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The Wisconsin Literary Magazine



October, 1925

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The WISCONSIN LITERARY Magazine



Volume XXV

October, 1925

Number 1



HANNAH'S BIRTHDAY

By

VIOLA WENDT

"MOLLY, take the baby outside, and see the cars don't run him over. He ain't been feeling so good today." Hannah Fabner looked up listlessly from the patch she was bungling onto her father's worn flannel shirt, and spoke to her sister Molly, who had come bursting into the room, excitedly waving a slip of paper.

"Ja, wait a while. I got something you dassn't see. Sister Celia made me promise to be good today, and she said neither of us dassn't see it; but I did."

"It ain't about me again, it ain't—give it me." Hannah's voice was sharp and anxious.

Molly laughed. It was fun to tease Hannah. She danced about, holding the note out tantalizingly and pulling it sharply whenever her sister made a movement toward it.

"Sure its about you. It says you gotta come to school oftener because you're only twelve years old. It's made out to Pa. Gee, I bet he'll be mad when he reads it."

"He ain't goin' to read it," Hannah's grey eyes became hard, and her lips drew into a thin line. "You gotta give it to me." She snatched it forcefully from her sister's fist and thrust it into her worn, ill-fitting blouse. Molly burst into tears. Something was always spoiling her fun.

Hannah spoke less harshly. "Don't bawl. He's got to see it sometime, but he ain't goin' to see it tonight if he's drunk. I hope he ain't. Now take the baby—he's over there in the bedroom—and keep an eye on Molly." Her third sister, a good-natured, carelessly dressed little seven-year-old, had just returned from a long and devious journey from school.

Hannah's fingers trembled as she went back to her work, and she soon threw the shirt in a faded heap on the window ledge. From out of the dust behind a tall, battered cupboard she drew a thin, ragged book, and wiping the covers carefully on the sleeve of her dull brown blouse, opened it eagerly to a blurred and torn picture. She looked at it intensely, scowling in the dim light. It was the

picture of a princess stepping from a gorgeous coach to distribute numberless packages to a great crowd of peasant folk whose faces were happy and beaming. Below were the words, "Upon her birthday the little princess decided that it was more blessed to give than to receive; so she begged the great nobles not to give her presents, but to help her in giving a gift to each peasant in her father's realm."

Hannah had read very few fairy tales—perhaps a dozen. Upon her occasional attendance at school she had smuggled them from the library when Sister Rosa thought she was taking Bible stories. Hannah hated to stay away from school so much. She wanted to go every day and read all the stories in the library. But now, since, as the Sister had carefully explained, God had taken her mother to heaven because He didn't want her to suffer any more from tuberculosis, there was no one but Hannah to take care of the baby and the two girls, and to cook meals for the family. Her father was sad and sometimes cross when she had stayed at school and hadn't had the meals ready. He was always sad, of course, since her mother was gone; and he never said anything pleasant, only cross things, or nothing at all. Hannah wished she could be like the little princess and make her father look as happy as the peasant folk. She had tried to by staying at home and working hard, going to school only enough to keep the officers from "getting" her.

But now everything was going to be different. She was going to be a real princess, although the princess in the story had never scrubbed floors or mended heavy old shirts; and she was going to make her father happy. Nobody knew that it was her birthday tomorrow, and so she wouldn't get any presents, but she was going to *give* one to her father. She arose excitedly, and stretching her thin arm behind the cupboard again, drew out a clumsily wrapped package. She

opened it and took out slowly and gently a yellow corncob pipe. This was her gift! How long it had taken her to save up the five pennies for it, and what agony she had had in determining what to get, and then in deciding that she might really take the final step of buying it! She reddened to remember how the storekeeper had laughed at her confusion and uncertainty.

What was she going to say when she gave it to her father? The princess had used such grand words, but she couldn't say such things to her Pa. It would only make him cross when she wanted him to be happy. Maybe he would be drunk, as he often was. Hannah was used to this—her mother had always said mildly to the neighbors, "I don't care how he gets drunk. He ain't got no other fun." A sudden terror came to Hannah, and her thin body quivered. Her father was going to be drunk on her birthday! He hadn't been drunk for four days, and that was a long time to remain sober. He would probably frown when she gave him the present, for he always did when he was drunk or when he didn't like something; and Hannah was afraid when he frowned. It was hard to be a princess when her father wasn't a king.

After all, why should she be a princess? It was of no use—her father wouldn't be happy. He would only be crosser than usual because she had tried such foolishness as giving presents on her birthday. Very slowly she picked up the book and pipe and laid them behind the cupboard. Then choking back her sobs she dragged herself to the kitchen to set about getting supper.

Frank Fabner, Hanna's father, came home unusually despondent that evening. He had been "fired" that afternoon from his job at the gravel pit because of his moodiness and lack of attention. While he was aimlessly wandering about the streets, the village priest had met him and talked to him very earnestly. He wasn't doing right by his oldest girl, Hannah,

the priest had said. She worked all the time and never had any fun. She was unhappy, and no little girl should be unhappy on her thirteenth birthday.

Mr. Fabner sat up late that night, smoking feverishly, and thinking anxiously of the things the priest had said. He did not hear Hannah take the three children quietly upstairs to bed, come down to lock the door, and then creep away to her own room.

Why had Mary had to die? Nothing was the same now; nothing was right. He remembered Hannah's birthday two years ago, how she had smiled and danced about when her mother had given her a package before she went to school in the morning. Mary had always given presents on the children's birthdays, and they had been smiling and happy. The priest had said that he was both father and mother now. That meant that he had to give presents to his children—his and Mary's. But he had never given a present before and did not know what to give. He had never noticed what Mary gave or how she had given it.

Mr. Fabner became uneasy and began to walk up and down the room, shaking the smoky lamp as he stepped on loose boards. The striking of the clock at ten startled and aroused him. In half an hour Artie would close the merchandise side of the store. He had to do something quickly. He rushed to the door, fumbling long at the lock, and hurried blindly into the street.

At the entrance to the store he hesitated, and was about to go in when he decided it would be better to go around the back through the saloon. On the way he kept murmuring jerkily to himself, "I want a birthday present for my girl."

Artie was in the store selling cotton gloves to an old man, and Frank Fabner strode quickly through the saloon, still mumbling the words which were ready to burst from his lips. The store-and-saloon-keeper, a fat, cordial, red-faced fel-

low, greeted him loudly and slapped him on the back. Mr. Fabner became confused. He reddened and stammered. "I want—I want—"

"What can I do for you tonight, Frank?"

"I want—". What did he want? He stared vacantly at Artie. Then the words came back to him, and he couldn't say them; they hurt and choked him.

"I want a package of 'Nigger Hair.'"

"You're sort o' fussed tonight, eh? What's up, Frank? 'Nigger Hair' is out here," Artie said, going into the saloon. Mr. Fabner followed dumbly, and in despair emptied his pockets on the bar and drank heavily.

Very early the next morning the chickens in the back yard had barely begun to stir when a hastily dressed girl stole softly through the weed-filled garden carrying a corncob pipe and a small fire shovel. She dug feverishly in the dirt behind the hen-coop, and with anxious glances toward the other back yards along the alley, threw the pipe into the hole and hastily covered it over, stamped the ground into place, and fled quickly to the house.

Mr. Fabner slept fitfully all morning; and his daughters heard him groan and sigh as they listened fearfully at his door. At noon he got up, dressed quickly, and without a word, without a glance at his children, he walked directly to the little store.

Artie's daughter, who was clerk in the daytime, greeted him sweetly. He did not wait for the customary question of "What can I do for you?" but spoke rapidly and breathlessly the words which had been trembling on his tongue all night, "I want a birthday present for my girl." Then he repeated them to be sure he had spoken, for he had not heard his words the first time.

"What would you like?" the clerk asked in a pleasant voice.

Mr. Fabner was helpless. "A—anything. You know what girls like."

"Oh, here are some swell pink stockings."

"Ja," he said, laying a bill on the counter and eagerly snatching the package.

He put off the evil moment of deciding what to say when he should give the present, by listlessly applying for work on the road gang, at the carpenter's, and at the railway station. But he heard nothing of what the "bosses" said and didn't know whether his applications were received or not. He seemed to gain comfort by planning to do this unusual action of gift-giving at the accustomed hour of arriving home after work in the evening. It wouldn't seem so funny, somehow.

For half the afternoon Hannah kept the food hot on the stove while she sat beside it, weeping because of the failure of her birthday. She didn't, of course, mind not receiving gifts; she had expected it to be that way. But now she wasn't a princess; she was only Hannah Fabner who was afraid to give her father a present. She cried until she was tired, and then, lured by the spell of its magic, brought out again the picture of the princess. She studied every detail absorbedly, and in the enthusiasm which the picture always awakened, imitated the actions of the princess. Jumping up on a little stool, she put out her foot with its scuffed black shoe, far too large, so that the toe pointed downward as the princess' had when she stepped from the coach. Hannah held up her skimpy gray skirt between her thumb and finger, as daintily as if it had been the flowing blue velvet gown of the princess.

Her spirits rose with this mimicry, and the old irresistible charm of the picture and the story came back strongly and insistently. Why couldn't she be a real princess? She could give a present on her birthday if only she wanted to—she *did* want to! Springing up and carrying the ladle with which she had been stirring the soup, she ran to the back yard and dug furiously in the loose earth. There

it was—the badge of her princess-ship! Frantically she wiped it on her apron, and ran to wash it under the pump and dry it carefully in the oven. When it was ready, she filled it with tobacco, wrapped it in the original store paper, tying it with a bit of red darning wool, and laid it away behind the cupboard.

At six o'clock Hannah stood over the kitchen stove, her trembling fingers twisting and untwisting the dishcloth, as she waited for her father.

A few blocks away Frank Fabner stood anxiously on a street corner, pretending to examine a new house, waiting for the time at which he usually came home.

During supper, Mr. Fabner's hand stole often to his pocket; and when Hannah had finished smoothing out the dish-cloth after what seemed to both an interminable stretch of dish washing, he laid the present on the table near which Hannah was working, and dropping nervously into his chair, mumbled, "It's a present for your birthday." Hannah looked at him in surprise and mechanically opened the package. A present for her birthday! She didn't want a present—the princess hadn't gotten any. It spoiled things somehow. A wave of disappointment came over her, and her eyes filled with tears.

Frank Fabner saw the tears and was terrified. Why didn't she smile the way she had done for her mother's gifts? Was there something the matter with this? The clerk had said—.

The surprise and despair in his face brought back to Hannah the realization of her purpose as a princess. She must make him happy. "They're awfully nice socks, Pa."

She ran to the cupboard. "I got a present for you," and she laid the pipe before him. How little like a princess she felt then, and how little like a happy man her father seemed when he received the gift. He lit it and puffed a bit because his daughter looked at him with such fearful expectancy. Then he laid it

down, and resuming his old pipe, said, "You got that down by Artie Goth's didn't you?" Why did she give him a pipe? It wasn't a time to give him presents—on her birthday. He felt that he ought to say something because she looked as if she were going to cry; but he could think of nothing. Unconsciously he frowned, and Hannah was afraid. What had she done? What ought she to say?

"The socks are swell, Pa," she blurted out, and ran sobbing from the room and up the stairs to weep until she fell asleep

from weariness, then to awaken again racked by aching sobs. Now she could never be a princess: she didn't know how. Fairy tales were all foolishness, as everyone said.

Mr. Fabner sat smoking in his chair, stunned and helpless, vaguely hurt, vaguely ashamed, wondering what was the matter, why he hadn't made Hannah happy and why he felt so queer. What was the use of anything? He got up and stumbled across the street to "Walter's Place" where the whisky was free and strong.

TWO SONNETS

By

VIOLET R. MARTIN

THE TRUTH OF IT

THE magic's gone. I do not love
you. Yet—

Soft shadows close about you; and
your smile

And swift uplifting of your brows beget
In me a certain longing without guile.

I would go back again to love and you,
And pander to your artless questioning,

So that desire for the things I knew
Find not too rudely a new mothering.

Though, you must understand, it is not
love,

But memory of a love, sends me to you;
And if I sigh and ape the mourning
dove,

It is for that I weep. 'Tis that I rue.

This much I know, that if I fain would
find

A constant love, would it were not too
kind!

THE DEATH OF THE HERMIT

UPON my tomb none but these
words ingrave:
"The lonely one"; and carve them
deep and clear

For him whose life of hope and empty
fear

Was naught but visions that no mortal
gave.

'Twas in my mind I lived my whole life,
save

One bright day lost in a long bygone
year

That made each new day dark and yet
more sere

For gazing at the niche beyond the nave.
No wild thyme put above my head, no
sound

Of whip-poor-will about me. Let no
hand

Upon the cold stone rest or trace the
word

Of my lone station. I would that my
gown

Were silver of the stars in a wide land
Where but the breathing of the Soul is
heard.

THE COLOR OF YESTERDAY

The Lewis Prize Essay of 1925

By

STUART PALMER

THE most beautiful and colorful thing in life is not a dream of the future, not a hope for some tomorrow. For the beauty of tomorrow is a blurred, nebulous rainbow, which seems like a fantastically bright picture seen through frosted glass. Nor is the beauty and color to be found in Today, for Today never really exists. Before one can realize it, or touch it, or see it, it is gone to make one more Yesterday.

The best part of it all is that we cannot remember Yesterday as it really was. Memory, with a kindness quite beyond our deserving, colors and selects and arranges the Yesterdays for us, that we may not go mad with the grayness of everything, and that we may have some measure of happiness there. If any man were to remember the past as it really was for him, in all its drabness and entirety, that man would be the most miserable of creatures, for he would never have neither pleasure in remembering Yesterday, nor hope in looking forward to Tomorrow. For if he knew the truth about the past, he could hardly help suspecting that the future was likely to be somewhat similar. And thinking that, he could hardly care to go on living.

But, happily, our fancies and wishes have colored the Yesterdays, until they are unlike themselves, better than themselves, yet hauntingly natural, somewhat as a clever artist paints an ugly but interesting woman. Thus each one of us has a fascinatingly illustrated volume in his mind, to turn to whenever he desires. Here he finds himself as he desired to be, the hero of many adventures. Here, at least, he plays the main part in the play, and here he can turn whenever his self-esteem is wounded by the facts of life, by the cruel reality of existence. Thus

memory, with all its colorful Yesterdays, serves as a balm and a comfort to the wounds and harshness of life.

There are no sorrowful or painful memories—only memories of sorrow and pain, which are in themselves, very pleasant and almost gratifying. "I was capable of that," one says, or "I suffered so much, I was so unhappy then—years and years ago. How superior I am to all that now." And then one longs to lean over and pat on the head the little boy that was himself, and that wept and struggled and fought and failed, so many, many years ago. There is little of bitterness in memories, and never more than a sweet poignant sadness, for the colors are blended by Time, who is a past master of chiaroscuro, and all of the harshness and reality is gone. There remains a clear, warm, soft picture, done in comfortable blues and greens and browns, on which one can gaze with a sort of dissociated and impersonal enjoyment.

Those who understand heredity and evolution tell us that this has developed as a protection to man. His mind, in saving itself, forgets as many of the drab and sorrowful things as possible, and softens and tints the remainder until they are no longer unlovely. No doubt this is true. However, the main thing is this—that we never see anything clearly. Tomorrow is a hopeful blur, for which we sometimes doubtfully prepare; Today is a fleeting and all-important nothing that is gone instantly, like the tick of a watch; and Yesterday is a page in a figurative family album, very interesting, but unreal and retouched.

Certainly no sensible person could desire things to be otherwise, if one admits that it is for happiness that we are search-

ing. Certainly there would be only pain in completely remembering, or in completely forgetting the past. Have you not seen a man go through life a dreamer, a nympholept, holding always in his heart the image of a girl once loved in flesh and blood, and now worshipped in memory? Think what a brightness runs through his days, as he dreams of this wonderful thing which is mostly the creation of his fancy. This dream gives him reason for living, and justification for being. It walks with him, hand in hand, and heart to heart, as he goes on through the pleasant fields of middle age. It satisfies all the unfulfilled romantic desires of his being. This is the first love, which every man loses, marry whom he may. This happiest of unions could not be if memory were a literally truthful faculty. For if it were, this man could look backward and see that his love was a weak, cheap thing, and that the girl was a giddy, selfish child, vain and false and unworthy. And worst of all, he could see himself, not in the glory and the splendor of passionate love, but as he really was. And thus all the beauty and color would be gone out of this man's life. Thanks to the Scheme of Things, memory does not tell the whole truth.

There is something very soothing and peaceful in the calm and drowsy contemplation of Yesterdays. One feels almost like a Judge, a Superior Being, looking backward and downward from an immense height on the tiny strugglings of a pitifully small creature. One feels that he has at last the correct viewpoint, the true perspective. "I was a fool," man says, and takes credit to himself for the saying of it. With tragic accent on the tense of the verb, man says, again, "I was a fool."

In old age comes the greatest delight

in the past. The old man has no longer the necessity of grappling with harsh realities. He has lived through nearly all his days, and his eyes naturally turn backward, with the wisdom of the old, toward the long line of Yesterdays that stretch out behind him. What a considerable pleasure he takes in the solemn reflection upon these half-forgotten days! What a glory and a color they add to the downward trend of his life! He moves in a world not quite like our own, for hands hold his hands, that are long since dust, and voices that have been stilled these many years, whisper to him as he stares into the fire. Only the very old can see all the beauty and the color of Yesterday.

Life is somewhat like a plain white tablet, of which each sheet is a day. Man tears out page after page, daubing or scrawling upon them for an instant, and then tossing them into the rapidly growing pile at his feet. Yet only in these torn sheets, wrinkled and faded and blurred, can he ever see what his life tried to be, and it is only in the half-idle contemplation of these thrown-aside Yesterdays that man has any real happiness.

Finally, the tablet grows thinner and thinner. The hands that mark and tear the sheets are faltering and trembling, and the eyes turn, not ahead toward the few remaining pages, but down to stare at the old sheets on the floor, so dimly and beautifully clear. Time has refined and softened the work of the artist, and there around him, in the scattered sheets, lies beauty. And so it is that when he tears out the last page, it is with neither heart-broken regrets, nor with inspired hope and desire, but only with a satisfied weariness, that he goes on to make a part, himself, of the color of Yesterday.



THE FRONT PORCH

By

JESSIE GRUNER

“JUNE, where are you going?”

“Out in the orchard,” the answer came shortly.

“No, you are not. You know that we are all going into town and you will have to stay around the house. Supposing some one came to buy honey. You would never know it, sitting out there in the pear tree. A crazy notion, anyhow. I don't know but that's why the tree never bears fruit. And your pa doesn't like it a bit—your sitting there.

“I don't care. He never likes anything.” She shoved her clenched hand deep into the pocket of her faded gingham dress.

“You'll just have to sew that pocket on, mending day.” The woman was heating a curling iron.

The child did not heed her.

“I don't see why we always have to think of what he is going to say or think. Why can't I sit in that twisted old tree if I want to? It ain't hurting him. If I ever get married I'll see that I have a pear orchard before I have a kitchen cabinet. I'll have six children and set each one in a pear tree and walk around looking at them and thinking how smart I am. I'll ask him to come and see me for one day, just so's he can see I'm doing everything my own way.” June made a final thrust of her fist, and the pocket gave way, tearing her dress.

Her mother removed a hairpin from the floor and pinned the last stray lock in place. June had struck the right note.

“You're a fine one to be talking of getting married! You won't even do anything toward getting ready for it. Every one of your sisters has got a hope chest. Anyone of them could get married tomorrow, and it would be precious little I'd be having to give them. But what have you got? You ain't got a thing, except what's been given you, and

you probably don't know where those things are.”

“They're in my dresser drawer”, was the stubborn reply.

“Yes, and I'll bet you ain't looked at 'em since you got them. Why don't you get out those pieces I gave you for a quilt and begin work on it this afternoon? It's cool on the front porch. Your father had it screened in just for you girls to work on. Such a thankless girl I never saw.”

“Yes, that's always it! Doing something so's we can work more. That's all he thinks of. Work, work! You always say he's sick. Ain't it because he works too hard? And he doesn't have to. It's because he's so stubborn.”

“June Leisner! Ain't you ashamed of yourself? You worry your father more than your other three sisters put together. You.”

“Bertha! Bertha! Are you ready? The father came through the door. The best riding whip was in his hand. June noticed that his Sunday hat was dusty, that the cuff of one of his trouser legs was turned up. She would not tell him.

Mrs. Leisner hurried out, saying, “I'll get my hat and meet you at the buggy.”

There was an awkward silence. The girl ignored it as she did her father. He turned to leave, then stopped.

“Girl, could I bring you something from town?”

“No.”

“You'll be sure to stay near the house, so's if anyone comes for honey, you can give it to them? We have more than we could use in five winters.”

She answered nothing, so he went out.

The afternoon was hot and slow. She sat on the porch, scarcely thinking of the quilt. A quilt of woolen pieces on a hot August day!

A car stopped in front of the house.

Some one had seen her father's sign for the honey. All the party got out of the car. They were thirsty. The women were in white linen dresses and fine white kid shoes. There was a girl about June's age with a handsome police dog at her side. Jip, the Leisner's homely little mongrel, tore up to bark at the visitors' dog.

June called him back as she went into the house to get glasses for the people to drink from. She gave them water, knowing that her mother would have offered them butter-milk. The man bought a great deal of honey. He said that he had lived on a farm once. The girl said nothing, though she smiled out of the window at June as the car drove away.

The money was laid on the clock shelf, the pocket repaired. Mrs. Leisner would not be able to say anything of a wasted afternoon.

Toward five o'clock she set the table for her mother and father, her three sisters, herself and the hired man. Then she went upstairs. It was not long before she heard the wheels of the buggy, and the voices of her family, so she went down. There was always something exciting about the return from town. There were so many parcels that *might* hold what they never did.

The shoppers were all hot and tired. Her father hurried to give the horse water and food.

"June, you finish the supper while we're taking off our good clothes. We'll open the bundles after supper, while your father is at the school-board meeting. There's quite a few trying for the teacher's job."

An hour later, they were examining the day's purchases.

Yes, it was just as it always was. They had been to that cheap dry goods store and gotten things for the hope chests.

"See, June, this buffet set. I'm going to do it in this blue floss, and I got two more pillow tops to work. It's so cool

on the front porch, now I'll be keeping busy."

"Look here, Sis," Margaret, her favorite sister, was holding up some coarse pieces of crash with blue stamping. "Another luncheon set. This makes four I've got."

So on it went. The sisters, talking among themselves, scarcely noticed when June slipped out. She headed for the pear tree, and was watching the moon rise when her mother found her there. June did not move. She noticed with distaste that her mother's gingham dress should have been in the soiled clothes basket two days ago.

"June," began the woman, "why do you always act so?" She saw the indifferent profile turned aside. "Can't you see how you upset everybody and everything? The girls were showing you what they bought and you run away. They know you don't like the things they do. You won't sew with them. You're not interested in what they do. You're a bad stubborn girl. You make your pa feel bad all the time, and he ain't well."

"He could have been different. He hasn't any right to treat us girls the way he does. Soon as we finish the country school, he expects us to sit home on the front porch, making luncheon sets and bed quilts, waiting for some one to ask us to marry him—Someone that'll make us work as hard as he's made you. I won't do it! Embroidering ugly luncheon cloths! And we'd never use them. We'd eat off from oil cloth on the kitchen table. Margaret's going to marry a man twice as old as she is. Maybe the other girls will never use their hope chests. I won't make one, so there!"

In her excitement she had gotten down from the tree.

Her mother had nothing to say. They walked silently back to the house. Margaret rushed toward them.

"Pa's had a stroke! They said it was from the heat. You should see him! It's

awful." Mrs. Leisner uttered a cry and ran into the house.

June went upstairs to bed. She could not help. No one thought of her. When Margaret came to bed, she pretended to be sleeping, but after she was certain her sister would not awaken, she crept out of the bed to the window and watched the moon.

She slept late the next morning. She passed Margaret on the steps. "You be good to Pa," said her sister. "He likes you best of us all, and he's awfully sick."

Her father was on the porch. June had never before seen him quiet in the day. He looked thin and ill, though he

turned his head quickly toward June as she entered.

"Girl, will you sit by me, here on the porch? I want you to. I told Margaret to pick you out one of them prettiest doilie sets in town yesterday. It's in my good coat pocket. Will you sew on it out here?"

"Yes, Pa." She went in and got the package and returned to the porch. She drew her chair close to the couch, and began on a blue forget-me-not.

Her father sighed with relief. "My, but this porch is nice for you girls to work on."

KEATS

By

MARYA ZATURENSKA

"*WHOM the Gods love die young,*"

said the wise Greeks who knew,
The hidden glory in the heart of Death
The dreams of Gods, the poverty of
breath,

And so your years were scanty, precious
but few.

"*I write my name in water,*" so you
cried,

As death to drain your soul drew darkly
near. . . .

The songs unwritten, Love unsatisfied. .
And all obscured and clouded that was
clear.

"Written in water!" No! your golden
lute

Burned through the sordid darkness of
your time,

Until the enchanted soul, and souls not
mute,

Mourned, "*Lycidas is dead, dead ere his
prime.*"

Your prime, your bud, your flower were
in your verse,

Beauty immortal glows above your bier.
Proud was the Miltonic cry above your
hearse,

"*Young Lycidas is dead, and has not
left his peer.*"

WHERE THE RIVER ENDS

By

JESSIE E. CORRIGAN

WE WERE WALKING along by a green river—the child and I. The child was half naked; there was a loose white garment hanging from her shoulders and barely reaching her knees; it might have been a petticoat—or a flour sack. I wore a scarlet cloak and a hat with a green feather. But all the world saw me; and nobody looked at her.

I was silent—in thought; but the child was talkative; she dug her warm fingers into my hand, and pressed one bare foot against my shoe.

“Must we go much farther?” she asked.

“Where the river ends, little sister. Are you tired?”

The child stopped short, and sat down on the bank. I followed sullenly. It was hard always to drag the child with me, to listen to her nonsensical prattle, to hold her hot, dirty hands, to feel her weight in my tired arms—to soothe and comfort and love her. I was tired; and I wanted to go on without the child.

We had chosen a barren spot. Two trees—that was all—and the river—the green, green river that flowed and flowed and flowed; above, the sky, feathered with clouds; below, the brown grass, scorched by the sun; a sleepy child and a tired woman. No more. The child slept—her head pillowed in my scarlet cloak. And I thought on; and the river flowed on; and the sky grew greyer and greyer; and the child slept.

I had been thinking a long time when the child woke up; and I was tired of thinking. But I thought on. The child was rested; but I was exhausted.

“Let’s go on,” said the little one as she pulled my hand.

“I can’t; I’m too tired.”

The child sat down and tried to comfort me.

“Poor, poor lady, did you want anything?”

“Everything.”

“Shall I go and get it?”

“It—what?”

“Everything.”

I laughed—coldly.

“Yes, the sun, the moon, the stars,—those wicked clouds that sail and sail; throw one about us; I hate the world. Bring me the sky—that bluest corner over there that was starless last night. And bring me God while you’re at it.”

The child shuddered, and moved away from me. Then she forgot—for it is the gift of children never to remember—and prattled on.

“Dearest”—she always called me dearest, drawling it out in a strong childish accent that sometimes got on my nerves—“see those great funny clouds? Do you think that they’re soap suds? Do you ’spose God’s mama makes Him wash His hands like my mama makes me?”

A smile quivered on my lips; I threw it away and frowned.

“Child, child, those are the dreams God made that didn’t come true; the bubbles of what might have been.”

The child sighed.

“Maybe they’re soap bubbles; I wisht they was. I’d like to play with them. Do you ’spose God would let me play with them?”

“That’s what they’re for—to play with—just to play with, and then put back in the sky. Do keep still, little one.”

There was a long silence. The child got up and chased a butterfly that had settled on the dry grass. She brought it back, struggling in her cruel hands.

“Let it go, child,” I begged. “It

lives too short a time—shorter even than we do."

"But I like it; it has nice wings. Have you wings, dearest?"

"If I had, I wouldn't sit here and let the river flow on and on; no—mine never grew."

"Will mine grow?"

Impatiently, I turned away.

"Not unless you keep still."

"Dearest, did God burn the grass? It wasn't nice of him."

"No, God didn't burn it; you and I burned it, walking over it—you and I and the rest of the world. Oh, child, don't you know I'm tired? Won't you keep still?"

The Child rose.

"I'm goin' on," she said. "You come after while."

So child went on; and the river went on; and I went on thinking.

The hours passed; and then the child came back. She was limping—painfully planting one bare foot after the other in front of her. I took her in my arms; somehow she seemed very near to me.

"Poor baby!"

"I can't find it," she sobbed. "I wanted to find it—for you."

"What?"

"God; you said you wanted Him; and you told me that you were going to the end of the river. He must be there; I

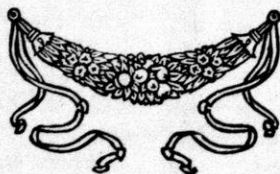
thought I saw Him, but I didn't; I did so want to bring Him back to you."

A raindrop fell, and I think God wept for both of us—for her because she had hunted for Him, and for me because I was too tired to hunt. And then realization came over me. I never could find the end of the river; it just wasn't—that was all. It flowed on and on, and I went on thinking and thinking, but the green river never got anywhere, and my thoughts always came back to the place at which they had started. I was tired, and so I'd stay beside the bank forever—and teach the grass to grow green again, and bless the water that flowed by, and pray to God who kept a blue kingdom so near to me. The green river might flow on, but I would wait.

I turned to the child who lay on the grass—one brown curl whipped across her white face.

"Child, child, we're going to stay here forever and ever, and let the river flow on, and stop thinking. We're just going to enjoy; and you will chase butterflies, and I will put my feet in the cool water, and we shall live forever and ever."

There was no answer—only the splash of a stone that a toad had kicked into the water—only the whisper of the trees which the wind had bent together. Something broke within me. The child was dead.



THE REMARKABLE MR. DOLLAR

By

LYDIA WEGNER

MR. LUMAN leaned reflectively against the wire fence that separated his garden from his neighbor's, and looked at Mr. Dollar picking bugs from his potato plants and placing them carefully in a tin can. A twinkle came into Mr. Luman's eyes, and he said to his son, "Watch me get a rise out of him." Then he leaned over the fence and called cheerily, "Afternoon, neighbor!"

Mr. Dollar arrested his slow progress down the furrow, lifted his massive head, and glared at the intruder malevolently. His yellowish white mustache was lifted as he made answer with a wordless snarl; then he stooped over the plants again. He looked remarkably like his two dogs who were crouched at a little distance watching him alertly; great, lean, hungry-looking hounds with a savage, fiercely untamable appearance. Mr. Luman was not disconcerted, because he knew he had an audience in the tall young man beside him. He was known as a wit and a very clever fellow at the drug store where he worked, and he delighted to keep himself fit and prove his reputation by bear-bating his sullen neighbor, who cordially hated him for his pains.

Mr. Luman waited until the man had almost reached the fence and then inquired genially, "Well, friend, are the bugs bad this year?"

This elicited merely a grunt that was accompanied by no direct glance. The joker warmed up to the sport. "Nothing wrong, is there? You look a little down in the mouth today, if you don't mind my saying so—"

Mr. Dollar had now reached the end of the row, and at this last solicitous remark he drew his hulking form to its full height and looked down at the rotund sleek little druggist very much as

a huge mastiff might look with unconcealed disgust at a troublesome poodle. His blue eyes were almost hidden behind the shaggy brows, and his great beak-like nose had quivering dents on the sides.

"Do not call me friend," he said in a voice so restrained that every syllable was rendered distinct and harsh. "I am no friend of yours. I am not your neighbor. Leave me alone."

At the sound of their master's voice, the two dogs rose to their feet with the hair on their necks bristling. He looked at them and they subsided sheepishly. Mr. Luman appeared surprised and mildly aggrieved.

"Now, that's downright unfriendly," he observed. "Besides, you can't help being my neighbor, you know. What does the Bible say about being everybody's neighbor? I forget the exact words, but you get the idea."

Mr. Dollar with his back turned had started down the next row and appeared to pay no attention. Mr. Luman changed his weight to his other elbow and started to moralize. "I never was one of these goody-goody Sunday School chaps, but as an American, and belonging to the great middle class, the common people, I don't mind admitting that I still admire the homely virtues; honesty, er—chastity, truthfulness and so on, and above all, friendliness. I'm naturally a friendly man, Mr. Dollar, and I may say I never failed to get on with anybody before, except you, and the Lord knows that isn't my fault. Now, folks say a lot of things about you, Mr. Dollar. They say that you are a miser, and that you did something bad once that turned you from society."

Here the man half rose, and again the dogs stiffened. But he controlled himself and went on with his work, now

very evidently listening wrathfully to every word.

"But I don't believe them, and I always put in a good word for you," the smooth voice went on. "Whatever may be the reason that turned you away from people and making friends I don't care, and I don't ask about it. But there is no use being sullen with me, because I will always be friendly. I believe in it. What's the use of getting mad if my chickens get into your yard once in a while? Such things you have to stand. And I don't say anything—much, when your dogs howl at night, though I will say that it's perfectly evident that they are clear bad and dangerous to keep loose."

"My dogs bother no one who doesn't bother them," said Mr. Dollar without rising. "They suit me and that is enough."

"Sure," assented Mr. Luman cheerfully, "but you're peculiarly suited with brutes like them. Besides, folks say they are chicken thieves, and I think if you don't start feeding them more and treating them better, the Humane Society will come after them."

"My dogs!" snarled Mr. Dollar venomously, getting up suddenly. "Always my dogs! Everybody bothers with them, and they don't do anything. What is it to you if they are fierce or bad? They are never out of this garden. It is only an excuse to badger me; a Hell of a lot you or anybody care about my dogs! Let them alone, and let me alone! As for your chickens," here he ground his heel in the sand in the extremity of his rage, "if any more of them come into my garden, I shall set the dogs on them myself, and they will be fed enough for once." He turned and, with the dogs skulking at his heels, entered the house and slammed the door behind him.

Mr. Luman was, for a moment, completely wordless with surprise. Then he said weakly, with the air of a man who had got rather the worst of the argu-

ment, "Good night! He sure hates himself, doesn't he?"

His son laughed shortly and asked, "What's the matter with the old boy, anyway?"

"God knows," fumed his father. "Or rather," he amended angrily, "the Devil knows. By George, Eric, the man isn't human."

"Of course, he knew you were stringing him," said Eric thoughtfully, as they picked their way back to the house. "But, Lord! The man seems half crazed with pure hate. And those terrible dogs! Scylla had nothing on them."

"He starves them. Or rather, he feeds them just enough to live on. The wonder is why he keeps them at all if he hates them so."

"But what's the idea?" persisted Eric. "What is he so soured on the world for? Must be some reason."

"I don't believe he's all there," said his father, still somewhat ill-tempered. "There's a nut loose somewhere. That's what comes of living alone. It isn't right nor healthy for a man to shut himself up like that; he gets moody and it turns his head. By God!" he cried in a final burst of indignation: "If I hated my fellow men as much as that, I'd go and hang myself."

This last seemed to restore his good humor somewhat, and as he ran up the steps of his house he called to his wife almost jovially, "Mary, you should have seen me get a rise out of old Dollar. If looks could kill,—oh, boy!"

Mrs. Luman came to the door and said, "What did he do?"

"He nearly set his dogs on me, that's all. Say, all you have to do is smile at that man, and he froths at the mouth. He sure has a grouch on the world. But, believe me," here the worthy druggist turned and wagged a warning finger at the house next door, "if that bird ever sets his dogs on my chickens, he's going to lose them. I'll put them out of their misery in a hurry."

"Well, don't get mad over him; come in to supper."

There was, indeed, no reason to be angry at the man, or at any rate to stay angry. Mr. Luman was quite good humored again as he went into the house. Eric lingered for a moment on the porch and looked at the other house thoughtfully. Dimly through the window, Mr. Dollar could be seen moving about in his kitchen. He lit a kerosene lamp and placed it on a bracket; by its light his shadow, huge, deformed, grotesque, was cast on the window. The boy whistled through his teeth and went in.

The strangest thing about Mr. Dollar, and the thing that troubled his neighbor, was the man's attitude of hatred and the isolation that came from it. There was little enough reason for it, except an innate unsociability of nature. Yet his was not, apparently, a self-sufficient nature, for did not his very quarrelsomeness imply a need of human intercourse? He could not be on friendly terms with people, but neither could he draw away completely. He could not like people, but neither could he be indifferent; he was obliged to hate. A deplorable state of mind for one already somewhat isolated from his kind by a retired method of living.

It is doubtful whether Mr. Luman believed Mr. Dollar's threat. Certainly he made no effort to confine his chickens, which were the pride of his life. It was customary among his friends to quarrel voluminously over back fences on the subject of chickens and gardens. Most families kept both in this little community, only a few steps removed from the agricultural stage, and it was sometimes hard to reconcile the two, especially since they were taken rather seriously. But violence and hard feeling were rare, for these things served rather as a bond of common interest among them than as a cause for quarrel. And so, some time later, when Mr. Luman missed two of his finest Plymouth Rock hens, he recalled half incredulously the threat he

had taken with so little seriousness. Curiously he looked into the next garden, and to his utter astonishment he found the ground strewn with grayish speckled feathers, and spattered with blood. And to make matters worse, there were the two dogs, still hungry looking, snuffing the trampled ground.

Like most people who consider themselves very good natured, Mr. Luman had a most inflammable temper, and he stood now, glaring at the hounds, utterly speechless with rage. They paid no attention to him until he picked up a stone and threw it, scarcely realizing what he was doing, and knowing only that he must vent his anger on someone. The one he struck, more by accident than by careful aim, fled to the barn with little yelps of pain and surprise. The other crouched on his haunches, laid back his ears and snarled. Mr. Luman shook his fist at him and the house indiscriminately. "Damn you!" he said hoarsely. "I'll pay you for this; you can't play any tricks on me. Just wait!"

For a druggist the problem of poisoning meat presents little difficulty, and Mr. Luman was given no pause in his enterprise. It was shortly after dark when he threw a large joint of ham over the fence and heard it drop with a thud on the other side. "We'll see who can put something over on J. B. Luman," he said with satisfaction.

The matter did not trouble his conscience; no, he was not the kind of person to get sentimental over two dogs, especially such brutes as these. He was often unable to sleep well toward morning, and that he found himself restless this night was not unusual. He got up very early and looked out of the window. There were two forms dimly seen through the dusk stretched out on the ground. But later in the morning when he sauntered through his garden, Mr. Luman did not see them there any more, nor was the ham anywhere in sight. Well, it was something of a relief to

find them gone anyway. At this moment, Mr. Dollar with a spade under his arm walked around the corner of his barn, and the eyes of the two men met with an almost guilty start. For a moment it seemed that Mr. Dollar, like an avenging Titan, was going to throw the spade at his neighbor. Instead, he only grasped it the tighter, lifted his moustache in a wordless grin and went on into the barn.

After this the two men did not speak again, although they saw each other often. Mr. Luman beheld his neighbor, as it were, recede farther and farther into the mist of his solitude, a solitude completely unbroken by communication with the outer world. The last link that bound him to society was broken; he was now indeed alone. And yet no one was prepared for what followed. The oddity of the occurrence never ceased to concern Mr. Luman; he was entirely unable to understand it.

Coming home from the drug store late one afternoon, a few days later, he found his wife very curious about the house next door.

"I think," she said, exercising a woman's intuition, "that Mr. Dollar is ill. He hasn't been out for two days, and there's a sort of funny deserted look about the house. You know what I mean. You had better go over there and see. He could die there all alone, and no one would ever know."

"Let him die," said her husband unfeelingly. "What do I care? I'll bet the old boy is waiting there with a gun right now."

This was a bluff; Mr. Luman, besides being curious himself, had a half unconscious, unexpressed desire to do the man a good turn in expiation of the poor service of the week before. If he were really ill, it would be rather a fine thing to heap coals of fire on his head, so to speak. And so, after divesting himself of his coat, Mr. Luman set out on his errand of mercy. He vaulted heavily over the fence and picked his way

through the weed-choked garden. From this new perspective his own house and yard had an oddly unfamiliar appearance. He speculated on this for a moment before entering the house.

"A man ought to go and stand in his neighbor's yard for awhile every day, just to get an idea of how his own place looks," he philosophized and tucked the observation away in his memory for future use before an audience.

He rapped loudly at the door. There was, as he had expected, no answer, so he tried to open it, making a great show of doing so openly. This business of house-breaking was new to him, and he felt somehow guilty. The door swung open to his touch and he strode into the kitchen.

The late afternoon light struggled in dimly through the half drawn shades; the sunset glow was not reflected here at all. A gloomy twilight atmosphere pervaded the shabby little room as if a sad spirit of dusk dwelt there and excluded light and happiness forever. No sound was there to break the spell; no ticking of a clock to recall the passing of time, no scurry of mice feet in the crumbling plaster, no sound of human voice or footstep. Far, far away, as from another world, could be heard the distant sound of an automobile horn, but without the cheerful every day sound it had when heard out of doors. He who stood in this little room was detached, cut off from the rest of the world as if the owner of the house had cast a spell over it, making everyone who came in feel the full force of his own unhappy isolation.

Mr. Luman found himself tiptoeing across the floor and peering with every mark of secrecy around a half-opened door. Angrily he pulled himself together and shouted loudly, "Hi, Mr. Dollar!"

The empty walls rang for a moment, and again all was still. With a sense of the closing in on him of the insufferably quiet and empty little house, Mr.

Luman walked boldly and heavily through the few chambers that made up the cottage.

There was no appearance of occupancy in any of them, although they had all the furnishings of an ordinary house. Here was found a fumed oak library table with a globular beaded lamp and a nickle-clasped Bible. They were covered with dust. In a corner stood an old-fashioned easel supporting a charcoal drawing of a young man. When looked at closely, it appeared to recede into the wavering shadows and become unreal. The chairs that stood about were shabby on seats and backs, but it was inconceivable that real people had worn them thus; no, they were the resting places of ghosts and shadows; real people had nothing to do with them now.

Most of the doors were open, but here was one that was closed. Mr. Luman opened it boldly. He was almost certain now that Mr. Dollar was not

there—that he had fled in some mysterious and unaccountable manner. The door led into a small vestibule or hallway, upon which the front door opened; ostensibly opened, for it had never been used in Mr. Dollar's occupancy of the house. A shade had been drawn over the frosted glass window in the outer surrounding gloom, seemed to stand out. Mr. Luman pulled up the shade, and the last pale light of the sunset fell on the upturned face of Mr. Dollar, his white mustache drooping over his half-opened mouth, and his blue eyes bulging horribly. With a cry of desperate fear, Mr. Luman threw his weight on the door, which swung open with a crash, and half ran, half fell down the steps.

An hour later, when the house and grounds were filled with a babbling, excited throng of people, Mr. Luman kept up an hysterical refrain, "I found him there, just like that—why do you suppose he did it? *Why* do you suppose—*Crazy*, of course. Always was crazy. But why do you suppose he *did* it?"

LOVE SONG

By

MARION F. WILLIAMS

AT ALL hours will I praise thee,
 Oh beloved.
 Early, ere light comes to kiss
 My dreaming eyes
 Thy name shall be sweet in my mouth.
 I will sing—"Thou art more fair
 Than the star-girt night,
 And more wise
 Than dark, silent waters."

All day will I praise thee, beloved,
 Every passer-by will I enchant
 With the unending tale of they graces.

In the evening will I hymn thee
 And pray Krishna, the Compassionate,
 Lest Dawn, delaying, find thee
 Among the departed stars.

All day will I praise thee,
 Oh beloved,
 And when night cometh
 I shall not cease.

STEP-MOTHERING

By

PAULA OTTEN

“**C**HER-EEK! Cher-eeek!” Mona turned over sleepily, pulled the covers closer and sighed blissfully—still gray and shadowy out—so sleepy! “Chereek!”

Oh that robin! She wished he'd keep still—fall asleep—something.

“Chereek! Cher-ee-eeek! Cher-ee-eeek!”

She was wide awake now and staring impatiently at the covered cage before the window. He'd wake the whole house. Mother would come out to the porch and scold. She had told Mona yesterday she wasn't to bring him in; but then, if she hadn't, the cat would have caught him. She had found him cheeping lonesomely under a cranberry bush while the cat was sneaking stealthily toward him. Why, she just *had* to bring him in!

The hoarse chirping continued from the cage, and Mona threw back the covers, and jumped out of bed. The bricks were cold on her bare feet, as she stepped gingerly over to the cage and pulled off the bloomers that she had covered it with last night. The little speckle-breasted creature started back suddenly, then opened his yellow bill wide. Mona had never seen such a gigantic, red mouth. She could see far down his throat! No wonder he was chirping. He wanted his breakfast. She felt suddenly guilty. His own mother would probably have fed him long ago. He might even be starving. She wished he would close his mouth.

“Chereek!”

She must hurry!

“Cher-eeek!”

If he would only keep still until she got dressed! Couldn't he see? She was hurrying as fast as she could! Where *was* that other stocking? Here—under the bed—now—. Yes, you poor hungry

baby, I'm going to dig *worms* for you—just you wait! This hateful shoe! Why hadn't she untied the knot last night? There now—she'd broken the lace. Well, she'd tuck it in so. Mona picked up the cage carefully. There was a dead fly on the floor on the box. Why hadn't he eaten that then, if he was so hungry? Of course, he was just a baby and couldn't pick it up. She was sure he'd like worms though, juicy, wriggly ones, much better. She stealthily pushed open the door, which creaked ominously. She gave it a swift push. It creaked louder than ever! She listened, breathless, but no one had heard. On tiptoe she made her way to the outer door and down the creaky wooden steps. How cool the air felt on her cheek—Umm—glad she got up too. The gravel on the walk crunched loudly under her feet.

“Chereek!”

Oh that robin! Right under her father's bedroom too! She wondered if he had heard? How glorious to be alive on such a morning! There above the trees stretched the early rays of the sun, like great, misty wagon spokes with clouds floating across them; great, fluffy clouds, blue and gray mostly, with curled, gold edges. Mona thought they looked like girls running with the wind blowing their hair behind.

She put the robin down in the carrot bed. Perhaps he would like the bushy green of the tops waving above him. There one green stalk bent low, bowed down by a gorgeously colored, black and yellow striped caterpillar clinging to the under side of the stem. Mona poked him to watch his tiny horns protrude. Caterpillars made her shiver. She would never pick them up, but they fascinated her nevertheless. She ran lightly down the path to the barn. On either side the

grass grew lush; such delicious mouthfuls for her rabbits. As they saw her coming, the chickens crowded close to the wire fence, all expectant and eager. In from the fresh morning, the barn seemed dark and damp, with the musty smell of hay pervading it. A mouse scurried swiftly below the rotting floor. There in the corner, stood a collection of rakes, hoes and spades. Mona selected a sharp pointed one, darted swiftly out and gasped. How she hated the barn smells! She would hold her breath as long as she could and then dash out into the air. Her mother scolded her for it, and told her not to act so foolish. Once she had even broken an egg in her frenzy to reach the door before taking another breath. Of course it *was* foolish. Old Mrs. Conley had even told her once that that was just the reason the milkmaids in Ireland had such red cheeks—but then—Mona's cheeks were red enough.

Out in the morning again, she thought it glorious just to breathe. It was fun to see how far down you could make it go. Once she had breathed deeply for such a long time that she felt all dizzy and sweet inside. She could hear the robin chirping disconsolately from the carrot bed.

Where should she dig. The west corner of the garden had been spaded yesterday for a new radish bed, but how black and rich the earth was here close under the plum tree! It was in full bloom—all white and soft with blossoms, as though it were waiting for some one—as though it were going to be married—almost! Mona liked to just *stand* under trees. It always made her feel so far away and adventurous and alone! She set the cage down on the irregular lumps of earth and began to dig energetically.

"Chereek! Chereek!"

Oooh! What a fat one! She picked him up gingerly, lifted up the top of the cage, and dropped him into the wide-open mouth. The baby robin closed his eyes ecstatically, gulped, and was ready

for more. Softly advancing, tail held high, lifting her feet daintily over the uneven clumps, Mona saw the cat approaching. She had not yet seen the robin, for she was entirely too friendly and purring, as if she had found Mona a pleasant surprise so early in the morning. The girl shooed her away impatiently, but puss could not understand such treatment and returned faithfully each time. Mona had already dug quite a deep hole, and long, pink worms wriggled at every fresh turn of the black earth. The robin gulped them all down indiscriminately till Mona wondered if robins ever got the stomach-ache. She found two of the smooth, shiny, brown things, that wriggled round and round at one end when you touched them. She liked to feel their cool smoothness in the palm of her hand, and always took especial care to tuck them back carefully into the damp earth. Never, never would she feed them to the chickens! Worms and bugs though—they were different—and caterpillars.

A fat robin alighted on a twig just above her head and two creamy blossoms floated softly down. How white and pure they were. They had come out of the ground too—just as the pink worms and the satiny, wriggly things had. Mona looked up at a burst of melody in the direction of the fence, just in time to see the saucy twirk of a short, little, brown tail beneath the heart-shaped leaves of the bean-patch. There he was again—bubbling as though he owned the whole garden and the blossoming plum tree too. How warm it had grown! She could already feel the hot rays of the rising sun on the back of her neck. That robin had eaten just about enough too. He was sitting back quietly, his eyes closed tightly, now and then chirping sleepily. Mona leaned the spade against the plum tree and picked up the cage. Perhaps she had better take him up on the porch and let him sleep in the shade. How hard mother robins must work to

feed a nestful of such gluttons! She was glad she had only one. When he grew older perhaps he would get used to bread and milk, or canary seed, as a well-behaved bird should. At noon, Mona triumphantly carried a doubtful looking can onto the porch. It seemed strangely quiet, and nothing stirred inside the cage. With a curious cold tightening around her heart, she stopped—held her breath! She attempted a pleading chirp—No

answer. He lay so still. *Her* fault! Too many worms! She had killed him!—She threw herself on the bed and sobbed convulsively! She wished she were dead!—There were robins calling now from the mulberry tree. What a wicked, wicked girl she was!—Utterly exhausted, she fell asleep on the pillows. The baby robin lay cold and stiff on the paper floor of the cage, and the worms wriggled hopelessly in the rusty can.



PETALS

By

GLADYS FELD

THEY say they want to die?
I laugh!

I want to live.

I want to pluck
Each rose flushed petal
That the bloom of life can give.

They say they want to die?
Pierce the land beyond the blue?
They have not seen as I have seen
A sunset's radiant hue!

They say they want to die?
Sleep an eternal night?
They have not loved as I have loved
Beneath a gold moonlight.

They saw they want to die?
I laugh!
I want to live.
I want to pluck
Each rose flushed petal
That the bloom of life can give.

AUTUMN LEAVES

By

MARGUERITE L. ANDERSEN

I THINK I found the very first autumn leaf of the season. It was not one of those tawny, stark ones which come of hot August afternoons, nor yet the kind that undergoes a slow, compulsory change on a rainy night. No. Mine was a bold, glorious one, a leaf with the courage of all its colors—flame and orange, with lines of fresh green still tracing out the ribs—a proclamation of vital importance to all who had eyes.

It is just a bit amazing how jolly and talkative an autumn leaf can be, sired, as it is, by the stolidness of root and trunk and bark and branch. It fares into the world, once it is free from the care of the parent, with all the enterprise and acumen of a seasoned traveler. My leaf is not the one to be discouraged by a band of contradictory winds or a frosty night. Morning finds it self-assured and even flippant at moments, carrying the colors for its own particular generation to a certain and well ordered destiny, from whence the next generation takes the responsibility of carrying both flag and message through the succeeding cycle.

There are generations of large well shaped leaves, and there are generations of dwarfed, crippled ones. All are, alike, the combined result of ancestry and environment. If the tree is fine and tall, the tendency of the leaves will be toward sturdiness; and if the spring has been fair and the summer moderate, the messengers will go blazing forth into the autumn days like the envoys of a splendid court. Perhaps, however, a hail storm has riddled the leaflets in their youth, leaving them scarred and mutilated; or it may be that a searing summer has brought a premature age upon them. In this case, they will carry a cynicism upon their coats and the dry blood of a wronged people in their parched veins. And, long

afterward, the annals of the leaves will show, in the place of that generation, only a faint blur to indicate the vividness that should have been.

Oak leaves have a habit all their own. It must be the remnant of an ancient patriarchal trend that compels them to hold with such a persistent determination to their parent tree. They lack the spirit of pageantry that drives the maple leaf upon the highways of the world; in its place there is the dogged oakishness—can it be called by any other name?—of the oak leaves. Together they make the dry clear rustle that the autumn wind evokes when he passes by on the blue and vermilion days. They catch a steely highlight from the sun, which is never seen unless it is reflected in the taut brown skin of the leaf in living death.

I am thinking of an October Sunday afternoon on the edge of a field near a wood. There is a clear dryness in the day, and a warmth and radiance which can belong only to a true October Sunday. Under a shining sky and the song of a fair weather wind in an oak tree, the earth expands, warm and sweet, for the last time before winter comes. And besides me, a boy reads his memoirs of the war.

Drawn into the ranks of the departing leaves, is always a company of the reluctant. Their time for crispness comes and finds them yet unwilling. They long desperately to be red and golden, when the destiny that presides over autumn leaves really intends them for members of a sisterhood in brown paper dresses and sober mien. They have to hide their hearts and go along, whether they will or not, for the leaf destiny is a relentless force, and there is no escaping. To those who submit in grace is given a winsome dignity which forbids the thought of

ridicule. But if a leaf attempts resistance, it does penance for the rest of its days in a lank yellow dress with spots and shabby gray edges.

Have you ever known an old lady with a girlish longing for a red silk petticoat, or an old man who pokes about in the grass with a cane, on his little walks, still hoping to come upon a four leaf clover? These are the autumn leaves which are not lost in November, when the first snows cover the earth. Their contem-

porary leaves may have cruised the surface of a pond, like slow gondolas, until they were eaten by the dark water; or careened brilliantly at great altitudes, carried aloft by a strong fitful wind, and then straight down into a swirling bonfire. Ah no. These are the leaves which are laid away between the pages of a book. One finds them again, long after they were gathered, and then they are the grateful memories of a beauty which has never been quite extinguished.

BEFORE GOING TO SLEEP

By

VIOLET R. MARTIN

SOUNDS in the stillness of the summer night—
 The rubbing of the leaves, like raindrops light
 Upon an attic roof; a gurgling wave
 Lapping the long brown shore; a frog's glump grave
 As notes intoned upon seraphic chords
 Ere the main chorus. It is these one hoards,
 Counted apace with slow expectancy,
 Temp'ring the loon's mad laugh across the bay,
 The chipmunk's scratching, plaint of whip-poor-will . . .
 How sweet my cot is; how the air is still!

Swift glimpses caught beneath the night's dark sky—
 Thin lightning brooding storm; the firefly,
 A lost star swooping zigzag through the trees;
 The lattice-work of leaves' intricacies;
 The dipper lone in else deserted dark
 Of upper heaven, with its cold lip sharp
 In north star's fixed direction where the bulk
 Of island lowers like an old ship's hulk
 Marked for destruction through its captain's sin . . .
 The world, how its tense mystery wraps us in!



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EDITORIAL

IN CASTING about for a subject suitable to introduce this venture—the new Wisconsin Literary Magazine—it seemed advisable to set aside our personal literary preferences, which can, at best, have only a restricted interest, and to present instead, as completely and clearly as limited knowledge will permit, an exposition of that attitude of mind out of which the works of literature spring,—to explain in what it consists, how it operates, and what are the appreciable benefits of its possession. This course is the better, we think, because literary theories, like all theories, may become intolerably dogmatic; whereas, to devote our editorial discussion to the imagination as in itself it is (although the abstruseness of the subject presents many formidable difficulties) is to avoid, on the

one hand, stating mere opinions, and to contemplate, on the other, a type of thinking that has, and will yet have, we may feel sure, great influence in the direction of human affairs. In taking up this task, we are aware that it lies, perhaps, beyond our capabilities; but we may justify our attempt by saying that only in the exercise of our minds with difficult subjects, however imperfect the exercise itself may be, can we be able at all to appreciate great thinking when we meet with it.

In order to understand the effect that imaginative thinking has upon daily conduct and to realize its bearing upon the apprehension of noble conceptions, it is necessary, first, to view it in relation to practical thinking, which constitutes an opposite, but not less profitable, field of

endeavor. In using the words "imaginative" and "practical", we are not conceiving of them in the ordinary sense, but accept them as the only ones that express the ideas we have in mind. By "imagination" is meant that power of mind which penetrates beyond the external aspect of reality and seizes upon the single vital quality of its existence; which can separate fact from fact and distinguish the accidental from the essential attributes of phenomena; which organizes knowledge in such a way as to reveal the relationships of its parts; which, in a word, simplifies and intensifies the perception of reality. In using the term "practical thinking", not alone is the mechanical, the technical, or the commercial viewpoint implied, but also, in a larger sense, that tendency in all fields of activity to concentrate attention upon pursuits bearing definite calculable results; and by the practical thinker is meant the man who looks to all things for their material usefulness and their definable values.

It may seem from this that we condemn the practical thinking as inferior to the imaginative, but this is not so; for they differ not in degree, but in kind, and they subserve wholly different ends. In general, the imaginative man looks toward comprehending the activities and impulses of life, while the practical man looks toward the administration of affairs and the satisfying of wants. The fact that these two qualities are rarely found balanced in one man has led many people to conclude that they work in contrary directions, and are therefore irreconcilable. Because we see men whose intellects are predominantly of either one or the other type does not, however, preclude the fact that in the larger swing of active life and thought they supplement each other. These two forces act upon each other like the poles of an electromagnet, in which the opposing currents produce the single concentrated power for attraction.

The imaginative thinker works by

synthesis. His problem is not to reduce knowledge to detailed classifications and categories, but to view the facts under his observation as parts of a larger whole, each fact bearing upon it the color of the greater existence to which it belongs. He wishes to see things not so much as they are in themselves, but as they bear upon his own action and thinking, and to understand, also, the manner in which they operate among themselves. He is interested in discerning truth; but truth to him is not abstract and impersonal, for he sees in life ever more and more substance to enhance his companionships; it is not, like the abstract truths of metaphysics, subject to hypotheses, for it is grounded in experience; it delivers itself to his use by providing the full realization of the conditions of his life; it invests his mind with lofty ideals and high purposes and frees it from the subversive influence of accidents; in a word, to the imaginative thinker knowledge and truth are humanized.

The practical man, on the other hand, is interested in the actual expediencies of his life; and yet he is no less a student of life than the imaginative, although his method of study is different, and he looks to a more immediate result for his labors. He is not satisfied merely to understand his environment and his associates; he must put them to use. Because of this mental attitude, he cannot realize that cultivation of the intellect and the sensibilities is in itself, as Cardinal Newman says, an undeniable good, even as the health of the body, though no results beyond the sensation of well-being accrue to it, is a good in itself; for, in the last analysis, it is good health we prize and not the work that can be done because of it. And so with the imaginative life; it is satisfaction, whole, complete, and adequate. But rather than submit to this *apparently* aimless mode of living and rather than interpret the world as an entity of which the parts are co-related and inter-dependent, the practical thinker

looks upon separate facts as entities in themselves, each with its own peculiar properties and capacity for usefulness.

A certain incident of a common nature demonstrates as concretely, perhaps, as anything can, the point we have been trying in the abstract to establish. Two men were preparing for an examination in a course in psychology. One was the type of student to whom "things come easy," as we sometimes say. The other, although he received as high grades as his friend, found it necessary to resort to much memorizing and outlining of definitions and laws. "How do you remember the answers to all these questions in the book?" he asked in perplexed wonder at the quick and lucid explanations of his friend. "Why," said the other, "I put myself into the question and then wait for something to happen." And this reply goes to the heart of the matter. Here were cold facts presented merely for memorization, or at most, understanding. And yet this student was able to perceive beyond the outward face of the diverse miscellany of facts a vital, unified principle, something that was part of himself, something that could clarify the mystery of his own dark being, something that might sharpen his perception and refine his sensibilities.

The chief and most important property of the imagination is, as we have already intimated, selection. By arranging facts into intelligible order and by choosing out of this array the ones which possess the most interest and the deepest meaning to a man's mind, imagination simplifies the system of circumstance. In the apparent contradictions, similarities, and complex associations of Nature, where variations unite to form a puzzling chaos, selection is indispensable. Ever are we seeking for the central reason, the hidden meaning of the swaying world that momentarily crashes in upon our senses. Even in the familiar byways of our daily lives do we find much at which to marvel, and we have no other means for under-

standing this swirl of motion and being than our imagination. For there is too much to take into ourselves, and we are forced, as it were, to concentrate the cargo to its essence and garner that alone in the granaries of our minds.

More than all else in the world we are concerned with ourselves—our labors, our loves, our hopes, faith, aspiration. But we also live in a complex, well-knit society and therein engage our minds and our bodies with its commerce and pleasure. Thus we constitute a community of centralized individuals, each one of us self-interested, but obliged, withal, for his own welfare and for the welfare of the group at large, to recognize the happiness of others. In this complex order of association and intercourse, we have, individually, contacts of varying importance; some are merely of the moment, having no influence in the direction of our lives; some are of long duration, bending us to the times and the circumstances; some divert, or even reverse, the currents of our days; some are catastrophes that leave us burned, gaunt, and bare as thunder-blasted oaks. It is for us, then, to fashion our actions, our speech, and our thinking to the best advantage in meeting the requirements of the occasion. We need for this end a thinking which can show to us the true nature of men and disclose to our inward gaze the quality in us which answers to or satisfies the quality in other men. And this thinking is none other than the selective imagination we have been explaining.

How many times have we not remarked that those whose spirits do not quicken at sight of a beautiful object, consistently maintain a stolid outlook upon all things. They do not seem to be able to adjust themselves to their environment, and they delude themselves into thinking that there is nothing of worth in the world but that which renders profit to them. They cannot, as the imaginative man does, penetrate

beyond the surface of things and see a kindred spirit, as it were, animating all things. They are out of place wherever they go, and they lack the necessary attitude to bring them closer to men and to the objects of nature. After all, the very familiar objects, the intimate acts, are the ones that constitute the center of our

lives, and with these derobed, left bare and ugly, we lose the *summum bonum* of our being. But with the ability to relate remote things and see wonder in the familiar—in a word, with the imaginative outlook on life—we can not only satisfy the duties of comradeship but can also find moral strength and courage in the earth itself. —G. C. J.



THE DREAMING WORLD

By

PAULA OTTEN

PORTENT

GOODBYE—quickly
And let me go,
Before the curled buds break
In fragrance,
Because—just now,
I felt a touch upon my cheek,
A taste—illusive—in my throat,
A something in the wind,
That sent a gasping to my heart,
And—such a warning in the sky,
Such a certain sweep
Of branches across stars
As frightened me!
Before the promise breaks,
Before I hear
The bluebird call
From a certain blackened tree,
Goodbye!
For, hearing him,
I should go mad,
With spring—and him—and you away!
Quickly—goodby—
And let me go—I say.

FOR ONE GOING AWAY
BEYOND the restless sea today,
How sweet the wind must blow,
And grasses bend in glad abandonment,
To wind and spring and joy!
There larks soar singing thru the dawn,
To greet the wanderer home,
Who stands, all tremulous,
With all the dreary ache
And desolation of a homesick heart
And poignant longing stilled;
With joy aquiver on his lips,
And throbbing in his breast,
And dreamy ecstasy alight
Within his gladdened eyes!
How glorious must the spring be there,
With scent of all such strange
Wild prairie flowers in the air
As he had told me of.
Beyond the restless sea
How sweet the wind must blow!

BOOK NOTES

COMMENTS

It is not our aim to acquaint our readers with every thing new that comes from the press; that is done by the publishers through the medium of advertising. But we shall try to include those books from the best writers which we think worthy, those which contain a new thought, or those which we think exceptional from the standpoint of art.

Novels which came in the spring book rush have held up their heads bravely all through the summer. *The Little French Girl*, *Arrowsmith*, *The White Monkey*, *The Green Hat*, *Soundings*. That most popular of popular novels, *So Big* is still in the lead. Michael Arlen makes *These Charming People* sing their swan song in *Mayfair*. Rafael Sabatini, that prodigious historical novelist, has published several new romances, *The Carolinian* being one of his best.

Mark Twain's Autobiography is still the most humorous thing to be published in many a moon. And yet it is the rollicking story of a human being, even more human than you or I. Some excellent books of travel there are, which come from the pens of experienced travelers and explorers—Beebe, Shackleton, Bradley, Akeley. Science has come into its own through the publication of understandable books on abstruse subjects. *Fruit of the Family Tree*, *Concerning the Nature of Things*, and *The Ways of Life* are of this nature.

There is no need to go further. The seeker after literature will discover the new books, and will choose what pleases him. He will set them down as good or bad, and will read again and yet again for the love of the words placed in endless succession to form what we call literature. And that is his life, for it satisfies his soul, and "maketh him a full man".

C. G. S.

PRISONERS by Franz Molnar. Bobbs-Merrill; \$2.50.

Here is the first novel to be translated into English from the pen of that sophisticated playwright, novelist, and man-about-town of Budapest.

We cannot accurately judge its literary significance as compared with his other novels, but it is bringing Franz Molnar to the front in literature, in spite of the fact that he has set such a high standard in some of his plays. *Liliom*, *The Swan*, and *The Guardsman* are all of high character.

At times Molnar writes in a half cynical vein, taking life not too seriously. By some, his writings are considered eccentric. Here, he has received greater acclaim than in his own country, probably due to the American desire for the unique, and partly because he really deserves praise.

It has been said that Molnar is lazy, that he is incapable of a sustained greatness in his work. Streaks of art are encountered, and one feels that he could do better things at times. I should say that *Prisoners* was written with little effort. It is simple, has a frankness of style, and is pleasant reading. The story moves along, a plot develops, and one is held in suspense up to the last moment. A young lawyer, a would-be actress, a restaurant cashier—simple folk of the village they are, but there is life in the story, and real people living in it.

One might say that *Prisoners* is typical of Molnar, but it seems not to approach what must be his best. However, the novel will help to introduce this man from central Europe, who cares little what the world thinks, so long as it accepts what he thinks.

LIVES

Once upon a time we thought a biography was the most boresome thing in the world; but biographies have

changed, and now rival fiction in popularity.

Biographies that have come off the press within the last few months, or even the last year illustrate the change that has been wrought. *Ariel: The Life of Shelley* by Andre Maurois is a delightful account. Of course, Shelley's life itself is colorful. But, somehow, Maurois has touched the soul of the poet, and has made it to sing and live again in this book. Shelley's tempestuous boyhood, his passionate youth, and then the short period in his life when he approached nearest to happiness are told in such a manner that one cannot help but understand better that much misunderstood poet of the stars. The story of his tragic death equals any incident in novel or short story for suspense, pathos, and beauty of description.

And now we have the life of Lord Byron by E. Barrington in an appropriately titled book, *Glorious Apollo*. It was Barrington who wrote that enticing life of Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton, *The Divine Lady*. Of Byron, he writes a sympathetic story, telling of his struggles and loves, of his vanity, his artistry, and of the soul of the man, who, at one time, was the *beau* of all Europe. . . .

It would seem that three poets whose names are linked in the minds of all have come to life for us under the pens of three different writers. Byron, Keats, and Shelley—magical names, meaning much in English literature, and even more in life when life takes in and rounds itself out with the beauty of the poetry of that divine trio.

JOHN KEATS by Amy Lowell. Two volumes. Houghton Mifflin Co. \$12.50.

Since this book was published, Amy Lowell has died, but the book remains a fitting monument to a poet.

This is no book for casual reading. Its 1200 pages challenge the mile-a-minute reader, slow him up, invite him to a

deeper study of this poet's life. Yet *John Keats* is not hard to read. A life such as his appeals to the imagination as well as to the intellect.

Miss Lowell, herself a poet, has been a collector of Keats material. In this biography she spreads out the detail of his life, and introduces much new material. Richard Le Gallienne in the *International Book Review* says of the book:

"She has written not only by far the best biography of John Keats, the most complete, the most accurate, the most understanding, but she has written one of the best biographies in the English language."

An article by John Farrar in *The Bookman* deals out the same high praise. He says:

"As a study of creative genius, and the working out of the life of a man of letters, the book is unexcelled.

"Into the hopelessness of his health Miss Lowell brings the brilliant light of his poetry as relief."

He also uses such phrases as "magnificent prose style," and "authentic note of genius."

There can be no doubt but that *John Keats* is a great work. The prose is clear, strong, vivid, and drops at times into Americanisms, but all is for the best general effect.

So much for the style and value of this work. The material, both new and old, is invaluable. There are new letters from Keats to his love, Fanny Brawne, all of which are woven into the story in a delightful manner.

Miss Lowell "leans toward a tolerable, charitable treatment of persons and actions." She condones some of Keats' faults, criticizes others, but her general trend is to defend Keats from the misstatements which have been made about him. She has humanized and has sympathized with the much-maligned Fanny Brawne.

One critic has said that "it is in the field of criticism that Miss Lowell does

her best work." Some of Keats' poems she calls "great failures," others she praises to the skies. An elaborate analysis of *Endymion* is one of the bright points of *John Keats*. She has an insight into the life of the poet and into his poems that makes it easy for her to criticize, both appreciatively and destructively.

One may not have time to read this biography now, but it will ever be new, and one cannot possibly go for long without dipping into its pages, and coming away with a feeling of having understood a great life.

HENRY THOREAU, BACHELOR OF NATURE by Leon Bazalgette. Harcourt, Brace and Co. \$4.00.

This biography of the poet-naturalist of Concord has in it the very essence of Henry David Thoreau and the nature which he loved so profoundly. Leon Bazalgette, the Frenchman, who also wrote that estimable biography, *Walt Whitman: The Man and His Work*, sees more than the poor naturalist. He sees Thoreau as an artist, as a part of nature itself.

Briefly he outlines the history of several earlier generations of Thoreaus, then plunges into the character of the most famous member of that family. Parts of Thoreau's Journal, cleverly worked into the story, so as to beautify the author's own material, make this biography as easy to read, and more interesting, even than Thoreau's books alone. The author follows the very style and mental attitude of the naturalist.

Thoreau was educated at Harvard, where he first learned a contempt for worldly things, which he retained all his life. With his brother, he established a school in Concord, but they did not succeed overly well.

About this time Henry took that famous voyage with his brother, which was later to furnish material for his first book, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers*.

Thoreau constantly went for long walks, seeing much, and writing it all down in his Journal when he returned. These notes are full of allusions to his friends, particularly to Waldo, as he called Ralph Waldo Emerson. He lived at Emerson's house at various times, acting as general caretaker; and there was nothing he enjoyed more than to work around outside, and to be with the Emerson children. His sweetness, his love of nature and children, and of all growing things is revealed with a beauty beyond description.

Although Thoreau liked solitude, he had his friends. Many little portraits of these men and women make the book more than a biography of a single man. Amos Bronson Alcott and Margaret Fuller are introduced. Thoreau's friendship with Emerson, and the contrast between the two men is depicted in some of their letters and conversations. Later on, John Brown and Walt Whitman come into Thoreau's lonely life.

Early in his life, Henry Thoreau decided to become a day laborer because it is the happiest and freest life. So he lives with no aim in life, and is despised by the townspeople. For this reason he desires to get away from the babble of the village to a place of solitude where he can write. Walden Pond, where he often went with Emerson, suggested itself. The story of two years spent there is told in *Walden*.

Who can resist Thoreau's beautiful translations of nature into simple, powerful English as put down in his works? All their beauty, and the kindness of his life, and that of his associates emanates from the pages of *Henry Thoreau*. All the pathos of his last years of weakness and confinement simply enhance the style of the biography. Then, with his death, the very heights of imagery are reached as the author gives a mystical and sympathetic image of Thoreau, his spirit still alive in nature.

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