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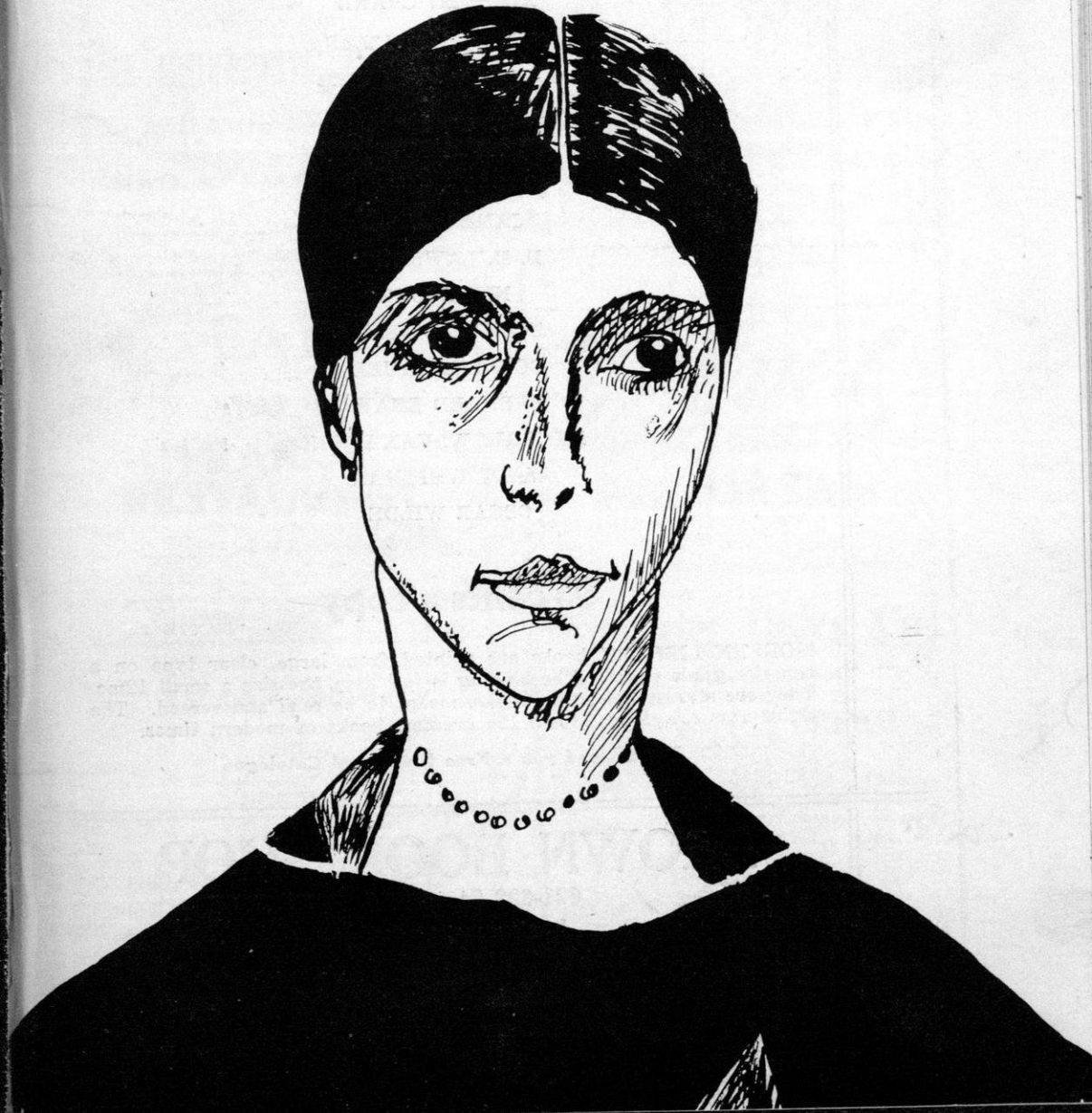
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CONTENTS

	Page
THE MARK OF THE SEA.....	<i>Erna Jorgensen</i> 3
TWO POEMS.....	<i>Edward C. Crouse</i> 5
A DIALOGUE.....	<i>William J. Paff</i> 6
OBSCURITY.....	<i>Stuart Palmer</i> 8
A FABLE.....	<i>Edward Soderberg</i> 9
FLAMMA AMORIS.....	<i>J. M. S. Cotton</i> 10
PABLO.....	<i>Idabel Sine</i> 11
POEM.....	<i>Richard C. Church</i> 13
THE BROWN CHRIST.....	<i>Doris Zemurray</i> 14
SONG.....	<i>Stuart Palmer</i> 17
EDITORIAL..... 18
THE POTTER.....	<i>Carl O. Nelson</i> 19
DEMENTIA PRAECOX.....	<i>Morris Morrison</i> 20
THE STRANGE CASE OF IVAN VERSOLVITCH.....	<i>Eugene Kinhead</i> 21
SHALOTT.....	<i>Stuart Palmer</i> 24
ON READING LUCRETIVUS ON LIFE AND DEATH.....	<i>Richard C. Church</i> 25
OF BEHAVIORISTS.....	<i>Sylvia Dermansley</i> 25
BOOK NOTES..... 26

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The Wisconsin Literary Magazine

Volume XXVI

JANUARY, 1927

Number 2



THE MARK OF THE SEA

By

ERNA JORGENSEN

HEDVIG Lagreid seated herself before the open fire to wait for her son. On many other nights she had waited patiently for him, but tonight it was different. A restlessness stirred her fears as a wind rustles the leaves of a maple. With strong will she suppressed the urge to call his friends and ask if they knew where he was. Eric would certainly be angry if he found that she worried over him as though he were still a small child.

Instead, Hedvig Lagreid forced her eyes back along the road of memory to her wedding day, the day big Nelse had come to take her from Jutland to his home in Bjorne, a little fishing hamlet on the northeast coast. She saw again the row of small bare fisher huts crouched on the hill above the shore like so many toads. There he had left her with his aged mother and sailed away to foreign lands. He was a seaman.

Then came the night of the big storm. The wind in a fury shrieked crazed curses at the sea. In answer,

the tossing water flung up long fingers to snatch the fishing boats from their moorings and hurl them in madness against the rocky shore. Groups of men stood knotted along the rocks, brave fearless men, waiting to be called by a ship in distress.

In the Lagreid cottage, Hedvig cringed on the hearth before the open fire. The old Frau Lagreid rocked monotonously back and forth, repeating in a low tone, "The sea is gathering men to her bosom tonight. Hear the waves on the shore? It is their death chant. My vigil is nearly over; yours is but beginning." The next morning all was calm again. The sea smiled serenely, reflecting the blue of the skies in the early sunlight. The fishermen were busily repairing the damages of the past night. Life went on as before to everyone except Hedvig. She was afraid.

When Nelse came home from his first trip, Hedvig had hoped to persuade him to give up the sea and return with her to Jutland where they could be always together, but he

would not. The old mother sided with her son. "He cannot help it. The sea has marked him for her own. It is in his blood, the call of the sea, as it was in that of his fathers before him."

There followed long days of loneliness. The dialect of the fisher folk fell harsh and strange on her ears accustomed to the soft tongue of the Jutlanders. The old Frau lived in dreams of the past. One evening as dusk was falling, a messenger from the village came, bearing a letter with a Copenhagen stamp. Black letters stared up at her from the open paper she held, "Nelse and his ship lost in a typhoon on the Yellow Sea." That night in her grief and pain Hedvig gave birth to her son.

The woman rose from her dreams before the fire to make certain the front porch light was lit. She returned to her chair. The procession of memories began again.

When the boy was five months old, she borrowed money from her brothers for passage to America. In America, a vast new country, among strange people, Eric would be safe. She passed quickly over those first years of hard work in the kitchen of a mining camp hotel. Hedvig remembered, with a slow smile, the day she learned that Eric did not have to grow up to be a miner, that in this new country he could even be a doctor if she could afford to send him to school. It seemed that learning and not birth placed one in this new country. Ambition filled her. She started a small boarding house of her own. The fear of the sea was forgotten.

When Eric was eighteen, he left for the state university in Seattle. His letters home were full of enthusiasm for his school and his new friends. When he pledged a fraternity, life seemed very good to her. Her boy associated with gentlemen.

In the Spring of his second year the blow fell. He wrote home that he wanted to take a trip to South America and back during his summer vacation. He told of how one night the fog had crept down from the mountains

to hover like a maimed grey bird over the harbor. The whistles and fog sirens of the boats had called to him, and now he found the docks most interesting. Forgotten words flashed to her mind, "The sea has marked him; he cannot escape; it is in his blood!"

She feigned illness to bring him home for the summer. A new Eric came home, a taller, broader boy, thoughtful and silent as Nelse had been. He is his father's son, was the thought foremost in her mind that summer. She sold her business and accompanied her son when he returned to Seattle. All winter he continued to spend hours on the docks making the acquaintance of seamen. Several times he brought Scandinavians home with him.

The next summer it was the same thing. Eric had an opportunity to go to the Orient. Hedvig, driven by terror of losing her boy, told him of his father, of her purpose in coming to America, the long hours of toil, her dreams for him, and her fear of the sea. Eric had given up the trip.

Only three more months now until he graduates, the woman comforted herself. The last year had been hard. Eric at times seemed to avoid his mother. He often stayed away all night and on several occasions he had come home drunk. She had cared for him without reproach. It was well that he sowed his wild oats during his youth. A man must have his time before he settled to the serious business of life.

The mother breaks off her reverie to pile more wood on the fire. A strong wind is sweeping up from the bay, a sudden gush rushes against the windows. The giant fir on the corner moans in protest against the wind's rough handling. The woman stiffens in her chair, she turns a set white face toward the window. Is it fancy or does she really hear the roar of the sea on a rocky shore, the death chant of seamen.

In the harbor a barkentine is spreading white wings to sail with the tide.

TWO POEMS

By

EDWARD C. CROUSE

THE BLUES SINGER

SHE wore red.

And as she sang of sadness the red, it seemed,
Was sad. And as she sang of hate
It flamed, and dimmed again,
And glowed.

Her body, livid brown, was lithe—it swayed
Rhythmically
With the driving monotone she crooned.
Weepin' and moanin' and sobbin',
She sang the Blues. (They tell of sorrow
And of pain;
Of tragedy, of woe . . .
Their joy is sham.)
Her eyes were jet, and as I watched,
A tear flashed and fell, and stained
The red.

SCIENCE HALL

WHITE-APRONED creatures leading dogs;
And red-brown walls, and red-brown tiled floors.
(Red . . . brown . . .
One, blood, the other, grease-filled hair
Of those, sad flesh, who lie and wait,
Naked and shameless,
Until again they feel the blade
Slicing, and ripping,
Cracking, splitting
Nerve, vein, cord.
Rank hulks, they lie in filthy gore:
Their own gore, and that
Of others,
Gone.)

A bell.
And through the corridors flows Life:
Noise, and fur coats; breathing, motion,
Youth!
And yet, in not so long,
These, too, will cease,
As those above . . .

A DIALOGUE

By

WILLIAM J. PAFF

Artist. I sleep better on a glass of beer, after a walk over the new snow. (They set out.)

Critic. I've been reading Emerson. He is stimulating.

A. You mean complimentary. You find so much from your every-day language organized by Emerson; the religions of the world give mankind proverbial expressions in a wild confusion because they are constant adjustments to the various accidents that are life. Do you know what language is? Language is adaptation; these adaptations are socialized in our tongues. Anatole France speaks of the spoken word as "higher shrieks and screams."

C. Ah, interesting.

A. But I fear that statement of the Parisian savors of the cocky evolutionism of fifty years ago. I believe the changes from early mammals involve, because of the development of certain parts of the brain, an almost new quality—Reflection.

C. I hate anything that is too obviously philosophic like Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Logic is ingenuity.

A. You missed the finest of Dante—his symbolisms—while worrying about the mystic number nine. But—you ridicule reason. I also believe it can mar the purity of poetry, yet I can't forget that the best romantic literature was mentalized, if anything, more intensely Is style more than mental habit, habit of study? Or do minds differ? Tell me why you enjoy Emerson.

C. They say his style is so natural—so spontaneous.

A. You must be an idealist by birth and training. It is his abstract and antiquated vocabulary that annoys me. I enjoy Emerson because of his attitude toward learning; he has a "scientific" spirit. His incoherence—remember the sentence is his unit of style—would make a primitive language, a direct adaptation, if all weren't from a "good" Transcenden-

talist. His closeness to human nature serves too often merely to give practical soundness to an abstract, philosophic idea. And these ideas—they are picked (at random?) from the old idealistic systems and juggled until they meet a situation that Emerson has chosen himself. We cannot talk of a broadminded partisan; instinct demands that he try to harmonize the world to his ego; all his work is "propaganda" for a prejudice. For truth, you must study the man with his advantages of knowledge, his prejudice. Remember, knowledge is a cumulative thing in history. Emerson lived in the wrong age, when poor data was being misinterpreted, to be a great natural philosopher.

C. Have you studied the poet?

A. You mean, the seeming universality and eternity of his appeal. To me the poet is an essence of nature. His words are like the grass and the water and the air. We still read Homer and Shakespeare as superior men while we laugh at Plotinus and Kant. Doesn't this prove that the poet deals with more primitive stuffs and that reason in the rationalistic sense was stale rhetoric, was an unnatural "appearance."

C. Pope.

A. I say the superior men—Homer and Shakespeare—made the mind and its ideas an end, along with other natural satisfactions—food. Poetry was one of those pure forms that nature is constantly building Any system of thought that is not based on the emotions of a healthy man must be artificial and false.

C. What is a system of thought? Notice, I'm playing Socrates.

A. I'm going to make a pretentious statement: From the Golden Age of Rome until the Romantic movement, philosophy was a catch-as-catch-can mental contest to justify various theological assumptions such as God, Immortality. James Harvey Robinson says, "all rationalizing." Emerson be-

longed to the latter part of that age which used tolerance and the sentiments as a means to prove an abstracted synthesis of systems—Neo-Platonism.

C. He is an introduction to philosophy, then?

A. And a valuable disciplinarian, teacher. He was "part and parcel" of human nature: he was interested in the strange, had weakness for fads, etc. Yet his New England seriousness called for a rather stable sobriety; he did not think charity was a game to be played with solicitors; in that age when religions were running wild, he satisfied the simple skeptic; he appealed to abolition sentiments; he even displayed nationalistic tendencies in letters to Grimm, in his ode at Concord Bridge.

C. Now you're satirical.

A. No, it is not cynically that I point to the west this new religion helped build. I'm somewhat of a pragmatist.

C. You've summed up my ideas of Emerson: he gives us the thought of the past in palatable form; he makes being good interesting; he revels in a world of ideas.

A. I said nothing like that. I say he had a clear mind. He was fairly successful in escaping prejudices; though, even in his youth, he was not free enough to be a materialist. His poetry, which so often avoids the vague guess-words of the introspectionists, has a finality that no American poet had achieved . . . I'm tricky in saying that. It means so little . . . I'm afraid I read him too literally. His vocabulary has given us an intellectual mythology; what Unitarian young peoples' society hasn't used Emersonian words.

C. I heard you use them yourself.

A. That's one of Emerson's great-nesses. His choice of philosophic terms often was founded on a truth of human nature. Unity; consciously or unconsciously, we try to organize the heterogeneous mass of data. All of us have assumed at times the impudent optimism of the Absolute which called forth "Compensation." The

"Over-soul" seems a logical explanation of the mysteries of our appreciations of the greater souls. I have wished that this belief could make me self-reliant. Clergymen are all the time trying to inspire our youth with Emersonian (compromise) ideas of evolution.

(The intelligentsia reach the saloon. The critic pays for the drinks.)

C. To Emerson.

A. No. I drink to myself.

C. What is your religion, that it cannot harmonize with Emerson's?

A. Must I say again I love the "un-specialized" man Emerson? To the vast mass of data about human nature which is unchanging in its crude, Emerson reacted naturally and clearly; I repeat, with the accuracy of a scientist . . . But I am prejudiced against his Science, especially his psychology. I feel his resulting metaphysic has developed him to be a different man than I. Unlike Emerson who had no animal emotion to struggle with, who couldn't laugh, I realize my body too well. I don't feel myself better or worse, but different. Often, when I worry about "purposes" beside the desire to live my life,—self-love,—I envy a man like Emerson. But I always justify myself—I know what I'm saying—by saying, "Happiness requires social ease; I'll do my duty to the unfortunates, but no more." I've been raised in atheism.

C. You never seemed dangerous. Are you a communist?

A. My prejudice is behaviorism. Our original emotions are fear, rage, and love. We repeat phylogeny to what climax? You say that sounds atheistic. You brag that Emerson never sounds that way. Well, I'm proud to come from the same foundation that Shelley did. It gives self-realization, the Ego.

C. Are you anti-social?

A. A minute ago you said communist. I am unsocial in as much as I feel free of its vulgar disciplines as such. Civilization, it must be admitted, removes the more primitive dangers, it alleviates certain instinctive fears by its organization. Yet society sets one

standard which may have to kill if it doesn't stunt its worldly giants. The man who understands human nature retreats within himself without wasting his life, fighting his species. Starved and scared people are repulsive to my nature. And one cannot escape these conditions by holding his hands before his eyes.

C. But let us go back to the nature of man. You say that nature originated in three instinctive emotions.

A. That question allows, or better, forces, me to organize myself. These emotions have an origin more simple and more selfish,—the urge to live; and they must develop and combine in harmony with this urge to live in order to be sincere or natural. The rakes are asses because they fail to realize that man must live as man. In evolution man has won, in thought, a great promise, but dangerous if abused. Normal man develops finer sensibilities, a soul. Thought makes a man conscious of these sensibilities and regulates them. Thought brings us to a fundamental relationship, to reality, and makes religion necessary. Yet the abuse of thought makes for a monstrous mass of sentimentalities.

C. You mean thought is but a means to emotional states?

A. Don't think your metaphysicians haven't used it for the realization of a peculiar emotional state. But that is beside the point. Wait. I said man must live to the full a man's life. That's perfect pleasure.

C. Mon Dieu. That's Epicureanism.

A. Yes, I think of Remy de Gourmont. Your exclamation makes me feel you're foolishly prejudiced. I felt

that when I mustered the courage to recognize, understandingly, the finality of pleasure, I already had the necessary higher tastes to prevent my being "dangerous." My ethique is natural. It is wise adjustment. I try to rest upon the perfect equilibrium that psychology talks of as the body's perfect comfort. Conventionally basic desires of food, of drink, of sex are satisfied to prevent unhealthy pressures that must become neurotic—worries; this doesn't mean sensual abuses, for they are worse strains, but this equilibrium seems to me but a base for a greater pleasure, for which the truest Epicureans go thru stringent self-regulation to set optimum conditions—free creative or reflective thinking.

I cannot imagine a society that would starve its thinkers, if they didn't become impudent crusaders; the norm is a fair reward for honest effort. Their simple "odd" tastes are satisfied in the intimate society of love, of the art and science fraternity. What more can man ask to help him realize his end,—working and playing with Ideas; It becomes his only pride, a personal satisfaction. You see, this most social is a most wise adjustment for man. It is natural and simple. It is a pure aesthetic experience. It is the expression of an instinct enjoyable to man alone. The "world's worst" ascetics unconsciously have worshipped at its throne; but they were diseased. It is a beauty not so temporary as a rose Good night

C. (As he closes the door behind him.) My, this discussion has been wonderful.

OBSCURITY

I HAVE forgotten so much
Of what I had wished to remember—
All but the snow in your hair
On a long ago night in December—
All but the blue of your eyes,
All but the white of your hands—
Gone—like initials we watched
Washed from the sands.

—Stuart Palmer

A FABLE

By

EDWARD SODERBERG

THE Town was quiet, as quiet as if it were five o'clock in the morning, and not two in the afternoon. There were People on the Streets, many People, but there was no Sound save the shuffling of their feet as they walked.

Outside the Town rose a Hill, upon which lay a Road, winding up and up until it was lost from sight over the Summit. Down this Road walked a Stranger, his feet seeming to keep time to the Jolly Tune he sang. His clothes were dusty, and his face was covered as with powder; but his Cheeks were crinkled in a Merry Smile.

As the Stranger neared the Town, he noticed the quiet that prevailed, and his brow twisted in a frown of Bewilderment. He saw that even the Children were solemn, their faces hard and stony; and he saw that they walked like Men with the weight of many years on their shoulders.

A House stood on the edge of the Town, its boards dark and dirty, and as the Stranger passed it, he saw a Child come out of the door. Like the rest, the Child, who could not have been more than eight, had the face of a Man of four-score. The Stranger called to it, saying, "Tell me, Little One, why is Everyone so solemn here?"

But the Child did not look up, continuing his way with his aged look. The Stranger's Bewilderment increased, and he stopped by the Roadside to speak to an Old Man who was sitting on a Stone.

"Pray tell me, Old Man, why is Everyone so solemn here?" Stranger, and there was a tear in his eye, but he said not a word; and the Stranger went on into the Town.

He stopped Everyone he met, asking each the same Question, but not One answered him. At last he came to an Inn, outside which was a bench, and he sat down to rest himself.

As he sat there, a Man came out of the Inn and sat down beside him. He was a Very Old Man, older even than he who had been sitting on the Stone by the Roadside.

The Stranger had not yet had his curiosity satisfied, and he asked the Very Old Man his Question. The Very Old Man looked at him sadly, and said in a silvery, tinkly voice,

"There is a Funeral this afternoon! Laughter is Dead!"

The Stranger feared he had not heard aright, and he repeated what he had just been told. The Very Old Man nodded his head Dolefully, and said,

"Ah, yes! It is too True. Laughter is Dead! And the fault is the Townsman's. For they are too Wise. Too much do they know of the World and its Sorrows; too well do they realize that they know Nothing of the Universe; too much have they thought of Science and Philosophy! For who can entertain Laughter who is aware of his limitations and his utter Helplessness to keep himself from Worry and Care? Ah, yes, there was No One to entertain Laughter, or even to keep alive his living spark, and so—He died; died through the fault of the Townsman, who know too much to be able to laugh." and the Very Old Man wept—for Laughter was Dead.

The Stranger arose from the bench and started away from the Town, going back the same way he had come. But his Face was no longer crinkled in a Merry Smile, nor did he sing a Jolly Tune—for Laughter was Dead.

FLAMMA AMORIS

By

J. M. S. COTTON



LOVE one day played with fire, and burnt his hand;
then sought he Afrodite, and he stood
sadly before her, strove to understand
what caused the pain, what caused the flowing blood.
She bound the hand, she held it to her lips,
she felt the soft touch of his finger-tips
against her face,
and for a space
Love lingered by her with his troubled eyes,
like a mild mist across the bluest skies—
and then he smiled.
She was so happy when she saw him smile,
just like a child,
who had forgotten he had wept a while:
“It was such fun to play with that bright flame;
why should it hurt me so?”
And then the answer came from Afrodite:
“Because men take delight
to play with many things they do not know,
although they call them by another name.”

PABLO

By

IDABEL SINE

THE sun beat down upon the white decks of the steamship Utah as she lay anchored in the harbor at Havana. Although this was not my first introduction to white heat, for our ship was just returning from Yucatan, it was as "white" a heat as any I had yet endured. I call it white heat, for it made the surrounding country seem to be without color. The waters of the Gulf, which is usually deep blue, were faded, and the city of Havana, lying starboard, was baked to a colorless grey—the poor adobe huts and the gay cafes on El Prado looked just the same. I tried to distinguish familiar buildings from where we lay, and thought I saw my old haunt, Los Dos Hermanos. Perhaps I only thought I saw it, for as I stood gazing I was sure I could see the window boxes with their withered plants and ivy hanging limply down the sides of the bleached boxes. I wondered if the red and blue tiled floor of the cafe had faded also and if they were serving no "vino rojo," but only "vino blanco" today.

There was no breeze coming in from the Gulf, and except for a slight slapping of the water against the boat, the bay might have been a stagnant pool in the plains of some far-off country. Everything seemed lazy—the automobiles drove leisurely down the boulevard and I could see dim figures of people moving along in a listless way. Soft splashes attracted my attention, and looking down I saw a flying fish flip along the top of the water and then dive down under again as though disappointed. A bird swooped down near the deck and the slow, easy swurr-swurr of its wings seemed to prove that it too had caught the spirit of the day.

I stood looking out at the city and watching for the return of the ship's tender which had taken a load of men to shore. It was Sunday afternoon, and I knew that red flags would be

hung in front of every saloon in town. Now, in any other part of the world, that would mean an auction sale; but on Sunday afternoon in the Spanish cities of North America it means a cock-fight. At the rear of each of these saloons is a courtyard in which there is a pit all ready for the fights—just a tiny arena of standard size with a "hoyo" built into the sand at each corner.

Slim's deep voice saying, "aye, aye, Sir," as he gave me a mock salute, aroused me from my picture dream. I grunted at Slim in friendly greeting and together we watched for the tender.

"Is everything ready?" he asked.

"Sure," I replied. "Pablo has had his exercise and is in the cage now, waiting to get going. The tender will be back in a few minutes."

Pablo's exercise was one of the big events of the day—we used to take turns chasing him around the deck, and he could wear out ten of us. The tops of his legs were as big around as a man's wrist, and as ship's mascot, upon whom the entire pay roll was often bet, he, as a privileged character, was fed bits of raw liver and allowed to sleep in his cage on the main deck.

Six months ago in a water front saloon at Tampico, I had taken Pablo as payment in full of a gambling debt. He had a splendid reputation at the time but had never before been fortunate enough to have a traveling manager. Since that day his career had been illustrious. That it was a series of successes is self-evident, for just one contestant comes out of a cock-fight, and dear Pablo we still had with us.

He was an impressive looking game-cock, standing almost two feet from the ground; and he had golden-brown feathers that shaded into red around his neck. He carried his head high in the air and was afraid of nothing, for he had always been pro-

ted against unnecessary dangers. And Pablo would size up his enemy with as much precision, and I think intelligence, as do human fighters. Another cock was defeated the minute he took the offensive move.

It was about three o'clock when ten gobs from the steamship Utah filed into the courtyard behind Los Dos Hermanos. The slanting rays of the sun shone down with less intensity. Color, which had been absent an hour ago, was coming back into the landscape, and into the objects about us as though everything were coming out of a deep faint. Our entrance caused quite a disturbance among the group of natives who were watching a bantam fight. Whispers of "gallo grande, otro gallo grande" went around the circle. I didn't see much of that fight, for my attention was fixed on another game-cock in a cage a few feet away; and its owner, Rodriguez, was eyeing Pablo. Here was a splendid match! As soon as the bantams had finished with the pit, Rodriguez and I got together. Pablo had never fought without steel spurs and the other bird had never fought with them, but Rodriguez was insistent. Unless Pablo used the claws that nature had provided, there would be no fight. I hesitated for a few minutes—Pablo had won lots of money for us, so why take such a long chance? But, on the other hand, the ship's pay roll was "up" on this afternoon's fight and Pablo's stock would go down if we refused now. I looked at him affectionately, but there was no affection in his eyes—only pride and impatience for something to happen. He certainly was "cock-sure" of himself.

Yes, we would do it. Slim found a machinist's file and held Pablo while I filed his claws to a sharp point. He could scarcely walk now, but his wings helped and he balanced around in a way that would have been amusing if it hadn't been such a critical time.

Two game-cocks in a pit may not be intelligent, but their instincts are certainly well-trained and used to the

best advantage. The first few minutes Pablo and his opponent spent in sparing—each just trying to "get on to" the other's technique; and then the fight started with all the ferocity of two wild beasts who realize that they fight to the end—fight until one is no longer able to defend his life. With the dying sun a breeze had come up; and now feathers were flying in every direction. The cocks let out low sounds as though they were talking to one another and occasionally screeches as though they were thirsty for blood. Pablo took the first offensive and rushed at the other bird, who was ready with a blow on the head that tore Pablo's left eye from its socket and almost stunned him. New side bets were made as some of the audience grinned and some frowned. Without losing a second, Pablo ran blindly to one of the "hoyos," stuck his head in it, and stayed there until he regained his equilibrium, like a pugilist who takes nine counts. The other cock stood off and waited to see what Pablo would do now. In a minute the fight was resumed, and this time Pablo was wiser. He waited until his opponent was convinced of his weakness and inferiority, until the opponent, feeling that Pablo was nearly beaten, rushed at him with wings outspread. Just at that second Pablo rose into the air, turned, and came down upon his foolish victim, digging his claws under his wings and through his ribs. The cock was dead in a second, and Pablo had to be pulled loose, for his claws had gone deep into the opponent's body cavity. He looked at the conquered foe for a minute, just to be sure that he was dead—but he did not crow. Pablo was all "strictly business."

Unlike the modern movie hero who comes up smiling, Pablo was indeed the worse for the wear. One claw was completely gone, and his eye could never be of use again. We took him back to the ship, cared for him, flattered him, and made him feel once more that the world was worth fighting for. Fine old Pablo who never saw defeat!

The next morning we left for New York. It was a beautiful day. The sun was bright, but the wind was cool. The governmental buildings along the boulevard stood out in glistening relief against the blue sky, and they, in turn, furnished a striking background for the tall coconut palms. The old fashioned sailing boats, plying between the city wharf and Moro Castle, bobbed up and down in the wake of our ship. The old Cubans, who rowed them when the wind was not favorable, looked like sea-dogs of a few centuries ago, with their huge bulks

and bearded faces. The reflectors in the Castle lighthouse sent out rays of sunlight in various directions, and small spouting whales were seen first on one side and then on the other. Later when we entered the Atlantic a strong wind was blowing, and that night we were tossed about by a typhoon. In the morning my first thought was of Pablo—how had he stood the storm? I went up on deck to see him, but he was gone. The foaming waves had washed him off into the sea.

POEM

By

RICHARD C. CHURCH

I

THE music plays; and far away I see
The stately march of kings and armored men
In gorgeous show of regal pageantry;
And liveried courtiers smile and bow
And bow and smile again.

II

The music plays; and in a dream I see
The fairy dance of love-lorn Pierrot
Along the white beach of a moon-white sea.
From far-off blossoms full of perfumes rare,
The scented breezes blow.

III

The music plays; and in a garden old
Fair Romeo doth his moonlit vigil keep;
He truly vows his love will ne'er grow cold,
Her "bounty is as boundless as the sea,"
She vows her love as deep.

IV

The music plays; and all around I hear
The mighty rush of winds on heavy sea,
And faintly comes the staunch crew's husky cheer,
And rushing waves splash fiercely over helm;
The schooner swings to lee.

V

The music plays; and 'round about I feel
The pall of death—the clammy dawn's half light,
A muffled drum;—hushed clank of martial steel,—
The sombre stillness—tears—a hushed command—
Down to eternal night.



THE BROWN CHRIST

By

DORIS ZEMURRAY

SAN PEDRO SULLA content in the assurance that it needs not the hand of the white man to keep up its existence, and not caring whether or not it progresses, smiles with amusement at the rest of the "civilized" world and snuggles among its white adobe houses. It prides itself on its position, its uniqueness, and its importance. For San Pedro is (at the time of which I speak, about six years ago, for now the whole country has come a little more under the authority of foreigners) the only town on the eastern coast of Spanish Honduras which can boast of a church. Not only that! San Pedro can also boast of being the seat of the Maya civilization on the coast, for the Uloa river, where many Maya-Aztec remains are still to be found, and where, some say, the Maya capital was formerly located, is only about an hour and a half ride from there and is now entirely deserted. The inhabitants pride themselves on the thought that the white man always was and will be utterly superfluous to their lives. They are a queer people, much taken up with their own ideas and beliefs, wanting no help from the outside.

Fundamentally the Honduranian peon is an implicit believer in miracles, a worshiper of the unknown. Consequently, in ancient days, before

his civilization was contaminated by the Spaniard, he belonged to the primitive creed of the Sun and Moon. Nominally, today, he is Roman Catholic. At heart he still fears the forces of nature, and distinct traces of his old faith are still to be found, crudely transplanted (yet without his realizing the crudeness) in the genuine belief and devotion of the present religion of the land, Catholicism.

I speak, of course, only of the peon of the east coast, not at all of those of the west, the interior, or British Honduras. This race was formerly pure Maya-Aztec with a high civilization almost on a level with the early Egyptian. Now since the fusion of Spanish blood and the cruel pictures of the Conquistadore's way which have been left on an easily impressionable mind, he has become, in truth, a degenerate, who, not even in appearance, offers a hint of his former glory. The Conquistadores! Those proud unscrupulous Spanish conquerors who cared not for the conquered, deeming it sufficient that they help their own gold-ridden souls by converting the people with whom they came in contact, to Christianity. Firm was their belief that all Christ asks of His followers is for them to convert as many unbelievers as possible. Therefore, they tortured the natives without mercy, using as a solace

for their by far too flexible consciences the fact that they, the most holy and great envoys of Spain and the Pope, had accomplished their duties to God and country and had also saved those poor devils from the everlasting furies of hell, by compelling them to come under the jurisdiction of the Church of Rome.

The alien cannot understand this race. He is too extremely wrapped up in his own affairs. They are a body of simple folke who merely ask to be let alone. They wish for their own religion, their own thoughts, which the Spaniard took away from them. As late as six years ago their ceremonies contained fragments of their old faith incorporated into their new religion. The best example of this is to be found in their conception of Easter Sunday. This, naturally, was celebrated in San Pedro. It was *the* religious occasion of the year, even being considered worthy of more attention than Christmas. Why, it is hard to say. Probably because the idea of many angels and white lilies appealed more to the minds of the people than did the thought of three wise men, camels (which they had never seen or heard of) and a manger (of which their surroundings afforded no immediate illustration.) At least the jungle is full of lilies of all types, and the church has a bell.

Natives flocked in scores Easter day to san Pedro to "La Fiesta" which was sure to be held there. Imagine a small village of adobe houses with occasionally a few manaka shacks and, perchance, five or ten streets (paths), and you have the San Pedro of old. The little Catholic church maintains a prominent place directly in front of the plaza. In the church yard is a large cieba tree which is protected by a small iron fence. The interior of the building consists, ordinarily, of rude wooden benches, a few crucifixes, and statues. But now the church is gay, for it is Easter Sunday and white flowers and candles take away its native bareness.

Easter Sunday is a state occasion. All the natives wear white clothes

made to represent an angel's dress. The costume is trimmed with silver and gold tinsel and has large wings attached to the shoulders. Big men, large women, small children, important men, the village scum, all are arrayed like angels.

Early in the morning the services begin. About ten o'clock a statue of Christ with the Bleeding Heart is borne by a priest through the town. This image is primarily like any other statue of the same subject. Its main and only differences are that it is dyed a brown-black to represent the color of the natives, and that its head is detachable. The people do not believe that any great God can be white. Unfortunately, their opinion of the white man was formed by a group who were not "white" themselves. That is, they were unscrupulous and hard, the Conquistadores, agents of degradation, not aggradation. Everyone, regardless of creed or nationality, is compelled to bow to this statue when it passes. Finally, the procession, which includes the altar boys, the choir, and the peons, returns to its starting place, the church. There the priest places the image under the cieba tree, and the altar boys bring out a lamb and fruit which are first blessed, then offered to the god. A mass is again held. It is, indeed, a sight worth seeing, the multitude of adoring peasants of all sizes and description, dressed as angels and grouped in front of the image of a brown Christ, while the priest and altar boys offer sacrifices to the god under a sacred cieba tree. It suggests, to a certain extent, the tree worship of the ancient Druids.

After this ritual comes the event of the day. The crowd gathers in the plaza where the priest takes a large pair of dice, and, assisted by a few head men of the village, he shoots them. The whole mob now has a chance to yell out the numbers. The prizes are the different parts of the body of Christ. For example: it is announced that they are going to shoot for the arm of the statue. If a peon screams, "Seven!" and the dice

come out correctly, he obtains a foreleg of an ox. So the game continues until the whole body of Jesus has been played for and won.

The lucky natives now take their portion of the oxen, which they consider good food, and the mob is eager for the next and last attraction. This consists of the removal of the head of the deity from its body. The chief men and the padre now take the head which they hide somewhere in the town. A treasure hunt commences. High and low the peons seek the head of Jesus. The fortunate finder is given a bag of money. Another mass is held and the day is concluded.

Naturally, to the foreign mind this is ridiculous, sacrilegious, and unheard of. "In the first place," one asks, "What 'bon catolique' priest would allow such proceedings?"

That is, indeed, a good question. But, remember, "mon amigo," that San Pedro boasts of no Spanish father. No, the Spanish padre suggests too much the Conquistadore. He is too fully under the immediate control of the Pope. The papacy does not know nor does it understand these people. These peasants are too primitive and too uneducated to appreciate modern theology. The forces of nature, the earth, the unknown, are entirely too prevalent in their lives to permit their mute acceptance of church logic.

The cieba tree is large, beautiful, and majestic. Why should it not be sacred? They suffered untold degradation at the hands of white men, who, for consolation for the manner in which they were treated, forced them to accept his God and his form of worship, promising them remission of sins. It seemed permissible to them that they should accept the good principles of this god, and yet, as it is a natural thing for them to do, transfer the hated white color of the diety to their personal brown one. The whole ceremony took place in pure and heartfelt devotion. There was no mockery attached. The participants profoundly believed that Christ would have approved of the

hunt and of the dice game had He been there. They accept the teaching that Christ is a God who believes in giving to His children and who wishes them to be happy. An European priest would not allow such a show of faith, even though it meant more to the people, and they were more devout than an ordinary congregation at Notre Dame or at St. Peter's itself. Consequently, these folk have their own priest. If, in ancient days, a Spanish father had been sent over, undoubtedly, he would suddenly have become deathly sick or he would have got lost in the jungle. As to his whereabouts the peons would not know.

The natives were taught Christ very incoherently. They take what they choose and reject or overlook what they have no use for or what they cannot comprehend, even today. Nevertheless, they are genuine believers in Jesus and in Christianity. If they are given a chance to develop their own civilization, perhaps, they will accomplish much. One thing is certain, they have been ruined by the white man. Most probably, deep in his heart, the peon sings the following song:

I hate your civilization,
I love the jungle wild,
I hate the Spaniard's arrogance,
I love the Aztec's pride.
What fools you stupid white men!
What fools! I say you are,
You with your white religion,
Awaiting the day and call
For your sins to be resurrected,
Oh ridiculous! Can't you see,
That if only my own life I lead,
My own thoughts follow through,
My own true God, the Sun or Moon,
(What difference does it make to
you?)

As long as I believe in faith
And lead a godly life,
Tending to my jungle lands,
Being absolutely free,
Oh ignorant white man!
You with your beliefs,
All I ask of thee
Is to be left alone,
My own religion, life, and home.
I did not ask for you to come,

Nor of the welfare of my soul,
If you would merely right your
 wrongs,
Look into your homes awhile,
Clean your lives up well,

Then I do believe that you
Will soon lose all fears of hell.
Leave us to our own thoughts,
Each man to live his own life
To work out God's great plan.

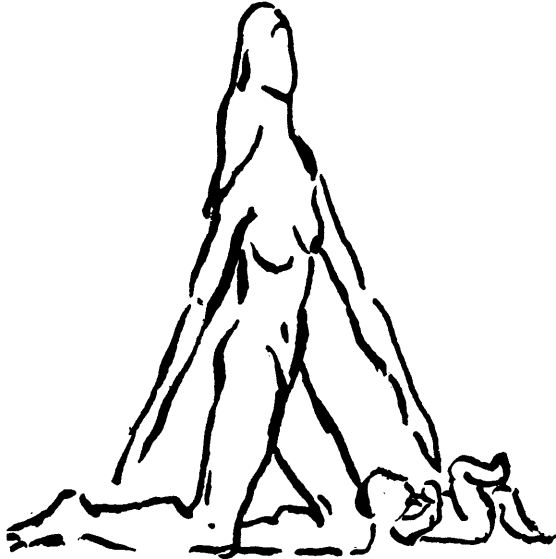
SONG

By

STUART PALMER

THE world is so large and so cruel and so cold
 Lady, my love—
Our words are so small and the stars are so old
 Lady, my love—
List to my song ere the morning may come,
Old lips are dead lips, and dead lips are dumb—
 Lady, my love.

The moon is so thin and so frail and so bright
 Lady, my love—
How can we know if it lasts out the night—
 Lady, my love?
Have you forgotten the promises made?
Listen awhile to the Last Serenade,
 Lady, my love.



EDITORIAL

NOW that the year has turned, and the Lit again thrusts out its feelers toward a small and rather unfeeling audience, it is the customary thing to take account of ourselves—and of the world. Not that this process matters. Only we have had a vague sense of insecurity, a sense that we have never known, quite, where we stood. That, of course, can be attributed to the uncertainty of youth and the equivocal nature of youth's enterprise. Then, perhaps, we are too busy to worry much about reasons, so long as others are not interested in them. Dreams seem more substantial at this stage in life, anyway.

All of which points to the fact that youth is irrevocably lost in the maze of its own self-made perplexities, groping for an opening into the outer world of men and knowledge and ultimate Truth or Beauty. How near it succeeds, or how far it misses the mark may best be seen through the medium of self-expression displayed often with objectionable exhibitionism, in a magazine which professes to have certain literary tendencies.

The Lit has been criticized, to put the point mildly; and good reasons, including variations of the above, have been advanced for the utter futility of an undergraduate literary publication. We agree, to a certain extent, with our critics, to be congenial; but we shall adhere doggedly to the saturnine search for art—or, at least, for some semblance of original thought and expression.

This is not simply a matter of choosing the best of what material is submitted; nor is it a matter of inducing the bashful author to expose his masterpieces to the profane eye of the critic. Authors are more often than not audaciously frank about those matters. One month we will be swamped with feeble quatrains and maniacal attempts at free verse; and then it is our duty to infuse the germ of inspiration into some budding author's brain—and presto! we have a short story or an essay, of undoubted genius. And of course the business side of such an enterprise as this takes care of itself. Art for art's sake, and all that sort of thing.

Such lack of appropriate literary production is not to be wondered at. However, we are not looking for a genius that does not exist, but for a grade of literary work based upon a relative standard of excellence. When it comes to such things, our judgment is not

infallible; but we are certain of one or two facts:

Youth writes of some far-fetched fancy of the brain and attempts to wed it to life—with rather gruesome results. Or youth writes of realism with more sensation and far less success than did Stephen Crane and Frank Norris of the naive nineties. Youth cannot get away from impressionism and its accompanying exaggeration.

The failure to look at life straightforwardly may be attributed to the fact that youth has not yet known life, except for an incident or two, and consequently conjures up a picture of something it has read or imagined. Taking for granted that youth does not think, we come upon the tragic reality that neither does youth see. Or if it does, it does not concentrate, or does not try to understand what it sees—which is wholly typical of youth and a healthy state of mind.

Whereupon we see ourselves arriving at certain devastating conclusions, which our critics have been hurling at us from time to time, and which the attitude of the student body has made only too evident in the past. After taking account of ourselves, rather drastically, it remains but to draft our New Year resolutions—and then to break them when we find our ideals at stake. For it were better to throw up the whole affair than to give in one iota for a cause that would thrust aside that intangible something which, however long it may elude us, is the only bright star on a rather dreary horizon.

The Lit means more to us than just a magazine, or a graveyard for student literary effort. It represents a hope and an ideal, of which the words imprinted herein are simply a feeble outward manifestation. The spirit, the cosmic urge, the inspiration, or whatever you will, that brought the words to paper—that is important. Effect is relatively unimportant here. Cause is what we base our future upon. Thereby we stand destined never to be popular, but to go on building up the tradition of the Lit—a poor tradition of misunderstood editors, queer offices, small sales, and words, words, words, which no one even cares to understand.

We are unnaturally pessemistic, and sound like martyrs to a cause,—heaven forbid—when our course seems to be only that of pushing on and grinning endlessly, until at last we are engulfed by uncertain oblivion.

C. G. S.

THE POTTER

By

CARL O. NELSON

THREE men were once journeying through the eastern part of the country. It chanced that they stopped at a small town for a few days. This town was noted for its many hand-craftsmen, most of whom were descended from generations of craftsmen before them; the crafts had passed from father to son, as they did in the middle ages. There were silversmiths, goldsmiths, metal-workers, glass blowers, hand loom workers, wood carvers, cabinet makers, stone cutters, and potters. The products of these hands are known everywhere.

The men became interested in the life of the town, in its inhabitants, in the work the people were doing. They spent the greater part of their time going about from workshop to workshop, studying the methods of labor, and the articles produced. The town was not very large, and they found it possible to visit every one of the shops. Every one, that is, but one. This workshop was at the northern limit of the town, in a rather quiet and forbidding neighborhood. It was large, rather dilapidated, and one of the oldest in the place. In order to get to it, one had to walk two blocks beyond the last house on a long street. The only approach was an uncared-for cinder path, wide enough originally, but now narrowed to barely passable width by dense weeds and grass encroaching upon it from either side. At this isolated house lived and worked a potter. He was the best pottery maker the town had ever had; no one denied that. In days gone by he had employed more than a dozen highly skilled artisans; the products of his workshop were prized by all people who purchased pottery. He was, at one time, well on his way to success in life. Now, however, he was an old and broken man, with no one in the world who cared for him. That was because no one understood.

"But what is the matter with

him?" the men asked of another old potter in the town.

"Well, he does such strange things. He works very little at his pottery; he has done nothing more than keep himself a shade beyond mere existence for the last twenty years. He spends all of his spare time in his workshop, molding statuettes. He is a born sculptor. He used to make most beautiful little things of clay many years ago, and he used to sell them to art shops for very good prices. Now he does not sell any of them."

"Why not?" asked one of the men.

"Because he is crazy," the potter answered. "You can never guess what those statuettes of his are, or what he does with them." The men, to draw him out, made several guesses, but they were, of course, wrong. "Well," he continued, "those little clay figures are always bodies of women. His skill is marvelous. He always makes the women young and beautifully developed. I have seen him at work on them several times. He will work upon a model for a whole day, and get the thing perfectly made. But—and here is the strangeness of it—when he finishes it, he will sit and look at it for a long time in silent, scornful, and scowling contemplation. Then he will go to it, while the clay is still plastic, and with his thumbs crush the face and head beyond recognition. That accomplished, he will proceed to crush the breasts, which he always takes care to make full and perfect; next the abdomen and remainder of the trunk will suffer the same fate. From there his hands will go to the feet, then up the legs, until finally he will have nothing but a formless mass of clay left. If he is in the mood, he will start all over again to make another little model; if he is not, he will throw it into a corner where a mass of clay that has been similarly treated has been accumulating for years.

Now, what do you think of that?"

"The man is clearly crazy," they agreed. "Something must have happened to him twenty years ago to make him like that. Is that right?"

"Why, yes," said the potter. "Twenty years or so ago he was a successful worker. His parents and relatives were all dead—had been dead for some time, but he had gotten over that loss. He was happy and prosperous, and unmarried. He had never been in love. Women seemed to have no attraction for him. However, one day a dashing young lady came to town to visit friends. She was from New York, I believe. Her friends had recently moved into town, and little was known of them. Of her nothing was known. Through chance, he met and fell in love with her. With unreasoning ardour he pursued her, and persuaded her to marry him, although he knew noth-

ing of her. He did not seem to care where she was from, or what she had been. No one knew; no one ever found out about her. Well, one day in June he married her. All his friends were at the wedding; it seemed that the whole affair would be a success—the future looked bright for them. Yes, it did look bright until that night. About two o'clock in the morning the young wife appeared at the home of her friends, hysterical with fright. Her husband had sternly ordered her from the house, and ordered her never again to set foot in it. No one knows what happened—no one will ever know. The young woman disappeared forever after six o'clock that morning. He stayed on, living the way he is now. Strange, isn't it?"

"Strange, indeed," the men said. That was all they could say.

DEMENTIA PRAECOX

By

MORRIS MORRISON

I LOVE the ridge of muscles and their bulge—
the crudeness of geraniums, greenest peppers, white-
est salt, and mostly the raw lemon flame—
someone must call me by a different name:
Covarubius, or Gluck—anything trite—
big or bitter—I invite
some callow experience. I must indulge.

Great Scott and all the collected irks of Christendom
delete the close, moist, consummate
expression of this line from Mallarme.
(Hist, Truepenny, peaches drive me dumb.)
Debussy—like intolerable shreds, exasperate.
all flesh to-day!

II

What sea-goose heard and left
hurdie-gurdies of grey unicorns and peacocks,
blue smell locked in a rumpled mane,
to wander, musically bereft,
the sweltering plains of Ukraine.
(My God, my past, and my soul! how my brain tick-tocks.)
Some day, my amalgamated damsel, you'll reclaim
the arrest infinity of Notre Dame.



THE STRANGE CASE OF IVAN VERSOLVITCH

By

EUGENE KINKEAD

THIS tale is taken from the records of the *Cheka* at Irkutsk, Siberia, and is simply the statement of Ivan Versolvitch concerning his personal history, to be used in his own defense in the case numbered 281 versus the Government, March 13, 1920.

The prisoner is described as being twenty-two, tall, almost slender, with no distinguishing marks save a pair of unusually large eyes. At the time of the trial his beard was unkempt, his clothes were ragged and torn, and the privations of his ordeal showed themselves plainly in his peaked face and nerveless limbs. The courtroom was filled with country folk clad in their big sheepskin coats that buckled around the middle, with their Astrakan caps in their hands; and around the walls stood an immovable line of blue blouses bearing the dirty red bands of Bolshevism.

When asked by the fat pudgy "comrade judge" to defend himself, he demurred. It was only after some difficulty that he spoke.

"In the year 1915, when I was just a boy, I was drafted into the Cossack Army with that regiment that was recruited from the lower Dnieper region. My education was interrupted, as I was a student of law at that time in the University at Odessa. We were sent against the Austrians in Galicia

around the Carpathian mountains. The campaign was long, arduous, and difficult. Because of poor leadership at the start we were nearly routed several times, and it was not until General Lenor came that we made any progress at all. He was a butcher; he sacrificed men by the thousands; but we took Cracons in the early spring of '16."

When interrogated by the court as to the Cross of the Order of Saint Nicholas which was found in his pocket, the prisoner was non-committal. He simply admitted owning the decoration, stating that it had been awarded to him in the above-mentioned campaign.

"News of the revolution at home reached us soon after that. Opinion was divided, but those who held the command loudly proclaimed the Republic, and our corps was withdrawn shortly after the treaty of Brest-Litvosk for 'internal duty.' We were stationed at Moscow with the Eleventh Corps under direct command of Commissioner Trotsky for the next two years. It was my unfortunate experience to be assigned to one of the execution squads, which branch of the army was most busy during those months, and to see fall before me daily hundreds of human beings."

The court interrupted here, knowing something about the laws of evi-

dence and self-incrimination, and asked the prisoner in its most pompous manner what he meant by "unfortunate assignment." The prisoner refusing to make answer and keeping a superior silence so angered the "comrade judge" that he threw out his chest and puffed his cheeks until his face was read as a beet and commanded the prisoner to answer whether in this capacity he performed his duty as a soldier of the Soviet shield.

A sarcastic smile curled about the lips of the accused and his reply was so very pointed that, had not the result been inevitable and the possibility of further information so important, this tale would have come to an immediate close.

But the prisoner continued, "The reverend court would no doubt deem me presumptuous if I spoke my own mind in the way I am able, but words today in Russia are not for the mouths of honest men, but for the lips of vampires who fatten on our blood. We are led to destruction with phrases that glitter, that we do not understand."

The eyes of the speaker began to glow and he straightened majestically, easily.

"Too much liberty, too little knowledge, fellow countrymen, makes us crazy. This Sovietism is a wild thing, an uncaged beast, that, roaming at large across our land, breathes out the fumes of madness. We are all infected, and the things we should care for are neglected. In the cities our schools and churches are closed, our boys and girls roam the streets, half dressed, like hungry little tigers, the stark light of fever in their eyes. In the country the plow no longer rips the sod, the horses have been requisitioned, and the smoke from the farms is thin and pale, while hiding the sun like an ominous cloud, sits red-handed Bolshevism, the blood-flecked froth drying cold on its lips."

The speaker stopped suddenly as though awakened and glanced around at the courtroom, still as a tomb. He laughed shortly, and turned to the

judge, who closed his gaping mouth, shook off the spell, rapped down his gavel, and told the prisoner to confine himself solely to facts.

The man resumed the narrative in his low vibrant tone, under which ran the powerful emotion of a personality cloaked beneath the most listless of poses. It seemed as though the tired soul of the man spoke alone. The court room shifted, sighed, and was silent.

"After two years of duty in Moscow and the vicinity I was granted leave of absence for a month to return to my native town. Conditions there were most chaotic. The Whites under Admiral Kolchak had just been driven out, and the Anti-revolutionary Committee was in full power.

"Plots and counter plots were noised back and forth. All men were suspected and suspicious. No one knew when he left his home whether he would ever return to it. Sorrowing families bade good-bye to their fathers and brothers, and those that remained were in terror of their lives.

"My father, a venerable elder and headman of the town, had been imprisoned a week before my arrival with my younger brother, a lad of but thirteen years. My two unmarried sisters met me at the gate on my arrival and hurried me in to my mother, who was sitting with folded hands by the great fireplace. Her joy was a sorrowful sight and quite unnerved me. She wept and thanked God for my arrival, declaring her prayers had been answered, and her tears that wet my sleeve pierced my heart. The next day I went to see the Commandant. He said nothing could be done about my father and brother until word had been received from Moscow. I had known him before I left for the wars as a man of the lowest type, fit for nothing but driving a dung wagon, and now he held my family's destiny in his hands. He was the lord and god of our town. I could not even obtain an audience with my father, for he was in strictest confinement as a suspected cog in the recent counterplot. I returned with a sinking

heart to my mother, but comforted her and told her that now it was but a question of time before I effected the release. For several days the town buzzed with rumors and reports. Then one late afternoon I received definite word that the prisoners, and among them my father and brother, had been spirited off to a neighboring town about thirty versts distance to the west. I left quickly and quietly, not wishing to alarm my mother, and with a faint glimmer of hope, for the commandant of the neighboring town was known to me. Night falls quickly in the autumn in my home, and I pushed frantically on in hopes of arriving before the commandant left his office, which was never until late in the evening. When over half the way was accomplished, the windows of a grog shop loomed through the dusk. I entered and seeing a soldier half-stupefied at one of the tables, I approached him and tried to awaken him, hoping by chance to learn what time the troop had passed. He awoke after much shaking, and in answer to my question growled like a sleepy dog and told me I had best return home, for he had helped execute the group about two hours before, three versts to the south of there. The blood left my face and head completely and gathered in my stomach, making me deathly sick. I could not stand, but sunk into a chair, and the perspiration poured out of every pore in my body. I was nauseated as though by a violent sickness, but much more acutely. His words ran through my brain like hot fire. To kill a boy, an innocent lad; and an old man. Why, it was murder, murder. A cloud descended on my brain and I could not think. Automatically I rode home. I wondered what I had better do, what I should say, and how; whether it would not be better to let the matter go for a day or so before I revealed it to my mother.

"A rosy glow suffused the sky and grew larger at my approach. I spurred my horse onward. The head-on wind brought the snapping and

crackling of flames that devoured. I rode as fast as I could through the outskirts of the town, passing by the small white cottages with their darkened windows. The lights of the conflagration played upon them, lending to their surfaces a pinkish tinge strongly contrasted with the black of the night.

"Within the town chaos reigned. The streets were littered with articles of every description; china ware, pots, kettles, furniture, broken-down wagons and carriages. The sparks from the not-already consumed houses bit one's face like poisonous insects. Running frantically through the chaos were goats and sheep, lending a ludicrous atmosphere by their squeals and kicks as dropping brands singed their coats. I turned my animal loose, resolving to make my way on foot to that portion of town where we lived, daring to hope for mercy and respite. On the way I met soldiers drunkenly engaged in sacking and pillaging the houses before they burned them. I reached my home just at the moment that two great burly brutes were dragging my sisters into the courtyard, twisting their arms to force them to remove their protecting embraces from my mother. She was almost dead with fright, speechless, and ashen gray. I broke through the group around the gate, and rushing up to their captors, was in the act of drawing my revolver when several pairs of arms clasped mine to my sides, and a bloated hairy face with bloodshot piggish eyes leered over my shoulder, and chokingly said, 'Cease, Comrade, all will be dealt with fairly. We shall draw lots for the girls. It is the agreement. The liquor has addled your brain.' It was then I committed the greatest sin of my life, and I shall never cease to do penance for it, either in this world or the next. I fell into an utter faint.

"Sometime later I pulled my face out of the suffocating, stinking mud of the street and rose unsteadily to my feet. Before me in smouldering ruins lay my home. I wandered dis-

traught over the flags of the courtyard mumbling a childish prayer. My foot struck the dead body of a hog. I looked down, and, may the Christ of Mercy forgive my sight, there lay the body of my mother next to the beast, her white hair ground into the mud and her wide eyes staring into mine.

"The effect of the evening upon my nerves was such that I felt that each atom of me was darting into space, that literally I was being reduced to nothingness where I stood. For a moment this sensation lasted, then calm settled over me, and it was as though I had lived my life, and it was over. Material things that actuate men's deeds no longer were a part of me. I was alone and different from other folks. In place of my blood a virulent, icy poison flowed, and vengeance was my sole thought. I was a Lazarus guided by a fury.

"I tracked the soldiers to a grove of trees out of town. The early morning air was cold and refreshing, and my resolutions were strong as adamant. All about the grove were scattered the remains of a feast; bottles and conserve tins. Several articles of feminine attire were nailed in grotesque positions to the trunks of trees. Protruding from the underbrush on the opposite side of the clearing were the small boots of a woman. I could not bear to investigate. In the hut that stood in the center of the grove, his drunken head lolling against the doorway in which he was seated, was a sentry, stupidly drunk, and sleeping with his mouth open and his rifle on the ground. I glided silently toward him, and using my revolver muffled with a piece of cloth as a club, dragged him unconscious from his perch. Through the crack of the partly-opened door I saw the soldiers prostrate on the floor and benches. Silently I barred the door, and using a can of petrol that stood near by, I drenched the lower logs. In ten seconds the cabin was in roaring flames, and I became alarmed that the blaze might be seen by an early passer on the road. Two men, less drunk than the others, who tried to escape by the

windows, I shot, and the sentry I also disposed of. Inside half an hour I left. My work was done.

"From that time I traveled, lost, through the Don River region, by the Caspian sea and into the Trans-Balsalai country, avoiding my enemies as best I could, keeping off the beaten roads and traveling a great deal at night. It was probably due to good fortune that I was allowed to proceed as far as I did. All through that country the vengeance of the Bolsheviks was penetrating, powerful and searching, and men who should have lived were caught, and I was allowed to escape unhurt. The woods simply swarmed with rabble hunting for the half-dressed, unarmed officers of Kolchak's defeated army, and near here in a meadow that I passed through were the unburied corpses of seventy bound officers that your fearless militia had no doubt captured and executed.

"As for the incident, which your honor no doubt wishes to have settled, there can be no discussion. I did wreck the transport train in the Krasnoyark pass quite 'wilfully and with malice aforethought'."

Here the prisoner bent his piercing eyes upon the judge.

"Also I turned the machine gun on the survivors until the bullets ran out," and he shrugged his shoulders and smiled his crooked, quizzical smile.

"But, *komu nujny eti tovoriseki*, who cares for those swine, anyway?"

SHALOTT

I STAND in loneliness
And all things pass
Before me, but a pane
Of thin clear glass
Stands firm between
The world and me,
I wish to touch and taste—
Not only see!

—Stuart Palmer

ON READING LUCRETIUS ON LIFE AND DEATH

By

RICHARD C. CHURCH

OH WEARY wanderers from life and death,
O passion's tools, Oh hating fighting fools,
Mad with the lust of power and barren gain,
Drunk with the wine of parasitic pain,
Art thou but fortune's fools?

But puppets of the cynic-gleeful fate,
Who veils thine eyes, gives glimpses of the skies,
And chuckles gloatingly to see the swarm,
Thus shown a gleam, strive on amidst the storm
With hope and eager cries?

Is there no hope that thou may understand,
Thy reeling brain, thy bitterness of pain,
The hidden truth—or is there no such thing,
No saving straw to which a few can cling,
A beacon thru the rain?

OF BEHAVIORISTS

By

SYLVIA DERMANSLEY

Long lines of hills glide darkly into night,
And their bright-irised eyes of bronzing leaves
Lid coldly, with the murk of such dun skies
As still the chilling corpse of Summer grieves.
Day shuns such turbid gloom and jealous steals
The very purple shadows from the pines,
And every mould'ring needle, fallen, feels
Rot-dampened, at my feet, like dregs of wine.
So have they left my heart all winter-bound,
Who feed its God to holpeess word and sense—
Desert, beneath a slough of refuse found
In logic, as my study's recompense.
And yet the silly heart still constant, sees
New Summer's soil in Autumn's sodden leaves.

BOOK NOTES

BOOKS AND IDEAS

Despite the Christmas rush of new books, the publishers have released a larger percentage of good books than is usual. And, a propos of nothing at all, some of the new gift editions of the classics and near-classics are marvels of composition and binding.

The *Great American Ass*, (Brentano) is an anonymous autobiography which seems to be attempting the portrayal of the national and racial defects of the great American people, but its effectiveness is destroyed by the moaning of the author's personal grievances against the rest of us. *The Fatal Countess, And Other Stories*, by William Roughead (Dutton) is interesting both for the stories contained and their variety. While most volumes of stories impress one with the similarity of the tales in them, this collection is exceedingly un-unified; there is a detective story, a romantic tale, 'gossip on a novel', and studies of characters. Raimon de Loi, in *Trails of the Troubadors*, (Century) gives us some delightful pictures, intimately written, of the Age of Chivalry and its attendant pageantry. *The Sun Also Rises*, by Ernest Hemingway, (Scribner's) is his first novel, and exceedingly well done. *Seventy Years A Showman* by George Sanger, (Dutton) is an interesting and humorous picturization of English circus life in the Victorian Era. Dr. Paul Van Dyke, in *Ignatius Loyola* (Scribner's) gives a seemingly authentic and carefully written account of the life of the founder of the Jesuit order. A contrast to this book is R. F. Dibble's work, *Mohammed* (Viking Press) which is an ironic and amusing distortion of the life of the great Arab. *My Mortal Enemy* (Knopf) seems a bit inferior to Miss Cather's previous efforts. Her characterization of Mrs. Henshawe is not as good as one is led to expect when the name of Willa Cather is on the title page. *Fraternity Row*, by Lynn and

Lois Montross (Doran) is another college story, consisting of the events in the life of Andy Protheroe, who is apparently the answer to a maiden's prayer. H. G. Wells has written in *The World Of William Clissold* (Doran) of a character and his thoughts which 'portrays the twentieth century modern and his world.'—for which H.G. is to be complimented. Doran has published *The Proper Place*, by O. Douglas, an appealing, light-hearted story. Jerome K. Jerome, whose *Three Men In A Boat* has delighted us, is still more humorous in *My Life And Times*, the latter being the memories of his rather unusual career.

—E. C. S.

GALAHAD by John Erskine
Bobbs Merrill Co. \$2.50

May I call *Galahad* a relief? It is more, of course, but essentially, it is a great relief from the century-old exaltation of the purity of Galahad. He remains pure, (one would think that even Mr. Erskine did not dare to make him otherwise) but his purity is not that great trait in a noble character which we have so long been led to believe; instead, it is the expected result of the reactions of a prude to the world.

Erskine has so developed his novel that one does not receive the shock one expects from the sub-title, "Enough of his Life to Explain His Reputation." Instead, there is a clever and steady advance in the work which leads one through the explanation of the prude without a too shocking disillusionment. Erskine's treatment of the relations of the sexes is relievingly frank, and yet, it is a treatment that is original and purely Erskine's.

The situations in *Galahad* are highly dramatic, and throughout the work one sees Erskine's snapping, sparkling humor. Yet Erskine himself has said that any humor found in the novel is not the result of native wit, but

instead, "arises from a sense of recognition of universal characteristics by the reader."

The one great thing for which Erskine must be praised is his originality, his ability to tell an old story in a delightfully new manner. The plot is not a new one, (two women have struggled for one man hundreds of times before) but the originality lies in this: An old plot has been lived again by old characters, but both have been placed in new situations. The characters—Lancelot, Guinevere, Arthur, the two Elaines, and Galahad—have always been to us dim, hazy figures, but Erskine, through some ingenious employment of his creative art, has given them to us as our own contemporaries, as ourselves.

The novel is philosophic in the manner of Erskine, whose manner is refreshing. There is much to ponder over and much to remember. Who could forget this line, "That's the worst of it . . . when you love somebody who isn't your ideal?"

The plot in itself is a simple one. Two women, Elaine of Corbin and Guinevere, love Lancelot. He loves Guinevere entirely, and yet he is enticed by Elaine to love her for one night. Galahad is the result of that nocturnal love. He grows up without the knowledge of his birth, thinking Lancelot, who is at court, to be the husband of his mother, who lives in her own castle at Corbin. Galahad goes to court in search of an ideal and falls under the influence of Guinevere. Under her tutelage he becomes a prude, the opposite result of her expectations. When the knowledge of his birth and of his father's love for Guinevere is suddenly thrust upon him, he reacts as a prig would react, fleeing from court in horror, disgusted with life and still in search of an ideal. Lancelot enters a monastery, and Elaine is forgotten.

Galahad is a greater book than *The Private Life of Helen of Troy* and for those who enjoyed Erskine's first novel, his second will prove even more interesting.

—M. R. S.

AN OLD MAN'S FOLLY by Floyd Dell

George H. Doran \$2.00

This is the story of a pathetic futility of life as lived by Nathaniel Windle, the son of James Windle and Lucy Framingham, and whose heritage is best explained by the words of the author:

"In Lowell there had lived the three Framingham girls, Harriet, Lucy, and Adeline. They were of the star-gazing sort, who attended meetings of the anti-slavery society, read the essays of Mr. Emerson, and talked with kindred spirits about Beauty and Heroism and Friendship. . . . the two younger ones, Lucy and Adeline, were wooed and won respectively by the two enterprising Windle brothers, James and John. The Windle boys read Emerson with the Framingham girls, and attended anti-slavery meetings with them, and even hazarded an occasional transcendental sentiment—until Lucy and Adeline were duly married to them. From that time on there was no more nonsense about Abolition or the Oversoul, so far as the brothers were concerned."

From such a union sprang Nathaniel, who admired his father's practicality, and tacitly reproached his mother for that urge for Beauty she had given him. Christopher, the cousin, had inherited more of the Framingham than the Windle blood, and to Nathaniel the idealistic Christopher was both a blessing and a scion of the Devil. Christopher's legacy to Nathaniel had been accompanied by a curt note, "for God's sake, squander it on something beautiful and foolish," and throughout Nathaniel's career as a bustle salesman and owner of a wall-paper factory, this bequest, together with his never-read copy of *The New Atlantis*, was the symbol of his vague ideas of freedom. Blindly seeking his ideal of he knew not what, Nathaniel dreamed alike with Reds, Conscientious Objectors, and I. W. W.'s, trying to live beautifully and foolishly as Christopher had com-

manded; and dying with his dreams
—his bequest spent as Christopher
would have desired. —E. C. S.

A Rhymed Review of
HIAWATTA AND NO ODER POEMS
by Milt Gross

Witt a himitashum worty,
Worty of de gretest mesters,
Gross, cre-etur of *Nize Baby*,
Tells us tells of Hiawatta,
Hiawatta in his childud.
First we learn of izzy payments,
Izzy payments on a weegwom,
'For one family a weegwom
In de beck a two-car gerridge,'
Jost a stun's trow from de stetion,
As de bull flies, fifteen minutes.
Den in seen de pitchur changes
Und we see de big Chiff smooking,
Smooking et a pipe tebecca
Witt is deadly wishus wapor
Goshing like a hoil-well pitchur
On a hoil-well scheme prospectus,
'Like a hoil-well wot it goshes,'
So off ruzz de Chiff's tebecca.
Hiawatta came by air-mell,
By a stuck came Hiawatta,
And de autor's least concern is
For de baby thet de stuck brutt,
Gives to him but jost ten peges,
Jost ten peges to de baby,
To de baby Hiawatta.
Of his infency this record,
Greshusly de autor gives us,
Give us *free* dis mighty record,
'So it grew opp Hiawatta.'
Then by keendergotten, gred-skul,
Pessed de little Hiawatta,
Where he learned gret chunks of
knowledge,
Learned de lengwidge of de forest,
Of de birds und of de fishes.
Then de sturry of de moon's fece,
Witt de feeturs so decided,
Learned de yonkstir frum his grend-
ma,
Learned he how de shedow got dere,
Jost by how it got de shedow.
Grendma told a storry worty
Of a Curwood or a Conan
(Arthur Conan-Doyle his name is)
Told a sturry of untemperance
Tempered by a gay deescripshun
Of some boys wot toted heep-flesks,

Notty boys wot toted heep-flesks,
Heep-flesks innusent of likker,
Heep-flesks empty of their likker,
Of thees nooty boys wot carried
Heep-flesks by their heeps a pocket,
Grendma told her ferry sturry
To de baby Hiawatta,
Told heem all de gruesome details
Of their trials und treebulashuns
When dere skwuzz witt angry feel-
ings
Tossed et them de kitshun hardware,
Hard in fect as well as fikshun.
—Hamilton Beatty

THE MAUVE DECADE by Thomas
Beer
Alfred A. Knopf \$5.00

With the sting of ridicule and yet
with a certain respect where respect
is due, Mr. Beer holds the last feeble
decade of the nineteenth century up
to light for inspection. Under the in-
tense glare of modern standards and
the tendency to deride anything that
happened before the recent war, the
'90's appear to us a very pale mauve,
indeed.

But Mr. Beer has shown us the be-
ginnings of many of our modern ten-
dencies. The first chapter, happily
called "The Titaness," illustrates the
women of the period, the women who
were just growing into a world of their
own, in which, some day, they would
vote and be the ruling factor, as they
so zealously attempted to be even at
the end of the past century.

Louisa May Alcott and the results
of her moral literature for children,
Mr. Beer discusses with anecdote and
personal touch. In fact, the whole
book is so dressed up with sheer story-
telling power that it reads more in-
terestingly than the average novel.
Thomas Beer has a trick of turning
a word or a phrase so as to mean
much or nothing, but which always
leaves a definite picture.

A long time ago we read a novel,
Sandoval, by this same Mr. Beer, and
we were delighted with his ability to
portray a character into actual life,
almost, and his habit of describing
sound and feeling, as well as sight,
with colors. Now he has made color-
ful what he terms "the mauve decade"

in America—with its “four hundred” in New York, its adolescent and extremely painful architecture, its pug-nacious religions, its Irish tradition, its harlots and actresses and great men—figures of earth—all the tendencies that sprang up at the turn of the century.

His is not a consistent picture, for the scope and method of handling prohibits anything but an outline. Yet the outline is so definite in parts that only a detail is needed to show us the whole picture of the times. Mr. Beer is not afraid to destroy illusions, or to be outspoken. He takes Robert Louis Stevenson for the man he was, and not as a childhood dream; he sees Oscar Wilde, ugly, deformed, depraved—but recognizes his genius; he acknowledges the smoothness of men like Mark Hanna, and the oratorical magic of the then young Bryan; altogether he sees the close of the nineteenth century through the eyes of a mature man of the first quarter of the twentieth century. He is unbiased, but super-critical; a master of words, and a pleasant storyteller.

—C. G. S.

SUSAN SHANE by Roger Burlingame
Scribner's \$2.00

Roger Burlingame has created an extraordinary woman in Susan Shane. The book tells the story of a girl whose ideal is money, and who sacrifices all to gain wealth.

Susan Shane, born and raised in squalid surroundings, determines upon a successful career in life. With remarkable shrewdness she establishes herself in business while she is yet in her teens. Then begins her great struggle; she imagines her struggle to be for wealth, but her real task is in killing her love for David, the boy she loves. Susan rises from a small shop to a fashionable tea room; she moves to a larger city, where she forms a board of directors; and finally she realizes her ideal of wealth when she establishes herself in New York. A rich man who has befriended her finally succeeds in his plea that she marry him. She marries him

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only for the social position she will secure, and all the time she thinks of David, who has also realized his ambition, to be a sculptor. Some other novelist might have had Susan come back to David, but Roger Burlingame has a contented, but sad, heroine.

The individualism of Susan Shane cannot fail to strike the reader forcefully. There is about her character and vitality, and a lack of sentiment astonishing to the reader. It is a bit difficult to conceive how Susan could have crushed her sentiment, above all, love; yet she has done so. *Susan Shane, A Story of Success*, brings to one the question "After all, what is success?" No one had ever asked Susan that question, and often Susan doubted her success. When she knew that she could not have David, she cried, "Why can't I have everything?"

Susan Shane is well worth reading. The story is dragged a little, and Fannie Hurst could have done much better with it in a tabloid, but nevertheless the quality of the tale cannot fail to impress one favorably.

—A. W. D.

THE SUN IN SPLENDOR by Thom-
as Burke

George H. Doran \$2.50

It is not only a publisher's advertisement that calls Thomas Burke a second Dickens, for there is an air, or flavor if you wish, that reminds one strongly of the famous Charles. The characters in the *Pickwick Papers* are hardly better drawn or moved about than David Scollard, the plodding inn-keeper with the soul of a musician and the fingers of a plumber; or Mrs. Greenspan, unclean and malignant, licking her chops while she recounts a menu; or Christopher Scollard, whose musical ability is both the pride and despair of his father; or Connie, whose life is an eternal horror under the long and dreadful fingers of Mrs. Greenspan. Then there is M. de Florent, the second-rate violin teacher whose heart is with Bach and Schubert and who fiddles as leader of a jazz band in a cheap cafe; and charming Arthur Negretti, the gentlemanly thief whose depreda-

tions are always conducted under the supervision of his benevolent father. And over all these characters is spread a film of the London slums, giving the tale an air of ugliness and authenticity, and displaying to the full Thomas Burke's knowledge of Limehouse and his ability as an artist to reproduce reality without crudity.

The Sun in Splendor is a Dickens' novel set in the twentieth century, and, if we may be pardoned for this bit of lesse majeste, a bit more interesting than the immortal Charles could have made it. —E. C. S.

ANGEL by Du Bose Heyward
Geo. H. Doran Co. \$2.00

Du Bose Heyward, young Southern poet, has written his second novel. The two rather slender volumes, however, are not novels in the full sense of the term. Rather they are character sketches, lengthened, to be sure, to include the most vital part of the characters' lives. And they are sketches poetized or idealized into something more beautiful than life itself.

Porgy, the first of Mr. Heyward's novels, is his best. It is the story of an old negro of Charleston, done with striking clearness of perception and a sympathy with the black race that is uncanny in its understanding of their psychology. Mr. Heyward, as a poet, has achieved the art of quick, deft strokes of characterization and description, which he uses to good effect in his prose.

Angel is a tale of the Carolina mountains and of the backwoods people who inhabit the fastnesses of the "Great Smokies." Angel Thornley is a child of the mountains. Her father is a minister, a hard, silent, God-fearing man who never quite understands his daughter. Buck Merritt is the idealized mountaineer, who becomes Angel's husband. Heyward is best in his descriptions of the mountains, again the trait of the poet.

He has written of what he knows—of the mountain people, and of the insinuating advance of the outside world into the very heart of least-known America. He has been able to understand the people with whom he lives

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a great part of the year; and the new status of their lives offers possibilities for so observing a writer as Du Bose Heyward.
—C. G. S.

REVELRY by Samuel Hopkins Adams

Boni & Liveright \$2.00

Brown Book Shop

A political novel, this *Revelry*. A novel of the deeds of men in High Places. Critics and others claim it a picture of the Harding administration, which is more than probable. The Oil Scandal, the Department of Public Health, and various other glaring faults of the administration of 'President Willis Markham,' remind us strongly of Teapot Dome, among other things. If true, it is amazing; if untrue, disappointing; but despite the veracity of the story, it is interesting, and perhaps gives a view of politics as is. As a story, *Revelry* is interesting, and as a text for those who choose to call it an expose, it should be ample for all their needs.

The style of Mr. Adams is pleasing, with his vivid character sketches, and his delightful bits of conversational dialogue. We were strongly reminded of the famous, (or infamous) Upton Sinclair's *Brass Check* while reading this, although Mr. Adams is far superior in both treatment and style to the much-abused Sinclair.

Mr. Adams has written an interesting political novel, and for those who so think, a flashing denunciation of the Harding administration.

—E. C. S.

FRANCOIS VILLON

and others

IN TRANSLATION

WATCH FOR THE

MARCH ISSUE

THE NEW LIT

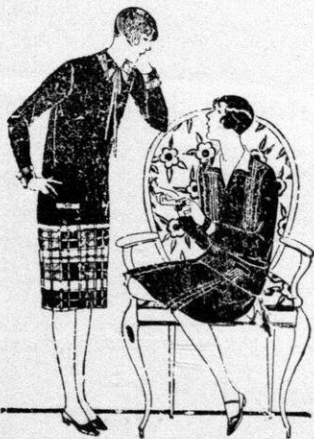
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SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

UNIVERSITY STOCK PAVILION

February 14, 1927

Just another evidence of the fact that the Union Board is constantly striving to bring before student audiences the greatest concert artists in the world.

WISCONSIN UNION CONCERTS

Series 1926-27

THE DENISHAWN DANCERS WILL APPEAR AT THE GARRICK
THEATER FEBRUARY 9 UNDER THE SAME AUSPICES