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THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY

"A little thought will sometimes prevent you from being discontented at not meeting with the gratitude which you have expected. If you were only to measure your expectations of gratitude by the extent of benevolence which you have expended, you would seldom have occasion to call people ungrateful."
-Arthur Helps.

"Consider the postage stamp, my son. It secures success through its ability to stick to one thing till it gets there."
-Josh Billings.

"The more you say, the less people remember. The fewer the words, the greater the profit."
-Fenelon.

FROM FIREFLIES

Life's play is swift,
Life's playthings fall behind one by one and are forgotten.
The one without second is emptiness,
the other one makes it true.
Life's errors cry for the merciful beauty
that can modulate their isolation into a harmony with the whole.
Clouds are hills in vapour,
hills are clouds in stone—
a phantasy in time's dream.
While God waits for His temple to be built of love,
men bring stones.
In the boundant time of roses love is wine—
it is food in the famished hour when their petals are shed.
The shade of my tree is for passers-by
its fruit for the one for whom I wait.
Flushed with the glow of sunset earth seems like a ripe fruit ready to be harvested by night.
-Tagore.

ALPHA CHI ALPHA

THOUGHTS ON SPRING

Spring is here! I saw the first crocus the other day, just peering above the ground and I knew that spring was on the way, and now that I have seen a whole bed of daffodils, I am sure that it is here. What is there about a perfectly blue sky, wonderful sunshine, first flowers, and the song of birds that quickens the step and makes us want to throw out the chest, breathe deeply, and run, run, RUN on forever! I think it must be a new consciousness of life, a sense of new beginnings and with that an almost unconscious, and certainly an unuttered, desire to share the new life and become heir to its promises.

In spite of the fact that I appreciate winter and admire its dazzling white beauty, I do get tired of wearing rubbers, and bottoming my overcoat. In contrast, spring seems to be a process of liberation in which I can shake off the heavy old wraps, and start out with new freedom and exhilaration. Perhaps, wraps are not the only impediments I might have behind, many unpleasant old thoughts get in the way and prevent me from appreciating the beauty of a new day, just as the coat seems to keep me from getting the full benefit of fresh air. I want to be free—free—free from annoying problems, free from binding shackles, free—free from the things that I want to go far away. It does not matter much, where, but I think I should like to fly over land and sea and arrive at some lonely mountain top from which I could survey the world. Below I would be able to see villages with tiny curls of smoke rising from the chimneys, further beyond the vast expanse of white-capped ocean waves with steamer disappearing just below the horizon, and if I look behind me I would see lofty snow-clad mountain peaks which would make me glad that my own little spot was green and warm just then. There should be to stay with violets and snowdrops all around, listening to the lark singing far above, watching the fleecy white clouds in the blue sky, and being thankful just to be alive.

There are a good many compensations though. A while back there was the most deadly sort of jealousy between them. First the Lincoln Building was the tallest in the world. Then the Chrysler sprouted a peak and a flagstaff and the Lincoln's towers was quite out of joint. Its windows fairly glittered with wrath whenever it thought of the outrage. Next the Empire State took height and added a floor or so to its stature. The disposed lords of creation united in loathing that ruler. Recently though, after much persuasion on my part, they are all on speaking terms.

SIDELIGHTS ON SKYSCRAPERS

You've no idea how peculiar it is to be the Public Library. I'm the only three story building on the Ave. Empire States to the right of me Chrysler Building to the left while I squat in the middle and squint up at them.

I am "Gran" to all the buildings in my vicinity and of all the problems they bring to me to solve! One of the Lefcoffs has hiccupps in its radiators. The paint on the Radiator Building's nose is peeling off. Several are troubled by people jumping out of their windows. And worst of all the Chrysler Building has a tap-dancer on its forty-sixth floor who has given it a sixth right where it can't scratch!

From the depths of my window—I forget how many volumes I have—I advise them over or around or through their difficulties. Then when they are all solved, I settle my lions, shoot off my pigeons, and sleep.

BLOOD ON THE MOON

"There's blood on the moon," moaned the old woman by the dying fire. "A long, deep gash across the whiteness . . . soon the blood will drip from the sky . . . blood . . . blood on the moon." Her voice trailed off into nothingness.
"Stop it, I tell you!" One of the two men at a small table in the middle of the room turned o her fiercely and hurled an empty bottle at her head. "I'm going crazy—Davis, you lie in your throat! I didn't kill that girl. I've never killed anybody in my life. I had nothing to kill her for. I was only helping you get the money. I— He choked and buried his head in his arms on the table.

Opposite him sat Davis with a crooked smile on his weakened, shadowed face. His blunted thumb played idly over the dull blade of an old pocket knife, and with his tongue in his cheek he cunningly watched the man before him. "You fool—you fool!" he whispered hoarsely, "you did do it . . . The knife was in your hand when the light flashed over us. You saw yourself it was covered with—"

"Blood . . . blood on the moon . . . blood—" The old woman's moan broke through the shadows. Outside the wind in the pines carried the echo far across the swamp to lose it in thick blackness. The candle light flickered—shot upward—and then plunged the room in darkness save for a ghostly reflection of the moon through the cracks in the wall.

The man crouched over the table. There was no sound in the room but his lips moved, breathing. Even in the darkness he could feel the warped leer of Davis . . . could see his eyes blazing with hate and cunning through the pulsating shadows. Everywhere he looked he saw those eyes. His blood pounded in his ears. He felt as if there were fingers holding his nostrils—a hand over his mouth—yet another at his throat, trying to choke out his breath in that reeling blackness.

With a scream he rushed out of the door and plunged into the swamp land. Fighting his way with blind strength, he did not stop until he reached a little cleared space where he threw himself flat upon the ground. His body twitched convulsively, and he pressed his bared throat and cracked lips to the cool, damp earth. Suddenly he stiffened, and raising himself on his elbows, watched the light of the moon from behind him slide through the hanging masses of moss swinging like grey shrouded ghosts from other worlds. The man dug his fingers into the ground, "Go away—" his voice was hoarse—it cut his throat. "Go away! I didn't kill her, I tell you! It was Davis . . . Davis . . . I swear it!" He pushed that knife in my hands . . . It was dark . . . I couldn't see . . . I don't know what happened . . . don't know . . . it was so dark . . .

He was sobbing aloud to those strange, silent figures swaying in the trees above him. "Blood on the moon . . . on the moon . . . That's crazy—Davis is crazy if he says I did it—I'm crazy—Crazy! I tell you . . . No, no; I'm innocent . . . I didn't kill—"
He found himself face to face with the moon. There was a strange, cold noise as he sprang to his feet, his eyes burning into the moon. Across her whiteness there was a gash like a knife mark across a woman's throat . . . The world broke loose around the man. The moon swung out of heaven toward him, and covering his face in his hands, he turned with a wild cry to be swallowed up by the gaping swamp.

Davis sat thumping his knife, snuffing quietly into the darkness. From the shapeless huddle by the fire came a piercing cackle that seemed to split the room—"Blood . . . blood on the moon . . . death—"

A GARDEN

The warm wine of spring air brings a memory back to me of the memory of a little girl who dashed home from school, flung her books in a corner, gathered her dinner, and with basket and trowel in hand, made for the woods. Sometimes a chosen companion went with her—one who had the love of the woods in her heart, coupled with the rare gift of silence; more often she went alone. I can feel with her the thrill as she first found that bed of "Dog-tooth" violets, carpeting the edge of the pine woods with their great velvet sky-blue faces; and I feel a tremor of life rage at the stolid farmer who plowed them under. There were other violets though—two-toned ones that grew between the roots of the great Birch tree, little sweet white ones from the marshy banks of the brook, long-stemmed purple ones from the middle of the swamp, and queer, flaunting striped ones along the railroad bank. There were Carolina Blinks that turned "Butter-milk Hill" into a rosy cloud, and shy "Quaker Ladies" that settled like a mist in the fields. It was in the very deepest of hollows that the most real treasures were hidden. Blood-root with its white, lady-like lily flid by blood red sap, Hepatica—its rosette lavender blossoms in recently peeping from behind dry leaves, and the Anemones—their earliest whiteness fluttering on the stillish day. Here the red and gold trumpets of wood lily flashed and pink honeysuckle frothed over in bloom.

From treasure to treasure she skipped until her basket overflowed, and the sun hung low in the west. Then she hurried home to a shady nook in the garden under the apricot tree, and there, with the help of her trowel and water from the crack-damp pitcher, she busied herself making a perfectly riotous garden until her mother had called her three times to come in and wash her hands before supper.

Do you, too, know the delights of a wild-flower garden? If not, may the Lord pity you!

SEARCH

We heard the song—faintly at first—and then more clearly. It was not merely a voice we heard, but a soul—a soul that had known sorrow and had not forgotten, but a soul that was trying to forget and was forgetting. The music was sad and sweet. We searched for the singer—only to lose her entirely. Then softly, she came back but only for an instant. She left us searching for something we would not know if we found.

MORNING

So often I have lost you for a while and thought: "I shall not ever find again—"
As once I found—"my heaven in your smile;"
For now I seek and seek for it in vain."
So often I have wandered—struck apart from you in sudden loneliness, and said:
"Deep in the silent places of my heart
Something that once was beautiful is dead."
So often, even as I touch your hand,
And seem to hold you— I
Only miss
The glory that I used to understand,
And all my world is dark because of this.
But out of every night fresh dawn arises—
So, always, come my mornings in your eyes.
The sky remains infinitely vacant for earth to build its heaven with dreams.

DEEP THOUGHTS

I inscribe my thoughts with a pen that squeaks or may squeals aloud—and there's one in the room who tries to sleep—would it be better to brave the wrath of my companion and squeak away—or that of our editor and not put a line? Oh! you're right—I had forgotten our editor's red hair—and the would-be sleeper has only light brown. I squeak on—I can see a kite floating lazily in the distance. Kite flying is my favorite spring sport. Please—can't we get up intramural kite teams—the High Flyers versus the Fly-Highers perhaps? I'd play by myself if it weren't banned by conventions—I can hear preparations going on below in the base—pardon me—recreation room for the new dean's reception—hope there'll be olive sandwiches. And I also hope Miss Lawrence is going to like us as well as I know we're going to like her. You may laugh at the way the seniors tilt their mortarboards, but even the best people do it. I can remember when Miss Riggan's wasn't so straight and Miss McAnally hung hers over one ear and Miss Frazer did well if she got hers on at all—remember when they turned out to be? It's funny how when you get home for the week-end you feel like school is a thousand miles away—and as soon as you get back you feel like you've never been home. The Faculty at Davidson gives their senior class a big house party—they appreciate their seniors while they are yet with them—ere it is too late and they fly away. The smell of Ivory soap always reminds me of my soap bubble days—when it was raining outside and I accumulated all my mother's empty soaps and used to sit by the window, blowing by the hour—filling my bubbles with cigar smoke . . . We welcome Hermes into our senior class not many classes can count a Greek God among their members—only he'll hold his shoulders up a little better, he'd come closer to being an ideal senior . . . Have you ever noticed how much colder a room becomes when you fly away, the radiators—and find there really isn't any heat on?

The spring hair-cutting epidemic is in full swing—counting Sennie and Chandler and Kay among its very victims. It is a thing to me that girls will go through all the tortures of letting their hair grow long and then just when it arrives—cut it off . . . Spring fever is a dangerous thing, and very detrimental to thoughts—it makes me want to sit and look off into the blue distant haze—and think—about nothing.

THE FALL OF THE STAR

Pin-point of gold in an onyx night
Burning a pure white flame
Filling the blackness with crystal light
Burning on proudly the same;
Serenely secure on a distant throne
You alone like a jewel that shines away
A gem unprofaned by a name.
You twinkle, you laugh, you radiate fire!
And, cutting a path in the still, black pall,
Your golden rays sparkle high and bright
And shine gaily down from the top of it all.
But ah! like a flash you stumble and away
And drop headlong down the Milky Way—
And emptiness reigns when you fall.
Dear Little Star, as you lie in the dust
Remember I say what is true;
Though your gold be tarnished and left to rust
And your shining days are through
It's good that the fire of stars burn bright
But best of all that the fire be white—
The whitest of stars was you.