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THE CONNECTICUT COLLEGE QUARTERLY

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MOON-FINGERS

OUTSIDE the formless walls of the old Benedictine seminary, the night was waiting, tense and expectant. Darkness had descended early; and the moon, try as it would, could not even peek through the heavy curtain of dark clouds. It must have been almost midnight, and yet the clock in the old stone tower had seemed afraid to strike its accustomed chimes. There was a hush over the little Canadian village, an unearthly quiet that was not the silence of sleep, ah no! Under the cover of darkness, the night was holding its breath and waiting.

Inside the seminary, the same hushed suspense hung in the air. The students had all gone to bed at nine o'clock, and the only lights in the building were those which dimly illumined the hallways. Everything was quiet, but no one in the seminary was asleep. The students, who slept in one large chamber at the end of the center hallway, lay in their narrow cots and gave over their thoughts to the luxury of imagination. Their professors, the Benedictine fathers, also felt the restlessness which hovered about the old seminary, and kneeling by their cots, mumbled a "Holy Mary" or two in a vain endeavor to calm their thoughts.

Suddenly, the silence was broken by the creaking of hinges. The door of one of the small cell-like rooms opened, and a cassocked figure stepped into the shadowy hallway. He paused for a moment as if undecided as to his next move, and then, stepping to the door of the cell opposite, knocked twice.

"Enter," said a voice in French. The monk entered, leaving the door partly open. The dim light disclosed a brother monk, kneeling by his cot.

"Pardon," said the intruder, "it is sad news that brings me here, Father."

"At such an hour, one could scarcely expect good news, Brother Francis,"

returned the second, rising and crossing himself as he spoke. He was evidently a superior both by his tone and his dress.

"That is true," said the first. "You have reason to say so. It is necessary for me to tell you that Brother Maurice is not long for this world. He has been delirious since sunset." Brother Francis paused.

"It is God's will," replied the superior sternly.

"Amen," said Brother Francis.

"However, we can pray for the soul of Brother Maurice," went on the superior. "You say that he has been out of his head?"

"Yes, truly," replied the other, "he has called on our Holy Mother without ceasing. Only a moment ago, he was completely in the grip of devils: for I heard him call on the name of a woman. It was not Mary. . . . Ah! What pity that such a great philosopher, such a devout religieux should die!"

"Consumption has no pity," said the other monk, "and I say again, God's will be done."

"Amen," said Brother Francis, and crossing himself, turned and left the room.

Instead of entering the cell from which he had at first emerged, he opened the door next to it, and kneeling down by the cot in the corner, mumbled some prayers for the good of the dying man's soul. Little did Brother Francis know of the spirit for which he was praying so glibly. Had he known, perhaps he might have spared his efforts, and prayed instead that his own soul might be cleansed of the impurities which contact with Brother Maurice must certainly have occasioned. A Benedictine? Undoubtedly! A philosopher? Most certainly, a great one! A human being, eating his heart out night after night in his lonely cell? Ah! That was the impure, the wicked worldly side of Brother Maurice that no one ever suspected. And was he praying, in these last few moments, for deliverance from a hell of fire and brimstone? Was he bowing meekly before the fire brands of fork-tailed devils who reached for his spirit over the abyss of death? Not he! The prayers of his brother monk would suffice for that, though to be sure, they were mostly Latin "Aves" which could not possibly carry much weight. Besides, there was not enough thought to push the words into eternity!

It was not dark now. The moon had swept out from behind the clouds, and was looking curiously into all the rooms of the seminary. It chased the shadows, and catching them, held them with its pale fingers. It peeped into the room where Brother Francis was kneeling and caressed his bowed head. Surely he could not feel that gentle touch; but for some reason he hastily got to his feet, and in the space of a few seconds was safe beneath the bed-clothes. The moon-fingers could not possibly reach him now. Instead, they reached into the next room and gently stroked the smooth white hands that lay on the rough coverlet. The hands had been twitching nervously, but the moon-fingers caressed them until soon they lay quite still. There was no

token at all that life still remained in that silent presence, and yet what strange thoughts were going on in his mind.

"If I have a soul . . . yes, I am convinced that I have a soul,—it will soon leave this worthless body and escape into the infinite. Now, if only my spirit could reach out over space—reach across all these interminable miles that separate my soul and the soul of my belovéd. Oh God! Why must I die? . . . Suppose my soul dies too. . . . Will hers die? But no! My soul is not dying! I can feel myself going . . . going . . . . Could I but reach out over space!—Ah, Gracious Mother, Holy Virgin! Help me! Help me! I have given my life to your service. . . . I have swallowed my pride. . . . I have mastered my passions. . . . I have flung away my manhood! You do not listen—you do not help—you are but an image! . . . Oh my soul!—courage . . . courage. . . . Listen! It is the voice of my belovéd. It is she—my darling! I see your face. . . . I feel your lips. . . . I reach out over space. . . ."

The moon-fingers found their way to the fevered lips and rested there for a moment. Almost instantly, the lips became cold as the marble hands which did not move on the coverlet. Upward crept the moon-fingers, until, little by little, they had molded each feature into marble beauty.

Suddenly a cloud passed over the moon, and the curious fingers were pulled back into the night. At the same instant, the clock struck midnight, the tension snapped, and with sighs of relief, both students and professors turned over in their cots and were soon asleep.

APPRECIATION

I asked the moon, once, what she thought most fair,
And thus she spake,
"Ah, Sir, the sunbeams, dancing on the lake."

I asked the sun, then, what he thought most fair,
He answered me—
"In truth, Sir, moonbeams, dancing on the sea."

I sought the breeze, and put my question then,
"The fairest thing,"
The breeze said, "is the song the brooklet sings."

I sought the brook, and questioned once again,
"Most fair to me,"
The brook said, "is the breeze's melody."
"Then all the world must be most fair," said I,
"And beauty's soul
Lives in us all, and forms a perfect whole!"

ETHER

CLANG, clang, shrill and warning, traffic lights suddenly turned from green to red, persons starting to cross the street and instead hurriedly stepping back to the curb, clang, clang, louder and louder, until when it seemed to have reached its maximum an ambulance went tearing by, racing with time itself. For an instant through the mind of everyone in that halted traffic there passed a single thought, the thought of the pain, the suffering, and the struggle of someone within that speeding car. Clang, clang, fainter and fainter, until the ambulance was seen to swerve into some distant cross street, when the sound disappeared altogether. Traffic moved on as grudgingly and as hurriedly as before, now unmindful of the incident that had but a moment before gripped its heart with a certain terror.

Yet the ambulance rushed on, until it finally drew up before the entrance of one of the city hospitals. Two orderlies sprang out and with the assistance of several others they took a stretcher from the car and carried it up the steps into the corridor. The superintendent nurse came up and looked down at the form lying upon the stretcher. All she could see was the tightly drawn face of a man whose neck was twisted in a peculiar manner and whose head lay as if it were apart from his body. The orderly gave her a short, terse explanation of the case, and lifting the stretcher, started down the corridor toward the Emergency Ward. As the nurse watched them, she saw a hand slip out from beneath the blanket covering and hang limply over the side of the stretcher.

Twenty minutes later the man lay on the operating table, but as yet he had not been under the ether. Suddenly the man's eyes opened. They looked first to the ceiling, then painfully they were lowered and rested upon the surgeon who was doing something or other with a needle, slowly again they were raised to the ceiling, and finally they were closed. The man was conscious now, he did not speak, he couldn't somehow, and it hurt him to open his eyes. He just lay there waiting—and thinking.

He was back at work again. There was the splitting noise of the riveting machines, the roar of the steam shovels, the crash of the steel girders slipping into place, the pounding of thousands of hammers, and the shriek of the cranes as they swung back and forth. This chaos of sound came up to him like a cloud of smoke, he who was far above it all moving about on the living skeleton of a skyscraper. Occasionally he rested from his work, for he loved to look at things far out and above him—it would have been fatal to look down. There was the harbor with its store of ships, each representing to him some distant unknown land, some thrilling adventure. Mystery ships. Ships of dreams. There was the line of blue that was the horizon, where now and again he saw a sudden flash of white—the sun caught in the sails of some prying schooner. There were days when clouds and smoke hung low and he watched them gently touching the towers of great buildings as if they were glad of their companionship up there. There were times when the sun had left but long, dark shadows on the street below, yet he could

see it brilliantly red, playing its rays for a last few moments upon a shining roof or window. What he liked best of all was when but a few moments before he came down from his lofty height, just at dusk, he saw the lights on the buildings about him. They came one by one, like the first stars of evening, at first but a dim twinkle, then finally bursting into blinding brilliance. They made him turn his face in the direction of the East Side, he thought of home, supper awaiting him, the children with their tales of what had happened in the streets that day. The day's work was done, life was—something was wrong, he was falling, falling,—someone was holding his mouth and nose—he couldn't breathe—he must breathe—he must—he—

Several hours later in the office of a certain city hospital a telephone operator said into the receiver, "He never came out of the ether."

A REVIEW OF ELEANOR SLATER'S "QUEST"

THE Yale University Press is doing a two-fold service to the world, it seems to me, by its publication of the "Yale Series of Younger Poets." Its purpose, as the editors state in an introductory note to each volume, is to present for public recognition those young writers, as yet not widely known, whose work appears to merit appreciation. "It will include," they say, "only such verse as seems to give the fairest promise for the future of American poetry—to the development of which it is hoped that the Series may prove a stimulus." A stimulus it should undoubtedly prove, for it opens an alluring pathway to the young poet—the prospect of seeing his verse in print and the hope of reaching the eyes of discriminating readers. But it is also a stimulus in another direction—it awakens a present-day public to the wealth of beauty in the world of today.

It is an interesting thing to note in the poetry of the hour the effect of our mechanical age upon Romance and Beauty, Philosophy and Truth, as they appear in the ideas of our more expressive contemporaries—our poets. It is in Youth that the glamour and loveliness of the world appear to us in full glory; Youth it is that experiences to the full the boundless joy of living; and it is to Youth alone, to newly-opened eyes, that the mysteries and the unfathomable truths of life reveal themselves most clearly. To be young is to be untouched, unchanged by the necessities of life, unsoiled by the foulnesses of the world; it is to be uncowed by the compromises life forces on us, to have our spirits and our ideals still unbroken and still shining. To be a poet and young is to have the sum of all these things with the power of translating them to the world. That is why immortality comes so close to Youth: because life to Youth is seen in all its brilliancy and dazzling idealism, in the light that too soon becomes dingy and grey when it is filtered through the distorted lens of those who have learned to live in this world. Whether in this age of invention and mechanics, it is impossible to see as the poets of former years saw, is the question which it seems to me the Yale Press goes far toward answering.

This is a very lengthy introduction to what I was attempting to say—which is just this: the latest little blue book which the Yale Series has added to its list is called "Quest," by Eleanor Slater. The book would be more worthwhile if it contained only one quatrain of the many which it holds. "Three Wishes" has beauty of thought and phrase; and that simplicity which is the most consummate of arts.

THREE WISHES

I wish I had a bird's way of flying;
I wish I had a wind's way of laughter.
I wish I had a day's way of dying,—
Light before, and stars coming after.

This felicity of wording, her ability to express her thought simply, and to find what seems exactly the fitting word—marks all her verses. Unlike many of the younger writers, her poems do not lack ease of movement, but flow smoothly and uninterruptedly. There is no straining after figures of speech, no distortion of phrasing in order to conform to the scheme of rhythm. Miss Slater's stanzas seem to fall into metre naturally, as they do into rhyme. We need only compare the quatrain already quoted, "Three Wishes," with two short verses of Jessie Rittenhouse's, to see how distinctly simple and natural Miss Slater's style is. The following "Loss" contains a single idea told in a direct unfurbished manner by Miss Rittenhouse.

LOSS

Once was the need of you
A pain too great to bear;
And all my heart went calling you
In work and song and prayer.

Now dull time has brought
A sadder, stranger lot—
That I should look upon the day,
And find I need you not.

Both "Three Wishes" and "Loss" are poems of moods and feeling rather than of concrete ideas; therefore, since they are similar in this respect, we cannot attribute the differences to treatment. The fact that "Loss" shows a lack of finish, of the perfect polish and completeness which "Three Wishes" evinces is due solely to the writer, not to the material. In comparison with this young woman's simplicity and utter lack of artificiality, Miss Rittenhouse's haunting little poem despite its very real quality, nevertheless gives an impression of labored effort. The metre limps in the first line of the second stanza; and the inversions of "Once was the need of you" and "I need you not" take on a slightly stilted, affected tone when seen by the side of the Slater simplicity. "Loss" hammers out its rhythm; its lack of intricacy in its metric system reduces it almost, one would fear, to a jingle.

"Three Wishes" on the contrary despite its entire accordance with a single, far-from-complex scheme of rhythmic feet, nevertheless slips along flowingly, easily, but freed from the set "beat-beat" of most first attempts at poetry. "I wish I had a bird's way of flying" has a certain musical lilt of its own, not manufactured from the mold of a fixed number of stressed syllables in proportion to another fixed number of unstressed—but born rather of the sheer beauty of the conception in the poet's mind. This is the quality of true poetry.

I have said a great deal about "Three Wishes" because this quatrain especially seemed to me an almost perfect thing, and because it exemplifies many of the characteristics which are outstanding in Eleanor Slater's works. Perhaps I should add that another is the very "quotableness" of her four-line pieces. "Direction" and "Alps" and "Substance" are three of these which fall very aptly from the tongue; and which besides embody Miss Slater's ideas and philosophy. Although she declares that she "flings to God the challenge of her Youth" it is a challenge offered in that truest of all reverence—a love of life, of beauty and truth and nature,—which constitutes her philosophy. "Before" expresses this quite beautifully and fully—and as simply as all her verses are.

There is a great deal more to tell of this book; but perhaps the Yale University Press publishers have expressed it completely when they say "the fairest promise for the future of American poetry."

MY HOUSE

I would build my house on a hilltop,
I would turn its face to the sea,
A cliff would stand behind it,
And near it an apple tree.

I would build my house on a hilltop,
And to tell the sun good-night
I would look to the west in the evening,
Till the stars were set alight.

I would build my house on a hilltop,
And a road would bring me friends
To rest in the shade of old, old trees
Till the long, long summer ends.

I would build my house on a hilltop,
A small house, but friendly, and kind,
And the wind that blows for all the world
Would cleanse its soul and mine.

THE LAND OF FORGETTING

THE old ones could tell you better of this land than I. They have been there, all of them. The youth of the world, and we are the youth, is striving to reach that land of dead dreams. I want to tell you now, all of you, it is useless to struggle, for you will never find your dead dreams until you have been cheated of all your living ones. An old one told me that, and he should know.

A few nights ago, I had a dream. It seemed as though I were caught in a great darkness; a darkness without air, whose hot clammy fingers pressed so closely against me that I thought I should surely stifle. Then I knew that I had never lived; that life was being given me for the first time. There was suddenly a ray of light, seen but dimly through smoke, and as the light grew the smoke and the darkness cleared away.

Before me rose a great structure, a palace, which rose turret by turret away into the clouds. My feet were all ready set upon the drawbridge which led to this vision, when I heard a voice behind me crying, "Wait! Wait!" It was only a young woman in white running after me, but when she came close enough to be seen I was glad I had waited, for I knew her to be the most beautiful one that man or God ever dreamed of.

"What is your name?" I asked her, "And what do you want with me?"

"I am your Conscience, my friend," she answered me. Her voice was beautiful and strange like an anthem in church. "I am going with you, all your life long, and you will have me always."

I said nothing, but looked deeply into her eyes and knew it to be true.

"Before you enter here," she told me, "you must know that this is to be your lifetime, and it is called the castle of Illusion. Let us begin. I will be with you until the end."

So we set our feet upon the bridge and into the portals of my lifetime. There were many rooms and many passages. Many of the rooms I have forgotten; many of the sights I saw therein have slipped my mind. But there is one I shall never forget. It was a long, low room and in this room were many, many toys; a doll's house, with the playthings scattered about the floor; a great many games, all set out and half played; story books; roller skates; everything a child could want. Along one wall ran an enormous fireplace, and there was a Christmas tree, with all the candles burned out, and all the trimmings old and faded. There were some empty stockings hanging on the mantle, and ashes from a long dead fire rustling in a draft upon the hearth. It took me several minutes to see everything in that room, and as I saw each inanimate object I realized that it was dear to me, infinitely dear. Suddenly I gave a cry, and a great fear caught me by the throat. Almost hidden by the pitiful Christmas tree lay a child, face down upon the ground.

"Do not move!" said my Conscience—"It is only your dead childhood!"

"But who killed it?" I almost screamed. "Don't you see I love that child? Who killed it?"

"Words killed it, of course," my Conscience murmured, so low that I could hardly hear her. "Come, there will be a better room next." But, as we turned to go I saw tears on her beautiful cheeks.

And so we went on and on. Some of the rooms were beautiful and we could see endless gardens from their windows; sometimes there would be a great sea, sleeping under a moon, sometimes meadows lifting their faces to the pale blue-grey rain. Some of the rooms were ugly, like deep subterannean dungeons; so dark that we could scarcely see. I would always long to flee from these rooms, but my Conscience made me stay and look until my eyes would pierce the gloom and see the horrible and grotesque creatures which writhed in the far corners. At last we entered a room high up in a turret. As my Conscience swung open the door I looked about me eagerly, for she had just told me that this was the second greatest room in the castle, and that there were only two more for me to see as great as this.

Nothing met my eyes but a bare, attic chamber. There was no one in it; there was no furniture. Only a spider busied himself upon a rafter hanging endless silver festoons of cobweb. On the floor was an open book, dropped carelessly, and the last remnants of rose-leaves were crumbled on the open page.

"What is the book?" I asked softly, for the room seemed very sad to me, and very very lonely.

"It is a part of the story of King Arthur," replied my Conscience. "You have read it, but no one else has ever read it as you have. The story of Uthur and Ygraine."

Tears blinded my sight. "Let us go! Let us go, my Conscience! I know this room—it is the room of my dead girlhood!"

The door closed softly behind us.

"I cannot show you many more rooms now," my Conscience told me, "and all the rest will be harder for you than all the ones that you have seen. But before we go further, come down this corridor and look out the window at the end."

"What do you see?" she asked me as I looked.

"I see a great field of poppies and wheat! I see the sun sinking! It has almost gone! I remember, I remember."

" 'And a thousand hearts are plunging to a love they'll never meet,
Through the meadows of the sunset, through the poppies and the wheat,
In the land where the dead dreams go.' "

"Come away now," said the woman beside me, "you have more to see." And she led me into a new series of rooms; rooms so bright with sunshine that it was almost too much to bear. They were beautiful rooms full of everything a human heart could value. And then, suddenly, as suddenly as a flash of a bird's wing, we came to a room which was different from all the others. "This is not one of your greatest rooms," my Conscience told me, "but it will hurt you now to look into it." It was a small chapel that I

saw. There was a long, glowing window which pictured Michael holding in his hands an unsheathed sword. His hair was bright with glory; I could hardly tear my gaze from it. Below the window was an altar, set with white and gold flowers. Candles burned among the blossoms. "I know this room!" I cried in joy, "It is my hope!" Even as I spoke, there was a slight tremble. Then with a deafening crash the lovely window fell in upon the altar, crushing the flowers and the candles. There was blackness and a great roar of many winds.

How I left that room I do not know, but when next I knew anything I found myself in a little garden beside a pool of water. It was the loveliest little garden I had ever seen. It was evening and birds were twittering good-nights in the blossoming shrubs. The light became less and less. It was growing darker. Coming down a path I saw my Conscience, her white dress glimmering mothlike in the gloom. She carried something in her two hands. It was a gold cup of wine.

"Drink this," she said, and her voice was as the birds, going to their rest. "It will never grow less. Whatever is to come, it will never grow less."

I took the cup in my hands, and drank. And then I sat there, motionless, holding it. Night came, and the heavens were burdened with stars. And when the moon came, slender as a sigh, it caught itself along the edge of the cup, turning it to silver. There was a summer breeze. My Conscience stood beside me.

"You must go on," she said—"But fear no more."

I rose to go, but even as I rose, sleep left me, and I woke.

You will never find your dead dreams until you have been cheated of all your living ones. I tell you that, and I know.

POEM

Dim lavender of a sunset dead,
Petals of a dying rose,
Fragile dust of a night-moth's wings,
Ye transient yet eternal things,
Say whence your beauty flows.

Shining gleam of a far, far world,
Golden sunlight's quenchless flame,
Great mystery of time and space,
Throbbing heart of the human race,
Thine answer is the same—
Unknown.

THE PLOUGHGIRL

Clump, Clump! the thud of horse's feet
I heard, and turned to take the picture in,—
A picture of the farms and broken fields,—
And there I saw a scrawny girl who walked
Within her horse's tread.

The reins, tight-bound around her slender wrists,
Yanked hard on every stumbling step
And pulled her over clods of grass and flowers—
A mockery they seemed.

Clump, Clump! It was the only sound
Which rent the weary stillness of the day,
A sound which gave her eyes a listening look
And made them seem washed out and pale,
Just like her decent dress.

Her thin, young legs encased in deepest black
Were stilt-like, weak, and wobbled with each step
Like an old man's whose stumblings need a crutch.
And yet, around her plain and proper hat,
A scarlet ribbon flamed.

Clump, Clump! the bare monotony
Of life she knew and feared it not at all.
Perhaps it was a girlish whim that made
Her bind that scarlet ribbon 'round her hat—
Perhaps—but then who knows?

The team of horses dropped beyond the hill;
And still they pulled with heavy, steady steps,
Which jerked and hauled the figure of the girl,
Until from sight was hid that scarlet ribbon—
A living, flaunting thing.

THE CHARACTER SKETCH OF A CAT

After the manner of "The St. Nicholas Magazine":

A CAT

My cat is black. But it has white whiskers. His name is Bimbo. Also it has three feet that are white. He is a pretty small cat but it is very lively and playful. It will play all the day. We try to teach him to keep his paws out of the dish, but he is still only a big kitten and he has not learned that much yet. I tie a piece of string to a spool, and we have lots of fun playing

together. My mother thinks it is a very funny cat to watch him play. I wish that some of the League members knew how nice Bimbo is because we all love him very much and think he is a very nice cat.

(Honorable Mention)
Anastasia Antigonious, Age 12
Red Neck, Indiana

After the manner of "The Saturday Evening Post" (the section entitled "Short Turns and Encores"):

MORALITY POEM

Bimbo was a burly cat
With whiskers white and stiff.
We put some food beneath his nose,
And he will only sniff.

Our Bimbo knows the ways of us
With whom he frisks around.
For when we chase him for his bath,
He slumps down on the ground!

Yes! Bimbo is a clever cat,
And often fools us all.
He does the same, to make us mad,
As children, when they squawl.

L'envoi:
The moral of this homely verse,
Is very plain to see—
"When things are bad; to make them worse,
A poser you should be!"

—*Baron Angerland*

After the manner of "The Dial":

THE CAT

The London suburb . . . a veil of fine rain sizzling on the hot street lamps. . . . A satin ribbon of road; narrow, glistening pavement stretching far ahead. Glum sentinels of thick stone houses on either side. London behind them . . . weary and asleep. . . . Tremulous silence . . . the air tingling with suspense, suppressed excitement. . . . Narrowing rows of yellow street lamps, like cats' eyes, disappearing into the darkness. . . .

A black cat, wet, scraggly, starved, slinks across the road. It looks around. . . . Yellow cat's eyes . . . malicious, threatening, inhuman. . . . It disappears into the darkness. You stand shivering like a man possessed. . . . Fear, it is, presentment of impending danger. . . . Stop shivering like a

blasted fool, will you? . . . Slippery lights in the distance. . . . The drone of a fast approaching motor. That damned cat. . . . The car swoops down the gleaming street. . . . London is a thing alive now; it is awake at last. There is a blinding glare . . . a deafening crash. Splintered glass . . . the groan of an aching tree. A thing horribly twisted . . . a green metal wreck of a thing, lies heaped at the side of the road, smoking and hissing in the fine, cold drizzle. There is another thing on the other side of the road . . . still, unprotesting . . . a man, it was. . . .

A black cat, wet, scraggly, starved, appears from the bushes where the green car is heaped, and slinks back across the slippery, glistening stretch of death-road. . . . Darkness again. . . . London is asleep. . . .

After the manner of "Poetry, A Magazine Of Verse":

CAT

Ay, walk among us, Cat,
And learn the endless discord of hateful life. . . .

Tall steel structures and cascades of fitted stone
You have seen us build, O Cat . . .
To make great swollen streams of filthy cities.
Great seas you've seen us tame,
Because your amber eyes shone terribly,
And in the soul of Man there is a yellow stripe. . . .

Tame men suddenly made wild
Have done horrible, war-like things to other men . . .
Beasts have trampled other beasts . . .
A million smiles are drownéd in a sucking mud . . .
Because you, Cat, walk by and smile hideously.

You are the prodigal of contented man . . .
Fat, wealthy, and honored in the cities . . .
Man has given you metallic strength
From food that comes from off his stuffed board.
His eyes are craven . . . yet your hideous smile
Touches man like bloated fingers of the gods
Touching a dead face. . . .

Ay, walk among us, Cat,
And learn the endless discord of hateful life. . . .

HOMER

"EVEN as are the generations of leaves such are those likewise of men; the leaves that be the wind scattereth on the earth, and the forest buddeth and putteth forth more again, when the season of spring is at hand; so of the generations of men, one putteth forth and another ceaseth."

Time metes out justice in the world. All that is human and imperfect passes; only thought remains. The immortal thought of Homer needs not our criticism nor our praise, it will endure as long as mortal men have hearts to feel and minds to know. With all the generations who have known Homer, we add our little tribute on the altar of ideal beauty.

As a literary masterpiece, Homer's poetry stands above all literature of all time. The hexameter itself is beyond comparison. The poem is a simple, beautiful narrative. The atmosphere and background are effected by incomparable descriptions. The tone and color are always perfect. Underneath all, lies a noble philosophy of life. The master poet combines all in a lovely mosaic.

Homer has the freshness of childhood, the passion of youth, and the wisdom of age. His poems are an epitome of human experience. From the beautiful picture of the child Astyanax shrinking in fright at his father's armour, and the schoolboys worrying a nest of wasps, to Nestor "the clear-voiced orator, from whose tongue flamed discourse sweeter than honey," every phase of life is represented. Homer pictures war with all its horror and all its bravery, yet he loves to sketch the scenes of happy homes in time of peace. He knows the cry of the wild cranes and the ferocity of the mountain lion; he feels the grace of the sturdy young poplar, and the fragilty of the poppy. He thrills to the roar of the angry ocean, and he catches the whispered murmurings of brooks. Wind and storm and darkness are as real to him as the beauty of "saffron-robed Dawn," or the splendor of the heavens embroidered with stars.

Above all human endeavor and beyond all wonders of nature, Homer finds the divine. The gods indeed plan the lives of men, but they, through the blindness of their hearts, have sorrows beyond what is ordained. If it is the gods who give trials and hardships, it is they who infuse strength into the human heart. Moreover Prayers of penitence are daughters of great Zeus, halting and wrinkled and of eyes askance, that have their task withal to go in the steps of Sin. For Sin is strong and fleet of foot; wherefore she far outrunneth all prayers, and goeth before them over all the earth making men fall, and Prayers follow behind and heal the harm."

To the child, Homer tells a thrilling story; to the poet, he paints a thing of beauty; to the musician he sings a noble song; to the philosopher, he answers the deep questions of life. Homer is indeed "a poet for all ages, all races, and all moods."

OHIO

I tell, first, of the lake
With towering cliffs,
With shining sands, and wooded shores.
The lake, whose quiet greens and amethysts
Change to deeper blues
When roar the mighty whitecaps
With a change of mood.
  No one can know the sunsets
O'er that lake
Unless they paddle out
Along the golden path—
Watch the shining plaything disappear
Surrounded by a host of rainbow clouds
Piled like fairy castles in the air.
See the golden gleam
Upon the water
Change to silver light.
  And, looking back, find that night
Has come upon the land
That fires have been kindled
Up and down the beach.
I tell of rivers, then—
Green and winding
With willow-shaded banks
Where lazy turtles, on protruding logs,
Bask themselves
In the calm, dull stillness
Underneath the sun.
  Beside the stream, great fields,
Sunscorched and unshaded,
With foot-worn paths
Which lead to hidden springs,
Or far away to the sheltering wood.
  I see that wood
Carpeted with ferns, and yellow violets
With great, widespreading trees—
Beech, and sugar maple—
Tulips, tall and solitary.
Magic forest—with patterned sunlight
Where birds are singing
And where children play.

ANTIQUES

WE Jacksons have always been a particularly clannish family, and to conceal whatever faults we may suspect of being among us, we have been known to go to the greatest extremes of care and vigilance. Not for the world would we have anyone imagine that Johnny is incredibly stupid with his algebra. Indeed, to hear the logical reasons which Father produces in favor our own particular brand of car, no one could have the slightest inkling of the tire trouble which has been ours. Yet these difficulties in family life are as mere trifles when compared with the latest dilemma in which we find ourselves. For, in order to present a united front to our neighbor, in this crisis, what untold torture do we undergo!

Gone are the days of the comfortable old sofas. Gone are the dear ugly mirrors on whose broad surfaces so many of us have caught reflections of familiar walls. Now, all has changed. In the old places stand grim, forbidding Hepplewhite chairs, and the prim, little Sheraton mirrors can send back exasperatingly small portions of a face or tie. Alas, Mother, usually the sanest of us all, has been the instigator of this movement away from comfort and towards fashion. Only too true it is that she has at last succumbed to the lure of the antiques.

The family unites quite heartily in its concentrated fury against Mrs. Brown. Had she never shown our mother the untold possibilities of an unassuming Maine farmhouse, we feel sure that an unfashionable comfort might still have reigned supreme in our modest home. With her first discovery of a real hooked rug—and the fact that it came from a hen-house seems to have added immeasurably to its charm—Mother's enthusiasm for antique hunting began and it has never abated for one instant.

As chauffeur of the expedition, I have more than once been the unwilling spectator of Mrs. Brown's and Mother's plan of attack. The road chosen must be one running off the main highway; the farmhouse to be despoiled must look old and shabby. Mother and Mrs. Brown approach the lady of the place with all the geniality and tact in the world. The conversation, at first, is general, but it very soon narrows down to the subject in hand. Almost always there is sure to be produced some articles which may range in size from a tiny pickle-jar to an enormous highboy. Then the real enjoyment begins for the wary farmer and his wife are quite sure of their hold over Mother and Mrs. Brown. But these latter are, in turn, determined to secure the article at its lowest price. I have learned that one of the most impressive and attractive features of an antique is its price. However, to return to Mother and Mrs. Brown—often they ride away in high dudgeon. More often they come to the car with happy stories of wonderful lowboys to be shipped to the antique finisher.

Sometimes they even bring the goods out with them. I was once horrified to see Mother lift a child from its cradle, hand the baby to its mother and proudly bear away the cradle. She assured me that the family was in dire

want and that the money would serve them much better than would a fine, old cradle. However, my conscience has always troubled me, for the youngest member of our family is thirteen, and the baby looked pitifully small.

I have never considered my mother a particularly hard-hearted woman, yet this experience and several others have made me begin to doubt. Perhaps she has only been carried away by her enthusiasm. But I do know that for a time all ordinary furniture became exceedingly distasteful to her. As the house was not entirely filled with antiques, the lack sometimes occasioned discomforts which would have weakened the resolve of anyone less determined than she. Many are the times we have seen Father paddling about in his bed-room slippers on a cold morning when the floors were entirely devoid of all covering. There was never a word out of him, of course. But sometimes we older children, rather incensed by Mother's seeming cruelty to Father, have been unable to contain ourselves when the express company that day failed to appear with the rejuvenated hooked-rugs.

But that form of cruelty is a thing of the past. The house is in apple-pie order now, and antiques hold undisputed sway. The evening before I left for college, the Boyds, who live next door, came in to pay tribute to our latest acquisition, an enormous portrait of one of our illustrious grandparents who, having had his coat torn at the hands of a careless moving man many years before, had lain in dusty seclusion until hunted out and sent away to be repaired. Grandpa Condict, as the family affectionately call him, in his broad, gilt frame had usurped the wall space of an old family favorite, and everyone of us secretly mourned the missing, at the same time feeling a bit overpowered by Grandpa's awesome presence. Yet each and every one of us joined in the general acclamation and with pride in our voices, congratulated each other upon having such an heirloom in the family.

Somewhat later in the evening an uncle and aunt put in an appearance. As we scurried about from room to room, collecting a Hepplewhite chair here, an appletree chair there, so that all the company might be seated. I thought I saw an expression on Father's face as though he were recalling the old sofa that used to hold such an illimitable number of laughing young people. But in an instant the expression had passed from his face and I heard him agreeing with Mrs. Boyd that antiques have indeed a great charm entirely their own.

AUTUMN MUSING

Strange poignancy of autumn haze
Upon the distant hills,
Strange draught within the bronzen cup
The autumn sunlight fills,
Strange, strange, the circling charm of life
Alternate stirs and stills!

LAMENT

Warrior:

Chieftain of our hearts and Nation,
Dead forever, dead forever!
Thus to lie among the hemlocks,
Thus to lie beneath the maples.
You shall hear the wild deer's hoofbeats
On the turf above your body;
You shall feel the withered oak leaves
As they fall upon the snowbanks.
And the rustling reeds shall lull you
In their sighing by the river,
And the loon and pale blue heron,
They shall cry above the marshes,
"Dead forever and forever!"
In the dark mists of the mountain,
There the Great Brown Bear shall mourn you,
Thus he'll mourn you with the panther:
"Dead forever and forever!"
All the streams and sparkling rivers,
All the trees with trembling branches
Shall despair you in their murmur,
"Dead forever and forever!"
We have slain you, oh, our Chieftain,
In our blindness have we killed you;
In your greatness you'll forgive us;
You will bless your struggling Nation,
You will give us aid and wisdom.
Sad our hearts are, oh, our Chieftain,
Sad our hearts remain within us,—
We have slain you by our actions.
Brother, when the cornstalks wither,
You will dash into the Fire Ball,
Swift winged lance of gleaming jasper;
Then shall come a heavy rainfall,
And the corn shall grow and blossom;
It shall bear us golden grainheads
Tasseled with the red-brown cornsilk,
Crowned above with golden tassels.
When the dew hangs heavy on them,
And the leaves are dank with water,
You shall clasp your bold War-Bonnet,
You shall touch its brilliant feathers;
From it there shall spring a rainbow,

And the heavy rains shall leave us,
They shall leave the flooded cornfields.
Brother, thus you will forgive us,—
We are shamed to be forgiven.
Brother, thus you will regard us,
As your children are we cherished,
As your weak and wayward children,
As your blind but cherished Nation.
We have slain you, let us mourn you,
Let us mourn you with the pine trees,
With the lone and tragic pine trees,
With the purple springtime blossoms.
Let our bitter, anguished crying
Reach our Brother and our Chieftain;
Let him hear our anguished mourning:
"Dead forever and forever."
In the Islands of the Blessed
Let him hear his saddened people
As they mourn him in their lodges:
"Dead forever and forever."