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May 1941





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THE LANTERN . . .

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Editorial

TO write an editorial, to speak intelligent words of advice, to give some word of encouragement to seniors who are being graduated from college are feats which many men undertake, but in which few succeed. We do not pretend to achieve any of these tasks. We are merely following a precedent in addressing these remarks to our seniors. For who can advise us wisely? Who can brighten the picture of world conflict? Who can teach us hope? Among the many creeds and beliefs and philosophies that appeal to us from all sides shall we find the answers to our questions?

Is advice and optimism and hope to be found in creeds and religions? Perhaps they are, but we must avoid an escapist attitude. Religion should never take us from the world, but should challenge the believer to realistic living and to a whole-hearted endeavor to improve society and himself—morally, intellectually, socially, economically, politically. But if we have accepted no creed, what then shall be our guide in this new world to which we are awakening so abruptly? We believe that the answer lies within ourselves, in each individual's faith in himself, in each one's particular delight in living. Life is a gift dropped from nowhere into our laps.

Shall we whine because the wrappings are torn? Instead, let us investigate the inner nature of life. A second of precious intercourse with our neighbor, a glance from the passing stranger, the delights of the delicately tuned senses, the wonder of living from day to day and waiting for love and joy and sorrow—all these are ours, and all these we experience unappreciatively from day to day. We worry too much about the beginning and the end, and our fortunes and think we are unlearned and unsuccessful until we know and achieve them. There should be adventure and joy in every breath we breathe.

There is some consolation, however, in the truth that all men have at some time been troubled by the same questions which torment us now. Whether we find the answers or not, we still have. The joy of individual sensation and achievement and experience. We are our own cosmos, and our fellows are too a part of our cosmos, for they give us happiness and pain. Nothing else matters so much as today and its little ecstasies. Ask not whence Life came, nor when it will be taken away. Life is a gift to be passionately cherished, completely used, and reluctantly laid away.

The Deluge

Jane Hartman

LIKE a long black snake it coiled on the hard pavement of the yard. At least so it seemed to my six-year-old imagination, which had been overstimulated with regard to reptiles by an especially gripping Sunday School lesson about the garden of Eden. While I was considering grinding it under my heel as a practical example of women's rights, a shout shattered the Sabbath stillness.

A violent scrambling and a flailing of arms and legs across the high board fence, which separated one box-like little yard from the other in the city block, announced the arrival of Esther and Tibbie, my next door neighbors. These two were the youngest of a long line of Abies, Rosies, Georgies, and Selmas. They always managed to appear with a diabolical end in view.

Today was no exception. With a shout of glee, they descended upon the innocent length of hose.

"Gee, Janie," they shouted. "Let's play we're in swimming!" As I looked down at my very best Sunday frock with pink dots and at my new white button shoes, a sense of reluctance arose within me. My six-year-old sense of propriety came to my rescue.

"But it's Sunday, Tibbie," I remonstrated.

"Well, we could just squirt the little old thing around then," he pleaded hopefully. His face brightened as he looked toward the fence.

"Or could we water the clematis," he added cheerfully. No one would mind that on Sunday."

I pondered this ethical point carefully and reached the conclusion that it was perfectly in accord with my Biblical training.

"Well, just a very little squirt," I assented.

Esther ran to connect the hose, and Tibbie brandished it in perfect content. The scraggly old clematis was very adequately watered, as were the high green fence and the cement pavement. We extended our operations to the first floor windows, but fear of parental objections caused us to abandon that plan.

When my back yard had reached the saturation point, Tibbie's fertile brain conceived another idea.

"Why don't we shoot the water over into my yard?" he queried.

By this time I was in perfect accord with the whole proceeding. The fact that my dress clung damply to my body and that my shoes emitted a

sullen "squoosh" ever time I moved did not dampen my ardor. There was something hypnotic in watching the flashing stream which gushed from the nozzle.

"Shoot!" I said.

We very successfully negotiated our campaign into hostile territory. While the height of the fence prevented an actual view of the results of our labors, the splashing told us we had gained our objective. We successfully diverted the stream to the yard on our left hand and then decided to try to hit the little enclosures across the alley which ran parallel to our yards. We gleefully watched the water pour into the yard directly across from us and then into the one next to it. By this time the neighborhood looked as if it had been the recipient of no mean cloudburst. One yard alone had thus far evaded our efforts.

"I think we can just make it," grunted Tibbie, as he pulled the hose out to its greatest possible length. Esther and I craned our necks at the gate to report upon the success of the effort. With a final heave, Tibbie managed to make the stream just clear the fence. Esther and I were just about to applaud our hero, when we were petrified into silence by a shriek from the yard in question. The gate burst open and a woman of mammoth proportions and ebony hue rushed forth, loudly voicing her protestations. Water was running in rivulets from her crinkly hair to her sodden shoes.

I felt the hose thrust quickly into my hands and caught a blimpse of my accomplices disappearing over the fence. Too astounded to run, I just stood in open-mouthed awe with the hose still directed in the general direction of my Nemesis.

"Tuhn that ---- thing off, you misabul white chile!" shrieked and spluttered the black virago as she rushed at me with intent to kill.

Suddenly I found my legs again, rushed into the house, and flung myself sobbing upon the bosom of my family. My mother was inclined to sympathy in so far as my sopping condition permitted, but my father chose to treat the matter as a huge joke. With adult callousness he hinted darkly at patrol wagons and lockups. In a state of mortal terror, I was bundled upstairs unceremoniously to take my afternoon nap.

I shall always look back upon that afternoon as one of the most terrible of my life. My father

could not have realized the terror which he had instilled into my childish mind by his joking remarks. At every flap of the curtain, I rushed to the window, and every time an automobile showed signs of stopping in front of the house I clutched my pillow in mortal terror. I lay in a cold sweat waiting for the sound of a siren.

Finally I became resigned to my fate, and since I was in the missionary stage of my existence, I decided that a prison would be a fine place to begin my conversions. I had just successfully won over the warden and we were bursting forth together into the chorus of "Breast the Wave, O Christian," when I dropped off to sleep.

Nocturne

Deep in the hushed and bursting night,
Cradled in darkness, silver-white,
The breathing waters of the lake
Keep murmuring watch, 'til dawn shall break
And scatter the misty spirit forms
That rise in vapors, like fairy storms
Far from the staring eyes of light.
Of a mystic world that lives in the night

The bended moon sends its mellow beam
Tenderly down where the waters dream,
And the lake's great heart throbs with tenderness
And her breath comes quick at the moon's caress,
The vapors that rise in a dewy mist
Sweet from her breath like a maiden's kiss
Rise to the moon through the mystic air
Soft with the form of a lover's prayer.

Esther Hydren

I Am the Ecstasy of Night

I am the ecstasy of night,
The brooding, burning stars,
I am the cool and mellow light
Of moon and slanting bars
Of clouds that softly pass
And pale night-breath
That stirs the trobbing grass
Upon the heart of earth.
I am the sun's caress,
The blue of sky and white
Of shimmering clouds, nor any less
The hateful menace of the light—
Destroying thunder storm. This soil
You feel beneath your feet
Is part of me. The toil
Of those who beat
Their life for livelihood
Against a crushing, hope-inspired universe
In fight for homely food,
Leaves me, too, weary. My lips are terse
With every sorrow, curved and soft
With every joy. I am the life
That throbs in every being. Here, aloft
On wings of wind, in every strife,
In every love. You cannot fly the breath
That blows in me,
For it is life itself, and neither on the earth,
Nor past materiality,
Nor in the future or the past
Will you be free of me.

Esther Hydren

The Killer

Marion Witmer

FRED Brown whistled timidly—he never did anything decisively unless his father told him to—as he walked down the dusty road from Sally Butler's house. He whistled not because it was a warm Saturday evening, but because Sally had agreed to go with him on a picnic on her birthday next Monday. When Mrs. Butler came in, as a signal that it was time for Fred to leave, Sally smilingly told her that she and Fred were going on a picnic on Monday. No wonder he felt happy; it was the first real encouragement he had had from Sally.

He remembered how he had never dreamed of such favor in Sally's eyes when he met her four happy months ago at the Lawrence spelling-bee. Standing next to her, he had hung his head in silence when it was his turn to spell. He was almost glad he had missed, though, because sitting down he had a better opportunity to look at this lovely, dark-eyed creature who had just moved to Kansas from Missouri. He had only a few minutes of pleasure when he heard his brother's voice raised in anger.

"I will not spell 'slave,'" he bellowed, "because that word is a disgrace to our language."

"Those are fighting words to my ears," shouted Billy Ross, whose father owned five slaves.

As he saw his brother's first shoot out toward Billy, Fred heard Sally gasp; and seeing her panic-stricken face he did something he had never meant to do.

Sensing her horror he said jerkily, "Maybe we'd better get out of here." Much to his surprise she took his hand and they dashed out of the school-house, which was now a mad-house.

"I know I shouldn't be with you," she began shyly, "because I don't know you, but I just can't stand fighting."

"That's queer," he thought as he whistled up the path to his own frame house, "the first thing Sally ever said to me was 'bout fighting, and that's about the last thing we talked about tonight. She's such a kind, peace-loving girl she just can't stand to see folks disagree." When he had told her the day's news from Lawrence she was shocked first, for they had not heard of the news out in the country, and then angry because the posse had been ruthless in its destruction.

Kansas at this time was fighting and had been fighting to settle the slavery issue. Every month

more settlers came to try to swell the vote either for or against slavery. That was why the Browns had come. In fact they had been among the first political settlers. There had been a lot of bad feeling, but this was the first outright uprising. It was a mob of pro-slavery ruffians, supposedly helping the marshal make arrests, who destroyed the newspaper office and burned Cobbs' store and the meeting hall. They had killed five men, too.

"I'm glad you weren't there when they killed those men," said Sally. "I'm glad you didn't even see it. I don't think I even want to be near someone who had witnessed that outrage. I know I should never, never want to be near a man who had killed another man."

Sally's words kept ringing in his ears the next day when his father, John Brown, told him his plan.

"It's up to us, Fred," he said "to avenge that act. The posse killed five of our men. Five pro-slavery men must die!"

"But Dad, it isn't right to kill." Fred knew that although he worshipped his father and couldn't refuse to do anything he asked, he would never take a part in killing. People made fun of him because he never made up his mind himself — said he didn't have one—used his father's instead. The teacher said he was half-witted, but he knew he wasn't. He'd show them this time. He wouldn't have anything to do with the fighting.

"We're going down along the Pottawatomie Monday afternoon and wait for the Wilkes boys." His father's eyes gleamed as he continued, "There'll be Ted Sherman and his brother, you and your three brothers, Mary's husband, and myself. The eight of us ought to be able to teach those nigger drivers a lesson."

"I, I don't think I want to go," stammered Fred.

"I know," said his father. "I don't want to do this either, but we have to show those Wilkeses that we're not going to sit back and let them come up here and destroy our property and men whenever they want to."

The old man shook his head until his wild gray hair became even more tousled than it usually was. He told Fred, as he had told him many times before, that slavery must cease. He reiterated his favorite proof of the Lord's disfavor of slavery by quoting from the Bible, "Remember them that are

in bonds, as bound with them." While the old man talked, Fred could not help noticing the change that came over his father as he talked about slavery. His eyes, usually the calm blue of the sky, became the hard blue of steel. A new, indomitable spirit filled his father. It was a spirit that Fred could not resist. When his father talked like this, Fred was hypnotized by his cold, flashing blue eyes.

"I had a vision last night, Fred. An angel came to me as I slept and told me to avenge those murders. He made me an instrument in the hands of Providence. I must free the slaves—by peace, or by war."

"But, Dad, it's wrong to kill," Fred objected, feeling his determination weakening.

"God wants us to do this act. I know he does. If God is with us, we can't do wrong."

With a heavy heart Fred heard himself tell his father he would go along. He thought of Sally's birthday; he thought of Sally, but he knew that his father's strong voice and compelling eyes would never allow him to do as he wished.

Monday noon, as they saddled their horses and started into town, their nearest neighbor shouted, "Where you goin', John?"

"Just headin' down toward the border to settle a little business," was his father's calm reply.

Fred's father talked all the way down to the head of the Pottawatomie Creek. Of course he preached about the topic that was always first in his mind, slavery. Fred knew his father was right. They must wage a war on these slave owners, these ruthless killers. It was true they weren't going after the same men who had killed their friends, but that didn't matter. There had to be five dead slave owners to retaliate for the five dead abolitionists, and the Wilkeses were the most rabid slave men they knew. Old Man Wilkes had run a slave market in New Orleans before he came to Kansas. Fred's blood was roused by his father's stirring words and his brother's anger.

"But what would Sally think?" Fred dismissed the question. He couldn't think of that now. He had a man's work to do, for he was a trusted member of his father's army.

They rode in a large semi-circle, avoiding the little settlement along the creek, and hid themselves in the bushes along the road to the barn. The

Wilkeses would have to come along this road to get home. Patiently they waited, having fed and watered the horses, which were tied a short distance away. They could hardly wait for those dogs who called themselves men to come. At last a figure appeared. Let him come; they were ready. As he got within seeing range, they recognized him as an old negro burdened with water buckets. The mere sight of him stirred their hearts even more against the Wilkeses. The negro passed but did not see them.

Then another figure in the distance. And another. At last five men and a little boy came into sight. Fred's father whispered instructions. Fred was to stand by and signal if he saw anyone else coming.

A shout from his father and the carnage began. Fred grabbed the little boy and tied him to a tree. As he watched the flashing swords, heard the curses and groans of the Wilkeses, Fred saw his father thrust at Old Man Wilkes and miss. Off balance, his father was caught by Wilkes and thrown to the ground.

Before he knew what had happened, Fred rushed toward Old Wilkes, who was about to kick his father's head. With his sabre in hand Fred yelled. Wilkes turned, and Fred ran his sabre into the old man's side. The old fellow crumbled, and as the blood gushed forth Fred realized what he had done.

His father was up off the ground, sword in hand, but Fred didn't notice him. He could see nothing but the body in the dust before him. He had killed that man! He could hear nothing but Sally's voice saying, "I should never, never want to be near a man who had killed another man."

Fred was unaware of the action around him. He was unaware of the youngest of the Wilkes brothers coming toward him. He only knew he had killed. Sally would never want to see him again. He felt a blow on his jaw. Dazed, he dropped to the ground, letting his sabre fall from his hand. He lay there next to Old Man Wilkes. He felt a sharp cutting pain in his right side, but he didn't care because nothing could hurt him more than the pain in his heart. As he felt the blood come, the pain became more intense. With a heart-broken sigh, he turned his face to the dust.

A Proposal

Dorothy Shisler

TONY, I am unquestionably a blithering idiot," Carlos announced.

"My God," I breathed. "What an unusual statement from you."

"Even if I'm the blitheringest fool in the universe, will you help me anyway, Tony?" he went on pathetically.

"Of course, if possible. What happened?"

"I—I proposed to a girl," he admitted blushing.

"Suffering crayfish! She accepted, I suppose?"

"Yes. Naturally."

"How did you ever commit such a ghastly blunder?" I persisted.

"You know how it is. Circumstances."

"No, I don't know how it is. I'm glad to say that circumstances never put me in such an unfortunate position."

"Oh—her hair was sort of shining in the moonlight, and I had had quite a lot of highballs, and she was, well, sort of nice—"

"God, what a sap," I sighed. "What a rarefied cranial atmosphere!"

"I know, I know," he said miserably. "But please suggest something."

"Let's see. Why wouldn't a girl want to marry you?"

"I don't know," he replied modestly.

"No bald head. No halitosis," I mused. "Creases in your trousers."

"That's the trouble," Carlos remarked sadly. "I'm too desirable. There's nothing wrong with me."

"We'll invent something then," I suggested. "Ah, I have it. Insanity in your family. No one would marry you if she knew that."

"Good! That'll terrify her."

"No. Make it a poignant renunciation scene. Your love carried you away, but the old family curse makes it impossible for you to marry. Bravely, sadly, you give her up."

"Marvelous. Martyr stuff. That's the sort of tripe women adore. Wahoo! See you later."

He dashed out enthusiastically.

The next day, glowing with that good-deed feeling, I tottered over to visit Carlos. I wanted an account of the interview with the girl.

"Hello, Stuff," I greeted him cheerily.

"H'lo," he grunted sadly. He went on glumly, lighting matches and blowing them out in rapid

succession. There was quite a stack of burned matches on the table in front of him. Obviously the poor fellow's nerves were in a sad state.

I had a dismal premonition. "How was the renunciation scene?"

"No go."

"Really. Why?" The idea had seemed pretty good, so I was curious to know why it failed.

"Oh, my speech was okay, quite touching in fact, but she had to top it off with something even more dramatic."

"Good Lord, what a woman! What did she say?"

"She immediately said that we needn't have children."

"Oh."

"And," he continued miserably, "she added that we could easily adopt some. There are lots of orphans now, what with the war."

"Ah."

"Don't sit around saying 'oh' and 'ah,'" Carlos demanded irritably. "Can't you just picture me as a father?"

"Sure. Bouncing a kid on each knee."

"And a couple more bouncing the furniture off my head," he added gloomily.

Uncle Hilary strolled in. "Good afternoon. My, you two look rather sad. What's the matter, anyway?"

Carlos made some sort of frantic motions which I failed to interpret and hence ignored.

"We *are* sad," I explained truthfully, "because Carlos is engaged."

"Engaged!" Unkie snorted, his face becoming bright anger-red. He turned toward Carlos. "What is the idea? Engaged indeed! Without even mentioning it to me. I don't mind so much supporting you, but I certainly will not support a wife for you."

"Is that a promise?" I asked with sudden brilliant inspiration.

"Why—yes." Unkie was surprised, but still firm.

"You see," I said hastily. "Carlos doesn't want to marry the creature. She just wants to marry him. We were trying to find a way to evade her."

Unkie immediately became sympathetic, or as sympathetic as his granite heart would permit. "I'm sorry I misjudged the situation. You see,

I've always forbidden Carlos to marry."

At last Carlos saw what I had realized after Unkie's first words.

"Will you tell her that?" he asked eagerly
"Will you ferociously tell her that you won't let

me get married on pain of starvation?"

"Yes," Unk agreed cooperatively.

"Oh, thanks. Good for you," Carlos yelled happily. "That will squelch her completely."

It did.

On Plastering

Joseph Chapline

IN the ordinary person's mind, plaster holds very little interest, yet to me it immediately conjures up strange visions of a past event. First, it might be well to say that the house we now live in is the product of a "depression". It was started as a \$12,000 house for which the foundations were laid. Then it gradually passed through four or five hands until finally the last jobs of woodwork and plastering were done by one who sold it for \$7,000. Thus we bought it, a good start but a questionable finish.

One day we noticed that the living room ceiling had a crack in it. We hoped; the crack got bigger; we prayed. Finally a small patch about three feet square came down, frightening my mother considerably. My father put his ingenuity to work and managed to plaster it up again. But at the same time we noticed another crack. Instead of remedying the cause we worked on the effect. We called in a paperhanger and he covered the new crack with a strip of window shade material. Then he papered over the newly plastered hole and the rest of the ceiling. Harmony was once again ours.

Time went from one season to another until three years had passed. By this time we noticed a decided sag in the ceiling right where the curtain strip was. How long would it hold? We all checked up on our accident insurance to see what we could get if either we or our guests were ever buried in falling plaster. The prospects looked good so we just hoped for a while.

Finally we grew impatient as the hump grew bigger—but what to do. Our thrift—or was it our pocketbook?—kept us from calling in the plasterers. However, for six months we only sat back and dreaded "the day when the plaster in the living room comes down."

I think it is quite true that families just like individuals, have composite moods. It was in a certain mood that we decided our own fate. An individual might have gone out on a spree in the same mood; we decided: "Let's pull the ceiling down!" The chorus was quickly taken up. Dinner over, we invaded the living room

to plan the attack. First of all, the piano could not be submitted to such a degradation as falling plaster; neither could the chairs or lamps for that matter. We moved the whole living room into the dining room—chairs, rugs, tables and lamps—leaving only such immovable items as the fireplace and radiator and one tough old bookcase.

The moments grew tense. My father had decided to attack by way of the curtain strip. He could reach one end from the stairway where he would be out of the way of the falling plaster. Everyone else drew to the front porch.

Now plaster, we found, is heavy stuff—very heavy, particularly when it falls from a height of ten feet in great flat slabs. My father mounted the stairs; we waited. He reached out and with his finger nail raised a corner of the strip. Then he pulled downward; a ripping noise, four successive thuds as four great slabs of plaster let go and landed, dragging another slab after itself. The floor bounced; great gusts of air loaded with plaster dust rolled out the front door leaving us all looking very pale and wan. Five front doors on each side of us opened simultaneously and as many heads of curious neighbors were stuck out. By the time the last detonation had died away our front porch was replete with onlookers, except for newsmen. What had happened? Was it an earthquake or heater explosion? Had the house fallen in?

I suppose we should have invited all our sympathizers in for "a spot of tea and some cookies," but with a house in that condition sociability had to be foregone. Our little party was over. We filled every basket we had with plaster and still there was more left. Everything in the entire house had a film of white dust over it which was superb for writing upon. It also provided a wonderful excuse to jibe Mother gently about being able to "write your name on everything in the house."

Well, it took us six weeks to put up a new ceiling of plaster board, which we *nailed* up. To this day it still stands, stalwartly resisting fire, earthquake, flood, and parties.

Spring Dilemma

D. J. Newhard

THERE, high upon its pedestal, securely shielded from the hands of the adoring multitude, stands that supreme creation of man's ingenuity, the new spring hat. To be sure, Henri has displayed other merchandise in his cleverly decorated window, but all the glittering little trinkets and the accessories in light pastels seem to fade into oblivion as the feminine admirer gazes at this "masterpiece of the milliner's art". I prefer to call it a "freak of the milliner's imagination".

There, perched upon a long, painted stick, protected by a pane of shatter-proof glass, is milady's newest ornament, her Easter bonnet. Scattered below are articles too numerous to mention. Attractive though they be, not one is able to vie successfully with the curiously-shaped, fearfully fragile, wispy thing that has become the center of attraction.

It has been said that once upon a time American women wore hats that were really "hats". They protected our pompadours from the March winds, the April showers, and the heat of the summer sun. But to-day Webster would certainly be justified in changing his definition from "a covering" to "a decoration" for the head.

Seriously, how could one have the boldness to appear on the street, in the public eye, wearing such a ridiculous contraption? Look at it. A full-sized bouquet of spring blossoms of every conceivable variety, with a tiny edge of straw protruding from beneath the miniature garden — this alone should satisfy the heart of any winsome miss. But it would be too ordinary. Every shopwindow in town displays big hats and little ones, covered with the brightest flowers imaginable. Henri, the master craftsman, presents only "exclusive creations." His models are originals, the products of his incomparable ingenuity. Henri is the most daring, the most eccentric of all the milliners. So, nestled cosily in the midst of a bed of artificial posies, are two almost uncomfortably realistic bluebirds. A blue veil of tremendous length, designed to cover the entire face of the wearer, and tied in a huge bow at the back of the head, completes Henri's favorite 1941 chapeau.

I confess that I am not a great lover of hats. I have never spent an appreciable amount of time thinking about them, and I dread the thought of having to undertake the annual task of purchasing a new one. In spite of this dislike,

I occasionally find it very amusing to examine them critically from the outside of the shop, beyond the reach of a saucy clerk who expertly convinces the unsuspecting customer that every hat works miracles for her.

I like birds. I admire their beauty, their grace, their melodious song, and their remarkable appetite for many of the beetles and bugs that are among man's worst enemies. But where could a bird appear more noticeably out of its element than atop a lady's headgear?

Beneath Henri's hat a little sign has been placed, small enough so as to be in good proportion, and yet of sufficient size to attract attention. "Vanity Fair, our newest model, with perfumed flowers by Dixon."

Perfumed flowers! What next? Are ladies to be identified by the scent of their hats? Perhaps the bird sings when it's wound up; . . . but why lose one's temper because of a little piece of frivolity?

"Enough of this! Why pretend any longer? Your Easter bonnet must be bought to-day. Why waste time? It may be a hard job, but you can't avoid it."

Sternly reprimanded by my conscience, I trudge on down the street. Henri's prices are impossible, but who'd care to wear his hats anyway? Just beyond the corner is Mrs. Tull's, a modest place, with prices within the range of my pocketbook.

"I must steel myself for the ordeal. Will she insist that the first hat I try is the 'perfect one'? Perhaps in my madness I'll choose an impossible shade of blue. I must be more careful than I was last spring. Great heavens! Is that a goldfinch on the hat in the corner? If I see another bird, I'll . . ." My eyes tightly shut, I rush blindly towards the door.

Mrs. Tull, a genial middle-aged woman, welcomes me in her usual profuse manner. At my request, she has promised to show me nothing that is ridiculous in design. Breathing a sigh of relief, I reluctantly place myself at her mercy. Hats come and go - big ones, little ones, flat ones, high ones - and still I am unsatisfied. I refuse to wear a hat in which I do not feel perfectly at ease. Mrs. Tull does her best, but comfort is nowhere to be found.

Finally, as a last resort, she adds: "What could be more be-oo-tiful than this?" holding

up something that looks like a miniature sombrero. "It's the exact copy of a model sold by Henri last week. The imitation is perfect, except that he trimmed his with an ear of yellow corn. I could find nothing but the flowers."

An ear of corn! This is the last straw! Trying to disguise my rising anger as best I can, I gather my things, thank the rather astonished proprietress as briefly as possible, and leave the shop.

At this moment I'd be willing to sacrifice anything to be able to return once more to the good old days when I considered a spring hat a luxury. My new hats were "hand-me-downs". Their style did not distress me in the least. To be able to own one was a joy in itself. A huge leghorn straw, having as its only ornament a

long black ribbon streaming down the back, was a source of real pleasure. Before its final collapse, it had graced the heads of three, or even four members of the family in turn, truly a remarkable record of service.

A quick glance at my watch has brought me to my senses. In three minutes the shops will close. There is only one thing to be done. I race down the street to Woolworth's, persuade the impatient boy at the door that my purchase will require only a minute's time, and hurry to a counter marked "Flowers." Two minutes later, I am on board the trolley, bound for home. Breathless, I clutch in my hand a small, gray-striped paper bag, containing a scented nosegay of generous proportions, two yards of crisp new veil, and a cunning little bluebird with black glass eyes.

To The First Robin

Sing me of meadows
Lush in the sun-mist;
Sing me of violets
White by the wood,
And crocus surprise
And stars that sear
Down the night sky
Into the trees.

Sing me of summer's
Half-shut ease,
The loss of aim,
And life that has
Grass-entity,
Death-dreams forgot,
And sweet sleep under
The sky's blue wing.

Gladys Heibel

Pictorial

When winter with an icy wind
Shall crystallize the dew
And soft winds bite into the leaves
To change their colored hue—
A oneness over all shall come
To leave a bleached white
Whence all the colors of the earth
Shall fade away to night.
Then shall I sit beside my fire—
Burning embers of some lost desire
And when these ashes turn to dust,
My heart will go with them; it must!

Anonymous

A Philosopher's Parable

Offise Wack

NOT one man in the crowded, brilliantly light-
ed banquet hall noticed the lad when he
came in through the side door. The banqueters
were too much preoccupied in eating and engaging
in small talk to give their attention to a new-comer
in their midst. Great chandeliers hung from the
vaulted ceiling, illuminating the room to its
farthest corner; and when the lad made his faltering
way to the lower end of the table, his shadow
fell upon the white cloth so that one of the diners
looked up from his plate and saw him.

"Whence came you?" he inquired of the
youth.

"I do not know," replied the boy, seating
himself beside the speaker. "Until but a moment
ago I was wandering about in darkness, walking
on air, cringing before shadows, and stumbling
through mists. Suddenly I found myself on your
threshold and blinking in the light."

"You have no recollection of your beginning?"
questioned the man.

"None," answered the youth, "but the memory
of nothingness."

"And that," added the diner, "is an impossi-
bility to remember. You may count yourself
fortunate in happening upon this hall, for had you
by chance passed it in the blackness, you would
have continued on your way oblivious to the op-
portunities that here await you. And you might
never have come upon us again."

"It is indeed a blessing," affirmed the lad.

"It is Fate," corrected the man, "that directed
your footsteps to this place of light and life."

By this time, the youth had settled himself at
the table, and curious about his companions, he
ventured a sidelong glance. It was strange picture
that presented itself. As far as the eye could see,
ten thousand men busied themselves with their
eating. Some were white with firm jaws, straight
noses, and brown hair; some were yellow and slant-
eyed, with cheek bones; some were black with thick
lips, low foreheads, and distended nostrils; some
were brown and hooknosed. The lad's face was
blank with amazement. Why so many different
men? He could not understand.

"Haste in your eating," directed his partner,
"lest your dinner becomes cold and unpalatable."

And when he cast his eyes to his plate, the
lad was even more bewildered; for there, where
nothing had been before, was an array of food the
like of which he could never have imagined.

"How came this here?" he asked.

"Fate," replied the man. "And you are in-
deed again fortunate to be so well provided for.
It is a good beginning."

"Were you likewise so provided?"

"In a like manner, but not so generously. It
was evident from the outset that I was incapable
of consuming such an amount."

"But you are a man much older and much
bigger than I."

"I was but a lad such as you when I first
sat down to this table."

The youth was too confused to question
further. What manner of place was this where
men talked in riddles? Why were the guests of
different colors? Who had set the food before
him? And why had he come upon this house in
the first place? "Fate," his informer had told him.
But who or what was Fate? He did not know.

Hesitantly, he raised a piece of meat and bit
into it. His mouth watered, for it was tender
and sweet, and when he swallowed the meat, he
felt a great desire for more. The sensation was
singular, to be sure, for a warmth crept through
his body, cloaking him with satisfaction. Raven-
ously he ate on, tearing at the meat until suddenly
a small bone caught in his throat. He coughed
and gasped for air, yet the bone would go neither
up or down, and he believed himself to be suffo-
cating. But just as he was about to expire, the
man beside him clapped a heavy hand upon his
back, so that the bone was loosed and he could
breathe again. He turned to thank his benefactor,
but the man raised his finger for silence and smiled
wisely.

"You will have many such experiences that
will threaten your continued existence," he counsel-
ed. "Sometimes I or one of the others will be on
hand to aid you, but there will be occasions when
you will be obliged to rely upon your own resources
if you desire security and life. My advise to you,
my son, is to practice caution and moderation when
biting into strange foods."

It was not long thereafter that the lad noticed
additional curious things about him. At regular
intervals other young men entered the banquet hall
by the same door and moved toward the table, where
they joined those who had already gathered. Some
sat down to fill the gaps that had been left by
departures, and some accommodated themselves at

places where before there had been no apparent vacancies. All, like himself, were unfamiliar with their surroundings and evidenced their ignorance by their blundering manners.

"Will things always be so mysterious to me?" questioned the lad of the man beside him.

"That all depends," was the reply. "If you ask questions that can be answered and if you seek knowledge that is everywhere about you, the time will come when some of the strange proceedings will be explained. But there will forever be unanswerable queries."

"How so?"

"There are phenomena which you are not fated to understand. Not because they are beyond your possible comprehension, but because their shrouding intrigue makes them worthy of your awe and marvel. You know not whence you came, nor do I. If you were to explain to me the details of your making, the fascinating circumstances of your creation would be like a book opened, and I might, perchance, attempt to copy the process and fashion for myself a man. Such power is not to be granted to mortals, but must by its very nature reside in secret within the knowledge of Fate."

"Then I shall always be possessed of a limited ignorance no matter how much I learn," said the youth searchingly.

"True," admitted the man. "And that will be the motive for your continued education."

"There will always be some things never to be counted in my knowledge."

The older speaker nodded. "Knowledge impossible to acquire, even as it is impossible for you to reach the full length of this table with your arm."

Then it was that the lad observed the intermittent exodus of men through a door opposite to the one by which he had entered. One twice removed from him sprang up suddenly from his food and dashed to the exit, and the heavy panel closed quietly behind him. Another, who had cleaned his plate, rose slowly from his chair and followed the first with faltering footsteps. And others walked in the same direction. Some were still young, some were quite old and feeble.

"Where do they go?" asked the youth.

The other shook his head. "That I cannot answer, for I do not know."

"Why are they leaving this place of brightness and activity?"

"Because," was the answer, "they have spent their allotted time with us."

"Will they not come back?"

"So long as I have been here," said the man

quietly, "no person leaving this room has come back through the door by which he left us. Nor, for that matter, has he returned by way of the other."

"Can they not find the path?"

The other speaker shrugged his shoulders. "Who knows?"

"Is there darkness out there also?"

"There is. But a blacker darkness than you can imagine."

"Mayhap there is a brighter room farther on."

"Quite possible, though we have never received any information to affirm or deny it."

The lad frowned. It was indeed peculiar that men should want to forsake the known for the unknown. Why should they of all ages and all colors pass through that doorway into the blackness? Was there an incomprehensible beauty beyond that commanded a chosen few to pursue it?

"I must know," he said bluntly, "what lies without."

"You shall," addressed the man beside him. "We all shall in time."

"I must know now," declared the youth, "else I shall be unable to continue my repast."

But there is no one here who can tell you."

"Then I shall find out for myself!"

Rising from the table, he strode to the door and threw it open to face the void beyond. He saw nothing but Stygian darkness and swirling mists that curled in over the threshold and reached toward him. But an increasing curiosity mounted in his being. If others had passed to the outside, so could he. With one swift step he plunged into the blackness and the door shut behind him.

The man at the table silently regarded the closed portal for many moments.

"Foolish, foolish lad," he murmured. "Unable to content yourself with your lot provided, you had to seek the forbidden knowledge. You would not stay to listen and learn; you would not even complete the meal that had been set before you in preparation for that outer world. What now have you found? Pleasure? Or Sorrow? Do you regret your curiosity, or are you without, laughing at us who would remain until we feel the will of Fate? Are you in the company of others, or are you horribly alone, even as you were before you came upon us? Foolish, foolish lad! Why did you not prevail upon yourself to await the normal moment of your departure?"

As he finished speaking, a shadow fell upon his face and he looked up to see another bewildered youth standing before him.

"Whence came you?" said the man.

Richard

Mary Hyde

I was careful not to let anyone know that I liked Richard, for certainly everyone would notice that he paid no attention to me. He was eight years old, and I only seven, so why should I expect him to return the quick glances I shot in his direction before school, or while my class was being led past his in the dim hallways? On the last day of school, though, Mrs. Hibbard brought him into our classroom and introduced him to us. When she left, Miss Costello spoke to him softly, but we all heard her explain that he would be with our class next year.

"I'm left back!" he whispered hoarsely, and dropped his head on his desk to sob miserably.

"Because you were sick so long, Richard," I thought, for I had noticed his absences and had been listening carefully to all reports about him for several weeks. I wished I knew him well enough to touch his arm and say, "We know you are a bright boy, and if you had been here all the time, you would be 'skipping', but I am glad you are in my class now."

Instead of my saying anything, of course, it was Miss Costello who tried to console him with the words she always used for such occasions, "I need you here, Richard, to help me explain things you already know, which the others haven't learned yet."

But Richard did not lift his head until Miss Costello dismissed us with a "Happy vacation, children!"

"Same to you," we chorused. A few minutes later, most of my friends were joining the "smart alecs" in the chant:

"No more teachers,
No more books,
No more teachers'
DIRty looks!"

But I was quiet as I could be for the rest of the day. My mother probably thought it was the rain that made me sad; but it rained hard for several days after that, and I managed to be cheered by the thought that next year Richard was to be in my class, every day. Maybe he would be sitting near me!

Eventually, the sun came through again, and Bertha, Rosemary, and I tried to explain to my younger sister how the water was going up the sunbeams in drops too small for us to see, so that it could rain again some day. However, it was

too great a task for such delicate sunbeams to draw up all the water that had collected in great puddles, and impossible for them to eliminate the sizable "swimming pools" that had formed in the excavations for the future houses of "Treasureland". We took my little sister to see these newly-formed pools, for we ourselves did not believe that they could be so deep as others claimed. We believed it when we saw them, though; for sure enough, some boys were even floating a crude raft as we approached. There were three boys on the raft. Two of them were big boys from the eighth grade, but the third—I was sure as soon as I saw the red-gold of his hair gleaming at us in the hot sunlight—was Richard! He was standing with one foot on each of the two planks, which were but poorly held together by ropes.

When we reached the concrete edge of their "swimming pool", the two big boys dived from either side, and Richard admirably retained his standing position by balancing from one foot to the other on his precarious conveyance. "Dive in, Richard! C'mon 'Rich', are y'a-scared?"

But Richard answered calmly, "I can't swim." Then the others shouted derisively and shot streams of water from their mouths at the redhead, who was showing admirable bravery, I thought. I wanted to tell those "bullies" that the two of them weren't worth one half of Richard.

However, I thought it wise to pretend I didn't care to "take sides", so I grasped my little sister's hand and led her home.

That night, I was talking down to my little sister's trivial conversation when we were supposed to be asleep. I knew she would think I was looking out the window, as most people do, just for the sake of looking; but I could see a bit of the rooftop of Richard's house, which was much larger than ours, although much of his was hidden by neighboring buildings. It was a hot evening, so Larry's mother and father were in their front yard, which was right next to ours. They were sitting in brightly striped beach chairs, quietly talking and less quietly slapping at mosquitoes.

Suddenly Larry disturbed the calm. I could hear the heavy, galloping beat of his feet on the pavement when he was a block away. Without taking time to catch his breath, he shouted at his parents, "Richard Kelly drowned!"

With a growing heavy lump in my breast, I

pressed my forehead against the window screen and listened tensely for the details: "The big boys left him on the raft. The raft split. The parents 'phoned the police. The body was found at the bottom."

My little sister wept sympathetically with me for a while, but she went to sleep long before I did.

For the next two or three days, no one spoke of anything but Richard, and of how people look when they drown. Rosemary said that people always drowned with arms outstretched, the way Jesus died. I believed that Richard must have died that way, even though Larry scornfully insisted that a person could just as well drown with his knees doubled up under his chin!

Larry said that he was going to Richard's house "to pay respects", and that we might come with him if we wished, so he led us through vacant lots and back yards to the now solemn and darkened home. We went stealthily in through the back door.

At first we could hardly see, because the summer sun made it mercilessly bright outside. In

the somber living room, two tall glowing candles enabled us to see that an immense crowd of people was there, mostly great, rough boys, now strangely quiet, all of them. From the moment I was first able to see it between the closely grouped people, I stared at the great dark casket with its rippled white satin lining that surrounded the body. It didn't look at all like Richard, for the face was terribly pale, and the unruly hair was combed tight to the head. It did not even look red in this dim light, but rather a somber brown.

"This is not Richard," I thought, "for Richard has gone to Heaven."

The big boys were going slowly to the casket to kneel, one by one. A lady came in and knelt quickly, then arose and swiftly left, weeping, but I could not cry. I could not even leave the small chair that one of the big boys had brought out for me. Surely it was bad, I thought, not to kneel like the others, but I could not move toward the casket. Instead, I remained still, made the Sign of the Cross, and said a prayer for Richard, who had never spoken to me.

Commencement

Marian Kriebel

THE audience was hushed and motionless as it patiently listened to the commencement address. The speaker's voice droned on tirelessly; but to Spense, who looked very scholarly in his cap and gown, it was only a meaningless jumble of sounds.

A soft, warm breeze drifted thru the open window of the college chapel. It brushed his cheek lightly, like the soft touch of a young girl's hand. Outside that same window birds chirped and flitted gracefully among the green leafy branches of a large tree. Commencement! It belonged to youth. Even nature seemed young and gay.

How often he had dreamed of this very day! Many an hour had dwindled away into nothing as he had vainly tried to imagine what it would be like. Often, when tired and discouraged, the day had seemed so far beyond his grasp that he sincerely believed it would never materialize, that it was only a dream and nothing more.

But now that the day was here, he felt a fine

mist of sadness sweep over him. For the first time he fully realized how much the college meant to him. He could never wholly leave. A certain part of him would always remain behind, no matter where fortune would lead him.

For a brief, terrifying moment fear seized him. The past had treated him well. But what of the future? It was so uncertain. If only he could start over again and thrust this day into the future once more.

Then his fear vanished as quickly as it had come. It was childish to worry. Every day was new and uncertain, and this only happened to be a newer and bigger one.

Suddenly it was over, almost before he knew it; and he was in his office taking off his cap and gown. He, Professor Spense, whom the students affectionately referred to as "Spense," would never have to wear it again. After forty-four years of teaching he was retiring. Another commencement day was over — his last.

"I Want a Pair of High Tops"

Virginia Schoffner

WE didn't think he wanted to buy anything when he came into the store on the day before Christmas—boys like him seldom do. He was ten, not quite reasonably clean, and wary; we all knew him as one of the most self-sufficient newsboys on the street after we came out of work on Saturday nights.

When Verna went to wait on him, we all listened; we expected him to ask for old boxes, whistles which we often give to small children when they buy shoes, a penny or two. The last word Verna expected to hear was "shoes."

"May I help you?" She asked him just as kindly as she would have asked her pastor's wife, but with just a little of her genuine liking for all small boys showing in the crinkles of her eyes.

Before the lad spoke, he thrust into Verna's hand the three dollars which had been tightly grasped in his grimy fist; we could see his intense satisfaction to be relieved of such a great responsibility. The money, we all surmised, represented the total of the lad's Christmas gifts from the families to whom he delivered daily papers, along with a few other nickels, the means of acquiring which we felt it was not tactful to reflect upon. Then in one breath it came out, "I want a pair of high tops!"

High tops! the "summum bonum" of every ten-year-old lad. Three dollars! The equivalent in leather of sixty hot dogs or thirty sodas. But there was no look of indecision on the newsboy's beaming face. "When a man can have high tops", it seemed to say, "what are meat and drink to him?"

Verna took off the tattered shoe, which had kicked a great many footballs in its time; on the inside lining she could barely discern the marks which told her that the shoe had once been size two. Long years of training had made her oblivious of the large holes on heel and toe in the boy's socks, but no amount of experience could prevent her noticing that the toes fairly quivered with delight. Such things come rarely in this sophisticated age!

Back Verna went to the rear of the store, where the high-tops are kept on an upper shelf. The rest of us pretended to be busy in different parts of the store; we wouldn't have listened to the progress of a sale to a pastor's wife, so why should we listen now?

Verna returned to the boy with a pair of high tops over her arm; with her other hand she tucked the three dollar bills into her smock pocket. Both she and her customer seemed to feel that they were safest there. "Try this pair on," Verna began. They are half a size larger than your own shoes. Your feet will grow some more before these new ones are worn out."

The lad needed no second invitation. He thrust his foot into the shoe—and tugged, and tugged. Finally the shoe went on; we all saw that plainly, for our business had suddenly brought us together a few rows behind the lad's seat. As soon as his foot actually touched the sole of the shoe, a light of supreme happiness came over the boy's face. "I'll take 'em!" We waited to see what Verna would do.

We did not need to worry; Verna had been a woman longer than she had been a shoe clerk. "O no," she said gently, "they are too tight. I'll get another pair that will feel better for you." When she took the shoe off and carried it back to its box, the lad tried to keep on smiling. But every second or two a terrible fear seemed to conquer the smile. Had he come this far only to be driven back from heaven?

He could have been still more fearful if he had heard George say quietly to us, "I don't believe there is a larger pair back there, except that one size three and a half. And that pair costs three-fifty." We all knew the pair he meant, the only pair of its kind left in stock. And it was a fine pair of high tops! We held our breaths . . . ! But out the shoes came, and on the boy's feet they went, without a word from anyone.

No tugging now, and a still wider smile than before on the lad's face—this pair had a real knife in the pocket on the side! Or maybe the smile only seemed wider to us because we couldn't keep our own mouths straight. This time the boy fairly challenged Verna, "I'll take 'em!" And then, a little fearfully, "They're three, ain't they? Them in the winder are."

"Yes, they're just three dollars. Shall I wrap them for you?"

"Can't I wear 'em? The fellers'll be green when they see 'em."

So Verna wrapped the worn shoes, but each second seemed an eternity to two trembling feet

and to one blissfully happy boy. He grabbed the bag with a grin in exchange for the "Merry Christmas" which was half formed on her lips. When she came back to us, Vivian and I were talking about what we wanted to buy for lunch; between the gaps of our conversation we could

hear Bill and George trying to put some interest into their discussion of a new brand of smoking tobacco. No one mentioned high tops, and no one mentioned fifty cents. What other use is there for that mysterious god, Profit-and-Loss, on the day before Saint Nicholas comes around?

Past

So here's my past: a heap of ashes soft
And gray as feathers, all that's left of fires
That made my body glow with tender warmth,
That scorched my soul like earth that's breathed
upon
By forest fire, that promised steady flame
Eternal as an altar-fire. And now
Irrevocable ashes almost hide
A tiny flicker, pale as match flame in
The sun, that barely warms my finger-tips
And drowns in one or two remembered tears.

Dorothy Shisler

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Hypothesis

(To a self-satisfied scientist)

If electrons are so very cute,
Pray, with them let's see you compute
The electrovalence of a kiss
The atomic energy of bliss.

—Gladys Heibel

Hollander & Feldman

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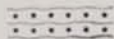
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"YOU SAVVY
QUICK,
SOLDIER!"



DAD ought to know. Look at the wall behind him. Photo of Dad, straight and proud in old-style choker-collared blouse, Sam Browne belt, and second "looie's" gold bars. And his decorations—the Order of the Purple Heart, Victory Medal, Croix de Guerre *with palm*.

"You savvy quick, soldier," he says to his son as that chip off the old block in the new uniform proffers Camels. "These were practically 'regulation' cigarettes with the army men I knew. Lots of other things seem to have changed, but *not* a soldier's 'smokin's.'"

Right! Today, and for more than 20 years, reports from Army Post Exchanges show that Camels are the favorite. And in Navy canteens, too, Camel is the leader.

Just seems that Camels click with more people than any other cigarette—whether they're wearing O.D., blues, or civvies. You'll savvy, too—and quick—with your first puff of a slower-burning Camel with its extra mildness, extra coolness, and extra flavor, why it's the "front-line" cigarette—past, present, and future!

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COSTLIER TOBACCOS