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The FRONTIER

A Literary Magazine



AMONG OTHERS

1. *Rocky Mountain Goat Trails: a story.*
2. *Poems.*
3. *The Sluice Box.*

STATE UNIVERSITY of MONTANA

MARCH, 1926

Thirty-five Cents a Copy

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VOL. VI

NO. 2

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THE FRONTIER

A Literary Magazine

"The frontiers are not east or west, north or south, but wherever a man fronts a fact."—THOREAU.

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VOL. VI, NO. II

MARCH, 1926

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Not Too Much Rest

When I am almost but not quite exhausted
From climbing up a fire-scarred mountain's sweep,
And crawling under and over dead fir trunks;
From forcing through mats of head high second growth;
And when August sun has burned my neck
And brought the sweat to drench my shirt;
When I am almost tired out, I usually come
Out on a swale, where, rank and lush,
The fireweed and the snowbrush mark a spring.
There for a little while I slip my pack
And wet my wrists and head a bit, and when I'm cool,
I drink—quite sparingly.
I smoke a pipe—then drink again,
And taking up my load, I struggle on.

JOHN C. FROHLICHER

Anhedonia

How strange this hope that holds the hearts of men
Who pause as at a play where players drone
Out listless lagging lines, their fervor gone
—These wistful men that watch and now and then
Grow restless to escape their stifling pen,
To heed some reckless urge, to breathe keen air,
To whirl through streams that ever lead nowhere
—Yet wait and murmur, “It may lure again.”

Thus have I waited, eager to be gone
To join some easing ebb and flow afar,
While sodden pain and hopelessness have grown.

* * *

Though I have found gay clothes will hide a scar
This bitterness has rankled now too long,
And, grown more subtle, counterfeits a song.

LLOYD S. THOMPSON

Silence

Sometimes I ask if I can bear the pain,
When my small self lies quivering and pierced,
Thrust through, and lost, in the keen wind of music—
Tones trample me, like the swift rhythmic hoofs
Of winged and shining things I dare not dream,
Like golden hoofs across a trembling bridge;
Tones flash above me like the gleaming swords
Of white crusaders riding into heaven;
And stamped upon me, indestructible,
In etched-out ecstasy, a pattern grows—
Be still!
I ask if I can bear—music, and hear
Thousands of human hearts stop beating,
And I am answered.

DOROTHY MUELLER

On the Rocky Mountain Goat Trail

“**W**HOOPEE!” I shouted to Alice through the thin partition that separated our rooms in the employees’ dormitory in the Many Glacier region. “Got breakfast off tomorrow. One grand, long snooze for me.”

“Oh Jan,” she called back, “I’ll get some one to work for me and we’ll take that Mt. Alten trip. We can’t pass up such a chance. What do you say?”

“Just what I wanted to suggest but I was afraid you couldn’t get off. Do you think you can?”

“Sure. I’ll see Casey right away, get a lunch fixed up and we’ll sleep on top of Alten tonite.”

Several moments of intense bustling in the next room and then a war whoop.

“Jan! We’ll come down Appekuny basin in the morning.” With the last words Alice burst into my room.

We thrilled at the idea, we’d often spoken of the trip but the opportunity to take it had never come.

Alice got her morning off and the busy Casey had our lunches put up without even noticing our explanations.

At nine-thirty that evening we started. Alice’s room-mates protested vigorously, saying we were crazy to go alone.

“Oh bother,” said Alice, “You’re just jealous because you can’t get off.” And, as we trundled off with the huge rolls of blankets on our backs, she called back, “If anything happens to me remember, I prefer the Glacier lily.”

The night was wonderful, clear and warm and still, with a gorgeous moon which shone on the lake, making it a pool of silver. Every nerve of us tingled with the mystery and splendor of our surroundings. We climbed higher and higher; through strips of dead trees turned ghastly in the moonlite, over rocky ledges and patches of shale. We paused often to gaze down on the bright spots that were lakes McDermott and Josephine, and chuckled as we neared the mountain top and noticed that the lights were still burning in the Grill.

At twelve o’clock we reached the top and I had my first glimpse into Appekuny basin. It was a narrow gorge,—dark, terrible. On all three sides shadows crept and lurked on the steep mountain banks. In the bottom I saw a dark ink spot—a lake.

Alice grew restless as I gazed, almost horror stricken, into the sinister canyon. The wind was blowing furiously on the mountain top.

"Come on," she finally broke out, "We can't sleep in this hurricane. Let's go down to the lake."

"Never, never! Into that awful place? I won't!"

Alice laughed—"Well—."

"There are trees, we can sleep in among them somehow."

We hurried over to the patch of forest and finally decided on a spot where the wind did not blow directly on us. We rolled up in our blankets and lay down, but we kept sliding and slipping down hill, so we shifted and moved about until each of us had her back against a tree. Then we settled down to sleep.

We arose at four-thirty the next morning. Appekuny, so terrifying the night before, turned from gray to brick red and gold as the sun rose; the huge rock that was Grinnel glowed with a thousand colors; fourteen lakes lay before us. Breathlessly we watched McDermott and Josephine turn from black to silver and in glee we watched four tiny, white dots move from the dormitory to the cafeteria.

Our reluctance to leave this place vanished as the sun climbed higher and charms of Appekuny became apparent. With our blankets once more strapped on our backs we began our descent into the basin. In the trackless shale, the gum-soled oxfords I was wearing began to suffer. They were already well worn, but I had put them on in order to save my much-used hiking boots for the main trip of the season—Grinnel.

We were about half way down the mountain when I frightened Alice by screaming, "Look!" Down in the basin, just above the lake came a rocky mountain goat. It stopped when I called and soon saw us. For a few minutes it watched us as we continued our trip down. Then, suddenly, it sprang off—leaping from ledge to ledge up the straight wall in the back of the canyon.

We finally scrambled to the place where we had first seen the goat on a large flat rock. We sat down to rest and shake the particles of shale from our shoes.

Soon there came a surprised cry from Alice—"A trail!" Sure enough through the shale above the lakes was a path.

We started on, passing first the lake we had seen the night before and then, after a drop, passed a second lake. Finally we came to a spring, just above a tiny falls, filled with mosses and ferns. It was lovely and as the sun had begun to warm up the damp rocks we sat

down and got our things out. We laughed over the breakfast, which evidently the preoccupied Casey had intended for a midnight spread—pickles, salad.

When breakfast was over we prepared to go on but to our surprise and, at first, dismay—the trail had ended.

“Oh well, they probably follow the creek from here on,” I ventured. “It looks easy.”

“All right. Let’s go!”

At first the trail was easy but gradually it became necessary to pick our way with care. Way down ahead we could see the trail leading into the basin from the other end. We had to reach it. But as we went further the trail grew worse and worse. Alice, a very dare-devil, was always quite a distance ahead of me and when she disappeared a few steps always brought her into my sight. But once when I took a few steps and found myself abruptly at the tip of an almost perpendicular rock, twice my height, with Alice at the bottom waiting for me, I was startled.

“How on earth—?”

“You’ve got to back down,” she informed me, “so and so and so.” She directed my footsteps. Finally by hanging on with finger-tips and toes to the narrow ledges I reached her side.

After that rock we went down one cliff after another until right beside us boomed a falls—higher, grander, more furious than any we had ever seen before. Rocks and cliffs surrounded us. Oh, it was a place of nature’s most rugged grandeur. Cliff after cliff we left behind; always thinking a few more would bring us to the bottom, but finally we came to a drop that stopped us. To the back and left of us were straight, rugged walls; the cliff in front was perpendicular and to our right the treacherous precipice ended in the surging falls.

“It looks as though we’ll have to go back, but how can we and what shall we do when we get back?” I looked at Alice confounded.

“Let’s try the falls.”

“Are you crazy? That torrent of water, those slippery rocks? If we ever get down we’d never get out.”

“Well, let’s look over this cliff. Maybe there’s a way.”

Alice looked over the thirty-foot drop and I moved over and examined a different place. A moment later I was rooted to the spot as I saw Alice going through the air feet first. She hit the ledge below, rolled over three or four times, then came to a sitting posture and

looked up at me. At the sight of her streaming face and blood-soaked blouse I screamed. What I said I do not know, but she said calmly:

"I'm all right. Just come on down."

Inch by inch I began letting myself down. Every few moments I would call "Your legs?" "Are you all right?" If I received no reply I would scream "Alice!" because I was sure she was either dead or would die.

"Nothing's wrong, but I want you to get my handkerchief."

When I reached her she said, "My arm is broken." Her arm? Yes. Her sleeve bulged above the elbow; her nose was on one side of her face; her front teeth were gone and she was streaming blood. The spot where she had landed was soaked with blood and three whole teeth lay there.

"Oh Alice, Alice" I sobbed—it wasn't true, all this—. "What shall we do?"

"See if you can find my camera."

I picked it up a few feet ahead and came back to her. She had scrambled to her feet and in a panic I seized her arm.

"Don't touch me." She could only mumble since her nasal cavities were shut off and her teeth gone. "I'll be all right but we've got to get out."

"But you can't!"

"I'll have to."

We went forward and in despair I looked at the hundred feet of rigid rock wall below. We turned to the falls. It was worse.

Abruptly I came out of my daze. I knew she could never get home, I knew nothing about first aid, I knew that I could not go ahead alone and that I was being the panic-stricken one while she—poor, battered thing—was probably using all her will-power to keep from fainting.

"Alice," I said, "You see what a fix we're in. We can not go ahead, the falls are impossible, you can't go back over those cliffs. The only thing is for me to go back and get help while you stay here."

"But I won't, I can't," she moaned, "I'm going right with you."

"No, if we tried such a thing we would both fall off some place. You have got to stay here."

She finally agreed and I found a ledge about the size of a table, the only one around that didn't slant directly into the falls, unrolled my blankets for her to lie on and when she was settled I said,

"Alice, will you promise me not to move?"

"Yes."

"Alice, will you swear it? You know I'll come right back to this spot and you must be here."

"I promise, Jan."

So I left her, the sun pouring down on her. Whether I would ever see her again or not was a matter of doubt.

When I started back I had nothing to carry. Cliff after cliff I scaled; sometimes it was straight up above and straight down below. I knew it would take hours to go back over Alten so I decided to go over the smaller mountain in the middle of the basin and reach the Appekuny trail. Up, up I went and finally reached the lakes. The soles of my shoes were gone; I didn't know where I was going and—going—where I would land. I knew I would get to the hotel eventually, I wasn't afraid—the power that my agonized heart was beseeching was giving me strength. The only thing I feared was that I would be too late, that Alice might attempt to rise, faint and fall into the raging torrent. On and on I went, up and up thru trackless shrubbery, through acres of juniper, through canyons, sliding down hills of shale, wading creeks. I remember sighing with relief when my burning feet sank into swamp land. At last I reached the Appekuny trail and my speed increased with the knowledge of my surroundings. When, at last, I reached the road I saw a car coming, flagged it and climbed in, choking an explanation as I did so. In a few minutes we were at the ranger station. I explained what had happened and said I would go back with them to get her.

The house detective was at the station. He and I rode back to the hotel where he reported the accident and the ranger gathered the things to take with him. Somehow I managed to change my shoes, explain to Casey, and get back to the corral.

"You can't go with us."

I looked at them stupefied, incredulous.

"You've never ridden before, it will be impossible for you to go as fast as we must."

"But I've got to show you where she is. I'll go as fast as the horse can."

When they only shook their heads and the detective smiled and said, "Oh, we'll find her," I seized the ranger's arm and cried wildly, "I've got to go. She may die. You don't understand—."

"You said she could walk."

"Yes, but she can't climb."

"We'll get her all right then."

Half crying, I persuaded them to take some rope and, when I had directed them as well as I could, they left.

People came to meet me as I stumbled toward the dormitory—how had it happened, did I think she would die?

From the time the ranger left, I lived in an agony of fear, questions and kindnesses. No word of reproof came to me for our escapade. Everyone was trying to soothe me—from Casey down to the garbage man.

When they brought her in at four that afternoon, having searched three hours for her among the cliffs, I fell asleep. No one disturbed me and at eight I woke of my own accord. My roommate took me down to the cafeteria for dinner. Those who were still there instantly crowded around and, after they had told me how Alice was, I related the story—again. Everyone wanted to know how I had come home. The detective and the ranger couldn't understand; they themselves had been unnerved by the trip, had almost decided to come back after me. Then I learned it was a trip no one had ever taken before; a few people had come up from the other end of the basin but no one had ever gone over the way we had.

When I saw Casey, she told me that besides having broken arm and nose, Alice had broken her jaw. I went with her to see Alice. When I entered the room, I almost fainted. The spotless place reeked with the odor of blood, the face on the pillow was puffed and swollen unrecognizably. Through it all Alice had been conscious. She talked to me of trivial details—packing her grip, having her films developed. They took her down to the entrance that night and on to Kalispell the next day.

In a sort of stupor, I got ready for bed. I thought of Alice's widowed mother, of the school she must give up, of her probable disfigurement, of her unhappy financial straits, of the almost insignificance of the one hundred and ten dollars the employees had collected for her.

The next morning came the hideous report that instead of losing all of her teeth some had been shoved up into her gums cracking the roof of her mouth.

In the evening I went down to the lobby to get some stamps. As I entered, I saw a group of people around the transportation desk. I caught the end of a sentence "Got off on a goat trail—" Then—"Shhh, there she is." Then—silence.

JANICE JOHNSON

Closed Up

I cannot bear the sobbing of the wind;
I cannot bear the dying of the wind:
It makes the blood flow back from my tight lips,
It strikes a rawness in my finger tips;
It makes me clench my hand and grit my teeth.
The clouds are grey and thin; and my blood's thin,
And I am closed up with the wind for sheath.

And yet I could cry out and beat my chest,
To hear my breast sound hollow, as the night
Sounds hollow now—that both have been so full
And mellow—or had seemed so I would think
(There is no place for richness in the air;
There's only lungs and tissue in my chest.)

Ah me! I will sit here and rest my head
Against this tree trunk. And why should I care
That ants may crawl out of the coarse dark cracks
Of this rough bark to struggle in my hair:
And the ground's damp and pebbly,
Being near the lake edge—Plop! my foot disturbed a frog.
I would not care now if a coyote slunk
Out of that bush and crept behind my back.
It takes a bit of eagerness to fear.

Oh dear! I might as well just close my eyes,
And close my ears:—My heart's already closed,
But not asleep; nor will it let me sleep: It holds a tide,
Billowing and billowing to burst out in sobs.
Oh God! if I could beat against the stars
And make them be as open hearts to me.
And there! those willows pillowing up the hill
Just loose enough to hold a star tucked in against a leaf—
There's something that I cannot get from them
They're offering me—Uh, everything is locked,
Even my sobs. —Why do I stand again?
There, from old habit I have kissed the leaf
That touched me; I could tear it just as well.
I'm standing up. I might as well move on:
Nowhere to go—nor nothing to wait for.

The wind is down. It stopped a while ago—
As if it had completed anything.
And there's the moon's rim; just another waste
Of something lovely—and monotonous.
Oh God! I could lie flat and bite the grass;
It used to look so magic where the moon
Lit each stubbed blade distinct.
There's something crisp about it to the touch—
It rasps my face—to pull a blade across
Makes my lips almost bleed. The grass is thin,
Too thin to be a carpet. These sharp stones
Make it too rough to lie on. —There's the wood,
Soft with its shadows, where the veeries live.—
I never noticed when they ceased to sing
Tonight—And I've not seen one since the time
I used to sit, quick-sensed, an hour or so,
Just waiting for the sly brown things to flit
Fearlessly by me—Yet I did not wait,
But listened deeply at the heart of life,
And heard completion and full ecstasy.
(That's how I would have said it then, at least.)

And it's as quiet now, and I can hear,
Far off, the swooping of the night bird's flight,
And the still further throbbing of the strong
Vibrations of the river's heavy flow.
I think I see the canyon-darkened waves
Throwing back from the rocks—then on again,
And well I know the sound's tumultuous
And almost angry, terrifying roar;
But here it is a wide encircling throb,
A hard-to-hear, strong, folding harmony.

The aspen stems are fair now in the moon,
Almost a white—the pale green's glowing so.
The bark has a smooth texture—powdery
As well—and they're so slender and so round.
Oh! my heart's full—Sad? Glad? I'll go to bed.
There's something—I can hear it through the throb
Of the far river—something yet to be.

ELSIE McDOWALL

Rubbers

THE OTHER DAY a friend walked 'round my way with me and when we came to where I live I asked her in, and she came.

On the porch she stopped to take off her rubbers, saying, as she did so: "Wait . . . I'd better take these off. I don't believe they're muddy but they may be. Hateful things, rubbers! I wasn't going to wear them, but I decided I'd better and went back and put them on. But I really haven't needed them."

Yes, that is the way we do—so many of us most of the time. We hate to wear rubbers, we resolve not to, but before long we go back to put them on. We are afraid to do as we want to do; we are always playing safe. And how much fun and adventure we miss because we are on the safe side, keeping to the right, doing as the person ahead of us has done and what the person behind expects us to do. Of course, we all need our rubbers once in a while, but I have a notion that we would find more pleasure and greater profit were we to go without them more than we do. It is a good deal more difficult to cross a muddy street without rubbers than it is with them. By going without the ordinary means, we are obliged to make our means and that is incomparably harder and more valuable to do. Without our rubbers we have to step wide, walk a good distance around, consider carefully each step, look for the dry places, calculate and try our abilities, learn. We can scarcely hope to cross without getting some mud on our shoes and it takes more time, and an inevitable amount of discomfort, but if we should get across without much trouble, how much more worthwhile our walk has been than if we had been fortified with rubbers and been able to walk stolidly and directly through, without having to think on the mud or look for dry places.

I think of the routine of every-day life, our daily assignments, our recitations, our degrees, certificates to teach, our class-rooms, as rubbers. I suppose each one of us revolts some time or another against the drive of an academic course and the detail work that each is expected to do, and many of us decide to ignore the prescribed assignments in order to spend more time on something that more nearly expresses ourselves. But most of us go back and do the distasteful things because—well, because we think we'd better. So instead of spending our time working into our qualifications, we waste it by

working off our requirements. Each of us is something like a piece of bark moving on a deep, dark water. There is mystery—another world—below. We would like to see it but we cannot go down because we must go on. We go with the current—always someone to see, a paper to do, a report to make, a class to attend. And we hate these things to do sometimes—outside there are so many interesting things that call. Perhaps if we could get away, out to that stretching smoke on Water-works hill, that quirk of snow along the road, back to the book we'd started, out among the wet-roofed houses, we could find a little rest, get a new grip on ourselves, we might even write a poem—if we could get away, if we only had time, if there were not so many things that we had to get done——

So we stay with the drive at the expense, I know, of something finer. We go back for our rubbers instead of taking a chance on getting past the bad places without them. We are so busy getting ready to meet life that we miss it. We had better go unprepared and make a way. If rubbers are really hateful leave them and damn the consequences. There will be good and bad ones, rubbers or no rubbers, training or no training.

And now the paradox. For nothing, it seems, is true unless it admits contradiction. It is during the drive and often because of it, that we do our very best work. One comes nearest to expressing one's self when it is most difficult to do so. And if we never wore our rubbers, if we did only the things that we wanted most to do, we would soon go wading through the mud without even stopping to look for the dry, hard places. We would soon lose our sense of values. When one has nothing more to do than to write poems, he soon ceases to be a poet and becomes simply poetical. It is in the drive—during precious moments taken from the every-day schedule, that real poetry is born. The longer our "expression" remains unexpressed the deeper and more significant it is when it does come. Like wine mellowing in the wood.

And in abandoning our rubbers there is always the danger of doing so, perhaps unintentionally enough, because others do not. One often becomes so conscious of one's individuality that one loses it. (Some people are so engrossed with liberties that they lose their liberty.)

So it appears that our expression lies not in whether we do or do not wear rubbers but in when we wear them. And we

can never come to know exactly when we'll need them. We will be constantly failing to set up a permanent expression of ourselves. It cannot be done—but every law of a healthy nature demands that we never cease trying. A constant, weighing of values on a delicate, sensitive scale that needs only the flare of the thinnest wind to set it swaying and knocking. It is well to let the wine mellow in the wood, but we must not leave it so long that it gets like acid. We may object to being like pieces of bark forever being carried along, never able to satisfy the curiosity we have for the world below, but it is well that we cannot, for were we to sink we would become water-logged and could not rise again. Best be on the wave, just sensing the mystery below and seeing what we can of the mystery above.

Well, so goes it—a wearisome groping for balance and finding it doesn't amount to a snap unless one has friends who understand and to whom one can smile what one cannot say.

JORAN BIRKELAND

Bread and Hyacinths

When I left the Port of Seattle
I thought to throw some pennies in the bay,
And shut my eyes, and hope some day
To come again, and see the gulls dipping
Down to green water, and the dirty shipping,
And the rain, and the dim, far line
Of mountains in their pale sunshine—
But I saved my pennies, and dropped them instead
In a box at the depot to buy children bread.

DOROTHY MARIE JOHNSON

A Successful Woman

She has mowed her thoughts down
Like a lawn
That is smooth and velvety on its top
But all the growing is done underneath,
Blind hidden groping in the earth.

ANNE CROMWELL NEEDHAM

Man Hesitates But Life Urges

There is this shifting, endless film
And I have followed it down the valleys
And over the hills,—
Pointing with wavering finger
When it disappeared in purple forest-patches
With its ruffle and wave to the slightest-breathing wind-God.

There is this film
Seen suddenly, far off,
When the sun, walking to his setting,
Turns back for a last look,
And out there on the far, far prairie
A lonely drowsing cabin catches and holds a glint,
For one how endless moment,
In a staring window the fire and song of the martyrs!

There is this film
That has passed to my fingers
And I have trembled,
Afraid to touch.

And in the eyes of one
Who had wanted to give what I had asked
But hesitated—tried—and then
Came with a weary, aged, "Not quite,"
I could but see for that single realmless point of time,
All that is sad, and tired, and old—
And endless, shifting film.

And I went again
Down the valleys and over the hills,
Pointing with wavering finger;
Ever reaching to touch, trembling,
Ever fearful to touch.

D'ARCY DAHLBERG

An Afternoon Call

THE ONLY PATCH of sunlight in the squat, dirt-roofed log cabin was blotted out as Jack appeared in the doorway. Old Whit, sitting on the edge of the grimy-quilted, sagging bed and sawing away at his fiddle, took no notice of his visitor; so Jack crossed over to the bench beside the stove and sat down. Surely it was only yesterday that Fred had dared him to knock out that little hole in the window-pane so they could snatch some dried prunes. The hole was stuffed with a strip of gunnysack now, but Jack could feel his clutching fingers making that little hollow in the box of prunes. The pot of mushy, over-cooked beans and chunks of bacon bubbling chokily on the back of the stove; the sticky white bowl of stewed prunes on the table; the half-dry, smelly beaver-hide on the stretching board above his head: ten years *had* passed but all these were the same.

"Yes," sighed Old Whit as he carefully laid the fiddle down, "I would die happy if I could only remember the last measure of 'The Arkansas Traveler.'" Then he announced briskly as he shoved his ears down with a limp, greasy Stetson, "Got to see how that irrigation ditch is working."

Jack half wanted to say, "That's where you were yesterday," but he asked instead, as he followed Old Whit out and squatted down on the other side of the door, "You don't remember me, do you?"

"Comfort's son," announced Whit cryptically. "Oh, yes, I remember you. I remember your coming—and your going."

Then they sat there a while in silence, looking out over the dead gray and black of the sagebrush flat, down into the little hollow where an overflow of the lake showed brightly through the brown and green of the willows; back into the stiff green of the pine forest; and still farther back to the hazy blue outlines of the Teton range. They were remembering, both of them, that coming. Jack could see what to him had seemed a long line of heavily loaded, canvas-covered lumber wagons; a huge band of loose horses herded along behind the wagons, with his uncle chasing one that had tried to break away. Jack had sometimes helped to chase them, too, although his job had been the watching of the placid cow tied behind the last wagon. Crazy old cow. Jack could still see her chewing her cud complacently while the two lambs took their evening meal.

"Decisive woman, your mother," said Old Whit quietly. "When you came down off of Corkscrew Hill and Earl said, 'This is your

place,' she just told your father to keep on driving until she decided where she wanted the house. And when you came to that little hill facing Grayling Creek she said, 'This is the place.' And that was the place. The other two families drove on but you stopped. Your Dad took out his grubber and cleared a place for the tent. Then there was a cabin and later there was a house. One thing you can say for your father—he never shirked hard work.

"And then your mother said, 'We must have a school.' And school you did have—down there in that old cabin of mine."

Jack's eyes turned toward the cabin. He wondered if the leaky old boat, in which they had hunted for tadpoles, was still down there in the willows. And if there were still rotten apples clinging on the nails where they had pitched them. Gee, he could still taste the cold, soggy pancakes and jerked elk meat that the Knox kids used to trade for his wholesome white-bread sandwiches. How they had scrambled to trade with the Knox kids, even after they had sat and gagged when Howard *had* pulled the scales off his face and stuck them in his mouth. He wondered where the Knox's were now and if Howard ever took a bath.

"And then there was a real school building, square and white."

Jack's memory leaped to the cave in the rocks, savory lunches of baked potatoes and smoked fish, with wild raspberries to finish with. He smiled as he remembered how the teacher had taken the five of them into her confidence about the washing ceremony that would give the Knox's clean hands for the lunch. Wayne, though, had kept his hands clean after Bess had refused to let him swing her up the mountain because his hands were dirty. You could still kid Sis about the way she used to petulantly turn her shoulder when she'd look up from her book to find Wayne's moon-eyed gaze on her.

"Oh, there were a lot of changes in those five years. Houses, and barns, and cow-sheds—but the roofs of most of them have fallen in now. Yours haven't fallen yet. But your fence is down, even though your father did burn the end of every pole before he stuck it in the ground. And you can still see Holt's roof—parts of it. See that red down there against the timber-line? A tin roof and a board house for this country where we have nine months winter and three months all the same. Your Dad used to say that—remember. Oh, this country got your Dad."

Other pictures leaped into Jack's mind:

His father rushing into the house with the shouted query, "Where's my gun?" His mother, quietly, capably, stepping against the door and demanding, "What are you going to do with it?" Himself springing to his feet as his father angrily, profanely cried, "I'm going to kill that damn dog. He's chewed my skii strap up again." But Pal hadn't been killed.

The dark, hurried meals where he and Bess had suppressed their giggles because "children were made to be seen and not heard."

Dad beating Nigger until Bess, who never cried, had started to whimper.

Dad kicking over the milk bucket, the stool, and kicking the cow against the side of the barn because Lizzie finally refused to give down her milk under such brutal hands.

"Ever hear from your Dad after you left here?"

"Yes," briefly, conclusively.

"When?"

"Two years ago last Christmas."

"Where was he?"

"Idaho."

"What was he doing?"

"Nothing."

"Wha—d—he say?"

With a shrug of his shoulders Jack answered, "Said maybe he'd see us children again some day, but that all he wanted to do now was make enough money in the summer to loaf around in the winter."

"Umm-m. Hard-working, ambitious man in his day."

"Yes, I know," said Jack eagerly. "There were a lot of fine things about him. Now I remember—"

"Yes, I know," interrupted Old Whit, "but the country got him."

So Jack remembered alone the laughing, shouting father that had chased him and Bess all over the house with the threat of his lathered cheek; the singing, patient father that had coaxed pain-racked Bess to sleep; the surprise-laden pockets of the father of his baby days. The long, long evenings of song and story.

"He wasn't the only one it got. Mrs. Johnson never has been just right since her baby died in the dead a' winter when you couldn't either get in or out. A doctor probably couldn't have saved it, but she'd feel better now if she could have had one."

"And Holt down there. He was French, so maybe he did get cruel to that part-Indian bride of his. Anyway that handsome bachelor uncle of yours consoled her. Ever see him?"

"Yes," answered Jack noncommittally.

"I saw him, too, last summer. Teeth all out except three or four in front; great deep wrinkles; and two or three gashes on the side of his face. Said he'd had some trouble with a horse, but the storekeeper said more likely his Indian wife had been throwing stove-wood or knives at him again. Great country, this."

Jack leaped to his feet with, "But it could be conquered! Hands that were hard enough, sympathetic enough, could conquer it!"

Old Whit rose too, hitched his suspenders up, looked at Jack inscrutably for a moment, then said, "Well, got to irrigate that strip of wild grass or my snakes will go hungry this winter."

DORIS ROWSE

Modern Fairies

You must know that the fairies fly
At night, beneath a star filled sky,
And when the morning comes, no doubt,
You've seen the tracks they've left about,
Where, for their fairy aerodromes
They've used the hornets' empty homes,
And you must know they use, for gas,
The oil stains on the garage glass.

JOHN C. FROHLICHER

SLUICE BOX

I

Ridin' the Flats

Maybe you've ridden the open range in July, when the heat comes up in blasts from the ground that wriggles under your cayuse's hoofs. And the sweat that burns and stings your eyes rolls down from under your hat till you can hardly see the mountains off there that float and dance in the haze from the awful heat. And the dust-devils chase off over the flat and maybe one hits you and your eyes and mouth get full of dust and you try to swallow or spit and you can't. And the sweaty smell from your horse drifts up and pretty near chokes you down. And the saddle starts burning and itching beneath you and the damn little flies keep buzzin' around till your horse goes crazy and so do you, and you want to get off and run around—but you thank the Lord you've got a horse when you think of walking far right then. And maybe a shower'll come along and you hate to put your slicker on 'cause the rain feels so good through your shirt. And the clouds blow away and your horse starts to trot and the lively smell of the fresh-wet earth helps to clear your throat. And the mountains off there are clear and still and you feel like a brand-new man.

II

Tone

Only a thread of smoke from a pipe, loosely held in a lean brown hand, showed that the man was alive. A chipmunk ran to an empty paper sack, turned it upside down, sat up and rubbed his face. Then he sprang to the outstretched leg of the man, and climbed slowly to the knee, where the hand (and the pipe) was resting. The small animal smelled the hand, then touched the hot bowl of the pipe with his nose. A scurry—and the chipmunk was gone—hidden in a nearby brush patch. The man stretched, then rose. "The little son of a bitch," he murmured.

* * * * *

Glare of electric lights. A canvas covered platform, fenced by ropes. Two half-naked men—one clinching to avoid the terrible body blows of the other. "Break!" shouts the referee. The fighters fall apart . . . a second shouts to his principal, "Kill that son of a bitch!"

* * * * *

The young candidate was just launching into the climax of his speech. "And I ask you, fellow citizens, I ask you, will you see the reins of the government in the hands of the Money Kings? Will your children . . . " One of the old politicians on the platform whispered into another's ear, "Ain't he a son of a bitch?"

III

Room-Hunting---Minneapolis

THE STREET—Narrow and foul with the stench of gutters which would not drain. . . . Ragged, pale, undernourished children playing with crudely made rag-dolls. . . . A woman's voice rising high above the cacaphony of street sounds, and the answering rumble of a drunken man's voice, apologetic—maudlin, sincere.

THE HOUSE—A delicate and once beautiful facade like a beautiful woman, worn, showing marks of dissipation and toil. . . . Finely carved balustrades, leading to the upper floors, now grimy and broken. . . . A glimpse of a drawing room, out of drawing room days—the style of sixty years ago. . . . mural paintings, tinted ceilings, with broken plaster and old clothes lying about. . . . An unmade bed, suggestive of sensuality rather than sleep. . . .

A shrewish, but beaten landlady. . . . A long, filthy hall. . . . Empty milk bottles standing outside doors. . . . Frying onions. . . . Stinking garbage cans, spilling over on the torn squalid carpet.

THE ROOM—"Six dollars a week" A rumpled bed, and a girl lying in it, asleep. . . . Her hair tangled and greasy, and her face pale and drawn, without the rouge. . . . "She's leaving in the morning." The girls' clothes flung upon chairs and curiously limp in the yellowed gloom. . . .

IV

Great hulking monsters of brass and steel. Rear axles jacked up to take a rain-soaked load of gravel off the rear springs.

The pigmy wrenches at the hood hooks and explores the cold dead bowels of the monster. Gas in the pet cocks and a strain on the crank. Bang! the awakening creature, in a deep throated bark, utters a challenge to inertia. The cry of a new born babe awakening to reincarnation, and then the steady roar increases as the pulse of life enters its vitals.

"Damn this old devil, she starts hard as hell on these cold mornings."

Seven o'clock in the morning, behind the wheel of a lumbering 5-ton truck. A 15-mile haul on a smooth flint surfaced highway. Five trips today with nothing to do on the way but think.

A dripping cloud obscures everything. A fuzzy bottled-up sun tries to peer at me from behind a curtain of mist. I am alone in a world of dream except for the faithful roaring monster who obeys my will and muscle.

I am king of a land of make-believe. This is morning on a choppy sea. The sun, a low hung ball of glowing copper, peers through the mist like the giant fiery eye of Polyphemus. A long ground swell is capped by the chop and splash of a windswept sea. The ship rides with yaw and heave, pulsating with the life of steel, bronze, oil and fire. Cargoes to Shanghai and Bombay, paper and spikes traded for romance and the Orient.

With the lifting fog—a glimpse of brown and white Guernsey cows, shocks of grain on a green and tan field, like the khaki tents of a Lilliputian army. Ahead a smooth flint surfaced road and—work!

V

Suddenly I came to the edge of a warehouse and had my first sight of an ocean-going ship. At first I could only sense that it was huge, and gray and silent, so deadly silent. Gradually my surprise dissolved as I eagerly peered upward through the board fence which so unnecessarily protected that enormous bulk of a tramp steamer. It brooded like some prehistoric monster, suddenly materialized there in its leaden shell by the warehouse runway.

Slowly my mind recorded details. Small, gilt letters on her forecastle announced her name, Manila-Maru, Maru being the Japanese name for ship. Two of her crew leaned inanely on her port gunwale. They were little yellow men, dressed in dirty white baggy blouses. I moved, the better to inspect her decks and rigging. Drooping from her mizzen-mast was a white flag with a red disk in the center. A strange place for a flag, I thought. My glance roved to other objects. An ungainly boom reared up over the cargo, while on her deck were ropes, unbattened hatches, and an anchor-chain windlass.

Again I glanced curiously at the little men of Japan and discovered one looking through me. That was my exact impression. I didn't seem to exist, for his gaze penetrated through me to infinity. I doubt if he knew that I was there. His attention probably had been attracted when I had moved to inspect the ship. His somber, detached, fate-like stare puzzled me, and that singular, draping silence which seemed to cloak the ship and the two members of her crew irritated me. What were those stupid, dreamy fellows doing there, anyhow? And where were the stevedores who should have been running the sputtering little donkey-engine, which operated the loading boom? Why all this silly quietude at this late hour of the morning? The steady, impersonal look from the passive little Jap made me uncomfortable and impatient. I pivoted on my boot heel and briskly struck out to find more ships.

VI

Montana Frontiers in Winter

A blizzard whoops and squalls as it sweeps south from Medicine Hat. Cattle drift toward the Missouri—their heads are low; they bellow as they occasionally stop to paw the drifts for grass. . . . Bar X 6 and Lazy M and Roundhead T. . . . and brands from Canada. . . . the cattle are drifting.

A sleigh, loaded high with logs, pulled by four bay horses, slips easily down the road to the landings on the Stillwater. The driver's shout shakes echoes from the canyon walls.

Two forest rangers count an elk herd. . . . the animals are black against the snow-covered hills at White River.

A white aproned Japanese scientist puts a small insect on a squealing guinea pig. . . . The Hellgate wind rattles the shutters of the laboratory.

A Letter from New York

After three months in the office of the Sun, I was offered a job as secretary to Freda Kirchwey, managing editor of *The Nation*. I was furious. Secretarial work in a magazine office. Irony was after me again. But I took the job—when vague promises of a chance to write were given. And thus I was brought reluctantly into one of the most pleasant experiences of my eastern adventure. I have no intention of lapsing into a eulogy of *The Nation*, but I find it hard not to write with ridiculous enthusiasm of the honesty, the sincerity, the youth, the fine spirit, the humor of its staff. The humor finds its way too seldom into the pages of the magazine; but youth is likely to be solemn in print and *The Nation's* most salient and most valuable characteristic is its youth. After an office like that of *The Sun*, where Business, middle-aged and portly, sits enthroned, gloating over his financial pages, the *Nation* office is like a spring breeze from Hellgate, like the first buttercup in Pattee.

I did get a chance to write—and had the thrill of seeing some of my editorial opinions in print.

Meanwhile, I explored New York—feeling it, tasting it, smelling it, loving even the terrible roar of the subway except when I was tired or discouraged. Then I hated and feared it. The dramatic season last year happened to be especially fruitful. "What Price Glory," "Processional," "Desire Under the Elms," "They Knew What They Wanted"—all of these were playing, not to mention revivals such as Shaw's "Candida." "Processional" interested me most. It is an incomplete but extremely vivid cross section of America—jazzy, crude, racy, exciting, somewhat amorphous. It leaves one limp, with a roar in his ears—but that is part of its power. And it sets one to speculating as to what America as a whole will ultimately produce in art. Certainly it will be individual, very strong, probably jazzy because of the Negro, and, I think, exceedingly fine and beautiful.

There was music, too. I realized a dream of hearing Beethoven's Fifth Symphony played well; I heard Roland Hayes interpret, through the spirituals, the tragedy, and the comedy of the Negro race in America; I looked down from dizzy heights at the stage of the Metropolitan; and I even went to the Ziegfield Follies, a stupid show that no New Yorker ever goes to, except with a friend from Kansas or Iowa.

New York has captured me again, and I am commuting from New Haven four days a week. I am once more in *The Nation* office, this time as financial secretary for a Negro high school in Virginia of which Mr. Villard, editor of *The Nation*, is president. A week or so ago I visited the school, which is entirely Negro, even to the teachers. It was a new and exciting experience, both intellectually and emotionally.

My next move will be west—for the summer. I am very anxious to see how the east has affected the west, for me.

MARGARET MARSHALL

The Frontier BOOK SHELF

A Hind Let Loose by C. E. Montague. (Doubleday Page). The day that Frank Munsey died was also the day that C. E. Montague resigned from the editorship of the *Manchester Guardian*. Christopher Morley, a great admirer of Montague's work, remarks that there was evidently some equity in this coincidence. Montague is a brilliant writer. *A Hind Let Loose* is a story of journalism rich in flashing criticism and irony. As in his stories in *Piery Particles* the narrative and characters run subordinate to the theme.

E. L. F.

Democracy and Leadership by Irving Babbitt. (Houghton Mifflin Co.) After one knows Rousseau, Bacon, Carlyle, Mill, Burke, Plato, Confucius, Tagore, or possibly just before, is the time to read this book. It is a very thoughtful, erudite synthesis and criticism of the economic, political, philosophical literature of the naturalistic trend. The book gets interest but not always conviction from its frequent critical reference to modern instance. We are living in a world, thinks Professor Babbitt, that has gone wrong on first principles. We have been betrayed by our leaders into naturalism, humanitarianism, democracy.

E. L. F.

Wild Geese (Dodd Mead, 1925) by Martha Ostensi, the \$13,500 prize novel, is a powerful book that gives an almost epic portrayal of the grim northern frontier. For any one familiar with eastern Montana the novel must have peculiar, though somber charm. It is the story of infatuation—the infatuation of a harsh, relentless husband and father for the beauty of the land, the hardness of the land, the soul-killing labor of the land. The land dominates and satisfies him. Through him it dominates his family with a harsh inhumanity that finally goads them to rebellion. In strong

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contrast to the harsh unloveliness of the life on the ranch, the brutal father, the cowed passivity of the wife, the quickly smothered outbursts of rebellion are the glimpses given of the easy-going neighbors, the chatty Scandinavian visitors, the young school teacher from town, and, above all, the sheer loveliness and beauty of the land itself. It is a powerful book. Its power is based not upon brute force but upon delicacy of feeling, subtle comprehension of the psychology of the characters, sure, deft characterizations, and a skilled use of phrases. It is pleasant that so worthy a representative of American fiction has already found its way into eight different languages; one can but wonder, however, if much of the charm of the book is not lost in translation.

L. B. M.

The Newer Spirit by V. F. Colverton. (Harcourt Brace and Co.) If Professor Babbitt had read this book it is strange he did not include it for damnation with the books of all the other naturalists since Rousseau and Whitman. In ten essays Mr. Colverton marshals much challenging evidence to show that both the style and substance of art alter with each of the vicissitudes of social evolution. And social evolution is inevitably right. Therefore, Sherwood Anderson with his common-man heroes, is in line to be the authentic representative in fiction of the proletarian movement.

E. L. F.

Pure Poetry by George Moore, 1925. (Boni & Liveright Co.) This slim volume contains a number of the finest songs from English poetry selected by the celebrated master of English prose, George Moore, and the two contemporary English poets, Walter De LaMare and Freeman. It is introduced with a very familiar and in places exquisitely written narrative by Mr. Moore of the occasion on which the three poets planned the book and the discussion they had about what constitutes *pure* poetry. It is amusing that in a book which makes its aim the exclusion of all ideas, moralizings, and reflections of supposedly passing intellectual attitudes, there should be not only a rationalistic and very questionable body of theorizing for introduction, but also, after all, a number

Make Business Reciprocal—Patronize Those Who Patronize Us.

of poems which make reference to moral principles like justice, and kindness to animals and duty. The book finely illustrates the inescapability of reference to standards of value even when the utmost concentration is put on so-called impersonal *things*.

However, it is a book that many who like poetry will delight to own, and that I should like to see in all libraries.

S. C.

The Common Reader by Virginia Woolf. (Boni & Liveright Co.) This is a book of fine critical essays by the cultivated, intellectual daughter of Leslie Stephen. She is a true critic. Her criticism is creative. She finds friends, secret sharers among the fine minds of many ages. She lays their books aside, divines the relation between their utterance and their living souls, and creates forms to match her impressions of those relationships. Imagination, intellect, erudition, beautifully used words work together to give her essays the quality and intensity of fine art.

E. L. F.

The Ordeal of Mark Twain (Dutton, 1920) Van Wyck Brooks. To the average person who is familiar with Mark Twain as our great professional humorist, this work of Mr. Van Wyck Brooks will come as a stimulating and challenging surprise. Probably few will agree with Mr. Brooks' interpretation. Many will, doubtless, feel that he has determined upon his conclusions and then sought evidence to prove his case. The thesis that he seeks to prove is that Mark Twain was chilled and repressed by the influence of his wife and Mr. Howells, and, therefore, failed to reach the true greatness of which he was capable. Because of this failure we see—thanks to Mr. Brooks' careful research—the constantly growing bitterness, the deep pessimism, the overwhelming sense of failure realized by Mark Twain himself. To be sure, Mr. Brooks' works hard in his collecting of proof for this conclusion, but, despite his effort, the sunny Mark Twain asserts himself from time to time and eludes the author's vigilant pen. The book is a clever study that provokes thought and invites disagreement. At all points it is good reading.

L. B. M.

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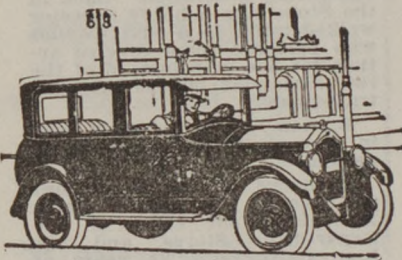
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Notes About Contributors

Dorothy Mueller is a graduate student doing special work.

Anne Cromwell Needham, '24, did her major work in the School of Journalism.

Lloyd Thompson is doing newspaper work in San Francisco.

Elsie McDowall, '26; Doris Rowse, '26; Janice Johnson, '28; Joran Birke-land, '26, and Dorothy Marie Johnson, '28, are majors in the English department.

Contributors to the Sluice Box are: Alex McIver, '26; John Frohlicher, '26; John Ryan, '27; Dorothy Marie Johnson, '28, and Edward Heilman, '26.

D'Arcy Dahlberg is studying and writing in France.

Margaret Marshall, '24 (Mrs. Hal White), is secretary for a Negro high school in Virginia, of which Mr. Villard, editor of The Nation, is president.

Maurice Angland, ex-'23, is in the United States Consular Service in Sweden.

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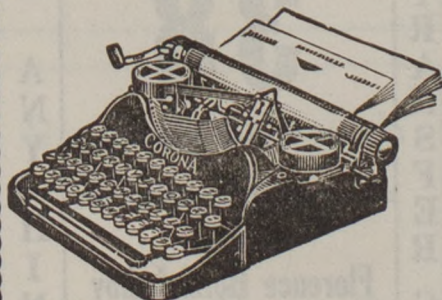
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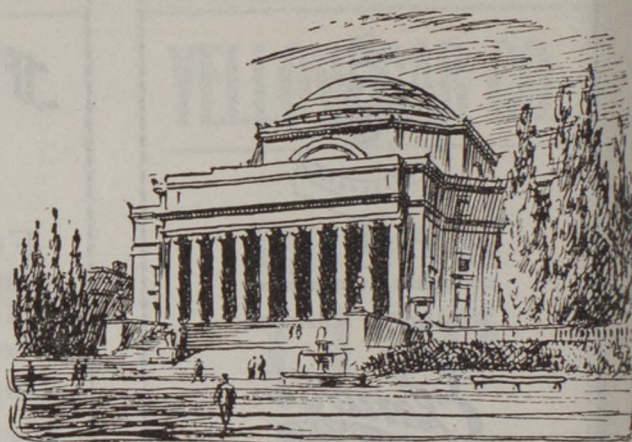
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