Folio

a literary magazine

MARCH - - - - 1948

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VOLUME II MARCH, 1948 NUMBER II

Published by authorization of the University Student Commission at the University of Western Ontario.

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IN THIS ISSUE

Sharkey

It is really amazing how often a fellow bumps into an old friend, and while it is equally amazing how often that fellow owes that old friend some money and wishes to duck out the door before being reminded of same I can say that I lost no time in going over to the corner table where sat my old buddy Alexander P. Sharkey.

"Mama mia!" cried Sharkey. "If it isn't the Kid himself. Why, I don't remember seeing you since we were back in old Limeyland. Wasn't it the night that Mrs. Tupwhistle invited us over to tea?"

"Right, Sharkey, right," I said. "And speaking of Mrs. Tupwhistle's little tea, perhaps you could clear up some of the fog around the unexpected events of that evening. They have puzzled me quite some for the past three years."

"Now look," said Sharkey. "The story that you want to hear is a bit personal, and maybe I don't want to tell it. But, draw up a chair and partake of some nourishment while we discuss affairs of interest from this wicked old world of ours. What are you doing for a living these days?"

Sharkey was one of the most interesting buddies that I have ever had. He is about forty-five years old, is big enough to toss his weight around, and has a friendly face and smooth tongue that give forth a very pleasing personality. In 1918 he was on draft for France when the brasshats discovered that, according to his age, he should still be in the Boy Scouts. In 1939 he had received another free ride to England, and after four years of manoeuvers, had waded ashore with the First Division in Sicily. Two weeks later he was Blighty-bound with a bullet in his tummy and a recommendation for a medal that he never received. After that, as far as I could see he did very little in the line of work aside from supplying the natives with shell-eggs and blankets.

One evening, about the time that Runstedt was trying to bunt to first with two out in the ninth and the bases empty, Sharkey and I were crunching biscuits in the snackbar of the local Amusement Hall and talking about this and that—at least I was talking while Sharkey was giving the crowd the once-over. Suddenly he leaned across the table and spoke as follows: "Get a load of that redhead just across from those Vandoos!"

The girl was certainly worth a look, and perhaps two or three more. I have seen girls capable of turning Greenland into steam with one smile, and girls who could alter a ten bob dress into a ten quid gown just by wearing it, and tall girls, and redheads,, and girls with twenty-three other pleasing features but never before had I seen one girl who had all of them and especially in that one-pub town.

"Would you believe it," said Sharkey, "I knew a broad in '18 who could be that one's Siamese twin. Hold my chair." And with that he was halfway to the redhead's table.

I have often wished I could have heard Sharkey's line of approach, because

it went over like a bowling pin. Before a chappie who stutters could say, "two pints of light please," he was waving me the old come-on-over.

"Sylvia and Agatha Tupwhistle," he said, "this is my friend The Kid."

Of course a blindman could see that Sharkey was giving me the dull job of keeping Agatha occupied while he was getting in solid with Sylvia. Unfortunately, Agatha did not share in her sister's beauty. In fact she was an A-1 prune. While her face might not stop Big Ben in the blackout, it would certainly crumple any alarm clocks that might happen along, and perhaps any grandfather clocks as well. Therefore I stood up at the first opportunity prepared to wish one and all a pleasant cheerio.

But before my mouth was open Sharkey took over. "I hear," he said, "that the Red Tiger pub has a new billiard table. Shall we try a four-hander!"

Now the Tupwhistle sisters were not only fond of billiards, as well as other games such as one plays in pubs, but they also had considerable skill in same. Sylvia ran up such a quick score on the pool table that Sharkey and I scarcely had time to chalk our cues. Then we tried darts with no better luck. Agatha threw doubles and triples and bullseyes like a champion, all the while giving forth a line of chaff and wit that surprised us no little.

All went very well for the next few days. We were seen at such spots as The Ritz, The Swan, The Red Tiger and the Hippodrome, to say nothing of two evenings spent out of town.

One evening, as we sat sipping a brew in The Red Tiger, Sylvia told us about their mother. The mater, she said, was a dear and not too old widow who had helped her daughters greatly in one way and another and who now kept their flat tidy while they worked in a shop. Furthermore, she told us that her mother was always interested in meeting their friends. "You simply must toddle around for tea to-morrow eveningg."

The next evening Sharkey and I went around to the flat on Victoria street. Sylvia, who must have been listening for us at the keyhole, opened the door just as Sharkey lifted the knocker. After giving me a nice big "hello" and Sharkey a nicer and bigger smoosh smush, she called to the kitchen: "Aiow muthah! The bies ah heah. Dew komm in."

Sylvia had by no means exaggerated her mother's charm and beauty for that was impossible. Mrs. Tupwhistle was just as one would expect to find Sylvia along about 1965. She had the same red hair, the same smile and the same smooth figure, as well as the added refinement that comes to women in their forties.

But when Mrs. Tupwhistle saw Sharkey her smile changed into a gasp, and then a stare, and a little later into a fierce glare. Sharkey, who looked like an undertaker's apprentice on his first case, started edging towards the door. Sylvia and Agatha appeared to be completely at sea.

By now Sharkey was halfway to the door and I was thinking of joining him. But before I could move Mrs. Tupwhistle had grabbed a cane out of the umbrella stand and was going for Sharkey.

"Run Kid," he yelled. "Run like Hell!"

Run I did, out the door and down the stairway. Sharkey was ahead of me, while back on the landing Mrs. Tupwhistle was raking in odds and ends and throwing them at him, although how she could hope to hit him on a narrow stairway with me in the way was more than I could see. But she threw just the same while we ducked and dodged and dropped four steps at a time. I finally slammed the door after me just in time to stop a bottle coming fast enough to cripple a bulldozer.

And that is the last that I saw of Sharkey. He was not at camp when I returned, nor did he show up the next day. In the evening I made the rounds of the pubs and canteens but found no Sharkey. The day after that, our unit went out on draft—without Sharkey.

I was not to see him until the day I bumped into him here in Canada.

"Yes," I said, (once more back in Canada) the new Studebaker is certainly a marvellous little buggy. But I am more interested in hearing your version of the Tupwhistle riot, and also you never told me what became of you afterwards. If it was one of your personal affairs why did I need to carry a bump on my nogging for a week or so after."

"I see your point," said Sharkey. "But first let's have another of your cigarettes. That's a good boy."

"I beat you down the stairs," began Sharkey, "and dived into that corner air-raid shelter before you hit the street. Of course I was a bit jolted over it all, but I began to remember a few things from '18 and by the time I had my wind back had decided to have a few more words with Mrs. Tupwhistle. I tiptoed into the flat without knocking.

"Our lady was sitting on the sofa, crying into a little handkerchief. She stared at me without saying a word. Then she shooed the girls into the kitchen and told me to sit down. You see, Kid, the girl from '18 who could have been Sylvia's twin was nobody but Mrs. Tupwhistle herself. She told me that Sylvia was born not too long after I had gone home in '19 and that the only reason for her last name being Tupwhistle was that I somehow forgot to tell her that mine was Sharkey. She also told me that she had not found it easy to pay her bills while Sylvia was a baby.

"I could see that I was strictly for the birds, as far as Mrs. Tupwhistle was concerned, and that the sooner I cleared out the better. But Sylvia had been eavesdropping on us. She popped out of the kitchen and started to blubber on my shoulder. She said that I was the best father a girl could have and that she didn't give a damn what her mother said about me. I could never remember anyone saying such things about me before. I patted her shoulder and said, "There, there," and "Now, now," and "Chin up kiddo," all of which gradually settled her and Mrs. Tupwhistle also. The next thing that I knew I was asking the blessing from the head of the tea table.

"Along about midnight I spoke of leaving but she wouldn't listen to me. She said that I might get lost in the blackout and that it was too late to get into camp anyway. Of course neither of these possibilities worried me in the least, but I agreed with her, after the proper amount of hesitation. You see,

Kid, I had too good a setup to let some silly Jerry spoil it. So the next morning I agreed with her again, and so on for the next two weeks.

"And that is about all," he said. "I did my stretch for jumping draft, got discharged and got married. We bought the Red Tiger and have done very well ever since. Drop in for a brew the next time that you are over our way."

"Thank you Sharkey, I most certainlly will. But what brings you back to Canada when, by rights, you should be filling them up in The Red Tiger?"

"Why," he said, "Mrs. Sharkey and I are visiting our dear Sylvia who married a chappie from this town of yours. You must drop around and see our little grand-daughter. She is the reddest redhead yet!"

—Willis Tilden

Kingdom of Klee-Shays

Did you ever visit the Land of Klee-Shays
Where writers go on their lazy days,
Where old King Trite and jaded Queen Worn
Feed the people with copious corn.
Where a Bromide is the favourite drink
And the citizen's great crime is to think,
Where tourists their hackneyed mounts astride
Up on the platitudes daily ride.
Of course, conditions are awful
At times described as terrible,
Fogs are as thick as soup
Fires raging and roaring,
People as stubborn as mules
Some of them crazy as fools,
Children as smart as crickets
(Though suffering from mental rickets.)
On the other hand—
The country's abnormally normal,
The grass is green as grass
The nights are as black as night,
The fair sex with raven tresses
Are jealous of beautiful blondes,
The snow is as white as snow,
(Ouch! Time for me to blow).
If you think my verse is bad
If it almost drives you mad,
Don't blame me!
Just got back you see
From the Kingdom of Klee-Shays.

—Roger Gleason

"Just a Little Too Big"

The little fellow trotted up to the bus stop on his short, terrier legs. He peered anxiously in the direction from which the bus came, his eyes blurring from the exertion of the last sprint. His thick lensed glasses had jostled lower on his nose with each short bounce and forced him to tilt his head back in order to see. Short, hard breaths jerked from his narrow, caved-in chest and were exhaled noisily out of his half-open mouth. His nose was apparently more ornamental than useful, as each inhale sucked in his loose, lower lip and the released breath seemed to force out his protruding upper teeth like a breeze-caught flounce. A black overcoat sagged sloppily over his rounded shoulders and as he thrust his hands into the pockets against the cold air, extra inches of sleeve pushed up into a dozen deep-ploughed furrows. He wore a fedora whose normally narrow brim assumed the proportions of a stetson atop his diminutiveness. Only the monkeyish wrinkles in his low forehead betrayed the fact that he was not, after all, a little boy playing man.

He pulled a handkerchief from his pocket and took a quick, nervous wipe at his steamy glasses. It was then he saw the girl. She stood, not two feet away from him, staring straight ahead of her. As he looked at her, the little fellow's jaw retreated down and in like a bar into a new notch. He had never seen anyone so beautiful. So tall—and her head held so high and proud. She looked like a queen. Her blonde hair swept with starting smoothness away from the back of her fur coat. Surely she couldn't be waiting for the bus, thought the little fellow. She should be riding in a gold carriage with six white horses. Buses with their cruel, curious, paired-off eyes and their common, congested atmosphere were not meant for creatures like this. He looked up at the back of her head. Furtively he stretched up until he was standing on the tip of his toes. I could almost make it, he thought, if I could just straighten up my shoulders. He dropped suddenly and guiltily as he heard the hissing of the air-brakes.

The bus slowed down for the stop and he stepped back to let the girl go in first. Passengers were one in their cold, appraising stares at the joining brethren. Woudn't it be wonderful, thought the little fellow, if they took it for granted that she and I were together. He throbbed with pride at the sudden idea. They couldn't laugh at him then—poke fun and fingers at him for his misshapen and underdeveloped contours. Not if this glorious creature were beside him. As he dropped his fare in the box, he saw her sit down in the seat next to the window near the front of the bus. With the pleasure of the idea biting into his mind, he took the seat beside her. He even shifted a bit, adjusting the tails of his coat comfortably as he had seen others do. Usually he slouched into the nearest seat, and disappeared into his coat collar that he might be as little conspicuous as possible.

The bus made a sudden swing around a corner and threw the girl against his shoulder. She looked at him and smiled, murmuring an apology. Behind his forever askew lenses, his eyes shone as if the firmaments had yielded their secrets to him and his short upper lip trembled and bobbed up and down over too-much teeth like a nervous rabbit's. He felt a new confidence warming through him and in his new-found boldness even ventured a glance around him. Maybe now they will really think we are together, he thought excitedly. He watched her ring for a stop. She tapped a high-heeled, graceful path to the door, her proud carriage gathering all eyes to a focus. The little fellow jogged after her, warm and bold in the reflected rays of public approval, sinking like a warped, lead ball in the soft mire of his illusion. Even the sudden cessation of the dream-inducing rock of the bus and the feel of the cold, moveless cement beneath his feet failed to startle him back to reality.

He followed her, his rapid patter playing a background harmony to the rhythmic click of her heels. Just as he was abreast of her, he closed his eyes to a small slit and lifted his head to peer his way through the crowd. He slowed his step and did not even realize she had drawn away from him.

People must be staring at us, he thought. He didn't mind any more thought. They wouldn't be laughing at him now, not with this golden dream beside him. He tried to straighten his sloping shoulders with a convulsive jerk, then stretched—and stretched—and stretched. He pushed his banty legs forward farther—farther. He felt his little strings of muscles pull at their moorings and he stretched again. He felt inches taller. His head would be above hers now. But he didn't open his eyes to see. He saw too much with them shut. He saw a beautiful girl with a black coat and shining yellow hair walking beside a tall, straight, striding man, both apparently oblivious to the openly admiring passersby. Why, the man was even *too* big for some things—like little, spindly-legged chairs and low doorways. But he was proud in his height, carrying it to its last glorious inch.

He felt rather than saw the crossing and put out his hand to guide his companion across the street. He took a great step, the toe of his shoe caught on the edge of the uneven pavement and he measured his whole handicap of height on the roadway. He was conscious of a sharp hurt as broken glass drove into his eye—then a blazing, blinding white brilliance—then nothing . . .

The policeman scribbled in his notebook, with one eye warily watching the curious throng. "Don't anybody touch him," he boomed. "He's dead." A man leaned forward from the crowd for a closer look, and offered the comment, "Just a little guy, wasn't he?" Nearby a voice, loud with the importance and the sense of personal achievement of the eye-witness, answered, "Just a little too big for his own good. That truck just went over the top of his head. If he'd been a few inches shorter it would have missed him completely."

—Marg. Stoner

The Papyriad

The author invoketh the Muse

When man has gazed on godly plain
His role's to marvel, not explain!
Yet having seen the battle field
Where men and gods in contest reeled,
Though lacking concept to explain
To tell of it he can't refrain.
Thus Muse, I pray thee, guide me well
That of such contest I may tell.

The author giveth a general impression of the air pervading the place of contest before the exam commenceth.

A fitful chatter filled the room,
Made fitful by impending doom
And sickly smiles there were seen
And hollow jokes increased chagrin,
(For some would joke on Judgment Day
To try and drive their fears away.)
But now the door bursts open wide—
An awful figure strides inside—
Ozymandiazic smile
Chiselled sneer and blandness vile,

The examiner entereth

The pompous strut conceits impone,
The honeyed accents, not his own,
Reveal him as th' examiner.
And some have called him Lucifer,
In token of his hoped-for fall
From his despotic capitol.
Wild choked surmise invades the place
Engendered by that Doomsday face.
What may those blazing looks foretell?
What fearful fate those papers spell?

The author introduceth the principle protagonists and telleth of their various recations to the approach of the contest's beginning

Each asp'rant strives in anxious pain
To try to prime his fear chilled brain.
Miss Sero Cram, from frenzied lips
Recounts her points on finger tips
And put in order once again
Restores the points unto her brain.
Ignoble Crib, unchecked by rule
Reviews his notes in miniscule
While Rolin Stile, most wise of men
Compresses ink into his pen,
As does his female counterpart
Whose pen's as swift as Dian's dart.

She owns Dian her matron saint
And emulates her famed restraint
In staying home-bound every night
To learn (mark well) to swiftly write.
All hail her perspicacity!
Her name is Belle Sagacity.
The other types intend to cope
Supported by blind faith and hope.
Stoics all they grimly wait
Convinced success is dealt by Fate.

A resigned and critical calm settled upon the candidates at the nearer approach of the contest's beginning.

Like in that time which now is done
When men of **RAF** and men called **Hun**
Engaged in groping airy fight
Midst asterisks of searching light
Fantastic in the occult night
Above the **Rhineland's** smoky might;
When men of **RAF** had crossed that line
The dimly glimm'ring death-choked **Rhine**;
When certainty was left behind
And life itself, to death resigned;
When in the radar's lum'nous eye,
Despite the curtained **German** sky
The target showed and fast grew near;
When dulled became each airmen's ear
When every tick grew to a year
And engines died in airmen's fear;
Like that before the marker-bomb
There fell on all a poignant calm . . .
Then like a sudden burst of flak
In shatt'ring haste the door crashed back,

An aesthete entereth almost late.

Each candidate leapt to his feet . . .
Ah—it's just the class aesthete.
With ink horn and with well trimmed plume
He takes his place within the room.
But at the portal's mighty slam
The head of poor Miss Sero Cram

The overtaxed brain of Miss Cram giveth up the ghost.

As if 'twas struck by bolt of thunder
From nape to nose was split asunder,
And all the points that she's stored there
Like vagrant leaves flew through the air.
And Lucifer then wildly cries
"All candidates will hide their eyes!"
And though all heard his frantic shriek
Yet still one thought he'dtake a peak.

A Candidate observeth that Miss Cram's method was faulty.

"John Donne was very classical
And Johnson metaphysical"
These points he chanced to see before
The master swept them through the door.

The exam commenceth

Shortly, when this job was done
Lucifer fired the starting gun.

The candidates begin to write with a fierce animal vigour.

Like when the fowler's gun doth roar
And echoes from the weed fringed shore
And rouses all the swamp to flight
In swirling flecks gainst dawn's light,
A shimmer spread, a flitting stirred . . .
Each hand flew like a frightened bird.
Like myriad voices of the Fens
Arose the scream of driving pens.
Yet hold, midst all, one hand stayed calm;

The aesthete trieth to think of what he should write.

The aesthete gazed, with chin in palm,
A trifle wan, a little tired,
He probed the void to be inspired.
In other quarters of the place,
Like comets hurtling down from space
To burn across the earth's dark face
The pens plunged on at frightful pace.

Miss Sagacity frustrateth her end as she observeth not the laws of physics.

The pen of Miss Sagacity
With fear inspired vivacity
Drove on with such a furious stroke
Its nib produced a plume of smoke
Which traced her writing in the air . . .

Crib cribbeth.

And Crib sat in a nearby chair!!!
He, with evil, calloused smirk
Inhaled the essence of her work
Which filtered through his crafty brain
In form concise, flowed from his pen.
(His paper earned a glorious A
But hers to ashes fell away.)
Like some celestial dynamo
Whose awful power no man can know,

Great Rolin ,writeth at a rate unmeasurably rapid.

Great Rolin Stile thundered on,
And like its planetary spawn,
Who vary, in respect of speed,
As they from it in space recede,
Each other striving candidate
Approached that furious writing rate

The other candidates approach the speed of Rolin directly as they resemble him.

To such degree as neared his mind
In character, to Rolin's kind.
Like those abstruse phenomena,
Unfettered by a cosmic law,
Which stand loof in teeming space
And scorn the swirling systems' race,

The aesthete thinketh but writeth not.

The aesthete scorned the humming room
To contemplate his truant plume.

The exam draweth to a close.

When time's required, how time doth pass!
The sand swirled from the upper glass . . .
The frenzied gamut's almost run . . .
The master lifts the stopping gun.
But ere the charge had been set free

Great Rolin finisheth the exam within the time limit and attributeth his success to the magic of his pen.

Great Rolin crossed his final T
Leapt in the air most marv'lously
And cried aloud in ecstasy
"The battle's done, I've won, I've won
All hail the Parker 51!"

Great Rolin's exultant cry startleth the other candidates into a sweaty petrified silence which suddenly animateth itself into an orgy of confusion.

His voice came like the Tocsin bell
That booms a startled nation's knell.
It rose above that cringing crowd
And seem to form a pendant cloud
From which a stifling silence dripped.
But suddenly 'twas fiercely ripped
By some intestine generation
Which swirled it in a strange gyration
That soon evolved an ogrish form
Like those that ride astride the storm.
Then whisp'ring, screaming, weeping, jeering,
Coughing, choking, hooting, cheering,
Round and round in wild disport

The confusion precipitateth the failures from the room.

Confusion held his orgic court.
Now milling blindly through the door
The failures choke the corridor
Which echoes like an empty tomb.
This thrust on all a fog of gloom
Which downwards through their beings spread

The failures chanteth a doleful dirge which meaneth: "Learn speed and do not scorn the gods."

Resolving to a stately tread,
To which they mourned this dirge morose
"Discite celerem, non temnere divos."
They passed a-down the corridor
And afterwards were seen no more.

My ink fast turns to futile tears
But ere its tincture disappears,
Ere hope's dilute in flooding woe,
Before Despair's last fatal blow
I'll cradle yet some hopeful straws:
Oh ye who strove with hooked claws
To overmount that lofty peak

The author findeth himself near overcome with woe, yet proveth himself an optimist in rising above his sorrow to offer consolation to his unfortunate brethren.

And failed the task, though truth to speak
Your fall was not from learning's dearth
But from a misplaced sense of worth
Which gives dexterity a role
Which none but pedagogues extoll;
Oh ye, who victims of the Cramp
Seemed quite estranged from learning's lamp;
Ye also, who in stupid guise
Have never learned to memorize;
And ye, alas, ye souls naif,
Who in yourselves have some belief;
And ye, ye guileless children dull;
Whose brain is but an empty skull;
Ye failures all, yet bear with me . . .
There's solace in futurity!
When age has racked your human frame
And dotage cancelled failure's shame,
The county found a home for you
And for your fellow failures too,
As round the ev'ning fire you sit—
The room a-quake with toothless wit,
Some gibb'ring, crackling ward will tell
Of all that in his life befell.
About his college days he'll tell,
And give a gummy college yell,
Then all will lisp in words of praise
About them good old college days.

—*Gerald Fremlin*

Christmas Story

The great ship was still and quiet in its berth. From railings and sides, water dripped and ran in tiny rivulets into the black emptiness that held the ship. Nowhere was there to be heard any sound save the muffled slap of the water against the wharf. Over all this, hung a thick veil of fog that made smudgy blotches of the lights and caused the buildings to fade into the night. On the breeze that stirred for a brief moment then ceased to struggle, came the strains of a Christmas carol. Not enough of the song to identify it, just enough to be sure it was a Christmas carol, because it to faded in the face of the fog and darkness. There was nothing else to tell you it was Christmas. No bells, no holly, no laughter, no tears. Just a night in a year. Christmas eve, 19 — — What difference the year. Let it be Christmas eve the year of the wars. What war? The wars of the past — — the wars of the future. — — What difference the war?

On the deck of the ship stood two men. One not very old, the other not very young. They were leaning on the wet, slippery rail looking into the night. Neither spoke nor moved. Neither was a part in spirit of the scene. About them the fog swirled, casting light, then shadow on the face that was young and the face that was old. And sometimes the face that was old looked young, and sometimes the face that was young looked old. In their uniforms on the deck of this boat, this Christmas eve, these men were a part of a tragedy. Nor could they be distinguished from it, for this was a night to remember.

The eyes that were young looked beyond the dim lights, beyond the blackness and the fog, into the world that held other Christmas eves with his home and his friends. He felt the warmth and the joy that was Christmas before this Christmas eve. He saw bright eyes that softened and smiles that held a glow, and a touch that could take away all that was not beautiful. He saw snow-filled lanes that led to blazing fires and the dreams that lay in the shadows of the dancing flames. He smiled and through him went a warmth that was good, and he forgot for a moment the empty fog-filled night. He heard the whispered goodbyes, and saw the smiles, the smiles that held back the tears, and the smiles that the tears held back. He felt the strong grasp of hands that wished him well, and the glowing fire of the last sweet glass before he left. He saw again the shadows of the flames, and again he heard the promises, and he dreamed once more the dreams. The eyes that were young were misty and the face that sometimes looked old, looked now, so young.

The face that held the eyes that were old was set as though in stone. The lips were drawn in a tight straight line. The eyes looked not beyond the night but into it, and the man whose eyes they were saw too much. He saw his family in their home. He saw in particular his son. His son was in uniform also and he wondered what that son was thinking to-night. He saw all the old hatreds and prejudices manifest in the dirty, damp, fog that clung to him. He

saw the hopelessness of the struggle. He saw the faces of the men who were standing all over the world on this Christmas eve looking into the night, and from the faces came one that struck at the heart of the man whose eyes were old. He wondered again what his son was thinking as the world whispered to all men this night, the story of Christmas.

From the depths of the great ship, a bell sounded, softly like a tiny church bell in the valley heard in the mountains. It sounded again, and for the third time. A brief moment of silence, then the muffled voice of a man—"All ashore that's going ashore." It was not an order, not a request. It was like the bell, just a sound in the night, and like the carol it faded and there was a stillness over all.

The two men at the rail started at the sound of the bell and as the voice faded they straightened. The young eyes turned and gazed into the tired eyes beneath the peaked cap, and the eyes that were old smiled a welcome.

The young voice spoke, "Merry Christmas, sir." The eyes of the young met the eyes of the old and the hand of the youth reached across the years and held firmly the hand of age. The eyes of the man dimmed and the hand that grasped the youth's and reached back through a thousand memories shook just a little. The fog cleared for a moment and the light fell on the crown that sparkled on the slightly bent shoulders. The youth turned to leave and the voice that followed him was low and there was a sadness in it.

"Merry Christmas . . . and goodbye, son."

—Harry J. M. Furlong

Dark Walls

A siren shrills, careening
closer with its burden,
seeking refuge from pain.

Across the dim-bulbed street
dark walls stand,
their blank eyes cold, emotionless.

The red-winking banshee,
suddenly silent,
glides down the lighted ramp.
Bright white moves
huddled grey into the quiet warmth.

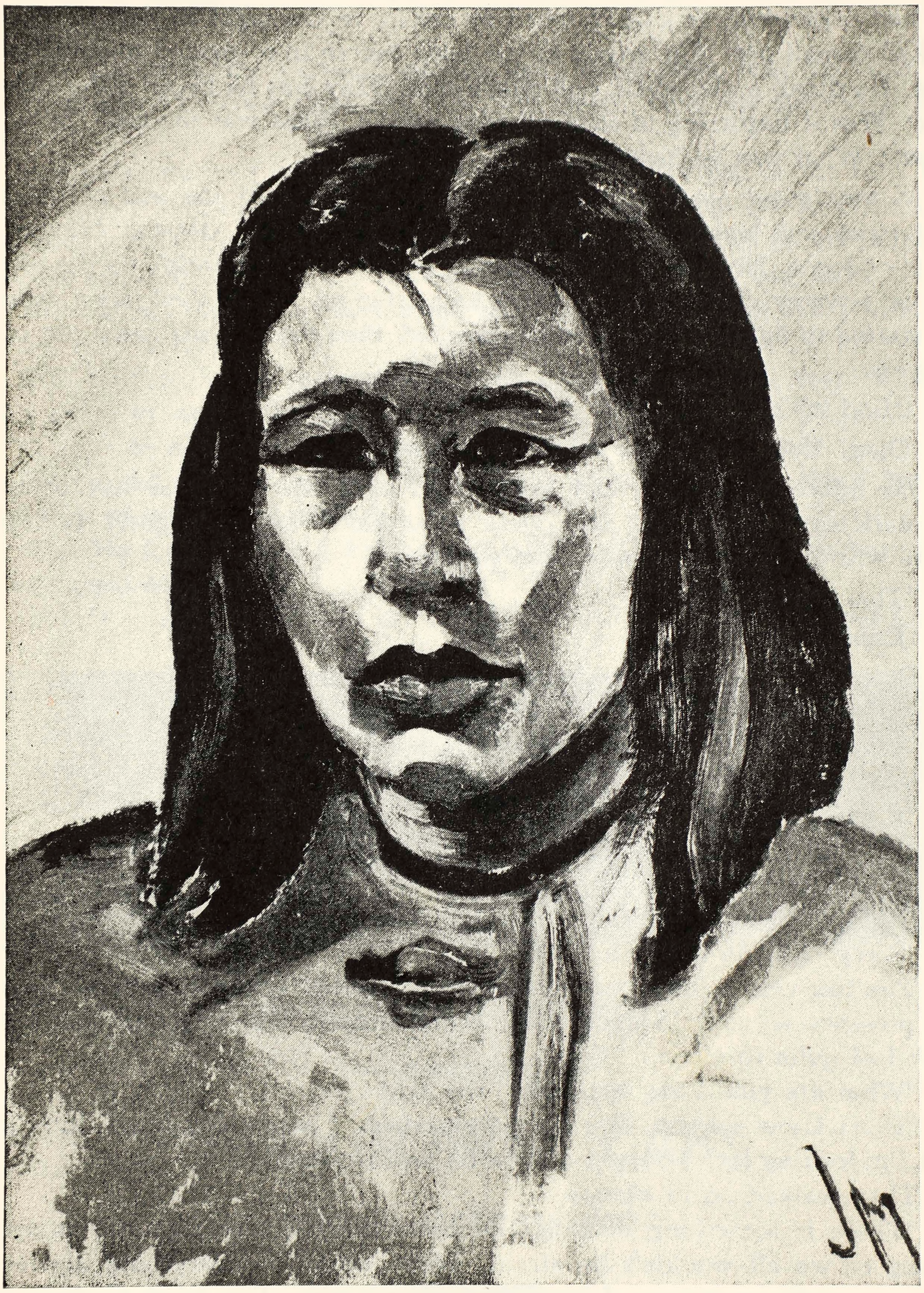
Dawn gives respite to the tired bulbs.
Dark walls begin to glow
blank eyes become alive.
Behind green lids is born
New help for huddled grey,
new knowledge that will some
night look across the
dim-bulbed street and see
blank eyes
in dark walls,
and know they only sleep.

—Peter Roberts

NOTE ON THE PAINTINGS

Janet McKillop, two of whose paintings have been photographically reproduced in this issue, has studied commercial art at Beale Technical School in London, and has spent two summers at the Banff School of Fine Arts. Both the landscape and Indian portrait were painted during her last term at Banff.

In future, Folio anticipates introduction of work by other Western artists.



The Walk

He was alone. He was desperately alone; the same frightening feeling that had seized him as a child when he awoke in the night to find the light in the hall turned out. The words in the book before him seemed meaningless or futile. He didn't know which and didn't care. Why was he here? Education for what? Was it beginning to start all over again? What was missing? Why was he lost? What was he looking for?

It was better outside because he could breathe. At the end of the walk he stopped and looked at the blackness, listened to the silence. Maybe that was it—silence. No. He had seen enough of death; that couldn't be the answer. Not yet anyway. He went on looking and listening, then pulled out a cigarette and started to light it. As the match cracked, then flashed, she came out of the darkness.

"Hold it," she said.

"Sure. You startled me a bit. Didn't hear you."

He offered the flame and in the dim light saw that she was beautiful. Her dark eyes and round face were subordinate to her slightly protruding mouth with lips that were alive and sensitive.

"Thanks," she said.

"Escaping?"

She drew in on her cigarette, then spoke out the smoke, "I guess you'd call it that. I come out here often this time of year. It's easier to think."

"What course are you in?"

"Sociology."

"Finding out how people live, eh?"

"No. Why they live as they do."

"What's the difference?"

"Let's not be academic."

"Sorry. Like to go for a walk?"

The two very minute read circles glided further into the universal shadow. Her presence seemed to make him forget himself. He was still lost but he didn't feel quite so alone.

"What are you doing out here?" she said.

"Don't know exactly. I've been trying to find something but I don't know what I'm looking for. Thought maybe I'd find it to-night."

They walked on in silence.

"There is something missing," he contineud. "There must be something missing or we all wouldn't be afraid. We're afraid of everything and everybody, especially ourselves. I want to find out why. I've tried alcohol, asked people, read books and looked at pictures but still haven't found an answer. I'm still looking. Sounds silly, doesn't it?"

"No," she said.

The two walked on in silence looking at the night. In the darkness he felt for her hand, found it, and the two walked on together.

"What do you believe in?" he said.

"A lot of things."

"What?"

"Oh, the earth, the universe, people, light, dark, tears, laughter, The New Yorker, music, The New Deal, the U.N., life, death, God, the theory of evolution . . . "

Her voice stopped believing when they reached the top of the hill. They stood together looking down on the city and seeing it for the first time. He thought about the girl that stood so near him and knew that he loved her because she believed. Quietly, and without premeditation, he turned, looked at her, and then kissed her. For that brief moment, symbolic of everything and nothing, they belonged.

Still holding hands they walked back in silence. At the door he asked, "Am I going to see you again?"

"I don't know. Do you want to?"

He paused for a long time. He thought about the night ,about her and about that which he was seeking.

"No. No I don't think I do," he said quietly. "Thanks. Thanks very much . . . and good-night."

—Ward Cornell

Statistical Truth

Two things we are to do,—we must build up by creating the new, and tear down by simplifying and correlating what already exists. This procedure is very apparent at the physical, chemical and physiological lovels; it is also applied by man in the worlds of invention and science; and we think it also ought to hold in the world of ideas. By the use of commonly accepted terminology, it should be permissible therefore, to attempt the clarification of any set of complex notions now existing.

The nature of truth is a philosophical question upon which there appears to be very little general agreement. Surely here is a problem inviting a solution; and we beg to submit an hypothesis for consideration.

Our premise is language, which in turn implies a plurality of individuals able to converse. Without further argument, it follows before there were beings able to speak a language in the evolutionary sense, there was no truth. In other words, truth does not exist below the psychological level. This, we suppose, will be taken to be a very strange statement indeed, and possibly there will not be many who will agree with it.

The poet Keats said that Truth was Beauty, and Beauty Truth; from Keats and from many before and since his time one would be led to believe that concepts such as truth existed as entities in themselves, independent and apart from minds which are their creators. Truth, we have come to believe, exists only when it appears, and appears only when it is practised. Truth is a word, a name, a term, a subjective mental value; it is a useful symbol effecting an economy of language; a symbol having great utility in that it is a verbal device to stand for agreement among people. The agreement need not be deliberate.

* * * * *

If necessary, we think we could find references to the effect that the first utterances from a child are random sounds. Some of these sounds may resemble what are accepted as word symbols in the human vocabulary. Then, due to repetition and imitation of these particular symbols back and forth between infant and adults, the child learns to talk. This is pointed out, because the situation in which a child learns language is closely analogous to that in which the human race learned language; and it looks as if chance plays an important part in the proceedings. There is no ulterior reason why a certain set of visual stimuli, for example, should become represented by the vocal symbol 'house', or the corresponding written symbol 'house'. The important reason is agreement among participants. We will say that 99.9% of English speaking peoples refer to certain objects as 'houses' (the blind may do so by other than visual association), and the individual who attempts a new and unpopular name does not do so for long without attracting attention. When he perists, the only term we have for the performance is insanity. All this, we believe, is solely because he is so heavily out-voted. The majority, a full 99.9% of everyone, has adopted

the name 'house' in this particular instance, and therefore a house is a house, and that the fact that a house is a house is the truth. For practical purposes, it looks like an objective, rigid truth; the device is so convenient and works so smoothly, that it is seldom thought necessary to try to find out what the exact nature of it is. The above inquiry has attempted to show, however, that concerning its first development, the nature of truth is statisical.

This is the first and simplest case for statistical truth. It is truth by a majority agreement, accomplished by graphic or verbal symbolization of sensory perceived objects. We will call these truths "simple truths".

* * * * *

Due to what we know as memory, symbols for objects are retained in the mind, and may be recalled and repeated in absence of the physical object itself. But names may refer to more than objects; they may denote abstractions, properties and qualities, which need not be confined to visual experience. They may be the result of other sensory experience, or again to sensory data of different kinds in combination. A ready example is the name 'sound', which does not denote a visual, but an auditory sensation. Let us look at the noun 'effect'. What is an effect? Sometimes it is difficult to define what we mean when we say that a certain thing gives a certain effect; but whatever it is, it is a name standing for some result of touch, taste, colour, sound or smell, singly or in combination. Somewhere, however distant, there is a basic sensory experience, or experiences.

But there are also symbols for objects in relation, and for objects, abstractions, etc. qualified. These are our verbs, prepositions, adjectives and the like. 'Run' is a verb, usually denoting a living creature in quick motion; an object qualified. An object in motion is distinguished from an object at rest because the visual stimuli are different. The word 'in' is a preposition, used to describe objects in relation,—e.g. a man in a house. We may say a 'large' house,—an object qualified as to comparative size. Learned single symbols which we know aas verbs and other parts of speech, as well as nouns, may therefore also be classified as "simple truths", although it is agreed that the more abstract names are not as readily discovered as the names for objects.

These examples leaad to a very important point. The physical structure of the brain is such that new neurological tracks or patterns may be formed almost without limit, if we accept current theories. Simple truths, consisting of the various kinds of symbols described in preceding paragraphs, by this means combine to form new truths which may never have existed previously. We submit that a mere statement involving more than one accepted simple truth, is a new truth. Simple statements so formed may again combine to form additional new truths, and so on as long as human minds continue to function.

In the morning, suppose I walk by a deserted house, situated at a location almost never frequented by people, and isolated. In the evening I return by the same route ,but in place of the house, a pile of ashes appears. The conclusion is very simple, you say,—the house burned down sometime during the day. This, however, is a new fact, a new truth, deductively formulated in the mind of the observer. This very ordinary observation depends upon

several previous arrangements. Suitable terminology must have been developed within a group, althohugh the observation was made by one individual. The observer must have had previous experience with, or knowledge of the phenomenon of fire, in order to visualize this particular deduction. Observation has played its part, but logic has built a new concept upon the premise of language symbols. From two true statements (1) a house existed, (2) ashes remain, the brain has created a third, i.e. (3) the house burned. Only in the mind of the individual may truth originate. To use terminology of the physical level, only in the human brain can truth take root and grow.

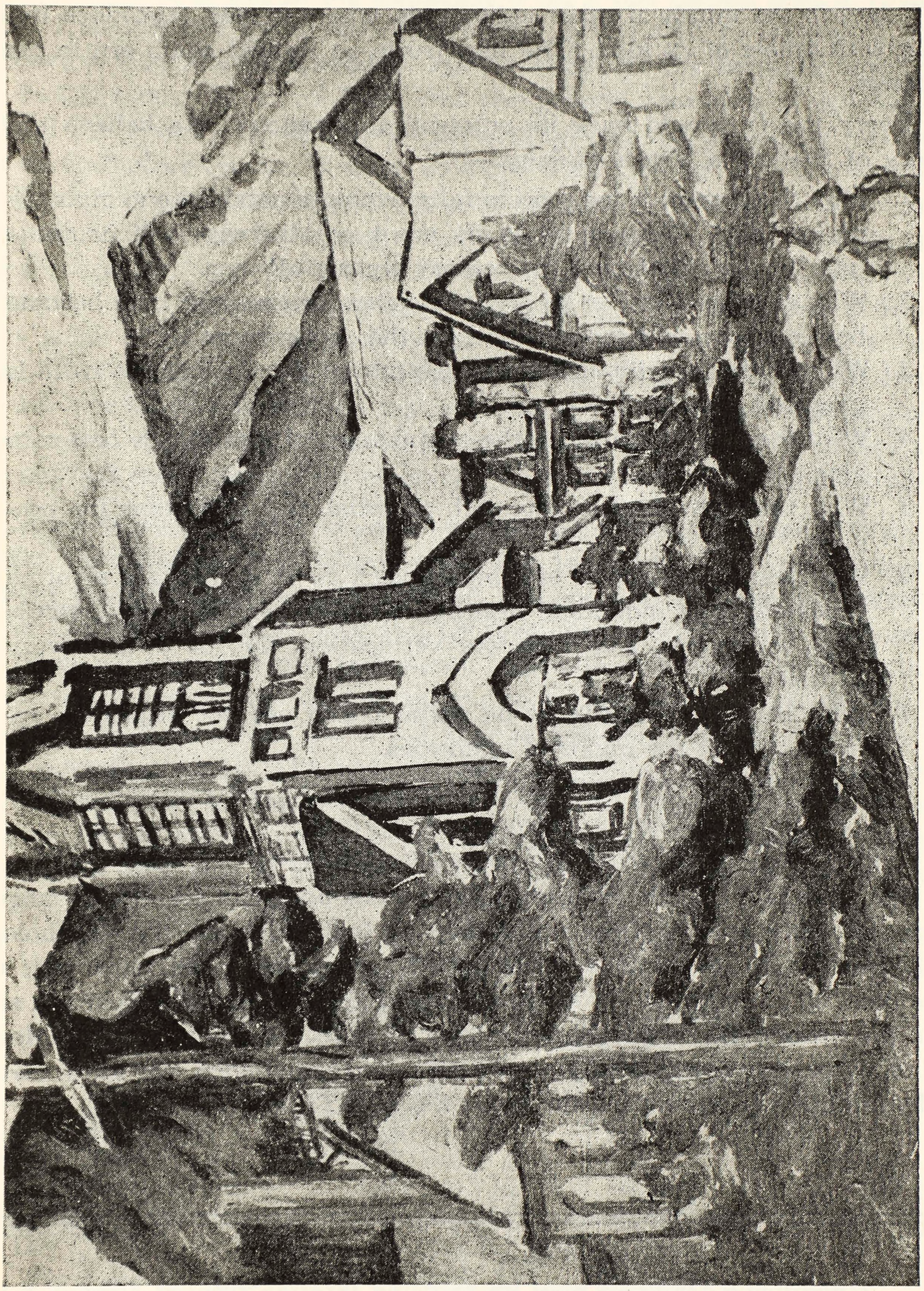
That third truth would die along with me, if it were never imparted to others. If it is imparted, it must again be by means of language. Having deducted the fact that a house burned, it is very probable that I will soon wish to tell people about it; and when I do so, whether this truth which exists for me exclusively up to this point will gain a wider existence, depends upon its acceptance by those to whom it is told. If no one believes me, that particular truth will not, for the moment at least, have made any gain. In fact, I might even be persuaded to disbelieve my own story; after all, perhaps the house did not actually burn; perhaps it is all imagination. On the other hand, if my statement becomes generally accepted, the truth of the matter is immediately settled. Everyone, or at least a very large majority believes what I say; and a truth is imparted from my mind to many minds. An isolated truth becomes a general truth because it is accepted as such by a majority, and once again the nature of truth is statistical. We found truth to be statistical in origin, and we now discover that its continued welfare is also a matter of majorities. This, hen, is the second caase of statistical truth.

* * * * *

We have placed truth in a democratic role; truth is a living issue, ever recurrent, never completely static. Continuously, new truths are born. New hypotheses, laws, theories, discoveries are created by individuals, and have been in the past; newly formed, they are flung out upon the world for acceptance. Truths lodge in human minds, grow into more truths and depart, in rhythmical cycles. Truths are constantly subject to verification; the final authority is sensory experience. But sensory experience is a private affair and is subject to change with the passing of time; even correlated results of sensory data among many may change, and it follows that the truths of yesterday are not necessarily the truths of to-day.

If the nature of statements are such that only experts in the field have sufficient knowledge to attempt judgment, their representative opinion must be taken as authoritative, at least temporarily. If facts or statements are such that opinion as to their truth is divided, controversy will be the order of the day if the statements are not subject to verification. If a statement put out as truth is altogether rejected, it does, although it could remain alive in the mind of the one individual who advanced it as long as he lived. If truth is received by a minority, its existence is precarious until it becomes more strongly rooted.

Since the mind is a mental term only, the relationship between truth and



the mind is symbiotic; between truth and the physical brain the relationship is parasitic.

As a phenomenon viewed in its entirety, truth is analogous to a biological organism with a life history. Truth originates in the brain, its host, it disperses and lodges in the minds of other individuals, where it may reproduce by combining with others of its kind. The new truths so formed again are in position to scatter.

Every theory should have its practical applications. We believe that the Theory of Statistical Truth explains,—

1. Why the present is too soon to fully evaluate notable contemporary performance. Opinion as to its merit or otherwise will continue into the future. As yet the returns are not all in.
2. Why great persons, let us say a musician for example, may become better known and more famous as the centuries go by.
3. Why reform usually comes through minorities. At first the truth is glimpsed only by the few.
4. Why there is no utility in the suppression of ideas. It is better to give.
5. Why the individual is, after all, essential and important for progress.
6. Why seemingly useless statements, such as 'It is cold' are so often repeated. The individual uttering the statement is seeking statistical agreement, and therefore verification, for his own sensory experience.
7. Why beliefs which cannot be verified, and yet not disproven, remain alive in the minds of minorities.
8. Why we have not found pure Truth.

'Many are searching for Truth,
But truth will never be unchanging'.

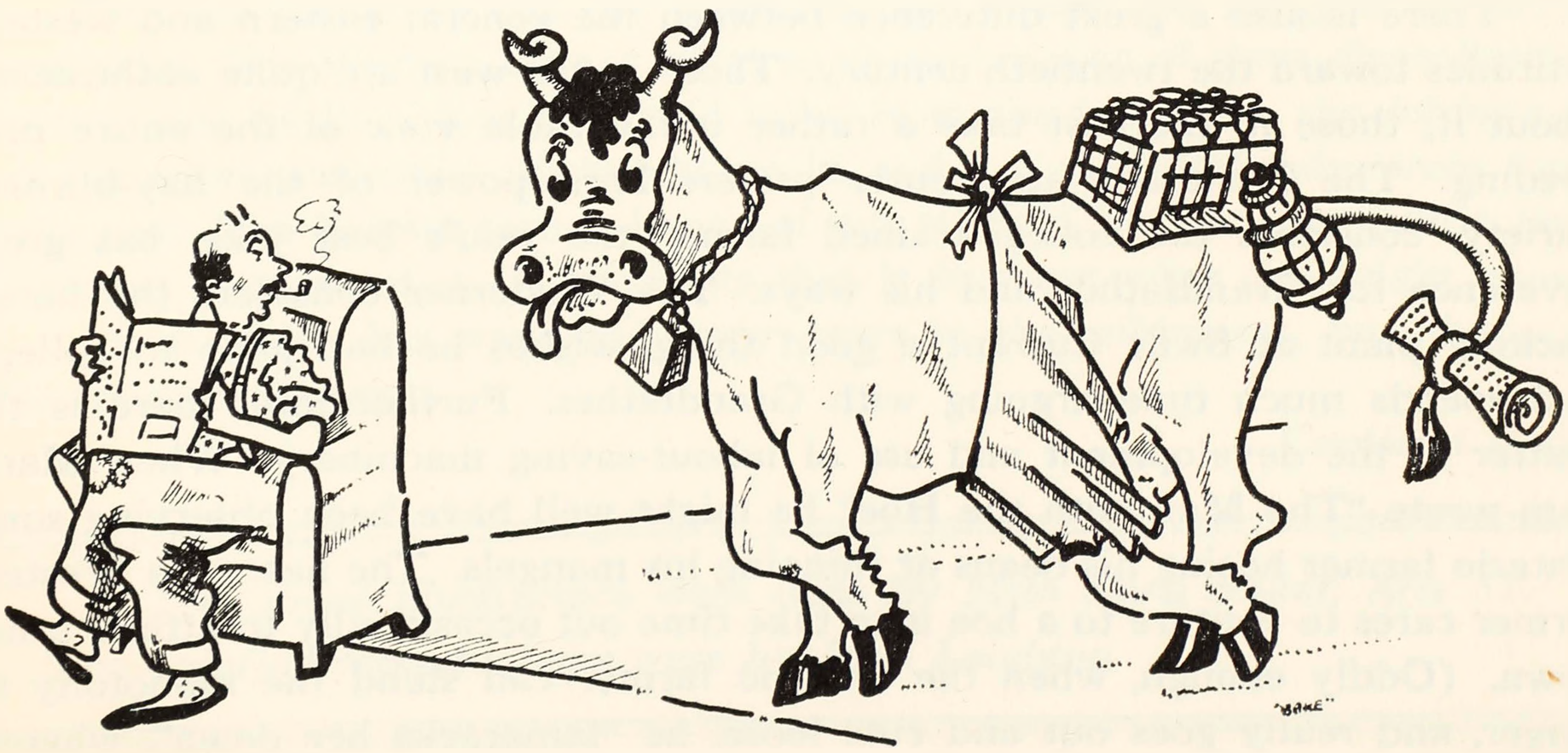
We have said that the concept of truth rests upon the premise of language, which can only exist among a plurality of individuals at the psychological level. Both as to its origin and continued acceptance, truth must wait upon agreement by a majority. Truth is analagous to a biological organism, and it has a life history. Since we require a term to effect en economy in the description of what we know through observation and experience, we have used for the hypothesis just submitted, the name **STATISTICAL TRUTH.**

—A. J. Harper

Wild Farmers I Have Known

When I used to live in the Canadian West, I was certain that if, (Heaven forbid), I should ever go, at some improbable future date, to Ontario, I should find there a very strange species of agrarian. But, to my surprise, now that I have finally made the trip, I learn that the general consensus of opinion here is that if one wishes to meet a really peculiar type of stubble-hopper, one needs must go to Saskatchewan. If these opinions were held by only the occasional individual, it would probably not concern us greatly which of them might be right, and which might be wrong. I have found, however, that these ideas are generally held, and are regarded as almost axiomatic. It seems that the farmers of Ontario and of Saskatchewan regard one another in the same way as Kipling, in the guise of "Tommy Atkins" regarded the members of the hill tribes of India. "East is East, and West is West," said Kipling; and Canadian farmers echo his words. It has become my purpose to inquire into these prejudiced attitudes and to attempt to arrive at an opinion which will be based upon observed fact rather than upon regional bias and upon ill-founded presumption.

In the beginning I wish to point out that there is much evidence to support a belief that Eastern and Western farmers in many ways are much alike. Probably the first common feature which will come to the observer's attention will be the similar posture assumed by these two species. Both walk on the hind limbs only, (except that in Ontario, in certain seasons, as for example, the turnip-harvest season, the farmer reverts to a posture far down the scale of evolution), with the front limbs left free to grapple with the problems with which farmers grapple. The body is held more-or-less erect, but not quite so erect in Ontario as in Saskatchewan. (The Ontario farmer is always trying to catch up to his work, so that he is inclined to lean forward—a line drawn through the long axis of the body will represent an agle of approximately

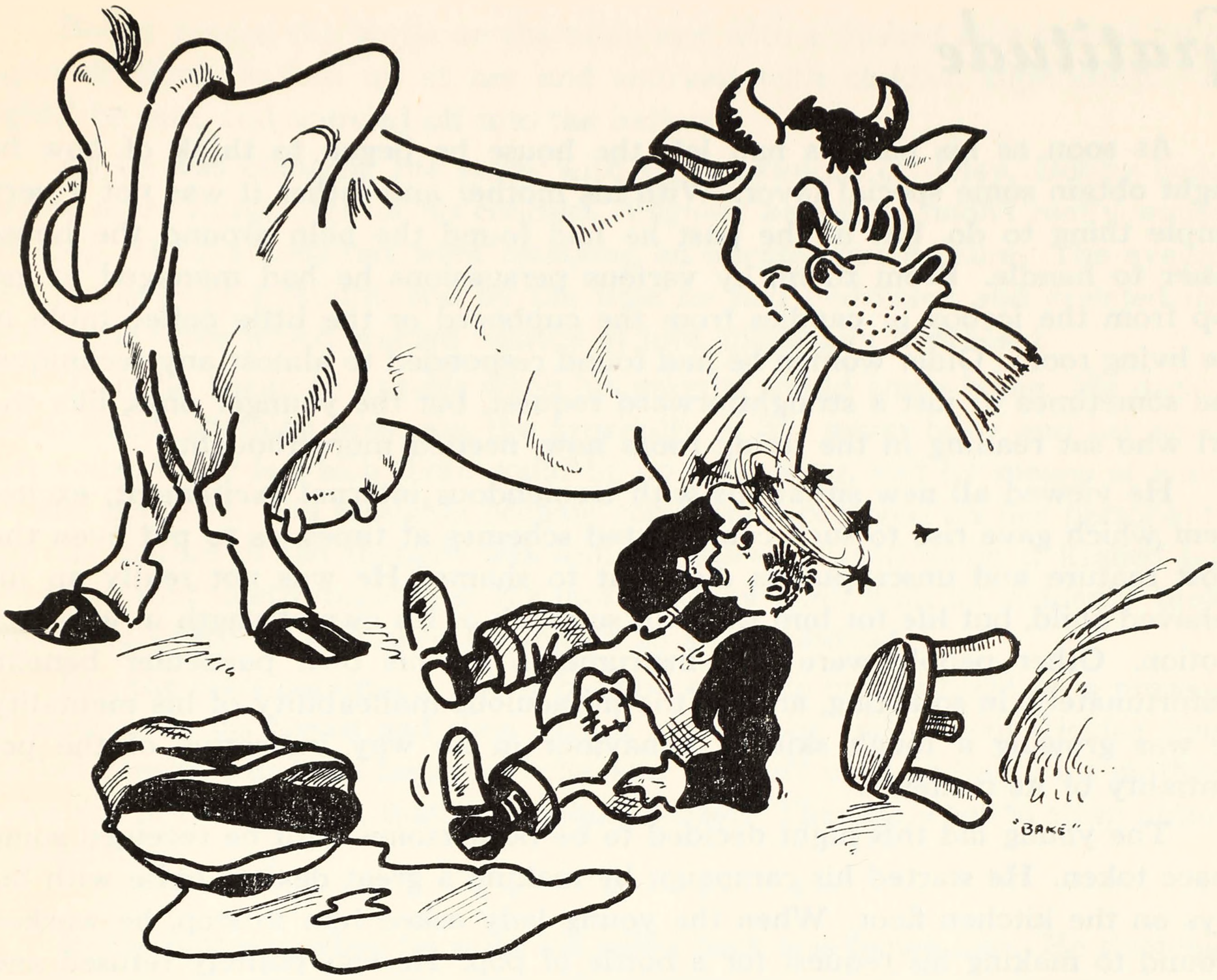


forty-five degrees with the surface of the earth. It must be admitted, of course, that leaning into the high winds of the '30's has had a tendency to produce a corresponding deviation from the vertical in the Saskatchewan farmer, although the maximum deviation there is probably no more than forty-four degrees.) The inhabitants of these two regions are very much alike in features, and the customary senses will be found to be represented on the leading plane of the face. (If the Easterner has a slightly sharper nose, it is merely an indication of the consistent hardness of Ontario grindstones, as well as evidence of the enthusiasm with which these machines are rotated in that section of Canada.) It will also be noted that the inhabitants of each of these geographical areas may be separated into much the same divisions according to sex, size, age and color. Both types make very hard work of living their approximate three score years and ten. Then they quit farming, and if, "by reason of their strength they be granted four score years" they spend these days of grace explaining to the son or son-in-law, who now farms the old homestead, how it should be done. The foregoing, and other, resemblances all, doubtless, are derived from a common prehistoric ancestor—the old Adam, if you will.

There are, admittedly, significant differences. Probably the most noticeable one, and one with which anyone who has had these species of horticulturist under observation will be familiar, is the marked variation in domiciliary habits. In Saskatchewan the female spends most of her time in the house, the male as much as possible. In Ontario, both spend most of their time in the barn.

The attitude of the Ontario farmer to life in general is that of a very practical man; he is much concerned with the present. The Saskatchewan farmer is more of a romantic—a great castle-builder; he continually dreams dreams and sees visions. (Saskatchewan is known as a "next-year country".) The Ontario farmer, on the other hand, is a confirmed pessimist. He is at all times firmly convinced that he faces personal ruin through markets about to fall, costs about to rise, and sundry "acts of God" about to descend. The Saskatchewan farmer is a man of faith—at the moment most of it appears to reside in "his own elect".

There is also a great difference between the general eastern and western attitudes toward the twentieth century. Those in the west are quite enthusiastic about it; those in the east take a rather unfavorable view of the entire proceeding. The Easterner apparently prefers horse-power of the hay-burning variety, considers the college-trained farmer the year's best joke, has great reverence for Grandfather and his ways. The Westerner considers the horse-packing plant at Swift Current a good thing, wishes he had gone to college, and spends much time arguing with Grandfather. Furthermore, there is the matter of the development and use of labour-saving machinery. When Markham wrote "The Man with the Hoe" he might well have been observing some Ontario farmer hoeing his beans or thinning his mangels. The nearest a Western farmer cares to venture to a hoe is to take time out occasionally to attend a hoe down. (Oddly enough, when the Ontario farmer can stand the monotony no longer, and really goes out and cuts loose, he "tamaracks her down", whereas



the Saskatchewan farmer turns the Easterner's implement of drudgery into a symbol of emotional release, and when he takes a fling, he "hoes her down".)

Another interesting feature is the relation of the farmer to the farm animals. In the West, cows, eg., are regarded as servants of man; in the East the reverse holds true. Some observers contend that this state of affairs is an indication of order of precedence in the scale of evolution. (However, little work has been done in this field.)

Both the Easterner and the Westerner are aware that many other differences exist. The Western farmer offers as an explanation of these dissimilarities the fact that he lives four thousand miles from the traditions, the inhibitions, and the conventionalities of the old world, and two thousand miles from those of the new. The Eastern farmer knows of this attitude, but he is not particularly concerned because of it. He suggests that it is about what one might expect of a group which has wandered forty years in the wilderness, two thousand miles from civilization.

—Cameron Henry

The above illustrations were done by Miss Anna Baker, Arts 51.
The painting reproductions were by John Leighton.

Gratitude

As soon as his parents had left the house he began to think of how he might obtain some special favor. With his mother and father it was not a very simple thing to do, but in the past he had found the help around the house easier to handle. From them, by various persuasions he had managed to get pop from the icebox or candies from the cupboard or the little coffee table in the living room. Older women he had found responded to almost any technique, and sometimes to just a straightforward request, but the younger ones, like the girl who sat reading in the living room now, needed more thought.

He viewed all new situations with tremendous internal excitement; excitement which gave rise to such complicated schemes at times, as to put even the most mature and unscrupulous diplomat to shame. He was not really an ill-behaved child, but life for him was still so much of his own strength in wile and motion. Other people were still instruments for his own particular benefit. Unfortunately, in so acting, around the miraculous malleability of his mentality he was growing a tough skin of behaviour in no way indicative of the potentiality of its contents.

The young lad this night decided to be bothersome until he received some peace token. He started his campaign by making a great deal of noise with his toys on the kitchen floor. When the young lady asked him to stop, he worked around to making his request for a bottle of pop. He was politely refused and started on a new tack.

"Why do you work here?" he asked insolently.

"Well, I'm saving up for some clothes," she said, "and this is a job that doesn't interfere with my studies; unless of course you or your baby sister should bother me too much. But I don't think you will, will you?" It seemed strange to Bobby when she answered his question quite good-naturedly.

But here was his big chance. "Not if I can have some pop," he said, "and then I'll go right to bed." The desire to achieve his ends was becoming stronger. It was getting to be an exciting game.

When he was refused again, even though it had been politely, and with the explanation that she had been instructed against feeding him, he decided upon his most powerful persuasion: a sort of mild, whining tantrum with interspersed pleadings. He kept it up until the baby sitter was forced to console him by granting his request or stop him by inflicting some sort of physical punishment. The latter course she knew would call for an explanation to his parents, and the former might easily escape their notice. So she went out to the icebox and took out a bottle of orange for him.

The young fellow took it and drank it triumphantly while the girl looked on, rather annoyed at herself for having taken the easier course.

"You must go to bed as soon as you've finished now, Bobby," she said as he was tipping the bottle for the dregs.

Bobby placed the bottle on the table and with a flushed face caused by his rapid drinking, looked up at her and smirked with childish superiority. "All right," he said, and scurried off into the hallway.

As he was climbing the stairs with the maximum of delay, Bobby began to find a few misgivings for his conduct. Vaguely he felt he hadn't really wanted the pop. His methods too, were receiving an unconscious censure. The evening had really been a failure, and by the time he had undressed and crawled into bed, some force which seemed outside of him, made him depressed.

Then he began to wonder when his parents would come home. He desired his mother's soothing presence, the proximity of her warm body and her small, soft voice, towards which there could be no true anger, and by means of which he lost his fears. His thoughts became completely centered on her personality. But the nature of the thought was selfish, possessive, and when it flashed into his mind that death might tear his mother away from him, he suddenly broke into tears which he painfully attempted to keep subdued.

But the tears continued, and it became sweet to cry, to build up a pressure of emotion in his breast and then ease it out in sobs and in cool trickles down his hot cheeks. His head began to ache, and it wasn't until he heard his mother's voice out in the hallway, that the sobbing ceased. Then he went to sleep almost immediately.

* * * * *

In the morning when he woke his wife's back was facing him. He stretched comfortably. A pleasant day head. He thought of one of Ann's Sunday breakfasts and leaned over and touched her arm. It's eight o'clock dear," he said.

She slid out of bed and wandered out into the bathroom. The tap ran monotonously for a while as it was warming up, and then came the sound of water splashing into the basin. Soon she appeared in the bedroom again to get into her dressing gown before going downstairs to prepare the breakfast. When Bobby heard the slapping of her loose fitting slippers on the stairs he got out of bed.

He went into the bathroom to shave. His eyes smarted under the strong light over the mirror. But he felt better when he finished shaving and when he had washed off the lather with cool handfuls of water.

He dressed and went down to breakfast. His wife was standing by the stove reading a letter.

"Who's it from dear?"

"Your mother. Says she wants to visit us for a few days next week."

"Oh God no!"

"Yes!"

"What a damned nuisance that will be." Memory, the force of society, and a deep resentful gratitude filled a brief pained silence. "Tell her I'll drive out and get her on Monday afternoon," he said and forced his attention to the hard black headlines of the morning paper.

—John Bruce

Poem

A silly-faced moon crept up the sky
With a sly little silly-pussed grin,
And said: "Mister Sun, just see what I've done—
I'm out before you've gone in.
It's only three and you haven't had tea
I really do think it quite clever of me—"

The sun only smiled and said to a breeze:
"I'd almost forgotten my tea,
To-night for a change from star-cakes and such
I would like a nice slice of green cheese."

The moon paled and flushed,
But alack! and alush!
A cloud came and cut her in two.
She was served with a spoon
As befitting the moon
And there wasn't a thing she could do.

—*June Rose*

A Horse of a Different Color

Xerxephon Buchanan wanted very much to be A Social Reformer.

Also within him was a great desire to become A Dickensian Character; like Oliver Twist, perhaps.

After a while he decided to be both. Which meant his life would have a Two-Fold Significance.

Xerxephon Buchanan realized full well how difficult this was going to be, so he straightened his little peak-cap and settled it firmly on his head. Then he faced the future with Grim Determination.

This decision to negotiate one of the Major Cross Roads of his life by going in two directions at the same time was made shortly after Xerxephon Buchanan quit school in 1882. He deliberately walked out at the age of five-and-a-half years. Why? Well, after all, he *was* a junior genius! And the Great Plans which he had conceived for himself didn't include mere passive resistance to an educational system geared to The Average.

Here's how Xerxephon Buchanan planned his career. First he would apply for a Grossly Underpaid Position in a textile mill. Then as soon as he was put to work he would begin writing Letters to the Editor. These would comment disapprovingly on the use of child labor—and especially the use of one Xerxephon Buchanan.

For instance:

Dear-Sir-or-Madam-as-the-case-may-be,

I am a child who labors in a textile mill. What do you think of that? I don't like it very much and neither do any of the other children here.

We should like to register a strong protest against our continued exploitation.

Faithfully yours,
NAME WITHHELD BY REQUEST.

What a scheme! Thus Xerxephon Buchanan would be a Crusader and—at the very same time—The Horrible Example. The result of this versatile performance was obvious. Public opinion would be aroused to a fever pitch, child labor in the textile mill would be stamped out, and Xerxephon Buchanan would be hailed from pulpit and platform as A Benefactor of Mankind. It was all cut and dried.

Looking beyond that initial success, Xerxephon Buchanan envisioned himself crusading from town to town, indiscriminately freeing children from the factories. Later he would go from province to province. And then, perhaps —who could tell?—maybe India, even!

So Xerxephon Buchanan got a job in a textile mill in Saint Elmer sur-le-Canal.

Then something went wrong. The work was so hard that night found

Xerxephon Buchanan exhausted. Sometimes he fell asleep with his clothes still on, without having eaten supper.

He was unable to write Letters to The Editor. A few he started but none was completed. He had no energy.

Xerxephon Buchanan thought, this will pass off. And so it did. He became accustomed to the hard physical routine. But still he wrote no Letters to The Editor.

Why? Well, because Xerxephon Buchanan had learned many valuable things since he took the job. Mostly he learned the Value of Hard Work, but along with that he also acquired some idea of the Dignity of Manual Labor. Consequently, he could not find it in his heart to ask for a raise, let alone write a denunciatory Letter to The Editor.

So, at four cents an hour, and twelve hours a day, Xerxephon Buchanan worked with his hands in the same textile mill for seventeen years. During that time he never wrote a word.

Then he decided to ask for a raise.

It was raining on the day that Xerxephon Buchanan entered The Superintendent's office with this resolve. The Superintendent had evidently misplaced the rubbers which fitted his black shoes, because with his blue suit he wore brown oxfords. Xerxephon Buchanan noted this and realized that he was dealing with A Practical Young Man. He smiled.

"SIR!!!" yelled Xerxephon Buchanan.

The Superintendent's eyebrows leapt off the frame of his glasses. The entire staff in the outer office turned right around and stared.

Xerxephon Buchanan felt like a Virginal Model in her first nude pose. He didn't know what to do with his hands. He flushed a damp red.

He had intended to say "sir" simply, in an ordinary tone of voice, just to establish the Correct Tenor of the conversation at the outset.

But in the weave shed he had grown into the habit of shouting against the shuddering cacophony dinned into him by the whip-snapping arrow-bullet bobbins in the tense-rocking looms. In his ears was the rattling crash whack whash crack slick shoot lunging thud hammer yammer crushing smash slam bang bam slang whish click tremble grinding roar of the shop.

So in the calm of the soundproof front office, the salutation of Xerxephon Buchanan came out high-strained and very, very loud. It frightened him. His stomach fluttered like a flag in the breeze. He grinned sickly.

"Sir," said Xerxephon Buchanan.

The office staff turned back to work. The Superintendent relaxed his corrugated brow into a slight frown.

"sir, I've been here for seventeen years . . . "

"My felicitations, my man," said The Superintendent. "But tell me, please, is it possible that you have punched your card 'Out' for this seeing me? We are not paying you for this, what shall we say, *tête à tête*, I hope so?"

"No, sir," said Xerxephon Buchanan, surprised. "I only punch 'Out' when I go home for lunch and at night . . . "

"So you think you are an *avocat* that you can charge me for talking? Eh! But tell me, quickly, what do you wish?"

"I believe, sir, that my faithful service of seventeen years deserves tangible recognition. I should ask you at this time to consider the matter of a raise in my hourly wage rate. At present—and for the past seventeen years—I have been drawing four cents an hour. Surely, sir, it is not asking too much if I mention *five* cents . . . ?"

"Je ne comprends pas l'Anglais!" The Superintendent snapped, with several rapid shakes of his head. *"Repetez en français, s'il vous plait."*

"Je veux bien avoir cinq sous par l'heure, monsieur le sûrintendent," explained Xerxephon Buchanan. *"Parce-que . . . "*

"No comprendo frances, senor. Habla en espanol, por favor."

Xerxephon Buchanan tried, but he couldn't remember the Spanish word for "five". So he didn't get the raise.

Hurt and bewildered, Xerxephon Buchanan gave his notice. Two weeks later he left the World of the Punch-Clock forever.

* * * * *

On reviewing his career that far, Xerxephon Buchanan reassured himself that, after all, he *had* been a reasonable facsimile of A Dickensian Character; a little like Oliver Twist, maybe. And just think of the material he had for his autobiography!

Another fact brought a warm smile to the lips of Xerxephon Buchanan. Now that he was a member of the Unemployed, he would have the opportunity —and the time—to be A Social Reformer!

This was almost the same as the Orginial Plan, he consoled himself. It was just taking a little longer to accomplish than he had anticipated. He wasn't being A Character and A Reformer both at the same time, but it was much more reasonable, wasn't it, to be One after the Other? Of course.

First of all Xerxephon Buchanan took his seventeen years' savings and bought a horse. A Social Reformer *must* have a horse, he told himself, so that he can sit straight in the saddle and have people Look Up to him.

He wanted to have an Arabian stallion with a coat as white as *blanc mange,* but the only animal that he could afford was a Thurber-like draught horse which was tattle-tale grey. He named him "Utilitas."

Next he bought an old brass breastplate from a pawnshop.

Then Xerxephon Buchanan, Crusader Extraordinary, A Knight clad in freckled armor and mounted on a farm horse, began his battle against Man's Injustice to Man. He rode out of Saint Elmer sur-le-Canal with his head high, his eyes shining, his lips parted with eagerness.

"Xerxephon Buchanan," he exulted aloud, "you are now The Champion of The Right!"

That was on December 31, 1899.

On that sweet winter day the career of Xerxephon Buchanan came to an end. Nothing has been seen or heard of him since. He rode out of Saint Elmer sur-le-Canal and was never seen again. He dropped right out of sight. All

trace of "Utilitas" was lost, too. The whole affair is A Mystery.

Naturally, there has been much speculation from that day to this about the possible Fate of Xerxephon Buchanan. Some suspect that Foul Play overtook him in the deep forest surrounding Saint Elmer sur-le-Canal. Contradicting this, there are a few investigators who hazard the theory that a Board of Education Official kidnapped him and led him back to kindergarten; there his Personality was lost in The Educational Process, never again to be recognized as Xerxephon Buchanan, junior genius.

An article once appeared in the Saint Elmer weekly newspaper, "Le Voix du Pays," advancing an explanation for The Mystery. It was written by an Eccentric Political Historian. His argument is summed up in these words:

"Xerxephon Buchanan, by going Right instead of Left at The Turn of The Century, lost his way in Eternity."

—G. Campbell McDonald

Du Schones Fischermadchen

—Heinrich Heine

O pretty fisher maiden,
Come row your skiff to land;
And here with me come set ye doon,
And we'll bide hand in hand.

Lay your dear head on my heart,
And be ye not frightened of me;
For daily ye trust with never a care
The dark and roving sea.

My heart is like the sea love,
With swell of ebb and flow,
And many a round sea pearl, love
Glints in the depths below.

—Translated by June Rose

The Link of Love

Out from the dull spinning of the mightyring—
From the soft, immutable, eternal space
You came—a timeless, changing entity.
Reality is fixed and you are here.
The affinity, the closeness of the most distant things,
The relation of opposites, the unity of diverse matter,
(Following the divine plane in which
The spark of spirit closes the gap)
Identify this union in the vortex of space
Which men call Now!
The parallel lines of our lives have met at infinity.
From this time on and always,
As with all natural phenomena,
The ways of attainment are wide and boundless,
With paths like cosmic rays, countless, endless.
The impact of the smallest act
Is felt universally, behind and before;
High and low it has its repercussions in all things.
First we are the guides, then are we guided,
Led on and shaped by our own causes.
Reaching ever on to leave the vortex, Now,
We are caught up again,
Again in the smoke-ring from whence we came
And have our being and end.

—Bill Langford

And The Figures Fade

It is folly that I who am condemned should judge the society which has convicted me. As I stand in the shadow of the gallows, a force within me says "stay"—and yet a stronger urge causes me to set this hand which has done murder to yet another act of violence. I indict society with a crime more heinious than my own—of conspiring to bring about its own destruction.

You, who have followed the story of my crime and trial in the newspapers, doubtless feel that nothing more can be added. "Is he not a confessed murderer?" you may justly ask. I acknowledge that when you put this question you echo my thoughts of a few months ago when I stood before the hooded judge and accepted the doom he meted out to me. I, who had been jujdged guilty by my peers, willingly accepted that fact that I should forfeit my life for the one I had wilfully taken. Had I not gone directly to the authorities, his life blood still on my hands? Was the trial not a mere formality? I, who until that night of which you have read, had lived a life of peace, was to die for one act of violence. I resigned myself to my fate.

Have you, who sit in the security of your homes, ever thought on the Death House? I confess that until the reality of it was brought to me, I had given it no more than a passing thought. If someone had mentioned it, that comment might have conjured up an unpleasant movie scene, but no more. And yet, here was I, a peaceful man suddenly thrown into the mental and spiritual violence of that awful place. The bleak bright corridor; the glazed looks on the faces of the condemned; the macabre bravado of others; the patronizing goodwill of the guards, the chaplains, the social workers, the feature writers from the newspapers; all of these present a constant threat to sanity.

At night, in the solitude of my cell, I am freed of these but set upon by other distractions. This is the real torment of the condemned man. If a drowning man reviews his life in the brief seconds before his death, think of the parade of events which must cross the tortured mind of a man who sits and waits for death. A death which remorselessly approaches him over a period of weeks and month. Like others before me, I have passed through my childhood and later life. No incident has been too insignificant to escape the relentless probings of my sub-conscious. No petty sin, long-forgotten, has escaped the rack in the inquisition of my soul.

But this can have little importance for you. This holds none of my indictment against you. This is my personal cross which you have judged I must bear because of my sin. I will pass on to the grisly paradox which is the thesis of my charge.

I have told how the nights and days since my trial have been filled with spiritual torture. It seems only natural that such conditions, coupled with the constant knowledge of approaching death have fired my imagination to a white

heat. How can I be expected to reason as other men if indeed I have retained my reason? The mind seeks constantly for some form of escape. The child in the classroom projects his mind to the green fields and the condemned man his to a justification of his crime. I tell these things to you since they bear a direct relation to the case I am about to present. You, who are in a position to judge impartially must decide the significance of my charge; whether the facts I relate are the product of a mind shattered by torment or constitute a true revelation of a disastrous flaw in the society of which all, even I, are part.

I spoke before of nocturnal phenomena in this House of Death, of the tapestry of my life displayed before my inward eyes. There is another—a weird tableau in which three characters appear as men but of a kind and nature like I have never before seen. It is an animated picture much like what I have seen of surrealistic art. I have experienced this vision not once but many times. It always follows the same pattern, the characters speak the same lines and ignore my presence although I feel that if I dared, I could touch them. Over the scene hovers soft eerie music, maddening in its familiarity yet escaping identification.

If it were in my power, I would describe the actors of this apparition to you. Although they do not refer to each other by name, I am aware that they are Good, Evil and Society. They have a quality which makes their identity at once discernible. Evil is not sin incarnate, Good does not correspond to beatific images of Renaissance art nor does Society personify paternity, yet I

know them at once for what they are.

The stage on which they perform is the entirety of my cell even to the inner recesses of my soul. They are without dimensions, their voices are of a quality and volume not known to me and yet I have never been exposed to speech more clear nor more easily understood. The moment they move on to the stage I am aware of every word they will voice, every inflection they will use, every action they will perform . . . There is a subdued fanfare and a blinding flash of lights when the figures appear. Good speaks first.

"I am the ultimate reason for life; the elusive ideal on which lives are fashioned and by which they are at times destroyed. I have been both pursued and persecuted since the beginning of time, rarely overtaken and seldom honored."

Evil speaks.

"I am the obvious reason. Empires have been built at my urging and under my guidance. I have been courted through the centuries and have answered the call of all in need of my ministration."

Good speaks.

"Children honor me. The old often ignore me but always, somewhere, they wave to me in passing. I am the hand that feeds the starving, the voice that soothes the sorrowing, the ear that listens to the wailings of the lost, the arm that aids the weary, the foot that rocks the cradle of man. I am all of these things, recognized in parts but seldom as a whole."

Evil speaks.

"In this world's wilderness, thirst-crazed man drinks deep from my well. Fruits from my orchard are exposed to his covetous grasp. The comforts of my household are his for the taking. My enemies are few and of no account for they are numbered among the weaker, lesser souls of this earth."

Good speaks as if noticing Evil for the first time.

"My very nature dictates that I ignore you."

Evil replies.

"If you had said your very weakness has recided that for you, it would be closer to truth."

Good replies.

"And what do you, who profit by deceit, know of truth?"

Society steps between the two and speaks.

"Always it has been my task to come between you in your bickering. Model yourselves on me—arrive at a compromise."

Evil replies.

"Meddling mirror of hypocrisy! We will have none of you."

Good remains silent.

Society turns toward Good and speaks.

"It was always thus. I do my best and am rebuffed."

Good speaks.

"Perhaps it is you who is at fault. You, who have the power to liquidate

your enemies, seek only to compromise. You gain only pity from me and the scorn of my adversary. Through the centuries you have shown yourself to be my ally but such a one as can be counted on only when it suits your purpose to act on my behalf."

Society replies, fading to the side.

"So, you as well turn your back on me."

Evil speaks.

"You'll get little help from him. I think the shadow was conceived to be his constant enemy."

Good speaks.

"Since help has failed, I must act alone."

Good draws a sword and strikes Evil down.

Society, appearing suddenly, speaks.

"Is this the compromise of which I spoke? You, who know the rules, have acted according to your passions and must perish by your own device." (draws sword from Evil and plunges it into God) "Justice must be done and peace preserved."

Society stands over the two figures and speaks.

"The final compromise has been reached. I have achieved my purpose. There is no longer a reason for my existence."

Society clutches at his throat and collapses on the two prostrate figures. There is a subdued wailing and the figures fade. Once again I am left to continue my death watch in the barrenness of my prison cell.

You have heard the charge, the prosecution rests.

—John Cranford

A Woman's Gift

If I do bring to you some passing peace,
A moment's sweetness free of clouding fears
And with soft spirit-touch erase cruel ties
Thus are avenged my silent tears.

If I do carry high your heart with mine
To soaring, singing, happy, careless dreams
With freedom king, and no chastising voice—
Then is courage all it seems.

If I do share your mite of pain and grief
And to your harassed heart some solace give.
If I do stir but one glad glow of hope—
Oh, only then I know I live!

—*Marg Stoner*