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Vol. 1, no. 2
Mar. 1927

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The FRONTIER

A Literary Magazine



SHORT STORY NUMBER

1. *The Devil's Match.*
2. *He'll Make a Good Sheriff.*
3. *The Homesteader.*
4. *Pride.*
5. *Old Pain.*

STATE UNIVERSITY of MONTANA

MARCH, 1927

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VOL. VII

NO. 2

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THE FRONTIER

A Literary Magazine

VOL. VII, NO. 2

MARCH, 1927

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

Published three times a year.....Subscription, One Dollar

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Fable

Every evening, when the receding sun had cast the same even greyness over the forest, the very, very old man was accustomed to leave his cabin and enter the wood.

And when he had gone a certain distance to a spot where the forest was very black, he would come to a pool strangely white, there to stretch himself at its side, reaching down toward the water with one finger till he had barely touched its surface.

"Heigh-ho, little pike," he would whisper as a ripple started beneath the tenebrous shadow over the water, "will you come to me now? Will you at last touch the tip of my finger and bring about the end of all things?" And the pike, a silver flash below him, would come very close indeed, but never . . . quite . . . touch . . .

Of course, there came a certain evening when the finger, and the arm above it, and indeed all of the old man, were quite relaxed.

And as the pike nibbled fearlessly, the heavens above shattered white splinters into the gathering gloom.

JOHN K. HUTCHENS.

North Winds

The North-Wind-in-Montana
Is a half-grown boy with a blacksnake whip
Swinging it around and about
Impudent
Reckless
Cracking the lash upon your cheek.

The North-Wind-in-California
Is a little old dried-up woman
With a clattering tongue
Rushing from window to window
In search of gossip.

The North-Wind-in-Montana
Strides brusquely over mountain trails
Brushing the giant pines aside as he passes
Knee-deep in snow.

The North-Wind-in-California
Is interested in styles
Moseying along the streets investigating lingerie
And running off scandalized into the desert
Crying Ooooo
As she encounters a cactus.

The North-Wind-in-Montana
Has a heart of chivalry;
Somewhere
'Way up the Bitter Root
He falls in love with the Chinook
And settles down to grow apples.

But the North-Wind-in-California
Winds up her wild career
By chasing the timid moon up a yucca tree.

HOMER M. PARSONS.

The Devil's Match

Note: Michael O'Goy, who likes so well to spin this yarn, is often guilty of mixing a bit of American color with his Irish folk lore. This may be unavoidable, and should be overlooked since Michael is fast becoming a good citizen. All the historical parts, however, are undoubtedly true. Michael is a reliable chronicler and his mother's own cousin got the facts of this story from no less an authority than Tom Moore himself.

EILEEN was the daughter of Brian Boru, king of the Irish. Eileen was a neat slip of a girl—two laughing brown eyes that seemed to have a world of fire behind them; brown locks that tumbled about her shoulders. There was not lack of suitors, as you may guess; men of great fortune and wide fame came to lay their claim to the hand of the king's daughter. Brian Boru was deliberate in his choice, for a beautiful princess is a political asset not to be lightly thrown away, but when he set his eye on the rich lands of the Duke of Killkenny he came to the conclusion that his daughter's happiness demanded the rich man of the west. It is likely that the king would have had his way and everything would have gone smoothly—if it had not been for MacDonnaugh.

How Eileen met MacDonnaugh is not known, for the history of the period is hard to collect. It was a surprising love that sprang up between them, for MacDonnaugh was a rough giant of a man with not a thing to his name but a rocky estate on the west coast of Scotland. And there were hard tales passed about him. Some said that he had sold himself to the devil, for he had been seen speeding across the Irish sea in a boat without oars or sail. He had moreover two shortcomings that would damn him in the eyes of any true son of Erin—first, he was a Scotchman, and second, he was a freemason.

When the king heard that his daughter had taken a liking to the Scotch heretic, he was furious. But he was a crafty old tyrant and tried his best to be diplomatic.

"Ye'l be marryin' shortly," he told her.

"It's to be expected," she answered.

"No doubt ye'l appreciate a bit of advice in the selection."

Eileen yawned as though the matter were of little importance.

"I'll send him around for you to look at when I have him picked out," she promised.

"I was thinkin' about the Count of Meo," suggested the king.

"Oh, there's many a better. He never looks you in the eye for one thing, and he makes too much noise at the table for another."

"Well, well," said the king. "'Tis strange that we should be of the same mind. Now that I think of it I believe ye'r right. How about Timothy O'Gweera?"

"He might suit some I know of, but I'm afraid the childer would want to whittle slivers from the square of his head."

"That's so. I never thought of that. Now isn't it strange that a son-in-law is so rare and precious?"

"I'll tell you what," said the king after a moment of profound thought, "it's the Duke of Killkenny."

"I'm surprised you didn't mention him first," said Eileen, "but if you ask for my unprejudiced opinion, there's no meaner, connevin', unscrupulous villain in the whole of Ireland than that same Duke of Killkenny."

The king had already spent an unprofitable half-hour without an argument. Now the storm broke.

"I'll have ye t' understand," he bellowed, "that the Duke of Killkenny is a personal friend of mine and I'll not listen to any dispar'gin' remarks about him from an upstart of a girl."

The daughter straightened herself to her full height and looked her father in the eye.

"Did you ever stop to wonder whether you are a personal friend of the Duke of Killkenny?"

This floored the king a minute, for the Duke was a notorious scoundrel.

"Well, anyway he's rich," he defended.

"Yes, he's rich," said the daughter, "but I'm askin' ye this: Is Brian Boru the king of Ireland or a Jew land-agent?"—or words to that effect. She flounced out of the room and the old man cursed that some of his dealings had to be with women.

He took his spite out on MacDonnaugh the next day. That young blade had the gall to go to the king and ask for the hand of his daughter. They were alone in the king's chamber but their voices carried through the whole castle—MacDonnaugh's low and rumbling like a distant peal of thunder, and the king's loud and fierce like a rising squall.

"So 'tis you, is it?" shouted the badgered father. "A Scotchman! The Lord deliver me from a Scotchman! Heaven protiet us. Git out of here, ye divil."

The king shoved the giant MacDonnaugh out of the chamber. Eileen met him out in the hall and cupped his hand over her own.

"What if I go back and break his head?" suggested the Scotchman.

"No. It would'nt do," said Eileen. "'Tis hard, I know, but there's many a poor man that blesses the day Brian Boru brought his iron rule to the rescue of Ireland. We couldn't be contented with our lives shadowed with the curse of the helpless."

So MacDonnaugh left the castle with the bewildered air of a great two-fisted man who lacks the nimble wit to extricate himself from an embarrassing situation.

Brian Boru took matters into his own hands and to gain the goodwill of all the rival suitors called the peers of the realm together to help choose a suitable husband for his daughter. But hardly had they convened before they were hopelessly split into factions. There was a hint that civil war would ensue if the unpopular Duke of Killkenny gained the hand of the princess, for Brian Boru was without a male heir and his son-in-law would some day ascend the throne. They wrangled for more than a fortnight and the king was forced to quell so many broils that he cursed the day he had called them together.

One night he gave a great feast, hoping to get his councillors into a happy frame of mind so that the weighty matter could be disposed of. The bowl was passed freely around, and before midnight the whole crowd became imbued with the convivial spirit of liquor and song. All went well until one of the waiters stubbed his toe and pitched a crockful of hot punch into the Duke of Killkenny's lap.

"Yow, Yow," roared the Duke, not daring to lay hands on the king's servant. "Savin' y'er presence, ye'r Majesty, but y'er flure is rougher than the road to Dublin. Bless me," he cried, pointing to the spot where the accident had occurred, "what's that?"

Everyone crowded about.

"Tell me," cried the Duke, "is there something there or have I had wan drink too many?"

They all looked. Two great, shining, red horns were sticking fully three inches up through the rock floor. Men who had been so recently tipsy turned sober eyes of consternation toward each other,

for they knew it was Old Nick. One young fellow, bolder than the rest, grasped a horn with his hand. There was a smell of burning flesh. He let go with a howl of pain. The inside of his hand had been burned to a crisp.

Brian Boru took charge of the situation.

"Gintlemen of the Parliament," he said, "it appears that there is trouble brewin', but keep a stout heart and all will be well. Bring a chisel and a hammer and I'll hew the devil down."

Confidence was restored somewhat as the servants hurried out for a chisel and hammer; but when the king tried to hew the horns off, the edge of the chisel was blunted and not a chip could be loosened. Repeated blows only brought forth a shower of red and blue sparks. Seeing that this would not do, some ran for clubs and stones and tried to pound the horns back through the floor. Others took heavy flails of oak and rained blows upon them. All night they kept this up, but their effort was wasted; for all the time the devil kept coming up and up—now the round head covered with brick colored hair; then the glistening forehead. Finally there appeared two cunning yellow eyes that turned wickedly, first on one and then on another. At this there was a panic in the room and everyone ran for the door, but Brian Boru turned the key in the lock and faced his men.

"'Tis plain that the devil is to pay, and we'll pay him together," he shouted, "and if anyone is less afraid of Brian Boru than he is of the devil, let him try to get out."

No one tried to force the door, for the king had a nasty way of emphasizing his remarks that made them carry conviction.

There was only one thing to do and the king did that.

"We'll fight the devil with holy water," he said. "Someone will have to go to the Saint of Lindisfarne and see if help can be brought to hand."

You may be sure that everyone was willing to bear the message, for nothing was more desirable than immediate release from the council hall. It was the Count of Meo that was finally sent, with a warning from Brian Boru that death awaited his return if his mission was unsuccessful. He put to sea with all speed and reached the monastery in record time. He found the saint walking up and down a shady pathway, telling over his prayers with a black rosary that nearly dragged on the ground.

The messenger approached and took off his hat.

"Good evening, holy father," he repeated, "and it's a fine day."

The priest stopped and his lips ceased to murmur the prayer.

"Why do you keep me from worship, sinful man?" he demanded.

"You will be the Saint of Lindisfarne, I'm thinkin'," was the ingratiating reply.

"That may all be, that may all be, but is that any reason for ye to interrupt the glor'fication of the Lord?" And the good man started his walk again.

"But I have a message for yez," said the Count of Meo, stepping alongside.

"'Tis plain that I can't get rid of ye without listenin' to ye'r tirade. Ye should have delivered ye'r message at first. Don't ye know that keepin' a saint from his prayers is like keepin' a Jew from his gold?"

The Count of Meo rapidly told him what was happening in Brian Boru's castle and ended with an earnest appeal that the saint come with all speed to save the parliament from disaster.

"So it's Brian Boru sint for me. He's the same wan that robbed the Abbot of the Holy Kettle of a few odd strips of land. And the Duke of Killkenny. I've heard of him, too. I'll venture there's no bigger bunch of blackguards in the whole wurld than those the devil is after now. Give the devil his due, says I." And the good man started on his walk again.

The Count followed respectfully.

"But, holy father, isn't it the primord'l duty of every saint to fight Satan and all his works and pumps?"

The priest stopped and thought the matter over.

"That's so, that's so. I had not thought of that. I'll tell ye what I'll do to be rid of yez. I can't go meself for that kind of work is not in my line of devotion, and besides 'twould hardly be worth my while to save the likes of Brian Boru and his bunch of rascals. But I'll give ye this much advice. If ye can find wan man who has absolutely no fear of Satan, and let him rush into the room, the devil will disappear."

"And, holy father, ye didn't tell me where to find the man who has no fear of Satan."

"No, I didn't. But there is wan, and he is now on the papal throne in Rome. May the Lord shower blessings upon him."

"But before I could get him there, the devil will be up. Couldn't ye give me a bit of holy water or somethin' that would drive him away?"

"Out on ye," said the priest testily. "Haven't I told ye that it requires a man who has no fear of Satan? Take yerself for example. Ye could no more look into the yellow eyeballs of Old Nick and sprinkle holy water on his head than an ass could climb the golden ladder that leads to Paradise."

Plainly there was no hope of assistance from this quarter and the Count of Meo was sorely tempted to bounce a rock on the saint's head; but he thought better of the matter and turned toward the seashore.

"By the by, I just thought of another that could help ye," called out the holy man. "He lives along the coast somewhere and his name is MacDonnaugh. I've heard say he fears neither man nor devil and he's a freemason—much shame to the sons of the true church."

You may be sure that the messenger wasted no time in going to seek MacDonnaugh. He found him moping about the grounds of his castle, disconsolately tossing pebbles into the moat.

"Oh, 'tis you, MacDonnaugh," said the messenger.

MacDonnaugh turned slowly at the sound of his name. When he recognized the speaker his eyes lighted with an unholy fire.

"Ooh, 'tis you, is it?" he said, grabbing the Count by the collar. "I've no more fervent wish than to wring the neck of any man who swear fe'lty to Brian Boru."

"But just wan word." put in the Count hurriedly, "Brian Boru has sint for ye to save his daughter."

At the mention of Eileen, the Scotchman loosened his hold.

"If ye'r tellin' the truth, out with it; but if ye'r lying"—MacDonnaugh made a motion to illustrate how a man could be torn apart.

The Count of Meo quickly stated his case.

"I don't think it's Eileen the devil is after; more likely it is the worthless bunch in the council hall," said MacDonnaugh, when he had heard the story.

"But Eileen is in the castle and who can tell what will happen to her if ye don't hurry—that is, if ye'r not afraid of Satan."

"I'm not afraid of Satan, but what's the use? I know a great

many men that are worse than Old Nick. I'd rather see Eileen in the hands of the devil than have her marry the cowardly Duke of Kill-kenny."

The Count saw that the time for decisive action had come.

"If ye'll come I'll make a person'l agreement that there will nobody marry Eileen except yerself. And I'll risk my neck as guaranty."

"It's little I care for yer worthless neck," said MacDonnaugh, "but I'll go. And if anyone balks me this time I will tear down Brian Boru's castle with my bare hands."

"I've a boat on shore that's ready to go," suggested the Count.

"Too slow, too slow. Follow me."

MacDonnaugh led rapidly to the mouth of the brook that flowed by the castle. Here they came to a pen made of saplings woven together to fence up the mouth of the creek.

"Ocooshla, Ocooshla," he called.

Then there swam up a giant of a fish, eleven feet seven long—or seven feet eleven as other reliable accounts have it—pushing himself with powerful strokes of his tail, his top fin sticking up like a ship's mast and his mouth opened, showing rows of gleaming teeth, which was the way he had of welcoming his master.

"Jump into the boat there while I harness the fish."

The Count of Meo jumped in and a moment later MacDonnaugh followed.

"Easy now, Ocooshla, easy now. Wait a bit till I open the gate. There ye are. Away we go."

The fish put to sea with a jerk that nearly snapped the head from the Count of Meo's shoulders. The man jammed his hat down tight and bent low to shield his face from the flying spray. The water roared as it passed under them and MacDonnaugh sat in front and kept crying out: "Faster now. Move along, move along."

The Count looked behind them and the shore had disappeared. The wake of the boat seemed ready to topple over on them—two great hillsides of water with a valley in between where they had come through.

"Move along thair. Move along."

Often a poor man finds himself eaten inch by inch with a lingering sickness, but few have ever been forced to stand helplessly by and watch the devil come up through the floor with maddening leisure. It had been three days since the servant stubbed his toe on Satan's horn—three days of suspense when nobody slept and nobody could pray. The parliament was huddled in the corners of the council hall and the king still stood with his back to the door. The devil had now got up so high that one foot was out and the other was uncovered as far down as the ankle. He kept drumming on the floor with his toe and his eyes gloated over his victims with ghoulish delight.

Brian Boru advanced to the table and poured out a goblet of punch.

"'Tis throe the jig is up," he said, "but there is no reason why we should not face the situation like men. Everybody drink a glass to the glory of Ireland and the damnation of her enemies."

At this the devil began lashing his tail until the tines on the end whizzed in air. He was nearly free when he straightened his body stiff as a ramrod and brought his loose foot down with a bang that resounded throughout the castle. Then he spoke up for the first time:

"Brian Boru," says he, "I have an especial hot corner for you." And with that he was out on the floor, wiggling his long red tail. It brushed a wisp of straw on the stones and the straw crinkled up in a little white flame. There was no word for the terror on them and as he stepped towards them, the sweat rolled off them with the heat of his coming.

"What can I do for your honor?" says Brian Boru, getting a little behind a fat chieftain from the south.

The devil laughed, a sound ye'd not like to hear. There was a great commotion then and in strode MacDonnaugh.

"What's all this?" says he, elbowing the high Irish this way and that.

"'Tis me, MacDonnaugh," says the devil, lashin' his tail.

"And what then?" says MacDonnaugh, unbuttonin' his shirt for the heat.

"Sure I've come for these Irish gentlemen. There's a labor shortage below."

MacDonnaugh laughed, bowld as a turkey cock in the face of the devil himself. "I'm surprised at your lack of judgment," says he.

"How's that, MacDonnaugh?" 'Twas an awful thing to see the little wisps of smoke curling out from the wrinkles in his red hide.

"Did ye not know," says MacDonnaugh, "that the Irish can't abide a red coat? When ye get them down in your kingdom forninst all the little red devils do you know what they'll do?"

"What then?" says Satan, looking thoughtful.

"Beggin' your honor's pardon," says MacDonnaugh, "they'll raise hell and when it comes to the surface where will ye be?"

"I niver thought of that," says the devil and to the horror of thim all he spat a little red coal.

"Sure," says MacDonnaugh, "me cousins, the English, 'll spend centuries learnin' what I'm tellin' ye now."

There was an awful silence and in that silence the devil started down through the floor, five hundred times faster than he had come up. When he was all gone but the head and shoulders, he wiggled one horn at Brian Boru.

"Mind your eye when ye deal with MacDonnaugh. He has great sense on him."

And that was the last of him.

No sooner was he gone than the false Duke of Killkenny drew his sword with an oath. "Me lords," says Killkenny, "bad cess to this omagon with his glib talk of the Irish. He's spiled me day. I'd have cut the divil to bits in another minute, barring his palaver."

There was the sound of swords coming loose and for a moment it looked as though there would be a battle royal, but the king rose majestically to the occasion.

"Me daughter waits ye in the garden, MacDonnaugh. Ye can fight later if there be need." And when MacDonnaugh was gone he turned to his bristling chieftains. "Me daughter," says he, "has the tongue of her own mother that's gone now," says he, and he crossed himself very pious, "to heaven, praise be."

Brian Boru winked his royal eye. "Put up your swords, gentlemen," says he, "there's more than one way to skin a cat."

But the Scotchman was in the garden with the royal Eileen in his arms. "Shure," he was sayin', "your owld man has plenty of castles. We'll just rint mine and live in one of thim."

The Homesteader

AT the postoffice of New Alta the valley widens and is divided by a spur of the Bitter Root range. Two streams merge here and become the Nez Perce fork of the Bitter Root river. The Hladik homestead, two miles above New Alta, is in the southwest prong of the valley. The land is cleared of timber, sub-irrigated, and watered by a small creek. Its black loam produces heavy crops of wild timothy and mountain blue grass.

Some of the natives in the valley envy the Hladik's their claim, for the latter are "furreners" from Norway. A few years ago their child came—a boy—called Jan after his father. With the coming of a son a new incentive spurred these people to develop their land. They cut down the trees and sold the wood, and with the money bought cattle and another quarter-section, until their original 160 acres swelled to 300. For five years they worked.

Then came a dry season. The fleshy leaves of the sunflowers, growing on the pine-wooded hillsides, prematurely curled and grew crisp. The deep dust of the road, stirred by an occasional team, spread a gritty film over fields and bushes. By July a blue haze lingered over the hill tops and settled in the valley. The Hladiks grew used to the pungent odor of wood smoke. But their hay continued to grow succulent and firm. For each day Jan spaded furrows at intervals from the stream's edge, permitting the water to trickle over the field, while Mrs. Hladik and little Jan hoed the garden.

One sultry afternoon, while the boy was weeding, Mrs. Hladik rolled and kneaded the dough for the week's bread. Only when she was baking or mending clothes could she be found in the house. She was a sturdy woman, tall and muscular, and not yet past the middle thirties. She had Scandinavian features—light, yellow hair, blue eyes, a fair skin, and a broad face. She wore a checked gingham dress, faded by frequent washings to a pale green. Despite her constant grind at manual labor, she had a woman's rounded bosom and curving hips.

Occasionally she looked out the window. The faintest curve touched her lips as she watched the little fellow hoeing the radishes, bending slightly and loosening the soil with the quick, firm strokes she

had taught him. It was Jan's and her dream, though they never discussed it, that the "kidt" should some day own the farm and much land besides.

At the jingling sound of spurred boots on the porch, Mrs. Hladik turned quickly, giving the dough a surprised punch. Jim Parker, the ranger, entered.

"New fire broke out over on Blue crick today," he began abruptly, "and I'm needin' another packer tomorrow. You ask Jan if he wants to pack for the rest of the fire season, an' let me know tonight, Christina."

"I tell him tonight," she replied to his disappearing figure.

While Jan was on the porch washing muddy hands, Mrs. Hladik came to the doorway, saying, "Yim Par-ker up here t'is afternoon an' say he need packer for t'e fire season. He want you pack for him."

Jan straightened up, shaking the water from his hands, and looked at the dusky green of the meadow.

"I ain't really know," he slowly replied. "Who cut t'e hay next mont'?"

"Mebbe I get so-ome t'e boys from t'e lower valley t'e help me. We need t'e money, Jan."

Jan slowly dried his hands before answering.

"Ya-a—I guess I go."

Mrs. Hladik went into the fields alone at seven o'clock every morning, cutting the hay with the new mowing machine. Later, one of the Bradley boys came to drive the buck-rake. Mrs. Hladik worked on top of the stack all day, quickly spreading masses of heavy timothy with a pitch-fork, while the sun drenched her body with sweat, until she felt chilled and light in the head, for there was no time to rest between loads, as the Bradley boy worked fast. In the dusk she trudged back to the cabin behind the shuffling team, their harness loosely jingling, to drag herself around a warm kitchen and cook supper. Afterwards there were two cows to milk.

One afternoon in late August she was mowing the alfalfa, when the ranger's son galloped across the field to her on a lathered horse.

"Jan is bad hurt, Christina," he cried, "got kicked in the chest by a mule. He's at the Station now. You better come quick—I'll catch that roan for you."

Mrs. Hladik found her husband in the truck body of the ranger's

runabout, on a pile of blankets covering some fir boughs. He lay pale under his tan and moaned occasionally. Red froth welled through his compressed lips. He turned his eyes toward her, gazing as from a distance.

"We got to get him to Hamilton, quick," the ranger said. "I'm afraid it's an internal hemorrhage. You better ride down with him, and Martha'll look after the kid."

During the trip Mrs. Hladik sat beside her husband, staring straight before her. Occasionally she would twitch an arm or a shoulder and once she made an odd sound in her throat.

For a long while Jan gazed at her. He was wheezing audibly now. At last he spoke. His words tottered. "You—sell—t'e place?"

For awhile Mrs. Hladik was silent, then looked searchingly at him.

"Na-a," she decided, "I work it. Jan is get-ting big now. So-ome day he own it."

The injured man nodded and closed his eyes.

When they stopped before the frame house in Hamilton that served as a hospital, the ranger jumped out and ran up the steps. Mrs. Hladik bent over her husband. At sight of his queer immobility, a sudden tightness seized her chest. She breathed with quick, short gasps several times, then leaned back against the car, her shoulders drooping. They were quivering when Jim Parker returned with the doctor. She watched the physician with dull eyes as he felt Jan's heart.

"He be dead, t'is lo-ong time." The words squeezed around the lump in her throat.

The doctor nodded.

After the funeral Mrs. Hladik returned to the ranch, finished mowing the third crop of alfalfa and stacked it. Six-year-old Jan tended the garden and fed the stock. In the fall, she and the boy rounded up the beef cattle and drove them to Darby for shipment. The rest of the stock she winter-fed, and even supplied the lower valley with hay, for the season was long and cold.

In the spring she reseeded her garden and planted a field of wheat. In spite of irrigation, though, she did not harvest a heavy crop. The crickets and grasshoppers were many during the months of that burning summer.

The snow came early in November and stayed late. During January Mrs. Hladik found a frozen carcass or two of a cow in the feed-

lot. As February came, bringing with it days of steady cold and frequent blizzards, she carried fewer pitch-forks of hay from the barn to the feed corral. Each week she counted fewer cattle and more carcasses. By March she had but eighty-five surviving out of a hundred and thirteen head. Each day when she went to the stable she looked on the stack with eyes that prayed the cold snap would break. But the days lengthened into a week, two weeks, three weeks, and still the sky remained a sullen gray, and no wind came from the west bringing that miracle of Montana winters—a chinook.

Mrs. Hladik sat up late one night, figuring with a stubby pencil on the kitchen table, by the light of the oil lamp. She would have to buy feed soon, if she would save the rest of her stock, for their loss meant the loss of her homestead. Those clumsy lines that Jan said his teacher called numerals, wouldn't act right somehow. They always made higher numbers than she had dollars. That meant she couldn't buy feed and more cattle too. Also, she remembered, there were taxes and seed, clothing and groceries. . . . She continued to stare at the figures, while little Jan went to sleep on the floor, with some sticks, representing cows and horses, and blocks that served as stables, beside him. . . . Perhaps she should wait a day or so . . . April was only one week off . . . At last, with a long breath, she rose and glanced about the room. Stepping softly over to Jan she carefully lifted him in her arms and carried him to bed.

That night the wind swooped out of the north. By morning a malicious blizzard was swirling up the valley, sending the mercury scuttling to 40 below by ten o'clock. Mrs. Hladik threw the cattle their last portion but one of hay. She decided to haul a ton from the Lawton ranch, seventeen miles away, the nearest place having a surplus of feed. Hitching her four heaviest horses to the bob-sled hay-rack she started that very morning, taking little Jan to the Ranger Station.

"But Christina, you'll freeze to death in this wind," the ranger's wife objected, "or get lost. And what's a few cows to Jan? You're all he's got. If Jim was here I'd send him with you."

"Na-a, t'e cold, he not hurt me," Mrs. Hladik insisted. "And what become of me and t'e kидt if I lose t'e place?" Turning to little Jan, who had been solemnly listening to every word, she said, "You be goodt boy. I co-ome get you later. I got-ta go now."

Putting on her fur-lined mittens she went out to the team. She turned them around and faced the storm.

"If you're not back tomorrow night, I'll 'phone Jim," Mrs. Parker shouted to her.

"I be here all right."

She stood on the rack leaning against the wind, a solid figure in a sheep-skin lined coat and overalls tucked in her husband's boots. The horses, heads lowered, strained forward in their collars. Frost gathered on their muzzles and shoulders, while they tugged through the massing white flakes, for the trail was rapidly filling with drifts.

By dusk Mrs. Hladik pulled up in the Lawton corral. Together she and Bob Lawton loaded the hay. When the last pitch-fork of it had been distributed and the wires fastened—a precaution against its being blown away—Bob Lawton suggested, "You better put up here. That team'll never make it tonight, and it's goin' to be cold as hell."

"Na-a," she objected, "t'ose cows yust bawling for so-ome t'at hay. I lose four, five, mebbe nine, ten if I sto-op. I bet-ter be go-ing." But she accepted a hot lunch before starting.

The wind blew steadily, a young blizzard, filling the air with whirling, driven snow crystals. New drifts had piled and hardened but not packed. Mrs. Hladik plodded beside the rack in the dusk, now and again swinging her arms. The team wallowed through the drifts, weakening with each effort. But she made seven miles before the darkness became so intense she could no longer follow the road—that snowswept space in the forest.

Pulling up beside a large pine, Mrs. Hladik unhitched the horses and tied them on the leeward side of the rack. Then she burrowed in the hay.

In the earliest light of dawn she awoke and crawled forth to find but three horses standing with heads drooped and backs hunched. The fourth lay frozen. For several moments she sat staring at the body. Three muscle-strained horses pull a ton of hay ten miles through packing drifts and deepening snow, even with a strong wind behind them? Slowly she shook her head. Throw off half the load? Again she shook her head. That 2,000 pounds of hay meant life to her cattle. It would only last them through the blizzard. Later, when the snow melted, they could feed on the scanty stubble.

She fastened the traces with quick, firm fingers. If the team was too weak—well, she had two more horses at the ranch.

At first, the animals pulled steadily, but in two miles their efforts slackened. Then one horse floundered in a hardened drift, and the sled seemed grown to the spot. She unhitched again and tied the most fatigued animal in the lee of the rack. Mounting the second and leading the third, she started for the emergency team.

At the ranch she first noticed many new carcasses in the feed-lot, while the flesh of the living cattle had visibly shrunk from their bones, and their eyes grown hollow and dull. At sight of her, the strongest of them bawled weakly for food. She tossed them the last of the hay while sudden tears misted her eyes.

She led her last two horses from the barn and harnessed them. They were saddle horses, of the ordinary cayuse breed, but with a strong mixture of the Arabian strain somewhere in their ancestry. It was a happy mixture, for those two red roans were known as the hardest and most enduring of the saddle stock in the valley.

She stopped for a few moments at the Ranger Station. The odor of frying bacon mingled with the vapor of steaming coffee caused her eyes to light up a bit as she entered. Jan and the ranger's son were on the floor, before the blazing fireplace, constructing a crane with a mechano set.

"You're just in time for supper," Mrs. Parker greeted her.

But already the heavy warmth of the cabin began to make her eyes feel dull, and the indoor noises had a curiously distant sound.

"I ain' have time," Mrs. Hladik replied, "I go asleep if I sto-op, but I take cup of t'e coffee."

"Are you going away to stay out all night in this awful cold, Christina?" Mrs. Parker demanded.

"I be home tomorrow night."

She finished the coffee, saying, "I got-ta be go-ing," and with an effort began pulling on her coat and mittens.

She paused a moment beside Jan, who was intent on hoisting an imaginary load of dirt.

"You be goodt kidt, now, an' I get you to-morrow."

Jan nodded, declaring, "I like to stay here all the time."

A smile flickered briefly on Mrs. Hladiek's lips as she went out.

Hunched forward in the saddle she rode through the dusk, facing

the wind's barrage of snow-quills. Though she frequently changed horses, night isolated her some miles from the sled. The wailing of the wind filled the forest. Now and then gusts of snow blown up by a freak eddy choked her, forcing the breath back in her lungs. She heard the splitting cracks of frozen tree trunks.

She stopped in a clump of second-growth pines to camp. But the shelter of the trees did not lessen the penetrating cold that kept her fingers numb, and chilled her very marrow. All through those hours of darkness she stamped about in the snow, swinging her arms. If she remained still a few minutes she was wracked by a spasmodic shivering, succeeded by a pleasant feeling of drowsiness. She knew it was a fatal feeling, for she frequently beat the horses with a stick to prevent them from freezing, and repeated aloud, "If I sleep, I die. If I sleep, I die." It seemed to her that night as though the world were made of darkness and the sound of wind, as if it had always been that way and would always remain so.

"T'e night, he se-em so-o lo-ong," she muttered once to herself. But the thought that some day Jan would own the land gave her patience and strength.

With the first faint light she mounted and pushed through the blizzard. On reaching the sled she found the snow-drifted body of the second horse—a fear realized. Immediately, she hitched the team. Urged to frantic efforts by her shouting and beating, the animals strained to their utmost, rending the drift clear of the sled. They plunged through the packed snow, and struggled up the road for a half mile. But the light weight of the saddle horses began to tell, despite their willing efforts to run away from that dragging weight behind them. Mrs. Hladik pulled up and pitched off half the load, while her body shook with choked sobs.

She rested the horses often, and that evening they staggered into the shelter of the barn, snorting their relief.

A week later when the horses had recovered strength, she brought in the rest of the hay. By that time the blizzard had blown itself out and the temperature was rising.

During the first slushy days of winter's breakup, Mrs. Hladik walked stiffly to the corral, carrying a long knife. She glanced briefly at the cattle—fifteen in number—all that had survived on the half ton of hay. Near them, pawing in the melting snow, were the three horses,

another draft animal having died from exhaustion. Mrs. Hladik sighed and her shoulders drooped a bit as she knelt down to skin a carcass. For some moments, streamers of pain shot through her muscles and held her paralyzed. She must remember to be more cautious.

As she forced the knife under the hide, she wondered if the dull ache in the joints of her frost-bitten fingers would ever cease. When she finished she flung the hide over the corral fence.

While she was skinning the second carcass, Jim Parker rode up.

"I put some ginger cookies on the table. Martha just made 'em for Jan," he explained; then dismounting, "If you've got another knife I've got time to slit a hide or so."

While they were skinning the rest, the ranger observed, "That last blizzard about cleaned you out, didn't it?"

"Ya-a. Next wint-ter I get waitress yob in Hamilton wit' t'e Yap."

"And what're you going to do with Jan?"

"I put him to school."

"It's pretty tough on you to farm the place alone. Why don't you sell it, and buy some developed land near town?"

"Na-a," she replied, "t'e kidt, so-ome da-ay he be big, fine, stro-ong boy. T'en he make lotsa money off t'e place."

ADDISON HOWARD.

Premonition

The bottom of the cut was warm today—
Not really warm, you know, but water ran
From little fissures where the surface ice
Hides, from the searching pick, the bare bed rock.
A bank of warm rain clouds hung in the west,
And shouts of distant men were low and dull—
Not like the sounds when frost is in the air.
Yes, I was warm, and when I shed my coat,
I glanced up to the sky, and saw
A wedge of geese—high flying—going north.

JOHN C. FROHLICHER.

"He'll Make a Good Sheriff"

OLD BOWMAN blinked his good eyelid to clear his vision of the approaching under-sheriff. He whispered portentously to bent, little Small, the odd-job man, "That there is him. Must be a week now, since he raided the Gulch. S'pose he just got out of the hospital."

Small knew it already, but he nodded. "Hey, Slim!" he addressed the young deputy fraternally. "Good job you did last week up the Gulch."

"Thanks, boys," acknowledged Slim, stopping his slow, limping progress to smile shyly at them.

"Too bad you couldn't get your man Mike, too, along with the other two and the still."

Slim bowed his head over the cigaret he was rolling. "Yeah, it was too bad."

"Funny, too, where he could go to up in that country, with no coat, an' nobody nearer than that Russian trapper twenty mile up the higher valley," Bowman suggested, poking his head forward.

"Yeah, it was funny," Slim agreed slowly. "Well, I'll have to be movin' on."

Bowman craned his neck to watch Slim limp up the block and into the jewelry store.

"What do you suppose he's goin' in there for?"

Small jerked his head impatiently. "Well, he's got a girl, ain't he? What do *you* suppose? Just what do you suppose?"

* * *

Deputy Sheriff Slim Graves plunged heavily through the deep snow at the far end of Yellow Canyon, breaking way for the sweating horses and the wagon. He lurched crookedly. The heavy rifle on his left arm disturbed his balance. He had been breaking trail for five miles, though his two mackinawed companions had taken turns at driving the team for rest. He was weighted with the responsibility of this, his first raid, and if sheer exertion could accomplish anything, he was bound for success.

The Sheriff had not been very enthusiastic about sending him. Slim had not understood the joke when the Old Man winked at him

and remarked, "Well, young feller, guess we better ring in a bootlegger or two this month."

There was no stopping him after that. He was inexperienced, but the Old Man could just get around with a cane since his fall, and Slim's two helpers knew how the thing was done.

Slim signalled behind him with one heavy arm, and stopped in his tracks for breath. The wagon creaked to a stop and the horses stood with heads down. There was no sound in the cold whiteness of the flat. Frozen white mist hung over the valley and between the rigid black ruins of the burn.

Jenson, beside him, was gasping for breath. "Such cold—such snow—" he began, but Slim motioned fiercely for silence. He was athrill with the glory of the chase and the splendor of responsibility. Ethel depended on him; if he kept his job she would marry him. But it took money, she said, and lately she had been getting restless. . . . He shut out the memory of her soft blonde prettiness.

"How much farther to the Gulch?" he inquired of the hunched gray man on the wagon seat.

"Hundred yards to the end of this flat; then you can see it," he announced wearily, without raising his head.

Slim scowled. "Why the hell didn't you tell me it was so close?"

"You'd find it out soon enough," Williams replied drily.

Slim shrugged off his little anger. "We'll leave the horses here," he decided.

Williams turned and handed out Jenson's rifle from between the blankets in the wagon-body, and picked up his own before he clambered stiffly down into the snow. Slim did not like the way Williams grinned at Jenson. Williams was apathetic about this business, but Jenson was almost hostile.

"Damn cold day for chasin' moonshiners," he had heard Williams complain when they left town, and Jenson had replied, "Fool kid. What's one bootlegger, anyhow?"

Around the bushy bend of the unused lumber road, they came suddenly upon the brow of a deep gulch, a split between two fire-scarred hills. A white blanket of silence lay heavy on the steep slopes and in the valley. The young, living pines were burdened with snow, the burned ones were desolate black spikes against the whiteness.

They could see the snow-filled road wind down with another sharp

turn to the old logging camp where the moonshiners hung out. There was no sign of a real road, only the long clear space between the lines of fifteen-year-old lodgepole, sprung up since the fire.

They stood silent, looking down into the valley where the three or four buildings of the ancient camp snuggled flatly down into the snow. Williams slouched as he rested. Jenson looked with sneering inquiry at young Slim. Slim turned just in time to catch that leer, and his anger flared. Something daring—he would show them!

“You fellows can stay up here,” he drawled, covering his resentment with a show of nonchalance. “I’ll go down and see what’s what.”

For a moment Williams looked interested; then he glanced down at the valley and relaxed into his customary apathy, with a faint trace of a smile. Jenson said nothing, but he too smiled a little.

Slim ploughed recklessly through the snow down the road. He was showing them! He wasn’t afraid!

Behind him, Jenson and Williams grinned.

“No windows this way,” chuckled Jenson maliciously. “They couldn’t see him if they tried.”

Williams nodded. “They watch the other road, if they watch at all. This is a pretty cozy nest for ’em.”

“Where’s it go to?”

“Down to the big lake and the track. Useta be the main road for haulin’ ties out when the railroad construction was goin’ on. Further to town that way, but it’s so growed up with trees, it don’t look like more’n a trail. I hunted over this country three-four years ago. They got no water down there; fire jumped this valley but it dried the creek. They melt snow in winter; guess they don’t stay there in summer.”

“Cold as hell up here. The kid’s had his fun by himself now; let’s go down to the cabin.”

“Awright.”

They caught up with Slim fifty yards from the house. He was angry when he saw them, black skulking figures against the pine-crowded whiteness, but it was too important a moment for a row. Without speaking, Jenson crept to the window on the far side of the cabin, and Williams and Slim went to the door.

Slim pounded. There was a tremendous scuffling and a metallic rattling inside the cabin. The slab door creaked slowly open, sagging

on leather hinges, and a weathered man, heavy-shouldered and black-browed, stared at them in surly surprise.

"Yeah?" he greeted them, and took stock of them in a glance.

Slim wished he had studied up on raids. He did not know what to say.

"You Mike Rowe?" he asked gruffly, trying for authority.

The man gave him another quick glance, and answered, "Yeah."

"We're comin' in."

"Yeah."

Mike stepped aside and they stamped in. The inside of the cabin was dark and damp and hot from the tin heater stove. The place smelled heavily of mash and pack rats. A light, pasty-faced man crouched behind the little heater, staring at them suspiciously. An older man leaned in a corner.

There was no need for words. The moonshiners knew what was what. A stained blanket was thrown over a metal affair in another corner in a hurried and unsuccessful attempt to cover it up.

Mike sat down heavily on a stool by the stove.

"Out huntin'?" he asked hopelessly.

"Yeah. Huntin' this place," Slim answered grimly. How proud Ethel would be when she heard of this!

"You behind the stove there and you in the corner help Jenson and Williams carry the still up to the wagon. You, Mike, since you got no coat or shoes on, stay here a while with me."

There was no confusion. It was an easy raid, Slim thought, as he watched the four men take the still out. He sat down with his gun on his knees.

They sat silent for a while. Mike finally lumbered to his feet. "Guess I'll have a smoke."

He reached for his pipe on the filthy table, and with a jerk of his elbow knocked the glass oil-lamp off. It was full of kerosene. Slim leaped to his feet at the crash.

"What the hell?"

Mike waved his arms deprecatingly and grinned. "Nervous, I guess," he explained. "That won't matter."

Glass lay in shattered fragments on the grimy, uneven board floor. Kerosene in a pool spread lengthening arms in the dirt.

"Guess I better get my shoes on before I cut my feet on this here

glass," suggested Mike, reaching for one of them behind the hot little stove, where a wood fire roared up the stove-pipe chimney.

Slim sat down again, with a distrustful eye on Mike. That lamp business was funny.

Mike put his shoe on and laced it.

"He couldn't get away, anyhow, with no coat," Slim thought.

With a leisurely arm Mike reached for the other shoe behind the stove. The muscles of his shoulder bunched, and with a jerk he toppled the stove from its brick legs over onto the floor.

Flames licked across on the kerosene and leaped from the scattered blaze. With a muffled exclamation Slim jumped for the blanket the men had taken off the still. That would smother the fire—but Mike was out of the door with his shoe in his hand, plunging through the snow to the barn. Slim had a startled glimpse of the great, angry burn on Mike's white shoulder, and the seared edges of his scorched shirt. Flame leaped up between him and the door as he looked. The window was small, but Slim squeezed through it and fell into the snow outside with flames licking his booted legs.

There was no sound but the crunching of the crusted snow and the subdued crackling from within the cabin, as he lunged ahead on Mike's tracks. Bitter cold, now, in the Gulch, after the heat of the cabin. Anger flamed in his brain. What a fool! What a fool!

He saw Mike dodge from the barn around a tree, both shoes on now, and make a break for the beaten trail to the big lake.

"Hey!" Slim shouted hoarsely, but he had not even a glimpse more of Mike. "God, he'll freeze!" was his thought, but it was eclipsed by another burst of anger.

He heard Jenson's shout from behind him.

"Got to get him!" he replied, not knowing what Jenson had said.

"Slim! Hey, Slim!" came Jenson's voice again. Slim turned impatiently. Time—wasted time!

"Don't try to chase him!" warned Jenson, still fifty yards away.

"Aw, get to hell back to town with what you've got and let me do my own business!" Slim yelled back over his shoulder, and plunged after Mike.

He galloped along the beaten trail. It was an old road, with fifteen-foot birches and lodgepole grown up in the middle of it. He was always bumping the trees as the track wound from one rut to the other

of the old road. There was no more sight of Mike, but Slim watched the sides of the road and saw no tracks diverging from it.

"He'll do it though. He'll do it. Where would I jump off the road?" Breath was laboring in his lungs now, and his clothes were weighing him down with a terrible force. "There, by that log, I'd jump off the bank."

He took a run and jumped off, square into Mike's tracks.

"Now I can get him!" he triumphed silently, breathlessly, as he floundered through the clogging, softer snow under the brush. "Now I can get him! I think like he does!"

Plunge and fall, snow and bitter cold, and the gray of evening mist filtering down through the stolid pale-blue poplars.

It was a malicious, cracking cold that settled down upon the woods that night, the kind of cold that cannot last. It would break, and there would be snow before morning.

At four o'clock in the morning, Slim caught up with Mike. Slim was exhausted, but Mike was half-frozen. His tremendous strength had given out long before, and his will power had worn ragged. Mike was trying to hide, wedged between two rocks on the top of a cliff overlooking Muskrat Bay. He was conscious and glared balefully as Slim stumbled over his legs and stared at him in the crystal moonlight. Slim was worn to a dull foolishness. His head slued on his shoulders as though he were drunk.

"Give up?" he whispered, like a child in a game.

Mike lay motionless. His mouth opened and closed again without sound.

Slim built a fire, not planning, not sensibly—by habit. Every movement was dull pain. He had a knife and matches, and he was a woodsman. Disconnected memories shot through his head: Ethel walking beside him in the cool evening, cars whizzing by, her soft petulant voice saying, "Billy Harris has a new Dodge coupe. I wish—"

As he patiently gathered the stuff for his fire, his mind stumbled again over every hidden root that had tripped him in that long, cold chase, the thin little burning pains came back to his face where twigs had snapped him all day long as he plunged through the brush. Then again Ethel's brave resignation as she said softly, "I wish we could have gone out to the dance at Early's, but of course with no car—" Another branch, and another branch with twigs, for the fire, and more

pictures leaping out upon the blank screen of his tired brain. The flames of the cabin, again, and then Ethel, "Of course I love you, Slim, but—."

When the fire made a leaping show of life in the vast, disinterested darkness of night, pursued and pursuer crouched beside it watchfully. Tired eyes ached to shut, heads could not be held steady, but tipped one way or the other. The frozen sweat on their bodies melted. Slim remembered something. He brushed a heavy arm across his strained eyes and lurched to his feet. He took off his mackinaw and his sweater, then put the mackinaw back on.

"Here, Mike," he mumbled, "you need the sweater."

Mike woke with a jerk and looked at him numbly. "Thanks," he groaned, and his head fell forward again before he could get his arms into the sleeves.

Watch and nod and doze in tired agony, until the sun made a chill paleness over the gray mountains to the east, and snow fluttered down thinly. Slim sat up with a jerk and gazed dully into the dull eyes of Mike.

No glory, no triumph now. Only numbed mind and listless body.

"Fifty dollars?" mumbled Mike.

Slim stared, blinking at him. What for? Oh.

"Nope."

"Hundred?"

"Nope."

Slim looked dully toward the edge of the cliff. Mike groaned. He reached painfully into his pocket with frost-bitten fingers.

"All I got?"

"Let's see it."

They counted it stiffly, amicably.

"Two hundred and ten."

A flash of Ethel's careful blondness went through Slim's head. The things she had to have—and he had to have to have her.

"All right."

He sighed and smoothed out the bills as snow hissed into the coals of the fire.

He got up stiffly, half his clothes melted and half still frozen to him.

"Snow'll cover tracks now, Mike," he said with feeble gentleness.

He was kin to outlaws now. "You get back to the railroad and your track'll fill. I'll have to go 'round the lake."

Mike crouched by the coals, his lined face drawn with pain, staring still belligerently at Slim's young, weary strength.

"Not a word?"

"Not a word, Mike."

"I—you see, kid, they got me on too many charges. Can't take risks."

"Sure. You got away from me clean. I got a hunch you fell into the lake and drowned. An' you had no coat or nothin'."

"Well, good luck, kid."

"Yeah. Good luck."

"You'll make a damn good sheriff some day, young feller. I've bought off worse'n you many's the time.

Smiling sickly, Slim lurched away from the fire.

"So long, Mike."

"So long."

At the head of the lake, five miles farther up, he dragged himself up the steps of the only frame ranch house in the valley. They gave him coffee and thawed him out, but in an hour he must go on.

"I know he come this way," Slim insisted doggedly. "I got to follow him and ketch him, 'less he fell in the lake."

So they let him go. At midnight, after forty-two hours of intense exertion, counting from the time he left for the raid, he made the first house on the outskirts of the town. A sleepy boy was sent to the nearest telephone.

When the doctor came drowsily in, Slim was sleeping, exhausted, in a chair, half across the oilcloth covered table.

"Nipped," the doctor said. "Few days in the hospital and he'll be all right. Fine fellow. Fine fellow. Make a good sheriff some day."

Ethel sat by his hospital bed. After the nurse went out, Ethel kissed him.

"You're my wonderful big brave boy," she told him. "I'm just so proud of you!"

Her voice was soft, her blonde hair was soft, her skin was white and soft.

"Love me, honey?"

"Course I do, Slimmy."

"Marry me next week? You know—I get something out of this—don't say anything—."

"As if I cared about money! Of course I will, Slimmy."

Her voice was soft. She bent and kissed him again.

"And the nasty man fell off a cliff and got drowned, didn't he?" she asked.

"I guess so," said Slim wearily.

After she was gone, Slim whimpered weakly to himself for a while, because of what he had done and because he could not have had her without doing it. He did not think to blame her.

* * *

So Old Small and grimy Bowman watched him limp into the jewelry store to buy Ethel a wedding ring with the money that had bought him.

"Boy'll make a good sheriff some day!" Old Small opined with a wise nod.

* * *

Down in the section shacks, Mike was playing stud poker with four mustached Greeks. He pulled another roll of bills out of his pocket.

"Had these in my shoe," he chuckled.

He moved one bandage-swathed foot painfully and put a hand up to adjust the bandage on his burned shoulder.

"Damn good kid," he opined warmly. "He's young and got lots to learn, but he'll make a good sheriff some day."

He chuckled again and dealt once around.

DOROTHY MARIE JOHNSON.

Monochrome

Roads are lacquered
Black, enamelled
With mud.
The quiet pools
Are high-lights;
Ruts are starved twin dragons
Squirming, oozing,
Black and silver.

ALICE VEIT.

Old Pain

I

TWO days after that very odd person had taken a room down and across the hall from Wyeth's, Wyeth moved. It was not at all a matter of cause and effect. One moves for almost any reason in New York—often because one may elsewhere find a cheaper lodging; and in this case, it was not only a cheaper, but a dingier one, too. But that was to be expected. Wyeth was in hard luck.

"One cannot sell his written words always? Well, then, one moves," he had said in half-apology to his landlady, though no apology at all was necessary, and she looked only the more mystified for it.

"If any mail comes . . ." He left an address.

There were, however, still two days remaining before his departure. Wyeth was packing his things when first he heard the man's step upon the stair. It was a stranger and a prospect, too, one knew at once, for the landlady preceded him fussily up the stairs. She explained. She pointed out. Then there was a silence.

"If anyone comes for me," droned the stranger in a hollow, old, sad voice, and as if he had been listening to her not at all, "ask him, please, that he lay aside his cloak at the foot of the stairs."

There followed an excusable silence on the part of the easily confused landlady. The whole house was suddenly quiet. Then their steps sounded unrhythmically down the hall. Short, petty ones. After them, strides.

Within a day, indeed before tea time the next afternoon, Wyeth and the stranger had met in the grey-filled hall, exchanging a momentary but more than casual glance. It was always dark in the hall. One almost felt his way about. But he was recognizably tall. His height struck Wyeth as being of the sort that brushes dust on ceilings, with almost nothing of body to support it. . . . Tall and frail, and his head—was it head or shadow?—it was, anyhow, immense, and somehow faintly luminous. His feet padded against the floor as he walked (one could think of no other term), so that later in his room Wyeth reflected, wondering if perhaps the man had not been barefoot. Very dangerous in that particular house.

But if he wondered then, it was as nothing to his amazement when in answer to his "Come!" following a rapping on his door, the man

walked in. Extraordinary! In New York! You have never seen a man before. . . . He knocks on your door and enters. . . .

He *had* been barefoot in the hall, then. He was barefoot now. One could see it even in the crepuscular light that edged through filmy windows. And from his shoulders hung a white, now hazy robe held together at his throat with his left hand.

The house was quiet. The man had brought quietness with him the night before. It seemed impossible that the silence should not have remained always, or at least for a fascinating and horribly long second. But it could not, even in the dimness that dispelled a direct glance.

"My name," in the hollow, old, sad voice of the evening before on the stairs, "is Spain."

It would have been interesting and experimental for Wyeth to have suggested, "Spain? To rhyme with Pain? Why don't you go?"

"Have a chair," said Wyeth, instead.

The white robe sat on the floor before one of those wretchedly dirty windows.

Almost at once, "And will you, too, tell them to lay aside their cloaks at the foot of the stairs?"

He knew that Wyeth had heard! He had taken it for granted!

And then, though Wyeth thought to listen for the next word, the white robe was in the middle of a droning sentence, as if he had somehow dropped himself over the first words and was swimming sing-song through the rest of them. He talked for an hour . . . of God, of Philistines. When he had gone, Wyeth said softly after him, "You damned nut." But he did no more packing that night.

II

Now, a month later, Wyeth was in other quarters. It was twilight once again. Once again the massive, luminous head was marked against the grey of the outside. One sensed the white robe beneath it, the spare fingers holding the folds together at the throat.

And Wyeth, the writer, the man of perception, sat without motion, without thought, under the spell of a droning voice.

". . . and I have told them everywhere that I cannot bear their cloaks, but they have worn them always. Many cloaks, cloaks to spare. And they have covered my words with them: mean cloaks that tar-

nished truth, fine ones that flattered it—till my truth was theirs to twist to every evil purpose. My truth! My words!”

“Your words?”

“Mine, first of all. I heard them and from the first they were mine. Love, God, they, too, were in them . . . once.”

Wyeth was a child. “What do you mean by Love and God?”

“Does it make any difference? They are no longer: for you, for me, for anyone. Who now would have them? Not the wearers of the cloaks, whom they only harass. Not you and I, who turn from them to seek the enemies of the word.”

“I, too, write words,” said Wyeth, and was sorry at once that he had said that.

“Ah, so you do,” said the other. “And the cloak is upon them like a winding sheet. . . .”

There was in the room, when he had left, the breathless pause that follows the last stroke of a big clock.

Wyeth did no writing for a month. The days passed. So, too, but very slowly, passed the sound of the old voice until it was a whisper, then nothing.

Wyeth took to his pen again, congratulating himself upon the recovery of his health. He said casually and honestly to a friend. “I knew a fellow once who thought he was Christ!”

JOHN K. HUTCHENS.

The Complex Age

LAST year in a psychology course I learned that man is a self-conscious animal. I remembered that only as a bit of information that might be valuable in a true and false test. Last quarter in sociology I ran across the statement that this is a self-conscious age. That was the first time that I actually took the idea into my mind. If any definite words had registered they would probably have been something like this: “All these years you’ve been worrying about your precious little self and wondering whether you had an inferiority complex—and here every one else has probably been doing the very same thing.”

As a child it was small wonder that I was self-conscious. My grandmother, who lived with us, had a rule of conduct for every childhood

squirm or wriggle, and it was to be through no fault of hers if we children did not grow up into modest and retiring men and women, filled with a very real fear of our Maker. One of her favorite maxims was: "Pretty is as pretty does. The good Lord above you sees your every move, and records it carefully in His ledgers in Heaven." That always gave me a feeling of having a rather intimate, personal relationship with the Lord, but knowing that He watched my every move brought me to the condition where I could not do a single generous deed without feeling a smugly virtuous glow. "God saw that, and will reward me for it in Heaven." I could not do a natural childish prank without thinking, "God saw that, and I'll have to make it right with him in my prayers tonight." Through a period that lasted over perhaps three or four years of my childhood I was never good for the natural sake of being good. I never suffered sincere repentance for childish sins; my only thought was to fix it up so that I would continue to stand in well with the Lord. I am sure that my mother would have been appalled at the low state of my ethical standards at that age, but she had no way of knowing; as a child, one simply doesn't confide in older people—laughter or lecture, one is as disagreeable as the other. The constant feeling that I was being closely watched by a personal God—felt by me at that time to be a kindly old man with a long white beard who sat on a golden throne and wrote messages in letters of fire or spoke from bushes—did not help me to lose that feeling of acute self-consciousness.

My grandmother was also unconsciously responsible for the development of my inferiority complex. My objections to washing my neck or combing my hair were usually made in some such fashion as: "But I don't see *why* I have to do it, Grandma. I look just as good as Dorothy." To which my grandmother would reply, "Goodness is not a case of *looks*, my dear. And besides, you at your best are not so good as many another at his worst. Because of this you must remember to be *good* and to be *clean* so that you will not compare too unfavorably with those others." Her primary objects, of course, were to turn me out a modest, sweet, and cleanly child; but instead she turned me out a shy and self-conscious being who constantly remembered: "You at your best are not so good as many another at his worst."

As I grew older I constantly strove to suppress this feeling of inferiority by doing things, winning things. Every class election was

a bridge to be crossed from inferiority to superiority. Every debate won was a star for that crown. Every dance program filled was a candle to burn to my egotism. Mary Brown was much prettier and sweeter; all right, I would be a much better dancer and much more vivacious. I do not think that any one realized this feeling in me. In fact, I do not think I realized it myself—except in a dim sort of way. I would not let myself realize it otherwise. Always a romantic and sentimental introvert, I imagined myself the heroine of each college girl's romance that I read—and I fondly told myself that I did not have to work for that popularity and strive for that leadership—that it was just the result that all these things were not tributes to my own personality at all but rewards that would have gone to any one who was willing to work to obtain them.

Last summer when I was home I rummaged through my old steamer trunk in the attic and found my three old diaries of high school days. Such gems of artificiality! They reflected my reading, but did not reflect my own self. I could get no feeling from them as I read them over except a wave of shame at their insincerity, and a rather twisted smile of embarrassment as I thought what a mental ass I had been. Here was the sweet-young-thing attitude of Bab, a Sub-Deb; here was a rather sophomoric love affair with a neighborhood boy written up in a hectic fashion—that was the autumn I had read Margot Asquith's sophisticated outburst of suppressed desires; here was a good long streak of treating everything in a humorous and slightly satirical manner—was it Mark Twain or Booth Tarkington who had inspired that? Here was bitterness from Wilde, melodrama from Zane Grey, austerity from Galsworthy, a supercilious attempt at verse copied after Edna St. Vincent Millay, the slangy breeziness of Sewell Ford, thoughts on marriage from Stevenson, patriotism by Henley, sex appeal from F. Scott Fitzgerald, and—Good Lord—even asterisks from Elinor Glyn. But where in all this higgledy-piggledy mess that I had called my "diary" was I myself?

The high school stage was the peak, I think, of that egotism. The year I finished high school I started to school at the Normal College. There I found people given little time to think of themselves. Standardization was lamentable—but necessary. The complete knocking out of all familiar props such as parents and friends from under me was the very best possible thing. It was completely on my own, but no one

except myself seemed to find it a particularly unique or surprising situation. I was one of six hundred others learning not to analyze themselves as individuals but to analyze themselves as teachers. If one of the six hundred fell by the wayside—well, you couldn't turn a teacher like that out into the Montana schools. Again, it was lamentable—but necessary. Standards were high, but machine-like. They had to be conformed to, and the task of learning to conform kept me at least too busy to sigh over any lost "individuality"; an individuality not really my own after all, since it had been unconsciously copied from popular novels and motion-picture actresses. The big thing was never the individual but the teacher; the even bigger thing was not the teacher but the pupil. In losing sight of myself as "Me—an Individual" and in catching a glimpse of myself as "Miss———, a Teacher," I began to lose all feeling of inferiority. Competition, superiority, inferiority, are only relative terms after all among cogs.

Coming to the University this fall, though, I went through all the old familiar feelings. Physically they are expressed by forced expressions and by unnatural walk and unnatural gestures. In fact, I have been so self-conscious at times that it has been almost impossible for me to walk at all. I am able to recognize these same symptoms in others now, however, and that is the best sign that a malady is disappearing. One awkward gesture from a stranger, and I forget my own embarrassment at once. At present the feeling at seeing the awkward gesture is more one of satisfaction than of sympathy, but I have hopes for a more charitable feeling in days to come.

All this brings me back to the realization I got from the bits from sociology and psychology—that there is nothing unique or tragic or heroic in my position—that probably every one else in the world is also self-conscious to some extent, and that I would have realized it long ago had I had sense enough to use my ordinary powers of observation. And with this realization has come a feeling of relief, of thankfulness, even of power.

JESSIE CAMBRON.

Pride

OLD Mr. Allison was coming home from work. He walked slowly, his shoulders a little stooped, his hands curled in the pockets of his shabby overcoat. One block off the avenue lay May street. Narrow brick houses pressed close together; marble steps with a twist of iron for a railing, a street lumpy with cobblestones. The houses were a wall beating back the clamor of the city. It roared up on them, crashed against their impassive fronts, and receded until it was only a restless beat, like the sound of the sea from behind a far off dune. The sky above the chimney tops was clear blue, faintly touched with gold. A tranquil sky, hinting of spring and of new life. But Stephen walked slowly, his eyes fixed on the zig-zag tracery of bricks in the sidewalk—

He hated to tell Ellen—

At number 22 he ascended the steps. The gas had not yet been lighted in the narrow hall. He groped for the railing and finding it began to mount in the darkness toward the third floor. His wife heard him and came to the door. She stood with her back to the light peering into the dark hall.

“That you, Stephen?”

“Yes.”

“It’s late, I was getting worried.”

“No need to worry.”

He pushed past her and, entering the shabby sitting-room where the gas flared, dropped heavily into the morris-chair by the window. Ellen followed him into the room and stood over him anxiously—

“What’s the matter, Stephen? What’s happened?”

“Nothing.” He sat playing with the seal of his watch chain, not looking at her.

“Yes, there is,” said Ellen—she crossed over to the window and jerked down the shade—“You’ll have to tell me sometime, you might as well now.”

Stephen leaned over and began to unlace his shoes. “I’ve been turned off,” he said. “I’ve lost my job, Ellen.” His voice sounded muffled coming up from between his knees.

Ellen noticed how thin his hair was getting on top. Someone had told her about a new tonic. She must remember to buy a bottle to-morrow—

“They’ve turned you off?” she said at last.

“Yes.”

“Why?”

“Too old, I guess. They said they wanted younger men. The place has been different since old Mr. Himminger died.” He rose with effort and walked across the floor in his stocking feet, carrying his shoes in his hand. At the bedroom door he turned—

“Don’t worry, Ellen, I’ll find something.”

“Sure you will.” She crossed over and stood by him, resting her hand on his coat sleeve. “Don’t you worry, either,” she said. “Fred’ll be here tonight and we can talk it over with him. Now get washed up. I’ll go mash the potatoes.” She went out the door humming cheerfully. In a moment Stephen heard the thump, thump of the potato masher in the granite pan.

Jessie came around after supper bringing Helen to see gran and gramps. Helen, a pale, quiet child, with her hair cut straight across her forehead, went to sit on gramp’s knee.

“Well, papa, how’s business?” asked Jessie.

Stephen clumsily untwisted a strand of Helen’s hair which had become entangled in his vest buttons.

“Papa’s been turned off,” said Ellen—

“Oh, papa, honestly?”

He nodded and cleared his throat—

“Whatever will you do?” cried Jessie. “And right now when work’s so scarce, too. What’d they turn you off for, anyway.”

“Too old,” said Stephen. He flushed painfully and shifted Helen to his other knee.

“We’re waiting for Fred to come,” said Ellen quickly. “It’s his night, you know. He’ll be able to help us.”

The bell in the dark hallway suddenly jangled.

“There he is now,” said Jessie, and ran to let him in.

Fred had a suggestion. He leaned back on the old sofa, looking big and prosperous and well-groomed.

“How about coming to work for me, dad?”

“Just the thing,” said Jessie.

"I don't know anything about the printing business, Fred," Stephen answered weakly.

"I know you don't, but you'll learn."

"I'm a pretty old dog to learn, Fred."

"That's all right."

"But you don't need any new people. You told me last week you thought you'd have to cut down the force. You haven't any place for me."

"There's always a place for you, dad."

—If he only hadn't said that. Stephen didn't want charity, and especially from his son. When Fred was a little chap in a white blouse and knickerbockers he had come and stood between his father's knees—"When I grow up I'm going to be just like you, dad."

"Better pick somebody better than me, son."

"Nope, there isn't anybody better."

He was always like that—crazy about his dad—

"I'll look around first," said Stephen.

He put Helen down on the floor and stood up, resting his hand on her smooth little head—

"Oh, Stephen," said Ellen, "hadn't you better?"

"No," said old Mr. Allison. "I'll look around first, something's sure to turn up. Thanks just the same, Fred."

"Well," said Fred, "the offer's still good if you don't get anything."

He began to make preparations for departure, folding his silk scarf across his chest, buttoning up his overcoat of English tweed.

"Good night, dad, I'll be around Friday. Better think it over."

He turned to go. Ellen and Jessie followed him to the door and out into the dark hallway.

Stephen remained standing in the middle of the shabby, bright sitting room, his hands fumbling with Helen's hair.

"Ow," cried Helen suddenly. She jerked away from him and ran after her mother. But Stephen did not notice that she had gone.

At each place where he applied it was the same thing—

"We aren't taking on any new people now. You might leave your name and address."

He thought the young, sleek-headed girls looked at him, a little

pitying, a little amused—an old fellow like that—didn't he know his day was over?

He came home each evening exhausted, his face gray with weariness. Ellen would meet him at the head of the stairs—

“Well, Stephen, any luck?”

“Nothing today, Ellen.”

At last he was forced to acknowledge his defeat. He sat at the supper table, resting his elbows on the cloth. The gas beneath its shade of mottled glass threw a circle of light on the table, the rest of the room was in shadow.

“I guess it's no good, Ellen,” he said. “I'm too old.”

“I'm old, too, Stephen,” she answered.

“Well, we've enough money saved to get us into the James Valley Home,” he told her, making circles on the cloth with his napkin ring.

She began to cry quietly, looking around the dingy little room. “And give up our home? If we do it's the end, Stephen—I should think you'd consider Fred's offer. Our own son! He's so good. You act as if you'd rather take charity.”

Stephen shifted wearily in his chair, then rose and stood by the window outside the circle of light—

When Fred was a little chap he had said, “I'm going to be like you when I grow up, dad”—such a funny youngster—his dad's boy—

“All right, Ellen,” he said. “Fred'll be here tonight. I'll tell him—”

Fred had put in a desk for his father at one end of the long, bright office, close to the window. Through the window old Mr. Allison could see the busy avenue, and across the avenue a little park, like an island, bravely, flauntingly green in a sea of gray asphalt.

“You're to do proof-reading with Miss Frank,” Fred explained to him the first day. “It's not hard, but you must be careful, one mistake may cause a lot of trouble.” He introduced Miss Frank, a thin, keen-faced little Jewess, very young, very arrogant.

“Sure, we'll pull together all right,” she said cheerfully. “Watch us!”

“That's the spirit,” said Fred. When Miss Frank had gone back to her desk he turned to his father—“She's the kind of a girl we want in the business—young and full of energy. She'll make good.”

All day the big office throbbed with the reverberation of the printing presses, snapped with the click of typewriter keys. When he was at home, lying awake by Ellen's side, Stephen could still feel the thumping going on in his head. The noise confused him a little. He had difficulty at times in hearing Miss Frank's thin, crisp voice as she read proof. Often the print blurred before his eyes and he had to stop and polish his glasses on the corner of his handkerchief. These interruptions irritated Miss Frank. She would sit tapping her pencil, waiting for him to go on, her foot swinging back and forth impatiently. Once when she returned to her desk she stooped and whispered something to one of the stenographers. He caught the word "grandpa," and then their young laughter—

The men in the office were kind. To them, he was a being almost without identity. They spoke of him always as "Mr. Allison's father."

He rarely saw his son. Now and then in passing Fred would throw him a careless word—but most of the time he was too absorbed with conferences and the work of a busy executive to remember his father.

When April blended into May and the walks of the little park were strewn with the white blossoms from the horse chestnut trees, Stephen began to spend his lunch hours sitting on a bench in the sunshine. The sun was warm through the fabric of his coat and the wind in the little park smelled of lilacs and of moist earth.

Stephen, leaning back with his hands folded about his cane, watched the sweep of shadows across the grass, and the bright heads of the jonquils nodding together—and watching them, he forgot how old he was, and how tired. He was a boy again helping his mother plant jonquils by the kitchen steps, the wind was cool against his throat and the wet, black earth clung to his fingers.

Every day he came to the same bench, remote from the main thoroughfare—John McLeod, the park gardener, began to notice him, to expect him. Finally one day he spoke—

"It's pleasant here in the sunshine—"

"Yes," said Stephen. "It's good to see growing things."

John came and sat on the bench, holding a trowel caked with earth between his knees.

"When I was a lad in Dundee—"

It was the beginning of a friendship between two lonely old men.

When he looked up he saw Fred crossing the office towards Miss Frank's desk. He had a sheaf of papers in his hand. The force seemed to sense something wrong and stopped talking—Miss Frank took her hands away from the typewriter keys. The only sound was the throb of the machines in the press room.

"Here's another mistake," said Fred. He flipped over the papers and snapped one down on the desk. "I'd like to know who did this. It means a matter of a thousand dollars to the firm."

Miss Frank examined the sheet carefully. "I think Mr. Allison had charge of that," she said at last. Her voice was sharply clear in the quiet room.

"Oh," said Fred. "I see; well, perhaps it can be straightened out. That's all right, father—don't worry."

He turned and walked out of the room. As the door of his office closed, one of the girls giggled nervously. Then Miss Frank swung back to her typewriter. In a moment the room was again humming with life. But Stephen did not move or lift his eyes from the paper on his desk—

When Fred started into business for himself he had come to his father with all his difficulties—"But son, I don't know anything about the printing business—"

"Maybe not, dad—but you've got ability and you usually do hit the nail on the head. That's what I need, see?" Funny how much confidence he had in his dad. He was always like that—funny boy.

Stephen was trying to explain something to John. It was not easy. To him, words had never been things that he could use with careless familiarity. They came with difficulty. But this was something he had been thinking about for a long time. Something he wanted John to know—

"It's funny," he said, "it's funny how you want to get back to the earth when you're old. It kind of pulls you—at both ends of your life. Sort of as if you had to get close to her before you go to her altogether. That's the way I look at it."

"Yes," said John, "that's the way I figure it out, too—it's the right kind of work for an old man."

He picked up a twig and began to trace a pattern in the dirt near his feet. "Why don't you come and work for me?" he asked. "The

Park Board said I could have another man but I told 'em I'd rather work alone than have one of these young whipper-snappers. I'll speak to Mr. Bradley. He'll take you on—"

Stephen sat looking off through the sharp, pointed leaves of the maple trees to the distant city street, noisy with the rush of noon hour. When the sun shone, the grass in the little park was sweet and hot and the pansies lifted their fluted, impudent faces to the sky. When it rained, the earth was wet, and fat pink worms came out to lie across the paths. If he worked here the dirt would grind beneath his nails and the throb of the printing presses would be something far off and forgotten—like a dream—like a bad dream. He turned and put his hand on John's arm. "I'll start in next week," he said. "I'll tell my son tonight." There was no need. He did not thank him.

Old Mr. Allison was coming home from work. He walked jauntily, swinging his cane. He guessed he was still good for something. He'd gotten a job. Wait until he told Fred! He could see Fred's face full of pride—"That's fine, dad"—they'd be pals again.

After a while they'd laugh over those weeks of proof-reading.

"Well, I may be no good in a printing business, but look at these roses"—pink, curled petals like a baby's hand, Fred's big finger running gently along the curve of a leaf. "Any dub can read proof. It takes a Burbank to grow these"—

The windows were open in the little parlor. A faint, hot breeze stirred the curtains, blowing them backward into the room. It was too warm to turn on the gas, but a yellow band of light from the street lamp had thrust its way between the meshes of the dusty screen and lay quivering across the floor.

Fred sat on the couch with his arm flung along the back. Now and then he mopped his face, running his handkerchief around beneath the edge of his collar. Ellen in a chair by the window fanned quietly. The movement of the fan against the still air was like the whirl of a bird's wing. The conversation was desultory, effortless. Stephen, sitting in the shadow outside the band of light, smiled to himself. He'd make them forget how hot it was. He cleared his throat—

"Well, Fred, I guess I won't be working for you after this week."

Fred shifted in the darkness and the rustle of Ellen's fan stopped abruptly—

"What's the matter, dad?"

"I've got another job," said Stephen. His voice was confident. "You see, I'm no good at proof-reading. It isn't my line—but there's one thing I can do, and that's grow flowers. You remember our roses when we were at Avon, don't you, Ellen?"

Ellen nodded.

"Best in town," said Stephen proudly.

"Well," questioned Fred. "what's the job?"

"It's in Ellis Park. John McLeod and I are friends. He's gardener there. I'm going to work with him."

For a moment there was silence in the little room. Then Fred spoke—

"Ellis Park," he said. "Do you think you'd really like that sort of a job?"

"Why, yes," said Stephen. "It's the kind of thing I can do."

"It's hardly the work—" began Fred. "I don't know—" he paused uncertainly. "Of course it's up to you father. But, well—I'd think it over before I decided."

Ellen rose and crossed over to the couch. She sat down by her son's side.

"Don't you see what you'll be doing, Stephen? Think of Fred's position. How will he feel having his father working as a gardener right across from his place?"

Fred reached out and covered his mother's hand with his own. "That doesn't matter, mother—whatever father does is all right!"

Stephen pulled himself heavily out of his chair. "Ellen's right," he said. "I mean—it isn't the kind of a job for me after all. It wouldn't work out, I see. Just another one of my foolish notions. I'll forget about it—"

Old Stephen Allison was coming home from work. He walked with bent shoulders, his eyes fixed on the zig-zag tracery of bricks on the sidewalk. A flock of little boys congregated under a street lamp, scattered suddenly with shrill, high cries. Stephen stood watching them until they disappeared into the darkness. Then he moved slowly on. When Fred was a little chap—

ALICE PASSANO HANCOCK.

SLUICE BOX

A Place in Heaven

Twice a day Nannie Harboro passes our house. In the morning she can hardly keep from tumbling right over and down and in the evenings she puffs and is bent way low. We live half-way up the hill and she lives on top.

One morning the laundry whistle blew just as she was in front of our house. She began to run but her feet went out in front of her and her big black bag went straight on. There was so much of her with all the full skirts and shawls that I had a hard time helping her up. Then she muttered and her body shook so hard that I had difficulty getting her on her way. She didn't even look at me. The bag was heavy, too.

Another time the wind caught the long plume and her hat whirled into the street. I thought it too bad she looked that way without a hat—the knob on the end of her nose redder than ever and only straggling hair to shade her face. She got hold of the plume just as the wind gave another spurt and she muttered pretty loudly.

On Saturdays Nannie always sends a money order. She looks at it several times and puts it in the envelope, then peeps in to see if it's there. Before putting the letter in the slot she feels the stamp and looks at the address. One day I saw her ask the postmistress to see if she'd sealed the letter she had just dropped in. The postmistress says the money goes to a mission society.

Somehow on Saturdays after she's been to the postoffice Nannie 'Arboro doesn't look so 'umpbacked. Neither do her eyes look so dead and once she sort of smiled at me. Maybe it's because the laundry is closed all afternoon, but I wonder if perhaps it isn't her advance payments on a place in heaven.

Maws

Sarah, big of girth and blonde, a waitress in a chop house, has a knack long known to her of handling a lunch counter lined with men; lined, rather, with black maws that open and close everlastingly on "Pie? Why, raspberry-lemon-apple-mince. Say, what DO you want?"

Sarah, perforce, is a materialist. She can't help it. I know she'd like to be something else when she says to me, "You know, they get me down. They're all alike, mouths. Nightmares. Open all the time—catin' food or callin' for it. Shovel it in; what good does it do? Sometimes I even dream about 'em.

"It's all right, they pay for it, eh?" Oh, that's right, but you oughta know how bad it can get. . . ." Sarah looks away hopelessly, beads of sweat running down her plethoric face.

I pay my check. I say inwardly, "Big Sarah, I'll make a million dollars some day . . . then you'll pick flowers."

Whiffet—Par Excellence

"Boss, he was right heah, when I done locked up las' night, but he's gone."

"What's gone?" the policeman demanded, looking in the direction in which Toby's ebony finger pointed.

"Whiffet's gone—done gone off on a jamboree, all by hisself—done gone an' lef' me." Toby's voice was almost hysterical.

"Whiffet? Who the dickens is Whiffet?"

"Don't you all know Whiffet, Mistah Flynn? Why, man, Whiffet was the gimcrackenest, gol-derneest, fightenest storm-crow that ever crowed."

The policeman was at a loss for words. With Toby it was the reverse; he became eloquent in detailing the prowess of his beloved midget of the owl family.

"Whiffet am no ordinary storm-crow"—the hysteria of his loss went into eclipse behind the eloquence of his eulogy. "That bird am the most accurate barometer that ever grew inside of feathers. He am the thirteenth great grandson of Oracle Kip, which same owl warned Old Noah about the wetness which was comin'—what, Mistah Flynn, you ain't read about Oracle Kip, that storm-crow what started crowing about a week before the big flood—and only Mistah Noah listened to him? Well, Whiffet am the direct and only descendant of that ol' bird."

Fear settled on Toby's inspired face as the thought came to him that maybe Whiffet wasn't now a living descendant. For a moment hysteria battled with the eulogizing spirit, but the latter retained its advantage.

"That scrappin' little owl has licked every fightin' cock brought to Front street, an' las' week he almost killed Dixie Tanner's ol' parrot, what Dixie claimed could lick anything his own weight or bigger. No sub, Mistah Flynn, that Whiffet wasn't satisfied with trouncing cocks and parrots, he included all the cats and dogs on this heah street. Why that bird would shadow box fo' hours—" Tony's narration was cut short by the pained yelps of a shaggy dog which catapulted from an alley. Front street echoed with his howls. Toby unburdened with a whoop of exultation and joy.

"That's him," he shouted.

"What's him?"

"Whiffet! Good ol' Whiffet, the fightenest dog-ondest bird that am. That am the way that baby fights; he jes' gets right down there on the nape where the hair am short, an' bites an' digs."

As the policeman moved away on his beat, Toby was saying, "Ah hopes the ol' boy wins in the nex' twenty minutes, 'cause Ah don't want him to be late fo' breakfas'."

Congress a la Dempsey

Congress has of late adopted a new and forceful method of debate. Only the other day Wheeler and Glass made use of it in the the Senate, while Tincher and Strong introduced the method in the House.

It was hoped that the new system was temporary, but scarcely a week elapsed before Representatives Blanton and Bloom found the newer system very useful. Results: the committee meeting was broken up; a woman in the audience, inspired by the gallant scene, stood upon her chair and prayed: two onlookers sacriliciously aped Congressmen Blanton and Bloom.

This new style of Congressional parlance should be encouraged. Locally, it would insure a capacity audience at every session. Nationally, it would greatly stimulate public interest. "Senator Wheeler of Montana jabbed a beautiful left into the right optic of Senator Glass of Virginia" would more readily be read than: "Senator Wheeler said, 'I'm sure the senator from Virginia will in time see my point'."

Many will object to the new system on the ground that it is no new system at all, but one of the barbaric customs of the Dark Ages. This is a strong objection. Nevertheless, a system that will encourage a woman to mount a chair and pray certainly merits development.

Another important point must be considered: Such a system would be a bit strenuous, and might in time discourage female aspirations to a Congressional seat. Probably Congress has not as yet considered this point. When it does, Congress will no doubt appropriate funds for the services of some intelligent debate coach, Gene Tunney, for instance.

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The Frontier BOOK SHELF

The Golden Day. Lewis Mumford.
(Boni and Liveright, 1926.)

This is an eminent book, with power in it to inspire us to work. It is a synthetic completion of the study of American culture begun by Frank, Brooke, Santayana, and Lawrence. "The settlement of America had its origins in the unsettlement of Europe . . . to mark the points at which the culture of the Old World broke down, and to discover in what places a new one has arisen are the two poles of this study. Something of value disappeared with the colonization of American . . . something of value was created."

Mumford has fine insight, wide knowledge, and brilliant power of synthesis. There is no serious defect in him. He writes firmly, like this: "It was the temper of James's mind, and it is the temper of Protestantism generally, to take more pleasure in the obstacles than in the achievement. It has the courage to face danger and disaster: this is its great quality: but it has not the courage to face prosperity." Occasionally, perhaps, he pushes his thesis too hard, as when he charges it to the materialistic zeitgeist that "As a youth, James debated over his capacities as an artist and threw them aside." Socrates threw aside sculpture to speculate.

But the book is not about James; it is about all American culture, particularly about the Golden Day, 1830-60, when Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Melville, yes, and Hawthorne answered the challenge of American experience. "This period nourished men, as no other has done in America before or since. . . . An imaginative New World came to birth during this period, a new hemisphere in the geography of the mind. That world was the climax of American experience. What preceded led up to it; what followed, dwindled away from it, and we who think and write today are either continuing this first exploration, or we are disheartened, and relapse into some stale formulae, or console ourselves with empty gestures of frivolity."

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Allons! the road is before us!

E. L. F.

Nigger Heaven. Carl Van Vechten.
(A. A. Knopf, 1926.)

What Sherwood Anderson's *Dark Laughter* is to negro sound Van Vechten's *Nigger Heaven* is to negro movement. It is a surprisingly vigorous picture of negro intellectuals and their position in life. We are, to some extent, moved to sympathetic understanding but their hideous practice known as "passing" soon takes it away. That the negro problem is a great one is quite evident; both the happiness of the negro and the safety of the white are at stake. However, the story leaves one coolly interested but not warmly sympathetic. We are too forcibly reminded of Vachel Lindsay's "Then I saw the Congo, creeping through the black," and are moved to feel with him that the negro is always a primitive at heart.

J. J.

My Mortal Enemy. Willa Cather.
(A. A. Knopf, 1926.)

This story Russian in its despondent qualities, has a theme similar to that in *One of Ours*. Miss Cather has given a vivid picture of a woman suffering from conflicting emotions and causing everyone around her to suffer. Although the story has an unmistakable ring of truth in it one misses the glorious strength of Thea Kronborg in that other novel so curiously unlike this one. The reader is forced to admire *My Mortal Enemy* but thinks of the heroine in *The Song of the Lark* and hopes that Miss Cather's fit of despondency will soon be over.

J. J.

The Letters of Jane Austen. (Dial Press, 1926.) Life, to Jane Austen, was a fascinating picture show from which she derived immense interest and amusement. Perhaps a secret sense of superiority increased her enjoyment of the wife discovered to be "everything that the neighbors could wish her to be, silly and cross as well as extravagant," or the knowledge of her own conversational ability heightened her enjoyment of the ridiculous call where

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"they came, they sat, they went," but she was no prig. She was quite as detached and amused at the behavior of her brother, her favorite niece, who would use "such thorough novel slang, and so old that I dare say Adam met with it in the first novel he ever opened," herself. These letters, written at intervals from her twenty-first to her forty-second year, the year of her death, are bubblingly alive, whimsically satirical, gently derisive, and—since letter writing was considered by Jane Austen as an art—delightfully expressed.

L. B. M.

Dialogues in Limbo. George Santayana. (Scribners, 1925.) *Dialogues in Limbo* is one of the most beautiful books of philosophical prose of our time. It contains no philosophical material or points of view that have not appeared variously in the author's other books but all the old elements are here in rich new embodiment. The Stranger, Santayana himself, is in Limbo, talking mainly with the shades of Democritus, Socrates and Avicenna, about religion, government, philanthropy, and death.

Santayana has not achieved a Landonian triumph in dialogue. The shades will not quite be persons. Rather, they are voices expressing the parts of the minds of the historical persons that have become parts of Santayana's mind. But that deficiency is as nothing to the pure flow of humane, gracious and subtle thoughts that Santayana achieves better than any other living writer of English.

E. L. F.

Troubadour. Alfred Kreymborg. (Boni and Liveright, 1925.) This book is an exceedingly subjective autobiography. Nevertheless, Kreymborg has endeavored to look at himself from the outside, objectively, and has succeeded in so far as he avoids undue egotism and sentimentality and that is no small achievement. The material is minutely personal, dealing with as inmost experience as a man cares to put on a printed page, and yet the reader is inclined to accept it all as illuminative of life, rather than as Kreymborg's revelation of himself. The first part, "Ollie" (his nickname) carries his life through his boyhood experience in his father's tobacco store with its back liv-

Tell Our Advertisers You Saw Their Ad in the Frontier.

ing rooms under an "elevated" in New York City, his early jobs and his first love experience. The second part, "Krimmie" (a later nickname), covers his life in Greenwich Village, with its ups-and-downs in projects, dreamed and undertaken—his early verse writing, his discovery of the mandolite, his early editorial experience. The third part, "Others," so-called from its span of the time during which he was editing that magazine, includes his second love affair, and marriage and separation, his grasp of a new literary art, his touch with what he thinks strictly "American" currents in contemporary art, music, and literature, and his third and last love affair and his second marriage. The last part, "Dawn," records his venture into dramatic writing and production, the beginning of his tours as a troubadour over the United States, after discovery of the vivid Americanism of Chicago, his editing of the magazine "Broom" in Rome, and his carrying of the newly found Americanism in art into Europe, and his return to America. Under the whole story of his experience lies the brilliant lives of the experimentalists in American painting, poetry, music, and drama, with their largely virtuoso productions, and the throbbing life of a sophisticated community bent on clever, vital self-expression. As an editor, Kreymsborg came into touch with scores of these people, and these contacts he records with loving tolerance and a lively accuracy. He has capacity for friendship, evidently, and a winning nature. Even a scoffer of our experimentalists in reading this book will absorb some tolerance and will credit them with more sincerity than he has been wont to do. The book should be read lingeringly, in small installments. It is written with literary skill.

H. G. M.

Notes About Contributors

The frontispiece is by John Allen, '28 (Billings).

John Hutchens (Missoula) is a graduate student in English.

Addison Howard, '27 (Missoula); Dorothy Johnson, '28 (Whitefish); Alice Hancock, '29 (Missoula), Jessie

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F. J. Ward (Ismay) is a correspondence student in creative writing; Homer Parsons, '20, is living at San Bernardino, California; John Frohlicher, ex-'26 (Kalispell), is now in Great Falls; Alice Veit, '29 (Livingston), is a student in the School of Journalism.

Contributors to *The Sluice Box* are: Mary Cavitt, '27 (Galata); John Hutchens; Peter Cerutti, '30 (Ennis); and Lyle K. Williams, '27 (Willow Creek).

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