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The Connecticut College Quarterly

December, 1924

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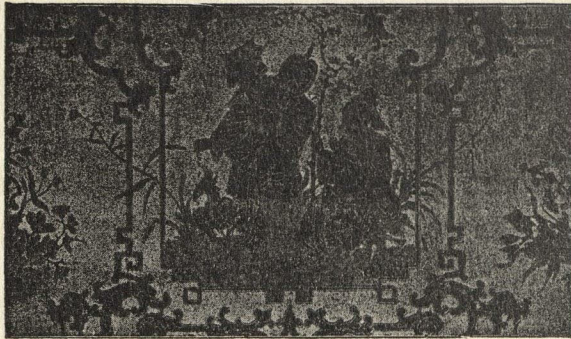
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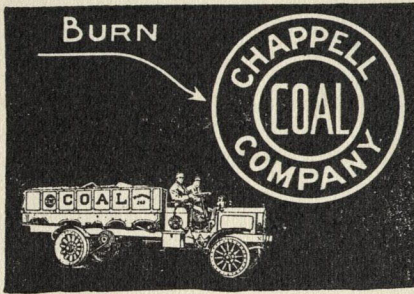
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THE CONNECTICUT COLLEGE QUARTERLY

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A LEGEND OF THE MISTLETOE

"CHRISTMAS eve is beautiful anywhere," I thought, as I paused beneath one of the big bronze statues that stand at intervals along the avenue, "even in the heart of Boston."

The night was silent and still in an awed sort of way, as if it were waiting for something. The bare branches, edged with a light outline of snow, stabbed up against the cold shimmer of the sky. The stars blazed like living points of flame. The Spirit of Christmas walked abroad—carols in the frosty twilight, holly and candles in the window, the wassail bowl and the Yule log, and the hand-clasp of brother to brother in the feeling of good fellowship. A glowing sense of existence swept over me, and I leaned back against the cold stone, clasping tight the armful of mistletoe I was bearing home.

Just then the first bronze stroke of midnight beat the hushed air from some far off tower. At the same time I heard a sound above me, something like the creak of a rusty joint and a very human sigh. Startled, I glanced up, and nearly dropped my mistletoe. Was I insane? Had the beauty of the night made me hysterical? It seemed to me that the statue of the Norse Viking, which I had passed by nearly every day of my life, had come alive, and high on the pedestal above me stood a living Norseman! We stared at each other. I think the wonder was mutual.

"Who are you, O Anglo-Saxon maid," he said at last in a deep throaty voice, "who dares to walk abroad at night without thy brother or thy husband by thee?"

"Why!" I answered, amusement overcoming my fear, "I'm not afraid. There's a policeman on the next corner, and besides it's Christmas eve. Nothing wrong could happen on this night."

He mused a bit.

"Surely the world is not as it once was," he said. "Christmas eve—that is the

birth-night of that strange god of love you have. And men celebrate and praise the birth of the emotions of love and sympathy, and a maid walks alone at mid-night! By Thor! The world has changed!" Then suddenly his whole face lighted up. His great eyes sparkled like jewels.

"But, I see! You bear the sacred mistletoe. Girl, you are no stranger! You are my kinswoman, for what the thought of your god of love is to you, that white berry with the dark foliage is to me. It stands for kindness, and gentleness, and purity. And e'en through me, many years past, it gained its meaning—oh Thorvolt, and Frieda, and the giant oak!" He mused again.

"Good heavens," I exclaimed, "tell me all about it."

"Would you really delight in knowing?" he asked. It seemed to me a note of pleasure stole into his voice.

"I surely would," I answered, curling up at his feet. The figure above me settled himself comfortably. There was a pause, and then his deep voice began.

"Fifteen hundred years ago on this very night and moment, midnight on the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month, I was striding through the forests that bordered the home of my fathers on a mountain slope in Norway. No kindly emotion filled my heart as it does now. Black and overpowering hatred seethed within me, and shook me to such an extent that I was weak and trembled, and leaned against a dark, dusky pine for support. The moonlight fell through the naked interlacing branches on the gleaming snow. A monstrous rock tossed a sloe-black shadow at my feet. I shivered. My garments were old. They were those of a slave. For ten heart-breaking years I had served as a captive in a foreign household. In that time I had learned hate, and now, free, I was returning to the lands that had once been my father's in the happy days of my childhood. I had returned to seek vengeance. Only the sudden and cruel death of my enemy who had once been a beloved friend could cure the anguish of my heart. Then let me die, but first—! My breath came in gasps at the thought, and I fingered the dagger at my belt.

"Pictures rose before my eyes. Memories of times long past drifted by. Once again I saw my old nurse with my sister Frieda on her lap telling stories to us before the great roaring fire. There was Olaf, my younger brother, a sickly lad, tormenting the great dogs, and my father, with his drinking cup and warriors. There was Thorvolt, my foster brother, shaping bows in the dancing light. By Odin! How I had loved him! No man knows how deep and true our love had been. We fought together, played together, laughed and wept together. He had no friend in that house but me. My father distrusted him, but I loved him vehemently, and would hear no evil spoke of him. Oh! how blind I had been! The vision ended a burst of passion. If I could only find him now, the traitor! By Thor! If I could only find him now——!

"Another picture followed. I strove to drive it back, but it persisted. I saw Thorvolt and myself, small boys hunting in these same woods. I saw the great mad wolf that leaped up on me from the shadows, with his bloody, foam-soaked jaws. I felt again the terror. I heard my shriek of agony. Once more I saw Thorvolt spring upon the great beast, and with only his short knife slay the creature and save my life. Oh, Thorvolt! My friend! How I had loved thee as a youth! And how I came to loathe thee as a man, when I came to know thee as a traitor!

"Then came one more picture. It was a scene of horror and confusion. I shrink to remember it. Into our quiet life, when we were all gathered about the fire on an evening, burst a messenger, wounded and spent. Even as he came there were the shouts of battle and the clang of steel from the walls without. 'The enemy,' cried the man, sinking on one knee, 'they are within the gates! The watch slept, and some traitors opened the small door to them! Odin, be with us!' There were screams in the hall outside, and hostile warriors entered the room. I see them now, dripping blood and thundering the war cry of a Danish house. 'Tis queer how distinctly my eye caught and held certain things. My father stands before me at this

moment, as he stood then, with his great form towering up, his wavy red hair and his naked sword. I hear him shriek through clenched teeth, 'Some treacherous snake within the house hath done this—death to the betrayer!' Then he met the onslaught and went out. I saw Frieda borne away, fighting as my sister would fight, and I sprang to action. I turned to Thorvolt, who stood beside me with my brother Olaf cowering behind him, and I shouted to him above the tumult. Would that the gods should blot from my memory the thing that followed! The horrors of it changed my life. I saw Thorvolt, my trusted friend, the light of a wild beast in his eyes, join *with* the oncoming enemy instead of *against* them. I saw his dagger flash red in the dying firelight. I saw him fall upon my brother Olaf and slay him as he stood. My father's words condemning the traitor within the gates were still ringing in my ears, and I realized, with a suddenness that weakened me like a vile disease, that the betrayer was Thorvolt. My friend of my heart was the loathed serpent who had stung the hand that fed him. I fainted—and would to Odin I had died.

"And now, after ten years of slavery, I had returned to slay the viper. My father, and my kinsmen, and my father's lands would all be avenged by my hand. I knew I would find Thorvolt at the old hall. The snake sleeps in the nest of the hawk he has treacherously strangled.

"These thoughts, like fierce wild birds, fluttered through my consciousness. The great calm stillness of the woods only increased the uncontrollable riot of my mind.

"Suddenly I heard a twig snap and a light footfall. Someone or something was coming near. With a muttered oath I drew back under the shadow of the great tree, just as a figure appeared in the clearing. The moonlight shone full on his face, as bright as noonday. I looked and looked again, and with a burst of frenzied exultation I recognized him. There was no wonder in my heart that Thorvolt should be wandering so near me, at such a time. It was the just hand of Odin who led him, so that the dagger of retribution might fall unhindered.

"As I saw his despised face, as I had dreamed it during my ten captive years, the sensation which rose in me was so wild it made me stagger. I had loved him so fiercely as a lad, and now I hated him as greatly, that the two huge forces maddened me. There was a roaring in my ears, and through a crimson haze I saw that ten years had not changed him much. He was still handsome, and looked well-fed. A moan was wrung from my throat as I leaped out into the moonlight upon him, gripping the knife so tightly that my knuckles hurt.

"'Defend thyself, thou betrayer of friends,' I said thickly, 'even now death meets thee.'

"Quick as a wild cat, hand on dagger, he sprang into defence at the sound of my voice. All in one instant I saw anger, surprise, wonder, and then, joy chase across his face, as he saw and knew me. He dropped his weapon.

"'Eric,' he cried stammering, 'Whence came thee? We thought thee dead! Why this strange appearance? Art thou mad? Is this the way to greet old friends? By Odin, lad, 'tis thee alive!' Insane, he tried to embrace me. I knew it was but mummery, and his aping ways made my wrath almost too great to endure. I beat him in the mouth with my fist, and then with dagger upraised strove to strike him.

"'Yes, I live, but only that thou, traitor of my house, may die.' My own voice, echoing in my ears, sounded like that of the war fiend.

"'Thou fool,' he panted through his bleeding lips, attempting to hold back my arm, 'I am no traitor.'

"I heeded not his babblings. I fought only to slay, to crush the adder that I hated, and he defended himself. Back and forth we struggled, trampling the virgin snow into a murky mass. I was weak with long years of suffering, and although I had the upper hand, the end came not as quickly as it would have in my days of strength. Yet, even in the lust of rage, I noticed that twice, by a turn of his wrist, he could have thrust the dagger into my own heart, and yet he spared me. The thought made me wilder yet. Suddenly a black crawling root, a crooked thing, from

the white snow reached out and caught his foot, and backwards he tripped. I was upon him. We rolled over twice, and then in under the low-sweeping branches of a giant oak which had raised its twisted, tortured head against the storm blasts of fully two hundred winters.

"Still I was on top. He, pinioned beneath me, ceased to struggle. I raised the dagger above my head, my soul filled with exultant triumph, as fierce a passion as my hate. A finger of moonlight stabbed through the clutching, crooked branches, and pointed at his face. He was gazing at me with no fear in his eyes. As I looked, he laughed. His smile was twisted by a trickle of blood, but his teeth, white as the snow about us, flashed in the moon-beams. He laughed.

"'Strike true, O friend,' he said.

"For a moment my heart seemed to break. I sobbed, and my dagger nearly slipped from my relaxed fingers. The horror of the thing I was about to do struck me. Then I saw my father, and the flaxen braids of my sister, and cursing my weakness, I flung my own arm back for the second time. This time I hesitated not. The blade was sweeping up and on the downward arc with all my force behind it, when suddenly something happened. It was one of those things which in every age and in every country proves to every man that some god lives.

"Low above me, just over and in front of my head, was a great twisted bough of oak stooping down from the tree above us. On the underneath of this branch hung a great compact mass of that mysterious plant, the mistletoe. Its white berries and clustering leaves formed a monstrous bunch. As the knife blade came plunging over and down on the final sweep, Odin moved in that mass of mistletoe. It reached out and caught the force of the blow. Like a thinking thing, the growth of jade and pearl entangled the dagger in its midst, wrenched the weapon from my hand and flung it out into the clearing, where it tinkled on the snow and sparkled evilly.

"The suddenness of it all took my breath. Neither of us moved for a moment. Then I realized that my anger had swept away like a mighty tide, leaving me old and tired. Nothing mattered any longer. I stumbled to my feet, and stood with my face hidden in my hands. Then I spoke. Thorvolt was gazing at me with a look in his eyes almost akin to pity. Between us lay the dagger.

"'Go thy way,' I said lifelessly, 'the gods and that cursed mistletoe have spared thee, and much as I hate thee, I cannot slay thee now.' The deep hush of the night was unbroken for a moment. Then he turned away with a helpless gesture.

"All at once there came a rustle, a soft footstep, and a panting call. A third figure burst through the bushes about us. I grew tense. Then I saw the stranger was a woman. 'Thorvolt,' she gasped, 'why did'st thou stray so far to seek the mistletoe? I feared that—' There was a glint of golden hair. My knees shook and I nearly sank in the snow.

"'Frieda, my sister,' the words were forced from me. Faintly I heard her glad, wild cry of recognition. Then warm arms were flung about my neck, and warm tears fell upon my cheek.

"'Eric! Eric! We thought thee dead long ago. Oh, my brother! Our house is once more united! How our father will rejoice now that thou art home to stand side by side with Thorvolt!'

"'Frieda, Frieda, thou livest!' I felt strangely dizzy. 'How is my father, and do we still hold the old hall? I thought that on that black night when our home was pillaged nearly ten years ago, that you and all our goods and kinsmen passed into Danish hands.'

"'Oh, that night of horror!' she sighed, 'my brother! my brother! Yet you know not that Thorvolt rallied our forces and gained back our house? Surely, the old house is still ours. True, we lost men and wealth, yet Thorvolt has done much to save our fortunes. He stood by the right of our father.' She threw an eloquent, shy glance in his direction. 'We have only lacked thee to make our home complete. Even the old nurse fought her way to freedom by our side that night. The men

rallied splendidly, and followed Thorvolt. Thou only hast vanished from among our family since that cruel night.

"'And Olaf,' I added, still feeling stunned and half asleep. A look of anguish wakened in her eyes.

"'Speak not of him,' she said, 'he is not one of us. Our line breed no traitors. He died as was his due!'

"'Olaf, the traitor!' Then as the sun pierces the heavy fog shrouding the valleys on an autumn morning, the truth was with me, and I saw. My sister added, 'Thorvolt suspected Olaf from the first, yet knew nothing certain, so held his peace. Then at the last when Olaf's treachery stood revealed, he slew him before his friends, our foes, could aid. Olaf never was. We have no brother but Thorvolt.' Again, by the flashing look between the two, I knew them for lovers.

"A vast spring of relief bubbled up in me and washed away the sorrow and anguish of years. Great thankfulness flooded my heart. I realized suddenly with infinite pain and joy for what I had been saved.

"'Oh, sacred blessed mistletoe,' I murmured with awe.

"'Mistletoe!' cried Frieda. 'Yes! Thorvolt came to search for some tonight. Tomorrow we decorate our halls in honor of the birth of a god we are beginning to worship. He is a god of love, and we thought the pure green and white of the strange plant would be pleasing to him. Tell me, Thorvolt, did you find the mistletoe?'

"For answer Thorvolt stooped, and picking up the knife at our feet, went in under the oak bough, and cut away the vast bunch which that night had saved his life. I noticed with a shudder that much of it was slashed and mangled even now. Then holding the scintillating mass in his arms, he turned towards my sister.

"'Yes, Frieda, I found the mistletoe,' he said quietly. He came up to me and gripped my shoulder till it ached, and I loved the pain of it. 'And I found my friend,' he added.

"Frieda laughed in a puzzled way.

"'There is more news, my brother,' she said shyly, 'Thorvolt and I are betrothed. We wed in the spring.' She stood beside us both. He put his arms about her and gently kissed her. High above their heads I saw another spray of mistletoe. The moonlight sparkled on the mass in their arms and above their heads, and all about them. Each sage leaf gleamed dully, but every white berry sparkled, and flashed, and glinted like the vivacious dance of fairies.

"'Oh, mistletoe!' I cried, 'Henceforth, for me and mine till time shall cease, thou shalt be an emblem of peace, and love, and kindness. Friends shall meet beneath thee and lovers embrace. Nothing wrong or evil can take place near thee. Thou art love and the time shall come when the world shall follow thy influence, and maids, and men, and matrons, and children shall feel naught for each other when thou art near, but kindness and affection.' And it was even so."

The great heavy voice above me ceased. I looked up. The statue was in appearance only a dead thing of bronze again. A light wind made the branches rattle dryly. Something was wrong with the city clocks, for one of them way off in the distance was still striking twelve. I drew a deep breath. It was several seconds before I could speak. Then I could only murmur, "Thank you, oh, thank you." It seemed as if words would ruin the fascination of the tale.

Somewhere near at hand children were caroling softly. The harmony died away and rose, "Good-will towards men," the phrase was distinct. I pressed the mistletoe against my cheek, and a soft sweet spirit of the past, joy of the present, and content for the future fell upon me. The white eyes of the mistletoe seemed to wink at me. I knew great peace.

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EVOLUTION

Out of the empty, pathless void,
 The world was born in flame.
 Out of the burning heart of God,
 The soul of man became.

Out of chaos, the whirling spheres
 Their swerveless pathways take.
 Out of the sea of doubts and dreams,
 The mind of man shall make

A way, at last, to understand
 The wonder of all he sees,
 And from the very hands of God
 Receive his golden keys.

 THE PROGRESS OF MAN

SCIENCE, the twentieth century prides itself, has achieved its triumph, and in order to prove the issue, points out the mechanical inventions which show a higher power of man over Nature than ever before. Politics, education, and art all claim a greater strength and rely upon the inventions of science as indications of their advancement.

With this as a criterion, the world measures its progress, and concludes that humanity at present shows an advancement beyond any formerly achieved. It seems, however, a little superficial to measure by mechanical agents the intrinsic progress man has made. A question immediately arises, is the criterion worthy, and has real progress been achieved in the education of men beyond that known in medieval and ancient ages?

It is undeniable that the mechanism of the present exceeds that ever known before, that science has become the fundamental of our civilization, that the inventive genius has become more fully assertive than was ever previously recorded. Yet, this does not necessitate an advancement over our more primitive ancestors. It rather points to a concentration on mechanics, and a worship of applied knowledge. The mere fact that science has come to wage our wars, to destroy races by its powers, is evidence of its superiority to man. From the most primitive races there has survived the desire for achieving physical prowess, and in the applications of nature man has found his satisfaction. By his own power, man in his civilization seeks to direct the elements of Nature toward the destruction of his own species. It would thus seem that while he has increased his capacity for manipulation, he has progressed in reason but a little further than he who first appropriated the hatchet to destroy his fellow-man. Science has shown a remarkable power of destruction; man has not discerned the peril of his own applications, and remains primitively unconscious that he is placing his resources at the mercy of mechanics.

Yet, does not the present show an advancement in its inventiveness over the civilizations of the ancients? Granted that man has not yet overcome the primal instincts, has he not achieved intellectual and spiritual progress beyond that known to past eras? So far as mechanics are concerned, the answer must inevitably be positive, but men are wont to consider mechanics but the agent of civilization, not an element of it. Upon this basis, there have been no evidences of progress. Art has not touched a chord more deep than that found through the medieval and the ancient periods. The obelisks of the Egyptians, the temples of the Greeks, the

cathedrals of the Gothic period discover no new themes as they advance; they are symbols of the thought of their period and of their civilizations. They exhibit exactly the development of humanity as it advanced through the various stages. The intrinsic elements have remained the same—man's idea of religion motivated his efforts, and his mechanical skill prompted him to manipulate his ideas so as to achieve character.

Again, literature has not advanced beyond the excellencies of the ancients. In volume its increase has been marked, but in content it possesses today exactly the characteristics exhibited by Aeschylus and Sophocles. There has never been advance beyond Homer—the modern poetry and modern prose have contributed little in essence to the art; the differences are manifestly differences in mechanics. Thus again, man has shown no intrinsic progress; his advance has been an advance in manipulative skill.

For the essence of man's being, it is necessary to inquire into the science which he has developed as a study of himself and his environs—i. e. Philosophy. Today it has analyzed the elements of intellect and of spirit no further than was done by Plato and by Aristotle; the subjects which attract it are the same. It is true that the point of view is sometimes at variance with that of these fathers of philosophy, yet the very method of its study emphasizes the essential similarity. It is not the principles which call for comparison and which form the basis of our "new" culture; it is the mechanics of their exposition which compel the attention.

More manifestly obvious still is the lack of progress in consideration of the religious attitude. Religion has never been more than the attempt to satisfy the questionings of the soul. The Greeks had their ideal in the Olympian realm, the Scandinavians in Valhalla, and we in Heaven. We pride ourselves on having caught the truth, yet there is no measure of its truth other than its ideality. The spirit hearkens to the same query as did the Hellenes and the Scandinavians; and like them we answer with a conception of the ideal. Whether the truth is more nearly ours argues not for man's progress, but for an improvement in his circumstances; the fact remains that his spirit craves the satisfaction of its search, and endeavors to justify its being in the same essential way.

Man has thus remained true to his traditions; he has not advanced beyond them. However, he has no need to despair, for it is quite conceivable that he is a creature endowed with limited powers of understanding but with a boundless capacity for the manipulation of those powers. Thus he has achieved civilization; his intellect has become more highly mechanical, and he has exerted more fully his influence over nature; yet he has not altered so far as actual fundamentals are concerned, from the time he first gained a consciousness of physical being, mind, and morals.

POEM

The time has come to light my garden's pyre
Of dry, dead grass, and sticks, and fallen leaves
That snap and crackle as the bright flame weaves
From pile to pile. Higher and ever higher
The blue smoke towers. I can never tire
Of this October rite. The pungent smell
Of burning leaves, the ruddy glow, a spell
Lays on my heart and sets my blood on fire.
The laughing flame will pass, and in its place
The icy whiteness of the snow will shine.
My garden, as in death, will sleep a space
To wake again in beauty more divine
Than decked the Phoenix, which, in days of old,
Though burned to ashes, gleamed more brightly gold.

WHY BE A PIANO TUNER?

MOST people cherish ambitions along with ideals and other things of moral purity. Some people cherish ideals of a negative type, which though not immoral, are perhaps more difficult to conceive. To me they are those things which I least favor, and in which I hope never to indulge. At present I have three negative ideals of which I am very sure. The first is playing the bass viol, the second, studying the classics purely for their own sake, and the third, being a piano tuner. The first two are not worth considering, being based on childish fancy. I once saw a bass viol player with cauliflower ears, and I have never had much success with the classics. Thus I concentrate on *not* being a piano tuner.

Here I have no violent prejudice against any particular piano tuner, nor against the profession; the idea itself simply does not intrigue me. How can any human being possessing vertebrae and a spinal column go through life tuning pianos but never playing them? How can he be content, how can his ego flourish when he can go but half way? Thus because of my antipathy in this direction, there are those about me whom I put in this class.

In piano-tuning, in college, or in any pursuit, how can any normal person meet life only half way? In other words how can any person of college age and intelligence sit day after day in class rooms, collecting fact after fact without assimilating them? College is full of people whose minds are veritable stop watches; they tick during the class hour with a delicate and lovely precision, but cease to function when the spring is unset. There are those who might sit through an excellent discussion on Skeptics and Cynics and Their Philosophical Importance without realizing that this material might be related to their lives. Still others tick off fact after fact of historical significance without carrying them any farther. Thus they gradually learn the mechanics of life, but a life apart. There is no interrelation between that life and this life, as they see it. Life for them remains at a low and convenient level. Many people go through college expecting to be prepared for an abundant life. They graduate, they find themselves inadequate, and curse the Alma Mater. All because they have been piano tuners. Having resisted opportunity for four years it is doubtful whether or not their technique will ever advance. They will continue to tinker with the parts, but will never be able to manipulate the whole instrument to the best of its possibilities.

It is possible to make an entity of life. Why subdivide it? Life is too important to be choked down without digesting it. Pianos are too lovely to just tune and not play upon.

SOMNAMBULISM

A long, dimly-lighted hall with doors, doors, doors;—then steps, lots of them, steps of wide, cold stone;—a cool delicious sensation on bare feet. A feeling of going on and on;—a flash of bright light in a lower hall, and then darkness.—An open door,—a glimpse of a delicate face on a white pillow;—a shaft of light turning the mass of fluffy hair to gold.

A gradual awakening on a warm September morning,—a tired, strained feeling of sleeplessness; then a dull recollection, a dim impression of long corridors and cool, stone steps.

In amazement I looked at the soles of my feet, and I shuddered as I saw that they were dirty!

AUTUMN

Last night it rained the moon-beams,
 And the autumn world grew bright,
 Tonight I live on tales oft told,
 Lone in the fire-light.

Last night I counted colors
 In a flashing, fleeting whirl,
 As blood-red, orange, amber
 Sobbed to my feet in a swirl;

Of wind that whispered low
 Of Fairy laces in the dawn,
 Painted by the Frost King's hand
 On the emerald of the lawn.

Last night I stood upon a hill
 And counted stars on high,
 And wondered in the moon-white gleam
 Why Autumn had to die!

ON WRITING POETRY

LAST week my roommate sat down at her desk to write her weekly composition. Without a thought in her head she took out pencil and paper, and said, "Guess I'll write a poem." Forthwith she wrote a poem. She read it to me. She didn't like it very well; neither did I. It didn't seem quite adequate for the assignment, and she decided to write another. In an hour or so she read me another poem. It was a rollicking, light-hearted affair and she had enjoyed writing it. The first had been a struggle. We both liked this later one.

The next day in class, my roommate's poems were read. The gay little song was worthless, it seemed, while the difficult, ground-out one was deep and worthwhile.

Today, I sit me down to write my weekly composition, without a thought in my head. I remember my roommate's experience. Knowing that anything in the line of poetry which I would write would be ground-out and hard worked for, I decide to try. Who knows that my little verses, struggled for and labored over, might be recognized as something? I look around for inspiration.

Our curtains meet my eye. Yesterday I spent hours sewing rings on them, and risked my life balancing on bureau, bed, and chairs, putting them up. But they look very well, and are of a bright golden color. We selected them because of their color, which seems to hold the sunshine. With joy I look at them again. Why not a poem about our cheerful, sunny curtains, with a moral tacked on at the end! After a few minutes I have:

Our curtains catch the bright sunshine
 And hold it fast and tight.
 Oh, catch and keep it to be mine,
 Hold it against the night!

That sounds rather light and sing songy, but I'll keep on for awhile. I want another verse, but can't think of one at the minute. I'll begin the end.

I could not keep the gay sunlight
 When day had passed away ;
 It went like birds on southward flight
 And left my curtains grey.

Now for the moral.

So it is with our lives, dear heart,
 When we would selfish be.
 From things we love most we must part
 As sunshine did from me.

That is really hopeless. It is sing songy ; I can't think of a middle verse ; I don't believe in the moral ; and anyway, it suddenly occurs to me that I have read somewhere that morals are out of style ! In despair I look about for another inspiration.

I see the Sound, a long stretch of heavenly blue. I wish I were down by it. I think of the long, carefree hours of summer I spent splashing in it or lolling around on its sands. Ah ! I grasp pen again, and start to write.

I sat by the sea in summertime
 And it was cool and blue,
 It sparkled as with diamond fire
 And sapphires, bright and true.

I sat by the sea in wintertime
 And it was tossed and wild,
 And green and gray, with wind-tossed spray,
 And like an angry child.

I pause, I look at the Sound again. I look at my pen, at my poem. I ought to say something more, but what is there to say ? Again I look at the Sound. Yes, it is all of those things, but what more is it ? And what connection has its being those things with life in general ? I'm sure I don't know. This poem seems rather pointless. With a deep sigh I lay down my pen. The Sound holds no more inspiration for me.

My eyes again wander. They alight on my mirror, in the framed corner of which is a snapshot, a summer vacation snapshot. Memory arises within me. That poem I wrote after the houseparty this summer ! I had been reading a lot of Sara Teasdale ; I went on a houseparty ; I returned, and wrote a poem. Frantically I search my memory book. Joy, here it is ! I read it through.

Oh I have met the fairy prince
 But he is not for me ;
 I'm nothing but a waiting maid
 As all the world can see.

We played I was the princess,
 And for three blissful days
 He loved me true, as poor men do,
 For all his princely ways.

Although I'm not the princess,
 As all the world can see ;
 I still may dream of three short days.
 My prince was poor with me.

Somehow, the poem does not seem the same as it did when I wrote it. *It* has

changed, or I have. There is something lacking. I know it will never do. Again I sink to the depths of despair.

Well, I certainly haven't got very far by looking around the room and out of the window for inspiration. Perhaps if I shut my eyes, the divine spark will come. For five whole minutes I sit with closed eyes, awaiting that elusive inspiration. It is useless. The snapshot, with its amusing memories, has finished me for tonight so far as writing is concerned. At least I'll make one more try.

Because I want to, I ask—

What harm to be found in one little kiss?
 Only this:
 The want of another
 The birth of a lover
 Make heartbreak of bliss.
 Only this
 In one little kiss.

Goodness, I'd never dare hand that in! In disgust I get out note paper and envelopes to write a letter. I never was born to be a poet anyway. Tomorrow I'll write an exposition on "How to Cook a Meal," or a description of an antique museum at home, or a book review, or something.

PORTRAIT

The night descends with velvet black,
 Illumined but with moon and stars.
 A face stands out in sharp relief
 With shadows crossing it like bars;
 Like bars of dark and sinister tone,
 Concealing, yet revealing much.
 The shade is drawn—the face is gone.
 I hear the pounding of a crutch.

SUMMER DUSK

Night woos fair Day with sad sweet bits of song,
 And bids her haste and to his love reply,
 But she is loath to leave her realm for long;
 So lingering thus, Dusk shadows earth and sky.

Then is the time when eflin games hold sway
 In woodlands where the sleepy veery sings;
 And where the lowly glow-worm lights the way
 For tiny, fairy folk with gossamer wings.

'Tis then that yellow primrose buds unfold,
 And send their fragrance through the balmy air,
 While gorgeous moths seek out the nectared gold
 That lies within the dainty petals there.

Thus in the perfumed dusk, Day hides her face,
 And gently sighing, yields to Night's embrace.

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