

# *The Nassau Literary Magazine*

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## THE TORCH

*(Sussex Landscape)*

Is it your watch-fire, elves, where the down with its darkening  
shoulder

Lifts on the death of the sun, out of the valley of thyme?  
Dropt on the broad chalk path, and cresting the ridge of it, smoul-  
der

Crimson as blood on the white, halting my feet as they climb.

Clusters of clover-bloom, spilled from what negligent arms in the  
tender

Dusk of the great grey world, last of the tints of the day,  
Beautiful, sorrowful, strange, last stain of that perishing splendour.  
Elves, from what torn white feet, trickled that red on the way?

No—from the sunburnt hands of what lovers that fade in the dis-  
tance?

Here—was it here that they paused? Here that the legend was  
told?

Even a kiss would be heard in this hush; but, with mocking in-  
sistence,

Now thro' the valley resound—only the bells of the fold.

Dropt from the hands of what beautiful throng? Did they cry  
"Follow after,"

Dancing into the West, leaving this token for me,—  
*Memory dead on the path, and the sunset to bury their laughter?*  
Youth? Is it youth that has flown? Darkness covers the sea,

Darkness covers the earth. But the path is here. I assay it.

Let the bloom fall like a flake, dropt from the torch of a friend.  
Beautiful revellers, happy companions, I see and obey it;

Follow your torch in the night, follow your path to the end.

—*Alfred Noyes.*

## HUMAN AND HAMADRYAD

### A MASQUE

*Late summer afternoon at the edge of a wood. Behind the small group of trees to which our attention is particularly directed the dense trunks and foliage conceal a public road; in front of it is a broad meadow which slopes rather steeply down to a brook, partially occupied by cows. Our eyes are drawn to a young elm on our left whose boughs are being violently tossed about by a wind which, curiously enough, does not disturb any of the other trees. After a moment, the trunk opens by means of a sort of sliding panel and discloses a Hamadryad, quite naked and very pretty with large eyes and brown hair which reaches to her waist. She steps out and gazes with contracted brows into the agitated branches, among which soft laughter is now heard.*

THE HAMADRYAD. Stop that and come down!

*(The West Wind, an amorphous being with long gray garments and a young and pleasant masculine face, flutters down and sits upon the trunk of a fallen sugar maple which is lying on the right.)*

THE HAMADRYAD. What a troublesome afternoon! First the squirrels keep me awake for hours with their quarreling and then, as soon as I've managed to fall asleep, you have to come and tousel my tree-top until I wake up again.

THE WEST WIND. What? No word of welcome for the ever kindly Favonius? Think, my dear girl, how long it is since I came this way. The cows in the valley were glad enough to see me a moment ago, but now, when I take the pains to look you up particularly and concentrate my most refreshing blasts upon

you to the exclusion of all the other dear girls, you haven't so much as a kiss for me.

THE HAMADRYAD. You know why.

FAVONIUS. No, I don't.

THE HAMADRYAD. You do too.

FAVONIUS. I don't at all.

THE HAMADRYAD. Who blew down Saccharina in the thunder-storm last week?

FAVONIUS. Oh, I couldn't have done that.. What makes you think I did?

THE HAMADRYED. You didn't know what you were doing, Favonius: you'd had too much rain. And now you come and sit on her dead body as if it were nothing to you!

FAVONIUS. (*turning his attention to the fallen trunk*) Hello! Is this all that's left of poor dear 'Rina? Ah well, I always found her a little cloying. One could never spend much time with her. In fact, with the possible exception, Ulma, of yourself, all dryads are rather dull companions: they have to stay forever in one place and they know so little of the world, because they have no chance to get around. Now, you used to wander in the woods quite a bit; I fully expected to find you out of your trunk. What's the matter nowadays? Are you afraid the motorists will see you, if you go too near the new road?

ULMA. Oh, motorists never see anything! No one cares about the country anymore now that everybody has an automobile. But why should I mind, if they did happen to see me? The worst they could do would be to cover me with dust as they've done to all the trees who live near the road.

FAVONIUS. Well, you're not wearing human clothes, you know.

ULMA. Of course not: I don't want to be hideous!

FAVONIUS. But it would shock them to see you this way.

ULMA. What? Really?

FAVONIUS. It would embarrass and displease them greatly.

ULMA. How frightfully odd!

FAVONIUS. (*the man of the world*) Why, do you know if you appeared to a party of ladies and gentlemen motoring, they would feel horribly constrained for an hour afterwards and hardly know what to say or how to look at one another.

A VOICE. (*sharp and feminine, sounding from the green background.*) Isn't it just like your father not to have brought an extra tire? Now it'll take forever for him to fix that blow-out.

ULMA. (*struck by a delightful idea.*) Here are some people coming. I might appear to them!

FAVONIUS. Better wait a bit and see who they are. If they're what are called decent people, the shock might be too serious.

(*He flies into the tree-tops and disappears among the leaves, which begin to rustle. Ulma retreats into her elm. Two ladies come through the forest at the back. They resemble each other in their unattractive clothes and features and are evidently mother and daughter. They both have long nose and recessive chins. The mother is evidently of a forceful disposition, but the daughter's face affords very little clue to her qualities. They sit down on Saccharina's earthly shell.*)

THE MOTHER. Nice to break down at a time like this! They'll probably think we aren't coming and will sit down to dinner without us. And if there's anything I hate it's being late to dinners. I might have known something like this would happen: it always does when I try to get your father off to anything.

THE DAUGHTER. I may as well walk back from here; then you won't have to stop again to let me out.

THE MOTHER. (*after a short silence, during which she seems to be cherishing some sort of rancor.*) I tell you, Sylvia, you

make a very great mistake in not going to parties given by the older set any more. If you don't look out, you won't be invited anywhere after while. I guess you have no right to be so proud nowadays: you're too old for the young people and you'd better make up your mind to be satisfied with the others. Now, Mr. Janeway showed you very marked attention the other evening at the Alsops! Several people noticed it.

SYLVIA. (*whose voice, when she is irritated, has much of her mother's sharpness.*) I wish you wouldn't nag at me all the time.

THE MOTHER. Nag at you! You'd never do anything, if I didn't. Nor your father either. Why, it was only because I didn't keep at him and make him get a new tire that we're waiting here now in this damp dirty place! It's cold too; and I didn't bring anything but a thin shawl. (*The wind at this suddenly begins to blow with amazing violence. It tugs away one end of the "thin shawl", [which is in reality a heavy knitted one,] and while the two ladies are engaged in recovering and securing it, disarranges their hair and sends it flying about their faces.*) Nice weather for July! Oh, how I hate the country, anyway! There's nothing comfortable about it,—and I never knew a farmer yet who wasn't a perfect boor.

(*The lady's husband comes in, very hot and exasperated. His duster flaps open and reveals a dress-shirt smeared in several places with what may very well be axle-grease.*)

THE GENTLEMAN. What's the matter? I've been calling you for at least a quarter of an hour.

SYLVIA. We didn't hear you.

THE MOTHER. How could we, with the wind blowing the way it did?

THE GENTLEMAN. And I tooted the horn, too. Well, come on, for Heaven's sake! It's almost half-past eight now. And how can I go to any dinner with a shirt-front that looks like the office tower? I'll be ridiculous!

THE MOTHER. Well, we can't go back now for a clean one. That's certain. It all goes back to your not bringing along an extra tire. Come on Sylvia.

THE GENTLEMAN. You hurried me off so that I never had a chance to get anything. Besides, what the devil difference does it make whether I brought an extra tire or not? I've told you a thousand times—

SYLVIA. You know I'm not coming. I'm going to walk home from here, so good-night. I'll probably be in bed by the time you get back.

THE MOTHER. (*going off.*) Well, see that you hurry home then and shut the parlor windows before this terrible wind blows down all the pictures and vases. You know what happened to the goldfish last fall. And be sure to shut your bedroom windows almost entirely: you know you always catch cold, if you sleep in a draught.

(*They leave her to the darkening wood, where she returns to the great log and gloomily contemplates the first phases of a sunset. After a little, Ulma comes out of the tree and stands before her, whereupon Sylvia springs up with a little scream.*)

SYLVIA. Oh, how you frightened me!

ULMA. Well, I've actually made you cry. You *have* been crying, haven't you?

(*Favonius swoops to the ground.*)

FAVONIUS. Sylvia,—I don't know your other name; I'm sorry,—this is Ulma, a dryad.

SYLVIA. (*white and panic-stricken.*) Who are you? Let me go!

FAVONIUS. Dear lady, we haven't the least notion of detaining you; and, sorry as we shall be to lose you, you are at perfect liberty to leave when you like.

SYLVIA. (*a little reassured by Favonius's charming urbanity, sinking down on the log.*) There's something very funny about this. It looks indecent to me.

FAVONIUS. (*to Ulma*) Didn't I tell you?

ULMA. O-o-oh! I would have come out before, you know, but I couldn't bear the idea of being seen by that horrible old woman: I'm much too pretty; I knew that she would have insulted me.

SYLVIA. Horrible old woman! She's my mother, I'd have you know. Talk about insult!

FAVONIUS. Please don't be angry. Ulma is only a wood-nymph and has no scruples about hurting peoples' feelings, because she has no feelings of her own. Neither have I for that matter; but I have learned from observation how these things are done.

SYLVIA. (*rising.*) I should say not! I must go: it's not proper for me to stay here.

FAVONIUS. (*behind her, throwing his light cloak about her shoulders and speaking caressingly in her ear.*) Better stay; better stay. You are sick at heart; but we can comfort you. You are perplexed; but we can help you to find calm.

SYLVIA. (*won over.*) Well, I'm sure I never saw anybody like you before. (*She sits and begins to talk as if she were making herself pleasant to new acquaintances.*) Nice evening, isn't it?

FAVONIUS. There is one thing which must be done immediately. She must be taught to speak. Like most humans she knows nothing of how to express herself: she believes that her own ideas and feelings, as well as those of other people, are unfit subjects for conversation, and she has never found out how to use the clumsy human instrument of speech for any purpose higher than that of asking for food and discussing clothes, even if she wanted to. Before she can be a tolerable companion, I shall have to make use of the very limited quantity of magic at my disposal to enable her to be articulate and candid. (*He produces from under his robes a little silver star which shines brightly in the now advanced twilight and sets it on her forehead.*) Now your soul is freed from the constraint of habit and the hypocrisy of custom. You



can speak more frankly even than you have ever done to your God, for you expected rewards and punishments from him, and pretended in your prayers that you were sorry for deeds which you did not really believe were sinful; but with us you can have nothing to hope and nothing to fear, because we are nothing and have no meaning.

SYLVIA. (*in a new voice.*) Oh, you are kind to me: you have let me open my heart. A moment ago I could have died because I could not speak my despair. But now that I can confess shame and defeat, I already feel that there may be a new way out of them. . . . I shall not speak of slights at dances and quarreling at home and all the other meannesses and indignities through which my soul has been dragged. I have never had a good friend nor a lover nor a child, and I have found life dull and hideous. I spend year after year taking care of an ugly house and living with disagreeable people. I see other women marrying and travelling and working at interesting tasks, while I am too unattractive to marry, too poor to travel and too much bound by surroundings and circumstances to find any better work than looking after the books in a wretched little public library. And all the time I know that I have within me the strength that is never conquered, the love that creates heroes and the beauty which not even life can befoul. That will may be broken in me, but it persists in stronger ones than I; that love may be barren in me, but others shall be more fortunate; that beauty may be tarnished to oblivion in me, but another shall wrest the world to its likeness. This is what the soul is and yet life fights to destroy it. I was born to fulfil great purposes but all I find is bitterness and waste.

FAVONIUS. Bitterness and waste; that is the story that most human beings have to tell. I spoke to you a little while ago, Ulma, of the monotonous and provincial lives of trees, who have to stand forever in one place. Well, I swear I would rather be a tree than a human being like this one, for the trees are happy and

contented in being stationary, whereas these creatures have something which makes them hate it and tortures them to uproot themselves and do things which natural spirits like us cannot imagine.

ULMA. Look here! Don't you think she might be turned into a dryad? She could go into Saccharina's body and revive it. Surely you have magic enough to do that.

FAVONIUS. Yes. I have magic enough to do that. Metamorphoses are so little in demand nowadays that I should welcome the divertisement. Come, Sylvia! you have the name for it and I have blown your hair loose so that you look quite like a wood spirit. You would probably live in perfect health under sun and rain for several hundred years.

SYLVIA. Oh, how gladly I will become a dryad! You seem so good that I hardly know whether to trust you. But I always knew that Nature was kind and generous.

FAVONIUS. No, you are mistaken. We are not kind and generous; it's only imaginative humans who have thought us so. Though I do you a favor and change you into a tree to-day, to-morrow I may come along and blow you down, as I did this one that you are sitting on. We know nothing of the souls and sensibilities you humans talk about. And, if I transform you into a dryad, you will be just like all the rest of us. You will be as beautiful as Ulma, and you will be as unvexed as she by aspiration and despair.

SYLVIA. What? Shall I never realize my desires then?

FAVONIUS. Your life will be all realization. What more can you want?

SYLVIA. But my real desires are not to be beautiful and comfortable at all! I want something else.

FAVONIUS. What? Don't talk vague human nonsense.

SYLVIA. If you were a human you would understand.

FAVONIUS. Come, which is it to be, hamadryad or human? I want to get on to the next town, where your father is no doubt

stifling in his dress clothes and your mother refuses to leave out of sheer perversity. Think what it will mean if you insist on remaining a human woman. It will mean mother coming back late and complaining because the windows were not closed earlier, and father swearing that everybody during the whole evening was laughing at the spots on his shirt-front. It will mean years and years—

SYLVIA. It is no use. I must go back, for I could never renounce my soul, now that I have found out how great it is. There will be some new way out, in another year or another month; it may be to-morrow. A man may love me or I may see clearly what my place is to be. I shall achieve something better than standing all day to give the squirrels a home and guard the grass from the sun. Good-bye, I am grateful to you. Only leave the star on my forehead. Only let me speak always as I have spoken to-night

FAVONIUS. They will think you mad; they will make your life more uncomfortable than it has ever been before.

SYLVIA. Let them—I shall not care.

FAVONIUS. Ah, well! If you positively clamor for your own destruction, I may as well let you have it. I have seen the people who have this star and are called prophets; little good from their fellows they ever get of it! My old friend, Shelley, for example, who, by the way, wrote me a rather pretty poem, was very hardly used.

SYLVIA. Your warnings cannot move me now. So thank you again and good-night.

ULMA. Good-night. You are a fool not to want to be as pretty as I am.

FAVONIUS. (*kissing Sylvia.*) Good-night.

(*She goes, and immediately they burst out laughing.*)

Oh, they're all like that. Always talking of their wonderful souls and never giving any evidence of them. If their souls can-

not make them graceful and lovely, what good are they? And, you know, the most ghastly joke of all is that they have invented absolutely out of the whole cloth a story that when they are dead, their poor dear souls will be perfectly free. I should like to see that Heaven, as they call it: it must be a home for mad cripples . . . Well, I must be off! There are hundreds of aeroplanes to be overturned and gentlemen's silk hats to be blown off and scholar's papers to be thrown into confusion before morning.

*(He departs through Ulma's tree-top to which he gives a parting wrench of embrace. Ulma gets into her trunk and is seen to curl up for sleep, without closing the panel.)*

ULMA. Thank goodness, I can leave my window open all night without being ordered to shut it!

*(She laughs and goes to sleep.)*

—Edmund Wilson, Jr.

## DAWN

His radiant fingers so adorning  
Earth that in silent joy she thrills,  
The ancient day stands every morning  
Above the flowing eastern hills.

This day the new-born world hath taken  
Within his mantling arms of white,  
And sent her forth by fear unshaken  
To walk among the stars in light.

Risen with laughter unto leaping,  
His feet untired, undimmed his eyes,  
The old, old day comes up from sleeping,  
Fresh as a flower, for new emprise.

The curtain of the night is parted  
That once again the dawn may tread,  
In spotless garments, ways uncharted,  
And death a million times is dead.

Slow speechless music robed in splendor  
The deep sky sings eternally,  
With childlike wonderment to render  
Its own unwearied symphony.

Reborn between the great suns spinning  
Forever where men's prayers ascend,  
God's day in love hath its beginning,  
And the beginning hath no end.

—George B. Logan, Jr.

## WAR

### I.

The Congregation *Anshei Yareslow* was composed not, as the name implied, entirely of men of Yareslow. Only two or three of the members were Yareslower. But all of them came from Galicia near the Russian border. One Reb Yussel, to be sure, had emigrated to New York from Odessa, and he had been born in a village near Warsaw, which is in Russian Poland. But twenty years he had spent, with a pack on his back, travelling through Yaverow, Janow, Nemerow, and as far as the suburbs of Cracow in the west. He spoke with a Galacian accent. So that he was as good as a true Galician; and the *Anshei Yareslow* thus formed a uniform whole.

When the war broke out in Europe, the congregation as one man ignored the operations in the west, and turned their attention to the Russian frontiers; as one man they awaited the downfall of the Czar. After the evening prayers they gathered together in their little synagogue on Pitt street, presumably to study the Talmud, actually to do only a little studying, but much arguing about the war—though, as a matter of fact, it could hardly be called arguing where all were on the same side. Even Reb Yessel, who, being not yet naturalized, was a subject of the Czar, hoped and expected to see Francis Joseph come out victorious over the great Slav. But he had left a wife and three children behind him in Russian Poland. And in his heart of hearts he cared little who won and who lost; but it grieved him that his eldest son should have had to draw the sword to kill, or perhaps—might God prevent!—to be killed.

For that reason Reb Yussel remained silent during the nightly discussions that went on in the synagogue of the Congregation *Anshei Yareslow*. It was in the wild time of the first Russian campaign in Austria. Rumors, conflicting, unconfirmed, of victories and defeats, made up the bulk of the war news. The Yiddish news-

papers eagerly seized upon everything unfavorable to the Czar, and daily headlined complete annihilation for his troops. And the men of the Congregation *Anshei Yareslow* read and gloated.

"*Nu*," said Reb Leibish one evening when the prayers after sundown were over—Reb Leibish was tall and cadaverous and had a scraggly black beard—"Nu," he said, "Nicholas is winning!" The remark was made not to give information, but in an ironical tone of voice, and to start the ball of talk rolling.

"Win!" said Reb Frayim,—he with the full brown beard and the twinkle in the eye—"Win! He will win a good cholera!"

And one they called Reb Lezer began the real discussion of the night. "In Lodz," he said, "they so mauled up the Russian, that there did not remain a trace of him."

"Eh," said Reb Frayim, "but they did beat those Cossacks!"

"And," put in Reb Leibish, "in Allenstein they took captive seventy thousand of them. Seventy thousand!"

"Ah," said Reb Chayim, slowly, "the Russian has, indeed, many men." Chayim was president of the Congregation; and from his height he could afford to speak in a manner generously of the foe.

"Yes," said Leibish, "he has many. But it is horse—not man." And he touched his forehead with his forefinger, to signify that the Russian head lacked brain.

Yussel sat listening through all this. He did not feel in the mood to talk. But Leibish had long battled with shadows, and was eager to prove his prowess on a real opponent. Suddenly he remembered there was a Russian in their midst.

"Yussel," he said, "they are whipping your Czar so, that the sparks fly."

"Nu," said Yussel, shrugging his shoulders deprecatingly.

"Long before the Day of Atonement," continued Leibish, "he will be a dead sin-offering."

"He is an enemy to Israel," admitted Yussel, "and it will be well when he is conquered."

But this was side-stepping which neither Leibish nor the rest of the congregation would allow.

"Even his son," some one called out, "he has sent to battle for the Russian. And though this was said in a joke, henceforth they considered Reb Yussel the champion of the Czar.

"Eh!—eh!—eh!—" said Leibish some two days later, with mock pity in his voice, as he slowly drew out of his pocket that afternoon's "Extra" edition of the *Tageblatt*. "A hundred and twenty thousand Russians killed! A hundred and twenty thousand! Bad! Very bad!—eh Yussel?"

Yussel was now taking the part that had been, against his will, assigned to him. "Well," he said, "it is not altogether as you think. First of all, the Czar has conquered all your Galicia,—he has taken Lemberg, and—"

"What is he talking about!" There was a cry of protest from the members of the congregation, and Reb Chayim began to explain.

"Lemberg is in a valley with hills on all sides. By whichever way you go into Lemberg you go down. By the Janow-road you go down; by the Cracow-road you go down; everywhere you go down. And before a foe could get within ten miles of Lemberg, there would be blood pouring in the air."

"The *Forward* says", insisted Yussel, "that they took Lemberg".

"It cannot be," said Reb Chayim.

"The *Forward* is altogether an anti-Semite," said Reb Frayim. "He hates Jews."

"Because he tells the truth?" asked Yussel.

"Why, then," inquired Leibish, "does not the *Tageblatt* say that Lemberg is taken?"

This Yussel could not answer. But some three days later he came in bringing a copy of the *Tageblatt*; and in it the loss of the Galician capital was grudgingly confirmed.

"It cannot be," said Reb Chayim.



"It is not true," said Leibish. "They are bribed to write it. But it is not true."

"*Nu,*" asked Yussel, "How will you know what is true?"

"Wait," said Reb Chayim,—“wait until letters come from home. You have a wife near Lemberg, and I a brother—we will hear.”

"Well" said Yussel.

But there was a long wait; for the mail was delayed and no word came from relatives in Europe; and the *Tageblatt* meanwhile daily conquered Russia, and nightly Leibish ridiculed Yussel for imagining the Czar could put foot into Lemberg.

"*Nu,*" he would remark, as an aside during the first pause in the study of the Talmud, "Eighty-six generals the Germans have captured in Russia. But Russian generals—what are they worth?"

Then, as Yussel remained silent, he would add: "And they have taken Lemberg! Ha—ha!"

"Well, we will hear from home," answered Yussel. "Soon we will get letters from home."

Finally the letters came. Because of the long delay, the mail had piled up; and now in the same day almost everybody got at least one letter, and many got three and four. In the synagogue that night extracts from these were read and re-read. And the fact became undeniable: the Russian pig had gotten into Lemberg. There was gloom for a while, until some one suggested that he would be driven out again. Then there was joy—of course he would be driven out. There is no greater optimist than your destitute Galician Jew.

But where was Reb Yussel? He had not appeared for the evening prayers, and he was not here now to gloat over the Austrians' defeat.

"He has surely heard from his wife and son," said Leibish,—“he will be here soon.”

"Let us," suggested Chayim, "when he comes, treat him to a pitcher of beer."

"Yes," said Leibish, "we must; and let us drink together—to the sorrow of the Czar."

So they all contributed small coins; and were prepared, when Yussel should arrive, to send for a tin-pail of beer, and drink.

Half an hour later he came. He seemed weary, and there was not the expected gleam of joy in his eye.

"I will bet," said Leibish, "that he has not heard."

"Did you get a letter?" asked Chayim.

"Yes," said Yussel.

"From your wife?"

"Yes."

"And from the son?"

Reb Yussel fumbled in his inside coat pocket. He drew out a folded newspaper and dropped it on the floor. He drew out a letter with a foreign post-mark, and said, "News of the son." And the seal on it was blackened, and the border of the envelope was black.

And the men who were gathered there forgot Lemberg, and forgot the beer, and remained still.

## II.

It was all a matter of less than a week in the happening.

Friday last Moisheh Yingmann's boss had told him there would be no work for the next three days—perhaps longer. So Moisheh, on Sunday, dressed himself out in his best, brushed his new suit, and combed back his curling brown beard, and, in the afternoon, putting on a black derby, went out for a walk.

It was fine for a walk. The sun shone in pleasant triangles and parallelograms on the sidewalk; the streets had been but recently washed; children were jumping rope or playing pussy-cat on them; only occasionally a push-cart with a dozen bananas on it was wheeled by, and Moisheh felt very comfortable as he walked along.

He came to the corner of Jefferson Street, and bought a paper, a *Tageblatt*; then he crossed over to Seward Park.

For from this point, going West, East Broadway becomes wider and wider, until Canal street branches off from it at the top of a slight hill. And thus a roomy block is formed, which has on one side of it many important buildings. The offices of the *Tageblatt*, and the *Forward*, and most of the newer papers, are there. And Jarmulowsky's Bank is there, and near the top of it, the number—179—in glowing electric lights, which may be seen from as far away as Houston street near Avenue "A." And facing all these is Seward Park. At least that is its official name. But in the columns of the most orthodox of the Jewish dailies it is often nonchalantly referred to as *Tageblatt* Park; while Hester Park is its most popular and most generally accepted name. It is one block in width, by one and a half in length. Privet bushes grow there, not in hedges, but singly, here and yonder. One sees grass there every spring before the children tread it down. A playground is there, too, with swings and see-saws, for girls; and a playground, with swings and climbing ladders, for boys. And at different spots in Hester Park pressers and operators and carpenters even, who are out of work, gather together daily in groups, and relate anecdotes to each other, and discuss the latest strike, and wait for an employer to come along (which occasionally happens) and employ them.

One such group, this Sunday afternoon, stood near the East Broadway entrance to the park. It was a large group, and extended to the sidewalk of the street. Moisheh Yingmann stopped on the outskirts of it.

"Ah!" several voices greeted him, "You, too, have no work?"  
Moisheh shrugged his shoulders indifferently.

"So?" asked one, Mendel Janower. Mendel was a big, broad-boned man, and had a beard that was long and black. "So," he said, "You do not at all care?"

"Why should he worry?" asked Berel Klem, the vendor of hot peas. "For a family he need not provide; he has taken his twenty-six dollars every week for the last year and a half. And now, he has a little vacation."

"These cutters!" said Janower,—"they pay them like kings."

"Ah, no," Moisheh said deprecatingly.

"Well, well," answered Mendel, "I wish they had made me a cutter like you, instead of an operator. It would have been indeed well for me."

Berel Klein interrupted. "What is the use of all this?" he asked. "Tell me better, Yingmann, have you heard anything new?"

Moisheh Yingmann said: "New? Here is all the news." And he held up the *Tageblatt* he had just bought.

"Well, read something," said Berel; and others chimed in: "Yes. Let us hear. Read—aloud."

So Moisheh took his stand on the broad sidewalk and faced the group. He read the headlines first: "The Russians Are Again Afraid! Warsaw Almost in the Hands of the Germans," and "Three French Battleships Disappeared: Where Are They?" and "English Papers Say Palestine Must Go to the Jews!" Then he said, "Ah, but here is something better." And he began to read aloud from the second page. It was a letter purporting to have come from Galicia, near the field of action. It related the truth, and the whole truth. "They tell you in the English papers, no doubt," Moisheh read, "that we are dying of hunger here in Przemysl; that we will soon have to give ourselves up to the Russian. You may say to them, the Czar has still a long time to wait before we will invite him in. Meantime let him guard his own skin! Thursday, last week, we went out and caught 2000 Cossacks that had come where one did not want them, and—you need not ask—the cholera took them. Yesterday we shattered 700 of them—" Moisheh's eyes twinkled, and he stopped and cleared his throat;

then he spread his feet wider apart on the ground, and rolling the words in his mouth with great satisfaction repeated, "Yesterday we shattered seven hundred of them, until—"

At this point he was interrupted. A girl had been slowly wheeling a baby-carriage down the sidewalk, having come from Canal street. Now Moisheh's big right foot was directly in front of it. She might have turned out; but she stopped instead and waited. Moisheh looked around scornfully. The girl was twenty or twenty-one. She had tied her yellow hair in a smart knot on the top of her head. She wore a white apron; she was as scornful as he.

"Why are you waiting?" she asked.

Moisheh detected the accent. "A Russian," he remarked with a motion of his left shoulder; and not budging an inch began again to read: "Yesterday, we shattered—"

But the young lady did not wait. She said, "Look out!" deftly steered the carriage aside a little and pushed it quickly, so that as she passed by Moisheh one wheel went over his shoe, and the hub of it violently brushed his trousers. She tossed her head once and threw back to the whole crowd: "Galician pigs!"

There was a rumbling murmur among them, and Moisheh bending down to brush his trousers called after her: "Littwach! Russian Littwach! You smell from herring!"

She only laughed a little, and said "*Fleisch!*" over her shoulder, mimicking the characteristically broad Galician accent, and went on.

"*Ach*, what does she want?" asked Mendel Janower; and the peddler of hot peas added, "That's what I call a born she-Cossack." But Moisheh only looked after her and shrugged his shoulders, saying nothing; and presently he took up his paper once more. "Yesterday," he read, "we shattered seven hundred of them, until,"

Now this occurrence of the afternoon was of course highly unpleasant to Moisheh. He was a man of peace and liked no

squabbles with women. Even his casual acquaintances knew this. And therefore, the next day when he was again standing on the sidewalk of East Broadway in the warm sunlight, reading the setbacks to the military ambitions of the Czar, Berel Klein suddenly cried out in warning: "Ah, there she comes!—with the baby carriage."

"Let her come," said Moisheh, and continued to read.

"But," advised Berel, "step inside, here—so that she will not be able to begin any further troubles."

"I am afraid of her?" asked Moisheh; and spread his feet out wider on the ground to get a stable position, and returned to the paper. His listeners stirred uneasily. They were asking themselves, what would happen here? In a short while the carriage had been wheeled close up to Moisheh and stopped. The baby in it had been trying to pull its cap over its eyes, and laughed now when it succeeded, and then cried as it became dark. He looked around slowly. The girl was the same one.

"Russian!" he accused her.

She answered, "Of Galicians, at any rate, a Russian has no fear," and swung the baby carriage aside, passing so close to Moisheh's foot that the hub of the rear wheel bruised his skin.

"Russian!" he called out again. But she only tossed her head, and smiled scornfully, and went on.

"Ah—ah—ah!" said Berel, the peddler of hot peas, "she is not at all ashamed."

"They tell," Mendel Janower wondered incredulously, "that Russians mix together barley and parsley, and potatoes, and rice, and call it a soup. Bah!"

"Pigs!" was Berel's laconic judgment. Then: "But Yingmann should have stepped away before she came near. He might have known her from yesterday."

"I am not afraid of her," said Moisheh Yingmann.

And apparently he wanted to prove conclusively that he was not afraid. On Tuesday he found out from the boss that there would be no work at all for him that week; so he went each afternoon at the same time to the East Broadway entrance of Hester Park to read the news of the war; and at the same time each afternoon the baby carriage came down the street, and the Russian nursemaid and he had a short encounter which invariably ended, as on that first day, in a draw. And she returned each time, an hour later, on the other side of the street, oblivious of the men who watched her, with nose in the air.

That it *was* a draw could hardly be doubted. For, as Mendel Janower put it, though the girl was victorious physically in that she pushed by Moisheh with the carriage to his no small discomfort, and verbally in that her remarks were more original and biting than his, yet he evened things up by reminding her continually that she was Russian—and no one can be worse than that.

And so this war raged on beside that other, with no prospects of a peace, and factions were even formed among the unemployed tailors in the park, which believed in the ultimate triumph of the one side or the other. Though the general opinion was a little inclined toward Moisheh's cause, how could she get a defence against his one great weapon? How could she overcome the handicap of being Russian?

On Friday morning of that week Moisheh Yingmann had an important piece of business to perform—the becoming an American citizen. He had gone through all the preliminaries; had been examined and re-examined; had answered certain questions correctly, which, for five dollars, he had been taught to answer. And now the court sat in a room of the Post Office building, and he was to appear with his two witnesses and swear the oath of allegiance to the United States.

One of the witnesses was Janower. And as they stood in the big court-room among two hundred other people, waiting, Mendel,

who had been here before, drew attention to the points of interest: how high the room was, and where the judge sat, and the long windows, and the ushers. And suddenly he said: "But look! There is *she*, with two men."

"Who?" asked Moisheh; though he knew quite well. For he was even then watching the profile of the yellow-haired nursemaid. And while waiting in the lobby below for his witnesses to appear, he had seen her pass—without the white apron—and had asked, "You, too, are becoming a citizen?" And she had half-nodded and said, "Galician!" with a toss of the head, and he had answered "Cossack!" But now he asked, "Who?" and Mendel showed where she was, and reviled her to him for half an hour, while he answered nothing, except once, at the end: "Yes, yes. She is a Russian."

In due time one after another of the prospective citizens were called before the judge, and took the oath. Moisheh trembled a little when the clerk announced: "Yetta Kantermann." But it was another woman. Later, they called, "Anna Sklowitz," three times, but no one answered. Then, after he had himself been summoned and sworn, and was being hustled out of the room, not knowing exactly what was to be done, he heard, "Rebecca Maglovsky!" and glancing back over his shoulder, saw a yellow-haired girl step up before the judge, followed by two men. "Rebecca!" thought Moisheh to himself,— "that means Rivkeh in Jewish."

He dismissed the witnesses, for they were no longer needed, and went up to the fifth floor. There, in a room over the door of which was the legend, "Naturalization Bureau. Final Papers," he swore again, and wrote his name in an interminable number of places, as directed, and paid a small fee. He was through then; but he waited in the hallway near the door until Rebecca Malkovsky came up, alone, and passed by him, with only the slightest glance of recognition, into the room he just left.



For ten minutes after that he leaned against the wall in the corridor with a look of deep concern on his face, and twisted his hat around and around in his two hands. People passed and re-passed him—clerks, new citizens, the janitor. But he ignored them all, and only doubtfully twisted his hat. Finally the girl came out. He stood up straight and put his hat on his head.

"Rebecca," he said as she was about to pass him, "*Do* the Russians eat so much herring?" She smiled a little and said with a positive inflection, "Yes."

He thought over this deeply while they went through the corridor and down the elevator. In the street he spoke again: "*All* the Russians?" he asked.

"Yes," she answered as before, adding after a moment: "But I am no longer a Russian."

He looked up to her face and saw it smiling.

"We have no war now, we two—being both Americans?" he suggested.

She answered, "Yes," and they waited in silence for a car. When the screech of it was heard he turned to her, stammering, "Well—well—if we are both Americans, and—well—"

He stopped, troubled, and she mimicked him, "Well?"

"Americans," he announced suddenly, and authoritatively,—  
"Americans always get a license before being married by the rabbi. And the Marriage License Bureau is in this same building, on the second floor."

But she answered, "No, no! It is too late: we would miss the car. We must come again next week."

### III.

Moses Berkowitz was a very pious and a very prosperous baker. Although the Lord had given him but a sparse and short beard, he wore that untouched by razor or shears; and all men knew that from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday he baked no bread and sold none. As a result he was blessed exceedingly. Delivery wagons advising the world, in large letters, to

Ask BERKOWITZ For

—:—BREAD—:—

And Get The Best

were familiar sights from Cherry street to beyond One Hundred and Tenth; and at Rockaway Beach "New York Bread" and Berkowitz's were synonymous terms among the orthodox community. (Though, indeed, the place has little piety left, and is not much better than a city of gentiles.) Moses, too, had four children growing up: three boys, of whose progress in the study of Hebrew the *melammed* gave weekly good reports, and a girl. And his wife was a thrifty woman, and a careful, who kept a clean house and clean children, and was good to look upon when he came home in the morning weary from work.

Clearly, Mrs. Berkowitz had been beautiful in her youth. Even now, at the age of forty, there was color in her face, and her eyes were bright, and her brown hair was long and gleaming. But it was noticed that she smiled rarely and laughed never at all. And now and again one could glimpse a fleeting hollow in her cheek.

When her housework was done in the afternoon, and the husband was asleep, she would often place her little girl before her chair, and slowly patting the yellow locks of the child, she would hum an old Polish cradle-song to herself. The refrain of it with its harsh, unmeaning syllables strangely thrilled the little girl. She did not know what the words meant: child-like, she never asked. And they were a repetition of, "Little-mother, little-mother," and "love," and "death."

It was Sunday afternoon, and Mrs. Berkowitz was thus humming softly to herself when some one knocked on the kitchen door. She went to open it and motioned to the child to go. A stout, middle-aged woman shuffled in breathing hard, and sat down. Mrs. Berkowitz frowned.

"You?" she asked.

"Yes," said the stout woman, "it is already four weeks."

Mrs. Berkowitz pulled out a bureau-drawer and took from it a handkerchief tied in a knot.

"Dvoireh," she said, "it is getting harder and harder for me to pay you the ten dollars each month. Only yesterday he asked, where was my pearl necklace. I said it was somewhere—I had it. And the man believed. But there will come a day, Dvoireh, there will come a day, when—"

"Well," interrupted Dvorieh in a shrill, complaining voice, "how, then, is that my fault? You are yourself to blame. I told you at that time to give me the money at once—you would not have seen me here again."

"I have given you," said Mrs. Berkowitz, "more than three hundred dollars already in the monthly payments."

"Well," asked Dvoireh, "do I have it? What can I do when I have spent it all? I say to you now, as before, give me the three hundred dollars, and—"

"But I have not so much."

A look of relief showed itself on Dvoireh's face. "Give me the three hundred dollars even now," she continued, "so that I may open a store for myself, and I go away, and will not bother you more."

There was a pause while Mrs. Berkowitz fumbled with the knot in the handkerchief. She succeeded in untying it finally, and two five dollar bills fell to the ground. She picked them up and gave them to Dvoireh. "It is all I have to-day," she said, "and I saved that from the children's clothes."

"Believe me," said Dvoireh, moving her head up and down and carefully putting the money away in a pocket in her skirt—"Believe me, I do not take this from you because of wickedness of heart. I do not want to do you harm—why should I? For two years after your marriage did I want a penny from you?"

"You did not know I was in America," Mrs. Berkowitz put in softly.

"I knew—I knew," said Dvoireh. "Only what harm was it to me that your husband married a divorced woman? Wherein did that touch me?"

"And now?" asked Mrs. Berkowitz with sarcasm.

"Now," said Dvoireh, "*—ach*, do not be a child! Now the One on high has punished me, and I am without a penny. And it is the war and every one is poor as the night. That is why I must come to you. But perhaps you want—let me go to Mr. Berkowitz. He will pay me three hundred dollars to find out about his wife's first marriage, and her little son at home. And then—"

"No, no!" interrupted Mrs. Berkowitz.

"Why?" asked Dvoireh, preparing to go, "why should you be afraid? He is, to be sure, a very pious man, and for such it is the custom to marry only virgins. But—with you it is now too late. He will, perhaps, not like it that you did not tell him the truth; still—"

"No, no!" said Mrs. Berkowitz again.

So Dvoireh shrugged her shoulders and went out.

But the other called after her from her doorway.

"And if," she asked in a whisper, "I deny everything to your face—if I say you invented all this—what then?"

"I have told you once," answered Dvoireh, a little impatiently. "I shall write home and send your little son a ticket, and he will come and speak for me,—if not now, then after the war. He wants to come to America." And Dvoireh laughed uncomfortably, and Mrs. Berkowitz shut the door.

And when the door was shut she sat down sadly on a chair, and folded her hands in her lap, and looked far away into space. The little girl came in complaining about something. She patted the golden locks, and crooned her Polish cradle-song, and thought of her little-son. For speak about him she could not to any one but old Dvoireh when she came for her hush-money; and she heard from him only through her. He was seven years old, then, when

she had left him in the village of Blorsk. How small he was, and how long the ear-locks hung on either side of his little head! And now he was nineteen, and there was war in Galicia! He had cried a little when she kissed him that last time. But not much. For he did not understand clearly what was going on; and his father had hurried him away. . . . . Thinking of Moses, she wished she had opened to him all her heart. But she had always feared to speak, as she feared still; and Dvoireh coming from Blorsk, had found out her fear and taken advantage of it. . . . . She patted the girl's hair, and crooned her polish cradle-song about "Matke, matke," and thought of her little-son.

That night after supper Moses Berkowitz, having piously repeated the "blessing," followed the meal, and giving the smallest of the children an uproarious horseback ride on his knee, rose from the table with his usual "*Nu*, Hanna-leh, once more again work. As he started to go, Mrs. Berkowitz turned to him. "Moses," she said. But she knew in her heart that she could not tell him,—that she would never tell. And so when he asked, "What?" she said merely, "No, no! nothing." And Moses, unsuspecting, went out.

A week passed. It was Sunday afternoon once more, and Mrs. Berkowitz was sadly thinking, and sadly wondering, alone, in the kitchen. A knock disturbed her, and Dvoireh came through the opened door

"Again?" asked Mrs. Berkowitz.

"No," said Dvoireh, "but—"

"It is only eight days," insisted Hannah.

"Yes," said Dvoireh, "but tell me, have you—? I received a letter from—"

"What letter?" asked Mrs. Berkowitz, alert at once.

"It is—it is—" she fumbled in a pocket in her skirt. "Tell me," she said, "have you fifty dollars?"

"Why," asked Mrs. Berkowitz, "and what is in the letter?"

"Give me fifty dollars now," said Dvoireh, still fumbling in her pocket, "and I will let you off. I'll not ask more from you."

"What is in the letter?" asked Mrs. Berkowitz alarmed.

"But have you fifty dollars?" insisted Dvoireh.

"Yes, yes!" she hastily unlocked a bureau-drawer, picked out a knotted handkerchief from among the clothes there, and a roll of bills out of a glass bowl, and thrust them into Dvoireh's hands.

"Is it fifty?"

"*Ach,*" cried Mrs. Berkowitz, "tell me what has happened? What is the letter?"

"If it is fifty," continued Dvoireh, "you will be free. I will not vex you more. I will not ask money from you again. You know well when I promise a thing I keep my word. And even if you do not believe me, there is now nothing to fear,—I can no longer bring proof against you." She unfolded her letter—it was from a sister in Blorsk—and pointed to the middle of the second page. There, sandwiched in between complaints at the war-prices of meat and flour, and items of the local gossip of Blorsk, was this:

"The son of the divorced Hannah, who is in America, they drafted, and he was shot going to Cracow."

Hannah moaned once, and seized the letter to read it all through. And as Dvoireh turned to the window counting the bills she had just received, Moses came in.

"*Nu*, Hanna-leh," he greeted her. She looked up quickly, and her face was stained with tears.

"Moses," she said to him, "I must go home—to Blorsk—today—now."

He did not understand. "What—when—what do you mean?" he asked.

She answered: "God will repay you for your goodness to me. But—I must go—I must go home."

"Go!" he said, "you cannot go. It is impossible, Hannah. What has happened? Tell me."

She hesitated an instant. "Moses," she then said, "I have not lived the truth with you,—but a lie. I am not that which you took me to be. I—I have had a child before, and been married before, and divorced."

"Well?"

"Well," said Hannah, "to-day, my child is dead in Cracow."

Dvoireh heard. She had finished counting her money, and now she slipped softly to the door, and went out. "Upon my foes' heads!" she swore in a puzzled way. "*—Now* she tells him!" and she hurried away.

"And Moses," continued Hannah, "I will not lie to you longer; I will not live a lie with you; my child is dead in Cracow—and I must go."

He said, "Hanna-leh, for your dead child we will mourn together. But you—you cannot go away. The slaughter rages there in the elder world—how can you go? And Hanna-leh, your dead child is in Cracow, but your living children are here. And you—widow or divorced, what care I?—Are you not you?"

When Moses had gone to his work that night, Hannah tied a black kerchief on her head, and sat down before the clean table in the kitchen, with her little girl at her side. And patting the soft, yellow hair she sadly crooned a Polish cradle-song to herself, and sadly she thought of her little son.

—*I Kaufman.*

## THE WIFE OF ATHEMIS

"Oh warrior-woman, art thou tender now?  
Shining upon his urn I saw thy tear."

"Shall I not weep for him who knew not how?"

"Black was his anger; naught did he revere;  
Rudely he dealt with men, and rudely spoke."

"Rude with me also—therefore the more dear."

"I would foreswear the market's wanton joke,  
To dwell at home with thee in tenderness,  
And teach thee Aphrodite to invoke."

"Ah youth, one time I cherished love's caress.  
But he who mocked, thou say'st, at gods and fate,  
Taught me to prize it more and seek it less."

"His was the clenched fist shaken in dark hate,  
The unshamed brow—" "Truth makes its own amend;  
Him thou would'st fain decry thou makest great."

"Forget, forget; too many tears offend.  
Each pleasant hour is numbered here above."  
"Aye, truly. So we follow each his end:  
And I a ruthlessness transcending love."

—*W. S. Dell.*



# THE ROOM THAT WAS CLOSED

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

MORDRET, *Count of Ausay.*

HERNAUT, *his son.*

GONORILLE, }  
AELIS } *his daughters.*  
YSABIAUZ, }  
MELIBRANDE, }

MALISTE, *wife of Hernaut.*

SCENE : *A chamber in the castle of Mordret, a spacious room, high-vaulted, chill, and dark. In the center of the rear wall an alcove with a great arched window of many-stained glass. Within this alcove, upon a dais, a chair, carved from wood with intricate tracery and various design. The walls of the room are likewise covered to half their height with panels of wood, curiously carven; above they are stone. At right and left a passage runs, continuous with the rear wall. At the right, somewhat set into the wall, a door, closed with heavy metal bolts and chains. Hernaut and Maliste.*

MALISTE. It is very dark within this room. Even when the sun is low upon the sea, and light wakes within the window, it is little better than dim twilight here.

HERNAUT. My father likes it so. He often comes here at sunset, when the great window is kindled to dim splendor, with lights of gold and jade, and soft colors of the sea, innumerable blues, deepening at last to sapphire.

MALISTE. He often comes here with your sisters. Since I have come here, scarcely a night has passed, he has not come here with one or another of them.

HERNAUT. It is at night that he comes here oftenest. Then he will sit in the great chair while one reads to him. He has many books with huge covers, and pages that were written upon by men long dead. He has books of magic, with the wisdom in them which was bought of old from the Evil One, that are written in a strange tongue which no man may read. He has books with the stories in them of queens with hair of sheeny gold, that had small lutes to make them music with, and tambour frames for cunning needlework. Here they will sit and read, until sleep weighs heavily on their lids, and they stop for weariness. Or perhaps they will sing him little songs, which poets made out of their love, while one plays upon the dulcimer.

MALISTE. It is often very late when your sisters come to bed. The night when you were upon the chase I slept with your sister Aelis, in the great bed whose curtains are of black, embroidered in silver. It was very late when she came to bed. I do not know how late it was, but the waning moon was very low in the west.

HERNAUT. They often read until the night is far gone. Then when my sisters have gone to sleep, he will stay here and strive to open the door to the room that is locked. He will allow no one else to try to open the door, but he himself has often spent the night in vain endeavors.

MALISTE. Why does he not get someone to help him? Why do you not open the door for him?

HERNAUT. My father always makes the attempt alone. Perhaps he may be afraid of what is in the room. No one has seen in the room since my father's father died.

MALISTE. Then why concern yourself about it at all? Surely there is much to be done without this. The walls are crumbling in the tower that looks toward the sea. I sat there to-day at noon, joying in the waves that broke in fuming spray upon the base. I but touched one of the stones and it fell over into the sea.

HERNAUT. Men say there is a great treasure there, coins of many lands, tankards of red gold, and cups for queens to drink of, and cloths woven cunningly, with the stories of great knights wrought into them. If we had them, it would do much to relieve the poverty and desolation of the land.

MALISTE. Either your father should ask you to help him, or you should get this treasure for yourself.

HERNAUT. I must leave things as they are. They have been so since I was a child. You must remember I have been in this castle but little since manhood has been upon me. As it is, I dare not cross my father. Those who have age with them cannot be crossed.

MALISTE. Then this treasure has been here many years with none to fetch it out, and the people dying for food and shelter.

HERNAUT. You must not judge us too harshly. It has not always been so. My grandfather was ruler of much land. For beyond this narrow belt beside the sea, this wasted land you behold, he owned the wide green tracts between us and the hills. But these things have been in my father's heart as the sand children gather in their play. Perhaps that is the reason the treasure was locked away. My grandfather hated the ways of the dreamer.

MALISTE. It seems very strange. You are quite sure his treasure is within this room?

HERNAUT. No one knows for certain. When my grandfather died there was with him but one old dumb servitor, a broken-brained creature, from whom one can gain nothing. When my father returned—for he was in a far country—there was this message: "My treasure lies within the closed room. Let my son not seek it. He has his sword."

MALISTE. So he has done nothing.

HERNAUT. You must not judge him too harshly. He has his own world in which he lives. All other things are to him as bad dreams.

MALISTE. But you—can you do nothing?

HERNAUT. I dare do nothing here, but by my father's command. He has long been accustomed to control all things.

MALISTE. (*rising, and examining the door.*) The bolts are very old. They are covered with rust. The wood about them has long since been eaten by worms. It looks as though a child could break them.

HERNAUT. My father has tried very often. He comes here at night alone, and tries these bolts. He was once very strong. Had it been possible, he would have broken them.

(*Ysabiauz enters with a lighted lamp.*)

MALISTE. I think that a child could break them.

YSABIAUZ. (*to Hernaut.*) You must bring the books here which we are to read to-night. They are very heavy and I cannot lift them from the wall. (*Exit Hernaut.*)

MALISTE. What is it that you read to-night?

YSABIAUZ. It is the tale of two who had much power of old, for he was very wise, and she was very beautiful in men's eyes.

MALISTE. What were their ancient and enchanted names?

YSABIAUZ. Merlin was his name, while Vivian she is called, that betrayed him. Upon a summer's day, the forest of Broceliande received them. There in the noontide shade, with music and with wiles, she drew from him the secret that was his life. And when she had her desire, she kissed him into sleep. And men say he still keeps his charmed sleep among the mossed and gnarled oak-tree roots. But she has long been dust.

MALISTE. You must do one thing for me. I know you will do what I ask you.

YSABIAUZ. I will do all that you ask, my sister.

MALISTE. You are very kind to me. Without it, I should be very lonely among these gloomy rooms and endless corridors. I must hold the lamp while you read to-night.

YSABIAUZ. It is not I who read. It is my sister Melibrande.

MALISTE. But she will let me hold the lamp. I know she will let me light her book while she reads.

(*Enter Hernaut.*)

HERNAUT. I have brought you the book of Merlin, who, men say, knows not death, nor any grave, but quiet sleep under eternal boughs.

(*The voices of monks are heard chanting below.*)

*Hunc, in morte involutum,  
Nunc fulgoris solis brutum,  
Christe, in tutamen tutum  
Damus, salva spiritum.  
Per id iter tenebrarum,  
Unde nulla animarum  
Redit unquam, notum parum,  
Duc, o lumen luminum!*

MALISTE. Who is this they commit to the grave with pious chant?

HERNAUT. This is one whom our robber neighbors murdered. Our strength is no longer such that we keep them down. Even in broad noonday, they descend upon the village below with murder and rapine.

YSABIAUZ. Listen! again—the monks.

(*Chanting from below.*)

*Quis celeripedum talis  
Qui praecurrat mortis alis?  
Venit hora triumphalis,  
Nunc et letum aderit:  
Media caede stat bellator,  
Stulte lanceis laetatur,  
Nam repente trucidatur,  
Potens eques pulvis fit.*

MALISTE. Are we not *all* made dust? What is it these churchmen prate of? Surely it were better to die amid the singing of swift-winged spears, and the shriek of the sword as it stabs, than to live as these churchmen would have us, and be struck on the hearth we defend not.

YSABIAUZ. O my sister, I pray you do not speak so! Yet, perchance, if we had the treasure of my grandfather—if we had the gold that is buried in the closed room—

MALISTE. Perhaps even these parchment-faced peasants might rise, if a leader was theirs.

(*Chanting again.*)

*Dominator proeliorum,  
Cincte viribus ventorum  
Atque fulminum multorum  
Salva nos ab hostibus:  
Frangas scuta tua ira,  
Mors propinquet forma mira  
Et cum caede saeva, dira,  
Te obsecrat populus.*

MALISTE. Ah, they call upon God to serve them. What should this God they sing of, this Lord of battles, girt with the strength of winds and of many lightnings, what should he do with saving them? God gave man as a leader for men. There is strength enough in the world without a leader should come out of heaven.

(*Enter Gonorille and Aelis.*)

GONORILLE. What is it you're doing here? It is time for my father to come here to read.

AELIS. I do not know what he is to do. Our sister Melibrande has hurt her hand.

GONORILLE. She climbed to pluck the apple-blossom bough. She climbed upon the little wall that runs along the garden between the garden and the orchard.

AELIS. And slipped before she could reach the bough with its pink fruit-blossoms.

YSABIAUZ. Who will read for our father to-night?

MALISTE. Where is Melibrande now?

AELIS. She is asleep. We have put her to sleep in the bed that has its ceilings carved with little bunches of fruit and leaves, and flowers, and that has curtains of blue edged with crimson.

YSABIAUZ. But who is to read for our father? Here he comes. He will be very angry.

*(Enter Mordret.)*

MALISTE. Ah, my father, I have been here two whole weeks now, and no one has refused me a favor. No one must refuse a bride a favor till the first month is gone. Now I have come to ask you a favor.

MORDRET. What is it my daughter? I have little to give you. All things here grow ruinous and there is little new to give you, save perhaps the thistles in the courtyard, or the wild-flower that peeps among the fallen turrets.

MALISTE. Oh, it is not for this I ask you. You must let me stay with you to-night. Melibrande has hurt her hand and cannot read, but I shall stay here, and sing you little songs, which once I learned to while away the weary hours of the loom or tedious broidure of the tambour frame.

MORDRET. Or perhaps you may tell me of the queens that were of old in your own land, or of the princesses whose names some yellowing parchment, stained with time and ruin, yet holds.

MALISTE. Perhaps I shall tell you of sweet ladies who made sport of all men's hearts, that had great robes of traded silk from the far East, for daytime, and whose wondrous hair fell over their shoulders, and down over the smoothed linen of their beds, when they sat them down at sleeptime.

MODRET. (*who, during the preceding speech, has taken his seat on the dais*) Thou shalt sit here beside me on the dais. And you my children, Aelis, Gonorille, and Ysabiauz, and you, my son Hernaut, may leave us.

(*Hernaut, Gonorille, Aelis, and Ysabiauz leave the room. Maliste sits down on the steps of the dais.*)

MALISTE. Look how the wind is lifting the edge of the carpet, that is over the dais. Listen, do you hear it rushing down the dusky passage?

MORDRET. The wind is the shadow of the storm, but it was not this you were saying.

MALISTE. But a little while ago, and I had many tales to tell you, but now they are all gone out of my mind. I had stories to tell you of the four cities that of old were great in the world, of Gorias, that is in the east, and is buried under the dust, and Murias, that was in the west, and is now hid under the sea; of Finias, that was in the south where men have the burning sand under their feet, and of Falias, that is in the north, where old men sat long around the fire. But now they have all gone out of my mind. I can think of none of them.

MORDRET. Maliste, you are not happy here. You have been here but two weeks and yet already you are beginning to fade. You are paler than you were, as the moon we see in a deep water, is paler than the moon we see in the sky.

MALISTE. You are very kind to me—all of you are very kind to me. No one could love me more tenderly than Hernaut, and yet—

MORDRET. And yet—

MALISTE. I can tell you. It is something in this castle with its dusty corridors and shadowy rooms, each with its glow-worm lamp, that is lighted even at midday; this castle with its dim splendors and faded magnificences, and strong things crumbling to ruin; this castle with its—closed room.



MORDRET. Yes, yes, I know what you mean. I, too, have felt it, if I feel it no more. That is the madness of age—to feel so little, and yet to know what we might have felt.

MALISTE. It is the madness of youth to feel too much. That is why we seek refuge in age. This door—this closed room—it terrifies me.

MORDRET. It has more than maddened me. It has stood between me and all I might have been in the world.

MALISTE. This door—this one door?

MORDRET. You do not understand. Behind this door was everything—all the treasure of my father. With it I might have been master of the world I lived in. Perhaps there was a shorter way. I might still have won it with the sword.

MALISTE. But you waited—you still hoped to get this treasure?

MORDRET. Night after night, while all the house slept, while silence stood aghast at its own soundlessness, and broke into ghostly whispers, I have stood before this door—why do you look at me so?

MALISTE. You stood before this door, but you waited: you dared not open it. *You did not dare open it!*

MORDRET. (*with increasing agitation*) I do not know—perhaps—yes, yes, I have striven for hours to open this door. I have thrown my whole might against its bolts, I have tugged with all my strength at its chains.

MALISTE. All this was long ago. Are you sure it really happened?

MORDRET. It was long ago—yes, yes, you are trying to make me say what is not so. There is a great treasure there, which would have freed me from these robber knights. I must have striven—why else should I come here alone at night? All my children will tell you I have come here alone in the night and striven to open the door.

MALISTE. Come, we two shall open this door.

MORDRET. No, no. You cannot open it. It will not open to any force at all.

*(She goes to the door and knocks loudly upon it. Then, looking round, she sees nothing with which to strike it. She leans with her whole might upon it. With a great noise, the door gives way. Like one in a daze of fear, Mordret stands trembling by the chair on the dais.)*

MALISTE. It is very dark. It is darker than the darkest night. It is like a black cavern built over a shadowy sea.

MORDRET. Do you not see the glint of silver through the darkness?

MALISTE. I can see nothing at all. Give me the taper. *(She grasps the taper and stands upon the threshold)* I am beginning to see more clearly now, yet I do not see the treasure. *(She enters the room. Mordret sinks back helpless upon the carved seat. From the right, enter Aelis and Gonorille, from the left, Ysabiauz, Melibrande, and a moment later Hernaut.)*

ÆLIS. What is it that has happened?

GONORILLE. We have heard a terrible noise.

MELIBRANDE. Oh! the door is opened to the closed room.

YSABIAUZ. See, see, she is carrying a lighted taper into the room.

MALISTE. *(from within the room)* I cannot find the treasure. I see nothing but four bare walls.

GONORILLE. Look to our father!

ÆLIS. The blood has gone from his lips! He is like one that feels a sudden illness.

MELIBRANDE. His hands are cold. They are cold like ice.

YSABIAUZ. His lips move, but he does not speak.

MALISTE. *(from within.)* Oh, I have found the treasure! I have found the treasure! It is not gold at all. It is only a great sword with a handle of iron. It lies across a huge shield.

GONORILLE. We must lay him upon his bed. There, haply this fit shall pass.

*(The four women crowd about him.)*

AELIS. His head droops, his limbs grow slack and motionless.

HERNAUT. It is his death upon him. Let no one touch him.

YSABIAUZ. His face grows white and still.

*(Maliste has come forth from the inner room. Her looks are intent upon the sword which she carries.)*

MALISTE. *(lifting the huge rusty sword into the air)* My treasure!

CURTAIN.

—John Peale Bishop.

## THE NEW VOYAGE

Look up and on, O Soul! Across the dunes  
I hear the husky breathing of the sea,  
The fierce-mouthed sea, singing Time's canticle  
In vague and mystic words of prophecy.

Brightly the beach is fretted with white foam  
And on the gleaming bosom of the sand  
The sun, half-heaven high, hangs promises.  
O Soul! With faith and hope I take thy hand!

Come! let us man our galley and put forth  
With Youth's bright pennon streaming at our mast!  
Let us look back no more, but forge ahead  
And pray to God the sea be wild and vast!

The siren voices of sweet song are mute,  
Our canvas flags impatient in the gale.  
Shove from the shore, O Soul, and let us fare,  
Thou at the helm, and I to tend the sail!

Straight be our course away from glamored dreams  
And false fair promises, on to our goal!  
Blow winds their challenge on my glad-eyed face,  
I glory in thy guidance, O my Soul!

—*Raymond Peckham Holden.*

## THE ORDEAL

### I.

The hot four o'clock sun beat down familiarly upon the wide stretch of Maryland country, burning up the long valleys, powdering the winding road into fine dust and glaring on the ugly slated roof of the monastery. Into the gardens it poured hot, dry, lazy, bringing with it, perhaps, some quiet feeling of content, unromantic and cheerful. The walls, the trees, the sanded walks, seemed to radiate back into the fair cloudless sky the sweltering late summer heat and yet they laughed and baked happily. The hour brought some odd sensation of comfort to the farmer in a nearby field, drying his brow for a moment by his thirsty horse, and to the lay-brother opening boxes behind the monastery kitchen.

The man walked up and down on the bank above the creek. He had been walking for half an hour. The lay-brother looked at him quizzically as he passed and murmured an invocation. It was always hard, this hour before taking first vows. Eighteen years before one, the world just behind. The lay-brother had seen many in this same situation, some white and nervous, some grim and determined, some despairing. Then, when the bell tolled five, there were the vows and usually the novice felt better. It was this hour in the country when the world seemed gloriously apparent and the monastery vaguely impotent. The lay-brother shook his head in sympathy and passed on.

The man's eyes were bent upon his prayer-book. He was very young, twenty at the most, and his dark hair in disorder gave him an even more boyish expression. A light flush lay on his calm face and his lips moved incessantly. He was not nervous. It seemed to him as if he had always known he was to become a priest. Two years before, he had felt the vague stirring, the transcendent sense of seeing heaven in everything, that warned him softly, kindly that the spring of his life was coming. He had

given himself every opportunity to resist. He had gone a year to college, four months abroad, and both experiences only increased within him the knowledge of his destiny. There was little hesitation. He had at first feared self-committal with a thousand nameless terrors. He thought he loved the world. Panicky, he struggled, but surer and surer he felt that the last word had been said. He had his vocation—and then, because he was no coward, he decided to become a priest.

Through the long month of his probation he alternated between deep, almost delirious, joy and the same vague terror at his own love of life and his realization of all he sacrificed. As a favorite child he had been reared in pride and confidence in his ability, in faith in his destiny. Careers were open to him, pleasure, travel, the law, the diplomatic service. When, three months before, he had walked into the library at home and told his father that he was going to become a Jesuit priest, there was a family scene and letters on all sides from friends and relatives. They told him he was ruining a promising young life because of a sentimental notion of self sacrifice, a boyish dream. For a month he listened to the bitter melodrama of the commonplace, finding his only rest in prayer, knowing his salvation and trusting in it. After all, his worst battle had been with himself. He grieved at his father's disappointment and his mother's tears, but he knew that time would set them right.

And now in half an hour he would take the vows which pledged him forever to a life of service. Eighteen years of study—eighteen years where his every thought, every idea would be dictated to him, where his individuality, his physical ego would be effaced and he would come forth strong and firm to work and work and work. He felt strangely calm, happier in fact than he had been for days and months. Something in the fierce, pulsing heat of the sun likened itself to his own heart, strong in its deci-

sion, virile and doing its own share in the work, the greatest work. He was elated that he had been chosen, he from so many unquestionably singled out, unceasingly called for. And he had answered.

The words of the prayers seemed to run like a stream into his thoughts, lifting him up peacefully, serenely; and a smile lingered around his eyes. Everything seemed so easy; surely all life was a prayer. Up and down he walked. Then of a sudden something happened. Afterwards he could never describe it except by saying that some undercurrent had crept into his prayer, something unsought, alien. He read on for a moment and then it seemed to take the form of music. He raised his eyes with a start—far down the dusty road a group of negro hands were walking along singing, and the song was an old song that he knew:

“We hope ter meet you in heaven whar we’ll  
Part no mo’,  
Whar we’ll part no mo’.  
Gawd a’moughty bless you twel we  
Me-et agin.”

Something flashed into his mind that had not been there before. He felt a sort of resentment toward those who had burst in upon him at this time, not because they were simple and primitive, but because they had vaguely disturbed him. That song was old in his life. His nurse had hummed it through the dreamy days of his childhood. Often in the hot summer afternoons he had played it softly on his banjo. It reminded him of so many things: months at the seashore on the hot beach with the gloomy ocean rolling around him, playing with sand castles with his cousin; summer evenings on the big lawn at home when he chased fire-flies and the breeze carried the tune over the night to him from the negro-quarters. Later, with new words, it had served as a serenade—and now—well, he had done with that part of life,

and yet he seemed to see a girl with kind eyes, old in a great sorrow, waiting, ever waiting. He seemed to hear voices calling, children's voices. Then around him swirled the city, busy with the hum of men; and there was a family that would never be, beckoning him.

Other music ran now as undercurrent to his thoughts: wild, incoherent, music, illusive and wailing, like the shriek of a hundred violins, yet clear and chord-like. Art, beauty, love and life passed in a panorama before him, exotic with the hot perfumes of world-passion. He saw struggles and wars, banners waving somewhere, voices giving hail to a king—and looking at him through it all were the sweet sad eyes of the girl who was now a woman.

Again the music changed; the air was low and sad. He seemed to front a howling crowd who accused him. The smoke rose again around the body of John Wycliffe, a monk knelt at a prie-dieu and laughed because the poor had not bread, Alexander VI pressed once more the poisoned ring into his brother's hand, and the black robed figures of the inquisition scowled and whispered. Three great men said there was no God, a million voices seemed to cry, "Why! Why! must we believe?" Then as in a chrystal he seemed to hear Huxley, Nietzsche, Zola, Kant cry, "I will not"—He saw Voltaire and Shaw wild with cold passion. The voices pleaded "Why?" and the girl's sad eyes gazed at him with infinite longing.

He was in a void above the world—the ensemble, everything called him now. He could not pray. Over and over again he said senselessly, meaninglessly, "God have mercy, God have mercy." For a minute, an eternity, he trembled in the void and then—something snapped. They were still there, but the girl's eyes were all wrong, the lines around her mouth were cold and chiselled and her passion seemed dead and earthy.

He prayed, and gradually the cloud grew clearer, the images appeared vague and shadowy. His heart seemed to stop for an



instant and then—he was standing by the bank and a bell was tolling five. The reverend superior came down the steps and toward him.

“It is time to go in.” The man turned instantly.

“Yes, Father, I am coming.”

## II.

The novices filed silently into the chapel and knelt in prayer. The blessed Sacrament in the gleaming monstrance was exposed among the flaming candles on the altar. The air was rich and heavy with incense. The man knelt with the others. A first chord of the magnificat, sung by the concealed choir above, startled him; he looked up. The late afternoon sun shone through the stained glass window of St. Francis Xavier on his left and fell in red tracery on the cassock of the man in front of him. Three ordained priests knelt on the altar. Above them a huge candle burned. He watched it abstractedly. To the right of him a novice was telling his beads with trembling fingers. The man looked at him. He was about twenty-six with fair hair and green-grey eyes that darted nervously around the chapel. They caught each other's eye and the elder glanced quickly at the altar candle as if to draw attention to it. The man followed his eye and as he looked he felt his scalp creep and tingle. The same unsummoned instinct filled him that had frightened him half an hour ago on the bank. His breath came quicker. How hot the chapel was. It was too hot; and the candle was wrong—wrong—everything suddenly blurred. The man on his left caught him.

“Hold up,” he whispered, “they'll postpone you. Are you better? Can you go through with it?”

He nodded vaguely and turned to the candle. Yes, there was no mistake. Something was there, something played in the tiny

flame, curled in the minute wreath of smoke. Some evil presence was in the chapel, on the very altar of God. He felt a chill creeping over him, though he knew the room was warm. His soul seemed paralyzed, but he kept his eyes riveted on the candle. He knew that he must watch it. There was no one else to do it. He must not take his eyes from it. The line of novices rose and he mechanically reached his feet.

*"Per omnia saecula, saeculorum. Amen."*

Then he felt suddenly that something corporeal was missing—his last earthly support. He realized what it was. The man on his left had gone out overwrought and shaken. Then it began. Something before had attacked the roots of his faith; had matched his world-sense against his God-sense, had brought, he had thought, every power to bear against him; but this was different. Nothing was denied, nothing was offered. It could best be described by saying that a great weight seemed to press down upon his innermost soul, a weight that had no essence, mental or physical. A whole spiritual realm evil in its every expression engulfed him. He could not think, he could not pray. As in a dream he heard the voices of the men beside him singing, but they were far away, farther away from him than anything had ever been before. He existed on a plane where there was no prayer, no grace; where he realized only that the forces around him were of hell and where the single candle contained the essence of evil. He felt himself alone pitted against an infinity of temptation. He could bring no parallel to it in his own experience or any other. One fact he knew: one man had succumbed to this weight and he must not—must not. He must look at the candle and look and look until the power that filled it and forced him into this plane died forever for him. It was now or not at all.

He seemed to have no body and even what he had thought was his innermost self was dead. It was something deeper that was he, something that he had never felt before. Then the forces gathered for one final attack. The way that the other novice had taken was open to him. He drew his breath quickly and waited and then the shock came. The eternity and infinity of all good seemed crushed, washed away in an eternity and infinity of evil. He seemed carried helplessly along, tossed this way and that—as in a black limitless ocean where there is no light and the waves grow larger and larger and the sky darker and darker. The waves were dashing him toward a chasm, a maelstrom everlastingly evil, and blindly, unseeingly, desperately he looked at the candle, looked at the flame which seemed like the one black star in the sky of despair. Then suddenly he became aware of a new presence. It seemed to come from the left, seemed consummated and expressed in warm, red tracery somewhere. Then he knew. It was the stained window of St. Francis Xavier. He gripped at it spiritually, clung to it and with aching heart called silently for God.

*“Tantum ergo Sacramentum  
Veneremur cernui.”*

The words of the hymn gathered strength like a triumphant paean of glory, the incense filled his brain, his very soul, a gate clanged somewhere and *the candle on the altar went out.*

*“Ego vos absolvo a peccatis tuis in nomine patris, filii, spiritus sancti. Amen.”*

The file of novices started toward the altar. The stained lights from the windows mingled with the candle glow and the eucharist in its golden halo seemed to the man very mystical and sweet. It was very calm. The subdeacon held the book for him. He placed his right hand upon it.

*“In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Ghost—”*

*—F. Scott Fitzgerald.*

# Editorial

It is high time that the Senior Council made a clean sweep of Freshmen restrictions. They are not important but they are a nuisance. The only one for which any tolerable excuse can be offered is the rule for freshman caps. It has been

## THE QUESTION OF COSTUME

argued that the acquaintance of the freshman with each other is immensely promoted by these quaint insignia; but we are seriously inclined to doubt whether we can be compensated for their ugliness and bother by any assistance they may supply to a purpose already sufficiently served by Commons and recitations.

The real argument against them and against the black shoes and necktie, the hard collar and all the rest of it is one which would probably be extremely difficult to make many students take seriously; it is simply that they are wrong because they are unsightly. Not that many freshmen, if they were permitted, would clothe themselves in color combinations which would delight the eye. But we must admit that even the crudest sophomore discordancy of tints would be preferable to the dismal garb of the freshman. There is something a little uncanny about the cunning with which this costume seems to have been designed so that not even the handsomest freshman, be his presence how impressive ever, can go through the ordeal of these preposterous restrictions without looking horribly dingy. A Yale man of rather highly developed artistic sensitiveness, walking the Princeton campus a short time ago, could not repress an involuntary expression of horror at the sight of the members of our lowest class, and his companion blushed for them.

No one can predict what may be the subjective influence on the freshmen of eating in the new Commons. The substitution of beautiful architecture and clean dining-rooms for unspeakable hideousness and evil-smelling halls may make an incalculable improvement in Freshman morals, manners and habits of thought.

But, in any case, let us hope that the least they can do will be to make the shabbiness of freshmen clothes seem glaringly out of place by throwing it sharply into relief. The whole thing is part of a raw provincialism which Princeton should have too good taste to tolerate. It belongs to the sort of college where "hazing" is still in practice.

Another troublesome and absurd detail is the rule that neither freshmen nor, for half a year, sophomores shall walk on Prospect Street. I do not know whether this was intended to keep underclassmen in ignorance as complete as possible of the buildings and manners of life of the clubs; but **SACROSANCT PROSPECT** this has certainly been its only effect. What slight awfulness and mystery the clubs may possess is undoubtedly due to the fact that the underclasses see so little of them. You may look at it in the light of a sacred and pleasing myth, like that of Santa Claus, to be preserved for the children as long as possible. You may say with considerable truth that almost the only real excitement and pleasure they are likely to get out of the clubs will be obtained before they belong to any. You may wish to shield them from the inevitable disillusion that what they may have supposed to be the high points of Princeton society and civilization are only colossal monuments to the incurable mediocrity of Princeton taste and ideals. You may urge all this: but we prefer to take the other view and suggest in this place that from henceforth all members of the underclasses begin to use Prospect street as freely as any other, and all members of clubs invite underclass non-members to as many meals as they please. But no! We feel that our words will have no effect. There is no reason why the freshmen should not carry on a small strike any time they please. There is nothing under heaven to prevent them from riding down the Street on bicycles, smoking pipes and clad in the most beautiful clothes they could find,—there is nothing but our silly public opinion which we hope somebody will shortly either change or flout.

# Gossip

AN ECLOGUE

*A picturesque segment of the Millstone is discovered. The banks of the stream are strewn with loose papers, broken bottles, tobacco tins, eggshells and dead sandwiches,—the remnants of a thousand picnics. Bosky branches overarch the water just on a level with the faces of navigators. The Beauties of Nature are doing their best to compete with the atmosphere of a New Jersey summer.*

A VOICE. Shall we discourse in rhythmic prose or prosy verse?

ANOTHER VOICE. They have both been overworked in these pages lately; but suppose we try the latter.

*(A canoe paddled by M. Bicker and the Gossip appears around the bend of the creek. The Owl is perched on the prow.)*

M. BICKER. Come, Gossip, let us tarry here awhile:  
The day is stuffy and the heat is vile.  
The campus is devoid of any charms:  
Reunion's loud excursions and alarms  
In daytime drive all quietude away,  
And make the night more raucous than the day

*(He drops overboard the kettle which is being temporarily used as an anchor.)*

THE GOSSIP. *(apostrophizing the Kettle.)*

Go; deem it no indignity to dive  
And drink the muddy millstone. As I live!  
Though thou hast been a faithful friend to me,  
Thou brewedst too oft a liquid less than tea.  
Ah, Bicker, you are right: we should rejoice  
To miss the harsh hurrah, the strident voice,  
The graduate, recalling college years

With joy and an infinity of beers,  
 (Lest middle-aged hilarity should pall,)  
 The business man, this once, turned bacchanal,  
 With choruses of fragmentary song  
 And brass bands mobilizing all night long.

M. BICKER. And we are also glad, one must confess,  
 To miss the baccalaureate address,  
 Which urges Youth to Higher Nobler Things,  
 Lauds that Success which Application brings;  
 We, Gossip, may esteem the phrases crude,  
 But student hearts are stirred by platitude.

THE GOSSIP. Nor yet forget how sweet the day will pass,  
 Unvexed by a departing Senior class.  
 Who, filled by a dislike they dare not tell,  
 Perform the dull machinery of farewell:  
 The Class Ode, which has served its solid use,  
 Since first, unmated by the meanest muse,  
 Some early poet coaxed the Senior tear  
 By making "towers" appear and reappear  
 By terming Dickinson "our hallowed halls"  
 And laying ivy thickly on the walls;  
 The prizes so mysteriously meted,  
 In contests where but one or two competed,  
 For writing of Etruscan Law on Tort  
 Or Memoirs of Monaco's Early Court.

M. BICKER. But tell me, Gossip: know you why it is  
 That graduation must involve all this?

THE GOSSIP. Alas! I know not. Ask of him who talks  
 Not much,—the Bird of Wisdom. Rouse  
 thee, Glaux!

THE OWL. When any youth has stayed his four years' span,  
He goes, an educated gentleman,  
He knows that he is so, in very deed,  
Because, in Latin which he cannot read,  
The text of his invaluable degree  
Attests his right to call himself A.B.  
Commencement's ceremonies are thrown in,  
Because, without some pomp and festive din,  
The whole affair would simply be too thin. }

M. BICKER. Well spoken, Glaux! . . . But see! the sun is low.  
The air is growing chilly. Let us go.  
Heroic couplets do not come with ease:  
Let's weigh the anchor, take our seats and  
breeze.

*(They drift off with the current, paddling languidly from time to time.)*



# Book Talk

It has been claimed that England and America are quits, having exchanged Ezra Pound and Richard LeGalliene, but we are inclined to contest the statement. Whatever Mr. Pound's faults

## VANISHING ROADS

may be, he is often amusing, at least; but Mr. Le Galliene manages somehow to be at once pathetic without charm, irritating beyond endurance, and boring beyond belief. We defy anyone to read a dozen pages of *Vanishing Roads* without crying aloud in agony. It is more intolerable even—stronger language could not be—than Mr. A. C. Benson's *Along the Road*, which we had the misfortune of reviewing two years ago. The two, indeed, have something in common. They have, for instance, a deadly faculty of making all they touch banal and insipid. They venture their commonplaces with a diffidence which is doubtless meant to be disarming. They are as shy about saying the obvious as if it were conceivable that some one might take issue with them. In fact, they seem to figure in their own eyes as regular "bad men" of literature; while we know only too well that their cartridges are all blanks, if indeed their weapons are anything more dangerous than cap pistols. For instance, Mr. LeGallienne ventures the following remarks on Montaigne and Lamb:

"It matters to us little or nothing what they are writing about; for their subjects, so far as they are concerned, are only important in relation to themselves, as revealing to us by reflexion two uncommonly 'human' human beings, whom it is impossible to mistake for any one else"—and so on.

Mr. LeGallienne might have taken a cue from Max, who discovered in '95 that he was already at the age of 23, "a trifle *démodé*. It would have been better for himself had he done so, but as it is he has furnished us with the best possible *reductio ad absurdum* of the Yellow Nineties. He still lies upon the daisies and discourses in novel phrases of his complicated state of mind. He has the intellectual impotence and the quivering nerves of the aesthetes,

and the "mysticism" of the neo-Celt—mysticism which may be defined as symbolism that doesn't symbolise anything.

"Nor was it a vain thing (for the ancients) to watch the flight of birds across the sky, and augur this or that of their strange ways. We too still watch them in a like mood, and, though we do not interpret them with a like exactitude, we are *very sure* that they mean *something important* to our souls, as they speed along their vanishing roads."

Let us hope that very few of us are sure of anything of the sort, that woodpeckers and robins are still birds and nothing more to most of us. But the foregoing excerpt shows Mr. Le Gallienne at his best: for it is diverting nonsense, undeniably, and anything diverting forms an oasis in *Vanishing Roads*.

As a matter of fact, the game's up—moods, exquisite effects, delicate sensibilities, mystic reveries, and all the rest of the decadent or "Celtic" machinery. Twenty years ago it was all effervescing, but now it has gone flat, and is about as exhilarating as tepid lemonade. That is why we said at the outset that Mr. LeGallienne is pathetic, as well as irritating and boring. We may as well leave him with Grosvenor's sentiment for an epitaph:

"I am a broken-hearted troubadour,

Who's mind's aesthetic and whose tastes are pure."

(*Vanishing Roads*, by Richard LeGallienne. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York. Price, \$1.50.)

—T. K. W.