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The FRONTIER

A Literary Magazine



STATE UNIVERSITY *of* MONTANA

NOVEMBER, 1921

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One Dollar a Year

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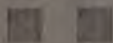
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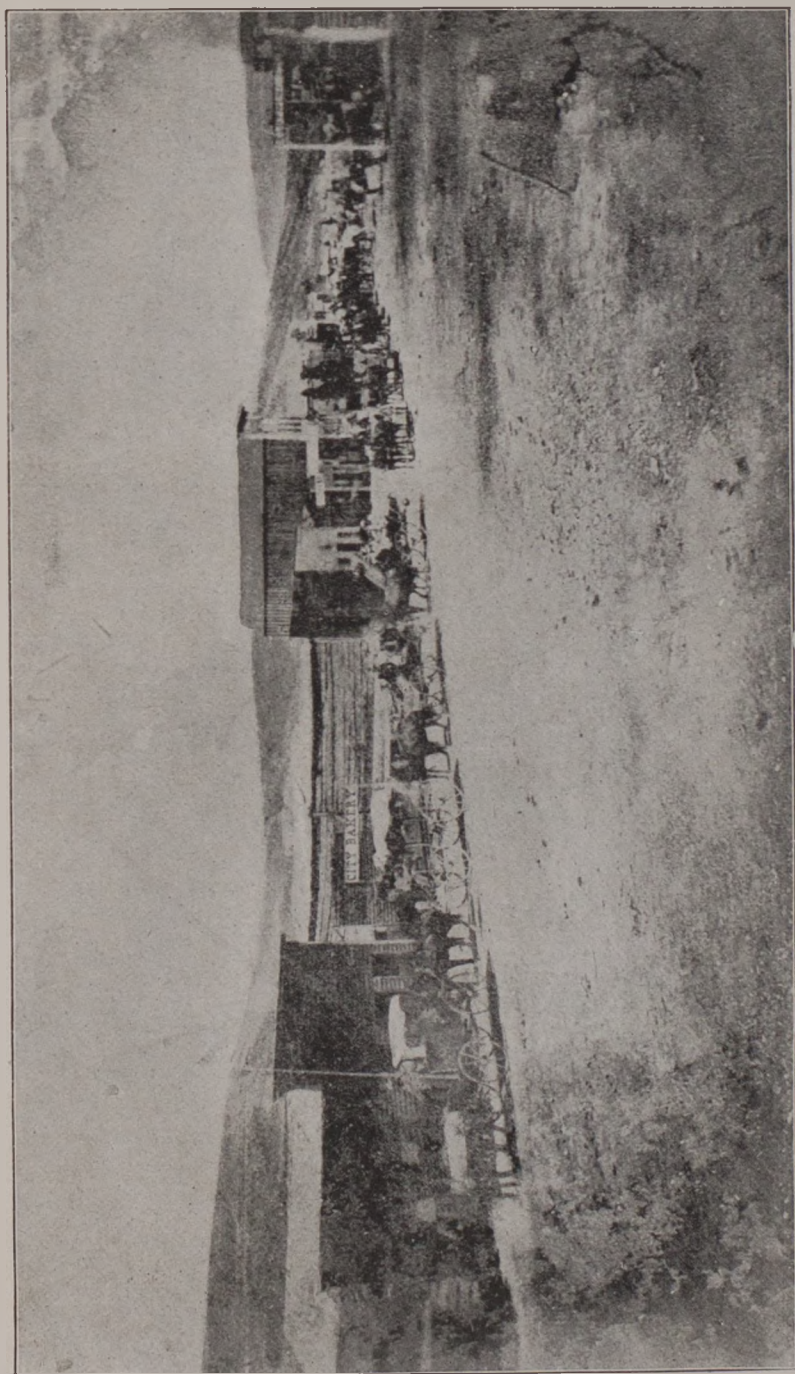
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THE FRONTIER

A Literary Magazine

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Published three times a year.

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VOL. II. NO. 1.

NOVEMBER, 1921

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EDITORIAL NOTICES

The Art department of the State University has brought to Missoula a splendid exhibit of oil paintings by thirty-one contemporary American artists, and for a week it has been open to the public in the Palace hotel ballroom. Only two other western cities have booked this exhibit, Seattle and Salt Lake City. Missoulians are thus given an opportunity that only the larger cities enjoy. The Art department is to be commended for its courage in undertaking such a difficult and expensive task. The pictures have delighted lovers of art and literature, and those lovers of life who see art as a necessary function of it.

In less than a month the Masquers, University players, will stage in Missoula a play by a great Russian which has never before been played in America, Leonid Andreyev's *He, The Man Who Gets Slapped*. The finest feature of this presentation will be the appearance of Mr. Maurice Browne and his wife, Ellen Van Volkenburg, in the leading roles. Mr. Browne was the director of the Little Theater in Chicago during its dramatically successful career. University students and townspeople will thus have an opportunity both to see these famous actors and to get touch with a great work of a Russian writer. The play has picturesque sequences of setting and of persons, and a wealth of human interest and meaning. Mr. Alexander Dean of the English Department is responsible for this production, both for making the appearance of Mr. and Mrs. Browne possible and for the direction of the play.

Dean Deloss Smith is bringing to Missoula a concert series of four artists. A month ago Arthur Hackett sang modern songs with a charm of voice and a fineness of dramatic interpretation that penetrated into the feelings and imagination of his most callous bearer. Madame Schumann-Heink, who has sung in Missoula before, is the next artist to appear. The community should support such a series enthusiastically and in large number. Again, Missoula is enjoying the opportunities of a large city.

During the winter, thanks to the activity of the public exercises committee of the University, three of the best known and most characteristic poets of America will speak and read before University and Missoula audiences, Mr. Vachel Lindsay, of Congo fame, Mr. John G. Neihardt, author of two epic poems of early Northwest history and Mr. Robert Frost, the poet who has laid bare the spirit of the New Englander of today. Mr. Frost will speak only in two other cities of the Northwest, Spokane and Walla Walla. It is through his friendship with Professor S. H. Cox, of the English department, that he has been persuaded to make a western trip.

This enumeration of literary and musical and art events reveals a determined effort to bring to students and the people of Missoula advantages which students in larger universities and people in larger cities enjoy. The support should reveal an appreciation of that fact. In addition to them, Mr. W. W. Ellsworth, for years president of the Century Company, will speak on the Writing Game, and Dr. E. T. Devine, the noted sociologist and an editor of *The Survey*, will speak on *Problems of the Pacific*. The University orchestra, under the direction of Professor Weisberg, will make its first appearance in December. Professor Weisberg is training a town chorus to present Handel's *Messiah*, and Dean Smith is training a town chorus of men. Art is alive at the University and in town. Encouragement will give it ever increasing activity.

The Frontier is receiving letters from many sections of the United States commending the quality of its material. Again poems have been chosen to appear in the volume of the best college verse of 1920-'21, this time five poems, Donald Stevens', *The Trout*; Lloyd Thompson's, *You Are Returning*; Mary Doerr's, *Renunciation*; Philip White's, *The Seasons*; and Jack Stone's, *To a Barbed Wire Fence*.

Blazing a Newspaper Trail

THIS IS the story of the first circulation campaign ever conducted by a newspaper in Montana. It is, therefore, a tale of trail-blazing in this western state. Colonel Frank D. Brown is the narrator and it was he who made the canvass, back in the era when Montana was in the making. The colonel told this story to the students in the school of journalism at the University of Montana, one night last winter. If it could be written so as to retain the charm which was given it by the quaint diction of the pioneer who told it, the story would become a classic.

To the pioneers of Montana, Colonel Brown is known as "Sandbar" Brown and there are many of the later generation of Montanans who have adopted this sobriquet in speaking of him. He is a remarkable character. He is a Virginian by birth; as a lad of sixteen he enlisted in the Confederate cavalry service in the Civil war. That service ended, he came west and, though he talks yet like a Virginian, he has become thoroughly a Montanan.

Intimately associated with the stirring events of more than one of the early placer camps of Montana, Colonel Brown knows all of the details of the thrilling history of Montana's beginning. Long experience in these and later camps has qualified him as a mining expert and he enjoys an enviable reputation in his profession. But it is as a story-teller that his friends love him most and there is no page of Washington Irving that possesses the grace and charm which characterize the tales of pioneer days in Montana which flow from the tongue of "Sandbar" Brown.

The Montana students, on the night when Colonel Brown told them this tale, were paying honor to the first editor of their state, Captain James Hamilton Mills. A portrait had been unveiled and presented to the school and the formal ceremony ended, when the colonel was called upon to give some sidelights upon the life of the pioneer occupant of an editorial room in Montana. His comment upon the pure life of Captain Mills was impressively gracious. Interspersed were many intimate stories, revealing details of newspaper life in the days of its beginning in the state. Among these stories was this one:

"You folks may be interested in hearing of the first campaign which was ever made for subscribers to a newspaper in Montana," said the colonel. "The earlier papers had been so eagerly sought by the miners that the question of circulation had not bothered the publishers to any extent. It had been just a question of meeting the demand.

"In 1878, Captain Mills had moved from Alder gulch to Deer Lodge City and had started The New Northwest, the weekly newspaper which he afterward made famous in a wider jurisdiction than is represented by the boundaries of Montana. The placer camps had, pretty generally, been abandoned. The rich diggings were worked out. A beginning had been made in quartz mining, but there was no mistaking the fact that Montana was mighty hard up that winter.

"I was an average citizen and the hard times had not passed me

up. I was just as near the bottom of my sack as a man could be. And there was no immediate prospect of relief. So I was tremendously pleased when, in the spring of 1878, Captain Mills came to me and said he wanted me to see if I couldn't get some subscribers for The New Northwest. He said the people of the territory were not taking the paper as they should and he thought I might be able to stir up some interest which would mean business for him.

"I had never done any soliciting, but I had to do something and I accepted the proposition. It is a long way from place to place in Montana now, but it was a good deal farther then. The question of transportation was serious, as I was without funds and had no horse. But I had a friend, Con Murphy, who ran a hotel and stable. To him I stated my case and he declared he had just the team and buckboard that I needed for my trip. And he very thoughtfully suggested that fifty dollars for expense money would probably be handy. Acting upon his own suggestion he not only provided me with the team, but he gave me a roll that contained the amount of money that he had prescribed.

"So I started upon the first circulation campaign ever conducted in Montana. I went from Deer Lodge City to Silver Bow, where they were sluicing and where the beginnings of Butte were just showing. Then I went to Wunderlich's, a famous old stage station on the trail to Salt Lake. From there my tour took me to Glendale, Three Forks, Silver Star, Virginia City and then back to Three Forks. It was a fine trip. The spring season was well along, the weather was delightful and I was received cordially wherever I stopped. And, by the way, I stopped everywhere. I stopped at every farm, every camp, every station. I stopped whenever I met a farmer or a miner or anybody else on the trail.

"And I never talked with a man or a woman that I didn't put his name on my subscription list. Money? Bless you, no. I wasn't collecting; I was just getting subscribers. And I got them. When I had finished my trip through those old-time counties, there wasn't a resident in any one of them who was not a subscriber to The New Northwest, whether he knew it or not. There was never a more successful circulation campaign than was mine.

"Well, I got back to Three Forks on my home journey. Smith's hotel was the stage station and I put up there for the night. I looked over my records and found that I had done pretty well. There were eighteen hundred new subscribers for Captain Mills. The New Northwest would cover southeastern Montana when I had reported, more thoroughly than it had ever been covered before and more thoroughly than it has ever been covered since. I was pretty well satisfied with myself.

"That's about all there is to the circulation campaign, except that on the night I stopped at the stage station at Three Forks, I sat into a poker game with Smith and a lightning-rod peddler who had come in from Salt Lake way just as I drove in from Virginia City.

"He was the first lightning-rod man to hit Montana. He had a fine outfit—a big red-and-gilt wagon, a splendid team of gray horses, both wagon and horses decorated with all the trimmings of a well-regulated circus turnout. He had a lot of lightning rod ma-

terial, weather vanes and all the necessary equipment for installing protection from the electric fluid. I was more interested in his outfit than I was in the invitation to the poker game, but I finally sat down.

"We three played all night—the hotel man, the lightning-rod man and myself. They were good players and I was better, I thought, than a green hand. I hadn't used much of my expense money, as I had been pretty well entertained all along the trip and I was able to start all right in the game. It lasted, as I have said, all night. And I shall always remember it as some poker game.

"Morning came and the hotel man had his business to look after. We checked up and cashed in. Smith, the hotel man, owned all of the lightning rods: I was the possessor of the red-and-gilt wagon and the gray team; and the lightning-rod man had what was left, which was mainly experience.

"After breakfast, Smith and I talked over the situation. He had twenty-two hundred feet of lightning-rods and I had the wagon and team. We concluded the best way to realize on our investment was to sell the rods. So we started out.

"Just before noon, we stopped at a little ranch and made our first attempt to sell lightning-rods. The house was a little log cabin and the barn was a shed with a sod roof. The woman who answered our call said her husband was gone and wouldn't be back till night. We talked lightning-rod to her, however, and convinced her that her future in Montana would be dim if her place were not equipped with our protection. We ate dinner as her guests and devoted the afternoon to placing lightning-rods on that log cabin and that sod-roofed barn. Just as we had finished our maiden job, the man of the house returned.

"We had thought it was a fine job. But it didn't impress that man just the way it did us. In fact, he was inclined to be emphatic in his disapproval. He told us that if we didn't take down every foot of those rods, he would shoot us both. The result was that we took down the whole equipment. He didn't insist, however, that we pay for our dinner and when we had removed the last bit of the rods, he was so good-natured that I took his name and added it to the subscription list of The New Northwest.

"We slept there at the ranch that night. In the morning we reviewed the situation. It was not encouraging. When the conference was ended, we drove down the road a way and dumped all of the twenty-two hundred feet of lightning rod beside the road. Smith went back to Three Forks and I drove on to Silver Bow. Our partnership was dissolved.

"At Silver Bow, I sold the team and wagon to a brewery for five hundred and fifty dollars. That night I got into another poker game and won two hundred dollars. The next morning I went to Andy Davis' bank in Butte and deposited the whole amount. Judge Davis never recovered from the shock that he received when I made that deposit. It would have been a hard winter for the Brown family if I hadn't sold that wagon. But, as it was, we got through first rate.

"I went on down to Deer Lodge City and turned in my list to Captain Mills. His eyes sparkled as he saw those eighteen hundred

names. When he asked me how much I had collected, he wasn't so well pleased. But he sent the paper to every address I had turned in. He had the biggest circulation then in the state and in a good many other states. The New Northwest was a great newspaper and my work made more people than ever acquainted with it. The captain gave me fifty dollars for my work.

"It must have been two years later that Captain Mills asked me to make another trip through Silver Bow, Madison and Beaverhead counties, to collect from those subscribers. I told him I wouldn't do it for ten thousand dollars—and I wasn't very well fixed, either."

So this is the story of a newspaper beginning in Montana. It is also the story of the first lightning-rod man that ever struck the state.

—DEAN A. L. STONE.

PIONEERS

Young, restless souls
Unconscious as the weatherbeaten crags
That guard wild passes into unwalked vales;
Unyielding as a mammoth pine, wind racked
When irate gods turn loose their icy flails;
Renouncing life of smirking, soft-skinned ease
To find and hold a manless waste unknown,
Wherein to spend the life blood of their years
In liberty to make their lives their own.

And growing old,
Content to view the work their hands have done
In fellowship with comrades sternly tried
By wilderness. Content to die enthralled
In what, long years ago, their youth decried.
Unwitting what their work has caused to be
That restless youth today must occupy,
That man-made cell, conventionality.

—JACK STONE.

Judge Shepard

JUDGE Shepard let his small eyes roam away from the dusty interior of his court house for perhaps the fiftieth time that afternoon. He was supposed to be listening to the evidence of a suit brought by the Ashley Creek Mining Company against a certain Jim Williams for some infringement of its rights, but the judge was not in the least interested in either evidence or defense. He had had his opinion on the case from the beginning and since he was to deliver the final verdict, it did not matter whether he listened or not. There was no crime involved and he could not impose a fine merely to fill his pockets, so he looked disinterestedly out of the open window. At the end of the long, dusty street which extended between two rows of shacks and tents, he saw the sunlight sparkling on the cool green river. Usually there was a number of people—cowboys, prospectors, gamblers, or dance-hall girls—on the street, but now the only living thing to catch the Judge's attention was a yellow cur, moving jauntily along with an eye out for trouble.

With mighty effort, the magistrate succeeded in bringing his gaze back to his courtroom. To him the case seemed to be proceeding even more dryly than usual. He shifted his fat arms uneasily, and looked rather disapprovingly at the defendant's attorney. A mere lawyer certainly ought to have enough consideration for the man who **must** hear cases, to make them interesting! However, the dry talk of the barrister was anything but what the Judge would have had it, so again he turned to look out of the window. The yellow dog had disappeared, and two young fellows were walking down the street toward the river. They, at least, were going to be cool, and this heightened the Judge's displeasure with the world in general and his court in particular. It wasn't the fact that he couldn't go down to the river himself—for his word was law in the Demersville court in the nineties, and he had often adjourned it for less cause than he now had—but he could not swim, and none knew the treachery of the Flathead river better than he.

He twisted around in his chair again, and threw a bleary-eyed, would-be-stern glance over the courtroom. Almost every person was either fanning himself or mopping perspiration. Suddenly the judge arose. "Gentlemen," he said pompously, "court will be adjourned for fifteen minutes so that we may cool ourselves and quench our thirst." and he led the way to the Two Jims Bar, next door.

"There's Idaho Hentree's dawg again," said the Judge as he leisurely returned to the court room. "If he finds somethin' to fight, there'll be a fine little scrap in our peaceful metropolis before long."

"Wall," replied one of the court room loafers, "I wish tuh hell there'd be one. This town's been so dead since Tex Carter was killed it's a regular cemetery!"

The wish was granted. Scarcely had court been reopened, when a chorus of growling and barking came to the Judge's ears through the open window. He spoke as he moved swiftly toward the door.

"This court is adjourned until the dog fight is over—who's the other dog?"

"A new one," replied one of the attorneys. "Must've come up on the boat today."

"Gee, but he's a whirlwind!" ejaculated another onlooker.

The Judge rubbed his fat hands together gleefully. "Here's where Idaho's pup gets licked," he murmured, more to himself than to any of the crowd. "Maybe Idaho won't crow over that dawg so much any more—hope he cleans him up good."

The wish was granted—but some people can never be satisfied. A fight is never really pleasing to the audience unless it is a long, hard one—and the yellow dog had the spirit of most of his kind. The moment he knew he was whipped, he was through. The ring of spectators had hardly formed when he broke and fled, with the other dog at his heels. The crowd was disappointed and the Judge was angry. Everything was going wrong.

Back in the court room he turned toward the court, his face red and mottled with rage. The barristers looked at one another with dismay. No one knew what his Honor might do when he was so furious. A call sounded down near the river, and he did not even glance in that direction. One of the lawyers did, however, and braved the displeasure of the Judge enough to touch his arm.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but a couple of men are coming up the street carrying something. I can't tell for sure, but it looks like a corpse."

"Have them bring it into the court when they get here," commanded the magistrate, without looking back.

"Very well, Your Honor."

Several men went to assist the two who were carrying the body. A few moments later it was brought into the court room and placed upon a chair. The judge looked severely down at the man who remained beside the corpse.

"Who is this man?" he demanded.

"I don't know, Your Honor. Bill and I were swimming down by the boat-landing and he was floating past, and we dragged him to shore. His name wasn't on him."

"Was there anything in his pockets?"

"Yes, Your Honor. This six-shooter, loaded, and a twenty-dollar bill."

The Judge assumed his sternest judicial air. The mottled red disappeared from his face, and beneath his hard exterior he felt pleased.

"Since the man gives no name, we must call him John Doe. Where was John Doe carrying his gun?"

"In his hip pocket, Your Honor."

"Was it completely hidden?"

"Yes, Your Honor."

The judge leaned forward and shook his finger sternly at the corpse. "John Doe, the court hereby finds you guilty of carrying

concealed weapons, and"—with a threatening glance around the court, he extended his hand and finished, "I hereby place your fine at twenty dollars."

The young man who had answered the questions produced the bill and put it in His Honor's outstretched palm.

Judge Shepard's countenance did not change as he slipped the bill into his pocket. He turned to the man, who still remained beside the corpse, and ordered peremptorily, "Remove John Doe from the court room!" Then looking at the court, announced: "The court is now ready to proceed with the evidence in the case of the Ashley Creek Mining Company versus Jim Williams."

—EUGENIE FROHLICHER.

PROPHECY

As when the darkness of a vast cathedral,
Is dispelled by altar fires before the place
Where God lies crucified by pride,
Love will break thru pretense,
And your face
Will be transfigured with a holy light.

While the organ thunders in the lofty nave
The gates swing open from the inner side,
And I the penitent without,
Fulfilling then my part,
Will come into the lambent shrine
With Easter in my heart.

—MARY ELIZABETH DOERR.

The Schrappers

IT WAS about 1908 that Earl Schrapper and his wife, each with a pack on his back, left Silvinite, a small mining town in the Yaak Valley, and went in search of a home. Just above Hell Roaring Creek they came upon a fertile stretch of level land. Here they built a shelter of fir boughs, neatly arranged their camp duffle, and called the place Home. Then came many days of packing in on their own backs supplies, dishes, a couple of chairs, a few books, and some tools. Then they went at the task of felling tamaracks for the cabin, of splitting them into boards for the floor, doors, and window sashes. Many days, beginning at daylight, found them at night without boards because of the twist in the logs. But at last the logs were in place, and the spaces left for the doors and windows were framed with split cedar. All was ready except the shakes for the roof.

While he cleared the land of the trees that there might be a garden, she bucked cedar logs into the proper lengths and then split them into shakes. Late into the summer they worked, each day long with weary hours of heavy toil. The garden was in, the cabin was built, their supplies were in, and they were beginning to look forward to the winter with a feeling of pleasure, as their work had been well done.

Then came the forest fires. He went on the fire line, she cooked in the camp. Whole townships went up in smoke. The Service was frantic and seemed utterly unable to check the devouring flames. Settlers were every day fleeing for safety before the destructive flames. Over night the town of Silvinite was wiped out. Rumors went about that not a place in the valley would be saved. Still the fire-fighters stayed on the job, digging trench after trench as the fire kept advancing.

And with the fire-fighters were the Schrappers. Gladly they worked, he on the line and she in the camp, the first ones out and the last ones in, giving as freely of their labor to the Service as they did of themselves to their Home. The danger over, they assembled their duffle and started back to their cabin under the tamaracks. Weary and foot-sore they at last reached the place, but instead of the tamaracks and the little home, they found great black snags standing above ground that was white with ashes, and a smouldering heap of coals where once had been the cabin.

She sank to the ground and wept great bitter tears while he sat beside her and said nothing. Imagine the anguish, the disappointment, the shattered hopes and the long hours of hard toil wasted. Imagine the utter blankness of things. But courage and a loyal soul surmount all difficulties, and with a smile coming through the tears as the sun comes through the rain she looked up to him and said, "It's gone, Earl, but it's home, and we will begin again."

Again began the toil of felling logs for the cabin, the dragging of them into place and the erection of the walls. They began at sunup, their hearts set upon their purpose. At night they rested, weary from the toil, black from head to foot from the ashes on the ground and

the charred trees. But the walls were in place and the roof shaken before the snows came. Within the walls of the cabin they raised a tent, and there during the long weary months of winter she split cedar while he planed it into smooth boards. The entire inside of the cabin was closely sealed, the window sills and sashes were put into place. Then came the making of furniture—a dining-room table, a buffet, chairs, bed, and dresser. Together they struggled, together they labored, she splitting the logs, he working them into boards and then into furniture.

Spring came. The winds were warm and the snows melted. The river Yaak rose and overflowed its banks. The grass turned green and every breeze had the soft fragrance of budding willows and early mountain flowers. And with the passing of the dead white snows and the frozen winds passed also the lethargy and morbidness of winter toil. With the coming of the mild winds of spring came also a new desire to win out in the Big Game. So with their courage strengthened, their hopes freshened, they each took an axe and began the gigantic task of clearing the land. The brush they piled and fired, the logs they threw on top of the coals. Around the stumps other fires were built until, little by little, the wilderness began to give way. Slowly, very slowly, the clearing grew. Each day they wrested from the forest a little larger space for their meadows.

But now came the realization that supplies were running low. Their cash was gone, except for fifteen cents. One night while they were eating supper Mrs. Schrappier reached over to the empty sugar-bowl, deposited therein the fifteen cents, and turning to her husband said, "Earl, we must add to this every cent we can get this summer so that when winter comes we can have enough for one of us to go on the outside and get a job. We are going to need it for another stake." That sugar-bowl was their savings bank. Into it there must somehow be placed eight dollars, that one of them might have car fare to a job. They laid their plans whereby the money might be made, snuffed out the candle, and went to bed.

At three o'clock that morning they were awakened by a loud pounding on the door—fire-fighters clamoring for them to arise and prepare a breakfast.

"How many of you are there?" asked Mrs. Schrappier.

"Fifty Ma'am," answered one of the men, "Can you feed us?"

"Yes, if you can wait about an hour," she replied. To this they readily agreed, and in a few minutes the candles were lighted, the fire started, a couple of the men were busy hauling water and peeling potatoes while she was busy frying bacon and baking biscuits. Breakfast over, everybody pitched in and aided in the washing of the dishes. Then came the payment for the meal, and into the sugar-bowl went twenty-five dollars. That noon another meal was served and another twenty-five dollars went into the sugar-bowl. The fire camp was established just a few miles from the house. Mrs. Schrappier baked cakes and sold them. Then too, fire fighting is dirty work and the tired men had Mrs. Schrappier do their washing. Also socks soon have big holes in them and men as a rule do not like to darn holes. This Mrs. Schrappier did at a small charge. Then the crew moved

farther away and Mr. Schrapper went with them as a packer. Regularly as the pay came to the men he sent his home and it was, with the rest of the earnings, deposited in the sugar-bowl savings bank.

When winter came the Schrappers counted up their summer's earnings and found that they had four hundred and fifty dollars in the form of cash, checks, and money-orders. With this amount on hand it was not necessary for either of them to go in search of work. They would be able to spend the winter in their home. So they sent to Troy and had the necessary provisions hauled out to Silvinite, (the end of the wagon road), and from that place they packed it in on their backs. That winter they had a strong desire for chickens and eggs. Mr. Schrapper was too busy building barns and sheds to go for them, so Mrs. Schrapper laced on her snow shoes and went for them herself. She purchased two chickens and putting them in a gunny-sack started back to her home. She carried those two chickens on her back for forty miles, being able to find her way through the woods only by the blazes on the trees.

Earl Schrapper and his wife have been on the claim for a number of years now. Roads have entered the valley and in a year or so they hope that there will also be a commendable mail system installed. People are beginning to find the Yaak valley, and in the fall there is a large number of hunters who go there in search of game. The Schrappers are fairly prosperous; not that they are rich; no, not that, but rather that they work together for the furtherance of the happiness of each. Now their meadow is of some size. They have a splendid team and a cow. Their buildings are well built and of sufficient number to care for all of their present or immediately future needs. They are proud that by their efforts they have accomplished a hard task, the wresting of a Home from the wilderness.

However, a home without children is not complete, it is lonesome and but a house wherein to live, a shelter in the time of storm. To the Schrappers a home means more than that. Home is a haven of rest and the great center of happiness. So they sent to the orphans' home and were granted the privilege of having an orphan girl come to them to bring the sunshine for which they hungered. Mrs. Schrapper, her face lighted up with a light that came from her great generous heart, her eyes filled with tears of a happiness long withheld, said, "As yet we don't know what she looks like, whether she is pretty or homely. Some times I hope she is homely, for then I'll love her all the more. Things won't be so lonesome on the claim from now on, 'cause she will be with me. Oh, there are so many things that I can do for her. I can teach her how to cook and sew. And I'll teach her how to fish. Then we can go hiking together and gather flowers and have just the loveliest time. Why, I have several boxes of pretty things ready for her now. Then when winter comes and it's time for school we can arrange to board her out, tho it's going to be hard to let her go. Oh, but I hope she loves me, because it's going to feel mighty nice to have a pair of little arms about my neck."

And Earl Schrapper leaning against the door jamb, his pipe between his teeth, blew contented smoke-rings and said, "And I—well, I'll steal her away from you part of the time, you can bet."

—GEORGE L. DALLY.

Blue Sky

SUNSHINE and rain—the sky warriors who parry over man-desertinies. The homesteading sections of a drouth-scourged prairie at a summer's end attest the fracas. Glistening sandstone buttes, crowned by sheep herders' monuments, pyramid-like, gazing out over the land of broken promises. The hard baked gumbo, the aimless fences, the lethargic herds of cattle, horses and sheep, the inscrutable sky like a blue print with one tiny, white mass of cotton pinned to it—this is the land each soft, gentle, blue-and-green April gives hope of prosperity for the asking, and each August pulls back the camouflage to reveal the glittering blue and hard brown underneath.

Brilliant, stupefying sunshine; a long, long, weary trail, narrowing away to where a tinfoil blue sky meets low, brown, red, purple reflecting hills. The broad, hot rubber tires sprinkled fine, gray, acrid dust into the air and on the brown prairie at each side of the road, as the automobile travelled on and on, never seeming to get nearer to that seething horizon.

Many, many miles, then a tiny, deserted shack, a sightless mummy of the dried prairie tragedy. No water there, and the engine was hot. Over a few more hills and the glittering reflection of a puddle nearly blinded the driver.

His companion seized a drinking cup and a pail. The water was beside the road. Faint white alkali lines showed how it had gradually receded from the rim of the hole. Many cattle tracks in the gumbo were now baked to hard cups.

Carefully the girl with the drinking cup labored to fill her pail. She wanted as little dirt as possible.

"Hurry!" commanded her father sharply.

"I can't, Dad. It's so shallow."

Her head grew dizzy under the vise-like pressure of the sun rays. Finally the pail was full.

As the car started again half a dozen red cattle progressed slowly toward the tiny pool. Their ribs showed plainly; their noses were dry. They looked sullen, like a dog that has been starved and then whipped. Deliberately they nosed the water, drank only a mouthful and slowly strolled away. They were almost beaten; the sun, once a grateful presence, had sucked up all their water and absorbed all their food until there was nothing left but useless brown strings.

The girl watched the beasts curiously, and with a shudder. But then she did not realize, that if there were not some rain soon to quicken life over the gray prairies these cattle would grow still leaner, starve and finally freeze to death in the winter. A whitened cow skull glistened beside the road as the car hurried on, a startling picture of what those red cattle back there might become.

A tiny cloud, the white of bleached clothes, perched itself just above the edge of the horizon. It seemed etched there, not even casting a shade. It was offering a stone when one asked for bread.

Even the car was rebelling. Laboriously it climbed the side of a coulee until the driver could see a shack a hundred yards or so away.

"We'll have to stop there," he decided. The road ran between two

fences; one kept a short-stemmed, yellow wheat field from starving cattle and horses; beyond the other the arid range rolled away and away.

The motorists stopped. A little girl in faded gingham, her mother in a more faded gown, and three small boys in overalls strung themselves around the step. The barrels, standing beside the house in the only shade one could see, no matter how far one looked, gave testimony that these people hauled their water.

"Yes, we haul it," the woman stated in a lifeless voice. "It's about four miles, I guess."

"I'll go after some," the father told his daughter. "That car won't go until I get it."

"Won't you come in?" The faded woman invited the girl. There was only one room. A scrawny curtain hung over one of the two windows. A sheet of wrapping paper covered the other. A table, a few chairs and some boxes, a stove, one bunk and a wash basin pretended to furnish the house. The girl drank some tepid liquid handed to her in a tin cup and sickened at the soda-alkali taste. The children had disappeared—almost. The boys stood outside the door gazing in discreetly. Their mother eyed them menacingly, but said nothing. Presently the little girl returned with three small turnips in her hand. She had had them concealed in the root cellar. The mother peeled the vegetables and the children pounced on them, eating them with animal craving.

That was the only activity the family exhibited during the afternoon. They seemed to be in a lethargy—almost half-baked, literally. They had been there four years in the same condition. It wasn't ambition—just a tenacity that didn't know enough to let go. The husband and his brother were in town, getting a loan. Presently they would come back and tomorrow and next year they would do the same thing.

The autoist had hardly returned when the sky began to be heavily clouded. A desperate run made an inland hotel some eight miles away. How those clouds piled, luxuriously, deliberately. The watchers in the way station held their breaths.

"Lord—if it would rain—"

It hailed.

In thirty minutes it was all over, the sky shimmered blue again—and the broken grain lay drugged under the sun.

—ANNE CROMWELL.

FAMILIARITY

He posed you in a gown of black
That shows your arms, your throat's soft curve,
Your head thrown back, the certain swerve
Of gold from brow to neck. In that you lack
No sign of beauty. But in your eyes—
I know—are loathsome, dormant lies.

—ANN WILSON.

What the Moon Knows

(In imitation of the style of Lord Dunsany.)

I.

THE MOON wore a broad-faced frown as she looked down upon the Badlands that bare-skied night. She smiled a sardonic smile upon the white tepees of the Crow encampment in the side-gully that led to the Great River—the white tepees that looked to her like ghosts dancing in the checkered opening among the cottonwoods.

The buttes quivered and their regular mechanically conventional designs still quivered with the heat of the day but lately past; all the weird beauties, the weirdness that amount almost to horror, of the Badlands summer night, came forth abundantly over the land weary of day; and the coyotes howled. But the Moon did not notice these things—the ancient Moon is very blase, and besides, she was intent upon the proceedings of a little band of Crows, eight or ten of them, who walked gingerly down the little valley, now slipping swiftly over a bit of prairie, anon diving into the blackness of a clump of choke-cherry bushes, or a bunch of stunted, sharp-thorned bull-berries, again emerging into the deceptive white light of another cactus-grown prairie. The Moon watched their creeping, which took them to the bank of their beloved River, that child of demons; for whispers came from far hostile tribes toward the Hunting Lands of the Setting Sun, saying that the River was born in travail in a land where devil-works abounded, and fires, and bubbling waters; and where the ground is firm to walk upon, for the devils of that Demon-land shake it from beneath mightily.

In the moonlight, their lance-slim, bronze bodies glistening with sweat, the Crows moved swiftly, noiselessly along the river bank, bearing in their hands strange things: one bore the sweet inner bark of the willow, and the willow's sweet, pithy shoot-tips; one had a small wicker basket of last year's maize, wrinkled and flinty; another carried the tongue of the great bull-bison that the hunters had dragged in in the afternoon, and part of the choice fat hump; the foremost, and seemingly chief, carried a beaded pouch, such as warriors carry the rank Indian-tobacco in; and he swung a blazing stick of greasewood as he strode, to keep alive the fire at its tip. In various symbolic vestments they were decked and feathered medicine-bonnets—the full regalia of the Crow medicine men. And they went on, until they reached a high, bare, flat-topped rock rising directly out of the water—a rock all striped and dabbed, and ringed about with colors, in the way in which Manitou has seen fit to color the Badlands. Slowly, ceremoniously, and chanting a monotonous dirge in the cracked, quavering yelling-voice of the Plains Indian, they mounted the rock; and the old Moon, distant witness of all men's doings, knew that it was the sacrifice-rock of the village; and she looked closer, and saw that its sides were crudely daubed with totems and fetishes of the gods of the clan. But she was amazed at the sight

of the sacrifice of this night, for seldom before had she seen such bounteous gifts to all-ruling Manitou.

And when the medicine-men spread their sacrifices, their gifts, on the rock, and a pile of the tobacco smoked in a crack of the mouldering stone, they cast themselves down in a ring, and made their medicine; and their Chief Medicine-maker prayed the prayer of the Rain God.

And in this wise he prayed:

"O, Lord of the Thunder-Birds, thou weeper of tears that make glad the Earth! O, Freshener of the Fields! Father of the pools where the fat ducks swim at leaf-fall! Come thou, oh come, and make glad the land of thy children with thy presence! Our maize shrivels for lack of thy rain-gift, and the grass dies in the valleys. Few will be the rabbits in the snow-time, and pinched will be the belly of the barking-rat-of-the-prairie. Come thou, make our fields to smile, and the fish that inhabit the River to rejoice at the sound of thy coming! O Manitou, Spirit, loose thou the Thunder-Birds, and let the clatter of their wings be heard in the land; and make to lie down this earth that cumpers the wings of the wind in the hills, and darkens the sun in our valleys. Make still the heat-snakes that reign over thy land in the sun. Make to rejoice the land of thy people, that they may make glad, and smile again in thy sight!"

And when they had done, they arose, and departed from off that rock, and took their way silently toward the silent, smoke-crowned tepees; and as they came near, they passed through small patches of maize, knee-high, but yellow; and the leaf of the maize was sere, and it was wrinkled, and twisted in fantastic spirals, which bowed mockingly in the hot night-wind, and whispered dry jeers at the stern-faced priests who stalked in the midst of the maize.

But the Moon went, and came again; and she waned and grew again, and became dim and waxed yet again; and still the Thunder-Birds only clattered fruitlessly in their burning cages in the Western Sun; or they came and peered over the horizon, croaking hoarsely; but they only snorted, dry-throated, in passing, and no drop did they shake from their wings, though they were wet with their dip in the Waters of the West—for the land was filled with the odor of lands afar off refreshed. And nightly did the priests make medicine at the Medicine Rock! But the Rain God came not, and the burning East Wind knew not mercy; and the sneaking coyote, and the mink or otter wrangled over the nightly sacrifice.

And the cottonwoods became dry and dusty along the streams, which became brooks, from brooks shrank to runlets, then to chains of stagnant, frog-infested pools, green and slimy; and finally became baked, stony channels, paved with crisp, curled gray flakes of mud; the choke-cherry withered long ere it approached to blackness, and the wild currant was hard and bitter. And the pith shrank in the stem of the sedge-reed in the rain-pool, and it became a hollow flute for the passionate East Wind to play his mad songs on. Longer and longer grew the trail of the otter from his mother Water to the Sacrifice Rock at night; and the voice of the frog was heard no more, and the song of the robin was stilled. The horned-toad reigned on his dusty rock.

And the rabbit's young died in the nest, for the milk of the she-rabbit was dried in her dugs, and her stomach yearned for the fresh grass-roots; and the whelp of the coyote was runted and sickly. The corn of the squaws by the river became as it had not been, in the teeth of the wind; and the wind sang as he swept through the strips of buffalo meat hung to dry in the sun—sang a dirge, for he saw the time to come. And the rattlesnake reigned supreme in the land that is the Badlands.

* * * *

The time of the snows came, and in the camp there was naught but jerked venison and the smoked haunch of the young buffalo-cow. The hares in the hills were thin and scrawny, and no grass filled their stomachs; few were the geese that had honked southward over that parched land in the autumn, and scarce one had the arrows winged. There were no buds on the willows, for they had become dried out; and the people had no willow tips, nor any green-stuffs to eat with their venison.

And their gums became soft in their jaws, and their teeth became loose in their heads, for there was no vegetable to be eaten with jerked meat; slowly, one by one, fell out the teeth of the young men, and of the old; and famine and pestilence reaped in the camp. Dreadful were the sufferings of the men in the frozen land; and they were thin and cold in their lodges, despite the heaped-up fires of acrid cottonwood.

Many were the graves that were reared on the prairie in the snows of that winter-time; and high were they built, for the coyotes starved, and the hard-pressed, gaunt wolf came down howling from his timber. Desperately did the coyotes leap and tug at the lowest of the graves, and pull at the stilted bier; until the gripping hand of iron winter broke the cottonwood crotch, the bier tilted, and the frozen corpse thudded to the steel-hard ground; and the coyotes found scarcely old bones, with dry skin stretched over them tightly, as is the calf-skin stretched over the top of the tom-tom that the Crows beat in the festival dances.

And in their howls of disappointment was intermixed a thin snicker of astonishment; for the lips of the corpse snarled back in a grin over jaws that were toothless.

II.

The same old Moon grins sardonically over the edge of the hills, from a sky where she reigns undisputed by any cloud; the same heat-snakes dance and make festival in the same Badlands, which have lost none of their color of old.

But now, in the gully that leads to the River born of fire-demons, a white cottage gleams in the opening of the camp, and a similar one is in the next opening; and much of the land is squared out, and straight rows of growing things weave cubistical patterns in the squares.

And as the Moon watches, she sees a wagon leave a cottage, and pass along the white road which follows the medicine-path of yore. Other wagons join the first at each farm-stead, until several of them form a procession which goes to a little chapel, built near to the

ancient Medicine Rock at the River's side. The people file into the chapel, and sees no more; but she hears singing, and one of her messengers dances back, a sprightly beam, and says that they pray, so she puts her ear down close, and she hears a strong, deep voice pleading with the Almighty God.

And the prayer runs in this wise:

"O gracious and almighty God, look Thou with favor upon Thy people who cry unto Thee, and bless them, and have mercy upon them; for they come to plead for yet another addition to Thy numerous gifts. Oh God, grant Thou that the flood-gates of heaven be opened, that the eternal windows of heaven be shattered; that Thy blessing pour forth in fruitful waters on this, a parched and weary land. O God, we, thy people, crave Thy blessing, and beg the boon of Thy gracious rain, that Thy children may not hunger, and the cry of the babe in hunger may not be heard in the desolate land." And the people said, "Amen."

And in her heart, the all-seeing Moon knew that the Rain-Manitou of the Crows, and the Almighty God of these people, were one and the same; and she knew, too, that the one prayer would go unheeded, even as had the other.

As the procession moved in sadness homeward, the ancient Moon peered closer; and she saw that the wagons moved through the square fields, and that what she had taken for greening things were dried and shrivelled blades of wheat, dead and sere, as if some blind old horse had chewed and sucked at the grain which it had no teeth to bite off; and the leaves of the corn were sere as of old, and twisted fantastically in spirals, which bowed and ducked as of old, mocking at the folk who rode through the fields, silent in their sorrow.

And the old Moon, as if suddenly remembering something, smiled a dry smile, deep down in her dusty, dry old heart; for she knew something which these Earth-fools could never know. For how were they to know that the souls of those dead Crows of that drought-winter of long ago were as a curse in the land? That it is they who come on the wings of the East Wind at night, and gnaw and suck at the greening shoots, to try to ease the aching of their scurvy-ridden, toothless jaws, to make their gums solid and strong again? For the Western Hunting Paradise is closed to toothless men; one's teeth must be good to eat of the great feasts in that Land; and one must not talk as a lisping, shrunken-jawed old man, in the councils and hunting-parleys of the warriors in the Happy Hunting Ground.

—BURT TEATS.

The lonely seeker after Brotherhood took heart when he saw that the spiked iron gates of the Great House were open; he could not know, poor man, that the lock was broken.

Alone

JIM WRIGHT stood in dazed silence, the useless telephone receiver in his hand, and listened to the crackle of the fire in his sheep stove. The window above the bed on the opposite side of the cabin showed a fast-fading strip of light at its top. Its lower surface was banked with fresh snow. Below, on the bed, the form lay still now. If he could only reach out across those limitless reaches of soft, deep snow covering peaks and gorges, and get a doctor, she would pull through.

He replaced the receiver and gave the crank a violent turn. Then he raised it to his ear and listened. The only sound it recorded was a blurred buzzing, broken now and then by a sharp metallic click. This meant that somewhere in those seventy miles of white expanse the line was broken.

He slammed down the receiver, crossed the cabin to an empty milk case by the stove, and sat down with his chin in his hands.

"God, what a fool to bring a woman—but then, she wanted to come."

It was wholly dark now. He rose to light a candle but thought better of it and put some wood into the stove, from the pile behind the door. Then he returned to his seat. Outside sounded the long, trembling notes of a cougar's scream. The light which escaped from cracks in the stove danced over the floor and up the walls to where the hams were slung from the ridgepole. Then the form on the bed moved and he heard a light sigh. He went to her side and whispered, "I'm going to the springs for a doctor, tomorrow, Mary."

There was no answer. The woman's eyes looked through him at something beyond. He knew that he would not go to the springs tomorrow.

He turned to the table, took down the bear skin which hung above it and spread it over the blankets on the bed.

Mechanically he returned to the stove, took up the coffee pot, put in four cups of water from the pail on the table, and placed it on the fire. This done, he seated himself on the milk case and covered his face with his hands.

"Why did I take it? There are single men who could handle the job—and they knew at the office that I was married—Oh, God, if that telephone would work."

Another scream filled the cabin. Something scratched at the top of the window. Jim filled the stove and went over to the bed. She was asleep. But her cheeks, as he lightly brushed them, were burning. Her breathing came in short jerks. He returned to his box by the stove.

The hours dragged by until the moon had come and painted the crystals on the strip of window and gone. The final hour of darkness, just before the first light showed in the east, had come. Again sounded that tremulous scream.

There was a rustle in the bed and he crossed to it. He knelt at the head. Her breath was in gasps as she whispered, "Jim." He

rose and lit a candle. When he returned the breathing had stopped.

He stood, candle in hand, and stared at the face on the pillow. The flickering light painted his shadow in huge, grotesque forms on the opposite wall. He was standing there when the light crept in through the window. The flame burned down and touched his finger. He moved to the door, took down his snow shoes, and returned. He wrapped the body in the bear skin and went out, leaving the door open.

* * * *

The following month the station at Brushy Fork was found deserted.

—JACK STONE.

PUCK PHILOSOPHIZES

When I leave this sullen earth,
If another sees my birth,
Let it be no golden shore
Where harps are played for evermore.
Eternal strains would rouse my ire
As quickly as the village choir.

I'd rather find a sunny glade
With birds and grass and sun and shade,
And clouds adrift in April's sky—
A quiet spot where I can lie
And help the lazy time along
By singing just my bit of song.

Perhaps before the sun had set
I'd light a phantom cigarette,
And lie there puffing rings of smoke
At all the busy insect folk,
Or, swaying from a daisy stem,
I'd sing my little song to them.

A halo is too dignified—
I wouldn't wear one if I died!
If some old saint should hand me one,
I'd leap upon the setting sun,
And riding on its orange rim
I'd sink to hell and laugh at him.

—HOMER M. PARSONS.

Frozen Flowers

ETHEL ANDREWS shivered as she buttoned her sweater and pulled her uncomfortable chair closer to the coal stove. She was warmer, but the light from the lamp fell so weakly on her book that she closed it impatiently. She admitted to herself that she would be very glad to get back home to furnaces and electric lights and comfortable deep-cushioned chairs. "Socializing the rural community through the agency of the school," as the book on rural sociology which she was reading put it, was at times rather disheartening even for one so genuinely interested as she. But she had caught a glimpse of what trained, sympathetic leadership could accomplish, and she had accepted the country school in spite of the disapproval of her parents and school-mates. The keen interest in school and community affairs which she had aroused showed that she was succeeding. It was only here at the Sperrys' where she boarded that her courage ebbed. Nothing which she did had moved them an inch from their rut.

The girl glanced across at Mrs. Sperry, whose work-worn hands kept up a steady, rhythmic movement as the steel needles glinted thru the gray wool she was knitting. There was a fascination for the younger woman in watching her patience as the sock gradually took shape. There was such a dull repetition. She wondered what Mrs. Sperry thought of as she knitted those endless gray socks. Or did she think at all? But Ethel resolutely opened her book. She had tried to penetrate Mrs. Sperry's thoughts so often that she knew the only result would be her own confusion. She had always met a blank wall of reserve when she probed below the surface of everyday affairs.

The Sperrys had never boarded the teacher before, although they were the nearest family to the school. But that year the youngest daughter, Sarah, had married, so that Mrs. Sperry was really glad to have her. She had apologized for the room she had offered the girl.

"I know it ain't furnished very nice, and livin' in Chicago, you won't be used to not havin' things handy," she said. "But I'll try to make it just as comfortable as I can."

She had made it comfortable too, as far as she could. It was a small room downstairs, opening off the formal "front room" which was never opened in winter. The room had been Sarah's, and from its very atmosphere one felt that she must have been dainty and wholesome.

"Sarah fixed it all up herself," Mrs. Sperry said proudly. "She always did have her knack of makin' old things look like new. She painted that woodwork white herself, and papered with that yellow paper." Her tone was almost wistful as she went on. "She took and scrapped the old peeled varnish off the bed and painted it cream color. She wanted to fix up the parlor too, but her father wouldn't hear of it. He never was much of a hand to fix up the house. He never seemed to see anything that needed fixin'. Sarah had some pretty curtains too, and a yellow and blue and black braided rug, but she took them with her when she got married, and she fixes her city house up now just like she wants to."

Ethel had found the room cool and pleasant in the warm days of September and October. But she had been puzzled by Mrs. Sperry's reserved, almost humble, attitude toward her. The explanation came quite unexpectedly from a girl whom she knew in the near-by town.

"Of course she's scared of you. You're a teacher and you're from Chicago, and perhaps you're the only B. A. she knows. Probably you try to discuss the Wheat Growers' Association with her husband." She laughed as she glanced at Ethel's oxford-shod feet. "And you wear 'slippers' and silk stockings everyday!"

She promptly got a pair of walking boots, and packed away several dresses which she decided weren't suitable for school. "I can't expect to gain their confidence if they think I'm affected or superior. Mrs. Sperry has the capacity to make life better and fuller, and I think she just needs the right incentive to get started," she reflected. However, she wondered why Sarah's love for beauty and her mother's rather negative interest in making the house more livable, had not transformed the other rooms. After she had become better acquainted with Mr. Sperry, she knew.

He was now sitting opposite his wife reading a copy of "The Stockman." Ethel realized that Mathew Sperry was the type of farmer that was hardest to reform. He was a man of fifty-five, who had driven the years mercilessly before him, making each one yield an increase in bushels of corn, in stock, in slowly accumulated acres of land. As the girl looked at him it suddenly occurred to her that he was actually the wealthiest man she knew. A section of four-hundred-dollar Illinois corn land amounted to over a quarter of a million! And besides, there had been vague mention of farms in Dakota and Iowa. She marvelled at the long, persistent effort it had meant—daily awakenings in the chill dawn; thousands of buckets of warm frothy milk; miles and miles of black damp furrows. But his life seemed settled in that endless circle "to raise more corn, to feed more hogs, to buy more land, to raise more corn." He measured his happiness in acres. That was his foundation of rank, of freedom. Land was his master and his slave.

To look at the bare ugliness of the stuffy low dining-room, which served as living-room in the winter, one would never recognize it as the home of wealth. The only beautiful things in the room were the flowers on the old-fashioned stand in front of the window.

Mrs. Sperry laid down her knitting and walked to the window, plucking off some faded geranium blossoms. She was a tall, large-boned woman, who had been strong enough to bear up under the drudgery of her work. Her face was kind, motherly and good-natured, but her eyes were keen and dark, and wistful and dreamy as she looked at her flowers. She stooped to inhale the fragrance of a hyacinth, and caress the smooth green Christmas cactus leaves.

"Mat, I'm going to move my plants over on the table tonight. It's so cold I'm afraid they'll freeze. That old stove will never hold the fire good when the wind blows like it is tonight."

As she put them on the table she noticed a tiny red prickly bud on a cactus plant. She held it up wonderingly to the light.

"Look," she cried eagerly. "The plant Nell Samson give me is goin' to bloom. It's not bloomed for three years."

"Three years! Do you mean you've kept it three years for one

bloom?" The man's tone showed his contempt for such foolishness. "It must be down to zero tonight. If you've got any potatoes in the pantry, you'd better bring them in here or they'll freeze."

His wife continued putting the plants on the table. Several times she started to speak, but instead set her lips in a firm line. The clock struck nine. To the girl the dull monotony of the strokes meant one more day was over. Mr. Sperry would rise presently, yawn, say "Well, nine o'clock mother, guess I'll go to bed." He would say good-night and in a few minutes they would hear the thud of his shoes dropping on the floor above them.

Mrs. Sperry drew her rocker close to the stove and began wearily to take off her shoes. They were flat and shapeless. It was seldom that she looked at things with such critical eyes.

"Better draw your rocker up closer, Ethel, and toast your feet. It's a regular blizzard out tonight. I'll make some tea if you'd like, before we go to bed."

Mrs. Sperry's expanding geniality after her husband had gone to bed was a nightly revelation to the girl. At first their talks had been stiff and formal, but as they had gained each other's confidence they had talked easily on everything from plum jam to plumbing. Ethel realized that Mrs. Sperry was a true storehouse of repressed feminine psychology, and she had purposely drawn her out. Her human interest was warm and sincere, and her friendliness and charm had opened the way not only to Mrs. Sperry's heart, but to her school children and their parents.

Mrs. Sperry poured Ethel a cup of tea, talking as she did so. "Mrs. Hermann was over today to borrow some thread. They live in our tenant house across the pasture, you know. She was tellin' me that little Joe cried for an hour the other day when they thought it was too cold for him to go to school. And his father is always tellin' of the way he's learnin' to read and write English. His blue German eyes just get big with bein' so proud of that boy of his." Mrs. Sperry took a possessive pride in the girl's success, and always passed on any compliments which she heard from the parents. "Hermann says 'we must sure haf some teacher to make the kids so crazy about her'."

Ethel smiled as she answered, "Joe is learning faster now, but I've never had to work so hard with anyone. He's so shy and scared that I thought I'd never win him over. I've been planning to go over to the Hermann's ever since I met them at the Christmas program. What kind of place have they?"

"It's a better place than this, and nicer fixed." Mrs. Sperry's tone was so sharp that Ethel realized her question must have touched a hidden wound. "It's got bigger, lighter rooms, and it's built warmer. And they've got pretty curtains at the windows, and a nice rug on their floor. And they live in their front room all the time."

As she talked she looked around the room at the uncurtained window, the faded brown ingrain carpet, the bumpy sofa, the square ugly table with its flickering oil lamp. "And Hermann got her a gasoline lamp, and a coal-oil stove for summer. And when Mat told him he could work that northeast quarter for five years, what did he do but get one of those new kind of pipeless furnaces and put it in the basement. He gets his wife whatever she wants, that's in reason. And

yet he don't even own the land he's livin' on. And we that do own it have to put up with that cheap old stove there!"

She leaned over and opened the stove door dramatically. The fire lighted up her face and shone red on her glasses. "Look at the burnt out lining. It is always either too hot or too cold, and it eats up fuel like a very demon." She pointed to the queer knobs on the fenders. "See that ugly open mouth, and those staring eyes that are intended to be pretty, I guess. I've grown so that I hate the very sight of that stove. The light shines thru the broken ising-glass in the door like horrible, spying, red eyes. I hate every stick of furniture in this ugly house!"

She suddenly stopped, realizing how much she was telling. But as she glanced around the room again her eyes were hard and her face usually so patient and softly gentle set in tense lines.

"I don't know why I'm tellin' you so much, but since all my girls are married it seems I haven't a living soul to talk to—Mathew is a good man; I don't want you to blame him too much. He's been a good, kind father; but he just don't understand how a woman longs for a pretty house and a good stove and nice things, when she has to live in the house all day, and never sees anybody."

She paused again, but it was as if a spring had been touched, and all her suppressed feelings were gushing out at last. "Finally the boys did make their father buy a car. And they said I must learn to run it, so I could go around whenever I pleased. But land, the boys don't realize that a woman's chickens and butter-makin' and cookin' are like chains holdin' her to the kitchen. And besides, I was always afraid to try to run it." She laughed a little. "It even makes me nervous to ride down Main street on Saturdays."

"Ruth was home for Christmas this year, and she kept after her father every day to build a new house, or else move to town. She's the oldest girl, and she lives over on a farm near Peoria. And they have electric lights, and a furnace, and even an electric washing-machine in the basement. I guess she's made me real discontented. Ruth said I just ought to stand up and tell pa that unless he gets a new house that I'll go and live with her, but I never was one to oppose my husband, and I'd rather just go on in the old way than to quarrel with Matthew. But if it wasn't for my flowers and for you boardin' here and all, I'd have gone and staid a while with Ruth, and let Mat live here alone awhile and see just how it feels."

The telephone rang, loud and startling in the quiet room. It was the one thing modern in the farm house. As Mrs. Sperry listened Ethel saw her face become frightened.

"Yes, I'll come as fast as I can get there. Did you call a doctor? Give him all the warm water mixed with mustard you can make him drink. I'll be there right away." She turned excitedly to Ethel, talking rapidly and lacing her shoes with trembling hands.

"It's Hermanns'. Joe got hold of some kind of poison, and they've completely lost their heads. The doctor can't be out for hours in this storm. Will you look in that doctor book there on the shelf, and see what it says about poisons?"

Ethel ran a shaky finger down the p's in the index of the old brown book.

"What kind of poison was it?"

"They didn't know. It was some they'd used to kill rats—arsenic, maybe."

"I can go too, and I'll take the book. I know something of emergency nursing."

"Quick, then, bundle up good. The wind is cold as ice. Put on your overshoes. The snow has drifted bad."

Together they rushed into the storm, slamming the door of the dining-room behind them. The wind pricked their faces like points of ice. Their bodies bent against the force of the storm, as they plowed their way through the drifts of the pasture to the tenant house. They opened the door at last, breathless and weak with cold, and were met by Jake Hermann, whose face was stupid with fear for his boy. He led them into the comfortable living-room, where his wife was bending over Joe on the sofa. The seven-year old boy was white as death, his lips pale. Cold sweat was standing on his forehead. Tears were streaming down the mother's sodden face, as she frantically chafed the boy's hands.

"I dink he's maybe a leddle bedder," she murmured brokenly. "Maybe he hass drown up all de poison. But his hands are ice!"

"Ethel, get some milk and beat some whites of eggs in it, quick." Mrs. Sperry took command instantly. "Jake, get some coffee, even cold, and hurry!"

She forced the strong coffee between the closed lips, and then the milk and egg. She felt the pleading, praying eyes of Jake and Freda upon her as she moved the boy's arms to stimulate his breathing. Slowly the pulse grew stronger, the color crept faintly back into the round cheeks, and the lids flickered, opening wells of blue. They covered him with warm blankets and in a few minutes he had fallen into a quiet sleep.

"You won't need the doctor now. He won't be as spry as usual tomorrow, but he will soon be all right," Mrs. Sperry assured them. "And never leave a bottle of poison around again. Don't feed him anything but milk and eggs tomorrow." They hurried away from their stammered words of gratitude, and the more eloquent tears in their eyes.

They had the wind at their backs, going home, so they walked quickly, driven along with the snow. The house seemed smaller, more rickety than ever, as it grew gradually distinct out of the snow. Mrs. Sperry was surprised that there was no light. They fumbled their way to the door. It had blown open. Mrs. Sperry stumbled thru the dark, and lit the lamp with its smoke-blackened chimney.

"Every speck of fire is out. It must be midnight. Keep your wraps on and I'll build a fire."

Suddenly she hurried over to her plants, jerked off her gloves and felt the tender leaves. They were icy cold and brittle. Ethel hardly recognized the set, hard face before her as the one that had bent over Joe an hour before.

"They're frozen, every one." The voice was monotonous, hopeless. Tears rolled silently down her face. She began to untie her fur hood with shaking fingers. She looked unseeingly at the stove, round

and tall, cheap, rust red in places where the black had burned off. She shook the cold ashes out, and began to rebuild the fire. As the room warmed slowly they stood silent, close to the stove, shaking with the cold. Mrs. Sperry's face was worn and old. "I've told Mathew a dozen times to fix the latch on that door." "Look," she said bitterly. "That cactus that was going to bloom is beginning to wilt in the heat like I'd dipped it into boilin' water. Oh, it seems terrible to stand here and see those plants just die slowly, hangin' down on their stems. You can't do anything for frozen plants. They're just dead." Had Ethel not seen the tender daily care of the plants she would never have believed a woman could feel so deeply the loss of mere flowers.

Mrs. Sperry controlled her grief. "You'd better go to bed, Ethel, if you're warm through. You must be tired, not used to seein' sick people."

"Yes, I'll go now. Goodnight."

Ethel undressed slowly, her mind heavy with the feeling of tragedy. It seemed she had never seen a woman's eyes so sad even over the death of a child as hers had been. She slipped on her bathrobe and started noiselessly through the hall for a drink. She started back, frightened, as she opened the dining-room door. The stove was red-hot at the bottom. Mrs. Sperry stood there with her arms full of the plants. A knife lay on the table with the flower-pots. The naked stubs of the plants were sticking out of the rich dirt. It flashed through Ethel's mind that the woman's eyes were insanely bright. She opened the stove door and threw the plants in.

"I couldn't bear to see them die slowly," she whispered hoarsely. "They can have a quick, bright, beautiful death in flames." It was like a cremation.

In spite of the stifling heat of the room, Ethel shuddered. She wanted to say something which might relieve the scene of its oppressive terror. "Yes, fire is beautiful. I often think of it as a great purifier, which changes something ugly into something strangely beautiful." She hurried out of the room and finally fell asleep.

It was an hour later—when she awoke, the acrid smothering weight of smoke in her nostrils. There was a lurid reflection of fire on the snow outside. She leaped into the cold, dragging her blankets with her, and ran into the dark front room, and out into the snow. She heard shouts of "Fire! Get out of here!" and fierce haste and stumbling on the stairs, and Mathew Sperry and his wife rushed out into the night, struggling clumsily with some clothing they had grabbed up, the woman strangely wide awake, the man swearing dazedly. The girl saw that the flames were at the back of the house as yet, and rushed wildly back into her room, yanking her trunk fiercely to the door, throwing her clothes in, gathering up her dresser scarf with the trinkets upon it, and emptying the drawers. She never knew just how she got it through the door and down the steps, but it seemed to her that the whole thing happened in an instant. She shivered in the cold, looking up in horror at the smoking roof, just bursting into flames around the chimney. The wind howled over the roof, carrying the smoke along in black gusts, and forcing the flames before it, writhing serpents of fire. The whole roof was ready to shoot out flames. The

man came rushing out of the hall with a pile of coats and overshoes from the wardrobe. Mrs. Sperry was in the parlor. All three began carrying things and piling them in the snow, the man working with a wild haste, rushing out with whatever he caught up; the woman composed as she selected the most valuable things. Ethel had always prided herself on her self-control in emergencies, but she remembered later that she had run into the room, jerked down a framed picture of Lincoln and rushed back dropping it with a splinter of glass as soon as she had reached the steps. Mrs. Sperry had taken down some new curtains, collected some pictures and books, and had dragged out her favorite chair. They wavered back and forth, stumbling with their loads like ants disturbed while carrying wheat. Finally the dense smoke drove them into the open air.

There was nothing more to do but sit there, huddled in their overcoats and watch it burn, hypnotized by the horror and mystery of fire. It swept over the whole house now, sheathing it in walls of flame and smoke. The heat became so intense that they had to drag the furniture back over the snow. The house was the flaming scarlet center of the black, outspreading circle of wet earth where the snow had melted. This was surrounded by the wider area of fire-lighted snow, fading into the gray of the night.

"It's a good thing the barns are out of the wind, or they'd certainly go on a night like this. They're too near the house." The man's voice showed that he had overcome his fear, and was looking forward already to the rebuilding of the house.

"What time do you think it is?"

His wife sat on the sofa from the parlor, huddled in a big overcoat. "It must be three. We got home from the Hermann's at twelve," she chattered.

They fell into silence, awed by the awful energy of the fire. Matthew turned to the girl. "You must certainly have flown around to get your things in your trunk, Miss Andrew. And how you dragged it out is beyond me. Well, no use standin' here in the snow and watchin' it burn. I'd almost be glad to watch it burn, if I had those insurance papers that were in the dining-room. Guess they were about the first things to burn though, seein' as the fire caught in the flue. Come on, put on some heavy coats and overshoes and we'll go over to the Hermanns' for the night."

They started silently across the pasture, the fire at their backs sending great pointing shadows ahead of them. They stopped often to look back at the shooting flames and rolling smoke. No one spoke until they reached the Hermanns'. A light was burning and Jake had just dressed and was ready to start for the fire.

"It's all over, Jake. No use for you to go over. There's nothing near enough to catch, and it's terribly cold out. Can you put us up for the night?"

Hermann offered his best eagerly. "You'll have to bunk mit me, Mr. Sperry. Freda, she vill fix Mrs. Sperry and the teacher."

Freda had been watching Joe's quiet sleep, and had discovered the fire. She led them proudly to her spare bedroom.

Mrs. Sperry and Ethel sank down wearily, exhausted with the strain of the night, each busy with her own thoughts. Ethel shook

off her two overcoats and unbuckled the overshoes she had put on over her bare feet. Her feet were not frozen, but they were so cold she rubbed them vigorously on the rough carpet, and then slipped between the sheets of the high bed and sank into the soft depth of the feather bed. Mrs. Sperry was unlacing her shoes. It occurred to Ethel that it was very strange that she had put on her shoes, and laced them up. Her eyes opened wide with her growing suspicion. She noticed the trembling of Mrs. Sperry's hands, her flushed cheeks, and excited eyes. Mrs. Sperry looked up in time to meet the girl's questioning look. Her own remained unwavering and defiant. She pulled off her shoes and started toward the dresser. A thick packet of papers fell from her clothes with a thud. She stood perfectly still, looking from the papers to the girl. Then her restraint gave way and she sank into a chair, hiding her face in her hands, her body shaking with sobs.

The discovery precipitated the girl's half-felt suspicions into certainty. Incendiary fire—arson—crime, flashed through her brain. But crowding out these thoughts came the words she had spoken before,—fire, a purifying thing and in the ashes she saw the phoenix of a woman's soul.

In an instant she was out of bed, her own eyes wet with tears of sympathy, and put her arms around the bent pitiable figure.

"Don't tell me anything about it. I think I understand." She picked up the papers. "I'll burn these in the morning; they might be found. They aren't necessary anyway."

She loosened the scant, tightly coiled hair, and brushed it gently. There was a new depth in the girl's sympathy as she kissed the woman's hot cheek.

—IDA BENJAMIN.

THE RIDDLE OF RESURRECTION

That Love lies buried in the quiet glow
Of sapphire stone, set in an old, old ring,
And in the dusk, and shadows deepening,
And subtle perfume, and fires burning low,
I learned from Love a thousand years ago.
But this he told me: The awakening
Comes like the tide of Easter to the spring,
Full-throb; the talisman he would not show.
What will awaken Love? Is it a breath,
A word, a glance, a call of mind to mind,
Of soul to soul? Or does a firm handclasp
Unlock the virgin heart of Ashtoreth?
Or did Egyptian Cleopatra find
The answer to the riddle—in the asp?

—Homer M. Parsons.

The Most Intimate

THE HOST arose and excused himself.

"Father," he said, "I know that you do not smoke, but I have a stock of cigars whose excellence must be hidden from the servants. The Doctor and the Lawyer will appreciate them, I am sure. Gentlemen, you will entertain yourselves while I go for them?"

"Certainly," said the Priest. "And if your cigars are as excellent as your wine, you may count on my help with them. A special occasion, this."

"It is a strange coincidence," the Doctor remarked, when the Host had left the room, "that brings the three of us together to bid our host farewell. The three great intimate professions are represented here. A doctor, perhaps, learns more family secrets than any other man, professional or not; but your two professions will run us a close second. Secrets that I learned on my first call after I left the surgical ward and began my own private practice almost turned my hair gray. But the ethics of the profession demands secrecy."

"I do not entirely agree with you, Doctor. We lawyers discover secrets stranger than a doctor ever heard of. Here is a case in point: When as a young lawyer I hung out my shingle, my first client was a young man of pleasing appearance and gracious manners, who drew from his pocket a wallet, counted out ten crisp one-thousand-dollar bills and placed them on the table.

"'Retainer and expenses,' he smiled, 'and double the amount is yours if my plans succeed. I cannot take you into my trust, nor reveal my name. Are you willing to accept me as a client upon those terms?'

"I agreed rather hastily. The size of the retainer overbalanced any scruples I might have imagined against taking a hand in the transaction.

"'No time is to be lost,' my client went on. 'I trust you. You will place this wallet in your safe, and continue your same frugal existence. A week from today, at this hour, you will take it to this address, and receive further instructions.'

"He then turned abruptly and started away. At the door he stopped and looked around. 'You have a big surprise in store for you,' he said, and there was a twinkle in his eye that was not of humor, or if it was, 'twas humor of a cold, grim, calculating sort.

"The week dragged by. On the appointed day I went to the address he gave me. It was a house on Twenty-third street, not far from the ferry. Common brick—unpretentious—nothing to distinguish it from thousands of others just like it. I rang the bell. A young man in a large white rubber apron admitted me. 'Seeking your client?' he asked. 'I have just changed his bandages. He has a remarkable constitution.' He then led me down the hall and opened the door to a back room. Upon the bed lay a man in intense pain, whom I had great difficulty in recognizing as my client of the week before.

"You may talk of war surgery, and facial reconstruction! This man's chin had been remodeled, his nose changed, his upper lip shortened. I learned, too, that sections of bone had been removed from his legs, making him shorter by several inches. You may imagine the

intensity of his suffering when I inform you that his hair had become prematurely streaked with gray as the result of it.

"My dismay was clearly evident to the man on the bed. The cold, grim twinkle came into his pained eyes and he attempted to smile. 'Count out the twenty thousand,' he said, 'and leave the rest with me. I thank you for your part.' Then he winced and closed his eyes.

"I never learned his name, nor his motive. But surely you will admit that no stranger secret than that could have come to any man, no matter what his profession."

The Doctor refilled his wineglass and looked thoughtful. "No stranger, perhaps, but as strange. You have a story, Father?"

"Yes; the Lawyer's story brings it unwillingly to mind. I heard my first confessor at St. Patrick's, and the story he told in the calmest, most unimpassioned manner made my blood run cold. It was a tale of deliberate, planned murder, for the sake of a few hundred thousand in cash and securities, and escape through surgical alterations such as the Lawyer's client underwent. My knowledge of his secret through his confession weighed heavy upon my conscience, for I could not reconcile his freedom with my own sense of justice and right. It was monstrous, I said. By my own silence I felt that I was making myself an accomplice to his deed. Finally the burden became too great for me to bear alone. I told my superior, who in a long talk at last convinced me that the matter lay now between the man and God, and that it was not my part to seek his punishment through man-made courts and laws. But it was a harrowing experience, one which, I am thankful to say, has never recurred, in my entire twenty years of service."

As the Priest finished the story the Host returned with the cigars. The Doctor finished his wine and took up a cigar. "We were just remarking," he observed, "what a strange coincidence brings together the three most intimate professions. Doctors and lawyers and priests know a great many embarrassing and gruesome secrets. Which do you think know the most?"

"Really, I must leave that to you," replied the Host. "But a stranger coincidence than you may be aware of has brought you together tonight. I leave New York tomorrow—forever. So for the last time I have invited you here as my guests, that I may show you my appreciation for your aid and assistance in the past. Although none of you is at present aware of this fact or what it has meant to me"—here the Host paused and a peculiar twinkle in his eyes caught his guests' attention—"I was the Doctor's first patient, the Lawyer's first client, and gave the Priest his first confession."

—HOMER M. PARSONS.

Rocks and Dynamos

A LITTLE learning may be a dangerous thing but the danger is not apparent and it may be argued that a little learning is about as conducive of peace and contentment as a Ph. D. degree. The person who is satisfied with an eighth grade education misses a lot of worry. He doesn't have to burn the midnight oil trying to solve an abstract problem on the psychology of dreams. He just dreams the dream and lets it go at that. He is not worried about Einstein's theory of relativity or Chesterton's ideas about what is wrong with the world. He doesn't think there is much wrong with it. He doesn't have to read the "Atlantic Monthly" or other high-brow magazines. He probably gets as much pleasure out of the comic section of the Sunday paper or out of "Life," "Judge," or the "Red Book" as the college professor does out of his high-brow literature. For the high-brow literature presents problems and suggests work to be done, while "Bringing Up Father" produces an innocent laugh, but no worry about the problems of life.

Ambition is a hard taskmaster. It keeps one awake at night, rouses him early in the morning, and prods him all day long, makes him hurry, ruins his digestion, and shatters his nerves. It often urges him to win by hook or crook, to do almost anything not too far outside the safety zone that will bring success.

Whereas, the person without much ambition is content to get a job that provides for present needs. If he loses his job he hasn't lost much and there are apt to be other jobs. If there is no work for a time there is always recourse to the charity funds which have been provided by the ambitious. Six or eight hours a day will provide money for the movies or a prize fight, pay a small rent, buy a Ford and pay for most of the grocery bill. The company that employs him will give him a few days' vacation, provide a picnic or an excursion; and all he has to do is sit back and let the world go by.

If he has children he manages to feed and clothe them, the state gives them a free education, at least through the grades, and then they can shift for themselves, and possibly care for him in his old age. He takes no thought of the morrow, as to what he shall eat or wear. He does try to keep his job, for keeping it is apt to be easier than hunting a new one. He comes home at night, eats white bread or brown, romps with his half-dozen or more children, smokes his pipe, sleeps the sleep of the just and goes on his way rejoicing.

The educated, ambitious man must think, and that is hard work, he must scheme and plot, he must have a position or a business of his own, he must be his own boss, own his home, drive a Cadillac, provide plenty of money for his wife and children, must send his children to college or select schools, he must entertain and be entertained, he must join societies and clubs, he must be a member of civic organizations, must serve on various welfare committees, he must understand the theory of taxation and the law of supply and demand, he must provide schools and churches, pave streets and keep them clean, he must make and enforce laws, fill the offices of trust

and responsibility, he must carry most of the burdens of society and shoulder the blame for its shortcomings.

But all the easily satisfied, self-contented, unambitious person has to do is to walk on the sunny side of the skyscrapers in winter and on the shady side in summer. Whether you want to be a dynamo or a rock depends on your point of view.

—EARL BURGETT.

AUNT ALLIE

She works all week among the city's poor,
School Center work, with lower middle class,
Irish and Jews; and week-ends she comes home,
Home to a sister who's an invalid for life.

Aunt Sophie must be dragged from room to room
In her big wicker rocking-chair.
Rheumatism for thirteen years has left her powerless to stand,
Yet she keeps cheerful in her sharp New England way,
Within the narrow canyon-walls that stretch ahead,
Except when pain grows torture and she must be turned
At fifteen minute intervals all night,
And when the latest hope in medicine has failed.

A third New England lady calls the apartment home,
A family friend, small, spry and twinkling with an ever-present sense
Of fun in life; she works as housekeeper. Then there's a nurse,—
The nurses don't stay long; each tires Aunt Sophie soon,
Although the last one's salary is always more,
And drains increasingly on a too slender purse.

This is Aunt Allie's life, just this, yet she's serene,
Joyous, if just a little sadly so, full of divine content.
When my grandmother died some years ago, Aunt Allie did not cry,
She only wiped away the quiet tears,
And raised a window on the sweating summer heat
That filled the room in which the service was.
All through the last details and still today
She holds that inward happiness.

She does not weep at death nor flinch from stress.
Her fortitude she draws from God;
He is her loving Lord,
Who knows his children well.

—GWENDOLINE KEENE.

ABERRATION

HE SPEAKS:

First, we will speak of love as one of the great primal motives in life. I do not mean Love Absolute,—Love of Truth, Love of Beauty, or Love of Good, but the love of hearts vibrant with youthful passion, whose root hides in the mystery of sex.

HE MUSES:

What can they know of love?—young girls but lately come to womanhood, whose hearts have never burned in passion's flame, whose souls have not been tempered through the years by faithful service in love's name?

I cannot teach them love: they are too young. But,—poetry must be interpreted.

SHE WRITES:

Love: Its classification—

sex love, mother love, altruism, patriotism, love of beauty, love of truth, love of God.

Shelley's Epipsychidion—his search for ideal love—the fair, the wise, the true.

SHE MUSES:

What does he know of love? He is too old.

Is his heart buoyant with little dancing sprites
of Love's remembered smiles?

Has he ever felt a happiness

that sings under his breath all day long—

that makes the very rain laugh when Love is near?

If he should ask me what love is I could not tell him.

But if this inner singing voice could speak,
then he would understand.

—IDA BENJAMIN.

BOOK NOTICES

Bunch-Grass and Blue-Joint.—Frank B. Lindermann—(Scribners). In this volume of western verse Mr. Linderman expresses the true affection of cowboy, squatter, both Canuck and American, and Indian for the cabin in the wilds, for the spaces of prairie, the chaos of mountains, the mystery of the forests, the rush of headlong waters, the great sky and its gilded stars, the bear and the coyote, the magpie and the mountain-rat, and above all for the pal who shares such experiences. The opening verses express the hospitality of the West. "Git Down and Come In." To the Coyote has received country wide recognition. There are three splendid poems in Canuck Dialect. The Old Frontier, Ol' Dad, Cabins. Pard o'Mine, and To an Old Cow-Horse are fine embodiments of cowboy and settler sentiment. Mr. Linderman's rhymes are most pleasing when they are genuinely his own; the poems that echo models carry less pleasure. The conceptions of the poems are more truly western than the rhythms; but the general excellence of the book makes it one that every Montanan who loves the West should own.

How It Came About Stories.—Frank B. Linderman—(Scribners): Here are fanciful tales of how the bear lost his tail, how the crane acquired his long legs and sharp bill, why the sage hen has no gizzard and the mouse-people are all alike, and of a thousand-and-one other hows and whys. The fancy runs free and the prose that expresses it travels rapidly and lightly, so that reading of the book is delightful. The animals of air and earth and water gather for conversation around a fire at the edge of a forest and beside a lake out of quite natural curiosity about one another's physical make-up. The bear presides, calling upon one animal after another to satisfy the curiosity of the rest of the animal world. The book seems to the writer the best prose book Mr. Linderman has written. He has not been hampered by an Indian manner of telling stories which is understood with difficulty by a person unacquainted with Indian ways. His careful knowledge of animals, acquired thru out-of-door experience, weaves with his quick fancy to produce a charming pattern.

Montana should show its appreciation of the western work of Mr. Lindermann not only thru reading and personal expression but by sending copies of his books far and wide over the country. This is the gift season. —H. M.

Main Street.—Sinclair Lewis—(Harcourt, Brace & Co.) is the best selling book of recent years. It is the story of Carol Kennicott's effort to bring culture to the raw western town of Gopher Prairie. She graciously dangles art, literature, and democracy before the eyes of Main Street,—and gets only a few faint nibbles. It is only when she comes down to earth and co-operates with them that her influence brings results,—disappointing, indeed, but pointing the way to a future growth. There is a prolonged struggle here between provincialism and culture, materialism and art. This is a universal struggle, but because of America's newness, it is more especially national. Here, too, is represented the slow evolution of democracy. The characters are typical middle-westerners, and for this reason are most typically American. Will Kennicott is the honest, matter-of-fact, dollar-grabbing good citizen: Carol is the dissatisfied yearner for beauty. Most of the minor characters are products of the gossiping back-biting narrowness of the town. The style is vividly realistic; the conversation is a very near approach to actual American speech; western idiom and slang ring true in every instance. If The Great American Novel ever is written, some of the qualities of Main Street—its honesty, its struggle toward culture, its democracy, and its humanity—are certain to be essentials. —I. B.

The Brimming Cup.—Dorothy Canfield Fisher—(Harcourt, Brace & Co.) Unless one is interested in following the birth and development of ideas in a woman's mind he had better not try to read this novel. Marise, the woman ten years married, comes of spiritual age, and in doing so determines that, contrary to the protestations of radicals and Freudians, of cynical realists and seekers after truth in new fields the race experience of the centuries and the maternal experience of the generations is not wholly bad or in need of upheaval. The thot of the book is normally and wholesomely conservative; but the incidents of the story are unnecessarily melodramatic and the symbolism unnecessarily sentimental. The pages of reflection, which are the thinking aloud of a twentieth-century woman, are by far the finest of the book. A mistaken reading and criticism of the novel has resulted in its establishment in the reading mind as an offset to Main Street, by Sinclair Lewis. It is nothing of the sort. The interest of the latter is societal and of the former individualistic with its significance to sociology. Mrs. Fisher's thinking, in spite of her occasional sentimentalism, is deeper and truer than Mr. Lewis'. Both have a thesis, and that of Mr. Lewis is in need of leading-strings. Mrs. Fisher has less of an eye for details but more of an eye for their significance and for their relative importance. In Main Street a hummock is as large as a mountain and a mountain as small as a hummock. Its writer saw all people alike: he had no observation for those fine details that individualize. The Brimming Cup is not concerned with small-town life, but with the domestic life in a quiet community as it is lived by a highly individualized woman. Neither is a book that will long hold the interest of readers in the future, but The Brimming Cup has finer rights to existence. —H. M.

Moon Calf.—Floyd Dell—(Knopf). In welcome relief against the almost solid background of the silk-shirted representatives of the Young America of our fiction, stands

the figure of Felix Fay. Egotistical, given to dreams, endowed with a love of ideas, and lacking in much of the spectacular physical virility that characterizes the figures of much of our fiction, the hero of *Moon-Calf*, if he stands for only a small minority of American youth, at least represents it as it is. That small portion of the younger generation of the twentieth century that is interested in ideas in spite of their benevolent disparagement at the hands of most of the moulders of the thought of our youth, is by far more accurately portrayed in Floyd Dell's hero than are the majority in the fictional immaculately dressed youths whose Florsheims blithely operate the clutch-pedals of super-sizes.

The sympathy, the understanding, and the sense of humor with which Floyd Dell takes Felix Fay through the dreams of childhood, the chaos of adolescence, and the wildly conflicting emotions that rage within the young lover, are the fundamental assets that seem to promise to *Moon-Calf* a definite place among the beginnings of a coming American literature.

The criticism has been made that there is a too obvious parallel between Dell's novel and the *Jean Christophe* of Romain Rolland. That there is a similarity cannot be denied, but it would be difficult to prove that Dell has been influenced by Rolland. *Jean Christophe* and *Moon-Calf* are both accurate and truthful portrayals of human life and the universality of the fundamentals of life must make two such works resemble each other, even though one comes from Europe and the other from America.

Rolland's work is a masterpiece of excellence and finish, having behind it decades and even centuries of old-world literature. Its presentation of the dream-filled, half forgotten emotions of childhood is vivid and masterful. But the mixture—instead of the combination—of a novel and a philosophical work proves so tiresome to the reader that he is often tempted to pass over the scores of pages of abstract philosophy that are sandwiched into the story.

Moon-Calf is crude. But so is America crude. And *Moon-Calf* is a truthful picture of a phase of the truly crude American life. Much of the philosophy that makes Rolland's novel seem labored and slow is lived out by the characters of *Moon-Calf*, instead of being expounded at great length by the author.

While reading *Moon-Calf* the writer, had he been watched, might have been seen to blush over several chapters, chiefly through the first half of the book. It was as of someone had suddenly told him, and incidentally the rest of the world, all about the little weaknesses, follies, and egotisms of his childhood. All these little secrets about himself, he had guarded and locked up within him—he had expected to carry them to the grave—and then Floyd Dell, in confessing, also confessed the writer's and flaunted them in his face. There were many other incidents too, that brought back memories. The youthful literary endeavors, the first interest in ideas, Felix's identification of himself first with atheism, and later with socialism brought back vividly the days when the writer eagerly sought out, and affiliated himself with the groups of kindred souls who shared such ideas.

Moon-Calf will be disappointing to the person who expects the typical American novel—the action novel, "on six cylinders" as Mencken says. The most vital situations in the book are those of thought-processes and ideas.

The latter part of the novel, devoted to Felix's crowning love affair is indeed the handiwork of an artist. The heroine, human, vivid, and real, flashes into the reader's consciousness with the same sudden completeness with which she comes into Felix's life. Then, after the passing of the first glamor of love, come the problems and the arguments Felix believes in a relation free as air, "fancy free", while Joyce wants to be possessed—commanded with yea and nay. The intellectual conflicts of the two are vivid and alive. And their handling in *Moon-Calf* proclaims its author an observing and profound student of human nature. The end is not satisfying, any more than life is satisfying. Felix is last seen leaving the wreckage of his dream and departing for Chicago. Here again the parallel with Rolland's work appears, when we remember *Christophe's* last fervent words, "O Paris, save me from my thought," just as he left the Germany that had become so dear to him.

The incidental characters, the dark-eyed Margaret of the candy factory, the fatherly and satirically cheerful "Comrade Vogelsang," the pessimistically humorous little philosopher, Wheels, are all finished with a touch of understanding and sympathy which can only be founded upon experience. Floyd Dell was writing of the life he had lived.

While portraying that element in young America upon which Walt Whitman's hopeful vision was probably based, Dell never forgets for a moment the great mass of commonplace, disheartening things, that occupy so large a place in American life. We have been satiated with the literary slush of optimism and idealism, and well fed upon tragic realism. And now with the creation of *Moon-Calf* comes a welcome note, a cheerful realism.

—L. S. T.

Messer Marco Polo—Dohn Byrne—(The Century Co.). The mystery of the brooding quiet Orient with its submerged currents is here wonderfully woven with the innate mysticism and the wild imagination, running as it does to the ends of the earth for its themes, of a typical fine old Irish story-teller. Dohn Byrne has caught the rhythmic singing genius of the Irish bards, and with their words has woven this tale of peoples so different from

himself, yet so similar, so true to human character. It is a continuous tale, flowing quietly and the Celtic touch gives it its continuity, its sense of a living tale and not dead fact. The very deviations from historic accuracy but show the skill with which the author has worked out his theme. Did Marco find in the shops of Venice teak from Ceylon and cassava from Peru? Why, surely. What matter that Peru was not known to Europe until much later? If it had been known Venice would have had its merchantmen there. Did he find ambergrise from Madagascar when ambergrise comes as a sea product from the little islands of the South Seas? And the idea of Kubla Khan talking in an Irish brogue! But those are things which make a good story, the impossible made probable. The wild flights (and they are not wild unless analyzed) intrigue the reader. They are the story and the story is good. And the garden of Golden Bells is so beautiful there beside the Lake of Cranes. The names are music. One can feel the sadness of the song of the Weeping Willow "Which is the saddest song in the World" and the mystery of the Convent of the Red Monks at the edge of the Gobi Desert and the maddening gongh! gongh! gongh! of the bells in the ears of the thirsty wanderers. Altogether it is wonderfully done.

—P. W.

The Age of Innocence—Edith Wharton—(Appleton). Anyone who wishes to grasp imaginatively the social and ethical ideas of New York society of the eighteen-seventies may find the material spread before him in the pages of this novel. The revelation is startling to the American who has always considered American life the broadest minded in the world. The plot, the persons, and the situations are conventional. There is no originality in the story, which is a poor one, or in the telling of it, altho the Whartonian subtlety of presentation and the turning to ironic use of each situation and of each attitude of her persons is never lacking. A young society man not quite so conventional as his fellows marries a conventional society woman, while loving a genuinely unconventional woman. He never outwardly breaks the marriage vow. The woman goes to Paris and that ends the matter. After reading the book one is done with it—except for the historical interest, and except for Mrs. Mason Mingott, a fat lady of ideas and the courage for acting on them, the one real person in the story. No light is shed upon the problems—purely conventional and hackneyed ones—which the book presents. The reader does possess, however, a distressing sense of the weightiness of the conventional life portrayed, and a view of the narrow ruling social principles of the American seventies.

—H. M.

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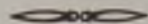
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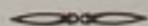
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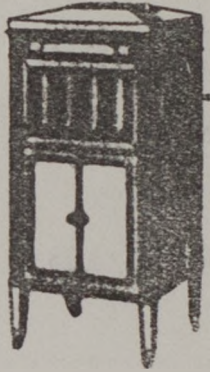


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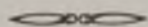
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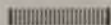
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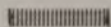
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