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### The Frontier, May 1927

Harold G. Merriam

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May 1927

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# *The* FRONTIER

A Literary Magazine



1. *Three Stories—*  
*One Came Back—a trapping tale.*  
*The Blind One—how does a man adjust*  
*himself to blindness?*  
*Round Trip—she went back—yes.*
2. *Poems.*
3. *Sluice Box—Pigs, Elk, Cats, Girls.*

STATE UNIVERSITY of MONTANA

MAY, 1927

Thirty-five Cents

One Dollar a Year

VOL. VII

NO. 3

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## A Literary Magazine

VOL. VII, NO. 3

MAY, 1927

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

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### I. Snow

Clean snow is a lovely secret,  
Burst and scattered everywhere too soon,  
Delighting you, even while you're sorry.

### II. The Highlands

The Highlands are a giant mass of raisins,  
black and wrinkled.  
The railway winding through them is a brown stem  
tressled where the fruit has fallen off.

### III. Second Dusk

This lonely dusk sheds quiet silver tones,  
So richly clear  
And pure  
They vibrate through me, leaving echoes here  
And I become another dusk, obscure,  
A pregnant pause of blended night and day.

MARY FARNSWORTH.

*Spring Night*

The black hills lay like shadows on the sky  
That was so deep the stars looked drowsy in it ;  
The frogs trilled melancholy cheerfulness  
Into the evening coolness ; the damp air  
Was delicate with something of the woods,  
Of earth and leaves and grass under spring pools  
That the frogs trilled about. I didn't know  
How awfully full of beauty the night was  
Until I turned the corner of the house,  
And saw him there, still sitting on the log,  
Our visitor, who made us laugh so much :  
But he was all alone now with his chin  
Upon his hands.

I felt just like a shadow as I passed  
Quickly and quietly into the house.  
I wondered why I didn't say a word,  
And why I suddenly heard in the night  
Throbbing back of the trills, and back of that.  
Hush and excitement and quick eagerness.  
I ran upstairs and put my head outside  
To feel it all again. All this is his,  
I thought, and, very happy, went to bed.  
And after that when hills shadowed the sky,  
And night was a soft darkness that the stars  
Lay in, and the hush held a widening throb,  
Pulsing like thought back of the pensive trills,  
I've gone out far—stood in the midst of night,  
Safe and at home, as in my own friend's heart.

ELSIE McDOWALL.



## And One Came Back

THE tired young man who rowed boats on the big lake flipped a cigaret butt into the crystal clear water and rested on his oars.

"Old yarn 'bout this lake. Three fellers went up into the woods at the head one Fall, say thirty years ago, an' next Spring one of 'em come back down. Nobody ever did know what become of the other two."

"Oh, isn't that thrilling?" commented the plump young lady in riding clothes. "Wouldn't you *love* to know what happened?"

The young man groaned and bent again to his rowing.

\* \* \*

Black Frenchy and old Haskins eyed each other appraisingly. The metallic music of the mechanical piano and the stamping clatter of dancing pounded and blared all about them in the old saloon. The patented hanging lamps for which the Four Corners Saloon was famous swung crazily in the smoke-blurred air and sent mad shadows swaying across the crowd.

Old Haskins leaned a sharp elbow on the weak-legged table and asked in his gritty voice, "Ya know 'im, do ya?"

Black Frenchy's caressing rumble replied, "Naw, old man, I donno him—donno you neither—hear 'bout both of you, see? They tell me you're the smartest man still out of jail—" he shrugged and grinned his white-toothed grin—"so I think I'd like to meet up wid you. See?"

Haskins smiled grudgingly, his face hardly breaking under straggly gray whiskers. "That's what they say. But how about this Alden? Pretty weak lookin' to carry a pack and do heavy work like trappin'."

Black Frenchy's chuckle rolled. "He's got money. See?"

Haskins nodded grimly, four times. "Yeah. Now I see. An' we're broke. Awright. You talk to 'im."

Black Frenchy found little Alden tucked away in a corner, whining dolefully on his mouth-organ. He was drowned out wholly by the music of the dance. The big Canuck towered bulkily above him.

"I'm LaValle—Black Frenchy. Maybe you hear of me? Huh?"

Alden nodded rapidly, with a flattered smile. "Sure have. Glad to meetcha, Mr. LaValle."

Black Frenchy told him the plan. "Cabin up there already, see? Old, but we can find the trail. Good trappin'—fine trappin'. Good cabin. Good water. You grubstake us, see? We—me and the ole man—



both broke. See? You wouldn't hafta do much. I'm big an' Haskins is stronger'n he looks. You just work around the cabin, see?"

"An' I get a third of the catch?"

"Sure, an' don't do hard work like we do. See?"

Little Alden scratched his head, clutching his mouth-organ tightly with the other hand. "It sounds good enough," he decided. "Yeah, it sounds good enough."

"Sure. Have a drink on that. I'll get the old man, too."

Alden paid for many drinks. He missed the slow wink that Black Frenchy passed gray old Haskins over his fuddled head.

\* \* \*

One of the bartenders saw them set out one morning in the cool, dim dawn. Packs and guns and sharpened knives, they swung down the trail. The bartender waved once, and went back in the Four Corners, shaking his head. "That tenderfoot don't look hardly husky enough to spend a winter with those two sons-a-guns," he mused. "Wonder how the three of 'em ever hitched up?" He shook his head again and began to sweep up.

Alden grumbled and whined under his pack of blankets and the few extras that they allowed themselves. Black Frenchy and Haskins strode steadily along under heavy packs—traps, and the bare necessities of food that must last for months. Great packs that pulled the shoulders, bent the back, and sent sweat running in salty rivers down their bodies—and little Alden wheezed along with his twenty-five pounds.

Alden could not understand nor cease to hate the swinging silence of the march. He wanted to rest at every log, to drink deep at every stream. He snarled at first when they tried to teach him. One day they let him drink his fill. The Autumn sunshine blazed its bright dizzy chill down upon him, and he was very sick. The half hour they had to wait for him paid; he learned.

As far as the big lake they followed a faint trail, slippery with dull red needles of evergreens, treacherous with concealed roots. The thin wormy yellow of the leaves on scrubby bushes by the trail was the only sign of Fall; sombre and changeless, the lodgepole pines shaded into dim gulches and up over tangled knolls. They traversed miles of thirst, where the whispering wind in the pines sounded like the faint gurgling of running streams, and they passed places where they forded four creeks in an hour and tramped soggily along in wet boots.

Nights, beside the fire, easing cramped shoulders and agony-throb-

bing feet, they sometimes dozed a bit before they crawled into the blankets for good. When the day's miles lay behind them, Alden soothed his soul with the music of his mouth-organ. Sometimes Black Frenchy sang to the whining tunes, thunderous songs that bellowed out of his black beard and drowned Alden.

At the foot of the big lake they built a log raft, not very solid nor very strong, but good enough to last them and their packs until they got to the head.

"Easier paddle this thing an' pole around the shore than tear through that"—explained Black Frenchy, gesturing toward the matted underbrush of the cedars clambering up the steep shores of the lake. "No trail much from now on; just old, faint blazes."

More days of journeying, slower going now, with Black Frenchy or old Haskins following up the old blazes, dulled with the weathering of years. Snapping branches tore at their faces, catching their great packs and jerking maliciously. And always towering above them were the mottled granite shoulders of the high mountains.

The cabin, when they found it, was a squat blur against the high blonde scar of a clay cut-bank. It was on a plateau of its own, perhaps fifty feet across, with a steep incline in the gravel down to the creek that foamed and boiled icily between its dark evergreen banks. A tiny, mouldy dark hole it was, not quite high enough for Frenchy to stand up inside. Webby light filtered in between the poles of its sides—it was not even made of logs. There was no floor, only a litter of dead boughs on the dirt. It had no chimney, either; there was a break in the thatching for smoke to get out. The worst of it was the damp, white, dead-fingered fungus that draped limply down from the poles of the ceiling, and caressed their faces with flabby indifference.

They had barely time to chink the cracks with mud and the crinkly, coarse-fibered deer moss before the first snow came. Then there was other work to do, laying out their trap lines. When Alden had to make his choice between staying alone in the dark pole hut, and really working at getting wood to pile beneath the brush shelter they made for it, he chose the hard work. They all hated the mouldy gloom of the hut. Only the need for sleep and shelter from the vicious cold of deepening winter kept them in it at all. It was odorous, too, of their dirty clothing and the fresh pelts of their catch. All around the cabin on the little plateau they kept the snow trampled and mussed, stained with the refuse of their catch.

They trained Alden to handiness. Black Frenchy even humored him now and then by throwing him the cold, furry body of an animal that did not amount to much, commanding with a gleaming grin. "Here, you clean that. You skin pretty fair." Then Alden hacked and slashed and labored, and showed the bloody result to Frenchy proudly.

"Yeah," would be his comment. "You may learn."

Sometimes Frenchy even took Alden along on short trips to the trap lines. Haskins never did. The old man got grayer and colder as the winter days dimmed and brightened across the heaped snows.

They hated worst Alden's eternal calculating. By the smoky fire, evenings, he figured with charcoal on a carefully barked slab. "What's that one worth? And that one? And that? But you said one just like that was more, yesterday. What do you call that?"

Questions and arguments and eternal figuring, figuring, until Haskins glowed white-hot with wrath and would have strangled Alden had he not been a little afraid of Black Frenchy. And always, when little Alden had the day's catch figured out in dollars and cents to suit himself, he divided it by three. That numeral three grated on Haskins and Black Frenchy. The whole catch as it grew mounted pleasingly—and Alden divided it by three. One night, as Alden was at his eternal computations, squatting between Frenchy and Haskins on the littered dirt floor, the old man looked across at the young, black-bearded one, and held up three fingers. He raised one eyebrow a bit, and a shade more of malice slid over the gray mask of his face. Frenchy shot a black glance at little Alden, humped over his black-smeared slab, and a sneer curled his lips back from his strong teeth.

Little Alden looked up with a jerk, and found the old gray man staring at him slit-eyed, inscrutable. Alden's hand crept fearfully inside his shirt to clasp tightly around his mouth-organ. He shivered, and his eyes shifted from one gloomy corner to another of the dark, damp box that was their home. He stumbled to his feet. "Go to bed, I guess. Pretty tired."

After that, he clung mentally to the mighty Frenchy as a child about to be whipped clings to a table-leg.

The cache of furs became more and more valuable; the winter terror weighed more and more heavily upon their world. And every night little Alden hunched over his slab, dividing by three.

Then, one day, Haskins made a trap. Swiftly and cunningly, with many precautions, for he had done this same thing in other winters for other men, he fashioned a pitfall. Alden was no danger; one need divide only by two as far as he was concerned. But why divide? He made a trap for Frenchy, on Frenchy's trap line. Snow covered his tracks.

Some days later, Frenchy came that way. He was plodding along with his eyes on the trail, when he glimpsed a furry body fifty feet ahead under the snow. His eyes opened. His luck had been poor; traps were sprung and empty. He broke into a run.

With a cracking sound, something gave way beneath him and his right foot sank, lodged between two small logs. With a startled snort, he pitched forward into the snow, and his rifle flew out of his hands. Wildly he rolled and struggled, digging at the snow, shouting terribly. At first the pain in his broken leg was worse with every movement; then as the cold crept in, he became numb. He was sleepy. He was tired. He was hungry, but that didn't matter. He slept. And the dim mist of evening drifted down over him through the black pines.

Alden found him, of course—little Alden, who sneaked out of the cabin just after dark, when he found himself alone with Haskins.

"Left my mouth-organ on a stump," he muttered, and was outside in the darkness in a moment. He was pitifully afraid, but no more of the dark than of being alone with gaunt Haskins in the hut. He broke into a stumbling run after the breathless climb up the cut-bank trail, blundering along Black Frenchy's track. Black, lifeless branches caught and jerked him. Trees, cracking with cold, boomed at him as he lurched on through the darkness. By some animal sense, coming to him when his human senses were breaking under the strain, he found the big Canuck—fell over him, broke into sobbing laughter, pounded him, chattered foolishly. The silent, heavy body of Black Frenchy was companionship, human companionship, though it was so silent and so heavy. He warmed to it and became sane.

"Frenchy! Frenchy! You, LaValle!" he warned. "Wake up, damn fool!" He shook the big shoulders feebly.

"Frenchy! You freeze! Understand—you freeze, Frenchy!"

There was no answer, no movement. Fearful, he screamed in the ear of the big limp body.

"Frenchy! Aw, my God, wake up an' come along wit' me. Frenchy! You know I don' like the dark!"



That helplessness always got Frenchy. He had a sort of pity for Alden. Sure enough, with the little fellow pounding and pummelling him, yelling in his ear, back came Frenchy from some far, black silence that he loved—back, back, though his soul hung onto the dark with claw-like fingers—back, back—and he was cold and dazed and angry at Alden, who was hurting him.

Black Frenchy tried to kick away something heavy on his leg, and a sharp spasm of pain shot through his body, waking him like a flash of flame cutting through starless night.

Alden was shaking pains clear through him, scolding, chattering noisily like a squirrel up a pine. Frenchy shook him off and more pains went through his leg.

“Lemme ’lone, you. Leg broke. Hurt like hell,” he grumbled.

Alden was frisking around him like a little friendly dog. He went on his knees beside the big Canuck.

“Howja get here, Frenchy? Whyn’t you come back to the cabin? Haskins, I’m scairt to death of ’im. Lord, I thought I’d never find ya, Frenchy! What’ll I do? Where ya caught at?”

Frenchy groaned. “Aw-w-w! Right leg. In trap. Dig.”

Alden, on his knees, dug frantically like a dog searching for a valuable bone. His cold hands scooped the snow swiftly, then slowed up as he came to harder crusts beneath. It was black, dark, so that he could not tell that someone had dug there before him. Black Frenchy knew that without being told, and as Alden pulled him out, little by little, the Canuck muttered curses that chilled the little fellow’s heart and shrinking body. The words were like animal snarls. They bore added menace with every reiteration.

“Want me to get Haskins?” Alden tried pacifically.

“Naw. I freeze.”

“I can’t carry you, Frenchy. What we gonta do? I’ll go get Haskins.”

“You hear me. Get a pole; I hang on; you pull.” He groaned and snarled sharply. Alden hastened, floundering, to get a long, heavy branch.

Again and again, on the long, terrible journey back to the cabin, they had to rest, Frenchy for the most part grimly silent, Alden shivering, but never whimpering except to say pleadingly, “Aw, it ain’t very far now, is it, Frenchy?”

Every time they stopped, Alden patiently straightened Frenchy out so that he could rest a little, but never for long. Frenchy's strength and Alden's pride got them there.

\* \* \*

Haskins was not much worried when Alden dashed out into the night. The little fellow was handy enough, but he could never find Frenchy in the darkness, and if he got lost—Haskins shrugged his lean shoulders and put a stick on the fire—well, it was a good night's work. He could have waited a month for this little trick, but lately—

When Alden fell against the slab door and pushed it open, Haskins reared up out of his blankets and looked at him with a tinge of pale fear in his eyes.

"Come on quick, ole man. Frenchy's over here a ways—close to the cutbank. Hurry up." Alden was shivering from his exertion.

Haskins took his time about getting his worn gray mackinaw on. Without a word he shut the door behind him and followed the dim figure of Alden to where Frenchy, already growing listless, was sprawled in the trail, helpless and aching.

They got him into the hut and undressed him. Alden was tired, so tired. Once, kneeling beside Frenchy and rubbing his feet, he fell asleep and toppled over onto Frenchy's leg. The Canuck's muffled shout of pain woke him, and he grinned feebly in Frenchy's black, contorted face as he mechanically resumed his rubbing.

As old Haskins stood over Black Frenchy, strips of deer hide and rude splints in his hands, with little Alden cowering beside him, he glimpsed for a moment the hate in Frenchy's eyes—hate born of savage Indian ancestors, not far back, and sharpened by pain. Frenchy was all Indian in his revenges—Haskins had seen him torture a wounded, trapped animal that had bitten his hand. The gray, grim man leaned over and began the work of setting Frenchy's leg, with little Alden whimpering uselessly beside him.

When it was over, and Frenchy was lying still, breathing heavily, little Alden squatted beside the fire. Haskins muttered something and went to bed. The little fellow sat silent for a few minutes, heavy with sleep. He pulled his mouth-organ out of his shirt and brought it to his lips, even played a strain. Then it fell from his limp hand and he slouched into a heap in the dirt. The fire died down and morning dawned wanly through the mist.

The days stumbled by, painful days for Frenchy, who had never before in his life been helpless. Carefully he planned his way with Alden, never letting him out when Haskins was around or likely to be, always keeping a knife slid under the boughs of his bed as extra protection against Haskins. His first step was successful. One day when Haskins creaked gloomily out, Frenchy winked significantly at Alden and tapped his own forehead with one finger.

"God! Do ya think so, Frenchy?"

Frenchy maintained a pregnant silence.

Still Alden divided by three, nights by the fire. Haskins watched him grimly, one bony hand closing and unclosing like the claw of a dying bird. Frenchy shut his eyes and gritted his teeth. There was not so much to divide by three, now. Haskins brought back poorer pelts, and fewer.

"Game leavin', I guess," he grated as excuse, but Frenchy knew better. He wondered where Haskins' private cache might be, but he refused to worry about it. His own plans were very satisfactory. They provided for only one.

The weeks went by, and Frenchy was learning to hobble a bit. How well, Haskins did not know, but he had his suspicions. And all the time Frenchy was working, working, working on Alden's fear.

One day Spring was upon them. The chinook came with a crackling sound, a sliding and a moving all around them, as black branches, suddenly released of their winter-long burden of snow, straightened up, relieved. The snow melted to softness, then to slush, then to water that swelled the creek almost to their plateau, and dragged driftwood downstream to be caught at the rapids and piled into a twisted mass.

They grew more and more restless. Alden was his own noisy self once more, when the Great Silence was gone and there were motion and sound again. Frenchy could walk. He limped, but he could get around better than Haskins or Alden thought.

Frenchy sent Alden off one day to look for Haskins' cache. "We got to be movin' soon," he confided, "an' I'm gettin' scairt of the old man. Crazy—" he broke off and shook his head. Alden clambered up the trail and scampered off into the woods.

When Haskins came stalking in through the low door, he stopped in amazement. Frenchy lay groaning on his bough bed, his face bloody and drawn. Frenchy burst into a torrent of profanity. He ended with

the accusation, "Kick my leg an' knife me, he did. Come behind me. Said he was goin' after you—my God, Haskins, I t'ink he's crazy!"

Haskins allowed himself a grim smile at Frenchy's expense. "I'll see about him," he announced and went out the door.

"But ole man," moaned Frenchy, "you fix my leg before you go, eh? I can't walk—little devil kick me!"

"Like hell I will!" grated Haskins.

He should have been wiser. When he was half-way up the steep trail of the muddy cut-bank, Frenchy took careful aim through a chink in the hut, and fired. The old man staggered as the bullet cracked through the stillness. He clawed at the air and finally toppled over backward down the wet clay slope. Then Frenchy got back on his bough bed and waited for the crackle of Alden's scared footsteps before he started to groan again.

"My God, Haskins is dead—shot—" gasped Alden, blinking in the gloom. "An' you—what happened—?"

He peered at Frenchy's bloody face.

"He tried to kill me—thought I was dead—started after you—" managed Black Frenchy in a feeble whisper. "But I got 'im!"

Alden slumped down in a corner and his breath came in quick gasps. "You're a good guy, Frenchy," he whispered earnestly. "A good guy!"

In an hour or two, Frenchy was much better, he said. "We can't stay here, wid the ole man dead. He'll be hauntin' the place! We got to start quick!"

Alden agreed. There was not room for a ghost with them in the hut! He jumped with a sudden thought.

"Now we only have to divide the furs by two!" he realized, and fumbled in the corner for his slab.

Frenchy allowed himself a quiet sneer. "We can't carry 'em all," he reminded him. "We just take the best."

"Sure. But it's too bad—"

Frenchy seemed to think for a long time. "What you t'ink, Alden, about this? We got to have a raft. I go build one or find the old one. I take what I can carry. You bury Haskins—" Alden moaned sharply—"and come after me. Then we go down lake."

"Leave me here with Haskins? Naw, Frenchy! Not me!"

"But you can't build a raft alone."

"Lemme go with you!"



"Listen." Black Frenchy leaned toward Alden and looked at him intently. "If you was dead, clear up here in the woods, all by yourself—wouldn't you haunt anybody that had a chance to bury you away from the wolves and didn't do it?"

"Yeah—"

"An' you'd want to be buried deep, wouldn't you?"

"Yeah—"

"Well."

"Oh, I'll stay an' bury 'im, Frenchy—but—"

"You'll get over bein' scairt. Just t'ink what a good deed it is, an' how you'd want to be buried good and deep if you was in the ole man's place."

Frenchy got ready in a hurry—packed the very best furs, the last of the food, as much as he could carry and nothing he did not have to have. He made Alden help him, though the little fellow wanted to get started on his job of burying Haskins. Together they dragged the gaunt, bloody body under a tree, and Frenchy set off in the morning.

"I tell you," he suggested. "The ole blazes not very clear, for anybody that don't know how to look. I blaze new blazes for you on my way down, see? You follow new ones—don' let yourself get off on old ones. See? I make raft an' wait for you. Remember how we got in here?"

"Naw, I don't know nothin' 'bout the country."

"Well, you just follow new blazes. An'—" he leaned over and whispered earnestly, "put Haskins good an' deep. Wasn't his fault he went off his head—I was sorry to shoot the ole man. Good ole fellow." He shook his black bushy head lugubriously and hoisted on his pack.

"Goo'bye, an' follow new blazes."

"Goo'bye, Frenchy. See you at the lake."

No reply to that, and Alden watched him clamber painfully up the blonde scar of the cut-bank. Then he set to work feverishly, digging a grave for old Haskins.

\* \* \*

Frenchy blazed a careful trail for little Alden, but he blazed it to a sink-hole. In summer the sink-hole was apparent to anybody; green scum was on its surface, and it bubbled in gulps at a footstep thirty feet away on the spongy ground. But in early spring it did not look much wetter than other ground. Frenchy observed with fearful satisfaction that of the twenty-foot pole he had stuck down into

the sink-hole early in the winter, when he had first found it, only the six inch tip stuck out. "He'll be buried where the wolves can't get him, all right!" he chuckled cavernously, his lips curling back. Then he got away from there as fast as he could, and took up the old blazed trail to the lake.

It was a painful journey of many days through the still gray timber. Black Frenchy dove on, stumbling headlong through the evening-dimming brush many nights when he should already have made camp. Once he lost the trail-blazes for a few minutes, and when finally his desperate hand felt the hardened drops of oozing pitch in an old blaze, he dropped where he was and made dry camp that night.

At the big lake, Black Frenchy was slow about building his raft. He tried to whistle once in a while as he limped back and forth but the sound jarred, and he glanced often over his shoulder. He began to wonder what Haskins and Alden were doing by that time. What if they should sneak out upon him in the gloom of evening, and want him still to divide by three? He shook off the thought with a violent shiver, and tried to think instead of the girl in the short red silk dress at the Four Corners. He would give her some furs. He tried to think about the smile that would come on her crimson lips, but she faded, and he was looking over his shoulder again against his will.

The raft was finished. It wobbled loosely, but it would hold for the trip down the lake. Limping still, Black Frenchy gingerly trusted himself and his precious pack to it. His food was running low, but he could forget that when he thought of the furs. The bright sunlight of early spring was glowing down upon the blue lake, where ice still floated in melting patches. The world was young and beautiful again. He pushed his heavy paddle into the gravel of the lake bottom, ready to shove.

"Frenchy! Hey, Frenchy!" came a reedy, distant voice from the woods.

"Hah?" he gasped. A little wind stirred his beard. The blue lake smiled.

"Frenchy! Wait!" The wheezing voice of Alden—Alden, for whom he had blazed a trail to the sink-hole.

"God!" Frenchy shivered. "It's come after me!" Desperately he paddled, urging the clumsy raft along with great strokes.

A wind skittered across the water and riffled it mistily.

Coming out of the woods, trying to gallop under its big gray load.

separating itself by leaps from the shadows of the timber, was the little figure of Alden. Frenchy's eyes filmed with fear, as the lake had filmed with windy wrinkles.

"Frenchy! Frenchy! Wait! Wait!" The voice trailed off into nothing.

It was closer to the shore now, closer—and with a last grasp at solidity and sanity, Black Frenchy jumped for his rifle, safe and dry on top of his pack. The ripples were washing up between the light logs of the raft; the raft was swaying. His jump tipped it, his foot slipped on the wet bark, and he went overboard with a shout of terror.

Little Alden stopped, perplexed, at the water's edge. He couldn't swim—he was dead tired—his pack was heavy—he had been lost, badly lost, from the new blazes that Frenchy had so kindly made for him, and had to follow the old ones—and Frenchy had been careless about leaving enough food. Now Frenchy was gone. Alden shuddered and crumpled up on the gravel, weary to agony, to whimper dolefully for a time. He did not see that Frenchy's foot was caught between two logs of the raft, and he did not know when the brief struggles ceased, or when the loose logs budged enough for the foot to slip out and the big drowned body to drift lazily downward through the water.

When he had worn himself out with his lonely sorrow for Frenchy, who had jumped in his fright and fallen into the icy water, he found the raft and pack floating near shore. The little winds were gone again. After a while he trusted himself, sadly and fearfully to the drying logs and paddled clumsily down the lake along the shore line.

\* \* \*

He staggered into the Four Corners and crumpled down in a corner with his pack still on his shoulders. They let him sleep a while. He had had to throw away lots of furs, he said, but he kept the prettiest ones. He had lost track of the days, but it was long ago. He was hungry. He had been hungry so long. What happened to Black Frenchy? Why Haskins went off his head, and Frenchy had to shoot him, and then Frenchy fell off the raft and never even came up. Then Alden went to sleep again, and missed the knowing winks that met his explanation.

When he awoke in his corner of the saloon, the girl with the short red silk dress was leaning over him, smiling scarletly in his face. He smiled back foolishly and kissed her with great daring.

DOROTHY M. JOHNSON PETERKIN.

## A Doctor of Philosophy

HE had long been a Philosopher.

And having been a Philosopher, he had been thinking about things for many years—all sorts of things. And each time a thought came to him, it underwent an examination; it ran a gauntlet. "Is it practical?" he would ask himself; "will it lead me to finality? Is it teleological?" . . . and onward *ad infinitum*.

These inquiries he made of everything that came before him. And when he was satisfied that each answer approximated correctness, he dismissed that answer into a certain limbo which he kept for discarded reactions. He did this necessarily. He could not possibly have preserved all his thoughts in a tactile, and therefore a convenient, condition. . . .

Long years of meditation: twenty-five or thirty of them. Of course, his years were divided into orthodox seasons: misty summer mornings; fretfully hot noons; cloud-bank evenings. Then winter, winter which differed from summer perhaps in the way that creative thought differs from reflective thought; its coldness was intellectually pushing and galvanic. Between the two seasons, the Philosopher often wondered just which he really preferred. (It was one of the few universal problems upon which he was admittedly undecided.) "Nevertheless," he once thought, "perhaps I will build around this problem a new philosophy of scepticism; perhaps I shall be another Descartes." And he brightened for a moment as he emerged from the grey, grey seas of thought toward a sky of mundane ambition. But inevitably, upon such occasions, he sank back, not entirely without shame for cherishing such worldliness, into his search for the solution of all problems.

"Ideas," he would say to himself; "*they* are all that count!" And he would smile, not quite complacently, but not quite in frustration, either.

"I will arrive . . . some day," he would reason next (he nearly always reasoned), struggling a little with himself to keep down pernicious aspiration. "I will arrive at the end of all things, at transcendentalism with a content, let me say. But will I recognize it?" This doubt gave him a new opportunity to ponder. He welcomed it, if with a somewhat hesitant fear.

Thirty years, then. A very long time, indeed. Somewhere in the thirtieth year, on a certain day, the Philosopher sat in his study: a



room plain to barrenness, for artistic effect he scorned, even in his philosophy of aesthetics. He glanced over the familiar surfaces of the walls, then at the pictures: Kant, Locke, Condillac, whom he called, with professional pride, his confreres in the esoteric affairs of the mind. . . . Now he observed that dust had been greying the room. "So with all life . . ." Thus while his mind started off platitudinously upon the Laws of Decay, he observed out of sheer chance a spider swinging on a thread, swinging clear and free, three feet downward from the ceiling. The Philosopher's mind paused, and the Laws of Decay escaped him while he watched the insect; instinctively, habitually, he seized upon it as stuff for meditation.

He saw the weary spider drop at last to the floor.

Of course, a thought came. "The Law of Categorical Necessity." Just like that.

And ordinarily, that would have been all. Just a thought. But very quickly another thought, a catastrophic thought born of introspection, leaped to him . . . the clammy fear of it made him suddenly ill. His clothes, though they fastened stickily upon him, for once called up in him nothing like the Laws of Peripheral Surfaces.

"The Law of Categorical Necessity." Familiar syllables! Terrible sense of shadowy reminiscence! Thirty years ago . . . in this very room. . . . Was it possible? What!—did no change, no development, nothing but awful hopelessness remain with him? That, and the musty, haunting sound of words thirty years old. . . .

Now, he had it. "All mental life is planned by a cycle. You begin at Point P, and you start around a great loop. Halfway on the journey (fifteen years!) you lose sight of point P, safe and happy on the other, the sunny, side of the circle. But you must get back to point P. Ah, you are bound to get back to it, if you live long enough!" There was the bitterness: you are *bound* to get back to it!

There was some abstract joy in the discovery . . . Descartes . . . but . . .

"I am a very old man," the Philosopher thought sadly.

And as a matter of fact, that was one of the last thoughts that he ever had.

JOHN K. HUTCHENS.

## The Blind One

### 1.

FORMER Professor Lawrence Brooks, sitting in the ambient drowsiness of the summer afternoon, listened to the receding footfalls of President Elkins. Very assuringly the presidential voice had spoken. "Your calamity need not matter, Brooke"—he considerably evaded the word blind—"There will always be a place on this campus for you. The men to whom throughout the years you have imparted guidance. . . ." There had been a platitude on Milton.

But Mr. Brooke, knowing the concealing courtsey of college presidents, had answered merely, "No, Mr. President, I am very tired. And you can easily find someone else—"

. . . To this suggestion President Elkins had listened with at least a simulation of defeated hope. Well, the man was almost fifty-three.

"At any rate, Brooks, we will see you often. . . ."

—And so had departed elaborately.

Presently Mr. Brooke was thinking of other things . . . Oh, of course he wanted to remember only what was pleasant from times before—Lugano's blue bay, quick thanks on the faces of students—but there were disturbing thoughts that emerged from his illness: the increasing quickness of Ellen, his wife, whose manifest ability and intellectual vigor might have taken her very far. . . . She was forty-three—full and mature and, at her best, socially attractive. But Fran—Fran was different. She would turn from her mother suddenly, quietly, to go to him.

She did this first, he now recalled, on that last of all last days when, in a final test of his vision, the bandages were removed from his eyes. Then blackness closed over him until he sensed her for a moment against the window, sensed her slimness, and gold in her hair.

"Father. . . ."

### 2.

The terrace door opened abruptly. It would be Ellen, he thought; and she was beside him.

Very efficiently she said, "Lawrence, are you remembering to exercise enough? Why don't you learn to pace off distances in the house and about the lawn?"

He heard her move across the terrace to the house and open the door again. Then, vaguely, her words to Frances sifted out to him. "Too much for one . . . this burden. . . ."

A new regime had started.

3.

A time of adjustments, of learning things.

"I must attend to myself," Mr. Brooke said, and he did: he walked up and down the stairs, not clutching too obviously at the bannister, and he ate with an acceptable correctness. There was nothing about which he was to be particularly bitter; one took things as they came . . . except, "I must not be absurd," he reminded himself later; and so to Frances, as they sat outside. "My dear, keep your father, if you please, from looking stupid and benign like a Chinese idol in his garden."

They laughed. Frances, from where she was sitting on the ground beside him, put her hand upon his chair. Its wicker arm quivered slightly under her incredibly delicate, slim fingers.

"Father, you heard her?"

Ellen's ". . . burden . . ." was a fortnight old. He lied serenely, "Heard . . . ?" and fell into a silence that confessed.

Frances sighed relief. There was very little responsibility indeed for her in sitting on the lawn on a late summer afternoon, talking or not as they pleased. Or if they did, it was like him that he at first should have said, "The house is behind us; the geraniums over there; and beyond. . . ."

"The white birch, father. And this moment it's sprinkling shadows upon you. Here . . . and here . . ." She touched his cheek with one cool finger.

He turned amused laughter upon himself. "Of course it is. I felt it. I should have recognized it, but I didn't, because I am stupid—like a newly awakened child. How little we carry over into this other world, Frances . . . And now run to the house or I'll begin lecturing you."

Sensuous subtleties were growing upon Mr. Brooke. A very sunny day, or an equally drear: it struck reddish or black upon the lids. And the words of others—how nakedly they came to him now, words that were still loud in his mind long after they were spoken. Sitting alone, he could indulge himself in pleasures long desired. On sunny

days a lyric, on colder ones an ode. Maybe that, after all, was what those poets meant. They had a way of seeing truth simply, like that.

A slight rustle on the grass, like slow moving wind: Frances. If more sweepingly, Ellen. He had always a tendency to shut his eyes on Ellen, as if in consciousness of some old failure. In the house he was unfailingly aware of her—not by her step, though her heels tapped a little too heavily now as she came down the stairs. But because . . . damn it, the thing was really psychic . . . the room was actually colder for her presence in it. Sometimes she would stand at the window before him, whereupon he could say with certainty, “Ellen, you are between me and the sunlight.”

But when, after the door opened, the rustle on the grass outside was very, very slight, he was certain; he spoke first, and joyously, and in a friendly code.

“Today, Frances, a glass of . . . let us see . . . of Shelley.” And the old known book was in his hands for a moment before she read first words that brought back to him in a rush the old pictures.

Why, it had always been like this. The world had never failed to drop away from him when *he* could read, leaving him in just such a still remoteness when the last word was reached, and the pictures shuffled slowly, slowly away . . .

Yes, he was doing quite excellently.

#### 4.

He was, indeed. But Ellen and Frances? Ellen was inevitably missing even the pleasant social routine of faculty affairs. Old friends came in for tea, perhaps, and for a time there was a flurry of gossip, pleasantly animated. But one felt that their visit was somehow determined, that they had gathered their courage and resolved, “We’ve got to go sometime . . .” It was far nicer to have old students who seemed to drop in as on Sunday afternoons aforetime. You could imagine them with their backs and the palms of their hands to the fire, trying very hard to be serious, and failing delightfully.

But when they had gone, helplessness came back. He could have sworn sometimes to have heard a tearful sniff. Ellen’s—she couldn’t do that. . . . But Fran, Fran again was different. And he must see that she did not grow old too soon, like the devoted daughter in a foolish old-fashioned novel.



He might have suggested, "Frances—all this—does it hurt you?" She would have been hurt then.

He welcomed a first opportunity. In the early dusk one evening, they sitting in the heart of it, a car slammed youthfully to a stop before the house. Through the shrubbery filtered voices, gay, spontaneous. The car was full. Voices. Steps on the walk.

He detached his hand from hers.

"Please go," he asked. Her fingers moved reluctantly.

He smiled in self-vindication as the car droned cheerfully away. Then the terrace door opened.

"Yes, Ellen?" It was his mild triumph that he spoke first.

"Frances is twenty-one, Lawrence." The shadows were very cold indeed, and he shrank from them. All the dust of the departing car had not yet settled.

Her voice was running on contentedly. "And she can not be with us—right here—always. You had thought of that, of course?"

Very perplexing for him to tell her that he had not thought but felt it.

Resignedly, "Oh, yes."

He assumed that she shrugged her shoulders before she came out with, "And you would be quite ready?"

"—for her to be happy? Is she unhappy here—now?"

"She has said nothing," answered Ellen, inscrutably, "but if she does?"

Mr. Brooke tapped his foot impatiently upon the terrace. He thought that he had made himself clear. He answered shortly, "I asked her to go . . . just now."

Ellen held open the screen door as he entered. Then, in the house, when a little sting had crept out of him, "Damn me for a patriarch. Ellen," said Mr. Brooke, attempting lightness. But Ellen was already two rooms away.

Nevertheless Ellen had planted a vague unrest. Frances, Frances. He must stay up until she came . . . Before midnight steps crunched upon the walk. An unfamiliar, masculine one. There was low talk. The front door swung open to admit them.

Frances was softly surprised. "Are you waiting up for us, Father?" The introduction was accomplished. Mr. Brooke was satisfied to bow.

"No, Fran," he answered her question comfortably. "But a fire is still very pleasant—at least, I can hear it burning, and I doze in front of it as sleepily as ever . . ." Then, lest this amiable reference to himself embarrass young Mr. Torrence, he turned to inquire of him, "You are summering here?"

"A nice boy," he thought fifteen minutes later as he went upstairs. He would formally present that judgment to Frances in the morning—just for the pleasure of hearing her amused agreement. How silly Ellen could be! Frances' future would take care of itself. Of course it would.

## 5.

Weeks of winter crept by, too slowly, in a sequence of drear days that choked the mind. The "adjustments" made of summer meant nothing now, then there was no subtlety of light and shadow, and the little winds of March still darted coldly over his terrace . . .

His terrace. That autumn night, and Ellen's challenge, "You would be quite ready? . . ."

He had told Ellen that he would be ready. But uncertainty was in him through those winter evenings as he sat before the fire, increasingly aware of young Mr. Torrence; of Ellen's approving silences; of Fran's wavering. Slowly he stirred against himself until—until he took that leap toward unwanted freedom, took it breathlessly, momentarily; and, uncertain, stood alone on the other side.

And he did it with such delicate pain! First, one evening, when there should have been two hours of reading, of life, before him, he said, "No, not tonight, Frances." ("Frances," formally.)

She did not stir. His heart pounded.

"You would like me to write letters, then?" Her love for him! He was sure the corners of his mouth trembled beyond any description.

"No, no"—much too faintly his voice brushed her aside. She rustled away; she would be thinking only that he was not well, and that he would be going upstairs shortly. But unmoving and resolute, he sat for two hours in wretched and meagre triumph.

That was the first time. There were other opportunities. He took them until slight pain edged her voice.

When finally she divined his meaning, he sat much alone.

"Thank God," thought Mr. Brooke, "I have used my eyes at one time or another." He thought of books, of Switzerland, of many things. He was profoundly unhappy.

Then spring came—recrudescant, steaming from the earth. Gently. gently. He sat again in the garden, but not in the swimming ease of the summer past. The air was warm; clouds somewhere were free; but the rustle of April was tight around his throat. If only he could have called, “Fran, Fran—the blossoms are out on the cherry trees. aren’t they? Surely they are!” But at dark it was Ellen who came to guide him to the house.

“Yes, yes,” he said petulantly, “of course there are two steps at the terrace. Why shouldn’t I know that, Ellen?”

Strangely, one late afternoon, he felt no wonder at Fran’s voice beside his garden chair. How long had she been watching him, sleeping there?

Soft voice, familiar voice, and the bees were droning over the flowers . . . Quickly now, pull himself together . . . But awakening, he had no firmness.

“Lovely, lovely,” murmured Mr. Brooke, half to himself; “and . . . very like it was before, Frances.”

She did not answer. Just by raising his hand, he was certain, he could have touched shoulders that were surely quivering. Young shoulders. The temptation was great. He folded his hands safely in his lap. He was thoroughly awake now.

“Well, father,” the candid voice was saying, “it’s time to talk, isn’t it? Have you been waiting until now, or do I only think so?”

Unfamiliar tone! Mr. Brooke shook his head—too weakly, he knew. Frances went on ruthlessly, “I am going away, Father . . . I think.”

He essayed unimaginative surprise. “Go away, Fran? You—where?” And although he waited, he was not ready for her certainty, her slight defiance.

“ . . . in June. Douglas wants to, and Mother thinks it’s best—if I want to.”

“If I want to.” Spoken slowly, challengingly, the words crept to him, offering themselves for rejection.

But Mr. Brooke was for the moment so paternal that he pronounced, “Fran—you are sure you love him?” And then, “Frances, you have misunderstood. You don’t understand now. Our times together—like this, but different—do you think I have forgotten them?” Trembling, he went on to his trump. “You are very young, Frances. And after all, don’t you see, it is your mother who . . . ?”

Somewhere, deep in the house, a door slammed.

But Frances was deliberate.

"Oh," she said . . . very, very slowly.

A terrace window opened mercifully.

Ellen called, "Frances, Lawrence! Dinner! How cold it is out there."

"Yes," said Mr. Brooke.

7.

They had been gone two hours, and the sounds of Fran's leather baggage as it swung through the house, making little thuds against the furniture, still wounded him. The neighbors who remained to patter of their daughter's "lovely, quiet marriage"—they too had gone. He sat inside the door that opened on the garden.

Suddenly he called up to Ellen, "Where are they now, do you think?"

"On the train, of course," Ellen had already told him twice.

On the train . . . and doubtless happy, were they not? He was quite content.

Sudden, hard rain sprayed through the screen, bearing wisp-like garden odors to him. He sensed the shadows deepening around him, the rain falling away more and more dimly on the garden's farther walks. Ellen, in slippers, was padding down the stairs. The house was very still.

JOHN K. HUTCHENS.

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There's hope to squander, regret to lavish;  
There's rest and strife;  
Some years for garnering wisdom into a mould called life,  
And that you'd trade for eternity!  
A wavering flare of lamplight thru a dirty window pane  
Can never be a fixed star nor the ancient moon in wane.

ERNEST ERKKILA.



*I Know Two People Like Two Mountains*

I know two people like two mountains  
Of one great granite range,  
That through the ceaseless, tireless interchange  
Of storm and sun across them  
Stretch trembling misty fingers and exchange  
Quick-flashing echoes that, reverberating  
Fade and blend and end in stillness  
As transient, and enduring,  
As their own still, deathless sympathy.

I know two people like complementary peaks,  
That knitted each to each stand yet each one alone,  
Aloof and calm and whimsical and strange,  
Cleaving its own far roof of unrelinquished  
And unrelinquishing bright stars;  
Condensing its own mists, and sturdily resisting, and assisting.  
The swift and sure descent and blending of its streams  
To where, in currents full and wild, surrendering  
And yet white-leaping, sweeping mutual vibration  
Through the innermost recesses and farthest wildernesses  
Of their mighty canyon floor,  
With immeasurable, inevitable, stupendous, stunning shock,  
Their fierce uniting currents tear their mutual solid rock,  
And roaring, welling, swelling, their sweeping waters bear  
The grist of patient sharing, and the wearing  
Of relentless-rushing, glorious, blended life.

I know two people like two mountains  
That above that endless roar  
Of their intermingling torrents  
Snatch delicious, drowsy moments, and homely, heathy spells—  
And into each recurring sunset's quiet-glowing skies  
Or stormy incandescence,  
Reflect each other's confidence,  
Securely, strongly wise,  
Serene across their chasm, facing night  
In a new and flushing vision  
Of their old and dear delight.

GRACE D. BALDWIN.

## Round Trip

SAM said, "Well, hon, here we are," and leaned back against the vestibule wall puffing a little, while she fitted the key in the lock. His fat body almost filled the vestibule, pressing her up against the door frame. It was dark in the hallway. Mrs. Garlow must have thought everyone was in, turning off the light like that.

"Goin' to kiss me goodnight, baby?" asked Sam. His arms came around her in the darkness, his mouth fumbling.

"There, that's enough, Sam." A girl couldn't be too careful. Hold him off, that was the idea.

He said, "Aw, baby." But she backed away.

"Got a match?" she asked.

"Yeah."

It scraped along the wall, then, in a flicker of light, his fat face with the downward lines creased in like thumb marks in wet clay. He reached to the gas jet and the hall was suddenly clear. The hatrack with Mr. Peterson's chinchilla, and the mirror stuck around with letters for departed boarders. There was a yellow envelope on the table.

"Somebody got a telegram," she said. She picked it up and held it to the light. "Mrs. May Brolander."

"Say, it's for me!" She turned it over and over in her hands.

"Western Union Telegram, Mrs. May Brolander. Why, say!"

"Why don't you read it?" asked Sam.

She tore open the flap.

"Mrs. May Brolander, 2463 Denby Avenue, Chicago. Mr. Brolander seriously injured. Recovery doubtful. Come at once. Frederick Waldman, M. D."

Well, the nerve, sending for her like that. What did they think she was anyhow to go tramping back once she'd got away. Carl hurt? That was funny. Carl had done the work of three men without getting tired. Worked like an ox, slept like an ox, too. Carl helpless maybe, stretched out under the flowered quilt.

"What's the matter?" asked Sam. He read the telegram, holding it close to his eyes.

Now she was in for it. She supposed she'd have to go, or what would Sam think. But right now, with the Elks' dance Saturday, and everything—

"Well, what are you going to do?" he asked

"Do? Go, of course. He's my husband."

"After the way he treated you and all?"

"That don't matter. I got to stick by him now."

"Gosh, you're great."

She felt a flare of self-satisfaction. "I wonder when the next train is?"

Sam reached for the telephone. "Oriska, North Dakota. Yeah—train leaves at 1:45," he told her. "You got forty minutes. Better step on it. I'll drive you down."

He settled himself on the chair by the hall table while she dashed upstairs to pack her bag. He was there, bulging over the chair's edge, when she came down fifteen minutes later. Not much for looks, but money!

It was raining hard. The drops spattered against her ankles. Grabbing her by the elbow he raced with her across the pavement to his car. Such a night. The rain made a blur of the car windows, but it was warm and dry inside. Comfort. She might have something like this herself before long, if she was smart enough.

Sam sucked a fruit lozenger, rolling it about on his tongue. "Got enough cash, babe?"

She'd hoped he'd say that, so she wouldn't have to ask him. She had only fifteen dollars in her mesh bag.

"Here." He took out his billfold and counted out a hundred dollars. "That see you through?"

"Thanks, thanks a lot, Sam."

"That's all right, hon. Glad to do it for you. If you need more wire me."

The train was ready to pull out. A redcap grabbed her bag and ran with her along the track to the Pullman. Sam puffed up a moment later and stood at the foot of the car steps, wheezing and mopping his forehead.

"Come back soon, baby."

"Sure I will."

"What'll I do without my little stenog?"

"Have to get another, I guess."

"I 'spose so."

"Don't fill my place permanent, Sam."

"Can't be done, girlie; but no more job—"

Far down the track the bell of the engine clanged; steam hissed from beneath the cars. Slowly the train moved along the rails. Sam ran by the side, his fat legs jerking up and down.

"What'd you mean? Quick!"

"You an' me, baby. You an' me, a little—" His voice was smothered in a rush of sound as the train swung past. When she leaned out she could see him still waving his newspaper and grinning.

In her section she took off her hat and smoothed her hair, using the dark window for a mirror. Her face looked shadowy and mysterious in the half-light. Pretty, gee, she was pretty. You'd never guess she was twenty-six. And things were working out fine. Sam had said, "You and me, baby—" She'd hold him to it. A flat on the Lake Drive, elevator service and a cafe in the building. The crowd in to dance, evenings. She rested her head against the window. Poor Carl. So she was going back to him. She couldn't get it. He'd been a nice kid at first. But afterwards, yelling at her when meals weren't ready. Up before daylight, drag—drag. Never finished. Couldn't even take care of her hands, and her hair in strings. "Well, why can't you manage, other women do?" Other women, huh. Slaves, they were. She'd been brought up in town, clerking.

Anyway, there hadn't been any kids. She drew the line there. After the first year she'd planned to get away when she'd saved enough. No chance with a kid coming.

The train was running through Aurora now; long empty streets washed by rain. The porter came and stood by her, rumple-coated and aggrieved. "Ain't you goin' to bed, lady?" That was funny. She'd forgotten about bed; here it was nearly morning. She went down the aisle to the dressing-room and began to take off her clothes. Luke-warm water and no towels. Gee, such service. "Towels, porter."

"Yes'm."

Back in her berth with the top pressing down upon her and the rain beating against the windows, her eyes propped wide open stared at the swaying green curtains. The last time she had been over this road, running away scared to death and excited. Say! She had sat up all night in the day coach. The man ahead of her had sprawled, snoring, with his feet in the aisle. Things had turned out pretty well, considering. First a job clerking in the Elite, and night school, when she was so tired the typewriter keys blurred before her eyes. But it had been worth it. A decent job at last; money enough for that musk-



rat coat on weekly payments—and Sam. They had got on from the first. Of course she had to squelch him once in a while. It had been hard, too; and the other would have been so easy. But it wouldn't have lasted. No, this way was best. Kid him along; and maybe, after a while, marriage. When she got nerve enough to ask Carl to divorce her. Funny how hard that was to do. She was soft. That was it. And after the way he'd treated her. But at night, his hand reaching out for her in the dark. Men were funny, if you let yourself care once.

In the night one station was like another; men with their coat collars turned up against the rain, the brakeman swinging his lantern, and the green-shaded light in the ticket office. "All aboard." She sat up in her berth watching the lights slip by. Then the country again and the scallop of hills, black against the black sky.

Golly, she hated to go back. She'd sworn she never would. But she hadn't thought of this. Maybe it would be worth it; it would mean Sam in the end.

There was the usual crowd of loafers at the station the next evening when the train pulled in, but she turned her coat collar up about her face and slipped away across the tracks before they could recognize her. Bert Starr was the only one at the garage.

"Anybody here who can drive me out to the Brolander place?"

He lounged over and peered at her in the gathering dark. "Why, May, when'd you get back? Say, you look great."

"Can you get me out to the farm in a hurry, Bert?"

"Sure I can. Drive you myself."

The Ford sputtered and wheezed, but it took the bumps and pulled through the mudholes. There was the Svenson place. Six kids, was it, or seven? Time for two or three more since she left. How natural everything looked. Just as if she'd never been away. She hated it. She'd hated it even that first day when Carl drove her out. But she'd been crazy about Carl, rubbing her cheek against his shoulder, closing her eyes to shut out the ugly country. Hate was stronger than love. It lasted.

"Pretty tough on Carl, ain't it?" said Bert.

"Yeah," but she didn't know. "What happened?"

"Say, didn't they tell you?"

"No."

"The black stallion kicked him when he went back to shut the stable door. His back's broke and the doc says something's happened to his insides. Not much chance for him, May."

"Oh." Poor Carl, it made her feel kind of bad. So the black stallion had got him in the end. She remembered the evening Carl brought him home, hitched behind the spring wagon. She had gone to the door with an old red sweater tied around her neck by the sleeves. The snow had blown in her face and whirled against the horse's flanks. How he had reared when Carl swung onto his back. "Carl, for heaven's sake. He'll finish you." But Carl had laughed and dug his heels harder.

The house loomed up through the twilight, shutterless, beaten gray by the Dakota storms. She caught the acrid odor of the manure banked against the walls. Bert followed her up the steps with the bags. The door was unlatched. Pushing it open, she stepped into the dark sitting-room.

A woman rose from a couch in the corner and came towards her. "Well, May, I'm glad you've got here." She extended a fat, damp hand. It was Mrs. Helverson from the next farm. Turning, she lighted the china lamp on the center-table. For a second the room was filled with the oily odor of kerosene, then the light flared up.

"How's Carl, Mrs. Helverson?"

"Pretty comfortable. He don't suffer much. Just lays there. You look good, May. Better take off your things."

"I got to be getting back to town," said Bert. "Do you want I should drive you home, Mrs. Helverson?"

"Well, no," said Mrs. Helverson slowly. "I guess I'll stay on with May and help her settle. Say, your hair's real pretty, May. The color's different. What'd you do to it?"

That was it. Start asking questions the first thing. If she let her stay she'd worm everything out of her in an hour. "You go on, Mrs. Helverson, I can manage."

It was hard getting her started. Mrs. Helverson didn't want to go, you could see that easy enough. But at last she was in the Ford and Bert turned on the gas.

"Don't forget his medicine every two hours, and his broth's in the kettle on the back of the stove."

"No, I won't. Thanks for helping out."

"I'll be over tomorrow sometime to see how you're getting on."

called Mrs. Helverson. "Chris'll stop around tonight to feed the stock." The car swung into the road.

May turned back into the sitting-room. Gee, but the house was quiet; no sound but her own breathing and her foot on a loose board. Everything looked just the same, only worse. The paper peeling from the wall in strips and the geraniums dead in their painted tins on the window sill. She hung her coat behind the door and dropped into the spring rocker. It creaked, and a coal in the heater broke open with a hiss and a spurt of flame.

Back in Chicago the lights were coming on along Michigan Boulevard and the L trains were packed with the home rush. How had she ever stood it here? The night pressed up against the window. Staring. She wished she could shut it out, but there were no curtains. You lived naked in this country. It was funny to think that Carl was lying behind the closed bedroom door. She expected him to burst in any minute tracking his muddy shoes over the linoleum. Sam probably had a new stenographer by now. She hoped she didn't have to stay here long. When she got back to Chicago she'd have to have another permanent. Her hair grew in so fast, it hardly paid.

There was a slight movement in the next room, and a voice, so weak it was scarcely more than a whisper. "Mrs. Helverson." Queer, how the sound of it pulled her skin awry. She rose, and picking up the lamp, moved forward in a circle of light towards the bedroom door.

The room smelt of medicine and of close air. She kept her eyes fixed on the lamp, lowering it carefully to the bureau. Then she turned. The hump of bed clothes looked like a grave with the snow on it. Gee, but it gave her a start. Her gaze moved upward along the white ridge. Carl's eyes were closed. Sickness had hollowed his face, narrowed it, pulling the skin tight over the cheekbones. A scrub of a beard lay like a shadow along his chin.

"How are you, Carl?" she asked, bending over him.

"Why, May, say is it you, honest?" A hand came out from under the covers and slid weakly down her arm.

"Sure, it's me." Poor kid, he looked all in. She couldn't believe it. He'd always been able to work circles around other men. "How are you, hon?"

"I'm all right, now that you're here, May-sie." He closed his eyes and seemed to drop off to sleep, but his hand still clutched her arm.

She awoke in the gray morning to the screeching cry of guinea fowls scratching for breakfast in the dry grass. At first she thought it was the creak of wet telephone wires in the wind, then she remembered where she was and put out her hand along the wall. In Chicago the milkman was coming around and the boy with the morning paper. Steam was knocking and banging at the radiators. She crawled out of bed and huddled over the hard-coal heater shaking it furiously into life.

She ate her breakfast on an end of the kitchen table, using the last clean plate and a cracked cup. The sink was piled high with dishes ringed with grease, a tin basin half filled with dirty water stood on the bench under the window. It was easy to see that one of the shiftless Helversons had been taking charge.

After breakfast she went out to the cistern for water. The pump creaked as bad as ever and the water was the same yellow-brown. God, how did people stand this country. A wind raced across the prairie tearing the last shrivelled leaf from the lilac bush by the door. She pushed her hair back out of her eyes and staggered into the kitchen with the heavy pail.

Later, Carl called to her and she went to him. It was time for his medicine. She slipped her arm beneath his head, guiding the spoon to his mouth. It was like taking care of a little kid. As she put him back on the pillow her hand brushed across his brown hair.

Carl seemed awful glad to have her back. He didn't say much, but his eyes followed her about the room and his whole face lighted up when she came in. She guessed it must have been pretty lonesome for him, even when he was well. Men didn't know how to make themselves comfortable like women did. Sam was different. He bought care like he bought clothes. But on a farm—the house was a sight, like as if it had never been touched since she left, and the Lord knows she was no housekeeper.

Her hands were awful. The nails broken and the finger tips rough and cracked. When she got back to Chicago she'd have a hot bath and a manicure first thing. Taking care of a fire was no woman's job. When she was a kid she'd played a piece called the "Jolly Farmer." Jolly farmer, hell! How about his wife? She wondered what Sam would say if he could see her now. She must write to him. If only the new stenographer wasn't pretty.



The days went by quickly. One day was very like another. She lost track of them at last and forgot to mark them off on the calendar. She had cleaned the house and cut fresh paper covers for the pantry shelves. After a while she grew accustomed to the smell of the manure banked against the walls and to the quietness at night. She didn't think so much about Chicago. Once she caught herself trying to remember what Sam looked like. It seemed as though she had been here always taking care of Carl.

The doctor called every day. He told her about Carl, but the words were strange and meaningless.

"Will he get well, Dr. Waldman?"

"I can't tell," he said. "There's a chance. He's a husky fellow. But don't count on it too much. He may just sleep away."

Sleep away. It scared her to think of it. She used to creep into his room to stare down at him when he was asleep, wondering.

Winter was coming. Each morning the clouds rolled up over the horizon heavy with snow. They seemed to press down on the prairie flattening out the slightest contour. She watched them from the kitchen window, shivering at the bleakness.

On the tenth day a letter came from Sam. She found it in the mail-box along with a farm journal and a mail-order catalogue and took it into the sitting-room to read—he missed her; he wished she'd come back. The new stenog was A Number 1, but she couldn't measure up to his girl—"his girl"? Nope, she guessed not. Not any more. What funny ideas she'd had about Sam. Marrying him and all. She felt different now. Sam and his money didn't matter much. She supposed she better write and tell him she wasn't coming back. She could see his face when he read the letter. He'd wonder what in the dickens had got into her.

She brought ink and paper and settled down at the center table. "Dear Sam: Well, Sam, I guess I won't be back—" But Carl called her before she had written further and she went to him.

"Busy, May-sie?"

"Oh, not very. What'd you want, hon?"

"Nothin'." His eyes were a little boy's eyes.

She dropped down on the floor by the bedside and took his hand.

"Well, old boy, feelin' better now, ain't you?"

"Sure, I'll be up soon."

Something caught at her throat. "Sure," she said.

She sat there by his side until he fell asleep. She would answer Sam's letter when she had more time.

In the night she was awakened by the wind hurling itself against the walls, beating at the windows. It seemed to clutch the house in an enormous icy fist as if it would splinter the flimsy timbers, crushing them together. Even the bed swayed from the impact and the fire flared and hissed and leaped upward. Cold! The North Pole had nothing on this. She wondered if Carl needed an extra blanket. It took nerve to get out of bed, but she did it, at last, in a bound, wrapping herself in her bathrobe. Then she groped for the lamp and went into the bedroom.

Carl lay with open eyes staring at the ceiling. When he saw her he relaxed, crumpled.

"Gee, May-sie, I'm scared. I'm scared, May-sie." His voice was so faint that she had to lean over with her ear against his lips to understand him.

"What's the matter, hon, the wind?"

"Nope. It ain't that. It's—I'm scared I'm going to die, May-sie." She shivered and drew his head closer against her breast.

"That's the bunk, old boy."

"Ain't it true? Ain't the doc said so?"

"I should say not."

"Honest?"

"Honest true."

He sighed. "I 'spose you'll be goin' back to Chicago soon as I'm well."

"Nope, I'm staying here with you." She leaned over, resting her cheek against his forehead.

"Now go to sleep, hon. May'll take care of you."

"You won't go away?"

"No. Never."

The wind tore at the window fastenings with icy fingers, rattled the panes of glass furiously against the frames. She drew her bathrobe closer about her, moving carefully to relieve her stiffened knees. The arm that supported Carl's head was numb, but she dared not withdraw it for fear of waking him. Poor kid, he was sleeping fine now. Like a baby. Her own head nodded, drooping until her cheek rested against his hair.

She awoke with a start, groaning a little from the pain of her cramped body. Carl was sleeping soundly, perhaps she could go back to bed and warm up. As she slipped her arm from beneath his head her hand touched his cheek. How cold it was. Funny with all those blankets. She shivered suddenly and reached for the lamp. The light threw wavering shadows across his face.

"Carl," she said, "Carl, Carl." She stooped, holding the lamp close above his head. Then she drew back and went slowly into the sitting-room. She thought, "I better call Dr. Waldman. I hope he'll hurry." She could still feel against her arm the pressure of Carl's head.

\* \* \* \*

People could pull all the wise cracks they wanted but a Ford sure did buck the drifts. When she looked through the dirty isinglass of the side curtains she could see the snow whirling madly before the wind. Bert crouched above the steering-wheel trying to peer through the frosted windshield. Every few moments he took his hands from the wheel and slapped them together.

Mrs. Helverson huddled back in her corner of the car with her fur collar turned up about her ears. Her breath had frozen white along her upper lip. May kept pulling the rug up around her shoulders, but at each bump it slipped down again. If she'd only had time to send to Chicago for some mourning. She felt as if she was doing something kind of indecent going to her husband's funeral in a muskrat coat and a red hat. Of course it didn't matter to Carl now— She began to cry, dabbing at her eyes with a crumpled handkerchief.

Mrs. Halverson said, "There, May, it don't do no good to cry."

It was easy to talk, but Mrs. Halverson didn't know what it was like to be all alone. There wasn't anything worth living for with Carl gone.

The car pulled up the slope into the bare, windswept cemetery. The minister was there, and a bunch of people from the town, clustered together against the cold. May gave her nose a frisk with her powder-puff and straightened her hat. She didn't want to look a fright the first time they'd seen her in four years.

The wind almost took her off her feet as she stepped from the car, but Bert steadied her, trying to stand between her and the stinging snow.

"I'm afraid we'll have to make the service short, Mrs. Brolander," said the minister. "The grave keeps filling up."

It was awful. The new grave was like an ugly gash in the hillside, the black earth covered with a drift of white.

The minister opened his prayer book at the Service for the Burial of the Dead, but the wind snatched at the leaves fluttering them wildly. He found the place again and bent his head, trying to read, but gave it up at last and closed the book, holding it clasped between his black woolen mittens. His mouth opened. May watched his ragged mustache, beaded white with frost, move up and down, but there was no sound. The wind caught the words and blew them back down his throat. The men were bringing forward the coffin now, lowering it into the grave. The lid and the frozen flowers were drifted with snow. How long it was. Carl had been such a big fellow, over six feet. She pulled her bright hat lower against the wind, holding her collar close about her ears to smother the hollow sound of frozen earth falling on wood.

"Sure you won't come over, May?" said Mrs. Helverson. "I kind'a hate to leave you alone like this. We got plenty of room for you."

"Oh, no, thank you, Mrs. Helverson. I got some things to straighten out and I'm not scared."

Mrs. Helverson was reluctant to leave. "Well, if you get lonesome call and Chris'll drive over for you."

"Sure I will." But she wouldn't, of course, and sleep with one of the Helverson kid's knees jamming into her back. Nothing doing! What she wanted was to be alone. Alone. She'd always be that way now with Carl gone. Other people couldn't fill the emptiness.

She watched the Ford pull off, then opened the door and went into the house. The chairs stood in stiff disorder just as they had been left after the service; a white flower had fallen on the rug and was stained brown by someone's heel. How lonesome it was.

Snow was still blowing against the windows, but the wind must have dropped a little, the house didn't shake so, and there was a band of clear sky along the horizon.

She walked slowly across the room and pushed open the bedroom door. The bed was smooth, the pillows standing erect against the gilded bars of the headboard. Not even a hollow to show where his head had been. She crossed over and rested her hand on the counterpane. He had been as helpless as a kid looking up at her with his big eyes.



And now the bed was empty. Never again would she slip her arm beneath his head while she guided the spoon to his mouth. Empty. Suddenly she flung herself face downward, burying her head in the smooth pillow, sobbing aloud—

—That damn horse—that damn horse. Carl was gone now, farther than she could ever reach. And it was her fault. Running away and leaving him—like a kid—Carl, Carl!—

It was dark when she sat up, pushing her hair back from her wet cheeks. She had cried herself into a headache, and yet she felt better somehow.

The wind had stopped. How quiet it was after all that racket. She went into the sitting-room and lighted the lamp. A wavering glow, then the room took form and color. Golly, the lonesomeness and the ugly shadows in the corner. Nothing to do. She guessed she might as well finish that letter to Sam. She hadn't treated him decent and he was a good enough fellow in his way. But after Carl—

Sitting down in the circle of lamp light she pulled the unfinished letter from beneath the farm journal. The words stared up at her—"I guess I won't be back—" She hesitated, twisting the pen between her fingers, her eyes fixed on the open bedroom door, "—I guess I won't be back—" Her pen traced over the letters.

Suddenly she pushed back her chair and walked over to the window, pressing her face against the glass to peer into the dark. The night was a black curtain shutting out the world. Lonesome. Golly, it was lonesome. She stood there a long while with her forehead resting against the glass. As her eyes grew accustomed to the darkness it seemed to lift, to dissolve. Gradually the world crept in; the barn roof, a line slanting against the sky; the thrusting branch of a cottonwood; the snow stretching, a glimmer of gray to the horizon.

Shivering, she turned back into the room and crossed to the telephone. She stood before it crumpling the letter between her hands. The crackling of the paper was the only sound in the quiet room. Then slowly she reached for the handle and turned it. The bell jangled. Two longs and a short. Two longs and a short.

"Hello, Bert, that you? This is May. Say, drive out for me in about an hour, will you? I want to make the flier. What? Yeah. I'm going back to Chicago. I say I'm going back to Chicago."

ALICE PASSANO HANCOCK.

*Fog*

The world is fading from me into fog  
And, oh, I'm glad.  
All day I've wanted, tried, to be alone  
But couldn't.  
I wonder how it feels to be all lost  
All unrelated to things, people, time—  
All found, perhaps?  
The air has settled down like thick, fine dust.  
It seems as though  
The wind forgot to come through here today  
When sweeping.  
But I don't care; I hope it doesn't come.  
I want to be shut out, alone with me.  
The world's absorbed; and yet—I feel it here.  
—The houses, streets,  
And even time won't go; it's crowding me  
To hurry.  
I'm not alone, nor am I here with me;  
I must have missed me in the fog; I might  
As well go home.

MARY FARNSWORTH.

## Document No. 2—*Prairie Ranch*

### I.

CLAIR sat up in bed. They were going to town that day. Everyone was up early getting ready.

Her Dad harnessed the horses before breakfast; her Mother laid out the clothes for the family. The stock was watered, the chickens fed, and the actual getting-ready began.

Clair's neck and ears underwent a detailed washing before her hair could be combed and the new pink ribbon tied. Then her Mother finished dressing her as she watched her Dad nail the egg case and collect certain letters and papers needed in town.

After the loading they started. Her parents sat on the spring seat, and Clair on a blanket spread over hay in the wagon-box, where she bounced around with the egg case. The horses trotted along the level prairie road for short distances, but always settled back into a plodding walk, with the sun beating down and the heat waves shimmering against the low horizon.

They went through a coulee and Clair leaned out to watch the brake rub against the back wheel. It was fun to see the little pieces of dirt and wood fly off. She wanted to rub her hand on the wheel as it turned, but her Dad might look around and see her.

Once they drove through a prairie-dog town, and she tried to imitate the shrill little barks of the dogs, until her Mother told her to stop. Then she watched the fluffy clouds follow one another across the sky. After a while, her Mother called to her to look ahead at the smoke stack jutting out of the rolling prairie several miles away.

It was mid-day and she was hungry when they finally drove into a vacant lot where her Dad unhitched and fed the horses. In her white ruffled dress and dangling pigtails she followed her Mother along the streets trying to see everything. They were to meet her Dad at the wagon after he had placed a machinery order and seen about a shipment of seed he was expecting.

They jogged along in the cool of the evening. Clair tried to stay awake, but after it got dark she curled up and went to sleep with her sack of candy tightly gripped in one hand. Her Mother woke her as they came in sight of home, and she sat up and watched the flickering light come nearer and nearer.

Then they were home again, standing in the wavering circle of light from the coal-oil lamp, while the men carried in the boxes and unhitched the team.

## II.

During the winter months Clair chummed with her Dad. She followed him about the ranch while he cared for the stock, watching him cut holes in the ice on the spring, and helping to throw huge bunches of hay from the loft. One day there was a new calf in the corral near the barn.

Clair sat on the corral fence watching the calf until her Dad came out after milking.

"Daddy," she said, walking soberly beside him as he carried the milk pails to the house.

"What?"

"Daddy, can I have the new calf?"

"Oh, I suppose so, sure."

Clair watched her calf grow from what looked like a few bones covered with a scrap of brindle hide, to a sleek-sided steer. A fall came when he was the pick of the range stock.

As the men cut the steers out of the bunch in the corral, and headed them down the road toward the spur, Clair stood beside her Dad in the yard watching each "critter" as he passed.

"Brindle's the biggest," she said.

"Yeh."

"How much money'll I get for him, Dad?"

"Money, what do you mean, child?"

"He's my steer, isn't he? You gave him to me."

"When?"

Tears came into Clair's eyes as she turned and ran into the house.

## III.

The sun was well up over the distant mountains, when Clair came out to the corral. She would be glad when the wire cut on Yankee's leg healed. She was tired of riding that little flea-bitten grey, Tommy. He was the meanest cayuse she had ever seen.

She saddled up and rode off toward the big coulee. The horse jogged along the trail, over slight rises and across small patches of flat ground. Clair slouched in the saddle, one hand resting on the pommel, the other hanging at her side.



As the horse started to climb out of the coulee, he slackened pace, and she settled back farther in the saddle, swaying slightly with each step.

Having reached the bench again, she pulled rein alongside the recently constructed railroad tracks. She waited, watching the west. A little cloud of smoke drifted along the creek bluffs, and she could hear the hollow whistle of the train going into a tunnel. Then she watched it come around the bend and its noise came down the rails to her. Finally it loomed before her and was by, a flash of windows in the smoke. Tommy reared as it passed. Clair watched it go, watched its smoke fade in the distant brakes, and gently touching the horse's neck with the reins rode back into the coulee. No one had waved today.

#### IV.

The smell of coffee and bacon and eggs drifting upstairs from the kitchen was the signal for Clair to get up. Outside the already harnessed horses were crunching oats from wagon boxes. Chickens scurried around under their feet picking up kernels that chanced to drop.

When Clair came down to help her Mother, the hungry men were already drawn up to the long table in the dining-room. They were a serious-faced, hard-working crew that had followed the machine all season and were now calloused and grimy.

A few minutes later Arnie Gerron drove a clattering bundle rack into the yard. His father had sent him over to pay back the number of days' threshing they owed.

By six-thirty the shock-covered fields were dotted with slow-moving teams. Two filled bundle racks drew up alongside the feeder and their drivers began to pitch sheaves into the groaning machine. A thin stream of yellow chaff flew out of the blower, and the noise of the machine, clattering wagons, and men's voices were all drowned in one sullen roar, which did not stop until noon.

Sweaty, dust-covered men spluttered around on the back porch as they washed up for dinner. At Clair's call they elumped in to the table and pounced on the food. Clair and her Mother hurried back and forth between kitchen and dining-room, refilling dishes. The men talked jerkily between mouthfuls. Dishes were shoved across the table or passed hurriedly down one side. As each man finished, he drew back unceremoniously from the table and left.

At one the noise of the machine started up again. Teams returned to the field and patiently pulled in heavy bundle wagons. Men plodded from shock to shock under the flaming sun, throwing bundles on high-stacked loads.

In the middle of the afternoon Clair made some lemonade and took it out to the men. Then she rode around with Arnie on the bundle rack.

After supper the sun was still high, and the men gathered in the long shade of the buildings to smoke and talk. Gradually the group dwindled as the tired men turned in to sleep.

## V.

Clair stood alone on the path to the house. She looked up at the night sky and watched the northern lights. Her eyes followed the band of light that arched across the heavens, and as she watched, it wavered, and broke, pulsating away toward the west, where it faded. Slowly it came out again, changed in form, flickering wisps of color floating before the dimly outlined disc of the moon.

She stood, quietly waiting. A cowbell sounded from the lot beyond the barn. Clair listened a moment, then walked on into the house.

ZELMA M. HAY.

## SLUICE BOX

### *No Justice*

Every evening when I have ridden home upon the six o'clock street car they, too, have been passengers upon it: a dumpy girl wearing a frowsy black coat; and with her, always, a girl already unhappily tall, the corners of her mouth perpetually turned down, very like those of a sharply distressed whitefish.

For numerous journeys, though with occasional and natural lapses, I had paid no attention to their talk.

But last night the tall one complained fragmentarily, and her voice seemed to slide down out of the corners of her mouth upon her companion ". . . now, honest, ain't she so beautiful that she hurts? . . ."

Tonight I am going to listen from the very beginning. Perhaps she will again say something startling like that, but probably not. If, however, she does, I shall hope that the dumpy one will answer intelligently by a proposal of a cult of ugliness, designed to do away forever with such a wretched compromise as a "nice enough" hat, but below it a mouth whose corners are very like those of a sharply distressed whitefish.

"Think of it!" I hear her saying to her companion. "How gloriously independent, how proud, to be of a hopeless, an unmitigated ugliness!"

But she won't say that. I myself shall have to say it. I will lean across the aisle toward the tall one to say to her, "In the name of heaven, will you not wear a red feather headdress all day tomorrow and be really honest . . . just once?"

### *Bugling of the Elk*

The valley lay before us saturated with moisture. The hills on either side were shrouded in a thick wet October fog. We were cold and tired from a long day's ride and the thought of riding farther through the dampness depressed us. Shivering, we started slowly across the valley toward camp.

Suddenly from the timber on the hill to one side, hidden by the fog, a bull elk split the silence with a long whistling call. Wild and thrilling and piercing it echoed from hill to hill. Almost instantly the call was answered by another bull farther off in the timber, the distance increasing the beauty of the call. The world around us seemed suddenly to have come to life, the bugling ringing out in all directions.

The call combined the silvery notes of a distant bugle with the emotion of a throbbing violin, uttered with a savage, thrilling, passionate wildness.

The chorus continued as we rode across the valley. Once the trail took us through a little opening in the timber barely a hundred yards in width. As we entered an elk, standing in full view near the other side, sent forth a wild ringing challenge. He stood still as a statue, his feet well apart and his head thrown back until his sweeping antlers brushed his flanks, his mouth wide open as he bugled. We were almost upon him before he wheeled and trotted off into the timber, making three short, sharp, whistling blasts.

We rode on to camp in silence. The day seemed to have grown brighter.

## *Pigs*

Dad had bought some pigs of a neighbor, and because I was always at his heels anyway, he took me along when he went after them. We drove up to the low three-cornered pen, the fence partly of logs and partly of wire netting. In one corner a long low building with an aisle down the middle and partitioned off into stalls on either side, provided shelter.

There were seventeen brood-sows and as many litters of pigs—all red and all of a size. The farmer said, all told, there were about two hundred and seventy. At the sound of our voices they swarmed around the pen and through the holes in the fence like huge ants. After a few minutes of silence, beady eyes and curious blunt noses peered cautiously around corners. I sneezed and the whole mass flinched, a wave running through like an electric shock; two hundred and seventy staccato grunts rose simultaneously. It was dizzying to see red pigs scurrying through holes in the fence; red pigs with four feet in the trough; red pigs playing and frisking around big red sows.

They were so wild and the sows of so ferocious a nature that we had to corral the whole bunch in order to catch our few. Doing so seemed to be a game of seeing who could move the quicker—the pigs or we. Just as we got them to the door of the long low pig-house a hen cackled. The whole drove spurted back, and red pigs flowed away from the door and spread over the pen as big kernels of wheat roll out of a sack and down the chute. The whole two hundred and seventy melted out of sight; we waited—presently pointed ears and glistening eyes peeked out from corners, sticks or whatever covering they had sought. Some had crouched on their bellies behind clods of dirt.

On our fifth attempt we lured all the little pigs into a pen by themselves at the far end of the house and each sow in her stall. Dad and the farmers were in their midst grabbing a red streak whenever they succeeded in taking it by surprise. The old sows were continually mumbling and sniffing and climbing up the stalls with their fore-feet. This mumbling grew to hoarse roars every time a pig suspended in mid-air by a hind foot let out an agonized squeal. Bristly heads poked up over the stalls and opened triangular jaws of jagged teeth, showing red rasping throats. I slid through into the pen with the little ones, and after groping about for a time clutched a pig tightly with one hand and holding his mouth shut with the other, made a dash down that alleyway of frothing jaws. One sow, more daring than the others, snapped



several poles as she lurched over the walls. Her charge was stopped only with severe blows on the nose from a sledge hammer—even then Dad didn't stop her soon enough to save his new leather coat.

I don't know how I got down that row of snapping jaws and gaping frothy red throats, but once outside I decided it was no place for a little chap of my caliber. For the rest of the time I sat on the box-lid while Dad and the farmer slid pigs down between the slats.

## *The Pent Flood*

"A cat is a cat when it comes singly but they are a damned nuisance when they come in droves," George Wicker grumbled to me over the type cases as the "Old Man's" eighteen felines came expectantly into the shop for their eleven o'clock rations.

The editor's hobby for cats was the one vulnerable spot in a Scotch personality of shrewdness and calloused efficiency. Tom, the big maltese sire of most of the seventeen cats, could scuttle across a type case, piling a galley of hand-set type, without a ripple of emotion coming to the surface from the depths of the "Old Man's" saturnine nature. However, should George or I frustrate the labor spent on a single stick of type, the rickety print shop would echo from the tempest.

Today the editor had gone to the county seat to solicit advertising. Thirty had come and gone and, having no orders to do so, neither George nor I had laid aside his work as usual to go to the butcher shop. Now George sat hunched on his stool with a half-distributed stick of type forgotten in his hand and glared balefully at the assembled cats.

"I'll go to no butcher shop to lug back liver today, you damned pests." The napes of the nearest cats ruffled at this unfriendly welcome. George repeated, "Pests, pests, PESTS!" Old Tom and one of his progeny backed off in alarm, spitting. George laid aside his stick of type and followed, exultantly hissing, "Pests, pests, psts, pst, P-S-S-S-T-S." As he advanced he kicked shut the door. Around the shop they went, George hissing the magic word. Cats leaped, darted and hurdled over the presses and between the separated fonts. Prompted by the handle of a broom, Old Tom, a black and maltese travesty, leaped from the ink tray of the big Cottrell press. He skidded a black path across a stack of stock paper and espying an open window facing Main street, dove through the aperture. Seventeen maltese shooting-stars, which had been watching their leader in the hope that he would guide them to safety, directed their orbits towards the open window.

George hastened the last cat through and then laid aside his broomstick to remove two sheets of ruined paper stock and a half-dozen sale notices stamped with Old Tom's footprints. These he carried to the stove and burned.

"Humph! We can work now." He climbed back onto his stool and picked up the stick of type.

## The Frontier BOOK SHELF

**Elmer Gantry**, by Sinclair Lewis.  
(Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York.)

The purpose and the irony of this latest American record are inartistically "obvious," but they are also intensely gratifying. The book could, however, be even more gratifying, and admirers of Sinclair Lewis, brilliant reporter and research man, must agree that had he "done" a less extreme central figure, his book might reach farther. And certainly the shams which he attacks deserve exposure without quarter.

There are, of course, Men of God who approximate this Gantry who "gets" religion at the same time that he is getting drunk; who discover suddenly the potential value of a maladjustment between emotion and brains; and who proceed with a maddening hypocrisy through a series of small town tabernacles to a commanding position in the politics of their church.

But if Lewis did not restrain himself in his Rabelaisian treatment of Gantry, his usual close attention to minor characters is a ballast. Splendidly done is Sharon, the lady evangelist, a dreamer with one eye on the box office. Even better, and deserving of more prominence in the novel, is Frank Shallard, one-time associate of Gantry in a Baptist college, who picks his way toward truth—and finds a beating at the hands of Fundamentalist followers of Christ.

Carelessly regarded seductions. Dried up bishops. Pulpit-pounding revival meetings. Starved country churches with garish yellow interiors. Munificent big city churches angling for contributions and press publicity. Meretricious anti-vice campaigns—you get them all.

J. K. H.

**The Romantic '90's**, Richard Le Gallienne. (Doubleday, Page and Co., 1926.) "Ah! did you once see Shelley plain?" This is the dominating strain in Mr. Le Gallienne's pleasantly rem-

## TEACHERS

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Opportunities  
Open for 1927.**

We need college graduates,  
with or without experience.

**Free Enrollment**

Write or call at office for  
Personal Interview.

**E. L. Huff Teachers  
Agency**

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MISSOULA, MONTANA

**The Lasting Gift for  
the Graduate**

One of Kittendorff's

**Beautiful Diamonds**

— ❖ —

You can do better at

**KITTENDORFF'S**

(There's a reason)

Near the Wilma

Our Advertisers Make Possible This Publication—Buy From Them.



**A Pinch of Good Will  
In Every Package**

"Just 'happy dust', Dad," our flapper daughter said this morning as she scrambled under the table for a tiny compact of rouge.

"Happy Dust!" Somehow the words symbolize so well that extra bit of satisfaction we try to give every customer who enters our store.

The J. C. Penney Company like to feel that everyone of the thousands of parcels that pass across our counters in a day contain just a pinch of "happy dust," that intangible spirit of helpfulness and service that is necessary to a sale; the spirit of the Golden Rule that we elders, in our sober fashion, term Store Good Will.

*J. C. Penney Co.*

**All University Students  
Know where to go for  
the**

**Delicious Mexican Chili**

---

**We make our own Chili  
and Tamales.**

---

**Merchants Lunch**

---

**Pony Cafe and Chili  
Parlor**

**To be sure of the best in**

**HAIR TRIMMING**

**and**

**Beauty Culture**

**Trust only skilled employes**



**Florence Hotel  
Barber Shop and  
Beauty Parlor**

**PHONE 331**

**KODAK FINISHING  
ENLARGEMENTS  
FILMS**

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Let us develop your next roll  
of film.

Regular prices on developing and  
printing, special prices on en-  
largements and roll film.

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5x7 enlargement free with every  
\$1.00 order of Kodak finishing.

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**M. A. PIPER**

**Pictures and Picture Framing  
322 N. Higgins Missoula**

**Our Advertisers Are Our Friends—Buy From Them.**

iniscnt book of the days of *The Yellow Book*, Oscar Wilde, The Rhymers Club, Aubrey Beardsley, and John Lane, encourager of young men with new and strange visions. The writer was one of those young men, taking part in an exotic movement in British literature as poet, lyric dramatist, and critic. He saw and talked with and wrote letters to and received letters from all the Shelleys of that earnest, fastidious time; he tells his stories of them all with fond lingering, and reproduces in facsimile a page of their letters. The critical aspect of the book is negligible; the scholarly value slight; the colorful and intimate anecdotes and reminiscences human and enlightening. A reader will not soon forget, for instance, his meeting in Norway with the giant man of drama, Bjornson, in his Viking home; or with Ibsen in the Christiania restaurant; or his account of "Fiona McLeod." There is nothing penetrating in the comment, but much that is garrulously charming.

H. G. M.

**Show Boat.** Edna Ferber. (Double-day, Page and Co., 1926.) Miss Edna Ferber's *So Big* was a meticulously written book; so also is *Show Boat*, even if it yields a bit at times to verbiage where its predecessor was severely restrained. But then, the canvas here is accordingly larger: it is the Mississippi river from Minnesota to New Orleans, viewed from a floating theatre; it is the Chicago of the glamorously sinful 'Eighties; it is, flashingly, the stage of contemporary New York; and finally, of course, it is again the river.

*Shore Boat* is the saga of the trooper life of Cap'n Andy Hawkes, gay and Gallic owner; his metallic and Puritan wife; their daughter, Magnolia; and her husband, Gaylord Ravenal, gentleman and gambler. Stars should be placed after every portrait and every shift of scene in the book, but particularly after that part wherein Magnolia and Ravenal rise and fall with the fortunes of cards in Old South Clark street, Chicago.

Always aware of color and of dramatic values, Miss Ferber has recorded here a fine change in tempo over changing scenes, from the "day of the flowing moustache, the broadbrimmed hat . . . and the diamond stud" to the time when Magnolia and her mod-

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Afternoon Parties, Banquets,  
After -Theatre Refreshments

## WILMA THEATRE

PRESENTING AT ALL TIMES  
THE WORLD'S BEST  
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PHOTOPLAYS  
VAUDEVILLE  
and  
ROAD SHOWS

Wilma Orchestra of Six  
Lawrenson, Directing  
Elaine Taylor  
Organist who really plays  
pictures

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Phone 581  
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**Star Electric Co.**  
**ELECTRIC SUPPLIES**  
Wiring and Contracting

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**EASY WASHERS**

**GIFT SHOP**

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**WE HUSTLE**

Don't forget us when you  
are buying graduation gifts.

Eastman Kodaks and Films.

Developing free with  
printing.

Columbia, Viva-Tonal and  
latest records.

**Prescription**  
**Druggist**

---

**Smith's Drug**  
**Store**

Corner  
North Higgins Avenue and  
East Cedar Street

**DON'T FORGET**

**JIM'S CAFE**

Just North of Wilma Theatre

While visiting here during  
track meet.

---

We carry the best line of pastry,  
the best short orders, and the  
best chili in town.

---

Quick Service  
Give Us a Trial

Meet Me at

**KELLEY'S**  
Cigar Store



Best Malted Milk in City

**Brunswick Records**  
**Sheet Music**

---

**Schaefer Music Co.**  
Phone 609 130 Higgins

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ern actress-daughter, Kim, force comparison upon you. It is significant here, as elsewhere in Miss Ferber's work, that the older generation that has felt and seen and, more particularly, suffered, must win your honest decision.

"A born showman, Andy Hawkes."

A very smart writer, Miss Edna Ferber!

J. K. H.

### Notes About Contributors

Mary Farnsworth, '28 (Anaconda); Ernest Erkkila, '27 (Red Lodge); Alice Hancock, '28 (Missoula); Dorothy Johnson Peterkin, '28 (Whitefish) are students in the English Department.

Zelma Hay, '28 (Great Falls) is a student in Journalism.

John Hutchens (Missoula) is a graduate student. Elsie McDowall, '26, is a graduate assistant in the Department of English at the State University. Grace Baldwin, M.A., '26, is a teacher in Flathead County high school, Kalispell.

Contributors to *The Sluice Box* are: Donald Shaw, Thelma Whipple, John Hutchens, Lyle Williams.

## HARKNESS DRUG STORE

PHONE 260

Cor. Pine and Higgins

Come in and see our  
New Orthophonic  
Records and  
Victrolas

**DICKINSON PIANO CO.**

218 Higgins Ave.

**WE HURRY  
CAREFULLY**

PHONE

**38**

PHONE

Office:

Florence Hotel Lobby

**DAY AND NIGHT SERVICE**

WE  
MOVE  
ANYTHING

F. C. BALL

Who Makes Mason Fruit Jars, Preserves his food at home with

**KELVINATOR**

Wouldn't that JAR you?  
Well, you CAN, too! Just ask

**MOSBY'S, INC.**

132 North Higgins

Agents for Oldest Domestic  
Refrigeration

**Butte Cleaners**

**KLEANERS THAT KLEAN**

A Peterson, Prop.

506-8 South Higgins Avenue

Phone 500

Auto Delivery

Make Business Reciprocal—Patronize Those Who Patronize Us.



## *You Can Depend Upon Us*

**W**E PRIDE ourselves upon our service. We get our work out at the time we say we will. The largest printing plant in the Northwest is at your command.

**PHONE 456**

**The Missoulia Publishing Co.**

Missoula, Montana

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We have Royal, Underwood,  
Remington and Corona.

Now you can buy Club  
Parchment with U. of  
M. seal. Two quire box  
for \$1.50

Trade in your old Waterman  
pen — half cost allowed at

**Office Supply Company**  
Florence Hotel Building

### PETERSON DRUG CO.

"A Good Place to Trade"

Exclusive Agents for

Owl Drug Co.'s Medicinal and  
Toilet Products of utmost value.

Try

**SILQUE**

The World's Best Lotion for  
Face and Hands.

**50 CENTS**

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## **Sentinel Creamery Inc.**

"You've tried the rest,  
Now try the best."

## **Sentinel Brand Ice Cream and Butter**



112 W. Front      Phone 25

## **Independent Oil Company**

**WHOLESALE AND RETAIL**

Lubricating Oils and Greases  
Kerosene, Gasoline and  
Specialties

**SERVICE STATIONS:**

Corner Pine and Higgins  
Corner Sixth and Higgins

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out the individual charm becom-  
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We are fully equipped to give  
the very best attention to her  
skin, hair and nails.

**Marcelling and Water  
Waving Our Specialty**

**Missoula Hairdressing Parlor**  
Missoula Hotel Block

University People  
will continue as  
our friends and  
patrons.



Send it to the

**Missoula Laundry  
Company**



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With a stock that is second to none, a corps of five registered pharmacists, a real desire to serve and a policy of whole-hearted support for our University, we solicit your patronage.



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Fresh and Salt Meats  
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The Place of Good Eats



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LAUNDRY  
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Meals in the City

Our Fountain

*Excels All Others*

Open from 7 a. m. to 12 p. m.

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Where your Clothing is Pro-  
tected by the DeLaval Con-  
tinuous Clarification System



J. R. NAGUES, Prop.

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Flowers*

Our corsages are  
superb.

Send her one.



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Growers of Plants and Flowers

Missoula's  
Best Habit Is

**Eddy's  
Bread**

It's a Good Habit to  
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*Extracts from  
Eight Years  
With Wilson's  
Cabinet*

◆  
**WOODROW WILSON**

"Wilson habitually took the long view. He preferred to go down to defeat fighting for a cause he knew some day would triumph than to gain a victory on an issue which he was confident would in time be shown false. He played for the verdict of history."

◆  
**BRYAN**

"I heard Bryan for more than two hours on the silver question. I discovered that one could drive a prairie schooner through any part of his argument and never scrape a fact or sound statement."

◆  
**WOODROW WILSON  
ON SUCCESS**

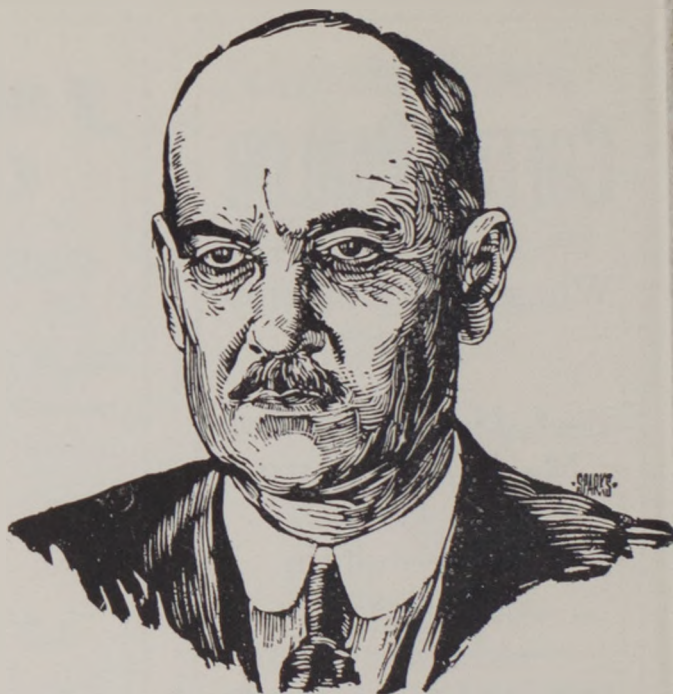
"The way to success in this country is to show that you are not afraid of anybody except God and his final judgments. If I did not believe that I could not believe in democracy."

◆  
**SENATOR FALL**

"Senator Fall paused a moment and said: 'Mr. President, I want you to know I am praying for you' . . . The President remarked, 'If I could have got out of bed I would have hit the man. Why did he want to put me in bad with the Almighty?'"

◆  
**WILSON'S FAREWELL  
TO HIS CABINET**

"His lips were trembling. He began to speak, but hesitated a minute as tears rolled down his cheeks. Then he said brokenly: 'Gentlemen, it is one of the handicaps of my physical condition that I cannot control myself as I have been accustomed to. God bless you all.'"



*He was Woodrow Wilson's most intimate friend in the Administration . . .*

Here is the most illuminating and sympathetic account we have of Woodrow Wilson. David F. Houston, formerly Secretary of Agriculture and Secretary of the Treasury, was closer to him than any man in the administration. Secretary Houston paints an unforgettable picture of wartime Washington and the nation's leader. He tells of Bryan's behavior, Col. House's part, Lodge's attitude, Mrs. Wilson's task. Joffre, Roosevelt, Taft, Balfour, Harding, Bernstorff appear in vivid pictures. Here is a book to stand beside the PAGE LETTERS.

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By **DAVID F. HOUSTON**  
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2 vols

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FLORSHEIM  
SHOES**

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**FASHION SHOP**

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HIGH TOP SHOES  
OXFORD PACS  
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SLEEPING BAGS

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Pull Over Sweaters



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Every house on the  
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be Odorless and  
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Continuous Purifying System

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**THE CRITICAL  
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**BP**  
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RAIN HAIL  
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Clothes, Headwear, Haber-  
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