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The Wisconsin Literary Magazine

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The Wisconsin Literary Magazine

Volume XXVI NOVEMBER, 1926 Number 1

BAILEY'S LIZ

By

PAULA NEUMAN

I REMEMBER the morning after the Fourth, and Main Street drowsing in the hot sunshine, as Bill and I slowly picked our way down the hill. The copper caps that the big boys had shot off the day before glittered in the run-ways on both sides of the road. We zig-zagged from one gutter to the other, stuffing our pockets with the empty shells. They shone and glistened far brighter than new pennies, and were far more valuable in our eyes. They made wonderful badges when you stuck straight pins inside and banged them flat with a big rock.

We stopped before "Bill's-father's store," the general "Emporium" for the small village of Cold Brook. It was cool and dusky inside, but Bill seemed to know the way to the apple barrel by instinct. His father was waiting on Bailey's Liz, a pale whitish blur against the far counter. I could hear her bargaining quietly; she was trading strawberries for flour and brown sugar. Bill's father stopped to give me a pat on the shoulder, and to ask how I liked being back again; then he turned to the little girl once more.

Crunching the crisp white flesh of the apples, we sauntered to the door, where we dropped on convenient kegs, and drummed our heels hollowly against them. The dark interior of the store, and the framework of the opening, brought the bright glare of the street into sharp relief. The horse trough in the center of the square, and the blacksmith shop across the way were silhoutted black against the light. Their heavy shapes made the cart before the door seem more spindly by contrast. It was a ramshackle affair, creaking protestingly as the horse lifted a leg to scratch himself. The top of the thin wheel nearest to us leaned outward, so that the wagon seemed to stagger. I noticed that the rim was clumsily patched with wire and an iron band, the mended spot making a huge lump, while the reins drooping over the horse's back were tied together with cord. He, too, seemed fit for the junk-heap rather than for active service. Wall-eyed, flea-bitten, lame, he appeared to be asleep except for the occasional quick twitching of his skin to jerk off an unusually persistent fly.

A dark figure staggered from the door of "Mike's" huddled next to the blacksmith shop. He crossed the road, weaving purple shadows in the dirt, and waving a black bottle about his head. We strolled from the store, and gravely watched him try to clamber into the wagon. His foot could not reach the axle, and he got tangled in the spokes; finally, however, he managed to tumble into the front seat. Then we struck up:

"Old Man Bailey,
Mad as a haley!"

What a "haley" was we did not know, and, I suspect, neither did he, but the refrain always served to en-

rage him. He heaved himself up, and poured out on us a flood of drunken abuse. Emboldened by our success, Bill threw his apple core. It flew wide of the mark, but the old man—he was only forty then, but he seemed like Father Time to us—turned red with fury. He grabbed the whip, leaning dizzily from its socket, and slashed down at us. The lash cut the air, and the blow landed on the horse's ribs. The startled animal sprang up the street, his hoofs thudding on the dirt road. Bailey fell back, breaking the loose seat, and lay flat, cursing bitterly. Startled by the sudden clamor, the girl came from the store, her arms full of bundles. She looked silently after the cart, which was rocketing past the turn in a cloud of dust. Still without a word, she trudged after her father, her chin tucked over the top package to keep it from falling from the stack. Then she passed from sight around the curve.

II

I had forgotten the roar of the brook as it rushed and tumbled through the quiet of the country night. I lay awake listening to its chatter, my city nerves tense to the myriad small sounds of the pasture. It was unusually warm for that time of year, and the noise of the village below—it was the night of the Fourth, and the boys were cutting up—added to my discomfort. As I tossed from side to side of the narrow bed, or gazed into the darkness of that slant-ceilinged room, I bitterly regretted the necessity for my presence there. If the settlement of my uncle's estate had not demanded a visit to Cold Brook, I might never have seen the old farm again.

I dozed off, thinking of my old friends in the village, and wondering how the years had changed them. Suddenly I was startled wide awake. A bell was ringing wildly in the valley. "Some young scamps ringing in the Fourth," I muttered, and rolled over again. But the illuminated dial of my watch showed three o'clock, and the sound was not like the clear church bell; this was dull and booming. Then I realized that someone was striking the fire ring by the blacksmith shop. There was a bright glare far up the hillside, scattered lights were scrambling up the slope, and voices shouted indistinctly. The Bailey farm lay there, I recollected, as I hurried on my clothes. I rushed into the kitchen, seized a bucket, and ran to join the last stragglers up the mountain. A heavy thick-set man gasped at my side. "Bill! I didn't recognize. . . ."

We stumbled up the dark road, guided by the distant shouts, and the flickering light of his pocket flash. "Glad t'see ye back. Quite a stranger now, be'ent ye? Hurry! Woods dry's tinder. Yer brook's 'bout th' only one runnin'."

We reached the scene of the conflagration, where the house and barn stood together in the center of a small cleared space. The woods yawned blackly, almost smothering the weak corn field and pasture. The barn was a roaring furnace; the house was doomed in a few moments. Helpless black figures scooted about like ants when the stone above them has been lifted. Men were scurrying here and there with armfuls of miscellaneous junk. The well and brook were dry, and it was apparent that neither building could be saved.

"How did the fire start?" I called to a man next me.

"Bailey lit some fire-crackers in th' hay. Sed he liked th' pretty flames, the' say. Thar's his darter, Liz, yander. D'rectin' the men."

The black figure thus pointed out seemed strangely composed. She was overseeing the removal of the horse—a job of some danger. Suddenly a boy's figure appeared in the wide window at the end of the barn loft. "Oh, my God! Johnny!" cried the woman. She rushed through the onlooking circle, and tried to plunge into the blazing building. I ran to help hold her back; and a moment later the walls crashed inward.

She sank to the ground, overwhelmed, wordless. Then she was on

her feet again, calling hoarsely for help to keep the fire from the woods. Dawn was beginning to pale the sky when the flames were finally controlled, and the tired men began to creep down the hillside. Silently and firmly she refused all offers of aid and shelter. She preferred to stay by the charred remains of her home, mourning over the body of her nephew, blackened in death. I stole away with Bill, looking back to see her searching among the embers of the barn. Bailey was babbling and crying, plucking at her burnt sleeves, and protesting that he had meant no harm. She paid not the slightest attention to his weak maunderings.

Early next morning I walked down to the village. It had changed little; the street was asphalted now, and the old horse trough was gone; the blacksmith shop had become the "Imperial Garage," and Mike's place was a notion and fancy-work store, the sign informed me. But the old "Emporium" had not altered a jot. A stout, shirt-sleeved man leaned against the door-casing, pipe in mouth, and hands in his armholes. He removed the cob, and waved it in greeting. How like his father Bill had become; I scarcely recognized him. And two boys sat on kegs just inside the doorway, munching firm red apples. It might have been yesterday.

We talked over the fire, and the events of the past twenty-odd years. He told me of Bailey and his daughter. She had stayed in the village all those years, farming and berrying in the summer, keeping close-shut in the house during the winter, tacking rag rugs. Her younger sister, a worthless "no-count" girl, had run away to the city. She had died there, a few years back, and Liz had taken her child and raised it as her own. Her life had centered in the boy and the last five years had been the happiest she had ever known. Johnny was to have entered the district school the next term, when——

"Beats me why she stuck by th' old man all these years," muttered Bill. "Never gave 'er a chanct. Drunk all th' time. She did th' farmin' an' everythin'. What'll she do now? Home and kid gone. Lucky th' hoss an' wagon was saved. . . ."

As she said those words, a cart lurched around the curve in the road. It seemed familiar; as it drew near, I recognized it as Bailey's. The old man lay sprawled on the floor, babbling loosely, and clutching the air. Liz was driving, her hands steady on the reins. Her head was held high, and her back straight, as they vanished down the street, the horse's hoofs clattering on the asphalt.

SONG OF PRINCESS KHARIV

By

MORRIS MORRISON

"On croirait voir vivre et mourir la lune."—VERLAINE.

LET the wind roll softly,
Softly on this leaf:
Softer than its falling
Will my tale be brief.

In this misted garden
Will my tale be told,
Where the vanished moon-light
Left silver as it rolled.

Near the yellow fountain
When the water ceased
Swelling, arching, drooping,
In a rhythmic feast,

I came and laid my body
Among the shadows there,
While a pagan fancy
Wove languors in my hair.

The moon had mixed a perfume
Behind its pale green mist,
And poured it in the flower
That wreathed my wrist.

Let the wind roll softly,
Softly on this leaf:
Softer than its falling
Will my tale be brief.

With their feathered fingers
Dreams had closed my eyes;
Already I was seeking
Distant blooming skies.

I crossed an ancient rainbow
That quivered with my weight,
And scattered into colors
Which were eighty and eight.

I lost myself in gold and blue,
In yellow, rose, and green
And nameless other lantern-tints
That never have been seen.

Let the wind roll softly,
Softly on this leaf:
Softer than its falling
Will my tale be brief.

On my sleeping eye-lids
Like a burning rose,
Knightly lips softer
Than the summer goes.

Knightly lips touched lightly,
Then passed unto my lips,
And fastened there like butterflies
On slender flower tips.

An echo fled the fountain,
Then entered in my heart,
And danced so long ecstatic there
I awakened with a start.

Let the wind roll softly,
Softly on this leaf:
Softer than its falling
Will my tale be brief.

With a murmured cadence
The fountain swelled again.
Ripples darted to the moon,
Delicate as pain.

In this misted garden
Has my tale been told—
Look, the vanished moon-light
Left silver where it rolled.

THE PINK HAT

"LITERATURE is that; that is literature" . . . .for Purity!

Always for Purity, of course .... and indeed, it is well that we so remember, lest in our contact with such productions of modern misanthropy as assail us from every shop and news-stand, it might occur to us that there were peculiar proceedings abroad in the realm of the printed page, and we might even be so misguided as to question them .... and so forever alienate ourselves from the worlds of art and of tea room intelligentzia.

"My dear," one can catch from the young Alpha Beta Gamma whom he meets at the soda fountain, "Haven't you read Whatsisname's latest? Oh, you simply *must!*" And in answer to the natural "Why?" she says, "Oh, it's a *good* book, all right .... a social problem thing or something ...." She smiles, as if she had accomplished her duty by recognizing this inferior merit, and adds, dropping her voice, "And it's just been surpressed!"

And there's the rub! The "social problem or something" may or may not have meant something to someone at some time or another, but there is no more danger of anyone's recalling that, except as an excuse for consorting with its accompanying charms. Genuine purpose .... that feeble accomplishment .... or weakness, if you will .... has lost itself in a blaze of glory! The book was surpressed! Now Olympus is conquered and the wreath won! Now the prodigal son has made good and all's well with the world.

Of course, there is the mournful and weighty consideration that, if the declaration of history means anything serious, the world may find that to be "naughty" is no less boring than to be "nice" when it is equally easy, and may not even be more interesting.

"Which," chirps our young Alpha Beta Gamma, whose literary appreciation has become largely a matter of self defense, "is the very best effect of modern literature .... to make it 'equally easy'. The only time it's fun to write letters is in econ lecture."

Far be it from human right to contradict her .... to judge is a right safest in the hands of a divinity. Perhaps then, it is through divinity that we learn that writing letters never helped anyone to learn econ, and that most **good** examples of correspondence are achieved elsewhere.

The simple standard of conduct, which is best established by those who least attend it, is no petty agreement to do this or not to do that. It is the very ground floor of society, whether it be covered with a tabernacle roof or the ceiling of a dance hall, whether it be recognized by Victorian convention or by deliberate non-accordance with its letter. In days less far removed from barbarism, it was left to Time, and to the slowly wagging pendulum of social temperament to realize that standard. And realize it they did, inevitable. The orgies of Nero gave place to Christianity; the court of Charles II turned Puritan .... occasionally we stop to laugh at some mumbling old fogie who warns us that our grandparents fainted more easily than we blush.

Yet today is not at all a "wicked' age. Simply, sometimes, a misdirected one. Here, evolution is too slow a machine for so rapid a century, and all civilization behind us cries out that it will serve our intelligence and save us years, if we permit it. Nowadays no astronomer waits for Time to show him what stars he may see upon such-and-such a night,—no chemist ever wonders what reaction will come of his compound. There is too much to be done in their work for them to waste time with ignorant fiddling about. Is literature less advanced, that we waste our little lives

filling them with sickly wherewithalls with which we are not concerned? The man who fed his child candy to spoil his appetite at meals, was surprised to discover that the candy cost more than the price of the full meals, and that besides, there were doctor's bills to pay!

And yet, if there were a reason for stuffing ourselves with what we wish to weary of, if horrid "realisms" could conquer horrid reality, what then? Supposing that their works are sincere pleas for relief, or serious attempts to educate, could such men as Keable expect relief from such a part of the public as would read their works? Or is there anything in the entire outline of their books that would solicit relief? Does a man accomplish anything from playing tag with "Flaming Youth?" Youth, yes, but . . . . "Flaming Youth?" Certainly, the false modesty of the past was no better a state of mind than the "frankness" of the present, yet in the process of instruction, Learning precedes gossip better than she follows it, else the "open-mind" of the modern generation might confuse things that are dark and secret with those that are simply sacred, and destroy them together.

Let it be no less fearful to "pluck the heart out of their mystery" than to gear goblins. For goblins are really fairy folk after all, and it were a shame to lose that! The answer to the cry for "frankness and open minds" is found in every advertisement that recommends its publications for being "Daring! Amazing! The most startling story ever written! The world's most fearless revelation."

Evidently, we are not sufficiently educated to handle Truth. We are too covered with the sensitive skin of earthliness not to cry for heaven. Shakespeare may speak Truths to us, because he can do so without stripping mortality of its silken wrapping . . . . and there's little enough silk in mortality, may the gods witness! Hecht is not great enough to handle realism without being simply vulgar, whether because reality is vulgar or because it is easy for us to find it so.

"But," says the Alpha Beta Gamma, who has been paying no attention to the discourse, "thinking people never consider any writing from the point of view in which it is vulgar." In the same way, people with clean hands never soil the lovely marble things in an art collection, but when some one whose hands are not clean violates the posted ordinance "Do not touch the Marbles!" the statue is dirty, whether or no.

There may be much to modern literature . . . . something that will grow up like flowers through the winter covering of dung and straw. Yet at present there is hardly sufficient merit in any of our modern masterpieces to justify the things with which a reader must contend. Hecht calls smoke "wreathes of tinsel!" A woman's breasts are "little blind faces raised in prayer."! ! ! Then we have

"When these veins are weeds, when these hollow sockets watch the rooty seeds bursting down like rockets. ."

". . . . Gerald was that, that was Gerald!"

"She was as annoying as an alarm clock."

A paragraph from *Eric Dorn* reads,

"A street of houses before him. A cigarette under his nose. An old man asleep. Outside the window the snow-covered buildings stood in the dark like a skeleton world, like patterns in black and white."

We simply substitute a "smart alec" whim for an answer to a real need. Poetry, being the ambrosia of language, should be eternal. The modern tendencies should teach us to be able to lay away a writing of Keats for the charms of the follow ing selection from Kreymbourg,

"We have a one room house
You have a two room three room house
We have a one room house.
We have a one room house because we do not need a two room three room house
We have a one room house . . . ."

Go through a collection of new poems and count all those examples of free verse that contain, as complete lines, the single word "Desire." If this be poetry, peculiarly, it misses the point of poetry. It is only poetry insofar as it is a perverse essence of something vital that strikes a certain sense to a disturbed response. The feeling that is charmed with the music of verse is too bound up with thoughtful reaction not to be insulted by a meaningless jangle of "desires" and of "black nights, folding about me like a silver blanket." There is as much poetry in the extract from Mark Twain's English as She is Spoke.

"We have an upper skin and a lower skin. The upper skin moves all the time and the lower skin moves when we do."

Our writing has shaken off the smudgy traces of mawkishness. We are prepared for something better than we are willing to strive for. There is an example of writing of a mediocre author, a contemporary of Dickens, who, telling the story of a lovely lady taken prisoner by the ferocious pirate Morgan, says,

"After a few days, finding that he could make no progress in overcoming her repugnance for him, he boldly demanded that she should yield to his lusts. Instead of being roused to despair and anger by the insult, she talked so like an angel to him, sentiments of such purity and beauty dropped from her lips, that he felt ashamed and humbled in her presence."

The fire that has singed off this sort of thing should be of a better variety than to destroy the thing it has bettered. Well suited energy is the only locomotive force in progress, but energy that burns itself into mere flame is neither a force toward progress nor a symbol of rhetorical stagnation. It is nothing of rhetoric at all. It is a disease of the mind.

We admit that we have progressed, then, from our lily white lady with the heavenly blue eyes folded on her heaving bosom. Our heroine has hair yellow as "butter," not "buttercups." She is as "slender as a swagger stick." She smokes. She is too good to bury in so many whims of affectation that it is a relief to look back a hundred years, and, thinking of Agnes Wickfield, become strangely lonely.

THE OLD MAN'S WATCH

By

VERA ROOT

MY WATCH? Ah Friend,
It has served me well,
And serves me still.
Yes, the case is a bit heavy;
But so are the years.
The case worn smooth, you say?
Well friend, life itself grows smooth
With fifty years of running.
The closed face unhandy?
Ah sir, one has time to open it,
At seventy-five.

POEMS

By

EULALIE BEFFEL

LULLABYE

I AM afraid to go swinging in the night.
When the lamps are lit
And the Chinese sing their lullabies.
There is a lime tree
That I know is kind on blue evenings.
I shall swing there.
And the Chinese babies shall not mind,
I shall kick stars to them
Gently. I too was little once.
Hi-ooooooooooo!

DEATH

DEATH, you say, is the spirit broke.
Ah well! I still can live.
Death, you say, is a mind diseased.
Ah well! I still may give.
Death, you say, is the vacant stare.
But mine is swift instead.
Death, you say, is a bitter heart.
How long have I been dead?

DECEPTION

AND all the silly people
Pass and repass again,
As if they did not dream they were
Other wives and men.

ILLUSION

I CAUGHT a silver butterfly
Against a shining moon.
I dipped the surface of the sea
And caught a silver tune.

My butterfly has painted wings,
My tune died long ago,
I only have a silver dream
Of things I used to know.

IMMORTALITY

WHO builds in dreams
Builds nearer to the sky.
The house of rock will crumble
By and by.

Give me one hour
In this my spirit's home.
When I am dead
There is the earth to roam.

ILLUSIONS

By

EDWARD SODERBERG

THE street was narrow, and tall tenements blocked the sunlight. Carts, heaped high with vegetables, fruits, and fish, obstructed the roadway, and dirty children played on the sidewalks. Number 112 was a narrow brick tenement, like all the rest in the block, and one could see, through its open arch-style doorway, a flight of dark and well-worn steps. A young man, dark and slim, entered the doorway and climbed the steps. At the garret door he stopped for a moment as if in thought, and then pushed his way into the room.

A man, hardly more than a youth, was seated at a table, his fingers punching the keys of a typewriter with a certain rythm. He typed on, apparently unaware that anyone had entered. The newcomer looked over the room. It was bare, and dingy streaks showed in places on the walls where the rain had seeped in through the roof. A window, wide and dirty, filled almost an entire wall. A table stood in front of it, its battered surface an exact counterpart of that on which the youth was writing. A chair, its varnish scratched and marred, stood at the end of the table, its back pushed against the once white-enameled bed in the corner. The bed was unmade, its dirty sheets and grimy quilts half on the floor. As the man noticed, an expression of disgust flitted over his face. With a shrug of his shoulders he spoke.

"Eh, Tost, no luck again."

The youth turned from typewriting. "Ah, Gigo, I didn't hear you come in! *Teh,* my friend, you look glum!"

"Tost, my friend, it is useless to struggle against fate! For three days now I have run from place to place, like a sheep that is lost, and everywhere I receive the same answer. They say it in different fashion, but it is the same. Too busy! Too late! Too early! Always 'too' something! I am broke. You are not much better off! Tost, my friend, the gods are not on our side."

"*Eh bas, Gigo, teh, teh!* Are you still a small boy, that a bit of evil luck makes you despondent? I will go this afternoon, when I have finished my story, to the magazines, and I shall come back with some money! *Teh, Gigo,* what you need is some sleep. You sat up all night to finish your story."

"*Eh bas,* and did my sitting up all night make it any better? This country is worse than our Cephalonia. Squalor, misery, pain, it would make any man despondent!"

"Gigo, but do they feel so, those whom you pity? They do not feel that they are wronged. Life to them is beautiful. Get you to bed, Gigo,

and I will finish my story." He pressed his friend down into the bed.

To Gigo's mind the drumming of the typewriter was an accompaniment. He thought of their life since they had left Cephalonia, their native Ionian island, and had come to the land of their dreams. Tostore Perone had found life as great as he had visioned it, but he, Gigore Panelle, had been disappointed. Somehow, America was not as he had dreamed it would be. They had moved into this garret and had started writing. So far Tostore had written a series of children's stories in his delightfully whimsical and touching style for a mid-western daily paper, but after a month they had been discontinued as unremunerative features. As for himself, he had had nothing accepted, and his stories mirrored his growing bitterness against the world. It was two weeks, now, since Tostore had received his last check—an infinitesimal amount, and their exchequer was very low.

When Tostore had finished his story, he left the garret, his feet making almost no noise on the creaky stairs. Once out in the street, he walked at a rapid pace, for if he had bad luck, there would be many publishers to see before five o'clock. The first three were too busy even to see him, and the others said vague somethings about returning in a day or two, but Tostore was accustomed to such promises, and he paid no attention to them. Too often had he returned, only to sit and fret in the outer office, and be put off times without number.

Stopping outside a delicatessen, Tostore counted his money. There was a dollar bill and a few cents in silver. Picking out twenty-five cents, he entered the store. Presently he emerged, a loaf of bread, some cold meat, and a bit of cheese tucked under his arm. He quickened his steps, for the odors of the little shop had pleased his stomach, and he was anxious to reach his garret.

Gigore was asleep, but at Tostore's merry call he awakened. His despondency had not vanished with his weariness, and in a surly tone he asked Tostore if he had found a purchaser for his story.

"*Teh,* why be so foolish? Did you think that I, Tostore Perone, could sell anything?" and he laughed in his friend's disappointed face.

"Never mind, Gigo, for I have here some food. Let us to table!" and he began clearing his table and unwrapping the parcels. Gigore ate hungrily, but his face did not lose its expression of despair. When he had finished, he took his hat and left the room without speaking to his friend. Tostore smiled to himself and murmured, "*Teh, teh,* he will return at midnight, running like one demented, and he will sit up all night to write. His genius needs the stimuli of despair and bitterness."

It was long after midnight when Gigore returned, running up the steps like a wildman. He rushed to his typewriter, and in his haste he tore a sheet of paper he was trying to fit between the rollers. He rolled out a vicious oath, as though afraid his ideas would leave him if he were not quick, and put in another sheet. For hours he wrote, and the pile of pages at his feet grew larger and larger. The sun was tinting the nearby roofs when he ceased his work and fell exhausted on the bed.

II

As Gigore re-read his story, his eyes glittered with excitement. He turned to Tostore, who was typing a story. "Tost, listen to this! Last night I was out in the streets. Suddenly the ideas came crowding one another in my mind. This is my masterpiece, and if it is not accepted, there is no use for me to write. For never again can I get such art into my work."

As he read, Tostore sat up in his chair. It was a story of a woman who loved a man, and to her he was all that life meant. He cared nothing for her, and his indifference hurt her more than hatred. For her, life was flavorless, and she became a woman of the streets. It was a pathetic tale,

a masterly combination of cynicism, bitterness, and beauty. When he had finished reading, Gigore looked at his friend. There were tears in his eyes, and his face twitched with emotion.

Gigore cleared his throat and spoke, "Tost, I shall go now to the editors I know. Someone will take it, I am certain."

Long after he had left, Tostore sat silent, his thoughts on the woman whom Gigore had portrayed so brutally, and yet so beautifully. To him it was almost as if he had seen the drama enacted, and with an effort he convinced himself that it was but a story.

When Gigore returned he was jubilant. "Tost, it has been accepted. I went to Parkins, and he read it, or rather he read the first page. He was too busy to finish it, but he told me that he would write me as soon as he had read it. He will certainly take it!"

Tostore was as joyful as Gigore, and they went out to spend his last dollar on buns and cheese in a cafe. Over their simple fare they talked of the story, and what they would do when the check came.

III

Several days passed, and Gigore began to be worried when he did not receive any reply from Parkins. Tostore had sold another story for a few dollars, but Gigore was too nervous and excited to write, and he spent most of his time and Tostore's money in smoking innumerable cigarettes. At last he could endure the suspense no longer, and he told his friend that he would go and see Parkins.

An insolent, red-headed office boy showed Gigore to a seat in the outer office, and took his name in to Mr. Parkins. The editor was up to his neck in manuscripts, and while the name of Gigore Panelle seemed vaguely familiar, he could not quite place it. After a moment he remembered him, the fellow who was always pestering him to buy a story.

"Tell him that I am too busy to buy any stories, and that if he wants his manuscripts that he has left here he should return next week." He had forgotten the accepted manuscript, which lay at the bottom of the pile.

"Th' boss says ter tell ya that he's too busy today. If ya wanta sell him any stories ya gotta wait till next week. Ya can get yer old papers back then, too," and the red-head went about his work.

For a moment Gigore was numbed. Parkins was planning to return his manuscript, his masterpiece! And Parkins was considered the easiest of the magazine editors. If Parkins shelved it, the others would not even look at it. Gigore could not quite understand it all. His masterpiece, the story he had put his whole soul into—and it was not accepted! Dazedly he went out of the office and punched the elevator bell mechanically, scarcely noticing when the ground floor had been reached. As he emerged onto the crowded street, the full realization of his failure came over him. He was no good. He couldn't write! A sob shook his shoulders, and he walked like a man in a dream.

Unconsciously he turned towards his garret, and it was not until he reached the tenement that he realized what he was doing. He could not go back and face Tostore! Never again could he write such a tale as his last, and that one had been shelved. The totality of his failure was a horrible thought, and he walked quickly away from the tenement. He walked for miles, unaware of his surroundings, until the wind from the river smote his face.

Like an automaton he swerved his steps, walking out the waterfront. He stumbled out onto a wharf, long since abandoned, and stood at its edge. The foul and filthy smell of the water came dimly to his senses, and the thought of suicide entered his mind.

Why not? He was a failure; he could not write. His thoughts surged and clamored in his brain, and his head felt strangely light, as though it were puffed up like a paper bag. Suddenly he felt tired, terribly tired.

He looked at the water, black and oily. It seemed as though something was calling to him from the water, and it seemed inviting. He thought of the story that had been discarded, and it was more than he could bear.

The water looked quiet and kind.

There was a muffled splash, and he felt himself sinking—sinking—what—a—relief—to—sleep—

IV

Tino, the peanut man, and his wife were looking out of their tenement window. The street below was filled with carts, and children were playing in the dirty roadway. A man, grey-haired, and well-dressed, leaned against a wall and watched them, a twisted smile on his lips.

"Petsch," whispered Tino to his wife, "it is Perone, the story-writer again." Every little while he comes and leans on the wall, and that sad smile is always on his face. They say he writes stories of the filth and evil of the city, and that he is very, very rich. Why should he come and watch the children play? But then, who can tell what is in the mind of these story writers," and he shrugged his shoulders, a pitying look on his face.

THREE EPITAPHS

By

CONAR KILARNE

The Cynic

THE Wall I built of doubt and disbelief
To ward off disillusion—give relief
From Life,
Kept me secure within its strong confines
From whence I watched the broken, serried lines
Of Strife . . .

I read of how an ancient, tranquil race
Kept peace within their well-girt dwelling place;
But fond
Of peace, did they so dully live and die
And never wonder what might lie
Beyond?

The Sentimentalist

The loves I knew were various
And though they were vicarious,
They were deep.
Just as in life I was denied
Truth—so in death . . . For I died
In my sleep . . .

The Poseur

And after having played a part
For all my twenty long-short years
I thought at last to break a heart
With one last gesture, wring some tears
From my passing . . .
I came back but saw not tears—
Only women's covert sneers,
And men laughing . . .

THE ANNIVERSARY

By

GLADYS FIST

SHE stretched a brown, wrinkled arm from under the covers and felt for the alarm clock; she might as well turn the alarm, so that it would not ring. She had been awake for hours, thinking, joyously planning how the day would be—her fiftieth anniversary wedding day. She would let Mose sleep a little longer; he slept most of the time now; after eighty years of life, one begins preparing for death by sleeping into it. Jennie could stay in bed no longer. She felt restlessly expectant. Silently slipping out of bed she walked to the frost-covered window; it was closed; Goldie could never persuade her that cold air was good for one. Scratching the frost with her cold hand she cleared a space large enough to see through. The world was a pattern of grey and white; snow-laden clouds of the heavens joined, like the lid of a pan, Jennie thought, the dull, white snow of the earth. The cotton-wood tree was covered with hoar frost; on one of its branches two sparrows, pressing close to each other, mutely surveyed the world.

Jennie shivered and walked back to the bed; she would awaken Mose now, so that she could shave him before they should go. He would complain, because he only allowed her to do that once a week; even that tired him and made him cross. Today, though, he must be shaven, for they were going to Goldie's for their anniversary dinner. Perhaps there would be company—people who were not of the family. Jennie had not seen many of her friends in the last few years; they no longer dropped in to see her as they once had done. She had only been to a single party in the last two years, and there she had been put in a little, dark hallway with "Old lady Harris" and "deaf Mrs. Foster" where they had played rummy all afternoon while the others played bridge. Mrs. Moore had even forgotten to bring them refreshments, until after the others were through eating theirs, when the cake was all eaten. Jennie had cried that evening when she went home, but she never told Mose.

Today was different; she was going to something finer than a party; she was going to a dinner given for her and Mose. She would not have to fear being put in a dark hall today. She would sit under the brightest light, and her pink beads would glisten and shine. She would be the center of attraction. She must hurry and dress. If only company would be there. She must awaken Mose.

"Mose! Mose!" Stooping over she kissed his white lips. "Mose." He opened his eyes—Jennie noticed matter in their corners; she must not forget to bathe them with boric acid. "Mose, do you what day this is?" He only muttered his usual answer, a gruff "humpf." Jennie often thought that he had met life with that answer, faced all problems with it, grown old with it. "It's our anniversary; Richard will be here in two hours to take us to Goldie's. Get up; I have to shave you and you ought to take a bath." The last she supplied merely as a suggestion. She knew that even a fiftieth anniversary was not a sufficiently important occasion to make him change his Sunday-Wednesday bath schedule. She could only remember one time in their fifty years of married life when he had taken a bath on any other day. That was the time he had sat up with Judge Lewise's corpse all night. He had walked in the room and stumbled and fallen over the coffin; then he had wanted to cleanse himself of the feeling of death. Jennie shuddered; she did not want to think of death; this was her anniversary.

At last they were ready. Mose had been sitting in the cold front room

for half an hour waiting for Richard, while Jennie had been trying to decide which beads to wear. Age had not lessened her vanity. She would like to wear the pink pearls, but her daughter said that they were too "fussy" for a woman of her age. Still, Goldie was only her daughter; daughters should not dictate. Why, she could remember the first time she had spanked Goldie for sassing, and now the same girl (to Jennie she was always a girl) was trying to tell her what to do. She would wear them; she was not so old that she must dress in the drab colors of mourning.

She heard the front door open; she could smell Richard's pipe; she could feel his bigness fill the house. His voice boomed out: "Ready folks? Bundle up—seventeen below. Mother, Goldie says to wear your knitted jacket under your coat," then lowering his voice, "Hello, Dad!" She heard a faint "Humpf." She wouldn't wear the jacket; she wasn't so old that she needed an old lady's coat under her heavy one. Goldie was trying to dictate again.

She and Richard helped Mose out to the car. He walked slowly, haltingly, as though he were feeling for solid earth; he leaned heavily on his wife and gripped her thumb, but at last they were in the auto. Richard was whistling; Mose was sleeping; Jennie was thinking. Suddenly, they were at Goldie's. The hall door swung open; the smell of turkey and pie and soup and perfume and people was swept to them—a warm, healthy, comfortable odor. A jargon of confused voices came through the closed door leading to the front room; men and women were talking; children were screaming. An inward exultant voice shouted over and over to Jennie: "Company, company; you are not forgotten! Company!"

The door leading into the kitchen opened, and there stood Goldie. Her face was flushed from the heat of the stove; perspiration stood on her forehead; a string of hair hung in front of her eye. Wiping her hands on her gingham apron, she ran to her mother. Instinctively Jennie raised her hands to her throat and covered her beads. Goldie was too nervous because the turkey would not brown to notice them anyway. Jennie felt important; all the people, the turkey, the hothouse roses, everything was for her and Mose, who stood there as calmly as he did when he watched her dry the breakfast dishes. She was being pushed into the front room. It was smoky and smelled close, but Jennie did not notice that. She only saw indistinct faces and bodies come toward her; she felt arms about her and kisses on her cold cheeks. A strong emotion took possession of her—this was Life. She looked at Mose who was standing alone in a corner of the room; people had forgotten that this was his anniversary too. He looked lonely and old; Jennie was too happy to think of that now, for he did not care about "anniversaries and such" anyhow. She suddenly thought that she had forgotten to wash his eyes; she hoped that neither Goldie nor the guests would notice the matter in them .

Then they went into the dining room. The hot food, the wine, (Richard had opened his long cherished bottle of Burgundy and given a thimble full to each of the eighteen guests) the flushed faces, the incessant babble of talk, the heavy sur feiting odor of the narcissus all combined to make Jennie feel giddy. All of this was for her. She was the center of attraction. In the last year she had often felt that old people were not wanted, for they carried with them an atmosphere of somberness, and decay, and old thoughts that young people did not cherish. She must have been wrong though, for all this celebration was for her and Mose; all this happiness was because she and Mose were still living and well. Their lives had been quiet and good, and they had raised a fine daughter. Goldie sometimes gave sharp answers, and appeared uninterested in the little gossip in which she herself delighted, but that was over-

balanced by the happiness she was giving them.

Suddenly a hush fell over the company; Jennie started; breathlessly she looked at Mose; perhaps the excitement had been too much for him. No, he was all right; he was absorbed in drinking his milk and eating his eggs; he had long ceased eating solid foods. She looked away from him toward Richard who was standing up; the people were all silent because he was going to make a speech. Jennie was too excited to catch all of his words; she only heard a few of them, but these made a vivid impression upon her. She heard "Anniversary—fifty years. A golden life—happiness—." The voice continued. Faces whirled before Jennie's eyes; that glass of Burgundy had been too much. She wanted to cry. If only her son, Clyde, were here, he would hold her hand and give her courage. He was in a tubercular sanitarium; she musn't think of him today. She felt weak and faint. "I must look terrible and ill and crazy like," she muttered to herself. She saw Goldie whispering to the servant girl (the ice-cream had not come; Goldie was worried); "She must be going to send her over to see if I need anything; I must straighten up. O, God, this is nearly too much." The girl had gone out of the room; Jennie imagined she was going after smelling salts. Suddenly voices boomed out—there were cries and laughs and screams. Jennie felt a piece of paper being thrust into her hand. Then there was an intense quiet. No voices, no clatter of dishes, there was only the sound of Tom Simpkin's heavy asthmatic breathing.

Out of the stillness came Goldie's voice: "Mamma, it's a check for your anniversary! Land, you've been sittin' there like anniversaries come every day. Why, ma, you've been takin' it calm as an undertaker. Here I planned for you to be all excited and tense like. If you aren't the funniest one. Guess you've lived with pa so long you're beginnin' to take on his ways." The people laughed; Jennie sat there clutching her check; her hand suddenly sunk on her breast; she heard Mose say "Humpf."

The dinner was over; the lull in conversation had come that comes to all groups when they have been together three hours, when the glowing effect of rich food and a stimulant has worn away; the lull that comes when Mr. Simpkins has told how much money he has spent trying to cure his asthma, when Goldie has given her recipe for cranberry sauce, when the price of Mrs. Davis' diamond bracelet had been whispered about; the lull that comes when the cold, grey light of twilight has walked stealthily about and is suddenly found brooding over the room. Jennie hated to think of going home; her day was nearly over; tomorrow she and Mose would be "old lady Jennie" and "poor Mose" again. She heard Goldie saying, "Richard, I think you had better bundle up the folks and take them home, for if you want to play cards tonight, you must get back. Wake Dad, and we'll go." Mose had been sleeping since dinner.

Hurriedly they bundled the two old people into their heavy coats. As they helped her on with hers, Jennie noticed that in the twilight her pink beads looked drab grey. Richard almost carried his father into the auto.

The ride home was over; Richard had gone. The two old people stood alone in the house which was cold and empty and smelled as though it had long been closed. In the dim twilight the two figures might have been youth or age; it was too dark to tell. Jennie's voice came out of the dusk; it was a thin, old voice made full by emotion and happiness. "We weren't forgot, were we Mose? I bet the dinner cost Goldie well night on to fifty dollars. Those fish eggs she had are expensive. Mrs. Jack said she liked my beads." For a moment Mose did not answer, then emitted a slow "humpf," but Jennie thought she felt a tear from his eye fall on her hand.

EDITORIAL

ONCE more, ("rearward and rearward" as one editor had it; but always again, for there must be a re-birth, according to precedent) yes, once more this much maligned journal of sophistication is out of the box like an irresponsible Jack. But before we brand ourselves (labels are such intangible things, anyway) as sophisticated, or martyred, or followers of this and that new creed, let us make two promises: 1. Never to publish anything that will offend the taste of our readers, be they members of the great social set, intelligentsia, or the powers that reside on the hill. N. B. The subtle distinctions are our own. 2. Always to strive toward that goal of perfection in literary matters whose lure is false and whose reward, futility.

Now that we have promised, and paradoxically contradicted ourselves we shall proceed to do as we damn please. Appearances point to the assumption that editors too often say "let your conscience be your guide," and then surprisedly, and maybe disgustedly, succumb to the tragic fact that they have one. Yes, a conscience. One of those mean, tricky little devils who twirls the stop sign of discretion and causes the intellectual traffic jams.

In other words, I suppose, an editor must be broadminded—and, we like to think, a little bit of a rake. But, seriously, "rearward and rearward," as far back as our first memories of the Lit will go, that magazine was "vital and daring" under such and such an editor. Too vital and daring for some people—and for its own good, perhaps, but with a challenge to original artistic development that has long been lacking. Not that the magazine has now degenerated to mere literary twaddle, not that it has become a classroom organ, an outlet for feeble sophomore themes inspired by super-enthusiastic instructors.

What I mean is that the Lit needs a heavier diet than milk and honey. Good things are being written by students of the university; experiments, part of them, experiments that bubble and seethe and boil, that some day will crystallize into an essence of something or other. The Lit itself is an experiment: witness the new cover design, the wood-cuts, the interspersions of naive typographical flares. But after all, the perpetrators of those startling innovations are headed somewhere. They have an idea that transcends a certain static state of mind common to the "laissez faire" policy of the average too self-satisfied calamity howler.

But we have said enough as regards policy and principle—or perhaps we have said nothing at all. That is the undeniable prerogative of an editor. And now we casually withdraw in deference to last year's editor of the Lit. The bombardment below was to have appeared in the May issue of this sporadic publication last spring. That issue failed to appear, and consequently we have the honor. . . . —C. G. S.

WITH the conviction that vital thinking and free expression ought to be made current at the University of Wisconsin, the editors of The Wisconsin Literary Magazine ventured in September of 1925 to present to the students and the faculty the best specimens of creative and critical thought available. However, as we review the work of the year, there comes to us the alarming realization that, insofar as complete attainment of this ideal is concerned, failure seems to have met us at every turn. It is, of course, difficult to determine whether this is true because Wisconsin takes no interest in the creative and critical writing of undergraduates or because the Literary Magazine has not found the best thought. Whatever may be the reason, we shall accept the fact of this deficiency and attack it, assuming that there are a few who cannot view this condition without some misgivings. Not only at Wisconsin does this condition exist, but it is present, in greater or less degree, in other large universities of the country. And so, what we shall say of student thought and writing applies, wholly or in part, to the attitude of mind prevalent among the greater educational centers. Let us say at this point, however, that the editors of The Wisconsin Literary Magagine recognize that

a large portion of the fault rests with them. It is the rigorous self-scrutiny arising from recognition of this fact that prompts the following discussion.

Much that follows is stated in generalizations, many of which admit of important and revealing exceptions. Nevertheless, in order to avoid undue usurpation of time and space, the particular exceptions have been left to the discretion of the reader. The important thing is to face honestly and fairly the situation that presents itself.

I

The reading of hundreds of manuscripts—prose, verse, stories, essays (and editorials)—some poor, some fair, a few really excellent—has impressed upon us the conviction that our young writers do not think. Their minds move in fancy, and that even is of a far too evanscent and elusive nature. Curiously enough, these people (observe that most of them are language and literary students) seem to possess no idea of the true nature of imaginative literature. Although these students devote much or most of their time to literary study, this literature means to them merely a collection of books—books which please, perhaps, which excite the fancy, but which in all too many instances remain so many pages of words, sentiments, and figures of speech. The students do not read with minds that are open to understanding their books. By *understanding* we mean not the superficial information that enables one to write an "Ex" examination, but that larger, more vital understanding which seizes upon the truth of living and of thinking and carries that truth into the student's personal life. In other words, our writers lack imagination. It is not necessary to define our conception of imagination at this time; that was attempted in the first issue of last year. Yet, a word more. Not only is the great literature of the world cold and inanimate for the students, but life itself is a cold thing—a commodity to be taken for granted, like an old hat. Neither mystery, nor wonder, nor pain, nor joy can touch their minds. They speak through media borrowed from books, and these books, to make the matter worse are but half-understood. Since the reading is a lifeless process, that writing which follows comes forth soulless, much like a pretty statuette with the face obliterated. Before they can create with understanding and feeling, our writers must understand and feel the greatness of great literature, must feel and understand the vitality of the life about them, it may be critically or sympathetically.

If you would reach a man's heart with your writing, not only must you attack his imagination, but you must also storm his mind with logic. Do not think that similes and metaphors, humor and pathos, metre and vocabulary can achieve the victory alone; these are the raw recruits for your army; but without organization and training they can do nothing. Go back to your Plato, your Keats, your Shakespeare, your Voltaire, your Stevenson, your Conrad and try, if you can, to separate the imagination of their works from the informing logic that strengthens them. Forget the moon, the sunsets, the painful beauty of spring; throw your fancies behind you and try to understand, at least to feel, the life that fills your own days. Neither revery nor dreaming will bring you success. If you want to know your own mind, (and you must in order to write convincingly) your first task is to become acquainted with the guardian of the gate.

Hard work? Yes, the most difficult form of intellectual labor. But why avoid it? Are you afraid to think? If you are, you have no right to your literary pretensions.

There is a tradition that young men and women should revel in their youth and high spirits. This is a noble and healthy thought. But when, acquiescing in this belief, we indulge our weaknesses and turn away from the serious and fundamental aspects of our existence, the maxim becomes a vice. For, if we

abjure serious thought now, what shall we do when we are suddenly called upon to deal with the tough and unyielding matter of life? Some weeks ago, we read a sonnet to a friend and when we asked for criticism, this was the answer: "Why, you shouldn't write about such things! You're too young." If we may not think now, when, by all that is just and good, can we think?

II

The thinness of real thinking among the students is not to be thought of as arising solely from the indolence of the students themselves. We may, with some reason, attribute this condition to a measure of indifference in the faculty. One naturally assumes that scholars who are devoting all their time to the study of literature ought to have the means for stimulating the students to intellectual inquiry. Quite to the contrary, however, we find that whatever of literary aptitude exists here has come into being in spite of the aloofness of the faculty. And more, it seems that this aptitude in individuals, slight as it undoubtedly is, persists even under the deadening influence of men whose interests are primarily those of the scholar and only secondarily those of the educator.

This, we realize, is heresy. But it is, we are assured, the sentiment of many students who desire much and get so little. After all, were it not better to study blacksmithing if our professors can tell us no more of literature than that Milton draws upon Grecian, Roman, and Hebraic literature for his figures of speech, or that Byron's poetry was influenced by an unhappy boyhood? Were it not better, we say, to leave instruction in literature out of the curriculum if all the attention of students and professors is turned to the outlining of the peregrinations of pious Aeneas, if Shakespeare is presented to us as a clever stage-manager, if Burns is painted as a dissolute libertine and drunkard? We must know our creators as possessors of a humanity common to our own. Were not these writers men before they were artists? Did they not live life fully and imaginatively? Did they not feel the mystery, the wonder, the tragedy of life? If these things be true and if we desire to understand life, why must literature be reduced to mimeographed outlines? It is not enough to know that the Aeneid is a literary epic and that the Ilaid is a popular epic. Our wish is to know what Vergil and Homer have to say. How close were they to life and what in their works can strengthen us and give us wisdom? We students are an obtuse crowd, but can you not, instructors, dissolve our coldness and touch the quick of our minds?

III

One of the purposes of study—perhaps the greatest of all—is the attainment of a wisdom of life. We are not here to turn pages of a book and scribble notes on a piece of paper. We live; we laugh; we have our successes and our disappointments. Mystery lies about us like night around a fire. Is it not a marvel that Plato is your friend and Dante your table-companion? Do you not think it a privilege to understand these men and draw from them somewhat for the enlightenment of your mind?

If living is the *summum bonum* of life, and if imagination and reason can bring us wisdom, shall we deny ourselves the exercise of our imagination and reason? Let nothing stand between us and the free employment of intellect. Let neither the accidentals of literature nor the difficulty of hard thinking deter us from the pursuit of that wisdom which will make of us vigorous men.

SONNETS

By

JIM CHICHESTER

TO ONE WHO WOULD MURDER ME

THE cadences of words you speak are those
That lift like Fugi-yama in one line
Of beauty and descend when sounds define
The lineage. So exquisite it flows,
That if I knew not more, I might suppose
You were my friend. But I reflect the shine
Of cold avidity your eyes now hold and mine
Hard fixed in fascination will not close.

This thing were fear, but fear is not so strong.
Corrosion is the poison in my will.
Your gaze is dark; the torture will be long—
Come, rend my living flesh and take your fill
Of blood. I'll make of agony a song
And fling it in your teeth until you kill!

APRIL

When April winds are in the willow stems,
The waters of the lake lift to the shore,
What is there here of good shall bring me more?
The maple trees wear flaming diadems
And spread their boughs to touch the April rain,
And green designs of grass reach everywhere
Beneath the April sky. What more is there?
Will ever Spring return so fair again?

With music in the April winds that blow,
The earth will rise from cold passivity.
A joy beyond this joy I shall not know
Nor probe the summer's vague futurity.
It will not matter how that those days go—
I shall be living then, but differently.

THE ANSWER

She marked each dull brown furrow that he turned
From where she sat beneath an old plum tree;
She let the pan of fruit rest on her knee.
Across the rise the sun's gold fires burned,
The share caught glints from it each time it spurned
Another ridge of earth. Oh, how could he
Endure this barbarous poverty
With fortitude that she had never learned?

Behind the hills the gleaming cities lay.
She rose and walked around the meagre mow
And went to him; she said, "We need not stay,
So do not finish this." He cried, "Go now,
And that's the end." And she, "But I will say—."
He answered, "Go! I have this field to plow."

OLD MEN DREAM

By

CHARLES MURPHY

THE white beards of the old men were reddened by the rays of the setting sun that poured into the great hall through the stained glass windows at the west end. The marble walls and floors were bathed in soft full floods of black and yellow and blue and pink that shimmered like water falling in the sunlight. White columns reached up, up to weird dark heights.

Almost beyond these moving seas of many colors, in the shadows of an alcove sat the old men at a long table. The blackness of their formal coats and the black of their long table blended with the blackness of the walls behind them; only their faces and beards reflected faintly the red hue of the sun and of the stained glass. Old wise men of many lands were there; faces made sad by the toil and the blasted hopes of all the countries of the world were turned toward the far end of the long table where a great man was speaking.

An old and a wise and a dignified man spoke, and in his voice there was somberness and weariness and a great tenderness. This was not the first time he had spoken to wise men in this Hall of Peace; this was not the first time he had pleaded with all the sincerity of his heart for kindness and love that would end all wars. His voice rolled out in subdued rhythm; his words rose and fell in great periods. Great were the names he uttered; sublime were the ideals for which he pleaded in their names. The soul of his moving eloquence was his pity for the suffering of men. His gestures, slow in their measured dignity, were full of the great yearning and the hope in his heart.

When he had finished, there was a low rustling among the old men. Slowly, very slowly, they were taking their pens and writing something on little white cards. White-clad figures of clerks noiselessly flitted past the tables. Grey and white heads bent closer together in low conversation.

The red light of the fading sun grew very dim; the flashing colors on the marble faded; never-ending shadows grew from the bases of the columns and disappeared in long vistas of majestic halls. Darkness settled on the old men at the table. At last only their white faces and beards and occasionally a white hand moving in slow gesture gleamed out of the dark alcove where they sat.

II

The morning sun was high in the blue sky; it had melted the dirty packed snow on the sidewalks, and the water-soaked ashes that remained scratched under the feet of the pas-

sers-by. On an empty lot, filled with tin cans, pools of black water, and ash-piles, three boys, each about five years old, were playing. They were bare-headed and dirty. Their yellow touseled hair gleamed in the sunlight, their glowing faces shone with riotous, unreasoning joy; their cries were shrill and wordless and happy.

One of them saw a clean new newspaper on the sidewalk. He picked it up, and holding it around his head, cried out in glee.

"Hey, see, Billy, I got a hat."

The others looked for a second at the grinning, mocking face whose eyes were shadowed by the tall paper cylinder he held on his head.

"Give us some of it, you——," they cried, running toward him.

The possessor of the newspaper removed it, and still holding it tightly, said:

"Let's make soldier hats and play war. If I can be captain, I'll give you part."

"You can have first turn, but you've got to let us be captain next."

The owner promised, and the newspaper was divided into three parts.

The soft spongy earth yielded under marching feet; a military and ominous "boom-boom; boom-boom-boom" arose to the morning air from the throats of children. Three grim figures were marching to battle. "Boom-boom; boom-boom-b o o m.''

Their heads were erect and their shoulders were back and their steps were firm and quick. "Boom-boom; boom-boom-boom." Their faces were serious, but a restrained savage joy shone in their eyes. Up and down the sidewalks they marched. They carried long sticks over their right shoulders, and with their left hands they held their newspaper-caps at the backs of their heads. "Boom-boom; boom-boom-boom." Greasy, unkempt women in dirty aprons came to front doors and laughed and clapped their hands. A little girl came running from her mother carrying a tiny flag. The captain dropped his stick and took the flag without breaking step. "Boom-boom; boom-boom-boom." The little girl wriggled for joy and clapped her hands. On and on went the grim procession. "Boom-boom; boom-boom-boom."

III

An idle passer-by stooped over in curiosity to look at a picture in a newspaper that lay crumpled up on the sidewalk. It was a picture of a majestic hall where many old men were seated at a long table, and one man, beautiful in his sincerity, was speaking to them. But the passer-by kicked the paper away from him and went on. He could not read the caption, for the paper was queerly rolled and crumpled, as if someone had held it around his head.

ODYSSEUS

By

LAURISTON SHARP

SILENT you sit in your infirmity
And turn your roving mind to days of old,
Pondering the prophecies Teiresias told—
How yours a happy, quiet age should be
And peaceful death, far from your wine-dark sea.
Oh, bitter paradox! How could you hold
In peace your wandering spirit, as foretold,
Kept from loved Ocean's deeps by destiny?

When the advancing years should bring us ease
We, restless and unhappy, strive to use
Our bodies as they were when young and fresh;
We struggle with our worn and withered flesh
That it should take us on new embassies.
But, old Odysseus, we must always lose.

A GATE IS CLOSED

The Lewis Prize Essay of 1926

By

LAURISTON SHARP

THE child was happy in the Garden; there he could amuse himself. For the Garden abounded in those things which give childhood happiness. There could be found the laughing water in which one might wade and swim and splash about; which could carry on its bright back the little shingle caravans which children, sending out to distant ports, watch for a time, and then forget, with never a worry concerning the outcome of the venture, or the fate of those navigators to whom they have entrusted their frail, paper-sailed craft. And, too, what interesting things the water contained: the bits of colored glass and stone or old ironware which surely came from foreign lands; the sand-washed shells, fantastically curled or sharp, or those which still contained their original slimy tenants and should be handled carefully lest the skin be caught in their painful grip; and all the varied aquatic life, from the ferocious crab to the elusive bass. And in that Garden were inviting fields where flourished the swaying mullen, the daisy, and the black-eyed Susan, through which fled the little mice hunted by the cunning snake, or disappeared the startled cotton-tail. Exploration never exhausted the secrets of the mysterious wood which was found in the playground of that Child. Novel diversions could always be had in every new-found, homely mushroom growth or taller outlook pine. Childhood could ask no more than the freedom to roam, with a friendly dog for company, such a place as that fascinating Garden.

The Garden was bounded by a wall; but the Child was late in discovering that. For many years sufficient entertainment could be found within the Garden itself. At first the games of boyhood, and when the toys grew tiresome, quiet rest upon some sunny hill. Then came the picture books and stories which told of a strange and different life, and made the growing Child observe his surroundings the more closely. Now was felt for the first time the keen enjoyment of the beauty of some stretching landscape, or of a single flower or graceful flight of some high bird. The seasons brought new mysteries heretofore unnoticed: spring and the mating birds, autumn and dying leaves, summer and activity, winter and quietness. Strange thoughts bothered the Child, and so the wall was discovered. The Youth passed through, and closed the Garden gate behind him.

Then followed a space wherein the Youth was busily engaged in observing the life upon which he had suddenly stumbled. A full appreciation of the best, he had learned in the Garden, would come with a close observation of life—he must discover concerning it as much as he possibly

could; and he now realized that as each new discovery was made, each new phase of life observed and understood, he must learn to utilize what was good in a way which would give him the greatest benefit in later years. During this short interval life gave to that Youth varied and interesting experiences and contacts, (perhaps too many for him to handle successfully), and so he followed his course confidently, feeling sure that "when the time came" he would be well equipped. But that time came early, and too short was the span in which the Youth must lay the foundations for his future happiness.

Manhood loomed before the Youth, and he was afraid. For Manhood, with its perplexing problems and responsibilities, frightened him. He would never be asked whether or no he had made a success of his childhood and youth—he had not been answerable for that—but it would be his to account for a successful manhood. Therefore the Youth halted and considered himself.

As the Youth looked about him, he found that he was alone. Friends he had had, many of them, whom now he must call acquaintances. For the friendships of childhood, that period when two small hearts are only too eager to pour out to each other every little grief and problem with which they overflow, must often grow apart as the individuals acquire the self-conscious reticence of adolescence or the diverging interests of advancing intellect. The common bond of all childhood—an almost universal interest in the same things, is easily dissolved by the developing individualism of youth. And because the individualism of youth is highly emotional, the friendships of youth, though intense, are often short. Two utterly differing characters, attracted to each other for this similarity of interest or that, will mingle in a most happy, enthusiastic relationship, only to find themselves, after a little, drifting apart; for the interests of youth are various and of varying degrees, and what may attract at one moment is of no concern the next. Thus the Youth had moved from one friendship to another until he found himself, at last, much in need of a true intimate. He had heard from Epictetus that "He who suffices for himself is rich," wherefore he had tried, for a little time, to be contented with a lonely state, he had turned back then to himself, only to find that that man is rare indeed, and the youth well-nigh nonexistent, who can live happily alone. Often, thereafter, he had knocked at the familiar door of past friendship, only to find beyond it sad exchange of interest for emptiness. The friend was busied elsewhere now, and strange; the Youth was alone.

Spiritually he was also alone. He had been told: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy mind and with all thy soul. This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." The reasonable wisdom of the second law had appealed to him, and he had followed that order with successful willingness. But a God he had not found; and who has yet discovered a Good or Right, universal and unfailing?

In spite of these difficulties which stood in the way of his happiness, the Youth possessed many helpful characteristics which should contribute much to a future enjoyment of life. He was patient, ever willing to endure what the Fates should be pleased to mete out to him, though concerned sometimes about the future. Coupled with this was a rather unusual lack of ambition, a trait depending in large extent upon an absence of any special interests. He seldom rebelled; he seldom enthused. Although such a calmness and evenness of character is conducive to a contented, satisfied existence, yet the passive individual misses a good part of what is best and most interesting in life—the portion which adds zest to the game. The heights of ecstasy, the depths of

melancholy, the whole range of the emotions, must be experienced by the man who would know life and live it to its fullest. But perhaps the lasting contentment of the quiet man rather than the stormy passion of him who is susceptible to the emotions gives, on the whole, the greatest happiness throughout a life which, at its best, is hard; and the Youth sought such happiness.

Early in his career the Youth had discovered beauty—the beauty which was in such great abundance within his walled Garden—and he had worshipped the various forms of nature "as gods of wood and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know." From that time he had been able to appreciate such beauty wherever he found it reflected about him: in the graceful symmetry of well formed phrases; in the particular excellence of fine thought or idea; in the delicate loveliness or rugged charm of some skilfully wrought work of art; or, as before, in the natural beauty from which he had learned his first lessons. Such beauty attracted him, and pleased what soul he had. He could never reproduce it; he seldom attempted to create it. It was far from a passion to him, yet beauty, rather than anything else, thrilled him and gave him joy. And because there is so much of the beautiful in man, his works, and his surroundings for those who are capable of recognizing and appreciating it, the man who is sensitive to beauty has an asset which should go far in helping him through a world which to the average human being must be ever crude and unlovely.

As the Youth considered himself, he was appalled by a realization that he had developed certain habits and characteristics which he could probably never change. He was supposedly young, free, with all of life before him to do with what he would; yet here he found himself hampered by mannerisms and traits fixed and indelible; characteristics whose presence he now for the first time realized, and which he recognized would greatly encumber, if not halt altogether, a happy proceedure along the way he had to go. Weak will, procrastination, forgetfulness that such obstacles, which might completely subvert his career, which would seriously affect his welfare, should have grown upon him unnoticed, discouraged the Youth. Keenly he felt his many defects; sorrowfully he realized that he "had been weighed in the balances and found wanting," as though another hand he could not know had written upon his wall, but with a different import, the ancient "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin." The helpless consideration of his condition unnerved the Youth, and the fear that he might never accomplish his way became greater and more intense, a melancholy anguish.

And so at some time all youth stands hesitating, afraid of life, afraid because of youth's own incompetencies; and thoughts run back to that pleasant Garden of Childhood, to the carefree joy of a happy life; and a longing for it fills youth's heart, and the desire to return to happiness.

But the gate of that Garden is closed. . . . never to be opened!

BOOK NOTES

COMMENTS

Some of the newer and interesting books, which we have been unable to review comprehensively, are mentioned here in an attempt to give a hint of their contents and their worth. This is but a taste of the hundreds of books available, for we have chosen only a few of those appealing to us—a few which we judge as best.

John Galsworthy's *Silver Spoon* is a continuation of the story of the Forsytes, carried on with a bit of English politics woven into it. The *Dark Dawn* is another of Martha Ostenso's portrayals of farm life, adhering to a realistic conception. In *Pig Iron,* Charles G. Norris has conceived another *American Tragedy,* albeit much simpler and shorter, and executed in a manner truly delightful. *Chevrons,* by Leonard H. Nason, is the best war story we have ever read; it is admittedly plotless, but brimming with a realism tempered with humor. Pio Baroja, the Spanish novelist, has given us the picture of a man's nobility and degredation in *The Lord of Labraz.* Lord Dunsany has a delightful new piece of fantasy, *The Charwoman's Shadow,* appealing in spite of the apparent weakness of the fantasy.

In non-fiction, Viscount Grey's *Fallodon Papers* is to be recommended. It is a series of essays on nature, readings, and life in general, that is very well done. *Collector's Luck in England,* by Alice Van Leer Carrick, enriches the knowledge and pleasure she has given us in her *Collector's Luck.* Llewellyn Powys's *The Verdict of Bridlegoose* is a group of essays distinguished by their facts and fancies, and written in the vividly expressive manner by which we know Mr. Powys. —E. C. S.

LABELS by A. Hamilton Gibbs
Little, Brown, and Co. $2.00

A year ago last spring the youngest member of the writing Gibbs family produced the most popular novel of the season. It was the story of a girl and her father, with a background of war. The author looked into the very soul of the girl with such uncanny insight, for a man, that the critics marked him as one of the better younger writers. This fall Mr. Gibbs brings forth *Labels* to vie for the honors that *Soundings* received.

It is a story of post-war England, and this time of a whole family rather than simply father and daughter. Mr. Gibbs went through the war and came out with some very definite convictions on the whole subject of war and peace. In *Labels* he voices these ideas through the medium of his characters—Dick, who has just been demobbed, Madge, just returned from a hospital, and Tom, released from a prison camp of conscientious objectors. Each member of the family finds the problem of settling back into the old pre-war life of England practically impossible, and their method of settling these things, so vital to their lives, is sometimes drastic.

Mr. Gibbs portrays the conflict of emotions and of ideas between the members of the younger generation and the father and mother, the latter having learned practically nothing of the real meaning of the war and its disastrous consequences upon the minds of young men and women, with a curious insight that is his individual gift and perhaps a result of that war.

Many things have been written of late about the conflict, which ended so abruptly eight years ago. Men and women are looking back now with a new perspective, and various prob-

lems of the war come up that seemed obscure only a few years ago. *Labels* voices only one idea, one problem, but a problem still vital, since it concerns the possible solutions of infinite other wars. And beside the problem there are the characters, thoroughly British, but likeable, who form themselves, under the deft pen of the author, into an enjoyable novel as well. —C. G. S.

EARLY AUTUMN by Louis Bromfield
Frederick A. Stokes Co. $2.00
Brown Book Shop

Early Autumn by Louis Bromfield, reveals the futility, the hollowness, the weakness of the decadent Pentland family, of Puritan descent.

Pentland tradition has fettered old John Pentland, head of the family, rugged and strong, who escapes overwhelming depression in periods of drunkenness. It has nourished Aunt Cassie, inquisitive, childless, verbal invalid. It has protected Anson Pentland, flaccid, stupid, spending days in conservative Boston clubs, passing evenings writing the "History of the Pentland Family and the Massachusetts Bay Colony."

Under this spell of fearful family pride has come Olivia Pentland twenty years before as the wife of Anson, "a soft woman of gentleness and poise, whose dark beauty conquered in a subtle fashion."

Into the formless and futile days, and dull evenings returns Sabine Pentland, hard and brilliant, after twenty years outside of tight little Durham in a fashionable and an intellectual world, to throw a cruel spotlight on the threadbare traditions of her family. With her comes her daughter Therese, to hunt insects, and clever young Jean De Cyon to love Sybil Pentland.

Olivia gains strength from Sabine's hard and unflinching courage. She falls in love with Michael O'Hara, a politician and man of vital personality, realizing fully the hollow mockery of her twenty years of married life.

Young at 40, she is tempted to flee. Old John Pentland guesses her purpose. He has sacrificed his love for the honor of the family and he tells her, "There are things, Olivia, which people like us can't do."

With a last effort Olivia frees Sybil from the family blight with a hasty marriage to Jean de Cyon, and bravely returns to take up the daily tasks as guardian of the parasitic Pentland name, whose line has left only hypocrites and weaklings who are terrified lest the "walls, the very foundations, of their existence be swept away leaving them helpless with all their little prides and vanities exposed, stripped of all the laws and prejudices which they had made to protect them."

Louis Bromfield feels deeply into the roots of the Pentland traditions. He respects the harsh integrity of the upright forbears and pities the bloodless and weak imitators which money has fostered.

Early Autumn is a book to read and to remember. —W. W.

WALLS OF GLASS by Larry Barretto
Little, Brown, and Company $2.00
Brown Book Shop

In this excellent portrayal of the heroic struggle of a woman to bring up her infant child, Larry Barretto has done himself proud. A kept woman, exposed to the ridicule of the worst snobbery in the world, that of a small town, the heroine at the end of the book, emerges from all her troubles with the reader's admiration for her indomitable spirit, still intact. The glamour of the race track, with its more questionable side, the accurate delineation of small town society, and the development of the character of Martin Greer, as they are handled in this novel, are all accomplishments of which the author may be justly proud. "No women and few men will be able to leave Larry Barretto's new novel unfinished," is Grant Overton's opinion. For my part I highly agree with him and feel that *Walls of Glass* is a distinctly worth-while contribution to modern fiction. —Biblio.

BEAU SABREUR by Percival Christopher Wren
Frederick A Stokes and Co. $2.00

Beau Sabreur is the story of Major Henri de Beaujolais, an officer in the French Intelligence Service. De Beaujolais is too good a soldier to appeal to all his readers, although many feminine admirers will be gained by his extreme masculinity and his adherence to duty despite the wilting contempt of the heroine.

The story is divided into parts, of which the first is told by de Beaujolais, and is packed with thrilling escapades and descriptions of native life in Africa that are interestingly portrayed.

The second part, told by "two bad men," saves the book. It has much good humor, and dissolves some of the "virility" and "melodrama" found in the first part. Major Wren holds his readers' interest throughout because the book is so full of action and suspense that it cannot possibly drag.

Beau Sabreur is good material for light reading, and time used in reading it is enjoyably, if not profitably, spent. —M. R. S.

TAMPICO by Joseph Hergesheimer
Alfred A. Knopf $2.50

"A keen psychological study of disillusionment in middle-aged love," someone has said of this novel. Studies in this thing and that are not interesting in themselves, inasmuch as labels are dangerous things to place. But Hergesheimer, if he ever wrote a study or a problem into his novels, has disguised it masterfully under the cloak of romance and the veiling mantle of description. Always he has written of disillusionment, though. Richard Bale of *Balisand* comes to mind—Richard Bale strutting up and down the rooms of his plantation-house—old, cynical, disappointed, but glorying in his pain. *Cytherea, The Bright Shawl,* and others stand forth now to match their strength against *Tampico.*

Hergesheimer has written of adventure, intrigue, illegitimate love, in the oil fields of Old Mexico. He has created men like Govett Bradier and

women like Vida Corew, to allure, to draw the reader on through countless pages of suspense marked by periods in which he explains things to himself and then hurries as if to catch up the thread of the tale.

Bradier has been one of those masterful, ruthless men, crushing all obstacles to his will. Stricken with malaria, he is sent to New York to recuperate, and at the opening of the story, we find him aboard a tanker enroute for the oil fields and the wife of a subordinate. He is curiously inert, his enthusiasm and ambition strangely absent in his oil deals; and his mind uneasy about Vida and their love. His old energy and singleness of purpose are gone, and the self-assurance that characterized the old Bradier has vanished.

In a masterly fashion Hergesheimer has drawn the ethical and moral doubts that assail Bradier, placing him ironically far from all his determinations and plans. —E. C. S.

THE CASUARINA TREE by W. Somerset Maugham
Geo. H. Doran Co. $2.00
Brown Book Shop

The Casuarina Tree is the title under which W. Somerset Maugham groups six short stories. The scene of all of these tales is laid in the East—the Malay Peninsula, Borneo, and Singapore. The first tale, *Before the Party*, is a story of the unrestraint caused by the lonely, careless life at the governmental outstation in inner Borneo, and the tragedy arising out of it. In *P. & O.* the psychological reactions of a jilted wife are worked out to the accompaniment of descriptions of savagely wild landscapes and ship's-passengers. Cooper's ignorance of Malay character in his outstation on the Peninsula is the basis for *The Outstation*, showing the impossibility of transplanting occidental customs in an oriental environment. *The Force of Circumstances*, and *The Letter* are two stories of illegitimate love, showing the effect of environment on morality and tolerance. Izzart, the governmental Resident, really a half-caste, and who is obsessed by the idea that his blood

will show him up at a crucial moment, shows his true character through that very fear, his thoughts and subsequent actions vividly portrayed in *The Yellow Streak.*

The vivid and colorful descriptions which Maugham has shown us his ability to create in his *Of Human Bondage,* are everywhere in evidence in this group of stories. Maugham uses much the same type of plot as does de Maupassant, combining it with descriptions photographic in their intensity. The whole book has an atmosphere of the subtle, undermining effects of the Orient, pervading the actions and the thoughts of the characters. More than a little charm has been added by the whimsical and slightly ironic *Preface* and *Postcript* of the author. —E. C. S.

THE GOLDEN DANCER by Cyril Hume
George H. Doran Company $2.00
Brown Book Shop

Cyril Hume's latest book is another one of these modern stories about a person who is weary unto death of the machine-driving slavery of our modern society, and who is suffering from vague dreams of something better. The man of the story is one Albert Wells, and the story tells of his quest, his random efforts at trying to get what he wants, of his disappointments because of the hypocrisy and meanness of others, and of his final reward.

The character delineations of the book are good, but I am afraid that, as regards the character of Albert Wells, the author has made his philosophizing and his desires somewhat too advanced for the degree of intellectual and emotional sophistication that he has reached. In other words, Wells philosophizes as we might think the author would. And perhaps that is all right. Nevertheless, if you read the book, take particular note of the reflections of a certain owl toward the end of the story. That has been particularly well done. All in all, if you don't mind a certain frankness of expression and a certain tendency on Hume's part to see things as they actually are, you will enjoy the book. Then, too, there are a few colorful and entertaining descriptions which you will no doubt like. —C. O. N.