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# The Wisconsin Literary Magazine



February, 1926

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# The WISCONSIN LITERARY Magazine



Volume XXV

February, 1926

Number 4



## THE PURPLE DAISY

By

JOHN P. GILLIN

I

IT IS a well known fact that there is nothing so boring as a man in love, especially if he be loquacious to others of his own sex regarding his affliction. Such, I thought, was never so much the case as on this midsummer afternoon, as Terry and I rode eastward through the rolling farmland of southern Wisconsin on the highroad to Milwaukee.

First, I had not had the faintest notion of a trip of this sort until midnight of the evening before, when Terry mentioned it to me as we smoked at a "ringside" table in the White Elephant, a much frequented resort, about which folks were wont to boast if they succeeded in gaining entrance between eleven and one—and feel very virtuous if able to get out after . . . At any rate, the White Elephant was a favorite vice with us that summer, and, as we sat at the table waiting for our partners to appear for the next dance, Terry leaned over to me and said, "Let's hop off for Milwaukee tomorrow, old scout—a little fresh air will do you good."

"But, Terry," I objected, "you know as well as I do that I'm flat broke, and as for fresh air, I certainly get enough of it at my—ahem—position with the

university agricultural department."

"What I mean is," said Terry as he blew a small cyclone of smoke toward his right eye—those humorous blue eyes so curiously set in his lean brown face—"that you need a change of air—a different kind of air. After breaking up with your heart's delight of last year, you've borne a very close resemblance to the Wreck of the Hesperus, or the Last Rose of Summer, or . . ."

"Stop," I said, "what do you know about it anyway?"—just a trifle self-consciously, I guess.

"I'll admit," he continued, "that I don't know much about uncommissioned sea craft or faded botanical specimens, but I do know that you haven't had a bit of pep this summer and have sat around moping for two months since school was out. What did you break up with her for? I know damn well she was crazy about you."

"Aw, shut up. I don't want to hear anything more about it."

And here we were, rolling along on the road to Milwaukee in Terry's home-made Buick. As I said, I was bored, first, because I hadn't had much sleep, not having planned for any excursion after the dissipation of the previous

night, and, secondly, because I had not known until we were well along the way that the cause of Terry's sudden inspiration for travel was a certain young lady residing in the vicinity of our destination. I should have known that there would be a catch somewhere.

The shimmering country-side floated past dreamily in the misty heat of the August sun, as our prehistoric equipage sputtered frantically along the white hot concrete, and Terry talked in a steady flow of collegiate superlatives of his lady friend. . .

"...yes, I called her up after I left you last night and she will have everything fixed up for you. Say, Ruth certainly is a wonderful kid. I know you'll like her, and she said she liked you already, when I got through telling her about you over the phone last night," I heard him saying. It must have been much later, for the lazy roadsides were gone and we were bumping along a tire-torturing brick pavement beside a maze of interurban railroad tracks. Terry was looking straight ahead, intent on the road, or his visions. "We'll stay at my sister's place tonight," he continued. "She's got a pretty fair place on the west side. But I certainly want you to meet Ruth, old man, because I know you will like her—"

I smiled faintly and decided to be tolerant. Poor old Terry, he was such a good scout anyway. Too bad. But I little suspected that Terry and Ruth's little affair was the starting point of a path which was to lead me far into the jungle of mystery, which hid the stream of life, where I was to plunge into it again, and there are hidden parts in the depths of the jungle on which the sun light never shines. . .

A few hours later found us driving up a winding drive towards a very tall, stern looking stone mansion which loomed through the surrounding trees and must have made the undatable Buick feel almost kiddish, because of its very air

of solid eternity. I guessed that Ruth's father was a lumber king. I was wrong. He had been a brewer.

"Ruth's friend is going to be here so we can start without having to waste a lot of time going around to her house," Terry said as we mounted the massive steps.

"Good," I said lightly, as we entered. The drowsiness of the afternoon had been bounced out of me during the sleep enroute and I felt fine, though limpidly unenthusiastic.

Inside, twilight had almost turned to night, and a soft gleam through the colored glass window in the reception room diffused a strange mellowness about the place and illumined ever so vaguely the thick rug, which I stared at as we waited for the girls to come down. Queer tricks a faint light can play, but there on the rug, much larger than life—yet I could see it but dimly—was a purple daisy, a part of the design of the rug. It was ridiculous; who ever heard of a purple daisy? Yet, it fascinated me, and I rubbed my foot across it absently as we waited.

The lights had not yet been turned on, but the first thing I noticed about the girl as she came down the long Victorian staircase in the mellow light were her eyes, and I wondered if anyone had ever noticed anything else before noticing them. I leaned over to Terry and whispered admiringly, "Heavens man, I don't blame you for your enthusiasm in the least. You certainly have wonderful taste, boy."

But the expected burst of recognition did not come. Terry was sitting in a slightly dazed manner also. I surmised that he had noticed the eyes too.

Not that they were vampire eyes, or siren lamps that begged for attention, for there was nothing of the "come-hither" in them at all. They were large and round, in a sort of trusting way, which at the same time met one on his own ground, while auburn lashes cast a hin-

of shadow through their brightness to make them unmistakably feminine. There was something about the face. I wondered vaguely at the time whether it was sorrow or courage. I liked it, whatever it was. It was a long time before I realized the rest of the owner of the eyes. The "rest" was rather like a painting by Coles Philips which I had once seen—except that on her dress, near the waist, she wore an ornament, some sort of a flower whose color I could not tell.

"I know this is frightfully brazen of me," she said, taking both our hands as we rose, "I'm Doris. . . ." some frightfully German name which I later learned was Scopenschlitz—"Ruth wanted me to come down and entertain you. She was detained down town and just got back a minute ago." Darned nice of Ruth, I thought. I was still listening to the ripples of her voice. It was one of these clinging voices that go through all the harmonies in soft, throaty trills, slightly husky, caressing to the ear.

\* \* \*

Doris and I were in the back seat of Terry's car. We had exposed each other to our respective lines, that is, we had become acquainted according to the fashion; I had found that she was a wonderful dancer and had told her so; the top of her head, with the golden hair drooping about her face and brought up behind, reached just to my shoulder; I thought that her lips were just full enough to kiss divinely and I told her so, which she had refuted—in short, we had decided that we were getting along rather well together. And here we were in Terry's car. Terry and Ruth were supposedly dancing, and the omniscient elms surrounding the Black Hawk Inn made pleasant shade 'neath which to sit with a young lady on a midsummer eve. The orchestra, which at this distance deteriorated into the dum-dum beat of the drums punctuated by an occasional overly zealous blat, competed with the

frogs and the hot-night hum of insects from Finger Lake in the other direction. (I kissed Doris.)

Her eyes were cool and deep, and the black was very large. There was something—yes, perhaps a great deal—which was incomprehensible about those eyes, as if they were used to much more serious business than merely smiling entrancingly into men's faces.

"Do you like my eyes?" she whispered. I admitted that they were adorable.

"I'm glad if you do, because they're the only part of me that is really I."

"It's queer," I said; but then I realized that there was no other part of her that I would rather wish to take as representative. They were so intelligent, and yet understanding, with a far distant twinkle, somewhere deep. I was in search of that twinkle, but always it led me deeper. There was danger of drowning in those eyes. Suddenly I started.

"Why—they're purple," I gasped breathlessly. She smiled.

"Are you sure? What is so breathtaking in that?"

But as she spoke, my eyes seemed to refocus and I realized that I was staring at the ornament on her dress, a *purple* daisy, strangely like the one I had seen on the rug. . .

## II

The stream of life is likely to change frequently, seeking new islands around which to throw the rush of its changing current, and that which a short time ago had borne the brunt of the current becomes a scummy backwater or a cool, still pool, while many things rush by. .

So it was with Doris. First rushing, then open houses, long cool drives through the autumn nights, football games and their accompanying trips on frosty week-ends, and the other hundred frivolities of the opening of school caught me in their rush.

Despite several persuasive letters of mine, Doris did not come to the U, be-



cause, as she explained sketchily in the first of the two letters which I received, her family insisted that she go to Downer another year. She was a sophomore.

And so, I gradually ceased to write and found myself too busy to accompany Terry on his jaunts to the Cream City with Ruth on week-ends. Not that he minded greatly, I imagined, but he did complain loudly of the lonely rides home, the few times when Ruth stayed over.

\* \* \*

It had been a fairly glorious football season for us, but the unchanging appearance of the College Inn at Chicago revealed nothing, I thought to myself as we took a table for four over in the corner farthest from the orchestra. Victory and defeat wear the same inebriate mask at the College Inn, and it is hard to tell whether the ship Happiness is being launched or Sorrow drowned—for after twelve o'clock of that last football night of the year, few know and fewer care about the difference.

Alice was an awfully good pal and danced wonderfully, even though she was slightly inclined toward coarse speaking after about five pulls at a flask, but it is small wonder, for it had to be rather a large flask which would stand for that much from Alice. However, the boys at the house called her "a dream for looks" and "an awfully keen little woman all around." I was not prejudiced against the belief myself.

"For God's sake, take that cigaret out of your mouth before you kiss me," she was saying, her flower-like face shining up at me through the indistinctness of the smoke. I had not been thinking of it, but on sudden impulse I removed the cigaret from my lips and obliged her, getting my eyes uncomfortably full of black bobbed hair. My arm was along the back of her chair. I could feel the velvet of her bare shoulder under my left hand.

"Listen, man," she said suddenly, then

drawled. I had not heard the piece before and it faintly disgusted me with its obscenity, but after a couple of more drinks which we mixed with the ginger ale on the table, I suddenly found that her second offering was very funny. We both laughed loudly . . . the tablecloth with the dishes slid slushily to the floor. . . Alice was shouting thickly, "Arrest this man. He insulted me," and with a change of tone leered at me and simpered in a harsh voice, "all right if yuh want to; I just dare you to . . ." I don't remember much, except that all seemed to be vaguely exciting, but in the general celebration we must have been scarcely noticed. . .

Suddenly something seemed to grip at the back of my neck. The vague excitement left me, and I seemed desperately cold. I gulped a glass of water and turned slowly in my chair. The hastily scrawled crayon mark of the waiter on the second table beyond caught my eye, an almost illegible "2." It seemed to remind me of something and I suddenly realized that, for the second time in my life, I had been drunk—very disgustingly drunk. Such is not a pleasant realization for a young man who has attended Sunday School and entertains fond ambitions of making a huge success in life.

I looked up, startled, for Doris was at the table looking fixedly at me in a sort of hopelessly disappointed way. I thought, and I had an idea that she had been looking at me like that for quite a long time. As our eyes met, she turned without smiling, and her escort, a handsome man with a small black moustache, slipped her coat about her shoulders.

"Doris," I said, rising, but she did not seem to hear, and they were making their way among the tables towards the doorway. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Alice sleeping soundly, the black hair in careless disarray on the cushion of her white arms. I knew that Terry

and Ruth would be back as soon as the music stopped.

She dropped something on the sidewalk as the cab door closed and I snatched it up feverishly as I instructed my taxi man to "drive the tires off his can" to catch the one which had just left. Away we swirled, cutting in, darting out, missing elevated supporting posts by miracles, bouncing with rubberized thuds over car tracks and cobblestones, as only a Chicago taxi driver can do, through the loop, leaving the twinkling lights behind, sailing smoothly along Washington boulevard, I on the edge of my seat talking hurriedly through the opened glass to the impassive chauffeur, while we chased the bobbing red light ahead. He was a very good driver who was at the helm of that taxi the night of the Chicago game, and I verily believe that we would have caught the fleeting red light, although I could later find no rational reason for catching it at all, but for the fact that out near the limits of Oak Park, the red point vanished down a side street, and when we turned the corner to follow, neither headlight nor taillight, nor any of the intervening parts or occupants of the conveyance were in sight or anywhere to be found, although we drove for several blocks each way searching vainly at all alleyways and intersections.

I kept wondering what it was about Doris that had made me suddenly become sober. I felt ashamed, as well as weak, as I descended the stairs of the Inn after leaving my taxi driver, with a tip for his pains. My hand in my pocket touched something velvety, which felt like a glove and I remembered the thing which Doris had dropped. I took it out as I got my coat check and made my way toward the French doorway, and there on the small rostrum which steps down to the tables and dance floor, I stopped still, staring at my hand. What I held was a crumpled velvet dress ornament,

but without mistake it was a daisy—a purple daisy. . .

### III

"Dear, good, sweet, wonderful Doris," I said, "please, oh please, tell me the secret of the purple daisy." We were on a sand bluff beside the lake somewhere north of Whitefish Bay, she perched on a half petrified stump which raised its scarred bluntness from unknown depths in the sand and, beside affording a good seat, provided an excellent support against which to lean our picnic basket, which, thus placed, opened into a tiny outdoor kitchen cabinet. It was summer again, and the warm evening land breeze struggling gently with the invading coolness from Lake Michigan, faintly, very faintly, stirred a few loose golden threads of Doris' hair and rippled the soft clingingness of her dress. I believe that it was a light blue dress of some kind of material which is called crepe-de-chine, but I am unversed in those things and remember little but that it was a very nice dress. The remarkable thing about it, however, was that on the left side, near the waist, was a velvet ornament—a very becoming, but not at all obtrusive ornament—the purple daisy.

"There is nothing in the least so terribly secretive," she answered, smiling faintly. She was looking out on the lake, and I could see that she was not thinking very much of me. "It happened a long time ago, when I was small and unsophisticated—"

"No, really. When was that?"

"Oh, quite a while ago," she went on, "but if you aren't good, you won't hear the rest of my bedtime story."

"Promise—honest and truly."

"Well, we were living in Massachusetts, and there were many, oh, so many, daisies growing in a little rocky field just a short distance from our backdoor, and I used to go out and pick them, because it was nice to be able to go out and gather flowers without having to order

from the florist or bother around the conservatory. Don't you think that was handy?"

"Yes. Please go on." I was sitting tailor fashion on the sand at her feet.

"One evening my father and mother were having a banquet at the house—"

"What's a banquet, Aunt Polly?"

"A banquet, dear children, is a party—a grown up children's party, except not nearly so interesting or decent. If you go to the College Inn in Chicago on the evening of the Chicago-Wisconsin game you may see the way some people act at banquets."

"Oh-h-h—" very loud.

"That isn't the kind of banquet my father and mother gave, but sometimes there were a few people invited, for business reasons, I suppose, who thought they were at that kind of a party."

"What did they do?"

"You ought to know." I was not quite sure whether the blue eyes were twinkling or glinting when she looked at me.

"At this particular party," she went on, "the guests remembered that the folks had a daughter, who was said to be just the darlinest, cutest little girl imaginable—"

I snickered ostensibly. "Excuse me, Aunty, I couldn't help it."

"I don't know anything about it, but that I was called in, and fond mamma had me go through my tricks for the entertainment of the big handsome men, who applauded loudly, and the beautiful women with long bare arms and soft shining hair, who smiled condescendingly and whispered against the backs of their hands, 'Isn't she the cunningest thing?' I was only nine years old—"

"What a long time ago, let me see—," I mused. I got a handful of sand in my hair for that.

"I was wearing daisies on my dress—just a couple down here," she pointed to the cloth one at her waist. "I was

going out, glad to be free of my duties as entertainer, when one of the men at the table with a flushed face and a distilled breath reached out and caught me in his arms and kissed me. I can remember how his moustache scratched my face. I remember also that I screamed and upset a glass of champagne on my dress as I clambered to the floor. . . father's white face, as he rose ever so slowly from his seat. . . the crunch of father's fist as it met the man's face."

I suddenly seemed very foolish, and I had a feeling that my frivolity had been out of place. Night was hovering about us, and I was still listening to the harmonies of her voice, for it seemed that one could hear echoed music, softly quavering, even after she had stopped speaking. On the horizon one could see a faint blur of light which marked a fading steamer.

"My darling white daisies had been bruised and stained until they were purple, a most distinctive purple, which I have never seen since. I still have them at home, because I wore them a week later at mother's and father's funeral." The voice was very hard and cold now and the words came slowly. I imagined many things in those eyes. There was the hint of a pause, then she went on. "They had been riding, and as they came to the crest of the Green Wedge, a high cliff to which people used to drive to see the valley of the Wamac winding down between the green hillsides, and our small residence city far below, the chauffeur opened the throttle and jumped out, as the car went through the fence. . . He had never been heard of since, although the papers were full of it, and every police force in the country searched for months.

"Two years later, the moustached man who had kissed me—you may have heard of him—Rufus Tonnetti, his name, was hung for the murder of ten passengers and the engineer of the Mohawk Flyer which was wrecked near Barring Junc-

tion—you may remember that, too. It happened, though, that the two men he had meant to get this time—former partners of his in some confidence swindle, who had beaten him up a few days before because they had discovered that he had not broken even in the profits, or something of the kind—were in the rear car and escaped unhurt, and were only too glad to be helpful in securing evidence as to the cause of the loosened rails. My brother, Lester, and I were left alone. . .

"That is how I started to wear a purple daisy. . . I don't tell everyone. . ."

Everything was as silent as death. Words seemed profane in the darkness, which suddenly became oppressive. I looked up, the stars were shining through a light mist. A limpid wave slapped the shore. We rose, walked through the soundless sand toward our car on the other side of the dune. That brother—I had heard vague things about him. . .

A few nights later a strange piece of driftwood from one of the backwaters brushed by and floated with me a while on the everchanging current of life.

I used to enjoy those summer evenings, after a hard day's work, when I would return to the fraternity, to change into cool flannels after a refreshing shower. There were quite a number of fellows at the house that summer, and it was pleasant to end the long day with rollicking good fellowship about the supper table, and distracting adventures in the evening. The only thing I did not like was that I missed Terry. Poor Terry, he had never recovered. He had been married in June after our commencement.

Tom Colbert had a friend up for supper on this night, a pleasing chap, extremely dark in complexion, with burning black eyes and a lean muscular face that seemed to be desperately yearning for something. Whatever it was I could not imagine, for long fine wrinkles and a small flush beneath the skin be-

trayed something which, to the imaginative eye, at least, appeared to be suspiciously like dissipation. All this passed under the name of Lawrence MacDonald. Strangely incongruous, I thought,—Scotch name and Italian appearance, but I soon forgot, for the stranger was an interesting talker, and knew sports, literature, and politics, as I found to my enjoyment at supper that evening, for I sat beside him at table.

"Michael Arlen is a hedonist, I'll admit," he said later as we two were smoking upstairs on the stone balcony. We had discussed many things, and I found him very interesting. He continued, "but I don't see that that detracts from his writing. That very thing is what makes him so shamefully interesting. Although I don't care for sex problems like *The Green Hat*. I enjoyed it because of the very brilliance of the style."

"I'll admit that," I said. "There is no one that approaches him in America. F. Scott Fitzgerald is entirely different." The conversation drifted on, touching lightly on many things, while we smoked.

We were talking of ethics and philosophy when suddenly he dropped the air of the intelligentia, and said quickly,

"I like you, old man. I wonder if you would mind listening to a little story. It will bore you to insensibility."

I replied that listening to tales of woe or otherwise was my long suit, and to fire away. "You must have had a pretty eventful life, if that is what you are going to tell me about," I said. "Otherwise you'll have to compete with some lusty nasal sounds accompanying slumber." He took a small vial from his pocket and shook some white powder into his mouth. Heavens—dope!

"Used to drink pretty hard," he said, with animation. "Took this to break me of it. Use both now—bad, bad. But," he said, turning to me, "I'll be asleep in five minutes—Bad heredity—old man a crook—don't know who mother was—bad, bad. Try to make

something of myself—intentions strong—can't, just can't live up to 'em. God, what I wouldn't try to do to please her."

Something had gone wrong. He was not going to sleep. He was half standing, hand against back of chair, face up-lifted to the stars, talking in short sharp tones. A fleck of foam dropped from his lips to my face. I brushed it away with a feeling of repugnance, but could not move. I sat tense, watching the strange thing beside me.

"Life a damn lie," he rasped, "an un-kept promise—don't know what I'd have done without her. I've tried to live up to her—cant, can't. Old man got her old man in some kind o' pinch. Made him promise and put in his will that if he died she and I were to be brought up together." His voice was becoming thicker, more croaking. Wiry fingers

clutched my arm. "She's been a mother to me. Stuck by me when she should have got out of it." He was staring unseeingly at me. "Name's not MacDonald," he almost shouted, "It's Tonetti. . ." He gasped, dropped to the floor, twitching convulsively. . . a sickening gurgle. . . the dark liquid splashed my shoes and soaked my shirt as I lifted him up in my arms. . . "Help, help," I shrieked into the solemn house, but it had been deserted long before. There was a quiver, a final convulsion, and I laid him gently on the floor, while I rushed to the phone and called doctors and ambulance.

It was over before they arrived. . .

Two hours later I walked to the phone again, and put in a call for Milwaukee. I had found the secret of the purple daisy.

## PROVEN

By

PEREZ GOLDMAN

YOU said: "Color lives."

I saw your blue eyes laugh.

"These golden years

Look back through mists of blue

On years of lavender

Touched rose with love of you."

Death is grey. The chill dawn through

I huddled near your bed. . . .

And watched with stupid eyes

The clock that marked the ageing

Of the Thing that had been You.

# THE CATALPA BEAN ON THE TOPMOST BOUGH

By

MARGUERITE L. ANDERSEN

*(Written because of the pessimism, the vanity, and the eternal hopefulness of unhappy women.)*

YES, here I hang,  
The scorned, outwintered remnant  
Of a sturdy race of beans.  
Wind and rain and sun  
Have courted, wooed and won  
The greener members of my tribe  
And carried them to other scenes.

You do not know the fate,  
The bitterness, of being an unwilling mate.  
Many storms have passed me by.  
Not one had kindness, nor the heart,  
To help me die.

Consigned! Unless, perhaps, some day  
A scorching stripling summer breeze,  
Philandering through the green catalpa trees,  
Could burn away the toughened thong  
That holds me now,  
That held me long,  
A consort of the topmost bough,  
And carry me away.  
Then I should feel his warm embrace,  
His kisses on my windscarred face,  
And, yes! his scorn as well.  
And to the music of his passionate youth  
My withered flesh would answer like a muted string  
Or muffled bell.

But do not laugh. You cannot tell  
What yet may happen  
To a sad, outwintered bean like me.  
Young summer winds regard the world  
With eyes that see  
Their own warm fires reflected well  
Where fires, in truth, could never be.

A day will come to me at last  
When something—*something*—must give way:  
When, overcoming all,  
The tragedy of age, the scorn, the past,  
I shall experience once the glory of that fall.

# JOE COLLEGE IN WONDERLAND

By

JACK ERNEST ROE

IT WAS a drowsy, winter evening. I was reclining lazily in the only comfortable chair in the chapter house, toasting my feet at the open fire, and idly perusing the morning's copy of the Daily Cardinal. The preceding day had brought forth the usual number of provincial commonplaces, as preceding days have a habit of doing. The Kappas finally have a Prom Queen, the editorial writer vindicates the World Court, Skyrockets gives evidence of a recent visit to a burlesque show. The cheerful glow of the fire began to have a soporific effect upon me. The lines of the paper seemed to blur, and then slowly to widen, until there was a space of several feet between two rows of type. Moved by a lazy curiosity, I stood up, stretched, yawned and stepped between the lines.

I found myself at the edge of a vast, open field, lit up brilliantly by a gigantic electric sign which flashed on and off in rapid succession, first reading "College," and then "Eventually, why not now?" The field was divided up into a number of sections which seemed to be arranged with the mathematical precision of a checker board. The whole group of sections was surrounded by a high fence which was beautifully decorated with millions of streamers of red tape. Still impelled by curiosity, I wandered around the outside of the fence, looking for an opening. Finally I came upon a door marked "Entrance," but was surprised to find that the door had no handle. After I had knocked rather timidly, the door suddenly opened and an elderly, impressive-looking man stepped out.

"I am the Registrar," he whispered, wiping his nose glasses on a silk handkerchief. "Just sign on the dotted line and I will let you in. There is a handle on the other side; so you will have no trouble in getting out all by yourself."

I wrote my name in the book he carried and passed through the entrance. Before I had an opportunity to question him, the Registrar vanished in a whirlwind of typewriting paper; so I set out by myself on a tour of the field. In the middle of the first section I came to was a signpost reading "Cheering Section." Two groups of perspiring students seemed frantically intent upon some activity that was going on at the base of the signpost. At first I could not discern the center of attraction, but I finally saw that two ants, a red one and a black one, were fighting over a morsel of bread. Just after my arrival someone shouted, "Skyrocket for the Red!" Immediately the place became a bedlam. The hiss of a million serpents was followed by a terrible thunderclap and a despairing sigh like the last breath of the lost souls in ten purgatories. The whole thing ended in a noisy exhortation to the red ant, who began to carry off the morsel of bread. A moment later, however, the opposing side burst out with a "Skyrocket for the Black," whereupon the black ant redoubled his efforts and the battle waged more furiously than ever. Finding myself in the group supporting the red ant, I began to cheer for the Red, but had no sooner finished my first skyrocket when I was rudely elbowed from behind. Turning around, I was confronted by a seedy little chap who wore an enormous red necktie.

"Where is your fee card?" he inquired pettishly.

"What is a fee card?" I asked in bewilderment.

"Don't be rude!" he snapped. "You have to have a fee card and fifty cents, or you can't support the team. You will have to move along."

Rather annoyed by the impoliteness of the little fellow, I went on to the next

section. Here I found a sorrowful looking young man who wore enormous tortoise-shell glasses, seated at a roll-top desk which was marked, in big letters, "Grind." There was a pile of books of various colors and sizes on either side of the desk. The young man would pick up a book from one pile and read it through from start to finish, after which he would read it backward from finish to start, before discarding it upon the other pile and starting the process all over again on another book. Noticing my bewilderment at this procedure, he looked up at me and said in a squeaky voice:

"You see, my head can only hold just so much knowledge; so I have to unlearn all I learn before I can go on and learn some more." He sighed and went back to his work. I was rather bored by his actions, and was about to proceed on my way when he looked up again. "Would you care for a cigarette?" he asked, reaching into his pocket.

"Why, yes, thank you," I replied. At this he burst into tears.

"What a shame," he moaned. "I only have cigars!"

I stalked off in disgust, leaving him to light a perfecto between sobs. The next section was made up of a large dance floor covered with broken bottles, upon which a good-looking young chap wearing a big raccoon coat was valiantly doing the Charleston in his bare feet. At one side of the dance floor was an orchestra of seven men, each member of which was playing a different selection in whatever time suited his individual fancy. All around the edge of the floor were little tables bearing telephones upon which were placards reading "B. 661," "B. 1488," "B. 3936," etc. The poor, perspiring devil in the fur coat was wearily dancing his way from table to table, talking only a moment upon one telephone before picking up the next. When he saw me, he looked up with a tired smile.

"Get a girl and we'll go to the Loraine for dinner!" he shouted.

"But I don't know any girls here," I protested.

"Applesauce," he replied. "So's your old man!"

Just then one of the telephones rang again; so I wandered away, leaving him to glare at the receiver in response to a feminine demand to "Guess who this is!"

On the next section I found an enormous plank which was marked "Board of Regents." A group of men sat around the plank in easy chairs, watching the antics of a tall, collegiately-dressed young man who was struggling and squirming in the attempt to get into a toy house that was only about half as big as he was. The men in the easy chairs seemed to be debating among themselves as to what to do about getting the young man into the toy house. Some were arguing in favor of enlarging the house, while some wanted to push him into the present house. I was about to join in the discussion when someone dashed up behind me and knocked me down. I picked myself up from the ground and saw that I was face to face with a serious-looking man who wore an overcoat up around his ears.

"You'll have to pardon me," he said hurriedly. "I have to go somewhere to make a speech about something." He leaned over and whispered into my ear. "Stop me if you've heard this one," he said. "This university is for students, but there are a lot of students who aren't for the university." Thrusting his hands deep into his pockets he hurried off, but turned and shouted back over his shoulder, "I'm only the President, you know, but next year I am going to be promoted to football coach."

Just at this moment a distinguished-looking man who sat in the largest of the easy chairs gravely handed me a roll of white paper done up with a red ribbon.



"What is this?" I asked in astonishment.

"That is your diploma," he replied. "See the pretty gilt lettering. Now you can go out into the world and be a bond salesman."

I sat down on the edge of the plank and began to read the diploma, after carefully putting the red ribbon into my pocket. The writing seemed to be becoming indistinct. The circle of easy

chairs was fading into the distance. I felt the plank becoming soft and resilient underneath me. I looked down and saw that I was sitting in a leather arm chair. In front of me was the fireplace and in my hands was a copy of the Daily Cardinal. The room had grown cold. Some of the brothers were playing cards in the next room. I got up and put another stick of wood upon the fire.

## SOLITUDE

By

EDWARD SODERBERG

THE dance is over at last! Those seemingly interminable, last good-byes are over! Soon now the musicians will leave. . . I can hear them putting away their instruments. Ah. . . they have left! I sink into the davenport and light a cigarette. Too bad Marj couldn't come. . . but it isn't so bad stargazing after all. The decorations are beautiful in the soft glow of the lamp. The artificial flowers seem to twine themselves around their wire stems like living plants. The waxed floor reflects the dim, rosy light, blending with the quiet and serenity of the room. The radiator at the other end of the room is hissing gently. There is a book on a little tabouret at my elbow, but I am not in the mood for reading. Rambling thoughts slip through my consciousness . . . that last waltz . . . the vari-colored gowns . . . the striking contrast of the black and white of the dress suits. . . In a moment now the boys will come storming in, and the peace and quiet will be lost forever. I close my eyes . . . the cigarette, forgotten, drops from my relaxed fingers. The silence is restful . . . soothing. . . .

The dancers have left. The mocking echoes of their last goodbyes taunt me in my aloneness. Why did Marj have to be

sick, this night of all nights? I have been alone . . . . the boys have been engrossed in their girls. I glance nervously about the room. How bare . . . dismal . . . lifeless. The floor is ghastly in the pale light . . . ghastly . . . depressing . . . The poorly lighted room seems to be without walls . . . it stretches out . . . out . . . extending endlessly. I am swallowed up in its immensity. The flowers . . . shadowy . . . vague . . . ghostly things. I fling myself onto the couch. The shadows rise up . . . they clutch at me. I rise and cross the room. Creak . . . creak . . . echoes, overpowering echoes. That radiator! Will it never stop that sputtering? Again I fling myself onto the couch. What's that? Oh . . . a book on the tabouret . . . I reach for it. As I draw it to me the echoes are re-awakened by the scratching of my fingers on the table. . . Thank God . . . that radiator is quiet. I open the book, the room is filled with the noise of rustling pages. . . Angrily I toss the book aside. Why are the boys gone so long? They left hours ago . . . What, only five minutes have passed? Tick . . . tick . . . tick. I thrust the watch under the cushions of the couch . . . . this silence . . . . it is oppressive . . . . I am suffocating . . . .

# SONG OF A DERELICT

*By*

MACKENZIE WARD

SMOKE to the ceiling,—  
Blue smoke, and stale,—  
Yellow lamps flick'ring,—  
Saxophone wail.

Lean, greasy bodies,  
Twist, bend, and shake  
In time to the noise that  
The music-men make.

Green, yellow, red, blue,  
Orange, purple gowns,—  
Prostitutes' faces  
Painted like clowns.

Off in a corner,  
Men from the ships  
Sing, drink, swear, and lick  
The foam from their lips.

One with an oath and  
A lurch and a leer  
Sways to his feet,  
Drains a thick glass of beer,

Bangs on a table,  
Kicks up a chair,—  
Music dies off in  
The blue, smoky air.

People all listen,  
People all stare;  
He sings in a low, slow  
Chant like a prayer,

"Swish . . . . Swash,—  
Green waves wash  
Over a glistening prow;  
Soon . . . . Soon,—  
Where the big, white moon,—  
What are you thinking of now?

"Off across an ocean, boys,  
Over a hill,—  
Work when you're hungry,  
Drink when you will.

"All around the world  
 A hundred girls in every port  
 Would rather have a sailor  
 Than the King of England's court.

"Oh, the song of the wind is  
 An old, old song  
 And the voice of a multitude  
 A hundred thousand strong.

"Swish . . . . . Swash,—  
 Green waves wash  
 Over a glistening prow,—  
 Soon . . . . . Soon,—  
 Where the big, white moon,—  
 What are you thinking of now?

"For we are the dream-makers,  
 We are the dice-shakers,—  
 Dream, dream, shake, shake,  
 Who the hell cares?"

"Step up to the rail, boys,  
 Let the glasses clink.  
 Hey, Mister Barkeep!  
 How about a drink?"

## SIX YEARS OLD

*By*

VIOLET R. MARTIN

THROUGH heavy curtains 'round the quiet room,  
 The shadows came, with ghostly tread and still,  
 And sat about the walls, until a gloom  
 Endowed the place and bent it to its will  
 The beings bore no marks of heavy woe,  
 But sitting there, with knees drawn up, with hood  
 Touching the wainscoting, with cloak spread low,  
 They nodded at the dusk, in pensive mood.  
 Only the firepot held gleams of light,  
 Blue gaseous flames and tongues of red, that made  
 Castles of coals, and pictured in the night  
 A battle ground, a fairy forge, an endless glade.

And, in the low chair, where no one had seemed,  
 A little, thinking body sat and dreamed.

# THE POTATO MYTH

By

MARGARET DILL

NOW, Uncle Joshua was worried because his potatoes wouldn't grow, and Mrs. Joshua was worried because her skeptical spouse was not religious, and Jonathan Busbee, the storekeeper, was worried because his fleet cow-pony was in a continual state of defeat, for the reason that Joshua's Indian pony, Wishatoo, was much swifter. As people hate to suffer in solitude, Joshua confined his worry about the potatoes to Jonathan, who promptly made the discouraging remark that the will of God had decided that potatoes should not grow in Virginia. But Joshua was more insistent; God to him had no authority in the matter; so he began brooding on the subject and recalled the many times before when his experiments with nature had proved worthy of praise. Once when the corn stalks had produced long cat tails instead of ears, Uncle Joshua had planted the four alternate left molars of his yellow pigs under the stalks and had produced corn as we know it, yellow and segregated into sections similar to the tooth of the yellow pig. After this, the pigs' teeth degenerated, and in order to justify himself in their eyes he always fed them some of the yellow, pig-toothed corn as a compensation. This was just one of the many things that Uncle Joshua had done with success so he went on angling for an idea to improve his potatoes. He always thought better when he was sitting on his heels with one hand to the earth in order to feel the number of pulsations per second. The monotony simplified his thinking because he felt more stable with a hand on the heart beat of the world. For a long time Joshua sat on his heels and thought, but nothing happened, no ideas came to him. In fact he sat so long that Mrs. Joshua got more worried about his religion, and began upbraiding him for his lack of

energy and speed. She told him that swiftness was needed in men, especially husbands, as well as in horses, and that if he would take suggestions from Wishatoo, he would be a better Christian man. Now, this lecture gave Joshua the idea, the great idea of the transference of swiftness. And Mrs. Joshua, the God-fearing, the conscientious, did not know that she was the source of the new magic phenomenon.

When Joshua organized his meditations and used his wife's idea, this was the result: that, because Wishatoo was swift of foot, the cause for that swiftness must be in his hoofs and mane. The restless hoofs of Wishatoo could never remain quiet; the fleet vibrations tingled from the black rippling mane through to the long wind-tangled tail and down into the small ever-moving hoofs. Why couldn't this same power of fleetness be applied to his wayward potatoes to make them grow?

Joshua went immediately to Jonathan with his inspiration, and although his friend was skeptical as to the attitude that God would take, he was friendly toward the new adventure. So that night, between the time when the white owls go to sleep and the gray owls awaken, Joshua and his co-worker went stealthily into Wishatoo's corral. There, very quietly so as not to be detected by the suspicious Mrs. Joshua the two experimentors neatly peeled away the three outer layers of hoof, and clipped all the wavy ends of Wishatoo's black, vibrant mane and tail. Carefully they placed the particles of swiftness in a black iron pot and stole away to the woods to brew the magic potion. The owls were hooting now and the moon was in the right corner of the heavens to make magic workings profitable. The burning sticks of tamarack soon caused the hoof swiftness to melt into the mane and tail

swiftness, and then all three ingredients changed into one liquid, the color of a blowing wind. Although Joshua was impatient to try the effect of the new mixture, the atmosphere was not right for magic. So the two friends were compelled to wait a whole moon before Youff the lone wolf came to the edge of the woods and howled three times, causing the gray owls to open their left eyes and the white owls to open their right eyes, and the moon to turn pale. These symbols signified that the time had come when the solution of swiftness should be placed into the loam a foot beneath the fagging potato plant. The men were afraid to breathe or even to blink an eye. Was swiftness transferable? As Joshua and the storekeeper stood with bulging eyes the potato plant grew as swiftly as the wind whistled in Wishatoe's ear. Then Joshua got so excited that he began pawing at the roots of the plant to find the potatoes, but before he had dug two inches the potatoes grew up to meet his hand, and when he grabbed some of them, they soon grew too bulky and heavy for him to hold. One grew so big that it took both Joshua and Johnathan pushing, and Wishatoe pulling to drag it into the barn. This one potato supplied Joshua and all of his relatives with potato pie twice a day for five years.

When Joshua returned to the house he was very careful to carry the pot of swiftness behind his back; but foolish man that he was to try and smuggle anything into his wife's house without her seeing it. She inquired, then, receiving no answer, demanded to know what was in the pot. Joshua, being able to lie glibly, told her it was flea killer and placed it carefully behind the door. He had great need to be careful, for Mrs. Joshua would have thrown away anything that was brewed in the light of the moon.

That night a traveling minister happened to spend the night with the

Joshuas. He, being a very good friend of the wife, was a great comfort to her in the matter of her obstreperous husband, and they talked long over the prospects of saving him from his interest in magic workings. Evidently the subject was too big for them because they soon went to bed; not forgetting to build a huge fire because the night was cold. As the midnight winds began to creep over the huddled cabins, the fire got tired burning, and the cold breezes crept between the chinks in the mud walls. The minister woke up and shivered so much that Mrs. Joshua compelled her quaking husband to go out into the barn and get Wishatoe's blanket for them. After it was spread on them they slept again for a while. But as the damp, mysterious dawn permeated the world, the minister woke up again with unaccountable itchings. Soon Mrs. Joshua woke up and had the same unhappy feelings. Then she remembered that over them was Wishatoe's robe which probably was full of fleas. She immediately stumbled out of bed and hunted for Joshua's supposed flea extinguisher behind the door. After finding the black iron pot she sprinkled the blanket with the wind-colored liquid of swiftness and went back to bed; but not to sleep, because the fleas began getting larger and more vicious in their attacks, and soon even woke up Uncle Joshua. He was greatly afraid when his wife told him what she had done and grabbing a butcher knife fought wildly with the ever enlarging animals. Soon they were as big as cats, and their bites made great welts on the victims. The minister, armed with the end of a rifle, aided in the slaughter, while Mrs. Joshua shouted instructions from a chair. Great flea-wolves were attacking them now, and although the men fought bravely, it was two hours before they had killed enough animals to cause the remaining number to escape out of the opened door.

When, after the massacre, Mrs. Joshua

looked to her husband for an explanation of this strange power of growth, the chagrined Joshua was compelled to confess that he had again been playing with magic. The minister fainted with horror at such a confession, but the brave wife of Joshua, being a God-fearing woman, was so outraged that she aroused the minister by her language, and grabbing the pot of swiftness dashed to the river's

edge where she flung the precious liquid far into its depths. (This is probably the reason for the great size of the whale.) I will make no feeble attempt to relate what the enraged wife did to punish her husband. She wasn't even reconciled when she saw the mammoth potatoes, and in her righteous indignation she has never to this day touched a mouthful of those magic vegetables.

## SHE IS ANSWERED

*By*

MORRIS MORRISON

" . . . my ways and yours may never  
bear an old surprise. . . ."

**M**ADAM, you mentioned tragic shades and dull  
Delights as unconventional, despite  
This magisterial flower we cull.  
All this maddening amperage of light  
You miss because you whisper of an age  
Uncouth with its due clause of youth.  
I'll wager you despise no phrase, no gauge  
The less, although you gesture with the truth.  
I better understand that defter hand  
Than any maiden's; better paid than mine  
Your debt, and see we both elude the band  
Of loathsome years. Their raiding brands that twine  
Those terrible lines about your eyes can  
Find you more a woman, me, still, a man.

# THE EPITAPH OF AN UNHAPPY MAN

By

RICHARD LAURISTON SHARP

*"I, Dionysius of Tarsus, lie here at sixty, never having married; and I would that my father had not."*

*Anonymous, from the Greek Anthology*

THE significance of the Greek epigrams cannot but be keenly felt by anyone who scans, however lightly, that storehouse of beauty and wisdom—the Greek Anthology. There can be found a truly marvelous "collection of flowers" comprising the simply stated sentiments of sixteen centuries of continuous Greek thought and feeling. There, among the forty-five hundred selections representative of some three hundred various authors, can be found examples well illustrating the Greek mind and mirroring, generation after generation, the political, religious, and personal life of the times with a beautiful simplicity which can as well portray the tenderest emotions as it can the most sarcastic satire, the pious adoration of a devout soul as well as irreverent impudence or bitter condemnation. In the Anthology, better than in any other classical work, can we find the human side of ancient life exposed, the morals and manners of succeeding generations depicted with beautiful intimacy by contemporary masters of word and rhythm in a peculiarly personal type of poetry. The original use of the epigram as an inscription necessitated a brief and restrained form of verse which could precisely express a single thought of significant meaning with a simple purity of style. The epigrammatic style was particularly adapted to the Greek idea of combined beauty and simplicity, and it is therefore the Greek epigram which excels all others of this type. Let us examine an example of this class of most interesting literature, for a single choice morsel of the meat should give us a taste of the whole body.

Perhaps the sepulchral inscriptions,

more than any of the other epigrammatic forms, would allow us best to view the fullness of brief expression so typical of all Greek literature, and illustrated so well in the restrained emotional testimony of the epitaph. We might choose any one of the inscriptions of the Anthology on known men or subjects and find it pregnant with both beauty and meaning, for all the Greek epigrams are of value to the aesthetic student, but let us, for the sake of more interesting conjecture, examine the anonymous epitaph, written about one of whom we know nothing more than is told us by the two lines of the inscription, which reads: "I, Dionysius of Tarsus, lie here at sixty, never having married; and I would that my father had not." Knowing neither the author nor the subject of this epitaph let us assume that they are one and the same person, for it is perfectly possible that this unhappy old man of Tarsus, watching Death creep steadily nearer, wrote his own epitaph, requesting that it be placed over his tomb that all might read his last sarcastic jibe at Life. Allowing our imaginations and sentiments to carry us on as the Greeks were carried on by that world which they built within themselves, what pictures can we not draw of this unknown man as we take up, one by one, the nineteen little words of his epitaph, so full of meaning to the sympathetic.

"I, Dionysius of Tarsus—" we read, and wonder who the man might be and when he lived. Of Tarsus, birthplace of that greatest Christian, greater, perhaps, than even his master, we know somewhat. Located in a fertile plain of Cilicia, within twelve miles of the sea, it was at once an important com-

mercial city and a center of education and culture. Our Dionysius might, then, have been a wharf-laborer, able only to toil all day under the weight of the goods coming into the unloading places from the East and from the West, by night sleeping the sleep of exhaustion in some lone hole along the river bank; or, perhaps, a teacher, pacing the cool shade of his academy in quiet conversation with his pupils; or, again, a man of trade, a member of a fairly comfortable middle class, perhaps, like Paul, earning his daily bread as a tent-maker. Of these three possibilities, more probable is the last, for the wharf-man, apart from being unable to write, would not have time or urge to consider his lot and decide it a sad one, but would have gone whistling through life contented to the end; and the teacher, a student of life as well as of letters, would probably, if besieged by doubts or disappointments, have succeeded in discovering a method or philosophy whereby he might acquire peace of mind and contentedness; but the man of medium intelligence, unable to bring to a mind capable of pessimistic considerations the soothing, antitoxic quiet which it needed, would have been of the type which might have written or deserved such an epitaph as the one we are considering. As to when he lived we can conjecture even less certainly, for Tarsus was an important center from early times down through the period when the last Greek epitaph was written. We do know that many men of a seemingly similar state of mind were aided in their discouragement or sorrow by the doctrine of "the unknown god" as preached by that Paul of Tarsus. So we might assume that our Dionysius had not yet heard of the gentle voice of that quiet man of Galilee, which gave, and still gives, aid to many, (even to those who call the preacher no more than "man"), with its invitation to "come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Per-

haps we should picture our old man of Tarsus as living shortly before the time of the Nazarene, at that period when the philosophers had succeeded in killing the old gods, and had failed to substitute a religion which the average man could comprehend. But from these indefinite fancies, knowing only in sureness where the man lived, let us pass to the more certain facts given us by the epigrammatist.

"Lie here at sixty—" we read further, and turn our thoughts to a consideration of the possibilities of a life sixty years in length. Sixty years is a long time! We cannot eulogize a "budding young life cut off in its prime." Sixty years determines the physical success of most men, for in that time can be definitely determined the favorable or unfavorable accomplishment of a life of labor, a life of business, or a professional life (unless it be a profession of one of the arts), as well as the accomplishment of pleasant or unpleasant personal relationships. At sixty a man may safely pronounce his life a happy or an unhappy one, for by that age his lot has been shown to him, whether it be, from his point of view, fortunate or unfortunate. And so when we consider Dionysius dead at sixty we must know, though he yet had a decade of his allotted span to fulfill, that his good or evil fortune had been made manifest to him. In the next two stave-ments of the epigram we are deftly told that these sixty years of life had brought sorrow to the man of Tarsus, and we are given, perhaps, a clue to the reason why a certain helpful light failed to shine into the later years of his life.

"Never having married—" we are next told, and wonder what the significance of an unmarried existence would be to the life of the average man. In the first place, it might show that there had been disappointment in love, for it is usual for a man to fall in love sometime during his career, and, of course, the natural result of falling in love is



marriage. Yet our friend might be numbered with that large group of men, exceptions to the rule, who are never acquainted with love, who go through life seemingly not needing it. There are many men, and, in this case, women, too, who live their threescore years and ten knowing only the loves of infancy, mixing with their fellows in congenial companionship, yet entirely ignorant of the critical love of friends, or the comforting love of one of the opposite sex, living a life of utter solitude, of crowded loneliness. "A crowd is not company, and faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal where there is no love," says Bacon. The respect of a friend or the adoration of a woman (both being termed generally "love") is an important determining factor of a man's happiness, for though a man may live without love, yet, not knowing the full joys of pleasurable content, he may never live so well. If we conclude that a good part of the life of our man of Tarsus was without love, that at sixty he died childless, friendless, and without the comforting hand, or even remembrance, of a woman near him, we must certainly assume that such a life could never have reached a realization of happiness, but that, on the other hand, such a life probably had moments, many lonely moments, of deep and bitter sadness.

Our epigram is concluded with a bitter denunciation of the fate which has given a life to one who has not made good use of it, an expression of hatred towards a futile existence, a low, "I wish I had never been born!": ". . . never having married; and I would that my father had not." Here is the interesting point in regard to this man, Dionysius, a fact setting him apart from all the other characters which march dimly through the Greek Anthology, a fact distinguishing him from that galaxy of epitaph subjects: people all alike, wheth-

er they fear or long for death, in a common thankfulness for life; the fact that looking back over two-thirds of a century he could not find that in his life for which he could be glad. Few there have been who, peacefully leaving a long life, curse the day of their birth! Many there have been, to be sure, who have, like Dionysius, willingly sought death, but these only as an unpleasant passage from some disagreeable state to one mysteriously inviting, for as we read in the Appendix to Bacon's "Essays": "Death arrives graciously only to such as sit in darkness . . . These wait upon the shore of death . . . wooing the remorseless Sisters to wind down the watch of their life, and to break them off before the hour." So we picture this Dionysius "sitting in darkness," no ray of sunshine glancing back to him from his earlier days, a man who, through his unhappy progress, has failed to attain either a physical success or a mental or spiritual success, a man who has failed to make a success of life because he has failed to understand it. "Life is a strange gift," a queer toy, like a hoop, given us on our birthday, which we accept, often without thanking the Donor, and start speeding down the hill of Time until, under our misunderstanding hands, it wobbles and slides to a standstill, and is kicked by our angry foot down the remainder of the gentle slope. How pleasantly might we follow the foolish toy, were we only to understand in our hearts its proper management! We roll our own hoops, and as intelligently as we guide them on, no matter what obstacles we meet, so happy will be the occupation. Let us leave the ashes of this unhappy man of our Greek epitaph, this Dionysius, that the gentle winds may blow them over the earth to enrich and beautify a land where may dwell a people happy in an understanding enjoyment of life.

# THE LURE OF NICOTINE

By

KATHERINE BECK

SIR WALTER RALEIGH brought the tobacco plant to England. In this way he brought upon himself the gratitude and accusations of all fathers and children whom nicotine has subsequently harmed, or hurt, or helped. How frightened were those persons first to view the blackened breath issuing from the mouth and nostrils of Sir Walter instead of invisible oxygen. Their first thought was of fire, and next they thought of sin. His enemies found abundant pretexts in this practice for the charge of immorality. His gift to England was esteemed an indecorous nuisance; it aroused the ire of many authors and the disgust and disapprobation of all ages and all ranks among the people. James I attempted to terrify his subjects with the "Counterblast of Tobacco." He told them that "they were making a sooty kitchen in their inward parts, soiling and infecting them with an unctuous kind of soot, as hath been found in some great tobacco-eaters, that after their death were opened." Disraeli refutes this drastic condemnation by telling us that the information used by the king was probably a pious fraud.

Now opinion has changed, and the fury of prejudice has abated, but still there continues to exist that ancient feud between the moral and unconventional. King James' speech suggests the tone of modern fathers and physicians addressing wayward women and daughters.

Maurine's father spoke to her in language a little less striking, but no less severe. His phrases were not so picturesque nor so terrifying, but his manner supplied anything that might be wanting to lend weight to the words. He used only one argument, but he used it often and with emphasis,—he said that smoking was wrong for women. Maurine could not see this side of the question. Just because Adam and Eve did not smoke in the garden of paradise seemed

no reason why she should not do it on the terrace of the country club. She said they had probably never discovered this kind of forbidden fruit.

Then her father spoke to his brother, a physician, and a week later Maurine received a letter from her uncle.

"My dear,

"I wish you would give up that noxious habit that your father tells about. Yes, I'm speaking of smoking. It destroys the appetite and impairs good digestion. I am not asking you to give it up on a moral principle, but solely for the sake of your health. I see a great physical degeneration implied in this habit if persisted in by women. Really, it's appalling. At least, think over what I have said as a favor to

Your affectionate uncle,

Arthur."

"Dear Uncle Arthur,

"Your letter about smoking came to me today. Your arguments are really excellent (much better than father's, and far better than Aunt Mollie's.) I promise to think them over. But do listen to a woman's view of smoking. There are different kinds and classes. I can't put cigarettes in the same class with cigars and pipes. You speak of smoking, but you know you couldn't bring yourself to part with that ancient, intolerable, odoriferous Dunhill! It's really appalling. But I promise to think over your advice and am grateful for your suggestion.

Yours lovingly,

Maurine."

She did think it over, but her conclusion did not cause her to refrain from Melachros, and her family despaired of ever curing her. Then, a year later she met Harland Wells, and Harland was a diplomat. He used the potent means of unvoiced but ardent disapproval. He felt for women's smoking a passionate loathing, invincible and changeless. But

one day he managed to master his distaste sufficiently to walk into Benson and Hedges' shop on the Avenue. The cigarettes he bought were slender, multi-colored and silk-tipped. He had them marked with her monogram. Then he found a holder of carved translucent ivory, and presented all his purchases on her birthday.

Then a miracle happened. He noticed that the habit was becoming less frequent, and gradually she came to lose all her former efficiency in its practice. He still persisted in his indifference, but what was his delight to discover one day that she had forgotten how to inhale.

"I told your father I could make you stop smoking," he told her when every

vestige of the practice had safely perished with the years.

"Well, you did, but it wasn't your indifference that wrought the miracle. I always hated Benson and Hedges, and as for the holder, that was simply the last word."

So whether parents and children like it or not, whether Maurine agrees or disagrees, nothing can prevent the hunting cry and the chase: always there remains the old order hunting down the new. The ancient conflict still persists and will persist ever unchanged. Conventions will never meet innovation amicably. The clash of their meeting will resound in the twentieth century, but not so violently nor so picturesquely as in the time of good King James the First of England.

## WIND WORSHIPPER

*By*

J. M. S. COTTON

WIND worshipper! where are the winds, the winds you loved so well,  
That used to break so boisterously, with rain, gust, storm and swell?  
Wind worshipper! the winds that danced, that cast your hair afloat  
And turned the curling tendrils round the column of your throat,—  
That set your eyes a-dancing like the waves that dance at sea  
For like the waves you were as wild, as unrestrained and free!

Wind worshipper! Wind worshipper! what do you worship now?  
Far from the waves that used to dance, the winds that used to blow?  
Wind worshipper, like other folk, ensnaked and confined,  
The chain of life has cast its coil around your restless mind,  
No longer wild and unrestrained, but do you still recall  
The wild sea winds that used to blow and how you loved them all?

# The Wisconsin Literary Magazine

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## EDITORIAL

"YOU are a pessimist," said one.  
"Thank you for the compliment,"  
replied another. "If by pessimism you  
mean the habit of looking upon men and  
their actions with a serious eye, then I  
am pleased to be a pessimist."

"But life is not all ugliness. You  
overlook beauty and exaggerate the repul-  
sive. You observe life with a scowl and  
a sneer."

"Granted; but by these words I gather  
that you are an optimist. That every  
cloud has a silver lining seems to be your  
gospel, your panacea, your demi-god.  
But listen: while you are wasting your  
hours smiling—for no other reason than

to be smiling,—the high seriousness of  
life has passed you by. Really, you know,  
it is not necessary to point your finger at  
beauty; for beauty is quite strong enough  
in itself to make its presence felt. And  
the profoundest beauty, you know, is  
always touched with sadness."

"Perhaps you are right; but is it not  
better to regard your fellow men with in-  
dulgence than to berate them for their  
shortcomings? We all have our faults.  
People in glass houses, you remember,  
should never throw stones."

"You quote a proverb that has been  
worn thin with over-use. By throwing  
stones one may, perchance, break some

fetish in the house of his neighbor, or rouse his family to the realization that they, too, are living in a glass house, which is, after all, very fragile. You spoke of indulgence; that, you must realize, is nothing but acquiescence to ugliness and falsehood. The inconsistency of your argument is alarming."

"In some cases, your arguments certainly prove to be true; but were it not better to forego criticism and so avoid creating pain and sorrow?"

"If pain and sorrow—or chagrin, which criticism usually induces in the recipient—if these are, I say, the price of truth, then it is good for men to suffer."

"You are cruel."

"Truth is cruel; life is cruel."

"What you have just said goes to the root of the problem and proves my point. If life is cruel, if sorrow is inevitable, let us then try to alleviate our miseries by looking for happiness."

"You choose to become sentimental, and you turn your back on the facts. Your subterfuges of smiling give you a clown's grin. Already you have admitted that the world is a little off key. How, then, in the face of this fact, can you ever hope to remedy the maladies of a sick world when you blind yourself with platitudes of happiness, laughter, and silver linings?"

"But to look upon pain is painful."

"There we have it: you dare not face reality. You cannot bear the imputation that you are contributing to the squalor and the sham of life."

"But the philosophy which you uphold is only for great men."

"Exactly. Through great men, strong men, it becomes the guide of the crowd."

"You hate mankind."

"And you aggravate its diseases with smiling indulgence."

"But need one be brutal in order to impress upon people the inequalities and injustice of life? Need one dig up from the shambles the filth of the mire?"

"Certainly it is necessary. How else can the evil be shown?"

"But, as I said before, to do so causes pain."

"One must somehow overcome the inertia of the mind, somehow break the old custom, somehow kill the old habits. There is but one way, and that is by conquering, by breaking, and by killing. Shall we go on denying reason to gratify our senses, admitting money-lenders to the temple, painting old falsehoods to pass for truth? Shall the future be sacrificed for the present? Shall we, for the taste of a sugar-coated philosophy, bequeath to the son his father's infirmities? Is today and today's happiness so precious that we must sit and smile like stone gargoyles while the old, outworn platitudes and proven falsehoods thumb their noses at tomorrow?"

"I see; you want to make of life a battlefield."

"Better to be a fighter than a contented pig wallowing in his sty."

"Ah, my friend, but you are obscene."

"Ah, my friend, but you are weak."

"You are a pessimist."

"And you, dear soul, are an optimist."

—G. C. J.

# SONNETS

*By*

JIM CHICHESTER

## HEREDITY

HE felt it creeping near him as he slept;  
The monster that had frightened him before,  
But only by its shadow on the door,  
While now into his very room it crept.  
He listened fearfully: there, had it stepped  
Behind the bed? The clock struck four.  
He gasped and shivered, frightened more and more  
And dared not reach out where the gun was kept.

But suddenly the thing was gone again;  
The room was grey with morning's shadows cold.  
Gradually the man relaxed and then  
He let his tightly twisted hands unfold.  
And this is what his life had always been:  
A monster near—a slipping mind to hold.

## TO A POSSIBLE HE

I would not have you seeking in my past  
For that which was before my life met yours.  
The ills of heart I knew—the subtle cures  
I used (to find that love of life does last  
When other loves are done) were swiftly cast  
In shadows of dead years. No well planned lures  
You make will bring them forth while yet endures  
This later love to keep my heart steadfast.

I stand beside me now and take my hand,  
And smile with me and let me hear you say  
That you will be my friend and understand,  
Though all the bolted doors must bolted stay.  
And all the years I've lived are never spanned.  
I will be loved for what I am today.

# LIGHT UPON THE EARTH

By

GERTRUDE MACMASTERS SMITH

I SHUT my eyes, and breathe the quiet night,  
And dream a garden. It is not yet light,  
And yet I know the dawn is here; for now  
A wren awoke, to sing his silly song:  
Sweet, cheerful thing, too small for so much joy!  
The crickets are eclipsed by so much din,  
For all their numbers, from one tiny throat.  
Dark! dark! I stoop to press the grass.  
Invisibility at such an hour  
Is too obscure for my humanity.  
Touch reassures: and when the fingers meet  
Such soft, cool wetness, all that's vague and dim  
Melts into blest familiarity.  
And after all, the stars above look down.  
Why came that momentary fear?  
The wren was not afraid. Now stirs a breeze,  
And round me stir to speech the sleepless trees.  
And now behold! In piquant-scented throng,  
Pale irises, that match the eastern sky,  
Disclose themselves from slow unfolding gloom.  
Sing on, O wren! to join thee in the song  
Come robins chorusing; and now a thrush  
Sings hail to morning, farewell to his star.  
This tree I see now is an elm, and that  
A locust, from whose boughs the breeze bears down  
Such deep delight. Now vanishes that star  
A moment since so white. And here I see  
The columbine shake forth her dewy hair,  
And poppy, folded tight, hang low her head,  
Bowed over by a bee, held fast all night.  
O Sun! Where is thy rose? By now that cloud  
Should shine, bedecked by all thy morning glow!  
These trees await thy shafts of golden rain;  
Beneath their load of dew the roses strain.  
And I—I need they reassuring light!  
Why com'st thou not, O Sun? We wait for thee,  
This lovely garden and this fearful I.  
Still comes no sun—and gone, too, are the stars.  
It is too dreadful: dark or light, I pray:  
Not this half gloom, that's neither night nor day!

My eyelids flicker. Now I stir to peer  
About me. Naught to see. What now is this?  
Without, there stirs a wren to senseless song.  
Soon will the great sun rise, and flood the world  
With searching light. Why lingers here with me  
The silver scent of iris? Well I know  
There is no iris here. How sings that wren!

## BOOK NOTES

### A Great Poet

ROAN STALLION, TAMAR, AND OTHER POEMS by Robinson Jeffers. Boni and Liveright. \$2.50.

"A red-roan mane shaken out for a flag on the bare hills" in this contemporary period of flag-waving, will impress; will even hearten the jaded reviewer into ejaculations more flattering than a dithyramb. Earnestness, when America's bane is the insincerity of our accepted "poets," drives with all the *eclat* of genius. Intense, stark, the poetry of Robinson Jeffers strikes with the authenticity of vision. It is as incontrovertible as strength.

The creatures that move with the magnificent, living rhythms of *Roan Stallion* and *Tamar* are real, throbbing entities, pulsating with the ultimate reality of things, a music that may end in a final upheaval of the senses, but can still stir to every discoverable depth. Each one, an instrument whose physicality, not through repression but through a natural progression, is transmuted into that infinite void we term the soul.

Being a poet, he could not approach Nature, intent on analytical investigation, but by permitting himself a sensitive passivity, every fibre of his being as accessible to her touch as the earth to the sun, he dared to attain a realization of himself.

"the last, worst pain  
the bitter enlightenment that brings  
peace."

This is the stuff that form is made of—the true Greek conception of tragedy:

And Tamar said, "I cannot dance,  
drive him away," but while she said it  
Her hands accepting alien life and a  
strange will undid the fastenings of  
her garments.

She panted to control them, tears ran  
down her cheeks, the male voice  
chanted

Hoarse discords from the old woman's  
body, Tamar drew her beauty  
Out of its husks; dwellers on eastern  
shores

Watch moonrises as white as hers

When the half-moon about mid-night  
Steps out of her husk of water to dance  
in heaven:

So Tamar weeping  
Slipped every sheath down to her feet  
the spirit of the place  
Ruling her, she and the evening star  
sharing the darkness,  
And dance on the naked shore  
Where a pale couch of sand covered the  
rocks,  
Danced with slow steps and streaming  
hair,

Dark and slender  
Against the pallid sea gleam, slender  
and maidenly

Dancing and weeping . . .  
It seemed to her that all her body as  
Touched with polluting presences  
Invisible, and whatever had happened to  
her from her two lovers

She had been unto that hour inviolately  
a virgin,

Whom now the desires of dead men and  
dead Gods and a dead tribe

Used for their common prey . .  
dancing and weeping,

Slender and maidenly . . . .

Mr. Jeffers discards all the less concentrated emotions and works radically.

The naked hunger of the blood, and strength that drives towards the fulfillment of lust, are the actuating impulses of his people. They are never pitiful.

They are splendid beasts with the higher intelligences of man. Subject to eternal laws, Orestes remembers:

"the knife in the stalk of my humanity"

This is the work of a great poet who again distills the visible world from chaos.

M. M.

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WILD GEESE by Martha Ostenso.  
Dodd, Mead and Co. \$2.00

When Martha Ostenso set out to write her first novel, she chose to depict life in a country quite devoid of buoyant and living things—the outermost edge of cultivation, the land where the wild geese fly southward. That this American writer chose wisely, and molded her materials with care, may be judged from the fact that *Wild Geese* won a \$13,500 prize as a first novel.

Throughout its entirety stalks the per-



sonage of Caleb Gare, who is the sternness of the North personified. Caleb is the farmer of Oeland who sees life only in his fields of flax, the farmer who thirsts for acres and wealth to be gained by the labor of himself and his children. He holds all in subjugation except one daughter, Judith, whose revolt smoulders silently, and finally is fanned by desperation into action. Caleb's wife, Amelia, is an object of pity because of the sacrifice she is making for her first child, not a child by her husband. Most outstanding among the other characters is Lind Archer, who came from another world of delicate things to the Oeland of stern realities, to teach school and at the same time to find a friend and a lover in the person of Mark Jordan, Amelia's son.

Martha Ostenso may have painted too drab a picture of life for some readers, but it is a vivid story of revolt and parental tyranny and an epic of a strange community. One discordant note is touched, it seems, when Caleb is left to die in the muskeg as a victim of his own greed. Somehow, one wishes that he might have lived and that his oppressed family might have found freedom in some other way. C. O. S.

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**DARK LAUGHTER** by Sherwood Anderson. Boni and Liveright; \$2.50.

A weird, indefinable impression is the result of the reading of Sherwood Anderson's *Dark Laughter*. The book does not seem to get the reader anywhere, and yet it touches parts in him that remain touched.

The story deals with a young Chicago journalist and his wife who are struggling along with writing as their chief interest, rather than their love and home. The man finds he cannot exist in this way, and leaves for his native state, Indiana, where he obtains a position in a small factory. Feeling no qualms about having left his wife, he settles down to a care-free life, writing, living, and thinking poetry.

The climax comes when he falls in love with the young wife of a prominent man in the town. She hires him as her gardener; and in this way they are together constantly. When the woman discovers she is to have a child she decides to leave her husband and marry her lover.

The idea, though it is what the hero wants, comes as rather a shock to him, for he realizes that it means buckling down to a job, carrying responsibility, and really working. But at the same time he knows it means a home for him, love, and a family.

He takes his young wife off with him, and makes plans for a divorce from his own wife. The other husband is left at home, empty and thoroughly miserable. The book closes with the harsh laughter of the negro servants, who have interestedly watched the progress of the young romance.

*Dark Laughter* is more poetry than prose. It takes one out of this world, though, in truth, it is full of life. It is realistic. It thinks for you, yet makes you think, too. It is not a book you can soon forget, nor is Sherwood Anderson's style a medium that goes over your head—it goes through you.

*Dark Laughter* will not make you laugh; but it will make you live and think.

M. H. W.

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**POSSESSION** by Louis Bromfield. Stokes. \$2.00.

This is a book written by a man who has chosen to climb high above his story, and to look down on it with the perspective of a bird's eye view. This, however, does not prevent him from the most intimate feeling and sympathy for his characters.

Bromfield deals here with the life of a musical genius, a girl from a small industrial town in the Middle West, and her bitter struggle with the problems of life and living. The author shows her life as no more than a series of episodes;

episodes of possessing and being possessed by people, and things, and ideas.

The life of Ellen Tolliver, who ran away from the Town and became Lilli Barr, the new pianist, seems almost biographical, and has that strength and power which comes from consistent biography. The author, to be sure, has not done a new thing here, but then, there are very few new things, anyway. And he has handled his characters and his story with a very attractive and vigorous mastery. There is not an element of weakness in his book, not a false note. Bromfield tells his story realistically and rather simply, colors it with his very evident word-power, and presents it for exactly what it is.

There is little in this book for the reader who devours the somewhat frosted sophistication of the Green Hattists. The story does not "take you out of yourself." Nor does it create new worlds for one's imagination to conquer. But if you care for a realistic story that is not Realism, if you care for smoothness of style and for writing which takes itself seriously, then you will find yourself remembering *Possession* long after you have read it.

S. P.

---

THE PERENNIAL BACHELOR by  
Anne Parrish.  
Harper and Brothers. \$2.00

Anne Parrish has won for herself, not only the \$2,000 Harper prize offered for the best American novel of the year, but what is more, the patronage of the American reading public. She will not again be identified as the obscure author of a few obscure novels. Her prize winning "*The Perennial Bachelor*" is a novel of color and strength. It is the most human and accurate portrayal of American life from 1850 to the present time which has lately appeared, and as such is worthy of high commendation.

The story, which is laid in Delaware, opens with a portrayal of the early life

of the Campion family with which it is concerned. The Campions, typical of the aristocracy of an era forever past, immediately endear themselves to the hearts of the reader, and the author traces the life stories of the three sisters and their brother Victor, from the age of pantaloons and bustles to our own day.

It is rather a tragic story—this of the three women and their brother who lived in an age of blind self-sacrifice and who suffer because of it and their traditional pride in family and breeding; but Miss Parrish saves it from being melodramatic by weaving inextricably in it a thread of delightful humour which makes the novel one of laughter as well as tears.

G. G. F.

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POTRAIT OF A MAN WITH RED  
HAIR by Hugh Walpole.

George H. Doran Company. \$2.00

If anyone but the mild and fanciful Mr. Walpole had written this tale we should have been forced to look for it on the shelves marked "Mystery and Detective." As it is, the story is a bit puzzling. The reader has an idea that perhaps he is being "kidded along." And yet the serene seriousness of the author makes this seem impossible.

The story deals with the somewhat blood-curdling adventures of a retiring collector of etchings, who visits a singularly beautiful and unspoiled little town in the south of England. Here he becomes entangled in the lives of a very strange group of people. There is a beautiful girl, and her somewhat rustic and stable lover. There is her husband, who has little to do with the story, and her father-in-law, the Man with Red Hair.

There the story moves from country house to cliff side and back again. The Man with Red Hair appears as a sadly perverted sadist, waving little knives and torturing animals. His mad brain looks out from his sad little eyes, much to the

consternation of the somewhat wary collector of etchings, Mr. Harkness. It is because of the dreamy treatment of the rural beauty of England that the sheer horror of the last scene stands out so clearly. The whole thing, of course, is a trick. Walpole is far from being entirely serious. And yet, such is his smooth, easy power that the jagged incongruity of his chapters does not seem to affect the story at all.

This is not the best book that Hugh Walpole has published. Nor is it anywhere near being the best horror story, even of this year. But it is such a horror story as Walpole would write, and for that, as well as for its unusualness, it is one of the books that one reads this season. S. P.

WE MUST MARCH by Honore Will-  
sie Morrow.

Frederick A. Stokes Co. \$2.00

"We must march, my darlings, we must  
bear the brunt of danger,  
We the youthful sinewy races, all the  
rest on us depend . . . ."

These lines from the famous poem of the pioneers by Walt Whitman have furnished the name of Mrs. Morrow's first work as a historical novelist. With the skill of the trained writer and the precision of the correct historian, *We Must March* has left a very definite impression of the author's great ability to picture in vivid and living words the struggle for existence of the pioneer in the early period of America's frontier history.

From the beginning paragraph, the reader is shown in a most emphatic manner, the struggle for possession of the Oregon territory, which at the time of the story was controlled by the Hudson Bay Company. The British government in the person of Sir George Simpson, the royal governor of Rupert's Land, uses drastic measures to exclude all Americans. It is in this disputed territory that Marcus Whitman, a medical missionary, and his gifted wife, Narcissa, find themselves

after a long, dangerous journey from the States across the plains and mountains to this magnificent land of green forests, snow-capped mountains, broad rivers, and majestic waterfalls.

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