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Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin, March 1927

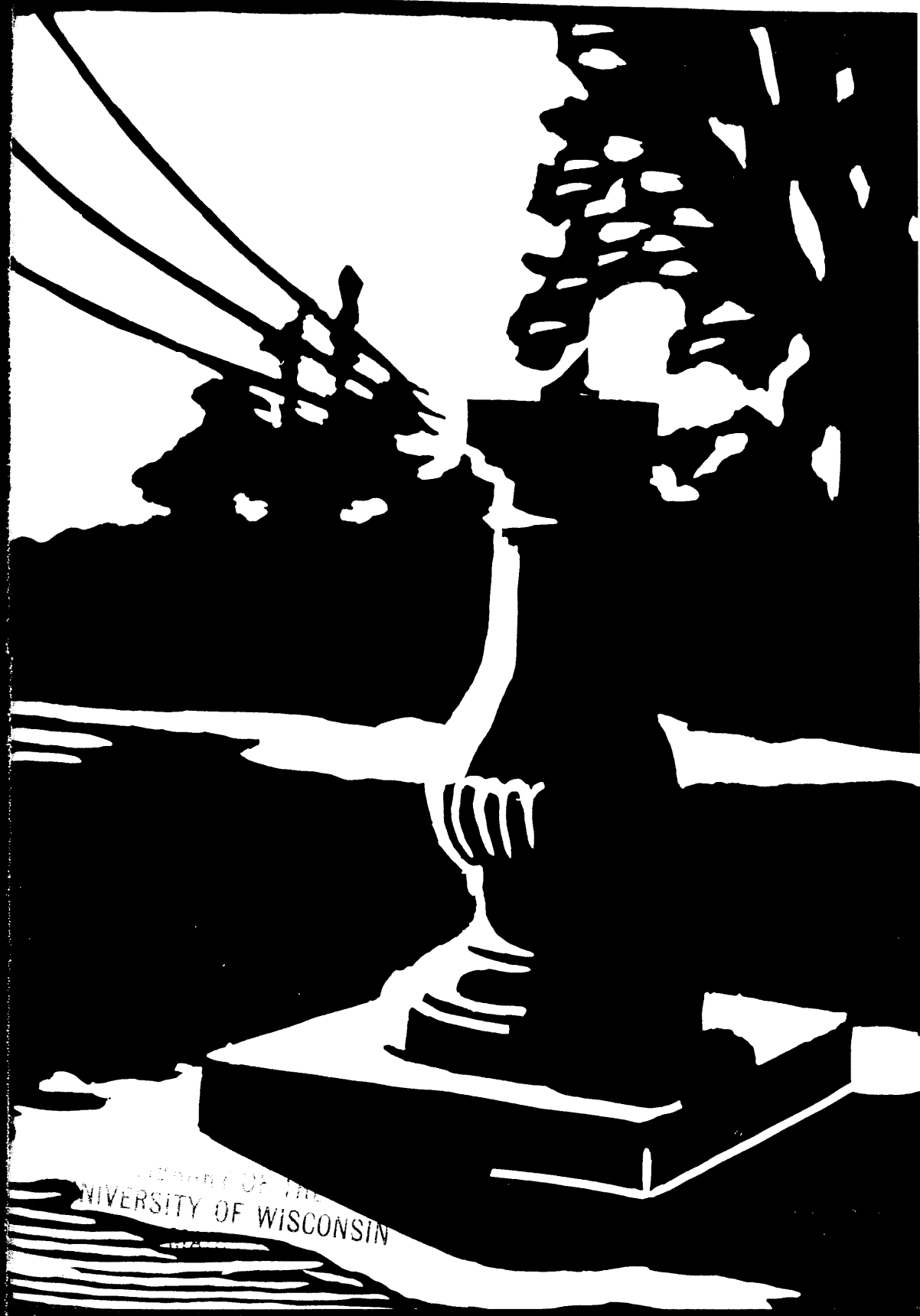
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Wisconsin Literary Magazine



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The Wisconsin Literary Magazine is published quarterly, two times a semester, by the students of the University of Wisconsin. The price of the magazine is twenty-five cents a copy; one dollar for year subscriptions. Those who wish to submit manuscripts for consideration by the editorial staff should send them with a stamped return envelope to 772 Langdon Street.

(Entered as second class matter in the postoffice at Madison, Wis.)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TWO POEMS	<i>Helen E. Howe</i>	3
LET THERE BE LIGHT WITH LESS ARGUMENT	<i>Mackenzie Ward</i>	4
SONNET	<i>George C. Johnson</i>	5
MY FRIEND THE BACHELOR	<i>Kwei Chen</i>	6
MENTAL ABERRATION	<i>George Washington Smith</i>	7
BLINDNESS	<i>Janet Tietjens</i>	13
FRAGMENTS FROM "LAUS VITAE"	<i>J. M. S. Cotton</i>	13
THE SCENTED KISS	<i>Mark Randell</i>	15
EDITORIAL	16
LA BALLADE DES DAMES DU TEMPS JADIS	<i>Perez Goldman</i>	18
PROTEST	<i>Robert McMillen</i>	18
THE UNWALKED WAY	<i>Gladys Fist</i>	19
THE QUEST	<i>Eugene Kinkead</i>	24
SANCTA SANCTORUM	<i>Lauriston Sharp</i>	25
BOOK NOTES	26

The Wisconsin Literary Magazine

Volume XXVI

MARCH, 1927

Number 3

TWO POEMS

By

HELEN E. HOWE

"I HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE SOMETIME"

Is she asleep, Drusilla, who her body leaves
Upon the bed?
I say she is awake asleep, who sags among the sheetings
and is gone.

Drusilla is come back, she lived
Strange things, awhile, who buttons up
Her life about her, is returned to the unstrange unenter-
taining this.

And is the strange with her? it goes
Little lock-steps behind her mind
A half-felt hinting mood of thing
That asks for birth. How can I find
What knocks, Drusilla says, for exit from my mind?

So a long time Drusilla, where the street is wound,
Has walked alone.
She has not ever known
What was with her some days, a moment time. Until to-day
There came a face that said that strangest thing
Drusilla dreamed, and lost a-wakening.

THE RAIN

THE rain is a little hand-maiden,
Eleven, and ready to be given in marriage.

How soft her silver sandals on the roof,
Her little ivory nails along the window.

How round the little circles of her lips,
Stooping in the evening, drinking at the fountain.

Across the court the little-fingered vision of the rain
Comes, bearing sandalwood.

LET THERE BE LIGHT WITH LESS ARGUMENT

By

MACKENZIE WARD

I am tired of hearing people's opinions about what I am doing in my four years of college. It is strenuous to read articles by eminent men and women who dissect me and analyze me as though I were a bug or a compound. I feel like a bandit who has held up the fast mail and sighs at the newspaper account of his crime. No one knows much about me; what they say is all wrong to begin with; and until they understand me, how are they going to correct the system of making me as intelligent as they are.

Percy Marks thought he had me cornered, but he was all off, and if Lynn and Lois Seyster Montross seriously believe I am Andy Protheroe, they are crazy, also.

People are all suspicious of me, It is because they are jealous. My parents and my relatives are suspicious of me, my instructors, business men, editorial writers, bill collectors, the board of regents, they all are. They make jests about my inefficiency, my ignorance, dress, presumption, and ideals. I laugh at them, and they think I am laughing because the joke is on me, but that is not the reason. I laugh at them as you laugh at clowns. You see, I do not take them very seriously.

A few years ago it was decided that I should go to college.

"College," said Aunt Eva, "is very broadening."

"College is foolishness," declared my father.

"It is dreadful in some ways," remarked my mother, thinking of movies she had seen.

"College is the nuts," concluded brother Charlie, who had just been there.

I know a lot more now than if I had gone to work. I can tell you about two or three philosophy books and about elementary geology. I am pretty well up on history. I know a few economic theories. About poets and

verse forms and novels and literary movements I could talk longer.

The trouble is, they all think that because I am in a university I really should learn a great deal. I am not interested in that. It doesn't seem to make much difference whether or not I learn all I can. This point of view is some sort of a trick idea that does not work for everybody. I am too young to be too much interested in learning.

These people who write about me and talk about me are stodgy and not youthful any more. Did you ever watch them bob around when they danced? They have lost their hold on what I am, and so they cannot understand. They are clever, and when they phrase their distorted ideas nicely, people believe them. Other people want to believe that things are all haywire. If they have not gone to college, they are jealous, and if they have, they are jealous anyway. It is an old grudge, between youth and middle age, and it is an obvious grudge.

Business men and editorial writers see me at football games or on Friday and Saturday nights. They see me in night clubs in New York, or in Chicago's supper places, when I have a little money. Sometimes I am drunk, and they think I am too young to get drunk. Most any of us could drink them under the table. They do not realize that from Monday to Friday I am busy with lectures and textbooks, as busy as they are with market quotations and press bulletins. Sometimes, though, some one will ask, "Shoot a hand of bridge?" and I will often lay down my book and yield to this temptation. I play bridge, and go to movies, also. You may interpret this as a confession, if you like. But because of what I do on special week-ends, they think I am always like that. They believe that my education is all nonsense. That is a foolish thing to believe. Such things as

Prom week-end and football games and suicides and pregnant coeds get all the publicity. Newspapers pounce on these, and readers like them even better than Andy Gump or the Inquiring Reporter. People are somewhat jealous of me. I just laugh them off.

Last month a man said that "they (colleges) exist mainly for clubmen, athletes, and snobs." I think it was Mr. Huxley who said this. His article was full of several clever phrases: "unduly emphasized" and "over-significant" and "falsely idealized,"—things like that. He is a reformer. He wants to do away with lectures. They are too easy. We go to sleep in them, and very few lecturers are any good, anyway. Just for fun, I counted my lecture courses and found eleven excellent professors out of fourteen. I know one professor who has as large a following as Billy Sunday and is almost as interesting.

You cannot fashion us to any educational system of your own. These systems and schemes have to adapt themselves to us. You might go ahead and put in all sorts of educational apparatus for two per cent, and exclude the rest of us. It is only natural that we should be babied along for awhile.

But what I meant all along was that we are not here to study any

harder than we like. College is a place where we wait around for awhile and let our youth burn away; and then we are really prepared to do something a lot more ridiculous than going to school.

What educational schemers would have us do is too much inflicted upon us. It is too much of a system, like labor-saving devices and efficiency in an automobile factory or a cement plant. Some of us chase after facts and dates and later deserve a square, golden key as a symbol of dandruff and round shoulders, but those of us who take things easier and more sensibly always last at the queer, goggle-eyed, straggly-haired people of the other type. We are content to slide along and not work too hard except in a few courses.

I should think that all this talk about "What is Wrong with our Colleges?" would soon become forbidden among all but legislators and vaudeville comedians. It is like "Is there a God?" and "Should the U. S. join the League of Nations?"

What changes occur will be very gradual. You have to do it cautiously. And you have to remember that we cannot afford to take ourselves too seriously.

SONNET

By

GEORGE C. JOHNSON

THIS, I say, is all that three hard years
Of books, philosophy, and art have won
My mind: the will to doubt a faith that rears
Great walls of empty creed against the sun
Of reason, under which the childish fears
Of gods and kings have withered to decay;
And science, lord of life, has found its way
To lighten labor and to sharpen spears.

And yet, the ancient wonder still endures:
That men are born of love through women's pain;
That supple grace of yielding breast allures
To quicken life from aching life again.
This awesome spectacle of birth decries
The blood of battle, where the wonder dies.

MY FRIEND THE BACHELOR

By

KWEI CHEN

My friend the bachelor,
Having just returned from his trip around the world,
Without regret, tells me
That for him travel is preferable to the married life.
I soothe him with two stories of his Chinese comrades:

A thousand years ago,
In a hut at the edge of the West Lake
Lived a poet who, throughout his life, married not.
In his garden he planted a plum tree,
And upon a pedestal he mounted the two wings of a crane.
The former he acclaimed as his wife, and the latter his son.
Every year the Bright Clearness of the Spring found him in
rapture

Under the ample foliage of the willows by the Lake, crooning;
Early in the winter morning, after a night of heavy snow fall,
He failed not to visit the blossomy plum, his wife—
With a crooked cane and a conical hat of bamboo leaves,
Alone he stood there.

His poems he threw away as fast as they were written.
He declared, laughing:
“For fame with my contemporaries I do not care;
Should I care for fame with posterity?”
Poor was he, but the Emperor’s call to office he refused.
Lonely he might be, yet for a score of years
His foot-prints had not marked the neighboring city.
By the cottage where he lived
He prepared himself a grave, in which he was buried
With a copy of his last poem in the coffin beside him.
At present in his garden every year are blossoming
Hundreds of plums hung with snowflakes,
But on the pedestal from which the crane took his flight
Only an inscription is erected.

The other comrade is my own dear, poor, mad Uncle,
Author of the “World’s Unmarried Heroes,”
Still maintaining his principle,
“No marriage without Platonic love!”
He lives a very simple life,
But he inherits a thousand volumes of the best literature,
A large collection of masterpieces of painting and calligraphy,
And some urns centuries old.
He possesses gifts as a poet, a painter, and a calligrapher.
Alone or with an understanding friend,
He spends his days and evenings
In reading, criticizing, reciting, and in composing poetry
of various forms;
In painting and in cultivating the precious art of calligraphy;
In fishing and gardening on sunny days;
In walking and singing on moonlit evenings.
He is known as wise and good, but obscure and mad;
He is revered by every one, but helped by none!
My friend seems greatly moved by hearing these stories.

MENTAL ABERRATION

A Story

By

GEORGE WASHINGTON SMITH

As the L train wheeled the corner a sharp, dragging moan cut into the air, as if the steel road suffered from the weight that ran over it. Every carriage was nearly choked with people feeble as a flat baloon. They were going home after a day in the city. The seats on either hand were crammed with them; and on every one of the long row of white enamel straps heavily rested large hands of men and smooth hands of women, swaying—so queerly parallel, thought Simon—as the rushing express straightened itself.

Simon had not much need to sway to the shaking train—he was jammed securely among those who stood between the rows of seats. He had come too late to find an inch of sitting-room; and he was far too short to be able to grab one of the straps. Simon was a hunchback. As he stood, he could feel the hump which was his back fitting fairly between the legs of the man behind him. The tall man in front was talking in jerks with his companion. Simon bent and dropped his leather satchel on the floor. "If a guy looks ugly, I bet his inside's ugly too,"—someone's voice fell upon Simon's ears through the clatter of the train as it crossed the points at the head of a station yard. Simon looked up sharply. They were not talking of him, were they?

The train came to a stop. No hope of anyone's getting off so near to the city, thought Simon. No one did. In fact, a few more squeezed themselves in. There was a little more squeezing inside the carriage, and in the squeezing some one pushed Simon's satchel to one side. Simon let it lie. There were only a few life insurance papers in it. And, oh, yes, of course, a letter from the lawyer in Huizen on the Rhine, with a statement accounting for the money that Simon had cabled to bear the charges of his aunt's funeral.

His aunt! So now they had buried her. Simon wondered how she looked lying there under the soil of the little pine-covered churchyard. She had never been very handsome. And Simon's eyes, as they wandered discreetly over the many women sitting—their faces almost level with his—rested on one very close to him. Her eyes were small and blue, and she had steel gray hair; and Simon, standing as near as he did, could even watch a sparse growth of hair on an unduly fertile lip; but what most held his eyes was the line of her cheek as she turned her head to look out of the window. That was just the contour of his aunt's face—at any rate, that had been when he saw it years ago. For the photograph that the Huizen lawyer had enclosed showed nothing of the free curve of cheek and neck that the woman near him displayed; the photograph only showed a loose shrunken face that one could scarcely tell from any other of the same age.

And that photograph was all that he now had of his aunt. She herself was not in Huizen any more—not in Huizen, not anywhere. *Anywhere?* Simon did not know. All he knew was an odd sense of loneliness. Inexplicable,—with all those bodies of men and bodies of women touching him on every side. Simon looked out through the window. There was little to cheer him there. Backyards cluttered with rubbish—dark gray walls—dreary back rooms—a fat man in a shirt stuck in a chair puffing at a pipe—half-clean linen hanging on rakish lines—a white-haired old woman knitting—what?

Simon was startled out of his brown study by a sudden twinge of pain. He had almost screamed. The ferrule of the moustachioed woman's parasol had jabbed into the wound on his knee. Simon bit his lip hard to hold the pain in, stooped, and gently caressed the fringe of the still fresh

wound. He had acquired it that very afternoon. He had been typing as usual—kneeling on a cushioned stool. He never typed sitting like other people for his projecting chest came in his way. He remembered stretching his arm out to reach a letter that had blown to a corner of the table, stretching—straining—just an inch farther—and then the stool had toppled from under him by his unequal weight, and with a loud clatter he had landed knee first on the floor. And now here was this woman poking her parasol into the bandage. Simon glowered in vain; her eyes were shut, and she was dozing with the parasol clasped on her lap.

Simon shifted his stand by the fraction of a squeezing inch, and his mind jumped to a rehearsal of the afternoon's accident. But the woman holding her parasol with its ferrule sticking out from her lap was a constant threat. Simon tried to edge further and further back, his patience steadily ebbing. With every jerk of the train the parasol poked his knee, or promised to. But the woman dozed placidly on. Jerk . . . jerk . . .

Simon could suffer it no more. A tear was strangely forcing itself out of him. His lip twitched. The parasol spread in his mind and pushed out all thought. And,—what are you doing, Simon?—he plucked the parasol from the woman's hand and tossed it to the floor. It dropped across the tall man's feet.

Simon instantly cursed himself for a rash fool. A picture came to his mind: He was picking the parasol up and handing it with apologies to the blue-eyed woman. But the tall man had already picked it up and was glaring at him, demanding, "What d'ya mean?" Was that his wife? Maybe. There was a snarl in his voice. Simon cowered; he would explain, apologize. . . . No. He would not say a word, not a word about his bandaged knee, or about the jabbing ferrule. Let them glare, all the women about him—let them. The tall man's voice broke through this bravery. "What d'ya mean you—" and while he was groping for a word of sufficient abuse, his companion held

him back saying, "Let the little hump alone, Bill."

"Little hump." Simon heard the words. And he hoped the tall man would hit him, hit him rather than be stayed by scorn. "Little hump." The words had come to him like hot liquid lead, heavy, and stinging his delicate senses. He writhed inwardly, and writhing left the train a while later.

He would go to Dragaziki's first, complying with habit. Then he would go to his room and bury himself, bury himself. "Like aunt Lotte." Simon's mind was playing tricks. He went into Dragaziki's. There was the waiter, a new fellow. And there was Dragaziki himself at the cash register. Simon laid his satchel on a table, and taking off his overcoat, turned to hang it from a hook on the wall. But the hook was placed at a height for normal men; and Simon, *you* can't reach it. Simon stood on his toes and stretched himself up . . . and up. Simon had a strange feeling that everyone was looking at him, but no one moving to help . . . up Simon. . . . He dropped to his feet, the coat heavy on his hands. Someone laughed. Was it the new waiter? Or was it just his mind teasing him again? He wouldn't bother to hang up his hat and coat now. He would throw them across the table and sit down. Simon was curiously shaken. Yes, it was the new waiter, must have been—Simon protested to himself. As he ate the fried eggs and hashed potatoes and baked beans that Dragaziki laid before him, wild irresponsible ideas flapped about his head. Crazy suggestions. He saw himself heaving his plate of eggs at the waiter. Or why not dip his bread in the gravy and let that fellow get it on his chest? Crazy. Simon broke a piece of bread, gathered some egg on it and put it into his mouth instead. There was someone at a table behind him talking to Dragaziki. "You would have the big icebox and the electric fittings and everything in the price." It was Dragaziki negotiating for the purchase of another restaurant somewhere. Dragaziki . . . why did the man engage such a brute of a waiter?

As Simon left the restaurant, the waiter scrambled for a hold in his mind: the waiter, and the tall man in the train; trying to hang up a coat; tumbling out of a stool; snatching her parasol from a woman's hand—pictures jostled and elbowed one another to take the screen all to themselves. Simon's mind was a chaos; a chaos as he climbed up to his apartment; a chaos as he threw his hat and coat across a sofa, as he went into his bedroom and dropped into a chair. His knee hurt as he bent it. That woman—digging into him with a parasol. She was fat too. Enormous calves. Simon could still see the wrinkles in her stockings where the knees had been flexed; and her peeping garters. But she was not to blame after all, reflected Simon. How *could* she know about his knee? He ought to have told her perhaps. Instead . . . impulsive as ever. But that tall man—confound him. Would he have hit him, hit him before all those people? He couldn't, he didn't dare. Not dare? Why not, Simon,—for insulting his wife? . . . *Insulting*. Simon's thoughts switched to the waiter and his mocking laughter. What should he have done to the man? Ask him "What d'ya mean" as the tall man had done? Yes, but he was not the tall man. *He* couldn't threaten anybody. He couldn't, how could he? He—"the little hump." That man's voice sounded again agonizingly distinct: "Let the little hump alone, Bill" . . . *Little hump* . . . a hunchback—a crooked ugly little creature. Hadn't he ever known it before? Little hump. The words chased each other in his head, tumbled over each other. Little hump—he caught himself in the looking glass over the low dresser. The hump didn't show after all. He didn't look really bad, as he sat like that. No, but one couldn't be sitting in a chair all one's life. One must get up and move about. And with the thought Simon rose and walked to the open window.

The evening was warm. From the avenue trees, the leaves hung stiffly, or moved to a slow breeze. There were two or three people at the barber's across the way. Next was a

vacant plot partly hidden from the avenue by large posters. Simon's eye fixed on the posters: Metropolitan Bank, Olivo Soap . . . Camel Cigarettes. Simon stared—a vast young man regarding a cigarette, and a rigid camel on the right foreground.

Damn. Simon jerked down the blind, turned back and threw himself on the bed. The poster hurt him like a positive insult. Camel! How he hated the sight of the beast. Did Nature make camels to taunt him? His mind went back over the years to the time when he had first joined Coppersall & Glutz's. They had started him rather well. That was because of Macguire, the attorney that Nicholas knew. They had set him to file old Coppersall's papers and see that the day's letters were mailed in time and that they had the correct postage on them. There was that boy—Coppersall's office boy—Joe who used to go to the post-office and bring the week's supply of stamps. Joe . . . Once he had come back with a dollar's worth of stamps short. "Where are the rest of the stamps, Joe?" Simon had timidly asked. "Aint they all there?" sulkily. "No, Joe." "I d'no wha's happen to 'em." However, with a tentative threat, Joe had been induced to fumble about his person and produce the missing stamps with studied surprise. Joe was a vindictive devil though. Next morning Simon had found on his desk a smeary bit of paper that had on it a creature that looked like a camel with a magnified hump standing knee deep in a heap of letters, stamped and unstamped. A camel with a hump, that's what he was. Joe had found it out. A camel.

Since then Simon had loathed the sight of a camel, the sound of the word. Joe had left the office, but yet Simon kept stumbling across the word almost every day. Simon remembered,—at lunch that very day. There was that man from Webster's. "Say, talkin' of gettin' a hunch, d'you ever hear of gettin' the hump? You know what that means?" It wasn't Simon he was addressing. Nor Liggett. But Liggett had intervened—beastly Liggett—with, "Say, *who* d'you say's got the hump?" Liggett was always like

that—making nasty personal references. He doesn't like me, thought Simon. He always tries to take a dig at me. Otherwise why should he come to me with an extended cigarette-case and his "Have a Camel" when he knows damned well that I smoke only cigars Liggett Why do they all look upon me like that Wh-y? And as he asked the darkness Simon shook with a fever of emotion. Break the looking glass Simon. Break a chair. Break something, Simon. But he pushed the thought down, and his mind veered to a different tack.

Aunt Lotte was no more. Not that he had ever been fond of her. She had brought the handle of a saucepan once down on his head. He could not remember what it was for. He moved his hand, felt his head, his scalp, for the old scar. He could not place it. He hadn't known aunt Lotte very well. She had let Nicholas take him to America when he was about ten. She couldn't have been over-fond of him either, if she could send him away at that age with a man who was little more than some sort of a cousin. But she had taken care of him for ten years when he had neither father nor mother. Poor aunt Lotte. He had sent her money every month or two from the time he first began to earn. He wondered why he had done that. Pity? So she might not have to slave for a living at her age? Gratitude? Simon could not answer. But he had found a queer vital satisfaction in sending her money. It had made him feel he was wanted, somewhere in the world, for someone in the world. And now she was gone, and Nicholas somewhere out West. That odd loneliness he had felt for a moment in the train returned to him. Alone, thought Simon, deformed . . . camel camel Then why go on, why live? What was there to live for? What did the rest of them live for? Glutz, what did he live for? Oh! Glutz, uxorious Glutz. He had married a pretty actress, doted on her, wouldn't leave her for—for even a prettier one. And Glutz had property, dozens of interests with which he was tied up. . . . Liggett?

Have a Camel? Simon couldn't say. Even Liggett couldn't. Something like water about Liggett. Unsteady. One day he lived for the pretty typist. The next his passion was to save enough money to buy a roadster. He would never buy one. No guts. . . . Guts. . . . Dragaziki he had them. He was already buying up his third restaurant. He means to own a chain of them soon. And make his million. Perhaps he will. But Simon didn't care. He didn't want to make a million. Money, bah! He made enough and more. He was personal assistant to Glutz and that fetched him a tidy sum. He sold insurance on the side too, and real estate. A million wouldn't do *him* any good. A house and a car like Macguire's? What fun if, as you stepped from your Lincoln, two blunt pyramids stuck out of your back and front, even through your fur coat, for every passer-by to remark? Moreover there were people Macguire had to look after, a wife, and children.

Wife, repeated Simon, woman. He had wanted woman. Desire had run warm through the blood in his twisted little body. Simon remembered one night when longing tore his vitals. He had gone out into the streets where the waiting women walked in the lights. Looking at them, he had long wandered up and down, too timid to do more; and they, they were looking for straight-backed men. Simon saw them—their lingering step, the weary greedy invitation in their eyes, the soft lines of their sex—and watched them disappear one by one. They were the younger ones. Simon had finally driven to a hotel a haggard woman who had ceased to be fastidious. Simon had hardly ever seen her after that night. How could crooked he lie with a straight bodied woman? So Simon had deliberately quelled the passion in him and starved out of his veins the taste for woman. Woman? bah! said Simon the while an old thought reared itself like a serpent. Why go on living like that? . . . Suicide so easy, Simon just a tiny pill of something yes, Simon, an overdose of a sleeping draught. . . . What would Liggett—

"Have a Camel?"—say when he heard about it? How can a camel live out of a desert? . . . something beastly smart. . . . Liggett. . . . "Have a Camel?" . . . Curse him. . . . What would the janitor do? . . . 'phone the police? . . . the coroner . . . "temporary insanity" . . . what did they know of the racking pain in a man's heart? . . . nothing, Simon, nothing . . . just a tiny pill, that would be all. The newspaper headlines of the morning danced in Simon's head: "Hunchback Found Dead in Apartment." . . . Hunchback. . . . "Have a Camel?" . . . Damn Liggett . . . "the little hump" . . . mocking laughter . . . God, why wasn't he like other people? . . . Why did his back stick out so . . . his chest so . . . why? . . . What had he done? . . . *Why?*

The question screamed in his mind. Simon's face twisted, his teeth gnashed, his legs stiffened, and he turned over on the bed. Just swallow a little pill, Simon. . . . (There his mind was at it again.) Suicide . . . a little pill . . . only gulp it down, Simon . . . it will be all over . . . no, not over—what if there was left over a little hump of a soul . . . no, no, suicide . . . yes Simon, a little powder . . . but an ugly twist of a soul! . . . no . . . no . . . yes . . . suicide Simon suicide. . . .

The word bawled, roared through his brain, a sounding confusion. The horrible word bullied him. Simon jumped up, flung his door open and ran down the stairs, flying, flying from—Simon.

Simon turned into the street. Its brightness assuaged the uproar in his soul. His steadied eyes took in everything. Two girls were buying tickets for a show. Simon saw a sprawling crack on the glass of the narrow cage from which a red-haired woman sold tickets. He walked on. A squat smelly man went by with a child held at his shoulder. He wore neither collar nor 'tie at his neck. There was a short woman at his heels, a heavy woman with a spotted shawl over her head. Simon noticed the bulge of flesh between the straps of her shoes. She waddled along. Simon saw the

epileptic electric signs, passed the meat shop and the furniture shop and the ten cent store. There were tiny fluted glass vases in the window of the ten cent store. Pretty things. A street car rolled past, rumbling metal thunder. Simon turned to the vases again. Pretty, he thought. Pretty. The word somehow awoke the hot turmoil that had held him in his room. Pretty . . . and that man in the train saying: "If a guy looks ugly, I bet his inside's ugly too." *His* inside—was it ugly too, like his outside? Simon passed the glass of a large shop window. He could see himself in it. Hatless and coatless. And his back hunched as always. . . . His back . . . ugly. . . .

Simon was coming to a corner glary with light. A few taxicabs were parked by the curb. One of the cabmen was chatting with a constable. The traffic signal blinked. Simon caught sight of a girl standing about, a niceish girl for the hardness that showed in the line of her chin. Simon knew what she was there for. He knew the loud pretty look in her eyes, and the offer that hovered silent at her subtle red lips. Her purpose was obvious. A sudden notion gripped Simon. He would take this girl home and make her decent. Would that show his inside was ugly? "If a guy looks ugly, his inside's ugly too." Yes indeed. He would "show 'em." He would make this girl stop nightly hawking her sex on the streets. Why not? *He* didn't want her. He would feed her and clothe her and let her enjoy herself. He would be a father to her. That would make him feel he was necessary to someone, even wanted, perhaps, some day. . . . No need then to feel desolate. . . . Yes, why not?

With that he had accosted the girl. He offered her a drink. She looked him over. She wasn't going to refuse—no need to. Time enough to turn him down after the drinks. A drink was always welcome. So they went into the corner drug store and took their seats. Simon ordered drinks; but without waiting, screwed up his courage and spoke out. It was a detached, unfamiliar voice that he heard

saying, "I am going to make you a proposition. I want you to come with me and live with me."

What did he mean? The girl wondered. She searched his face with a cunning smile.

"Live with you?" She put her question on "live." "Yes, live. As—as my daughter," Simon explained. The girl kept silent, but regarded him with her pretty eyes. "So you won't have to—to do all this," Simon blurted by way of inducement.

The drinks arrived on a tray. Simon fumbled with the wrapper, on the straws. His fingers seemed to have escaped his control. He looked slyly at the girl as she sucked at her straws. Her eardrops glittered in the light. Simon put his lips to the straws. He had quite nice hair, silky and long and wavy. But that was perhaps the only nice thing about him. His eyes were small and black and buried deep in their sockets; nose quite enormous; and a mouth that ran big above a bony jutting chin. His neck was rather stringy. The girl's eyes watched his fingers, knotted and stumpy, as the twitched round his glass. She wondered if he was quite right in his head. Simon's voice quavered as he spoke again.

"You can do what you like. Dress as you like, go where you like, if only you would come to me. Give this up and let me look after you. You can have all you want."

The girl was setting her glass down. She seemed to be thinking.

Was she going to leave his now—murmur "Thank you," and get up quietly?

"Whats your game anyway?" she asked.

"Game, game," repeated Simon, "Why, I mean just what I say."

The girl's rouged lip curled. "A pretty nerve you have, haven't you," she said slowly, "to ask a girl like me to take up with a man like you, a man with a—"

"Don't say that word," shrieked Simon. And the very instant—Simon, what *are* you doing?—he hurled his glass across at the girl. It caught her on the head, and shattered. The pieces clinked as they dropped. Simon's mind fled to aunt Lotte and the scar that was hidden under his hair. And his eye in that blind moment worked with unnatural haste. He saw the lustre of the soda fountain—someone opening a bottle—gaudy colours of stacked magazines—someone stamping on the fag-end of a cigarette—the pain-carved grimace on the girl's face as her hands leapt to her head. . . .

After that Simon best remembered the streets flowing white before his dull eyes as he sat abject beside the policeman he had observed talking at a corner with a taxi-driver.

And when the time came, the pundits of the police court analysed Simon and the seeds of his offense.

They said it was a case of "mental aberration." Yes?

A GREEK FRAGMENT

HIGH heavens quake
Vast forests shake,
When Zeus goes forth a-wooing.
A maid once she,
But now a tree,
When Hera learns what's doing.

—Elizabeth Bunting

BLINDNESS

By

JANET TIETJENS

The Japanese Poet sang:
"Oh Nightingale,
If you do not sing for me
I will kill you!"

Haughty Mohammedan Corsair,
you stand above your prisoner and
cry, "Harken, infidel dog! Allah is
great. Confess him as thy god, and
thou shalt have in paradise seventy
black-eyed virgins, with dark eye-
balls kept close in their pavilions.
Deny him, and thou shalt feel my
sword."

Again the poet sang.
"Oh Nightingale,
If you do not sing for me
I will make you sing!"

Christian missionary, you stand be-
fore the heathen and overawe the ig-
norant and superstitious. You cry,
"Believe in God and Jesus Christ, else
shall ye be damned eternally! For-
ever shall your souls be roasted in the
lowest pit of hell, nor shall ye ever
come up thence to lie at the feet of
the Lamb."

Yet once again sang the poet.
"Oh Nightingale,
If you do not sing for me
I will wait for you."

Stately Buddhist, sitting in silent
contemplation, you say to your pupil,
"Go, learn the way of the Norm.
Pass thy lives in holiness and con-
templation of the Exalted One. Then
shalt thou be freed from the Wheel
of Life and enter into Nirvanah, and
a state of blessed unity."

So speak they; and they turn to
gripe for the light in a search which
makes man to be raised above all oth-
er creatures on earth. Yet what is
man, save a thing of mist and shadow
crying blindly in Eternity? And
what is light, and truth—which all
men seek, and find, to disagree? Or
what is God, if He be not the same
for all?

Verily, I sometimes think, "All
men are fools."

FRAGMENTS FROM "LAUS VITAE"

(From the Italian of Gabriele d' Annunzio)

By

J. M. S. COTTON

All was ambitioned
and all attempted.
What was not done
I dreamt,
and the eagerness of dreams made acts mine own.
Blessed art thou, oh power
or dreams, whence I am crowned
imperially
above my fate
and sit enthroned
with my high hope,
I who was born
in a prophory chamber and was nursed
by a grand silent woman, who came down
from a rude rock! Blessed likewise
art thou who opened wide my breast
too narrow for the breathing of my soul,
and thou shalt have
from me new melodies.

There were women serene
with clear eyes, infinite
in their silence
like low-lying plains
where flows a stream;
there were women whose golden light
rivalled the summer,
or devastating fire,
like unto blades of corn
luxurious,
untouched by the sheath
and yet devoured by flame
of stars 'neath a relentless sky;
there were women so light
that a word could make them slaves,
as a down-turned pitcher
is prison to the bee;
others with lifeless hands,
who could destroy strong thoughts
without a sound;
others with slender hands
and bending, whose slow play
seemed to be furtively
breaking the veins apart,
like to threads of a skein
in blue-dye dipped;
others were pale and tired
the burning face
hid among the hair,
nostrils like
restless wings,
lips like
words said,
eyelids like
violets;
and many others there were besides. . .

And I said: "oh world thou art mine,
I will pluck you like an apple
and crush you to my thirst,
to my eternal thirst,
for I remember no longer
that I am a man,
since my heart beats
in the earth, and in the sky
with so great a force.

. but a beauty
virginal, like a song
. scattered
in the placid evening,
brought us a sudden peace
to the heart, and the tumult ended,
and only we heard, returning
from the yokes of Arcady, the messenger
of Pan, who restores
to time the ever-lasting Return.

THE SCENTED KISS

(Directions for Fantomime)

By
MARK RANDELL

PLAINTIVELY By Dorothy Kornhauser

The musical score is written for piano and consists of two staves. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The piece begins with a piano (p) dynamic. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. There are several slurs and dynamic markings, including a 'RIT' (ritardando) and 'pp' (pianissimo) marking. The score ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final notes.

The Plot:

Ere Columbine her love will tell,
A Kiss upon his lips must dwell
That from her own did stray.
He knows he's won her fancy when,
She perfumes her lips. And then—
She will not say him nay.

But foolish Pierrot's blind to see;
So ends this tale in tragedie.

Scene:

In a garden. At the side is a door leading into Columbine's house. There is a moon.

Synopsis of Pantomime:

Enter Pierrot and Columbine. They have just come from a Masque. She is happy and dances about, now in imitation of one, now mimicking another. The moon is out, and she would dance 'till the day dawns, while he, sleepy fellow, would go away.

Impetuously Columbine turns toward Pierrot, shaping her lips to kiss him. Suddenly she stops. She puts her fingers to her lips—they are dry. She rushes about the garden from flower to flower, examining all and brushing each one against her lips, to see if they have any perfume within them. After testing many, Columbine finds a rose with two drops of perfume—then turning, she flies to Pierrot only to find he has fallen asleep. She is furious, and waking him up, pushes him out of the garden.

Columbine returns to the center of the garden, disconsolate, and tearfully wipes each lip. Pierrot returns. How can he sleep in peace, he sighs, unless she kisses him. She is about to kiss him,

when she puts her fingertips to her lips and remembers they are dry. She tries to explain to him, that the essence of the kiss is in the flower. She hunts again about the garden for another Rose, while Pierrot watches her and laughs.

She has found her flower and comes back to Pierrot, only to find him still laughing at her. He attempts to seize her, but she throws him off and goes into the house.

In the tussle he has wrested the rose from her. He looks at it, then at the closed door. He runs to it and knocks. No answer. He raps again. No reply. Distracted, he beats upon the door again. Slowly it opens, and Columbine appears. Begging her to touch her lips with it, he gives her the flower. If she will deign to kiss this rose, he lives. If she refuses, he will die; but slowly, as each petal falls from the flower.

Columbine takes the flower, and drinks in its perfume. With a gesture of disdain she throws the flower to him and goes into the house. Pierrot holds the Rose in his hand, then crushes it against his heart—a petal falls. He sees the petal and presses his hand against his side as if he were in great pain.

Slowly Pierrot goes toward Columbine's door. Petal after petal falls. He calls to her. His feet drag. More petals drop. He becomes weaker. Columbine appears. In a last effort he holds the rose toward her and sees that all the petals have dropped away. He sinks at her feet—and dies.

EDITORIAL

I.

AGAIN we face the rather doubtful task of writing an editorial, doubtful in the face of the benign insouciance which pervades our little world and which would seem, necessarily, to indicate that we are sadly but incontrovertibly superfluous. Of course our own ego will not allow us to be guided by any such intangible prognostication as public opinion, whether it be manifested in swift, empty words, or in indifference. . . . And so, at last, we have definitely, if a little redundantly, stated our own indifference to the influence of thought extraneous to ourselves—that is, when we wish to take that attitude. Fortunately, the human mind is so fashioned that it can adopt ideas at will, to suit the physical convenience, perhaps, of the person concerned, and after a time will come to believe what before seemed possible only through the exercise of painful mental gymnastics. What might be termed an immoral example is that of the lie, or negatively, of what is not the Truth, told and retold until its author comes to believe it, physically and mentally and whole heartedly—because of its origin within himself.

Such is our dictum.

2.

But, after all, we are vitally concerned, both in our official capacity and through some quirk in our cognitive makeup, in the creative thought of anyone who has the inclination to foist his brain-child upon us. If the hypothetical off-spring lives through the first vigorous scrutiny of our professional judgment, (it will not die if it has been born of time and pain and experience) we become, as it were, a benevolent god-parent. Which means assuming a responsibility which is not always altogether pleasant, in view of the fact that too many words, arranged in certain patterns, become uncommonly obstreperous and productive of irritating dissension.

3.

If, as William Ellery Leonard so earnestly believes, all art is propaganda, the effect of art, following naturally from the cause, will be to produce a feeling of antagonism. Granted that art in any of its forms is the

visible or audible, and voluntary propagation of the artist's ideas: man is averse to having his own ideas influenced until he has thought out the problem for himself—and then taken credit for his (to him) superior intelligence. Therein rests the reason for the many and diverse interpretations of art handed out so freely by those who profess to know more about it than does its originator. They are not satisfied to learn its fundamental aspects, to study its simplest, which are usually its truest, cause and effect; they must cover up their fear of proselytizing, prose and poetry, for example—their fear of coercion by the ideas of others greater than their puny selves.

Antagonism developing into fear—and an easy retreat.

4.

Labels can mean nothing. Their very connotations, imbedded in and grown out of all the inadequacies of a civilization groping for some firm grip on the unrealities of life, like a fungus, which derives its sustenance from the air and the tree to which it attaches itself, yet resembles neither, have remained twisted and distorted in the amorphous process of adapting them to the narrow confines of creed. Yet, there remains the necessity of using them, to make ourselves understood.

They have sprung up like weeds within the past few years, and like weeds, have obscured the sight of the solid, black earth. Main Street and Babbitry, from the mind of the crusading Mr. Lewis, have gone hand in hand. Neo-Platonism, Pseudo-Classicism, Georgian and Victorian and Decadent have been the bane of the student and the last pedagogical stronghold of the moss-back. The religious fanatic has concealed himself from the supposed wrath of a just and good God behind the sonorous emptiness of Righteousness, Faith, Courage, and Forgiveness; and has the temerity to say that he is the Chosen Lamb of the Almighty.

Our modern slang, with its highly picturesque labels, is slightly more amusing. We are thinking of Butter and Egg and all its attendant connotations. And from Mr. Mencken's Booboisie to the much overworked term, Sophistication, which as someone has so aptly said, means corrupt—which

means rotten, all Society is labeled and classified like prize live-stock at a county fair.

What platitudinous turpitude!

5.

Why are new art forms so hesitantly received and so scurvily lauded, even when they possess inherent artistic merit? Free verse has suffered as much as any of the new forms which an era of extraordinary self-expression has imposed on all the arts. And chiefly because of an imaginative lack in the reader, a failure to catch the sometimes too delicate rhythms of good verse libre, or a failure to appreciate strong, rugged rhythms resembling those of well-written prose.

Those who quarrel with the imagists have but to ask themselves whether they understand the poet before they criticize him. With so much of the literature of today written from a psycho-analytical viewpoint, it is practically impossible to understand it fully without first knowing something of motives and of a certain modern attitude, which in itself is intangible until approached with some degree of sympathy.

6.

We deplore the passage of what might now be termed "the golden age" of art and literature at Wisconsin. It has come and gone intermittently, and left a trail, perhaps not of glory, nor even sweetness, but of a certain

amount of light behind it. We may be presumptuously optimistic even to imagine that such a "golden age" existed. The editors of those years, that seem to us now to have filled with an enthusiasm for what was vital and new beyond our knowledge today, probably deplored what seemed to them a hopelessly somber state of affairs. But, in looking back, and in reading the old files of the *Lit* (for our own amusement) we discern a spirit of sophistication, youthful to be sure, of investigation and experimentation in new art forms which we envy and which produced a surprising degree of success, and we should say, satisfaction, so far as literary merit goes.

That may be but the illusion of a romantic past, not so far gone that it has not left a few memories of what seemed ordinary enough then, but what grows more golden with time.

7.

The supreme compensation of editorial writing is the feeling which remains that we have placed solid words in solemn procession on a page, and that whether they mean anything or not, we ourselves know their irrelevancy or profundity—their slightest shades of meaning. And we may laugh up our sleeve or appear serious, at will, knowing that whatever we have said will not last, except as a pattern of words.

C. G. S.

WELL—

Is anything sadder
Than three maids
Walking together
Under the moon?

Is any thing gladder
Than two lovers,
Meeting together
In the heat of noon?

—Winnifred Wise

LA BALLADE DES DAMES DU TEMPS JADIS

(From the French of Francois Villon)

By

PEREZ GOLDMAN

TELL me in what hidden land
Is Flora, lovely Roman belle;
The graceful Archipiade, and
Thais, her German kin, as well;
Beautiful Echo, who by dell
And pool alone one often hears
Answering voices.—Who can tell?
Where are the snows of bygone years?

Where is wise Heloise, for whose hand
A eunuch's name and cloister cell
(Pain for the lover, you understand)
To the lot of Abelard befell.
And where the queen whose whim did spell
Buridan's fate, which now appears
Was, tied in a sack, in the Seine to dwell?
Where are the snows of bygone years?

Good Queen Blanche, like lilies wan,
Whose songs as sweet as sirens' fell;
Joan the Maid, whom English hand
Burned at Rouen, then tolled her knell;
Bertha, bare-foot demoiselle;
Beatrice, Alice, Ermangarde's tears—
Where are they, Mary Virginal?
Where are the snows of bygone years?

L'ENVOI:

*Prince, seek not the question to dispel
This week, this year—forever bears
The ancient tune its burthen's swell:
Where are the snows of bygone years?*

PROTEST

By

ROBERT MCMILLEN

I DO not like the snow

It hides away

The softer things of summer: all the slow
Sweet fragrance of an early August day,
With brown bees toiling fiercely flower-high,
And swallows plunging headlong through the sky.

A dusky night in June: a bat wing gleams
High up the slope of moonlight to the moon,
Where warm winds brush the stars; and evening seems
Aglow with summer's hopes, and fears, and schemes.

I do not like the snow
It brings the death of dreams.

THE UNWALKED WAY

By

GLADYS FIST

"D**ELLA**, finish pressin' your dress in a hurry. It's nearly time for them pills I got this morning. I can't reach my water."

Della violently snapped the cord from the iron and jerked her dress from the brown, scorched board. Trying to do anything for herself was hopeless; she might as well quit. She had not time to lengthen her dress, much less press it.

"I'm comin', Grandma. It isn't time for that medicine anyway; you're only to have it every hour." Hurriedly running the back of her hand over her lip she wiped tiny glistening beads of perspiration from it; her lip always perspired when she was tired or nervous. The perspiration felt cool and sticky on her hand and made prickly sensations run through her body.

"Della! Come on! If you'd stop moonin' and thinkin' of Joe, you'd do something."

Della felt her face grow hot. Joe! Mooning! Thinking! She had not been thinking of him—consciously at least. His vision though was always with her; Joe, with his red hair and hungry blue eyes; Joe, with the fine golden hair on his hands. Her grandmother did not even want her to think about him, God, not even think. She could not have him; he said that he could not marry her as long as the old woman was dependent on her. Her grandmother didn't realize that she was dependent, that she was dragging Della away from life; no, her grandmother never questioned her own belief that the duty of the young was to care for the old; she did not think that Della was sacrificing for her; she was so enveloped in old age that youth to her was nothing more than a convenient automaton by which her own comfort was made secure. The old woman, ever sympathizing with the "pains God had labored her with," had been swallowed into the immensity she had made of

them—nothing else existed save the pills and Della, both of them only for her.

"Are you comin'?" The voice, heavy with tears, fell about Della.

"Yes, Grandma, I'm here now. I've got to find them first; you've got so many boxes and bottles, it's hard to find the right one. Here they are." Della stepped into the darkened room; it reeked of candle-tallow, drugs, and body. She stepped out of her slippers; she had never been allowed to walk on the carpet with her shoes on, neither had any one else except the Doctor. Mrs. Grunden had her reason—a reason almost as old as the carpet; she had bought it twenty-five years ago. Mr. Grunden had stepped on it after cleaning and greasing the carriage; the rug was smudged and greasy; a big spot blackened its pinkness. Mrs. Grunden had not spoken to Henry for two days; she was hurt and silent, but when Henry had died a year later, (he left her nothing but three children, a melancholy voice of resignation, and a fishing rod) the formerly odious spot became sacred, and the rug was revered. No one could step on it; it lay soft, and pink, and a little black on the floor in the front room. The coffin had rested on the spot—now it was twice hallowed. When Mrs. Grunden took sick she wanted the rug near her; she thought that it brought her in closer contact with "poor dead Henry." She had debated with herself whether or not she would be committing a sacrilege in giving the rug over to common use. She had decided to compromise by having the rug in her room, but allowing no one who had shoes on to step on it excepting the Doctor. The Doctor would not have been allowed to either had he not known Henry, "and set up with him the fearful night he had died."

"Della, that spot," Mrs. Grunden's voice trembled with superstitious fright.

"O, Grandma, I'm not steppin' there. Here's your pill." Della's voice hardened. God! Her grandmother would always nag. Last night it was because her woolen blanket had fallen on the floor.

"I gotta be washed today—it's Monday."

Della had forgotten that; she hated Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays for that reason. The flabby, doughy chunks of flesh lying in loose folds and wrinkles over the old woman's body repulsed her. When the flesh was wet, it felt as though the whole mass were oozing through her fingers. Della had heard people say that old age was beautiful. It wasn't; it was ugly, as ugly as the husks of dry corn or barren, cracked earth. She could not even pity it; sometimes she wondered if there were a certain sentiment lacking in her, a certain love of the helpless. Old age—uninteresting—sick—talking of soured stomachs and tombstones. This was her life! What difference did it make? She might as well be old; she was saturated with infirmity. Joe, the most vital force in her life, was being pushed out by the strength of a weak and sick old age. Life and everything was paradoxical.

Her life was as commonplace and unfashioned as the rug which held her eyes; both were cradled in the room of the sick, felt only the quiet steps of people whose greatest interest in living was to see how Mrs. Donnow could make so much jelly from one basket of grapes. Della felt close to the rug, bound by a fate common to both of them. The black spot, sticking out of the startling pinkness, suddenly seemed to symbolize her feeling for Joe—the only deviation from the white commonness of her own life. Standing on the rug, she felt as though she were looking down upon and scrutinizing herself. She wished that she could step on the spot—hard—hard—so hard that the imprint of her foot would be left on it; she felt that if she could, it would in some intangible way mean the breaking of all her checking bonds; it would bring her closer to Joe, lift

her out of the dreariness into which she was sunk; it would mean that she was at last unhampered, free, alone, alone to go to Joe and to live as she wished, to be—herself.

She heard herself saying, "Do you want anything else, Grandma?" She was surprised that her voice sounded natural. The spot suddenly became only a black smudge spoiling the pink of a too pink carpet; she found herself standing at least three feet from it, asking in her low, sickroom voice whether or not her grandmother wanted anything else. Reality flooded over her; she saw a streak of dried, white medicine sticking to the old woman's lip; Della brushed it away with her handkerchief.

"I wouldn't mind havin' my wash; just 'cause I'm sick, I gotta be kept decently clean anyway."

"Oll right, Grandma. You know I won't forget; I can't. I'll heat the water; then I have to get ready"—she paused a moment; she rarely mentioned Joe's name to the old woman, for Mrs. Grunden resented him; she felt that Joe was the cause of Della's lack of interest in herself and her sickness. Della repeated her words, and then plunged on. "I have to get ready for, for Joe."

Mrs. Grunden grunted and swung her body ponderously over, so that all Della could see was the heavy muslin of her nightgown topped by a few straggling locks of gray hair hanging over it. Della picked up a cracked, granite basin from under the bed, and skirting the black spot, walked out of the dim, faded room.

II

The bell jangled through the twilight gloom of the house. Della nearly dropped the teaspoon of medicine that she was about to give to the old woman. Her face became red under the bleary scrutiny of her grandmother's eyes.

"If you'd think of me half as much as you do about that there door bell ringing, it'd be better. I don't know as I wants my medicine now; I'll wait half an hour."

"But, Grandma, please take it now; it's time. You usually want it early. Joe and I wanted to make the seven-fifteen bus; there isn't another one till nine fifteen, and that's too late. If you don't take it, we can't go." Della's voice was heavy with suppressed, overwhelming tears.

"Don't want it—it sours my stomach when I take it so soon after meals. I didn't used to treat your Grandpa that way when he was sick, no sir! I didn't ever leave the house, but of course you don't care. You're different."

Della was silent for a moment; then she said in a low voice, "All right, Grandma, we won't go. I'll stay—" Her sentence was cut off by the long insistent clatter of the bell. Della ran out of the room; in her hurry she almost forgot to put on her shoes.

"H'lo, Joe!"

"H'lo, Della!"

His face was red and shinningly smooth, as if it had just been scrubbed with soap. She noticed a cut on his cheek where he had shaved too close.

"I'm sorry, Joe; we'll have to stay here. Grandma isn't as well tonight as usual, and we can't leave her alone." Della wondered why she didn't tell him the truth; probably because he would have scolded her for giving in so easily to a silly whim.

"That's too bad, Della; we can sit on the porch."

They sat on the steps. Joe's hands lay over his knees; she wished that she could touch them; she longed to trace the blue pattern of the huge knotted veins lying so close under the skin of his hands; she wanted to feel the fine golden hair on his wrists. Instead, she twisted a piece of grass between her fingers. She didn't know what to say to him; it was always hard to think of anything, for so little happened to her. She could not tell him about her grandmother's sickness and her medicine; she could not tell him about the spot on the rug. If she had been like Emily Stephens, she could tell about the people to whom she sold neckties—about the

man who had tried to hold her hand when she gave him his change. (Emily's experiences were always interesting, Della thought, and they made Emily a woman of the world.) But she—her thoughts tumbled over each other—she was shut up all day, seeing the world only through her screened windows, hearing only the voice of sickness, doing nothing not related to it. A terrible fear rose in her breast. What could Joe see in her when there were girls like Emily! What if she were to lose him? What if he would not look at her with his hungry eyes? If only she could say something . . . black spots on pink rugs and medicine. That was all that she knew. God! It was silly for her to sit so stupidly quiet. She must say something. Joe took a deep breath. Maybe he was tired of her; Emily always said that she never had bored any man; they bored her.

"Joe, Mrs. Stephens told me that Emily got a raise, because she sold so many neckties." O, why had she mentioned her of all people—Emily with the smooth white skin, the startling black eyes, the curved lips, and the golden hair? Once Joe had taken her out.

"She doesn't need a raise; she makes enough money. I'd rather have you like you are."

At his words a joyful stillness took possession of her; she wanted to clutch him to her,—to assure herself that it was really he who had said that. She pulled a hair from the neck of his coat; her hand touched his skin; a hot, prickly, stimulating sensation shot through her body, leaving it dull and almost insensate. Joe turned toward her.

"I just took a hair off your collar." Her voice was hollow and flat.

"O," was all Joe answered.

Della's hands lay clasped together in her lap.

A dog trotted down the street. A man passed and coughed; the little girl across the street mimicked him; a black cat scudded silently across the way; a hush fell over the street and

night, swallowing twilight and corners of reality, became intense with shadowed beauty. Instinctively Della moved toward him. Joe sat staring at their merged shadows; she could feel the warmth of his body next to hers. She dimly remembered that it was time for the old woman's medicine. She could not move; everything was too wonderful. A tree, casting a black, jagged figure over them, enclosed them in a world of their own. This was her night.

She reached out her hand to touch his, to crush the soft golden hair on it. What was she doing? She couldn't do that; her mother had once told her never to make advances to a man; she had said that during one of the few confidential talks they had ever had together. She remembered how her mother had looked down at the sock she was darning when she had said it; she remembered the hesitant look that had come into her eyes as she lowered them to her work; she remembered the mysterious manner in which she had uttered the words; Della had felt as though her mother were about to reveal a new world to her, a world of ceaseless interest and peculiar beauty. Suddenly her mother had stuck the needle into a stocking, wound up a piece of thread, and then said: "Well, I guess I'll have to put that soup on; your father always wants his dinner at six." Della remembered the quiet of the room after her mother left it; she had glanced at a picture of her father hanging flat against the wall; he looked important and big in it. She wondered if her mother had ever made advances to him, or if her mother had also told her that it was wrong. Wrong? Why was it wrong? She had to live, too, she wanted to grasp at something secure and young, she wanted to feel. The force of her mother's stern, hard-fallen words were too strong to overcome; Della turned her hand about and rubbed it over her cheek. She tried to make herself believe that it was Joe's hand—Joes would be hard and calloused, though.

"You're awful quiet tonight, Della. Why don't you say something?"

"I'm sorry, Joe; I was just thinkin'—thinkin' about Grandma. Maybe I ought to go up stairs and give her that medicine."

"Aw, Della, can't you ever think of me. I come here to see you, and you just sit. You don't even shake hands with me. Are you afraid? Lord, a fellow'd think you wasn't human. Forget her for a minute; talk to me." He flung out his arm and threw it about her.

Della could not even speak; he must have thought that she did not care; that she was not human. That was the trouble—she was too human; she wanted him too much; she loved him too much; she felt the need of him too greatly. His arm pressed into her side until it hurt. She shut her eyes; she wanted to prolong the sensation, to store it up in her mind, so that she might think of it tomorrow and all the days after when Joe would not be there, and she would be giving medicine to the old woman. She opened her eyes; everything seemed to cease; the world and a star hung still about her. Joe was kissing her; she could smell cigarettes on his breath; she could feel hard teeth against her lips. "Joe, don't." O, God, she could not forget; the words still rung in her ears; the sound of the mysterious embarrassment in her mother's voice was still with her, "Don't ever let a man kiss you, 'till you're engaged Della, and got the ring." She looked up; Joe was standing before her; he was going. The dim light from the old woman's room shone down and glinted on his hair; making streaks of gold through it. He lit a cigarette and Della noticed how the mole on his cheek stood out in the glare of the flame.

"I'm goin', Della; I shouldn't a done it. You got your Grandma to take care of, and it isn't right when we haven't any intentions." Della tried to think of something to say; the words would not come. She could only whisper over and over to herself,

"His mother must have told him, too."

Joe was gone. She could hear him whistling as he went down the street. How could he whistle? A fierce resentment struck her. How could he do that after what had happened? He must have kissed other girls, if he was so little affected that he could do that. Why had she been so restrained? Why couldn't she act as she wanted, do what she wanted, lead her own life? Not only was she steeped in convention, she was shackled to old age; she was being conquered by both. She was torn by life before she had a chance to live. Why did she have to have a conscience? If only she might give way to herself, and then if there were regret, have it come afterward. She ran the back of her hand over her upper lip and wiped away the perspiration. She must change; she must throw off the unwholesome box in which she was caught. She must live in life, not exist by looking at it. She would begin now; but how? Suddenly she thought of the carpet; she would step on it with her shoe, walk on it, run on it, stamp on it. She thought that on that carpet lay her key to life and its consequent freedom. That carpet held her, that was her jailer. She would crush it; then she would be set free, convention and old age would be gone; she would be her own keeper.

"Della, Della!" The whining cracked old voice flew at her out of the night. "It's time for them pills." She would not go; now was the time to assert herself, to prove to herself that she was not afraid. She sat still; a mosquito buzzed past her; mosquitoes would still buzz whether she was her old self or the new; everything would be the same; she would be the only thing different. Again the wailing voice rose out of the night, "Della, please come, Della."

Yes, she would go; that would give her the opportunity to step on the rug—right now—tonight. She quickly stood up; her body felt weak and trembling. She ran up the stairs and threw open the door of the room; the

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smell of candle-tallow and body struck her; the room looked musty and old. Della's eyes fell on her grandmother—the old woman lay there, a wrinkled old body, a weak bunch of flesh, a thin, grey mat of hair—helpless, old, lifeless, lost in four corners of life—her room.

"Della, them pills please. I'm awful sick."

Now was her chance; were she ever to act it must be now. Tears, running down her grandmother's face, were caught in the folds of her wrinkles. The carpet looked old and grey, lost, forlorn. Life seemed to have seeped out of the room and cold existence have squirmed in.

Silently kicking off her slippers, she answered, "Yes, Grandma, I'm sorry I'm late. Here's the pill."

THE QUEST

By

EUGENE KINKEAD

ONE day when God the Father was busy on the other side of the Universe fashioning a world, Satan meanly overturned Hell's fiery lake and slunk off to the Moon. From afar, panic stricken, God saw the mounting flames and hastened, fearful, to the scene. Wrapped in leaping flames, which now and then pierced the dense billows of smoke, lay the Earth, and on high the Creator lamented his carelessness and the Devil's great guilt.

For a week the huge conflagration raged, until at length even the bones of the planet had been consumed, and there whirled through space in a crazy orbit a great black cinder. But before God sent his angels to destroy this derelict, this menace to the family of stars, he directed Michael to descend, and see, if in all that wonderful world that one had been, there now remained anything worth while, of value to the gods. And Michael went, and returned with nothing but some tiny blackened figures, queerly distorted like little nuggets of silver. That one had been the hopes of man.

SANCTA SANCTORUM

By

LAURISTON SHARP

THERE are many things of life that I shall hope never to investigate. For time and again have I thought of this and that, of which I knew a little, and finding it pleasant, have desired to know it better; wherefore in times past I have approached this or that, and coming close, have felt it or smelled of it, tasted or heard it, embraced it or reasoned concerning it. And for many things of life this is not good to do.

So I investigated those houses of God built through the aid of Jesus, a carpenter whom many have called Christ; and I found the churches too distant from their source, lost beneath the shrinking cloak of love, too busy spinning hard tales of murder and blood, sin and strife. I found to be sham much of what I had been pleased to call true.

And once I visited Venice to hear what Baedeker calls "the soft, melancholy cries" of the gondoliers; and though I saw much else that was good, it gave me little pleasure, for the gondoliers barked only short, harsh, warning shouts. I journeyed to that storied site, Carcassonne, but it was full of Americans.

And sometimes, too, I carelessly fell in . . . well, love . . . and out again.

So it shall suffice for me now to stand apart in viewing numerous things I would hold dear, to keep my distance from that which should not be too closely observed. So the Buddhist shall ever appear to be a happy man, and Buddhism shall ever remain for me a quiet searching after peace, the happy accomplishment of a world of no-desire. And, "Om Mani Padmi, Om," that pure Gotama, the Enlightened One, shall ever be the dewdrop, the jewel in the heart of the lotus.

Nor shall I ever cross the piled-up Pyrenees to view that nestling, quaint Republic of Andorra, romantic with tales of ancient Moorish wars and present smuggling escapades, fearing

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to find, even in that remote and an-
tique place, the automobiles and elec-
tric lights which would spoil the
pleasure of my visit.

Nor anymore shall I speak to that
girl—the red-haired one—who lives
across the street.

BOOK NOTES

MOSTLY ABOUT BOOKS

This is the time of year for short
story anthologies, and we have not
been disappointed, at least not in the
quantity of such collections that have
made their appearance. First, prob-
ably because it is oldest and seems
most authoritative, although no an-
thology can claim that title justly,
there is Edward J. O'Brien's *The Best
Short Stories of 1926*. As usual, it
contains stories by Sherwood Ander-
son and Zona Gale, Wilbur Daniel
Steele, Margaret Culkin Banning, and
a host of others. Whether these stor-
ies are the best published stories of
the past year is a question that might
cause some debate; but unquestion-
ably many of them are good—as good
as any of the fiction that makes its
appearance in the magazines from
month to month. There are also the
best British short stories and the best
French short stories and the O'Henry
collection, all of them interesting
enough reading, but indicative of not
much, other than that the short story
is not what it might be.

Of course everyone is interested in
the biography of someone else, es-
pecially if it is written in the im-
pressionistic and narrative style, as
so many of the biographies written
today are being done. *Napoleon* by
Emil Ludwig has received much
praise lately, because it is an admir-
able, and at the same time an intense-
ly interesting portrait of the man of
destiny. Mr. Ludwig has also writ-
ten a protrait of a former emperor,
called *William Hohenzollern*. Her-
vey Allen's life of Poe, *Israfel*, is still
among the popular biographies, al-
though it was published some time
ago. Among the more authoritative
studies of lives are *Horace Greeley*
by Don Seitz, himself a newspaper

man and a great believer in the type of journalism that made Greeley's New York Tribune the most famous paper of its day; and Michael Sadleir's study of that staunch old novelist, Anthony Trollope. Oftentimes, those lives are more vital and more alive today than the stiff wooden characters that march through so many of the current novels.

Sinclair Lewis is out again, this time with his much heralded preacher novel, *Elmer Gantry*. In this book, Mr. Lewis hits the clergy of America as hard as he hit the Main Streets and the Babbits and the Arrowsmiths. Elmer Gantry is a hell-fire preacher, a bellowing evangelist, and a great religious leader, marching up the ladder of ecclesiastical success in his career of hypocritical and ignorant preaching. Mr. Lewis has aimed at the clergy and has hit them hard, hard enough to cause much dissension among the ranks of the church.

Houghton Mifflin announce the publication of *The Old Countess* by Anne Douglas Sedgwick, author of *The Little French Girl*, which was a best seller a few years ago, and at the same time, an extremely well written novel. We look forward to reading this new story by a very distinguished and capable writer.

An increasing number of well-printed and nicely bound books, really artistic as products of the book-maker's profession, have come from several publishers of late—books which are on their regular lists of fiction and non-fiction. The John Day Company, new publishers, comparatively, are making as a part of their policy only good books, both in appearance and in content. Alfred A. Knopf, publisher of the Borzoi books, has put out some extremely interesting examples of a modern tread in book-making. Boni and Liveright, in their Black and Gold Library edition, have achieved beauty in simplicity.

We are interested in watching this trend toward better books at a time when it seems as if there would be no end to poorly written and poorly bound volumes, manufactured merely for the profit to be derived from mediocre material.

C. G. S.



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THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS
By Struthers Burt
Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.00
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" . . . we will . . . show you the Delectable Mountains, which, they said, would yet further add to his comfort, because they were nearer the desired haven than the place where at present he was." *Pilgrim's Progress*.

And on that the story is based. *The Delectable Mountains* is the story of two people who are constantly in search of a haven, always seeking, and then, at last, finding it in themselves. This in itself shows the way in which Burt involves his symbolism, further entwining himself as the story progresses, for the haven that Stephen Londredth and his wife, Mercedes, are searching for is the very place in which they start, in their love, and the delectable mountains are a far way off.

But aside from that, the book is really of a comparative value, discussing in a clear way the present day influence of Puritanism in America. The story is told in a very sophisticated manner, but with a sophistication that is different. It is not that of Arlen; neither is it like Hecht or Van Vechten. Rather, it is a sophistication purely intelligent, a mental modernness that in no way affects morality.

The book makes one wonder if Mr. Burt is trying to escape himself. *The Interpreter's House*, his earliest novel, is, in some ways, so different from this later work, that one almost thinks Burt is attempting a new style. It would be very wise if he would remember his grammar, for after all, if Struthers Burt is to remain worthwhile, he must remain Struthers Burt. His touch of heaviness is almost relieving after all of the modern lightness, and his slight oppressiveness is not entirely unwelcome. It is very worthwhile for any reader, even though there are so many books to be read. Struthers Burt possesses characteristics for which you will search in vain in our other present day novelists, and it is an undisputed fact that in days like these, variety is more than refreshing.

M. R. S.

SHADOWS WAITING by Eleanor
Carroll Chilton
The John Day Company \$2.50
Brown Book Shop

Ghost-ridden lovers, ridden by the spirit of their half-mad parents and by the spell of their own too intangible dreams, drift through the pages of this book, wraith-like, and very exquisitely. It is truly "a melodrama of the intellect," in which the action takes place in the minds of the characters, in a clear, logical fashion, yet obscured by the note of fantasy which pervades the whole novel.

Dennis and Haeckla are the only real characters, and the story is theirs, limited only as they are limited by the inheritances of their parents. The action, past, present and future is so subtly blended that we do not know one from the other—all is inextricably bound up in the whole thread of their lives.

Practically the whole action takes place in the conscious thoughts of Haeckla. Movement in time and space is supplementary to the psychological stream of thought, but the novel is not static. Its method is a relief from the violent, realistic action of the majority of novels.

Not often does a first novel show such signs of maturity in literary ability as does *Shadows Waiting*. It is executed with a fine reserve, a graceful touch of fantasy or a somber note of the deeper feelings that form so large a part of the lives of Haeckla and Dennis.

The publication of *Shadows Waiting* proves that a John Day book is usually worth reading. C. G. S.

TAR, A MID-WEST CHILDHOOD
By Sherwood Anderson
Boni and Liveright \$2.50
Brown Book Shop.

TAR, A MID WEST CHILDHOOD is the fancy of Sherwood Anderson's youth, a symbol of his boyhood.

Mr. Anderson does not pretend to tell the autobiographical truth. In the foreword, he explains, naively, "I am a story teller, and cannot be expected to tell the truth."

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son is intensely fond of the youth, born in the restless fancy of the story teller. He traces his adventures, his wistful fancies, and his young hopes tenderly.

The sensitive child of a gentle and enduring mother, and a laughing shiftless father, Tar lives in his poor ramshackle home at the edge of town. At times, Tar loses his individuality and becomes all the under-fed and lonely little boys in small Middle-Western towns just after the Civil War. He is always pathetic, feeling intensely the turmoil of the household and the sordid life of the town.

The structure of the story is simple. Mr. Anderson follows the boyhood of his character, picturing the family—the scampering boys, the flighty father, a typical Anderson character.

Mr. Anderson remains a naive amateur in his latest book, an amateur who has achieved naive expression after honest struggle. Through the years that preceded his recognition in the literary world, Mr. Anderson was constantly writing. On stifling evenings in the tenements of Chicago after work all day in a warehouse Mr. Anderson scribbled sheet after sheet of white paper, threw it away, and started a new pile.

Always, Mr. Anderson says, white paper has had a strange fascination, for he feels the impulse to cover it all over with stories of imaginings.

Those who already know Sherwood Anderson will delight in this whimsically woven memory he has achieved.
W. W.

TOMORROW MORNING by Anne Parrish
Harper & Brothers \$2.00
Brown Book Shop

The Perennial Bachelor, which we haven't read, was acclaimed by many as a really great novel. *Tomorrow Morning*, which we have read, is a worthy successor of whatever may have preceded it. As a novel, it is an excellent character study of a common, ordinary, garden-variety mother and son, with their attendant relatives and neighbors. Although the story is of everyday people, as critics love to call these very unreal brain-

children, Miss Parrish has treated her characters in much the same fashion as Floyd Dell treated Nathaniel Windle, in *An Old Man's Folly*. There is that same touch of sympathy, that same portraying of the irony, the pathos of life.

There is Kate Green, whose career as an art student is nipped in the bud by her marriage to J. Montgomery Green, and who lives on and on in the hope that some day she will again take up brush and palette and transfer desires and memories onto canvass, which mutilation is denied her. Then there is the relatively unimportant Joseph Montgomery himself, who slides through life recklessly and heedlessly, immersed in the detail of blue tie and fresh *boutonniere*.

The son is also a Joseph, who ambles through childhood with toy theaters, and grows up to take an unsuited wife and soon lose her. So intertwined with these characters is the setting that a new paragraph would spoil the *ensemble*. Small Town life, pictured not jeeringly and Lewis-like, but sympathetically and realistically, with vivid pictures of Opal Mendoza, harum-scarum; J. Hartley Harrison, affected and childish; the Driggses, coarse and lovable; and Carrie, the sentimental old maid whose life is a succession of services to crotchety old Aunt Sarah.

One could go on enumerating every character in the book, characters not described and catalogued, but hinted at, unveiled at unexpected moments. Perhaps they are what really make *Tomorrow Morning* worth reading.

E. C. S.

SONG OF LIFE by Fannie Hurst
Alfred A. Knopf, New York \$2.50
Brown's Book Shop

Song of Life! A heavy, droning melody dinning into the ears of humanity. Fraught with pathos. Heavy with joy. Singing song. Love Song. Fannie Hurst's *Song of Life*.

It is the usual Fannie Hurst we find in this volume of short stories. The first story, which gives the book its title, one must force himself to swallow. It leaves an acrid taste in the mouth, as if bitter juice of it had found its way under the tongue; the

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smell of it beats into the nostrils, a sickish, sweetish smell. The other stories in the volume do not carry the sharply etched impression that this first one does. They move us all about: we delight in scenes of Ohio farms, then suddenly find ourselves in Union Square in midwinter; we make a sudden, mad dash for Paris, and back again, breathless and exhausted, but exuberant. Probably the best story of the nine is *Who Are You?*, incidentally the closing story.

Fannie Hurst is an adept at forming single, vivid impressions . . . impressions that last. To dwell upon the author's intimate knowledge of the conditions of which she writes is but to reiterate what is already well-known. The reader who picks up this book will know what to expect if he has had any previous experience with Fannie Hurst. *Madagascar Ho!* is perhaps the only story in the volume that ends just as you want it to end. The others . . . well, the others have more to Fannie Hurst to them, the effective, drooping ending that seems to come up and slap you in the face; the ending that you want to shake off. Depression. A. W. D.

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