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El Palenque

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Some of our philosopher-scientists think that consciousness and will, mentality and purpose, are as much necessary functions in the constitution of things as are matter and energy. If they are right, and if "the first wealth is health," then health of mind and honesty of purpose are greatly to be desired and earnestly to be sought by all of us—novices that we are in the order of learning.

June 4, 1929.

EDWARD L. HARDY.

Indifference

ARTHUR ANDERSON

Don Santiago García buckled his brass-studded belt a notch tighter, and watched his very hybrid horse stretch for plentiful green grass, munch wide low-hung oak leaves.

Don Ermenegildo snorted out two vile breaths of his cigarettes of corn-husks and tobacco—mostly corn-husks—and played with the machette sheathed in his shoe, under muddy white manta pantaloons.

"No, I said. I said, What do I want that for? I'll give you seven pesos for it. But—" his shaggy chin wagged on to the four listeners.

Santiago García bristled his sparce moustache. "How can he gossip inanely, with Federal machine-guns sputtering below; with two dry tortillas and my horse the only possible food, and the town-women too scared to send more?" he thought; and spitting through his teeth, crunched away on damp gravel. A dark blue dragon-fly hovered before his face, shining wickedly; Don Santiago ignored it, and the insect settled on the carbide-can roof of the mud-plastered willow hut.

A distant aeroplane droned against the jagged skyline; seeing nothing worth bombing, it hummed off whence it came.

Santiago slouched behind the hut, stepping carefully over the sleeping dog and flies. He approached with considerable deference the dark-haired man in mud-yellowed manta, sitting on a torn red blanket in the sun.

"Señor Padre, I think we shall have to move. Already the aeroplane has given us a sniff, and I have been listening to the machine-guns for half an hour. So if you don't mind—"

"Perhaps." The priest tried a rather worn smile. "Do you know the way out? It appears that Cristo Rey has not wished our cause to prosper. God has permitted the Federal government to hem us in close."

"I think tonight we might try to slip through, in spite of the faro search-light. I helped once build a path leading to the house of the manager of the abandoned mine, hidden from the hills about."

Padre Arreola sighed, remembering his five years as parish priest there, before events had forced defiance.

"And if the Señor Padre does not object, I shall try to see my wife and children before we pass out to Amatlán de Cañas, where they say the Federals have not yet penetrated. Or perhaps the Señor Padre would prefer to join the provisional government at Bolaños—"

"No, I think Amatlán de Cañas is better for the present, General García. Perhaps later, when we are more fortunate—"

From distended black overhead, sudden big drops spattered on the dry stones. As the men hurried into the narrow hut, García wondered if he could have mistaken distant thunder for some of the machine-gun fire below; but surely not. The coarsened noses and ears of the sheltered men ignored all the ecstatic incense of fresh rain. They saw a sheet of heavy, sputtering moisture, so solid as to blot grey the nearest scrub-oak. Well, the Federals would probably be too uncomfortable to watch for them.

"Suppose," volunteered Santiago, "that we go now. If it continues like this, the Federals can't use their guns—or aeroplanes—" Thunder drowned his voice.

"If we wait until dark, it may be that the power line will have been struck by lightning, in which case the faro cannot work, and we shall not get wet," objected Ermenegildo.

"If we wait until dark to find out whether the searchlight can work or not, we have no proof yet that the line has been struck, or shall be. It seems to me that God has provided our chance now—" two of the men smiled sardonically at Padre Arreola—"and indeed it has not rained so hard, nor promised such length since the season started—"

Silver lightning struck the top of a nearby hill; the tin roof squawked under the pounding thunder. They ventured out. The dense water soaked through their tightly wrapped blankets, and ran thick over the brims of their wide straw hats. General García, blanketless, squished ahead with oozy sandals, through the grassy mud. The rest followed him, cowering at every forked flash. Head-high bushes resisted the bombarding drops with a blatant whir. García hesitated before one, parted the bush, and stepped through. The rest followed, slushing along the path.

As they reached the manager's house, the rain subsided to a sullen drizzle. García advanced cautiously into the waxing brilliance of the day. Suddenly he ducked flat, pulling the priest down with him. Three Federals before him raised rifles, spat rapid shots. The five behind, stupefied, fell. One writhed a little. Blood reddened the mud, mixed with rivulets of rainwater, and dribbled down the embankment.

Padre Arreola, hidden by a few blue salvia bushes, pushed García toward sheltering embankment. Too late: the three outposts advanced, covering them with their rifles. Both gave up revolvers; to

resist meant a bullet apiece. It might be God had spared them with a purpose. Padre Arreola noted, over his shoulder, that the two who had smiled sarcastically still grinned.

Colonel Aguirre stepped through the ranks of his mounted guard to his new red Buick. He pulled on a smooth tan overcoat, perched a luxurious Stetson on his black bullet cranium, and felt, finally, the position of his two Colts. He stepped in, banged shut the door, and sank against the cushions with a sigh.

An officer whose unsightly silver crescent labelled him officer of the day, splattered up and saluted.

"Two prisoners, sir—they look like García the bandit and Arreola the priest." He flickered before the accusing bristle of the colonel's moustache.

"Why the devil didn't they shoot them? We've enough in the prisons now; and Mexico City doesn't want to be bothered by any more trials—especially of priests! Besides, I'm late already to headquarters." Colonel Aguirre scented more rain; Ahualulco was far, the roads bad.

"I thought—"

"Well, Captain Romero, do what you like with them, but don't bother me; and don't come to me if the district commander reprimands you!" The colonel himself sulked under the shadow of two reprimands. "The prisons are full, the courts clogged. They shouldn't have been taken in the first place."

The car jerked off through the swirling yellow creek.

Captain Romero plodded back, his mind filled with further hate for these rainy-season expeditions. Pausing to scrape the mud from his shoes he rebuked the sentry for tracking mud on the red tile of the porch; and damned the draggled condition of his light khaki—at best ill enough fitting.

"Tell Lieutenant Martinez to come here," he snapped, and dripped in.

He came, with much mud, flaunting on the flap of his upper pocket the red emblem of the Masonic syndicate. Soon he strode out, smiling unpleasant joy.

"Tell Second Lieutenant Sanchez to report to my room."

Sanchez reported, jingling spurs, chains, and a sword. He returned shortly.

"Tell Sergeant Lopez to bring three men, and report to me in my room."

“The Bard”

MARGUERITE LUCAS

He came from the mountains, and, it is said, he returned to them as the far blue mists of a later season blanketed the drowsing hills.

* * * *

“You are a stranger here.” The old man leaned against the circular wall of the well, motionless, gazing through the spiraling smoke of his pipe.

“I came from beyond those mountains. It is a far journey.”

The old man grunted. The smoke spiral wavered, then stilled again. . . “What do you do?”

The young traveler looked far into the shadows of the old buildings that gave depth to the square and made of that place a dappled pool of varying dimnesses. . .

“I am a singer.”

The old eyes narrowed in suspicion, and turned again to contemplation of the pale smoke.

“My song is of the beauty of all things, of all forgotten lovelinesses. It is like no other song, for into it are gathered the fragility of dreams, of unspoken aspirations, the essence of all poetry gone before, or yet to come, the delicacy of all old songs worn beautiful with singing and long hidden in the mist of years. All life is in my song, and deathlessness its theme. For the clear lucidity of beauty lives in all things, and knows no end.”

The villager scrutinized his rough hands in the dim light, rubbed at their encrusted soil, then raised his head defiantly.

“Words! Words strung haphazard, meaningless. For a song give me a good tune and strong words, mouthfilling, hearty words, with body to them, like the brown ale meant to wash them down.”

“So long as beauty is there, and the utter loveliness of pictures, turned page by page in a perfect book, there is no need for more. These strange shadows, yours and mine, which the moon writes on the silver-splashed grey stones, these are a song. . . You would not know it, though.”

He smiled and turned away. And even as he went a little song rose in that dark market place. It swelled until the night grew silent, listening, and the droning insects ceased their long monotony, to hear. Those in the warm lit houses heard its joyousness. They, too, were silent as the song passed by.

The little path from the village led upward through meadow and forest, its goal the fortified castle which overlooked the valley and the sleeping town.

The Singer faced the bitter-eyed King.

"A singer? What have I to do with songs? I can neither touch nor taste them. But you may stay if you can find a way to make the time pass less slowly."

"You have not heard my song."

"A song will not fill my coffers nor make my ministers honest."

"Would you have me, like an Eastern merchant, open my packs and so display my wares? Here, a poem, a necklace of words, lustrous, glowing, gentle words, pearls to drip through your fingers, cool, smooth, and pale, like the wan moon peering through dim haze, her radiance diffused. Or would you rather the leap, the life, of rubies, trembling, liquid, troubled, each one imprisoning a protesting fire? Perhaps some delicate melody pleases most, fine wrought and beautiful in its simplicity, a ring curiously traced in silver and set with smooth, uncarved green jade. If not jewels, then pictures of strange places. Have you seen the slender brush strokes of tall palms against a bright golden cloud, their drooping fronds black lace before the coming blue of night? For I can sing of these, and more beside. My pack is bottomless. And there are more jewels and rich stuffs, stiff flower-worked brocades, and opalescent satins. There is bravery and gentleness, thoughtfulness and tenderness, and above all, and pervading all, there is beauty, and the calm, sweet love of her. Could one ask more?"

And so it was that in the great hall, light and shadow filled by the blazing hearth, there rose for the first time a song which filled its chill emptiness with the warmth of lovely things. There blossomed the gentleness of dreams and the fragility of beauty sought but never quite attained.

And still he sang, until the company, seated at long tables under the high patterned ceiling, ceased toying with their burnished goblets to listen. The King turned a ring upon one finger, but neither spoke nor moved. . . . Then wearily he rose, bitter with long futility.

"We have no need of you, nor of your songs."

* * *

The shimmer of pale moonlight, when the singer stepped from the shadow of the high carved door, had touched the valley with a blue and silver frost. He turned to the little path leading into the distant hills. And as he went, he sang.

Sea Men's Wives

DOROTHY CANNON

"Speaking of two ships tangling in mid air—those fellows should have gone to Raub—that's his strong point—he could tell them how to do it and get away with it." Jack spoke in a bantering tone, and Marjorie, Raub's best beloved, who had been proudly presented to our gathering for the first time that evening, looked startled.

Raub said, "Yeah, that's all you know—I may have been there, but that's no sign I know what I did. Say, for a while there, when that guy's prop was chewin' away at my fuselage, I was doin' so many things with both hands and feet that my brain just barely had time to tell 'em what to do, without botherin' to write it down for future reference."

Marjorie looked distressed.

"Talkin' about dead aviators," Raub continued, "did you hear about the first aviator that got to Heaven?"

"Was there one?" I put in, for Marjorie looked even more distressed. Since she was between us, Raub could do nothing but glare.

"Yeah, and to make this story right, there were several. Anyhow, this guy was quite a hero up there, and he put it all over the common run of grade crossing casualties, but pretty soon his stuff began to get stale, because there were too many others arriving, who peddled the same line. Well, he hatched it up with St. Peter to cut down the overhead, and do away with his rivals by telling them they were startin' up a commercial run in Hell. Saint Peter helped him out, and next day there was a sudden exodus of aviators, all bound for Hell, to get a job on the commercial run. This first bird was real popular again, but in about a week, he began spendin' a lot of time hangin' around the pearly gates.

"Finally, he got his flyin' coat and goggles, and comes up to check out. Saint Peter asks him what the big idea is, and he says, 'Well, they *might* start up a commercial run down there,' and he leaves Heaven on the chance."

Marjorie managed to laugh with them.

"But talkin' about scarin' people to death, Jack here takes the prize for that. Tell 'em about the guy that was teachin' you to fly, Jack."

"Yeah, that was good—but Mart was dumb to pull the stunt he did," Jack began.

"Aw, he was not—you could fly the tail offa' most of those things.

if you had to, only when anybody was there, you just depended on them all the time."

"Uhuh—I could fly the tail off—that's just what I could do. Any way, Mart got tired of making my landings, and decided he'd make me do it, so he told the mechanic just how he was going to fix me. He got me up, flying around on a nice day with him in the front and me in the back of a dual control ship. Pretty soon he pulled the stick out of the socket, showed it to me, and tossed it over the side. Then he told me to go ahead and land. I just pulled up my stick, said I wasn't taking that responsibility, and tossed it out. He looked plenty sick."

Marjorie gasped.

"I stuck the ship in a dive that turned him green, then I pulled it into a climb, and he began to comprehend. I made as pretty a landing as I've ever made since. You see, the mech had tipped me off, and I'd taken up an extra stick."

"Boy howdy! I know just how that guy felt . . . especially after chasing ducks," said George.

When the burst of laughter had subsided, Marjorie made bold to ask what he meant by the last remark.

He replied with, "Well, during the war, I was taking training down there in Florida. The whole country around where we were was dotted with little lakes, just as round as a dollar, and about a half-mile across. I went out one morning, and took a dive at one just to be doing something. I scared out a couple of ducks, and they lit out ahead of me down the lake, so I took after 'em. When we got to the end of the lake, Mr. Duck makes a wing-over, and comes back, so I made a wing-over, and came back after him, with all the old Jenny had. Boy howdy! we were sure makin' knots! He had me beat on the turns, but I had him beat on the stretches, so by the time we got to the end of the lake the old prop was just a-clippin' his tail feathers off, and he ups in a wing-over again, and gains speed with a dive, me right behind him, givin' the Jenny all she'd take, and just skimmin' along the top of the water. I got so excited spittin' out tail feathers I forgot all about the ground, and when I pulled her into the next turn, she just hooked a wing in the mud, and goes bong- bong- bong, spillin' me out on the third bong. Right then I stopped counting 'em. Mr. Duck goes off across country to grow him some new tail feathers, and I sits down under a tree, wonderin' if I had any legs broke, and lookin' at the pieces of old Jenny spread around."

(Continued on Page 30)



Cheiron Dead

RACHEL HARRIS CAMPBELL

*The white-violet lads, gold-haired princes of Hellas,
They could go always home to Cheiron their master—
Cheiron, the rough old Centaur,
White, all-wise, inexorable;
And his deep cave on snowy Pelion was always a home to them.
There where boys' friendships had linked them forever,
They could always find peace and the wisdom of Cheiron to make
them whole.
Wounds or long wars or the fatal loves of women,—
Torn limbs, heavy hearts, minds weary to death with the ceaseless
hate of the Gods,
These hurts they brought home to Cheiron for healing among the
white-violet crags of Pelion.*

*Now Cheiron the Immortal is dead.
Wound-tormented by the arrow of Heracles
Hydra-baned,
He hath foregone immortality.
Cheiron lies dead,
And Pelion is lonely for his hooves and his cry.*

*The white-violet princes of Hellas wither on the plain before Troy.
Patroklus, Akhilles, Antilochus, Neoptolemus . . .
Their names whisper off like fallen petals.
The gold lads of Hellas are fighting for a dream,—
Helen, daughter of Zeus. . .
They have almost forgotten her now,
For they are weary.
The Trojan plain has come to be their land.
Naught waits for them in Hellas but wives forgetful, and tall strange
 sons and daughters.
And Cheiron is dead,
Cheiron the Immortal.*

*It is not the war that they wonder at—
Skamander red with Trojan wars and Achæan,
Dead friends, angry gods.
They murmur no longer against the war,
They know that it must be. . .
And the death of dreams—that they have overlived also. . .
And ten years is a long while when husbands are away, and never a
 word of them brought to Hellas. . .*

*Only . . . through white Grecian tents on the Trojan plain . . .
A sigh,
The moan of violets withering—
“Ah, that Cheiron our master, Cheiron the Immortal, should die!”*

Portamento

HARRY L. ANDERSON

Mr. Wurfel fished a water-logged boot out of the fountain. A sparrow, chortling on the sill of his bedroom window that morning, had begun the day for him ten minutes before the alarm went off: and how could he be blamed for forgetting there was a fountain below? It was unjust that a musician, a man of aesthetic enthusiasm, should have to concern himself with practical matters. The true artist acts on impulse. And that bird—it woke him up every morning. When would Aunt Felina come back? She'd been gone almost a week on her visit now. Well, he'd get her to shoo it away, when she came back, he would.

He caught sight of the sign outside the house:

Samuel Wurfel—Professor of Music
Vocal Coaching and Repertoire

Two months that had been up, and he could still remember the labor involved. Aunt Felina had become ill just after they arrived in Chicago and for necessary reasons—the middle west was hardly the place, he found, to give concrete appreciation to such refined talents as his—he could not delay in establishing himself. It was he who had had to sign the lease for the house by himself. It was he who had had to decide what his sign should say, and who had hunted around till he found a carpenter, Mr. Bing, two doors away, who could put it up. And now that Aunt Felina was away, it was he who had to see about all the little practical things. Just yesterday, the laundryman had called for his cheque and the garbage man had asked him why the can had been empty for the last five days. And if Aunt Felina didn't come back soon he'd have to get somebody to wash the dishes. He had washed one the other day himself; grease on his fingers seemed to make the soul slip from his accompanying.

A crunch on the gravel walk met his ears, and Mr. Wurfel became exalted in the scent of a rose. It was his first pupil that day.

"Oh, good morning, Mr. Wurfel." She was tall, thin, fair-complexioned, wore spectacles, and carried her music in a cylindrical case that made for intimacy, since it invariably took their combined efforts to restore the music to a level state. "What a lovely picture to find you enjoying your garden!"

Mr. Wurfel beamed broadly, and fluttered two small blue eyes.

An appreciative pupil! He was clad in golf attire—not loud, striking colors, but here and there a touch of pastel, in the tie, the handkerchief: colors such as would become summer weather and yet betoken a man of the arts. Perhaps his reflection in the fountain, as he reached for the boot, had not fully revealed to him the un-pastel red of his oblong face.

He led the way in. The usual bouquet to find exquisite wasn't there—he had discovered the last one Aunt Felina arranged quite withered the other day, and pricked his finger on the thorns, but a picture, seen apparently for the first time, was a handy substitute.

She gazed rapturously back and forth from Mr. Wurfel to the picture. That picture! Aunt Felina would have it hung in a prominent place, and every now and then somebody would make remarks about it that—well, sometimes he felt almost unmannish.

"A little relation of mine," he muttered, and Miss Waters' rapture declined sufficiently to proceed with the lesson.

"Now some scales to put the voice in running order, eh?" He struck a chord, a good solid chord, his shoulders drawn back, his wrists firm and high, and the fingers as near straight down as possible; he had once seen a portrait of Harold Bauer in that position, and Bauer's playing had such a healthy sentiment about it. Miss Waters responded with a vague roulade and stopped.

"Oh, Mr. Wurfel, I can't do that."

"No, no, no! You can! Now try again." Mr. Wurfel rang another chord and Miss Waters, blushing, disproved his assertion.

"No, no, B, not F, B, B!" Mr. Wurfel struck the note in vigorous crescendo.

When the scales had run their course in sudden spurts and relays, Mr. Wurfel opened the book of Viardot exercises. Something about the waltz rhythm seemed to mystify Miss Waters.

"See, see," said Mr. Wurfel, "um-tum-tum, um-tum-tum, see?" He played the waltz bass with enthusiasm, even bravura. "Um-tum-tum, um-tum-tum," he rapped the rhythm on everything within reach.

And so the lesson continued, a lesson of enthusiasm. Almost lost in explaining to her the intricacies of Handel's Largo—little points the ordinary teacher would have left unsaid—Mr. Wurfel had barely missed giving her more than her hour. "Your explanation of the waltz rhythm always helps me so," Miss Waters said in fervent adieu.

His refined musical nature was beginning to be appreciated! And now he would devote some time to that work which would win him

Yesterday's Morning

F. M.

In the middle of the play yard rests a flat wooden sand box measuring some six or eight feet square. The sun streams down for unbroken hours upon the heads of Martin and Muriel as they mould and re-mould their coarse ocean sand.

A hundred feet away, both east and west, the pavement noises of city traffic clang by unheeded, except for the shrill, continual wailing of a fire siren, quickly noted, and quickly forgotten. . . .

There was just one point of similarity between my sand hill and me. We both wore briar stitching on our petticoats. Mother stitched mine, and they didn't last long for I was a tomboy and should have worn trousers. The enchanted black beetles stitched the sandhill's, and they didn't last long either, for the rascally wind ravelled out the stitching as fast as it was done.

My sandhill was enchanted. It covered over a mile, with wave on wave of smooth, silky, whitely-yellow, fine-grained sand. A few discouraged clumps of shadscale and greasewood were sprinkled over it. They were wicked, spellbound gnomes . . . and ill-natured, they thrust out their ghastly spikes to injure the unwary. Yet they were of some use. On a hot afternoon one could pass from crouching shade to shade and save wear and tear on bare toes.

Besides the black beetles who were doomed to labor incessantly at their embroidery hoops, there was a queer little, sweet little enchanted flower. But I could never decide whether its tender flower was the reward, or its wretched stalk, the punishment.

They called it "moon flower," perhaps because it opened late in the afternoon, or perhaps because it was white and round. Its fragrance was something to remember. It smelled like fairyland. And such an affection the lovely, fragile flower showed for the dry, scurfy stem. The minute they were separated the delicate flower fainted, collapsed, and couldn't be coaxed to revive. I think they were enchanted lovers.

Only the wind and I played on the sand hill. We had a game. The wind played ocean, and left waves of serried ripples. I played Indian, and left huge forts and great stockades. Our game was to blot each other's tracks. The wind had a thousand fingers and a hundred breaths. He always won, but I had the most fun, on my sand hill.

In front our house wears a little square apron of neatly clipped grass. It is right on the sidewalk's lap, and friendly passersby like to watch Martin and Muriel roll around hunting four leaf clovers. . . .

As a child I had a whole swamp all to myself. It was a tangle-wood formed in order of size, of cottonwoods, willows — pussy and plain, skunkbrush, wildrose, currants, clematis and Solomon's Seal. Several acres were covered over, and all belonged to me, though I never could use so much.

There were several reasons why it belonged to me. One, was the wild rose stems an inch in diameter all matted together until a very thin person, not afraid of scratches, could get in. Secondly, poison oak grew all around, so only one it did not hurt might venture in. The last reason was, there were no other children.

After once getting through the outer fringe of briars by way of hands and knees it was possible to half stand. There was a familiar air of odd, close, moist coolness inside. On even the hottest afternoon it was always dim, and cool, and green, on the black floor of my swamp, and always it felt as if the dew was falling a little bit. Not a house, nor a barn, or even a patch of blue sky was visible. I was quite shut away in a world of my own.

Afternoon frogs sing tenor; night frogs sing bass. Only the pleasant sounds of orioles and afternoon frogs could be heard.

In a little while there would be a gentle mewling as Blossom threaded her way to me. She made such tiny, gentle little sounds to let me know she was coming, and not to be afraid. Blossom's lovely white coat was softly green in the dimness, and so was my hand as I reached out to her. She was a pretty thing with green fur and orange eyes. She dried her toes on my dress . . . and went away again when I moved her off to keep it clean. Her muted mewling made protest of the dampness.

Gyp did not come on little cat feet. He crawled flattened out, same as I did. He did not need to vocalize his presence. I could hear him a long way off. Gyp was so black that all the green in the world would only make him blacker, but both his friendly brown eyes had green pictures in the pupils. He thought I wanted to be loved with his pink ham tongue, when I looked at the green in his eyes. Dogs *are* nice. Gyp could almost talk; he would inquire so anxiously if I wasn't about ready to come out and go exploring. And sometimes I was. My mother was a strong-minded woman. The floor of that swamp was of heavy black leafmold, almost mud. It did

things to clean dresses. And the huge, long rose thorns which deliberately reached down and hooked themselves into innocent backs, did things to dresses, too. Yet, my mother continued to think overalls unladylike.

* * * *

Martin and Muriel slip on their green bathing suits and are allowed to play at the water hydrant. They get out their box of cups and bottles and play drug store and mud pies awhile before taking a shower bath under the hose. To them it is great fun. . . .

My dearest playfellow was a brown creek. It lay, like a dividing river between the tropic swamp on the left, and the desert sand hill on the right.

It was a dainty little creek; a mere brook in the summer time when all its water went to irrigate the thirsty fields. Just enough water was left to offer one a proprietary interest in keeping the trickle unimpeded between pools. I thought it a satisfying employment to sit on a damp bank with my feet resting quietly in the water. Inch long minnows grew bold and frisked about, and six-legged skippers gathered in fleets in the far corners. Thirsty bees hummed about their business. The bushes had their feet in the water, too. The sweeping golden rod leaning far out to see herself in the water, was something to remember. She was a golden-haired fairy.

At the creek even dresses were of use. Tied up in front with a knot they made roomy carryalls for chunks of clay and for pebbles. A half-week was a short time for gathering materials for a castle. An idyllic month could be spent creating a castle with a real moat.

The brown creek babbled over its speckled stones, and I made talk with my colored pebbles. Neither of us was lonely.

* * * *

Muriel comes in to share with me the fascinating noise she has invented with the aid of a red balloon.

"Mother, did you find out how to go wa-ah! wa-ah! wa-ah! with a balloon, when you were a little girl?"

"No, lady bug. You see, Mother didn't grow up where there were balloons."

"Isn't that too bad," she consoled, as she hurried back to the porch to share the news with Martin.

"Buddy," I heard her say. "Mother didn't have any balloons when she was a little girl."

"Poor Mother," my little son replied.



To Norma

ROY C. BURGE

*As a Greek bearing gifts I come, Norma,
I warn you now.
For months have I brought fair things,
White roses (no fairer grew in the gardens of spice
Of the Queen of Babylon), a cunningly wrought
Temple seal carved by Li Tow. You do not think
That the coral drops fit for a king
Were but for friendship's sake?
I think you know their meaning.
And so tonight, I bring a slender silver band
'Shrining rare jewels, which my master strategy
I will have you barter for yourself,
Leaving you satisfied of the bargain,
Yet I shall have won you, Norma
With a spell and a silver band.
And so
I bid you beware of a Greek bearing gifts,
My Norma.*

On Anything

KATHLEEN BELL

To that Star of Hope—the Educational Investigator

As a result of my experience and investigations I have concluded that anything, when properly studied and considered, may be regarded as a subject for writing. . .

After reflecting mightily and having viewed the situation from all reasonably possible angles, I feel that I have proper justification in attempting to express myself on the subject. However, I make this expression rather reluctantly, because I realize in all humility that there are some things of which one can never be quite certain, and this problem is one of them. I do not wish to create the effect of presuming in any way upon my superior knowledge of the situation. I am working rather in the spirit of the seeker after the fundamental truth of things. This of course should be the mental attitude of all scientific thinkers. Bias and preconceived opinions are only a drawback in the investigation and evaluation of anything.

Before proceeding to the diagnosis of this vexing, indeed alarming, problem, I should like first to correct some false impressions which the reader may have obtained from other investigators in my field. I do not state this merely in the spirit of idle criticism; rather do I feel that it is a serious matter when supposedly learned people deliberately make statements misleading to the reading public. I believe that a word of warning is not amiss. We must all be wary of accepting anything seen in print, reliable as the source may seem to be. We can never be quite sure of anything.

At this time, I would like to state that this article itself does not attempt conclusively to prove anything. The investigations that I have made and the conclusions which I have formulated are only one step toward the truth, the ultimate solution. There is much to be done in the field, and it is with the hope of inspiring others to renewed effort that I take pen in hand.

When conducting my investigations I have borne in mind all the limitations and various factors influencing the case. Many of these are more significant than a first glance would indicate. In this matter, as in many others, there are factors which in themselves are not of such great import, or indicative of anything, but when viewed in the light of ultimate results are seen to be extremely significant.

(Continued on Page 30)

The Strange Interlude

MARION LAW, JR.

A critic is one who sits calmly apart and with quiet, suave wisdom tells the public what it should like. He knows all things, suspects all things, and tells all things—that he knows. He knows more than authors, than playwrights, than painters, and is quite willing to inform them about their motives, their skill, and their success. The critic never doubts. There is never the slightest possibility that he might encounter the work of an artist—or a would-be artist—that he could not digest and classify upon a moment's notice.

But there is Eugene O'Neill.

Mr. O'Neill once more puzzles the public, and furnishes an interesting topic for dinner table discussion. "Strange Interlude," playing to capacity houses, playing with the emotions of the people in those audiences. For O'Neill is, primarily, the psychologist. "See what I can do with these people up here! See how much I know about them—and about you!" His power is undeniable.

Particularly flawless is the subtle change of the years, like slow, relentless fire, which withers and wrinkles bodies and minds. The effect of pleasantness where needed is contributed by every article, every line and color on the stage. The same effect of unpleasantness is built up, and more often.

O'Neill shows himself more than ever introspective. The perfection of the asides is a constant delight; his complete grasp of characters and situation phenomenal. The play is a flawless structure reared in foul soil.

In the lines of Charles Marsden more than in any others do we get the impression that it is O'Neill speaking. In character somewhat alike, similar in calling, the idea comes first from the line:

"I have given my talent to making fools satisfied with themselves."

In Nina is the tragedy of wasted human life. Her inborn strength and fineness bitterly changed, her character weakened and her life ruined by tragedy quite beyond her control. Embittered, blindly groping for happiness.

"With you the lies have become the only truthful things. Say lie . . . l-i-e! Now say life. L-i-i-f-e! You see! Life is just a long drawn out lie with a sniffing sigh at the end!"

(Continued on Page 23)

INDIFFERENCE

(Continued from Page 7)

Sergeant Lopez, appreciating the dignity and importance of his delicate mission, strutted in with his slouching, ragged men, and received orders. Four horses and two mules waited below.

"Tie them on—not too securely," directed the sergeant.

They trotted off, around a fold in the hill. Women looked dark-eyed hate at the guard; men spat as the sergeant passed.

Soon the valley narrowed; the road lurched to the left, and passed a huge tree shading a pool where, in peaceful times, women washed clothes and children bathed. They strained up a steep path, twisting among great bushes of small, sagey leaves; past derisive "mala mujer" with its stinging velvet.

It was getting a little darker.

"When do we get to Ahualulco?" asked Padre Arreola.

"Who knows?" intoned the guard in front, and sighed. The guard behind grunted.

The sergeant and the third man rode ahead a horse's length, looking about apprehensively; these hills had not yet been thoroughly scoured. The prisoners kept their eyes open, their wits sharp, for carelessness on the part of their hurrying escort. It might be—they seemed not too intent—that they planned deliberate opportunity to escape. Had not the horse of Benito Cruz been slapped by a rear guard, and his immediate escort dashed off in the opposite direction?

"Andale," called the sergeant. "It's getting late! Hurry!"

García noted a small path at the left. He knew where that led. There was a chance . . . both guards gazed intent in the opposite direction, and Padre Arreola's eyes flashed questions. They reached the ridge. A path down, ahead; one to the right. The guard trotted forward, to look at the view of the plain of Ahualulco—leaving clear the right-hand path—and the two prisoners behind. Their hands were almost loose. Question again gleamed from Padre Arreola's eyes.

After all, thought García, the front guard looked amiable. Two more opportunities: each time the guard pushed ahead, lagged behind.

Finally the two captives' hands worked loose. The next, thought García.

A path forked left. The rear escort leaned down to pick a small white Rosa de San Juan: the front guard trotted on to joke the third.

True, the path led into clear space, but perhaps—

They dashed their mules left, García twisting apprehensively in his saddle. Four shots shattered the still air, then two more. Two

bodies flopped from startled mules. Two red streams blotted dark the fresh grass.

"Never mind the mules! Let's get back before dark," urged the sergeant. "We've done our duty."

Already two zopilote buzzards swayed high in expectant circles.

A dull section of Captain Romero's uninteresting report read:

"Two prisoners, identified as García the bandit and Arreola the priest, were taken July 14. Sergeant Lopez and three men were detailed to escort them to trial at Ahualulco. In an attempt to escape, both were shot. Loss of two mules which they rode (noted above on p. 32) was due to fright. Efforts are being made to secure the animals."

Strange Interlude

(Continued from Page 21)

This five-hour peek into the soul of cosmic woman—it is, essentially, a perfect thing—in execution, if not in conception. If there are flaws, they are in the characters studied—or in the influences upon them, which may be the same thing.

Certainly the play is possible; interestingly morbid; fatally sad. Yet perfect; the truth, but not the whole truth.

It is entirely possible to do a perfect job of transferring water from San Diego bay to the Pacific in a bucket. Interesting? Perhaps. Significant? Superficially. Necessary?



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Portamento

(Continued from Page 15)

the esteem and admiration not only of his pupils, but of the profession—his *Vocal Beginnings in the Grade Schools*. He sat down at his desk and adjusted a sheet of paper in a portable typewriter. Page three already! A ripple of satisfaction made him desire to look at the first two sheets. Where had he put them? He looked in the pigeon holes, in the drawer, moved the ink bottle. No matter, it would be good self-discipline to recapture the ecstatic mood, the righteous style, without recourse to them! He punched the machine vigorously for a few minutes, then paused and held his chin. Those music teachers! They had acted almost indifferent when he was introduced at the teachers' association, but he would change their minds. They would soon be whispering as he passed, "Oh, the Professor Wurfel whose famous text." He rose to answer a knock on the door.

"Professor Wurfel?"

Mr. Wurfel beamed. "Yes, ma'am, I—"

"My name is Mrs. Dodge, this is my daughter Edith. I hope we did not intrude—"

"Not at all, come in, not at all. I was just engaged in my new work." The guests manifested immediate interest. Mr. Wurfel waved toward the typewriter with its single sheet. "A little work that may perhaps contain some new ideas." The visitors gushed and Mr. Wurfel, inspired to confidence, his eyes closed as if pressed by the beam, continued rapidly, "My little gift to the nation, a little token of my experience in the greatest of the arts—" ah, here was a good place to give that dissertation on music that always so impressed prospective pupils—"that art which begins where others leave off, that apotheosis"—good word that—"of the emotions, that art which, as Webster says, hath charm to—"

Mrs. Dodge started. Excuse me, but—"

Mr. Wurfel opened his eyes. Mrs. Dodge looked uneasy. Perhaps she had lost the train of thought. He must recapture her! On, on, he must go on! Drat! What came next? "That art which—that art which—"

"Pardon me, but what is the name of your work?"

So that was it, she was interested in that. "Vocal Beginnings in the Grade Schools."

"Oh—oh—then you are not the famous Professor Wurfel—the celebrated authority on painting?"

* * * *

It was late afternoon. Another pupil had come and gone, page three of *Vocal Beginnings in the Grade Schools* was done, and Mr. Wurfel had just returned from Mrs. Van Gool's tea party. Mrs. Van Gool, who was an intimate friend of the Fitz-Jones, who knew Mr. Spitz, the opera impresario. And she had asked him over to sing at her tea, where there must have been thirty or thirty-five society women present! He had sung two operatic arias while tea was served, then was given some tea and a wafer himself, although he couldn't quite finish before the rest were through. He had a way with women, an innate faculty to amuse them, he decided. How amused they seemed while he was helping the maid clear away the dishes! And when he came back in again, they seemed to expect him to do something else amusing, and he did; he said something clever, appropriate, he couldn't remember what, that had

made them all laugh knowingly to each other. After, he had sung some more—old plantation songs an elderly lady asked for, that had evidently pleased everybody because they all stopped talking when he was through to applaud.

He caught sight of page three drooping over the back of the typewriter, went over and read it. There was something disturbing after the first few lines—a drop in the ecstasy, an unpleasant feeling that made him frown petulantly. It must have been that visitor. That woman! Why didn't she read his sign before knocking? And then there were all the little practical things to attend to. When Aunt Felina came back, he'd see that those things did not disturb his aesthetic mood. A thought struck him. It was two weeks since he had written to the president of the East Side Chicago University Extension, suggesting the introduction of some of his theories—he would be willing to accept a position as instructor—in the music department. Still no answer! Moreover, he had sent his credentials. That visit to inform the principal of the Benham High School, where he had taught a class in music appreciation, of his intention to leave, to get his credentials, came vividly to his mind. He could recall with ease with what joy and alacrity the principle had complied as soon as he heard. Mr. Dartmoor was an elderly man, ordinarily reserved, but on this occasion he had clapped Mr. Wurfel on the back and said, "Well, Wurfel, I wish you good luck, and I hope that your talents will be better appreciated there than here." And if the credentials, when Mr. Wurfel read them over later, seemed not to have captured all the principal's kindly feeling, they were none the less good,

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solid, recommendations, and not to be sneezed at. But that was what had evidently happened! Well, he wasn't to be trifled with that way; he would write a note—a brief note, a strong note, perhaps platonic was the word (or was it spartan?), a note that would show that he was no broken reed leaning for support.

He switched on the light, adjusted a clean sheet in the typewriter.

Dear Sir, I am—

He searched for the word. Ah, now he had it; not provoked, impatient, or annoyed, but—

peevish at your failure to reply to my recent letter in which I took the trouble to suggest some innovations, as it were, in your music department. I trust that this negligence is purely accidental. Yours sincerely—

He folded it, a little crooked the first time, so that he had to recrease it, addressed it, and looked at his watch. One hour more before he started for the Ravinia Opera. He would have time to post this note and have lunch on the way. He started for the door.

Somebody was looking intently at the house, a man; to Mr. Wurfel, the father of a prospective pupil. Mr. Wurfel ran quickly to the piano, placed right next to the window, the lighting arranged to give the best possible effect from the outside. He began a prelude, a flowing one, in which his hands could poise lingeringly in the air—as he had seen the best accompanists do—and whose difficulties did not prevent him from gazing rapturously at the ceiling. Then he broke into the prize song from "*Der Meistersinger*." Drat, what were the words? No matter, he would sing it as a vocalise. He sang

with the inspired fervor he could command on such occasions, but there was no knock at the door. That man must be waiting on the sidewalk, charmed, not daring to disturb until he was through! He played the last chord, then glanced at the window. How green it was! Why, the blind was down! Mr. Wurfel ran to the next and looked out. The sidewalk was empty.

Traviata was given that night with Bori and Danise in the cast. Mr. Wurfel gazed around him in the gallery. He'd wager none of the people around him had got to say "Good evening" to Mrs. Van Gool as she entered the foyer with the Fitz-Jones party. Probably common business people didn't know a note of the opera while he—he knew every theme. The chorus was singing, and he began to hum the tune. Some of the neighbors shuffled. Envious people! Bori came next, and he hummed her aria, beating time with one finger, beaming as she rounded off a cadence. Two neighbors suddenly got up and changed seats. A little later somebody called out "Shh!" That was the way! The individual who had the aesthetic soul, who was accomplished in the arts, was never appreciated! Well, they wouldn't have the satisfaction of making him feel embarrassed. He might stop humming, but they wouldn't stop him beating time, marking the entrance of phrases, or raising his eyebrows at a technical slip.

It was a long tramwayride home, and Mr. Wurfel had forgotten to bring along the latest number of "Song." He wondered when he would be sitting downstairs with the society, perhaps be invited by some wealthy person to sit in a box now and then. Not yet, but when his new

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work was finished, had brought him recognition and money—money was the thing! Somebody should support deserving musicians. As it was, they had to worry like everybody else, about making both ends meet. Two and a half a lesson he charged now, but just wait a few months, and see if he didn't raise his price! He'd get Aunt Felina, who sent out the bills, to raise it. He was overcome with a desire, morbid for him, to calculate his income. Two lessons—two times two and a half—five, subtract rent, forty-five divided by thirty—somewhere between one and two, say one.

He was still calculating when he reached his stop, and when he reached his house, by dint of mental detours, finger counting, and shrewd estimates that showed to him that even if his were an aesthetic soul, he had an innate head for figures, he had somehow evolved a profit of fifty-five cents.

His hand began to fly around his pockets. Where was his key? His hand flew around again. He'd forgotten it! He looked at the time: almost midnight already!

But he would not be fluttered, lose command of his resources; he would be calm. He would get Mr. Bing, the carpenter.

He walked coolly two doors away to Mr. Bing's house and knocked firmly on the door. There were no lights, but after a few knocks, one appeared, and a gruff voice suddenly said, "Who's there?"

"Mr. Wurfel, Mr. Wurfel, your neighbor!" Drat, why did his voice waver on the "ur"?

"Who's there?"

Mr. Wurfel was more audible this time, and after making plain that it was he and not somebody else that wanted to get into his house, was en-

joined to wait a few minutes. One of Mr. Bing's belongings was evidently not a bath-robe, for he was fully dressed when he finally emerged blinking, perhaps unaffable

"Had to hunt a bit to find the right tools," he remarked as they approached Mr. Wurfel's house.

"I assure you that I do not resent having to wait at all," replied Mr. Wurfel.

"Porch light ain't on."

Mr. Bing groped around muttering, snorting, fumbling in the dark for five or ten minutes. "Funny," he said. "It don't work." He fumbled again. "Perhaps—" He tried the door handle.

"Wasn't locked in the first place!" Mr. Bing seemed to look resentful, about to say something.

"Here, here, Mr. Bing!" Mr. Wurfel reached wildly in his pocket, grabbed all his change, and held it out. Mr. Bing still appeared about to speak. "No, no, I wouldn't have you disturb yourself for nothing—professional, you know, professional." Mr. Wurfel shoved the coin into Mr. Bing's hand. By some odd chance it was fifty-five cents.

Mr. Wurfel went in. An uncomfortable feeling accompanied him. He caught sight of a letter in one of the pigeon-holes of his desk. Drat! He'd forgotten to mail it. But no, he could remember dropping his in the box. What was this one? He pulled it out, opened it. "Dear Sir, we regret to inform you—" it began. It was an answer, dated a week before, from the East Side Chicago University Extension. He must have—

The uncomfortable feeling accompanied him to bed. He was misused, misunderstood. He rolled over for the last time. When Aunt Felina came back . . .

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Sea Men's Wives

(Continued from Page 11)

The evening progressed.

Marjorie was a little appalled, for to her, the dark shadow seemed dangerously near, and that night when we got into bed, she said, "Raub's been telling me that flying's no more dangerous than other things—after tonight, I'm not so sure."

I laughed, and said, "If you run to see every wreck you hear about, you're bound to get nervous—but just remember the little assurance that 'ten thousand falling at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee' . . . it's selfish, but comforting."

"Oh, why do they have to fly, anyhow?"

"They've got the bug . . . It's like pioneers having to move, I guess . . . or like the old sailors who couldn't stay on land."

There was a moment of silence, then she said, "I guess you need a sea-wife's blood to stay married to an aviator, don't you?"

Laughingly I answered her, "You know, Raub left out part of that story about the aviators in Heaven. About the wives and sisters and sweethearts and mothers who came along later and stopped at the gate to ask Saint Peter about their men-folks. When he'd told them the whole story, they all smiled a little ruefully, and—"

"And turned around and left without going in!" Marjorie finished gleefully.

"Uhuh, you're learning fast," I answered.

On Anything

(Continued from Page 20)

of the author upon the reader, and I do not wish to step beyond the legitimate bounds of the investigator in presenting my conclusions, yet I believe you will agree with me that my investigation has been quite fair and impartial, and that my conclusions are not only well justified but unquestionable in their import. The important thing which we are to conclude, the thing which the weight of evidence forces us to conclude, is that anything may be almost anything. In fact, it is, anything.

* * * *

Taking into consideration the probability that you have followed to this point my presentation of the problem, I should like to reiterate that it is possible to write about anything without saying anything . . . anything at all.

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