "We feel social injustice as our fathers felt personal sin."

Religion for him is more than ethics. It is the projection of that faith of imagination which will give strength to the ideals we are striving for. For him, as for James, faith and imagination outleap and forecast science.

He was bound to come into conflict, even in these early days, with the conservatives in all fields. His book reviews and articles show a thorough appreciation of all in our cultural past that was fine and good. But always he emphasizes the possibilities of the present and the future. He might have said with Witter Bynner:

"Perhaps they laughed at Dante in his youth,  
Told him that truth,  
Had unappealably been said  
In the great masterpieces of the dead:—  
Perhaps he listened and but bowed his head

In acquiescent honour, while his heart  
 Held Natal tidings,—that a new life is the part  
 Of every man that's born,  
 A new life never lived before,  
 And a new expectant art;  
 It is the variations of the morn  
 That are forever, more and more,  
 The single dawning of the single truth,  
 So answers Dante to the heart of youth!"

In literature, he deplores our "cultural humility." Appreciation of the classics by no means dulls him to the great stream of creative American literature that is coming into being. In fact, Bourne is intensely American in his entire outlook, his daring and his courage. On the other hand, his enthusiasm for the new literature did not blind him to its faults. He could write of Dreiser's "Genius," "For all its dull, rather cheap texture, the book is set in a light of youthful idealism,---- Of sordid realists Mr. Dreiser is certainly the most idealistic----" He could appreciate the creative spark of youth in the work of a retired college president, and could condemn that "hide-bound radicalism" which characterized some of his fellow-fighters. He might tire of the "wearying obsolence" of the discussions of the humanists, and yet deplore the amount of energy spent by certain American essayists in combatting an imaginary Puritanism. "Mr. Sherman, an arrant Phlistine, is dangerous," he cleverly remarks, "because he makes philistinism sound like belles-lettres. Mr. Mencken----makes literary art sound like vulgarity."

An ardent admirer of Maeterlinck, whom he beautifully eulogizes in his "Mystic turned Radical," he could yet know that in "The Unknown Guest," "Maeterlinck had "stepped over the line."

Bourne himself had a style so vigorous, so colorful, so pungent and brilliant, that even Professor Paul Shorey, in his extremely unfavorable review of Bourne's "Education and Living" cannot but admit the power of this volume by one of "that fellowship of stern young men of the new age."

Bourne is of all youthful radicals, the freest from their failings. He can be clever and striking and sarcastic. His genius for apt analogies is illustrated in a remark he makes on Huncker's art: "He has always swum gloriously but he never gets wet through with the salt of discrimination;" but he never yields to mere cleverness. He is caustic in his denunciation of that school of thinkers who condemn all that is new and creative, but acriminous and petty he never is; and this stands out in contrast with the attitude of his critics, who stand supposedly for the Greek ideal of poise. He is full of energy and ardor, the more remarkably

so for his handicap, but he escapes the bluster of the energetic man. He is self-analytic but not self-centered.

For the man was too much a lover of his fellows ever to become objectionably egocentric. Indeed, it might be said that for Bourne, the Adventure of Life was to a great extent, The Excitement of Friendship. "My friends, I can say with truth, since I have no other treasure, are my fortune." He is critical of his friends, as he is of all life, but he sets forth for himself the "Life of Irony" as against the cynical attitude or mere blind adherence; and the ironist "has rubbed out the line that separates his personality from the rest of the world." "There is but one weak spot in his armor, but one disaster that he fears more almost than the loss of his life, a shrinkage of his environment, a running dry of experience. He fears to be cut off from friends and crowds and human faces and speech and books."

That sympathy and understanding of his friends he showed in his occasional character sketches,—"Fertus," "A Friend of Mine," "The History of a Literary Radical," "Mon Amie," "An Autobiographic Chapter," "The Professor," and that sombre war portrait, "Below the Battle."

At the outbreak of the war, then, Bourne held a uniquely high position among the younger American intellectuals; and the older generation viewed him with respect, if not with approval. Prior to our participation, Bourne had shown great sympathy in his writing for French ideals, and had consistently denounced the tradition of Kultur. Dozens of articles on American life and literature showed him to be fully in touch with it, economically, politically and culturally. His internationalism, however forced him to oppose the war.

That opposition was no mere pacifism. It was truly a position of conscientious objection. His attitude meant the loss of many of his friends, and for one who depended so much on his friends, the loss was tragic. "Since our friends have all become woven into our very selves, to part from friends is to lose, in a measure one's self---- And since each friend is the key which unlocks an aspect of one's own personality, to lose a friend is to cut away a part of one's self." It meant that his contributions were acceptable to only one or two of the periodicals for which he had been writing.

Even more than all these, Bourne's attitude meant the loss of his old beliefs. It could never be true of him that he relied, as the editor of the Untimely Papers says he once did, "on the intellect as a programme maker for society." His high faith in courage and the creative impulse were too much a part of him. But the attitude toward the war of the intellectual he had

been associated meant for him a "Twilight of the Idols." Dewey and the school of pragmatic philosophers he had to throw over. For, in the crucial test, he felt that they had not insisted on the use of the "creative intelligence" to bring something new and hopeful out of the old hopeless struggle,—the European War. The "concepts" of the pragmatists seemed to lack "percepts." Particularly did he feel the tragic irony of the fact that it was the participation and the utterances of the intellectuals that made the war palatable to so many. President Wilson's phrases left him cold. "And the intellectuals are not content with confirming our belligerent gesture. They are now complacently asserting that it was they who effectively willed it, against the hesitation and dim perceptions of the American democratic mass.

Out of the tragic despair that came upon him in the last year of his life, he wrote, in vivid contrast to his earlier articles: "When you come as an inhabitant to this earth, you do not have the pleasure of choosing your dwelling or your career. You do not even have the privilege like those poor little shivering souls in 'The Blue Bird' of sitting about, all aware and wondering while you are chosen, one by one to take up your toilsome way on earth. You are a helpless victim of your parents' coming together. There is denied you even the satisfaction of knowing that they created you, in their own bungling fashion, after some manner of a work of art----" "We all enter as individuals into an organized herd-whole in which we are as significant as a drop of water in the ocean, and against which we can about as much prevail. Whether we shall act in the interests of ourselves or of society is, therefore, an academic question----"

Not that Bourne had been blind to the realities of life before. He had written, "Old people seem often to be resting on their oars, drifting on the spiritual current that youth has set going in life or 'coasting' on the momentum that the strong push of youth has given them." And so though "youth rules the world," it does so only when it is no longer young, but "is a tarnished, travestied youth that is in the saddle in the person of middle age." Even then he wrote, "The tragedy of life is that the world is run by these damaged ideals."

As a matter of fact, Bourne never quite gave up his seemingly hopeless struggle. As late as 1917, he could write in his review of the works of Dostoevsky, of man "as a being with his feet in the mire and his gaze turned toward the stars, yet always indissolubly one in feet and eyes and heart and brain."

Was his fight worth while? The courage of his

spirit cannot fail to draw forth our admiration. We are not sufficiently removed in point of view of time to judge of the truth of his prophecies on the war. Was he right when he wrote in "The Collapse of American Strategy" that in entering the war we had given up our real power to be an influence for world peace?

Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons, in her review of the "Untimely Papers" writes, "Randolph Bourne would have repudiated the role of Cassandra----he was too ardent and vital a person to linger among emotions no longer fresh and too much the artist to be trapped into self-exploitation. The Reader of 'Untimely Papers,' however, can not fail to recognize the pertinence of the ungrateful role to the single American writer who succeeded even partly, in expressing minority opinion about the American participation in the War of 1914-1918----. He had little interest in the government, but in the people he was loth to lose faith. Bourne has an unlimited capacity for scorn, but he steadfastly rejected that state of dismay over lost values with no compensation in sight which we call cynicism."

Mr. Oppenheim, who writes the introduction to the volume, says of Bourne, "His place in the American tradition is secure." I do not see how we can know whether or not it is. Nor do I know whether his fragment on The State is "the most effective and terrible indictment of the institution of the state which the war has yet brought forth." But I must agree that "a great man died with a great work unfinished."

In spite of "The Twilight of Idols," Bourne is still the best and most enthusiastic literary exponent since James of the pragmatic ideal. He is also its most severe accuser, especially in so far as it claims to relate philosophy to life.

He is even more, "the very soul of the young world," especially of the American young world. "No never of that world was missing in him; he was as sensitive to art as to philosophy, as politically minded as he was psychologic----."

Even in those last days, he called out, "Every man should realize that his life is an epic." His, alas, was a tragic epic.

One of his fellow-workers has said of him, "He was a flaming rebel against our crippled life, as if he had taken the cue from the long struggle with his own body. And just as that weak child's body finally slew him before he had fully triumphed, so the great war succeeded in silencing him." And another wrote, "Randolph Bourne was a part of this revolt; its blood pulsed in him, he breathed its air. Built of a happier nature than most of us, in him the intellectual tendencies

of an intelligentsia which was crudely and blunderingly engaged in finding itself, had already finely flowered."

If Bourne's life was a tragedy, it is also now, as it was then, a clarion call. He knew how to think, but he was not merely an intellectual; he supplemented thought with vision and vision with action. He knew the value, to use the words of one of my schoolmates, of both street-lamps and stars. Is his call to youth the voice crying in the wilderness of our twentieth century civilization? We cannot tell. But we are not to

plead, "art for art's sake," and let this eloquent pleader for the ideals of youth go unheard. "Oh, ye of little faith, awake and strive" is still his cry to youth, in the name of its ideals. In these days of hopelessness of the peace that has followed on the war, it behooves us to open our hearts and minds to him, and to say with him, "We believe in ourselves; and this fact, we think, is prophetic for the future. We have an indomitable feeling that we shall attain, or if not, that we shall pave the way for a generation that shall attain!"

ELSIE GLUCK.

## Our Frosh

FROM across the hall comes to my ears the sad syncopation of a third-class saxophone, lustily blown by the only Freshman in the house. He came to Madison and the university with the proud reputation of having played jazz music in some of the best bar-rooms in Milwaukee, where the inspired clientele encouraged him in his unique conception of harmony. Bereft of the aid of a trap-drummer and trick pianist, the Frosh endeavors to make himself a complete orchestra, and plays all of the variations of each piece, with the natural result that whatever melody there may have been is completely eclipsed. He jumps octaves, squeaks in high C, rumbles in bass, and otherwise disports himself until injunctions are demanded by the more civilized roomers. When this happens, as it usually does each evening, he smiles sheepishly and suggests that we close our doors. We explain vehemently that he is but a frosh with a small "f," and he finally bows to our united demands, and lays the instrument back in its case.

This only changes the form of his persistent activity. He now lounges easily into the room where the rest of us are gathered, sits down in the best chair available, and breaks into the middle of the conversation. He doesn't know what we're talking about, but that makes no difference in his young life. He speaks learnedly on any subject, giving advice gratis, explaining to his less fortunate friends how it really was, and generally showing his great brilliancy and ability. When rudely interrupted, he tries to change the subject. If he cannot understand enough of the conversation to get a good start on his interruption, he insists on asking irrele-

vant questions. He is able to offer an experience which will belittle any which has been related; his invariable response to another man's story is, "That's nothing, I know a guy that—," and here he is forcibly suppressed.

Driven from the society of his betters, he comes to me for consolation and advice, and is soon telling me the vivid details of his many love affairs.

"She's the prettiest girl," he says, "and I met her at the Colonial in town. Why won't she write me?"

"Have you ever been anywhere with her?" I ask.

"No, but I gave her my address," he tells me.

I try to explain, in words of one syllable, that there are probably one or two girls in the world who will not fall for his particular style of beauty, but he is still unimpressed.

"I'm going to go and see her when I get our car in town," he says. Here he shows real intelligence.

Finally I weary of discussing Milwaukee women, and tell him I have love affairs of my own, and am busy. He departs sadly.

A while later I pass his door and hear voices. Wondering what is wrong this time, I go in. He is entertaining friends, it seems. On the table is the latest box from mamma, just received from Kewaskum. The boys are eating contentedly, so I decide that they are probably harmless for the rest of the evening. Just as I turn to go, he throws another question at me.

"Say," he says, "Do they mail those probation slips to everybody?"

I close the door reverently, for they say that God loves the simple-minded.

CHARLES T. SCHRAGE

## Downdilly

*The love of living, flaming in my heart,  
Forbade quiescence and impelled me on;  
With all the ardor of a myrmidon  
I sought him out who chose to dwell apart.*

*Sheltered beside a wooded eminence,  
Downdilly's cabin nestled in the leaves,  
Which in their tumbling down upon the eaves  
Bespoke the primal rule of senescence.*

*I entered in; the ancient greeted me;  
And though his locks foreshowed the autumn gray,  
He bade me welcome in the youthful way  
Of one who challenges mortality.*

*We sat before a fire of seasoned oak,—  
He to expound his attitude toward being,  
And I, a fond disciple, bent on seeing  
Some vivid, gripping truth. Downdilly spoke:*

*When as a child I dreamed of magic men,  
I seemed to hear from out the maple trees,  
That brushed my nursery window in the breeze,  
The voice of some transcendent denizen.*

*His songs were of a life secure from care,  
Of years so brief for anything but play  
That one had better live and love each day  
Than pine for distant castles in the air.*

*I tented o'er the laughing fields in June,  
To race, to lounge, and watch from where I'd lie  
The white cloud and the tiny butterfly—  
The chorus of existence was in tune.*

*The universe seemed intricate and vast,  
And I a monad with the power to think,  
Doubtless adrift here but that I might drink  
Of all things lovely, ere my time be past.*

*Out of my primer rose the myriad dreams  
That make the mind of man a paradise,  
And I saw how from two impassioned eyes  
The flame of love doth radiate its beams.*

*Perhaps some spirit in the old school tower  
Inspired the sport upon the campus gay,  
And from his eminence had watched at play  
Children of old, who bloomed here for an hour.*

*My limbs were tingling with the wanderlust,  
For they were made to bear me far and wide;  
Wherefore I left the genial chimney-side,  
My soul in living, and in love my trust.*

*Unlike the flowers, I was not anchored fast,  
But with the freedom of the zephyrs blessed;  
Following them, I only came to rest  
At sundown, when the west was crimson-cast.*

*Smiling before me lay the open way;  
Strange how it lured me on at every bend,  
For well I knew that when I reached the end  
My morning song would usher out the day.*

*Yet in and out along the countryside  
My artless minstrelsy reechoed far;  
And quaint chords sounded on an old guitar  
Lulled me to drowsiness at eventide.*

*When on my path the shadows would descend,  
I sought the comfort of a tavern fire,  
Where I could sing unto my heart's desire  
The praises of a quest that knew no end.*

*These fantasies that in the flames arise—  
See how they vanish when the embers fade;  
Out of oblivion the unafraid  
Whispers to me that even fancy dies.*

*The highway branched, and in my fated youth  
I chose the zenith of the exquisite;  
But high or low, it matters not a whit—  
Conflict there is, and yet the two are truth;*

*For all is duplex, all that can be heard,  
Or seen, or dreamed of, as the years ensue,  
And he who strives to unify the two  
May one day grant his task to be absurd,*



Bound for the coast, I reached a charming vale,  
Whose river glided, calm beyond compare;  
Life seemed no battle, nay, a moment rare  
Laughed in a frolic at the long regale.

Sudden I heard the singing of the shell  
Menace the beauty of that quietude;  
And honor-bound, I joined the mammoth feud,  
To smile at horrors like an infidel.

Fortune preserved me, and I sailed the sea,  
To let the breezes in their soft embrace  
Soothe me, and from my memory efface  
The ghastly scenes of man's ferocity.

The island of content lay dead ahead,  
Deep-hidden from the desert waste of toil;  
They spoke in song there, and from out the soil  
Sprang life and love, re-summoned from the dead.

Watched from afar, the busy market-place  
Seemed but a vast projection of the mind,  
Planned by a million kindred souls to find  
A gay oblivion in the populace.

Yes, there was ample solace to be found  
In living as a leaf upon a tree;  
But somehow I preferred the tether-free  
Existence, as a nomad, elsewhere bound.

I dwelt at college not to fret my mind  
Seeking the futile guerdon of the wise;  
But just to share, beneath those open skies,  
The fellowship and laughter of my kind.

Under the eaves of an ancestral hall  
I drowsed among the legends of the place,  
While all the charming music of the race  
Was reproduced sweetly at my call.

And soon from out the shadowed corners stole  
Bewitching figures of a bygone year,  
To set me thinking that our whirling sphere  
Offers no innovation to the soul.

I pondered deeply o'er the stars we see,  
And those that fleck the infinite beyond,—  
Whether the legion know a single bond,  
Sailing the skies in common ecstasy;

And oft to unknown time and space I'd bow,  
As being beyond the measure of the brain;  
But presently would lift my eyes again,  
Singing—How beautiful the here and now;

Years later I pursued this destiny  
Back to the haunts I had been dreaming of;  
Long-waiting arms encircled me in love—  
Life's little moment, my eternity;

And gazing round upon the ancient views,  
I paused to marvel how a lifetime flies,  
How one must gaze well ere the nimbus dies,  
And all the trail resumes her sombre hues.

Out in the garden that my mother knew,  
The roses still recalled her tender care,—  
When, in her diadem of silver hair,  
She was an empress, they her retinue.

Her gentle spirit still adorned the aisles,  
The fragrant aisles I mused along at dusk,  
Haunting my memory in the Persian musk,  
The trickling fount, the distant sound of viols.

Nature untouched is Nature on her throne;  
She is the empress of a wanton crew,  
That caught, must blush to come into her view,  
Vaunting its schemes of life against her own.

Taking my ease among the vines at noon,  
Beyond the waving tassels of the corn,  
I see the universe as from a horn  
Scatter profusely of the living boon.

Nor is there sorrow in declining years;  
Bright is the hearth, and on the shelves about  
Are sweet old friends I could not do without,  
Causing me quiet laughter, and few tears.

Aye, though I dwell upon the sunset trail,  
Mine is a wealth of pleasant reveries;  
Up in the morn at skylark reveilles,  
I cleave unto the life ethereal.

My head is covered with the telltale snow;  
Gay tyro, take my heritage of song,  
For I am drifting to the shadow throng,  
The lullaby of ages sounding low.

JOHN CULNAN

# The Purification of Chink Allee

I was there when they broke in. There was a crowd of people around clamoring for their laundry; for the little shops had already been closed for several days; and people are always anxious about their clean linen. One little Chinese laundry was on one side of the street, and one was on the other; both had been locked up without a word of warning.

Bull, the plainclothes man, and the mammoth-trunked Bluecoat had just come from forcing an entrance into Sam Yep's place across the street. They had found it empty. Sam Yep was gone. The word, murder, passed over the lips of several of the spectators; it seemed to hang forebodingly on Bull's mind.

Here we were, standing before a rusty frame building over the door of which hung Chink Allee's modest sign. I had urged Bull to break into this place.

"I have some collars in there," I said, "which will be fading yellow with disuse—it's criminal, you know, in these days."

Bull agreed with me but gruffly counseled patience.

It seemed that just then I remembered things which had slipped out of my mind for years and years. At that moment I had the same feeling that I had years ago when I, then a youngster in first grade, had been sent by my curious teacher to this identical little shack to find out why Loo Chu was not coming to school that particular day. Loo Chu was a sweet little Chinese girl, a schoolmate of mine. She was the only representative of her race in our school, a little yellow, slant-eyed doll, who was a source of great curiosity and entertainment. I remember I approached the door quaking; I had never crossed a Chinese threshold before. I wrestled the door open, and immediately I heard a bell ring faintly. The shop was then filled with fantastic vases and heavily odored flowers. The dimness made me shudder. Then I heard a soft but hollow clatter of some one walking downstairs, as if with phantom hob-nailed shoes. The nearer the sound approached, the more my alarm increased; until, when I could almost feel somebody behind the curtain just ready to draw it back, my senses suddenly crumbled before a physical desire to run. I broke from the place. When I returned to school, I told the well-meaning teacher that Loo Chu was sick, and that I was not feeling any too well, either.

That this remembrance should pop up in my memory right at this time, after I had so long forgotten the event, somewhat startled me. I throttled my apprehension. With only a pressure of the wrist, the Blue-

coat easily forced Chink Allee's door, and we crept cautiously into the dark room. There was a sickening odor of sweetness, but we saw nothing strange. The dingy, smoke-stained room looked as indifferent as ever. Some of the laundry was done up neatly in packages on the unpainted shelves; some was still in the process of laundering. Chink Allee, I suspected, left his work on the blow of the whistle. The crowd was anxious to conduct a legitimate plundering of the place in search of their laundry. Bull restrained them.

We explored the first floor in no time, Bull taking the precaution to draw out his sleek little .38, in spite of his massive jaw, which alone would have frightened any Chinaman on God's earth. Our curiosity was high as a fever. We started up the dry, creaking stairs. There was only a low attic above, filled with a heavily padded silence and blackness. When the Bluecoat struck a match, our eyes penetrated to the corner ahead of us, where, on a pillowy floor-bed, lay a huddled figure. Chink Allee! I shall never forget his eyes, lit by the Bluecoat's match. They were at first mere oblique slits, but they spread widely open, dilated, filled with a fluctuating, terribly recoiling fear. The rest of his face was dead motionless. I was amazed at the way he was dressed. He did not wear his customary undershirt and the singed apron which enveloped his entire figure. His dress was oriental; the finest of deep blue silk, gold embroidered. It hung to his limbs like wet sea weed, with a clinging looseness of fold that disclosed every curve and muscle of his stocky body. His hair was sparkling and oily, rolled in a knot on the top of his skull. There he lay like a dead fish, except for his terrified eyes.

"What in hell yuh doin' here?" demanded Bull, placing his paw heavily on the poor Chinaman.

Chink Allee could not answer—except with those eyes.

We pulled him up, dragged him downstairs, clad as he was in that fragile outfit. We opened up the shades to let in some light; the Bluecoat drove out the inquisitive crowd. Chink Allee dropped limply in the chair where we placed him. And Bull began to question him. He bulldozed the shrinking little fellow.

"Whare's Sam Yep, whare is he? What's the idee of that shimeeze outerfit on you, heh?"

Chink Allee at first tried to speak, although his eyes seemed too big to let him open his mouth. He

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## The Lake

We have stopped paddling and drift aimlessly. Until the last glow of the setting sun, I had carefully steered the canoe so we might not miss one bit of the beauty of the sunset. Then as crimson fades into purple, and purple into gray, and finally as the gray too is lost in the soft shining blackness, the stars come out; the crescent moon silvers the water.

I lift my paddle up out of the water and watch the drops fall. "I wish," I think aloud, "the moon would silver these drops. I wish the stars somehow would sing, and we could drift—"

"Endlessly?"

"Yes, endlessly."

"And you'll never miss the flush of joy on seeing the sun rise, the sweet stinging pain of the robin's song, the care-free sweep of the wind, the warm earth beneath your marching feet?"

"Never."

Silence, then—

"If I were a Freudian, I should say you were dreaming, and expressing aloud in your dream a suppressed desire. Why? Oh, because in your waking existence, your life seems so much a question of fitting everything into the pattern you have cut out for yourself. This random impulse you think—unless it be trivial—must not be indulged; it does not have any significance in your "purpose;" that sun-kissed road—is it alluring—it may keep you from your barren heaven—"

"My barren heaven? I have no heaven. I do find joy in life even if I do pick and choose because of its significance."

"Its significance? What does life signify for you?"

"Struggle. For what? For the good. What good? The general good. And what is that? The opportunity for rich personal lives."

"Ah, that lets me out. You see I spend my days doing what you dream and wish for now. I drift. Significance—there it none. Beauty—yes, there's the beauty of the perfect silver drops, falling each without purpose or design. That for me is a rich, personal life. Am I troubled by doubts and cares and wonder what I am here for? You are still searching for the answer. I have given up, long, long ago."

"And so you follow every impulse?"

"Yes, every impulse for pleasure—the beautiful pleasure."

"Hedonist! but you too are now bound to a pattern, just as abstract, as elusive as mine. Is there no un-beautiful impulse or desire? Doesn't a shadow ever fall on your temple?"

"Yes, the shadow of moralists like you who disturb that harmony which is beauty."

"So you have found the life of beauty. And the other worshippers at your temple? Do all of them come with clean hands—I mean, clean in your sense—not stained by the unbeautiful?"

"They do not disturb me."

From the shore comes the harsh nasal twang of a ukelele, then strident voices singing and laughing. The charm is broken.

"Worshippers at your temple," I taunt.

"It's getting cold. Let's go in."

"Tomorrow the sun will come out—"

"And I'll have to get up for an eight o'clock."

"Why go? Lie in bed instead and think of the insignificance of all your misled professor will say." I can't resist teasing his.

In the moonlight the buildings on the opposite side of the lake are beautiful. But we paddle toward home. After all they are cages for the insane.

ELSIE GLUCK

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(Continued from page 211)

tried to speak with his limited vocabulary, which, all in all, was scarcely more than "Wlute you namee on the plapee," and "dlay aft' tomollow." Bull, of course, could not understand him,—you had to have an imagination to understand this Chinaman; Bull had nothing so vague. Bull insisted the "chink" was hiding something from him. He railed him, he clinched his threatening fists, he swore. The cruelty of the questioning hurt Chink—I could see it and wished I could stop Bull. I was strangely tempted to ask for my collars, but I kept silent. The hot words hurtling from Bull's mouth penetrated Chink Allee's native gentleness; they made him quake. He did what he could; he put up his bulwark. The life faded out of his eyes; it was like when a delicate dream is burst prematurely by some insensible force. Brute stupidity spread over his face. His mind grew calloused to the gibing. He went mute.

Bull at last realized it was hopeless to get anything out of the Chinaman, and let loose a fusilade of obscene profanity. Yet he had no grounds on which to jail Chink Allee, unless on the grounds of breach of public service; and Bull was neither communistic, nor capable of thinking up such a charge. Therefore we left Chink Allee in his shop. I purposely forgot my collars.

Two days later, I happened to pass Chink Allee's laundry about nine o'clock in the evening. I saw that it was lit up and that Chink Allee was working in his shirt sleeves. I went in. Chink Allee looked at me with apparent unrecognition. I thought how incongruous this little fellow was in these surroundings; how much more appropriately the blue silk costume became his oriental figure than this shirt and apron outfit. I recalled unconsciously that old, tritely used expression of Kiplings, about the East being East and the West, West; and never the twain meeting. I explained I had come after my collars, which must have reposed on his shelves for some time now. Uttering a grunting ejaculation which sounded like a laconic oath, he made a wooden gesture, indicating he knew nothing about the matter. Then he turned his back on me and started rolling shirts through his ironing rollers. I was surprised at this unbelievable discourtesy from him, but I resolved not to give up so soon. I reiterated the matter of my collars as plainly and convincingly as I could. But it had no effect; he did not hear me. I wondered whether it was because he associated me with Bull, or because the rough interruption had somehow upset and altered his characteristic attitude. I wanted to understand him. I felt patronizingly toward him, as is the

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## The Saving of Freddie

**F**REDDIE is a very likable youngster. He has as many of the virtues and as few of the faults attendant upon youth and enthusiasm as any Freshman I ever hope to meet. But, naturally, he is still susceptible to Romance, and Spring is a dangerous time even for older and staid folk than Freddie. Last autumn and winter he attended strictly to business, so well indeed, that I was disposed to boast about him a little. You see I considered Freddie my personal charge, and I don't mind saying that I believe I am responsible for not a little of his very satisfactory progress along the road to Parnassus. Some of the other fellows have doubted this. In fact, it has been insituated that my "damphool ideas would be the ruination of that Freshman." And it looked for a time last week as if my best efforts were going to fail.

We first became aware of the state of affairs when it began to be noticed that Freddie was absent from the house not only in all his spare hours but even at meal times. He came in nights at unheard of late hours, and met with scornful silence all polite inquiries as to what work it might be that was taking up so much of his time. Pointed references to his sleepiness the next day and suggestions concerning the need for study alike failed to produce any response. This had been going on for several days before the terrible truth flashed upon me. I should not have noticed it then, had it not been that Freddie's extra-curricular activities began to suffer.

A few failures in classes in the Spring are nothing to be alarmed about. They may arise from any one of a number of quite innocent causes. A particularly warm evening, or a better than usual bill at the local vaudeville house, or an especially good crap game, any of these things will be enough to account for a passing dullness in class the next day. But when a man who ordinarily makes runs of ten and fifteen at billards gets beaten by a rank amateur who never made a run of higher than five in his life, then it is time to look into the matter seriously. Freddie was doing even worse than this. He has a fair baritone voice, and it had been his custom to oblige us of an evening with his own

special rendition of a ballad called, "Frankie and Johnnie," and to respond to an encore with "The Face on the Barroom Floor." Both these things he now refused in a distinctly sullen manner to do. Nor was even this the worst of the affair. Freddie's time for the mile is usually a *trifle under four minutes and a half*, and now to our horror we learned that for a week he had been unable to do the distance in better than five minutes.

It was at this stage that I evolved the saving idea. To be sure, circumstances played into my hand. It was quite by chance that I reached our corner at the same time Freddie did on night before last, but the moment he came into the glare of the arc light I knew that a crisis was near. His hat, usually set very neatly, well forward on his head, was raked back at an angle over his left ear. He had his coat unbuttoned and his hands thrust deep into his trouser pockets. He allowed the cigarette in one corner of his mouth to hang dejectedly from his lips, a terrible offense of which he would not, under any other circumstances, ever have been guilty.

He fell into step beside me in silence, and I enquired, "Have a reasonably successful evening?"

"Umm-m-m," said Freddie, attempting to be non-committal and thereby revealing to me exactly what had happened.

We walked on without further words till we reached the house door. Then I said, "There's a professional wrestling match over in town tomorrow night. Want to go with me?" Freddie snapped his cigarette butt into the air and watched the glowing arch it made before it dropped into the gutter and died out. Then he said:

"Yeah, I'll go." Still I could not be sure that I had won.

But last night when I watched the "Norwegian Kid" writhing under a scissors hold on the body and heard Freddie's voice next to me whooping joyfully, "Thata boy. Break him in two," then I was quite sure Freddie was saved till another spring.

THEODORE L. SCHOLTZ.

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## THE BIRCHBARK'S HYMNEAL SONG

O, you shall be my bride,  
 The trip our honeymoon,  
 The birds shall tell I've married my canoe.  
 With grass blades still tear-eyed,  
 We'll steal o'er the lagoon;  
 Wrapt in ourselves, we'll bid the world adieu.

Then take this savage male!  
 Responsive to my joy,  
 Surrender your proud self into my care.  
 And for the bridal veil  
 The trailing wake employ;  
 And for a ring a pebble ripple wear.

And you the bride so subtle curved and true,  
 And swift, yet gentle as the wavelets kissing you,  
 And femininely fickle, as your whims disclose,  
 Coquettish to each undeveloped breeze that blows.

And I the groom, brown skinned and uncouth  
 dressed,  
 Legs leather-clad, shirt opened at the breast,  
 Rough in strong love, yet tender most to you,  
 Feeling your every impulse, finding you anew.

With vows upon our lips,  
 The red sun painting meek  
 Soft maiden blushes on your lifted prow,  
 Coasting the crisp wave tips  
 That babble at your cheek,  
 We'll cross the open lake, all scarlet now.

And when we pass the rocks  
 Where rival breezes play,  
 Whipping the sparkling waters restlessly,  
 There if your mischief mocks  
 My paddle, fierce I say  
 I'll tame you with a man's virility.

I'll swerve into the stream,  
 Where placid waters glide,  
 And end your faithless, flirting gaiety;  
 There, helpless in a dream,  
 With guidance gently plied,  
 I'll make you think and dream of only me.

And down the soothing river ever we shall float,  
 Until the moon calls out the nightbird's soulful note,  
 And bids me sink into your bosom, finding true,  
 That when I wedded you I married Nature, too.

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## He Travels Fastest

About a month ago I met a graduate of the class of '17, the class which was mine until I went to "batting" around the country. As is usual with young men freshly chafed with commercial and industrial routine and domestic restriction, he was full of advice, and he poured it all out on me. I took pity on him, and let him go. His employer monopolizes the suggestion and instruction department in the office where he works, and his wife is chairman of the advisory committee in the new home. I was sorry for him, and presented myself as a willing sacrifice for old time's sake. He began by putting me on the right track about world politics, and ended by letting me in on some of the choicest secrets of his new life. While I was with him in the university during his first two years, he never looked at a paper, he was an engineer, and I doubt if he knew there was a war on until the volunteers began to leave. As for his former knowledge of women, it extended but little beyond the co-eds in his freshman English class, and what bits he may have picked up on sundry visits to Kehl's. During his last year at the university, or possibly it was the last month or so, he met his wife. They were married three months later, on the eve of his departure for France. Now he bores his bachelor friends to death with detailed accounts of the wonders of his domesticity.

As I say, he filled me full of advice, good and bad, but, for the most part, interesting. I shall tell you of the result of the only bit that took effect.

"Ed," he said, paternally tapping my shoulder, "Don't make the mistake I made. Don't spend all your time bucking. Get into the game. Find a good little girl, and take her out once in a while. Take in a few dances and shows, and take a girl along. I'm telling you, it's great stuff. It will give you inspiration, make your work more interesting, and everything. Get some of this society stuff while you are young and can enjoy it. It will never seem the same to you after you get out of the university."

I am two years his senior, but that did not dampen his fatherly ardor. He babbled on and on, and then ended with a description of how beautiful his wife had looked when he first met her. At last I tore myself away, and wandered home. For a long time I stood looking at the picture above my desk. It is the picture of a young man deep in the study of a monstrous volume

in the glow of a student lamp. A ghostly hand holds a ghostly wreath of laurel above his head. Underneath is the caption, "He Travels Fastest Who Travels Alone." Carefully I turned the picture to the wall.

Procuring the first engagement was a nightmare. For a long time I considered the matter. I am naturally a shy man, and my circle of feminine friends is limited. My choice wavered between two; one is a fetching little blonde of the doll type who makes the tea hounds gasp and whisper, "Who is she?" the other is one of those nice girls who is comfortable but not startlingly good looking, and who usually has something more to say than "Really?" Instinct won, and I called the blond's house on the phone. I nearly choked with apprehension when I asked the maid if the young lady was in. No, she was out. Carefully I placed the receiver back on the hook. There,—I felt better; instinct has been satisfied, and I could now call the one I had really wanted all the time, the nice, comfortable girl.

I have told you that I am shy. I must add that I am no "kiddier," as the long-winded telephone leech is called. I am not quite up to the task of making conversation over the telephone. Neither am I willing to lower myself so far as to indulge in the silly claptrap which is usually the outcome of such artificial stimulation. Together with my shyness and my aversion to sustained long-distance conversation, the arrangements I made with my partner that evening were hardly indicative of anticipated pleasure, they were more like the details of a badly carried on business deal. The cordiality with which I endeavored to imbue my invitation was more like that we use with the coal man when the bunkers are low, than like that between man and maiden. Apparently she was hungry, for she agreed with alacrity to have dinner with me on the next Friday evening. Attendance at one of the good one-night shows of the year was to follow.

With the aid of the community wardrobe, augmented by one or two trips to "Pete's," my roommate made me quite presentable on the evening of the event. With all the air of a practiced gallant I boarded the taxi, and embarked on my first "date" of the year.

Ever since that evening I have been mentally chas-

*(Continued on page 218)*

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Oswald Garrison Villard, President, New York Evening Post Co.

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(Continued from page 216)

tising myself for my lack of finesse. Never again will I forget to compliment a partner on her costume. When the young woman appeared in answer to my message by the maid, all my senses but the visual were stunned. Her costume had done wonders to the quiet attractiveness she already possessed. Her clear, firm features, lighted by her eyes and framed by her lustrous hair, glowed like those of a rich cameo against the setting made by a soft old-rose cloak which fell in seemingly careless but effective folds about her small person. The cloak fell just short enough to disclose the neat ankles and the glistening tiny silver slippers beneath. Underneath the cloak, as I learned later, was a gown of cool blue with silver mesh overdrape which needs a chapter to itself. I let it all pass without a sign of appreciation, while a practiced tea hound would have raved all the way up town.

I hope the waitress realized that all the gratitude of a condemned man reprieved went with the tip I gave her that night. She was a wonder, for she interpreted my mumbled order and conducted dinner negotiations with my guest with all the tact of a diplomat. For months my order for meals had consisted chiefly of calling for "A bowl and draw one with buttered." or "Fry me a hog with spuds the same and apple 'la mode," but this was different. Thanks to the waitress, we had everything from soup to coffee, and I managed to get through without stacking my dishes, or reminding myself that the rowing season had not yet opened.

I should advise anybody in my position to do as I did, and try a show the first night. By the time you are through with the dinner, your conversational topics will be about run out, and a show, where you cannot talk, is a god-send. Talk is the supreme test of a partner. How often have I tried to make conversa-

tion with a wonderful china-pink and blue creation whose coral lips automatically formed the stereotyped "Really?," "How Exciting," "That must have been fun," "My," and whose vacant eyes stared at me with a feigned interest which made me want to put the palm of my open hand gently on the young woman's nose and push her face back into oblivion. Repetition of such experiences had made me enough of a recluse to provoke my old friend's outburst. The young woman of the evening in question, however, had brains and an infinite amount of tact; she steered the conversation, or allowed it to be steered, around to a discussion of myself. What man will not talk about himself to a young woman listener? It is the only thing we have to take the place of that display of prowess in the good old days when the suitor did battle with several of his kind in order to demonstrate his worth. I told that young woman every secret of my life from the day when I used to "slop" the hogs on the farm to the time the major general spoke to me; he wanted to know what the hell I was doing with my blouse unbuttoned.

The show was a good one; too good to be marred by the fact that I forgot to take my seat checks from the usher, and worried all through the first act about getting put out. By the time the curtain dropped on the last act I was well at ease. The visit to the Candy Shop was uneventful, and the walk home was a rather comfortable one. At the door I choked, said the wrong thing, and hurried away in confusion, leaving the girl rather bewildered, I imagine.

That was a month ago. The picture of the industrious and solitary youth still hangs above my desk, but underneath the caption "He Travels Fastest Who Travels Alone," my roommate has scrawled, "The race is not always to the swift."

CECIL MACAULEY RUSSELL

### DELILAH

"Where is the milk!" cried Norah,  
 "And which child shall I blame?"  
 But the little cat, the little cat—  
 That in the cellar softly sat,  
 (Delilah was her name)  
 That in the cellar purred and sat,  
 And quite ignored a tiny rat  
 And never blushed for shame!

MARY DUPUY BICKEL.

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## THE LADY OF THE DAWN

The dawn, my lady,  
 Came out of the East;  
 From the pale gray East  
 Came she.

Her breath was as sweet as  
 The shifting wind,  
 The drifting wind  
 That stirs the willow tree.

Her slanting eyes  
 Were China-blue eyes,  
 Soft China-blue eyes  
 That opened wide for me.

The dawn, my lady,  
 Came out of the East.  
 From the shining East  
 Came she.

HORACE GREGORY.

## RECALL

Ten thousand noises beat upon the night  
 Breaking its silent surface into waves  
 That sound in ceaseless cadence, tuneless staves  
 Of harmony. A bat in whirring flight  
 Loops circling o'er the lake. A west wind light  
 Laps striped ripples on the grating shore,  
 And pats the leaves together. Shrill the roar  
 And whistle of a distant train strikes trite  
 Discord on nature's symphony, and brings  
 With jarring suddenness the world of men  
 Where armies fight and kill and bleed and die  
 For gain and greed of selfish outgrown kings.  
 Tormenting memory returns again  
 To flout with aching thoughts the patient sky.

FRANCES DUMMER.

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(Continued from page 213)

habit of us Teutonic people toward a race we do not understand. I resolved, moreover, not to leave until I got my collars, in which I was slightly interested, too. I talked; he kept doggedly silent. It as coming to a showdown. I, for one, would not weaken.

Suddenly Chink Allee slipped out of the room—I cannot quite say how. I was aware that he was gone. In an instant the lights were switched off from the other room. The utter darkness took me by great surprise. I was rather alarmed. All the fantastic dreams of Chinatown flooded ludicrously through my mind. My stupor was shattered by a short falsetto scream. Something broke loose in me then.

I dashed stumbling over black objects into the rear room. There in the midst of a murky commotion, I bumped into two tangible figures. I stumbled upon the switch, somehow, and flooded the room with a dusty light. One figure was Chink Allee; the other was a woman. She was clinging to Chink Allee's wrist desperately. In his hand was a thin steel knife. They stood quite petrified in the light.

She, I noticed, was a Chinese woman of unusual beauty, but for the cheap, artificial heightening of her complexion. Her exquisitely cut eyes, now quite terror-stricken, reminded me of the little girl, Loo Chui. I perceived, from her attitude, that she was not defending herself, but that she was, in truth, preventing Chink Allee from indulging in the unholy privilege—killing himself.

I was abashed at this unexpected situation, until I apologized and she came forward with a suddenly assumed brazen grace and indelicate smoothness of manner, indicating all too plainly a constant experience in dealing with untimely interruptions such as this. The thought that she was Loo Chu penetrated so deeply into my mind that I stupidly felt forced to break the silence by asking her if that were not her name.

She recoiled slightly; her profuse smile tightened a trifle with pitiful tenseness. Chink Allee's knife slipped from his hand and pierced into the floor.

Yes, she was Loo Chu, she told me simply, in perfect English. She led me back into the other room, regarding me strangely, after she had first requested me to pick up the knife. Chink Allee stood there stupidly, drooping in every muscle of his body.

Loo Chu told me a strange story. When her family moved away ten years ago, her father's shops had been taken by two young Chinese fellows, favored friends of the family, with no further exchange of values than

a sworn agreement. Both young men, who were woovers of little Loo Chu, were steadily to build up their laundry businesses. When the time came that the father could spare his daughter, Loo Chu was to pick the one she loved the better and to return as his bride. The unsuccessful rival was sworn to turn over his business in favor of the couple, and to join Loo Chu's father wherever he might be, acting in the service which Loo Chu had deserted.

I interrupted her to ask where her father now was. "He is dead," she informed me, passively.

Not indifferently I thought of the vanished Sam Yep.

Continuing, Loo Chu told me that her family had taken up residence in the oriental district of a certain blustering city. There, I perceived, she had grown up into womanhood. She had had many revelations in this fascinating new world, she told me, knowingly. For a time, as she went on recounting her adventures, I thought she restrained with difficulty from unconsciously working her charms on me. But now, after her father's death, she had returned and become the bride of Chink Allee. She asked me if I did not think he was the more prosperous of the two laundrymen.

I replied in a manner to reassure her. But I thought of little Loo Chu, the harmless, slant-eyed, tiny individual of the first grade. She belonged in a fairy land; but she was quite spoiled now.

"Your husband, why is he not happy?" I asked, without betraying any irony. "He has such a sullen, dangerous disposition lately; he won't even take the trouble to look for my collars."

"O," she replied, "he was interrupted in his purification sleep. He is quite heathen, you know, primitive. When I sent him word that I would be his wife, he followed the ancient custom of his 'honorable family tribe.' He took the long pre-marriage sleep, which is to purge the soul to be so fresh, so pure on the wedding day as a newborn babe."

She laughed.

"Oh, it is a bad sign when this sleep shall be interrupted, for that means the gods shall not bless the marriage. He thinks it shall be sin. And Allee blames and curses himself and grieves for my sake."

I left as soon as I reasonably could, after wishing her good luck. I did not question further after my collars, fearing that they too, might be in a "purification sleep," and I refused to bear the awful responsibility of interrupting it.

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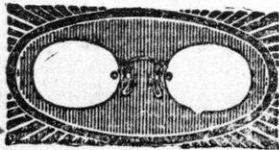
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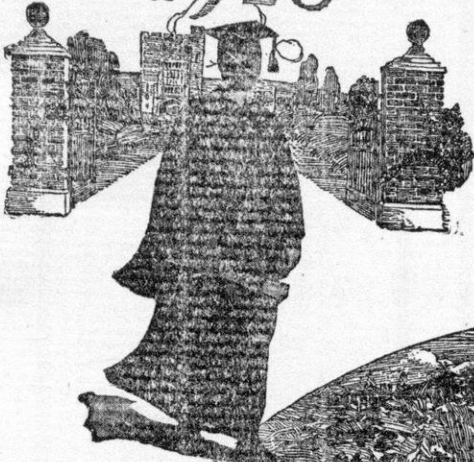
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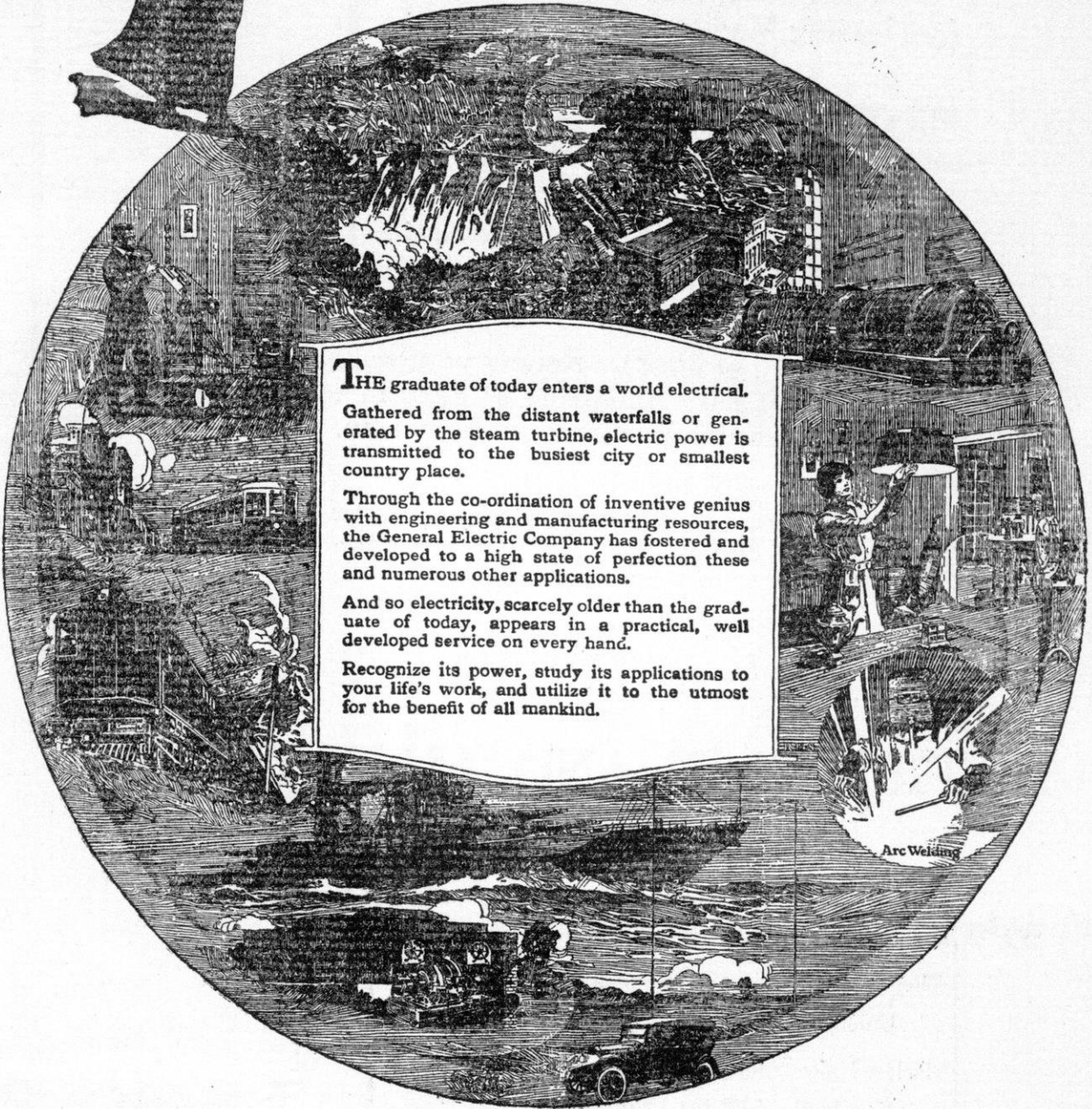
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