

The Salemite

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LITTLE THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

It is not work that kills men; it is worry. Work is healthy; you can hardly put more upon a man than he can bear. Worry is rust upon the blade. It is not the revolution that destroys autonomy, but the friction.
-Henry Ward Beecher.

Happiness does not depend on money or leisure; it depends on even on health; or society; on our realization to those we love.

When the outlook is not good, try the outlook.

NIGHT AND MORNING

Night shadows, like an overpowering hand.
Cast gloom upon the low and massive hills.
Until my weary soul, sorrowing for man,
Bows down itself, submissive to the spell;
Night weariness, night loneliness, night grief,
Enfold my spirit and oppress my mind;
And tired, weak and broken as an autumn leaf,
I wrap myself in dreams, subdued, resigned.
But when morn and rising sun awake the hills,
Striking the sky with hands of gold and rose,
My soul leaps up, exuberant, glorified, light,
With faith, with beauty, with strength for coming night.

CINOQUAIN

My thoughts *****
Go back to you *****
As moths fly into flames *****
Not knowing that their strong desire *****
Brings Pain.
-The Aurora.

FURTHER THOUGHTS WHILE SITTING

(With Increasing Apologies)
On December 1st, I read the news. The month of last minute tests, cold drizzling rain, wet feet and bad colds, of preparation to return to school and stand exams, and—O God! of Christmas. I thought I had forgotten something, and I miss open fires—my room-mate and I are thinking of knocking a hole out in the wall and building a fire-place—Miss Biddy's good looking car never has a speck of dust on it—maybe she washes it along with the dishes—Wonder what those two square holes are for, under the platform in an English-mad professor I once knew—who cut one big hole in the door for the cat—and six little ones for the kittens—What became of the left-over Thanksgiving turkey?—The hash is yet to put in its appearance.—Mr. Burrage has the best wave in his hair that ever Maida sighed—or read the paper. What would the school do without Lemmy Riggan's camel's hair jacket?—Julia Brown Jennings, after just four years here, searched wildly the other night in the library for the card index. Wonder if she knows where the dining-room is.—I love to hear Ruth Carter laugh—she sounds like she really means it. Ask Robin Fraley what the card index would happen to her if she were to be hanged.—There's a dime in it for the girl who can catch Dr. Lombard's wildflower in his button hole.—If you want excitement and adventure, come leap the ravines and walk the railroad ties with the practice teacher—it's a great life, but there's many a one that weakens.—Wonder if the post-master realizes the happiness he hands out every day—and the heart-breaks.—Salon is wearing thin in spots from ceaseless scrubbing. Saturday will always be connected in my mind with the inevitable sound of mop and broom.—Come over to Louisa Biting living-room if you want a shock—literally. Have you noticed the ghostly sound that a single dry leaf makes when it blows across the frozen ground at night?—Like they close their hurray! too.—I'm looking to find the swimming pool frozen over some morning so we can skate.—Rena puts sugar in her butter-milk—she says everybody does it in Russia.—Miss Lilly will blush if you look at her hard—but she always does it becomingly.—Wonder how many poor little squirrels—and maybe even their children—live to furnish salad with fat coats.—Lib Ward was Betty Ward when she was a Freshman—she curled her hair.—Soft grey twilight—the bare branches are black scabbling and the Academy windows glow like orange squares in a dull patch work quilt. The west is a soft rose wash behind the dark painted spires of distant steeples.—And a single star blinks out.—Star bright Star light, first Star I've seen tonight.—

LONELINESS

Alone—thrillingly alone . . . The sky a black pansy . . . The storm cloud blotting out the blackness . . . Wind hurtling through the treetops and falling exhausted to whisper breathlessly in the underbrush at the foot of the pine.
A hermit's staircase hark meeting its own echo, then choking itself into an irritated growl . . . peace, quiet exhilaration.
But a scratch of blue flame, a long tapper of lightning saw-logs, across a dark glow—sky and its crescent darkness of the night is no longer soft but gruesome, awful . . .
Alone—horribly alone . . . The sky glowering, stifflingly close . . . The dead branches of trees growing soggy and creaking in the whistling wind . . . A hound deep in the forest answering the cheerful terror with a howl that shivers in the blast and screams a husky groan of terror . . . suffocating loneliness.

ALPHACHALPHA

BELLS

Morning Bells

The melody swings in upon the smile of dawn over a world drowsing under its blanket of feathery lace over a land of glistening ice castles and crystal gardens. The golden laughter of the bells with dancing feet skims over the snow to ring on sleepy doors, and runs to catch up with its echo in the valleys. Sharp threads of smoke from penciled chimneys crack the crisp air, and are lost in the mystery of a morning sky.

Twilight Bells

Twilight bells . . . steal through the veil of dim shadows creeping across the grey sheet of earth. A quiet sky . . . a faint, rustling whisper recalling old forgotten things . . . a voice once loved whose ghost song now vibrates in a tortured memory. Silence as gentle as the gliding snow flakes, encircles a weary world, and the memory dreams of other twilights and seems to feed a breath of lilacs floating through the breathless dusk.

Midnight Bells

Soft and low they fall across the endless snow. Crying like a violin that remembers once a master's touch . . . like slender reeds beside a lonely pool whose black depth knows no star. The sound clings to the night wind sweeping through the silver dust of a winter's moon, and is crushed against the distant, dusky wall of blue that surrounds a sleeping world.

THE STRANGER INTERLUDE

What was that? "Life is—life is the stuff to try the strength of the soul." The typing book says that some one said that in ages gone by, so it must be true. (I have paused with my fingers in mid-air, thinking (me, not my fingers) as the other girls keep on typing.) "Life is the stuff to try the strength of the soul." What is life anyway? Is this life—am I living now? Surely this is life, if it tries the strength of the soul. For will my soul, self endurance, or whatever it is, last for another 15 days until Christmas?

Let me see, there are more rural schools in the state of North Carolina than in any other state in the union (Ed.); Agamemnon was a Greek military leader who was murdered by his wife Clytemnestra (Gr. Eng.); "esse est percipi" (Phil. Lat.); "Don't run like this, run like this" (Phy. Ed.); ffff jfff (typ.); "Je vousaime" (Fr.), etc. and so far, far into—the period. Notebooks, ten papers, themes, editorials, Christmas shopping lists, financial depression, endless rounds of classes, sleepless night, day-dreaming days, hurry-hustle-bustle, efficiency cards—such is Life. Life—Pandoemonium is the better word for the "life" students live Anti Noel. Those heart-rending, depressing, dreary days between Thanksgiving and Christmas when one gives way to recollections of turkey (not immortality) and predilections of Christmas-gifts-to-be (?).

"Ping! Come to—you've been day-dreaming again right in the middle of typing period. And all over a simple sentence, "Life is the stuff to try the strength of the soul." Well, so it is. But it won't be long till Christmas (You see "Hope does spring eternal in the human breast.") So on with problems. Such is life. "Think before you write. Smile while you write. Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers. Who but fools think themselves wise."

AN OLD STORY

The streets were deserted. The festive decorations in the show-windows seemed forgotten. The air was cold, the snow was falling steadily. It had been falling for many hours. The twilight seemed unusually quiet. Suddenly the chimes of the little village church rang out in clear and vibrant tones. It was Christmas eve. The man on the corner stood as if frozen to the spot, oblivious to the bitter cold and the snow. His threadbare coat was not even buttoned, his head was bare. When the bells began to ring he looked up and saw a large house. The shades were up, lighted candles were in the windows, and within he saw a huge Christmas tree and children eagerly playing in glee over their many gifts. He started across the street, mumbling, "My boy, my boy." This was Christmas Eve and hunger was cruel. He walked slowly along the snow-covered way, and finally came to a tiny cottage. There was no light within, no candle at the window, no Christmas tree, no feast. He stepped up the steps, then opened the door softly. A little pale-faced boy was sitting with his eyes close to the window-pane. His face was as if transfixed. "Sh, Daddy," the boy said, and he saw the man saying a Saviour is born. I am going to sing with them. Good-bye Daddy."

The man laid the tiny body tenderly on the bed. Then he came back to the window, and looking out, said "My boy, I hear the angels too. Soon I will come with you."

The bells still rang out over the snow and mingled with the laughter from the lighted house.

QUEST

A Diver one day glimpsed a Pearl! He sought for it in vain. His heart cried out to own the gem. If only for a day.

He wrought a suit of strongest steel As a shield each link with gold— He thought no force however great Could loose such armor's hold.

Secure within this suit of steel He plunged into the sea, He dared to hope he'd reach the Pearl!

Though thousands sought as he, As downward through the sea he went— His life he'd moved in prayer's stead.

That he might reach the great sea's bed And find his treasure there.

Huge monsters came to block the way To pierce his suit of steel; They crushed, they tore it link by link 'Till he began to feel

Their sharp-nailed claws upon his flesh— A sudden, searing pain, He knew their hands had reached his breast.

That struggle was in vain. As one by one the gold edged links Appeared upon the foam

They caught one caught a stray moon beam— And formed a burnished dome.

Within which lay a broken shell And that one had held a Pearl! For like each link it too had lost Its treasure in the swirl.

At length the Diver's form arose, And God had heard his prayer— Held tightly in his cold white hand The purest Pearl lay there. In death he found what life with held

In death he found not peace— Since worth he could not Pearl he sought, The Pearl was Someone's love.

MY LITTLE WORLD

It is raining tonight, and my little world is tenderly covered with a gossamer veil of mist. Sometimes, I think it is blue, but even as I look, it changes, ever so slowly—almost imperceptibly—and the change is there. I feel it even as I look. A soft sable hand is laid upon the blue, and the two gently merge into a fairytale tint of azure and purple. The long slim rain drops fall faintly on the earth, and I watch them as they pass gracefully and almost silently through the enveloping cloud, and come to rest finally upon the bare ground. My little world is perhaps really rather dreary, but I choose to think it lovely. The fog and rain is everywhere, but I think them beautiful. Across the rolling hill, the tiny lights twinkle, and vanish through the mist like microscopic fireflies that descend for a moment to shed their glowing light, and as suddenly float away to be lost where in some other darkness. All is silent, but I choose to believe it is silently for me. For me it does not hold fearful things. I see only the slender shadows hovering protectively round my own little square of yellow light, though to keep me safe, I will the thought to hear only the few comforting murmurs of the night elves as they fit here and there on their Lilliputian errands. The rain faeries still descend in shining array past my window, but—I like them. I stand there at my window, and wave to them, and I think they turn their translucent faces upwards toward me, and wave back. They patter on the ground; somehow, it gives me a comforting feeling just to know that they are there. Overhead as I peer through my window which the mist fairy has crossed with her tiny finger, the low hanging clouds float here. Night has covered the friendly sea with a thick velvet pall, and she is hidden behind it. But I know that she is still heaving down upon me just as though tonight her gown were radiant blue instead of black. I see on the sea beyond here and there with silver stars instead of being soberly plain. Oh, I love this night . . . its infinite friendliness . . .

Even the street lights seem rather lovely. Instead of being the common, low, wooden sticks which I usually see, they glow through the now lifting fog to be more like slender poles of silver, supporting their softly glowing air-lamps which have gone home, but on the slight breeze that springs up, I think they waft to me from their wee fingers a kiss, and a good-bye. The moon emerges through her vanguard of clouds, and smiles gently upon me. The little stars appear, and vie with the faraway lights of the city, now in their intense brightness, and now in their tender softness. The night is serene and calm, but all the while something within me seems to peer wistfully through my window, and call to the being rain faeries to come back, and tell me to slip with their drowsy pitter-patter—pitter-patter—pitter—pitter—

SILHOUETTES

The trees on the hill side Are whispering among themselves. Their black outlines against the sky, Swirling and rocking in the wind. They are a group Of old maid gossip, Nodding together And shaking their heads Over the latest scandal Of daisy and clover, Or the young red-throated robins That rest in their branches.
-The Aurora.