

The Salemite

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LITTLE THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

"What is this life, if, full of care, We have no time to stand and stare." -William Henry Davies.

"Poetry is founded on the hearts of men." -Harold Monroe.

"A garden is my soul, which I Must tend or slight until I die, Or as a mansion, to be kept With all its chambers cleaned and swept." -Gerald Gould.

PROCRASTINATION

If now, in the unaccustomed, welcome leisure of the opening days of the new term, we might have a glimpse of the distraught and wretched human beings that were ourselves only a few weeks ago, we might resolve more firmly than ever not to be guilty of procrastination. An overdose of work is never pleasant, but a steady diet keeps students in a healthy, normal way of living.

Now is the time to start fresh and prepare each assignment soon after it is given. The work itself will be much easier if done while instructions are accurately remembered and other duties not pressing for attention. Most of us need not so much expansion of our extra-curricular activities as concentration on our studies, in order to fill up the spare time now allotted to us.

Later in the spring will come a host of pre- commencement activities which everyone will want to attend. Then, if there is no back work hanging over us from these present days, we may throw care to the winds and celebrate in great style. On the other hand, teas and term papers will mix no better than notebooks and night out. Now, therefore, we do well to decide against procrastination and keep up to the mark in work. Later we may be able to afford a touch of Spring Fever.

EDITORIAL

(From The Carolina Magazine.) You stand upon a high hill as black pine trees stick up into the red of a winter sunset. The air is grey as the night comes on. And the silence is so deep and so vast that you are submerged in it. You are silent. As you do not breathe, for silence does not breathe. You feel the very colors of the black and red. The restless boy on your side taps you on your shoulder as he eagerly blares. "The trees are scrub pines. The sky is red, and the gleam of light through the trees is an automobile on the highway. Gandhi will die, and what do you think about the Japanese war?" You double your fist and measure the distance to his chin. But you do not strike, for you are a gentleman.

You stand on the ferry from Staten Island. Manhattan is wrapped in fogs. You see grey shadows and great buildings veiled in mist. The New Yorker standing by you talks. "That," he says, "is the new building. It was built in eighteen hundred." You see the ferry portholes cutting through green water, and white foam curls by the boat. "But it is not so tall as the Empire State. It is built of Indiana limestone. The red flows across your forehead, and little red lights flash through your brain as you wonder if the waters of the bay are deep enough to drown the man. You are wrapped in the soft notes of a violin. You are blind, and the people around you. You are filled with the throbbing of music and strange dreams. The critic sitting beside you whispers in your ear. The music is pretty. He gets that high note by the movement of his third finger on the E string. The violin is old; it was made in seventeen hundred. The music breaks as your mind's little cog wheels grate with a red shadow that passes through the sun. You want to kill, but you can not, for murder is against the law.

You stand before "The Angelus." No, you do not stand before the canvas; you stand with the two dusky peasants in it. You bow your head to the soft notes of the Angelus. You want to pray. "And," shouts the guide, "on your right is a canvas of Millet. It is a picture of French peasant life. That is a church in the background. It is sunset, and the Angelus is ringing. The canvas cost twenty-five thousand dollars. Pretty expensive picture." You do not pray. You move through the gallery. "On your right is this; on your left that!"

You read Shelley's "To A Skylark." You are caught in the spiral of the bird's flight, and your heart warms with color and beauty. It sings with the lark. The words come to you as you are ever dazzled and joyously spiraling upward, drunk on images and the lark's song. But the professor reaches for you, and brings you back to earth. "That," he says, "is a metaphor. Shelley's rhyme scheme is ab ab cd. The poem was written in 1820." Your heart turns black as it throws up both hands and utters, "O my God!"

WINDS

High above the world—above the rushing, greedy, self-centered world. In front of me stretches the grey-green sea, ruffled only by tiny wavelets. Behind me rises a wilderness of rocks, dotted by an occasional frown. Above the sky is bluer than blue. It is a new born sky that is not blotting by a single cloud.

I stand on the cliff with the life-giving wind rushing through my hair, brushing my cheeks with a million touchless fingers. It wraps itself around me, taking me from the real into the land of fancy. I float with the gulls in the blue. The sea smells of mystery. The lap of the water is far away music. I am not I. I am un-reality in the unreal. -Kathleen Atkins.

Teacher: "If a number of cattle is called a herd, and a number of sheep is called a flock, what would a number of camels be called?" Little Johnny: "A carton."

POETRY

PRAYER FOR A LITTLE THE THREE KINGS' ROAD BOY

By Winifred Woods Do you remember, God, My little boy on the stair— The way his blue eyes gazed at me— The sunlight on his hair?

Do you recall the thing he asked— "Mother, will God come soon And strike a sunbeam for a match To light the yellow moon?"

"I hope when I am dead," he said, "He'll let me come out one night And let me strike a little match— And light a little light!"

I'm all alone on the stair to-night, And the sun has set afar— God—keep that faith in my baby's eyes— Let him light a little star!

—The Free Press, Detroit.

LIFE

To live over the richness of life, Never fully lived; To see it all, as from a window that looks Upon a garden of flowers and distant hills, From which your broken body is barred, O life, O unutterable beauty, To leave you, knowing that you were never loved enough, Wishing to love you all over With all the soul's will!

—Edgar Lee Masters.

THE THREE KINGS' ROAD

By Anna Blake Mezquida

When all the tinsel has been laid away, The tree is stripped, the fevered rock is past— You will have trees, a hill, a child at play.

And love, and prayer, and fadeless things that last.

Wear your proud purple underneath your loam!

Touch hand with one who travels lone, afar!

Brave your dark night and walk the Three Kings' road

To find your Christ beneath his lovely star.

He loves, I know, our pretty baubled trees, Our busy shops, our laughter young and gay,

Our ribboned gifts—have we no gifts but these?

No bright, red wreaths except for Christmas day?

Though broken is some toy beneath your feet, Some dear illusion shattered, or grown dim

The Three Kings' road goes by your dusty street

That leads up to a star—and Him— Good Housekeeping, New York.

Week-End Travels In the Realms of Gold

"Much Have I Traveled in the Realms of Gold"

1. Galsworthy, John. Maid in Waiting, 362 p., \$2.50 Scribner. This novel appears four years after the last novel of the Forsyte series, and attains, (although with a dimmer irony and a restrained humor, the vivid pictorialization and keen analysis of his Forsyte epic). Mr. Galsworthy himself admits that his plot has a tinge of the films, but even through this obvious handicap, his expert technique supplies the reader with Mr. Galsworthy's familiar attacks on morals and manners. The heroine is another true English type.

2. Masters, Edgar Lee, The Open Sea, 302 p., The Macmillan Co., New York.

"Well, this life Was neither virtue, glory, fame, nor study, But it was life, and life that did not slay A Caesar for a word like Liberty." The author speaks of "that famous love-affair" in such a tone, and neither detests nor acclaims it, but simply and vividly describes it in his Brutus. If no other poem in The Open Sea were worthy of a second thought, this one would surely be. Masters' style is simplicity itself, alive, straightforward with few diversions and simple diction.

His ideas are those of a philosopher. Thus he ends his poetic story of Brutus and Anthony: "Marc Anthony lived happier than Brutus and left the old world happier for his life than Brutus left it." His smiles and metaphors are original and descriptive. Blank verse, with an epic rhythm characterizes his poetry. Neat are his topics for discussion. "You see! Merely reading him, leaves the reviewer with a tend to make his words flow musically!" "This is the man who slew the slayer of the noble Lincoln." To wax poetic over the burial of a madman is to leave a bit of a bewildered impression in the mind of the reader. Masters' seems to have done this.

Lastly the author makes the inevitable and conventional gesture expected of poets. He writes of Nature: "This is the dole And tragedy of man he has outgrown

His kinship with the beasts that kept him whole, Through thought, which is not instinct, but would own The unerring realm of instinct."

"You give us rest Among the mountains, meadows, and unconwon Our tired brows, and on your infinite breast Rock us eternally under the infinite sky." (Ed. Note: The quotations are to make you want to read The Open Sea.)

Hamman, Lawrence, Little Plays of Saint Francis, 287 p., Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, 139 East 46th Street, New York.

Many of the incidents around which these plays were written are purely imaginary, or rest lightly and any actual record of events. The plays are based on the life of Saint Francis of Assisi, whose history, as we know it, is as much legendary as true. But the book is written for the dramatist, not the scholar, and whatever of legendary material the author has used has been for the purpose of giving life to his subject and drama to his story.

"Not all of these plays are intended primarily for the stage—not at least for the stage as it exists today— They have been subject to the criticism of the reader before they have reached the eye of the observer. Nevertheless, they were written with an eye to stage effect and technique. In their shortness of length and simplicity of demand for dramatic experience, they will appeal forcefully to the Little Theatre organizations and most of all, to the Church, which has so long forgotten the medium of expression through drama. (Author's preface, and preface by Harley Granville-Barker).

THE TALE OF THE STANDING-UP ROCK

In the southwestern part of "ole Virginia" there exists one of Mother Nature's most curious phenomena. There, amid the rolling plateaus and the fertile lowlands, is the meeting-place of two of America's greatest mountain ranges. The Alleghany Mountains, running directly south from Pennsylvania through West Virginia, literally bump into the Blue Ridge Mountains which border southern Virginia, Tennessee, and the Carolinas. There is no break between these two great ranges, no imaginary line, no marker—except one, and that a man-made marker.

On a clear day a passenger on the southbound train that leaves Roanoke, Virginia, may look across the fertile Shenandoah Valley toward the West and see the intermingling of the Alleghany and the Blue Ridge mountain ranges. The glowing sunset casts its rose-tinted hues on the wooded peaks contrasting them with the aquamarine sky above. As the sun sinks lower, the passengers may see—standing upright in the semi-past, a bleached marble stone, which seems to glow mysteriously in its whiteness. This stone marker is about the size of an unusually large egg. The stone is so large, that it overlooks the cultivated plain on both sides of the mountains, menacingly, as though the stone image were protecting its own.

Travelers and sight-seers wonder at this curious spectacle and ask the negro workers in the section about it. But the colored neighbors will not talk about it; if it were up to them, the Tale of the Standing-Up Rock would never be told. The negro workers ignore the question of the passers-by and keep right on with their ceaseless work of cultivating the fields until it is pitch dark. Observant travelers notice this curious custom of the "niggers" inhabiting the fields of work until without stopping for supper, and may connect this with the curious marker.

This is the Tale of the Standing-Up Rock, as it was told to me by an interesting and a friendly doctor.

Long ago in that fertile section of Southern Virginia in the pre-Civil War days, there lived a man who owned the entire farming section on both sides of the mountain as far as the eye could see. This man, who in his youth had resembled a mountain giant in stature and in strength, had grown to resemble a mountain lion in his temperament in his later years. A tireless worker himself, he worked his slaves almost beyond endurance. He was the typical slave-driver that almost all Northerners of the period pictured all Southerners to be. A rope-lash in his hand, this man would force one of his mountain-lion to the other on his white steed once every day. The remainder of the day he spent on the pass between the Alleghany and the Blue Ridge ranges, where his presence would inspire (or rather frighten) his slaves on both plantations to work desperately, continually, in fear of the lash of their master's whip.

This man, the Terror of the Countryside, often said that when he died he intended to bring down a curse upon any of his slave-workers that did not do their work well or that loafed on the job.

Before long, this man was stricken with paralysis and was confined to his bed during a protracted illness. During the three months when his spirit lingered on earth and hesitated between earth and Heaven (or Hades), his slaves worked continually. Not a slave attempted to loaf or to escape.

One icy night in November, the land-owner died. For a day his body lay in state in the cold parlor of the spacious farm-house, while the few white friends of the man looked at him with concern, and while the negroes stopped their work for a moment to file around the bier and shudder as they looked at the face of their master, which was no colder in death than in life.

The next morning the negro slaves heard that the master's body had completely disappeared during the night. (Continued on Page Four)