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THE FLAMINGO



FALL 1944



THE FLAMINGO

ROLLINS COLLEGE, WINTER PARK, FLORIDA

FALL, 1944

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EDITORIAL

WAR GUILT

BY THE EDITOR

WALK through the shattered ruins of a German border town and ask the question: "Do you want war?" Inquire of the dazed, tattered people staring at you from an Italian village through which the ruthless armored Mars has trod, "Do you want war?" Think of the answer from the people of Coventry the day after it was "Coventrized" or the reply from the survivors of the annihilated Lidice. Even ask the question of the fanatical Japanese as they stand amid the cinders of one of their paper cities.

These are surely the people who should know all about war. A young woman with a torn, soiled dress, dirt smeared across her face, an ugly cut across her cheek, and a child speechless with fear clutched to her hand might say: "Send my husband back and never let me hear of war again." But an old man with burning eyes will look up from where he sits upon a stone that once helped make his house and murmur between tight lips: "Yes I want war. I want revenge."

And we must face the terrible fact that human history has nothing to record but the triumph of the vindictive old man's opinion. Conquerors, ancient and modern, successful and unsuccessful, appeal to their followers through some real or fancied wrong of the enemy. Vengeance is a vicious circle that has already wrecked civilization in the wake of its mortal fury. But those civilizations were only portions of the world, and other independent civilizations arose to take their place. How much more dreadful is our peril when our present day civilization is a single society, the destruction of which would be a calamity beyond comprehension. The danger that our children might find an earth of which they were not masters is enough to make any man pause to think how this coming peace might be better than the disastrous twenty-year truce begun in 1918.

In 1914 the leaders in Austria-Hungary, groping about for reasons to do a bit of harmless conquest of their weaker neighbor of Serbia, had the good fortune to lose an arch-duke and duchess to an assassin's bullet and gained an excuse to avenge themselves. The Czar, seething with righteous indignation, sent

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troops to rescue the Serbians, Germany, disliking to see herself ally beset by such an impressive enemy, declared war. France and England, to fulfill treaty obligations, declared war on Germany. The imperialistic motives of the leaders of all these nations are not to be denied, but they would not have dared launch hostilities had not a considerable portion of their people been persuaded that they were crusaders out to rescue national honor.

Unhappily, when portions of Europe lay a shambles and millions of people had paid with their lives and fortunes, a group of men gathered at Versailles to sow the seeds of the present conflict. All the nations had sincere reasons to hate each other now — reasons that future ambitious leaders could easily play upon. The problem faced in Versailles was not one that could lend itself to a simple solution. But a few deeds stand out as fantastic. Russia, the heaviest victim of the war, received nothing. England and France received the German colonies as a matter of pure vengeance, because those two nations did not need the territory and there was no immediate possibility of their becoming military bases. And the war was fought to save democracy. So they charged the new German democracy an indemnity they did not expect it to be able to pay. Bankrupt businesses and governments have been known to go out of existence in the majority of cases. Italy, a victor, was better off by a colony but worse off in the more important matter of finances.

In summation, the end of the first World War saw a group of powerful nations which had grasped the best things of the earth by fair means or foul and another group consisting of both vanquished and victors which hadn't had much luck in the grabbing game. Ambitious leaders — Hitler, Mussolini, the military clique in Japan — looked on rich neighbors with covetous eyes. But these men were too wise to say to their people: "Come, let us take the wealth from our neighbors." They reminded them of the misdeeds of history. They taught them to hate and desire revenge. The will to steal is weak in the average person — the emotion of revenge is very strong. Then these leaders felt strong enough to rattle their swords, and the China coast and Ethiopia fell. Even Hitler of defeated Germany, rising like a reincarnated spirit from the strangled German Republic, rattled his sword. The rattle was a bit weak at first, but he soon had reason to be impressed by the sound it made when England made concessions never dreamed of by the republic. But Hitler did not say: "Let us take the Polish Corridor because we want it." He

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claimed that Polish troops attacked the German border and that his counter-attack swept his indignant panzers across aggressor Poland.

But the position of the Allied Nations at the end of this Second World War is far better than at the end of the first. All the nations whose leaders would become envious are at our mercy. The nations whose leaders have no reasons to play upon the hatreds of their people are the victors. Few times in history has such an ideal arrangement existed. And future generations will never cease to condemn us if we do not make the most of it.

The Allied Nations could destroy their enemies physically if they chose. But such a solution is an obvious violation of all the moral obligations of present day civilization. Another solution must be sought. An exact consideration of peace terms is much less important than the spirit of the men who sit around the peace table. They must not be the Versailles Treaty men who would go to obtain all they could for the immediate profit of their nation, only to hurry home and leave the enemy with new hatreds and every advantage to do something about them. They must be men who understand men, men who can look into the future, men who are willing to sacrifice a little of the present for a future good that their children may enjoy. They must know that Germany, Italy, and Japan must be carefully scrutinized for more than a generation before their people may be trusted to live in permanent peace. Their people simply will not forget their hatred in a few years of occupation. The occupation must continue until the people no longer have reason to dislike their one-time conquerors. The men of the second Versailles must be wise and great enough to decide how to fit the people of the enemy nations into an honorable and worthwhile position in world society and economy. They must plan ways to raise the standards of living of all men to a position high enough to keep them from thinking of violence to shatter the beauty of their world. The men of the second Versailles must be relentless in their suppression of militant forces but understanding in their dealings with the people. They must — for the future of the world and all the wonders that can be depend upon them.

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ANNIVERSARY

The bells rang softly far away
And as I paused they seemed to say,
Go back.

Back to the world of never —
Back to the in-between.

It was a year ago today
We heard the music and ran away.
Down to the sea we sped together
Side by side, not caring whether
Tomorrow ever came.
Racing madly through the surf
Barely able to hide our mirth,
Because we had outwitted "he"
Who said you'd die ahead of me.

— June Ellen Stern.



BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO A SOLDIER

In Memoriam — Norman Darrow

"Nothing lives that dies," so this shall live —
Knowing the care, the love today I give
A humble gardener, I, who pluck a rose,
Will widen, taking root, as memory grows.
Words are too small and music gropes
In strange, uncharted space. But life
Is loving, friends, a search, and hopes —
So we must stretch the joys to hide the strife.

Therefore, we part, while you and I are young,
Not lovers we, who seek our separate ways.
But when the universal song is sung
Who knows what notes will sound from other days?
Peace with you. May it guard your soul in sleep.
Remember Israel! our home, our heaven, and our star.
Though you forget, a fragment, lodging deep.
Will tremble when I greet you from afar.

— Rosalind Darrow

LAUGHTER

By ZELL ROGERS-SESSIONS

PENNY and I used to laugh until our cheeks hurt and our stomachs ached. We laughed in the right places and in the wrong places. We laughed at our professors' jokes, and we laughed even harder when some spirited student played a prank on any of the dear professors. We were together at first only during the school day. We'd greet each other in the mornings with a "hail, fellow, well met" cheer and then go tripping along to classes with laughter in our hearts. We laughed at funny things and we laughed again at nothing. We laughed often for the mere delight of laughing. We weren't model students . . . we laughed too much. There was one morning that the Spanish professor spoke to us curtly for distracting the other members of the class. We had been ribbing each other in undertones about some previous episode. Penny sassed the professor back. She had auburn hair, cat eyes and freckles. She also had a quick tongue.

"You've no right to say that to us! We've done nothing. We know our lessons! We've done nothing but laugh!"

I tugged at Penny's print skirt because I thought that maybe it might be best just to remain quiet. Penny plumped herself back in the desk seat, and the professor for the moment seemed defeated by the silence. It probably would have worked if it hadn't been a new spring morning with the men outside breaking the ground for a beginning crop. I was the first to laugh, so I was the one who was expelled from class. Penny backed me up, though. She scooped up her books and left with me. We'd be back the next day; this was an hour of unexpected freedom. We walked out the door . . . laughing.

* * * *

It wasn't just at school that we laughed, Penny and I. There was one winter Penny came to live in town. Here mother kept house for her and her brother, Doug, while they went to school during the week. They had a nice, small apartment, properly furnished and convenient. It happened, however, to be located on the second floor of an old lumber warehouse, between a welding garage and a packing house. The only entrance was at the top of the up-one-side-and-down-the-other steps, which came up from a sand street and went down to the railroad tracks. The one bright patch in the environment was the flame vine in glorious

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bloom . . . on the other side of the railroad tracks. It was an ugly place, but, nevertheless, I used to tramp there from home every afternoon that Penny didn't ride the bus home with me. Whenever I had the bicycle I invariably landed flat under the vehicle in the sand. Then I'd stomp up the steep steps, shouting: "I'm a country rustic, but you're a city rot. Living in a place like this!"

Penny'd go on hanging her clothes out over the lumber beams while I sneaked inside to conspire with Doug in stealing cookies. When I had a handful, I'd come back on the porch, Penny'd be finished with her duties, and we'd sit together on the top of that awful flight of steps . . . and laugh.

After the winter in the apartment, Penny came to live with us. It was early spring when we began sharing a room, and she stayed on until school closed. We laughed then from the time when we woke in the mornings until we slept at night. There was school, there were parties, and there were week-ends at her home in the village ten miles away. We worked, we played, we sang, and we laughed. All things were light and gay, and we were very happy. Penny learned to sew and we both made our white eyelet dresses to wear at graduation. Our laughter rang and echoed in the halls of the school on that night when we held our diplomas in our hands.

We didn't get to laugh together much after that. Penny went home to stay and I went to work in town. I didn't think we saw each other over three times during the next year. I remember one time we met, though. Penny called me up and said something about a carnival in town. She wanted to know if I'd go with her.

"Probably won't be much," she said, "but there'll be a ferris wheel and maybe some laughs."

The first thing we did was to get lost and have to sneak in with some pint-sized kids. We laughed hard and ambled around on the sawdust in between the phoney shows and rollicking rides. We bought a ticket on the ferris wheel and stayed on for a double turn, letting our laughter float out into the night. It wasn't important what we laughed about: it was important only that we

* * * *

laughed. Penny's laughter especially was round and merry.

It was the last time we laughed together. The great distance of land and water separated our laughing hearts. The world . . . our lives . . . grew more complex. Beneath a Pacific sun men died; each one at his battle station, defending what he knew was good in his life. Penny joined them . . . Penny and her laughter.

PROMISED LAND

By ROSALIND DARROW

HE STOOD against the wall and the smell of apple orchards came to him. The tight band pressing on his eyelids shut out the early light, but against the barrier his mind envisioned cows amid calm pastures, a peasant's house, and dimly, the blue sky of a land beyond the ocean. The ropes on his wrists cut deep into his flesh, but he was smiling. His heart beat normally; he was not afraid now. Fear left him as he thought of home and the day he had left the humble village of his birth for the very first time. He remembered clearly, vividly . . . the wind blowing full in his face, the swirling snow, like sand.

It was snow of the Russian hinterlands, high, billowing, deep and glistening, heaped up in smooth mounds across the Mlastovoi fields. Ahead his mother walked silently. She did not turn or answer as her son spoke to her. He fell behind, shaking his head, speaking to himself. He did not want to go to school. The thought of it, the awful anticipation, weighed upon his breast like a fallen beam.

They were walking through the deep snows of Mlastovoi, the sleepy hamlet that lay six miles west of Sversk. Darkness hung over the fields where the snow loomed in long gray mounds, grotesque and gaunt, like frozen ghosts in the distance. They had risen early in order to reach the town before evening. It was the first time either of them had left the village or the bounds of their neighbors' fields. Sversk was the nearest district to the village that maintained a school, and the mother had long ago decided to send the boy there despite the disapproval of her neighbors, the peasant farmers, who could neither read nor write. As they labored through the snow, the boy dragging his feet slowly, neither of them spoke. He loitered as much as he dared, to view the vast fields, and the barns soaking in white. The mother's attention was fixed on the road. Only once she paused to adjust the lunch-sack strapped clumsily under her broad shoulders. Except that she bowed her head as she walked into the onslaught of wind, she gave no indication that she was aware of the cold, so absorbed was she with the issue at hand, the decision she had made. Her son, she thought, would not be ignorant like the peasants, untaught as she herself had been. The idea glowed in her heart and quickened her step.

The boy would have preferred the fields where in summer

he sat, hour after hour, watching the peasants as they worked bare-waisted in the fierce sun of morning and mid-noon. He had always been there when they came home of evenings chanting the sweet songs of the field. Besides, he told himself aloud, it was shameful for a lad in the fifteenth winter to go to school. The peasants declared him too old. But his mother, without consulting anyone, had decided that he should go.

It was late afternoon when they reached Sversk. The snow had long since been shoveled up against the roadsides, but thin, wet flakes were falling steadily in the gathering dark when they found the schoolhouse. It stood off from the Market Square in the center of town, a two-storied, brown frame building, no bigger than a peasant's barn, with a scanty yard that was hidden now under trampled snow. The schoolmaster was at supper when they knocked, but they did not wait long. He was chewing his food as he opened the door, smacking his lips and showing his great yellow teeth. The boy gazed at his lean, sallow face, and unkempt black hair that fell over his moist forehead. The schoolmaster in turn studied the new pupil, his quick eyes intent upon the slight figure that crouched in the half-light, the face under the damp, curling hair lost in shadow. The solemn eyes that emerged from that white face were wintry blue and blue lines circled the deep sockets. His face, as he stood upon the threshold, was filled with torment and the soul looked out of the shadows, forlorn.

The mother seated herself on a scholar's bench and folded her mittened hands in her lap. As she glanced about the room a sigh escaped her. Her body was flooded with weariness.

She said simply, "I have brought my son. We have no school in Mlastovoi. You will take him?"

In a short time they had completed the transaction and shook hands. The woman stood up, gathering her shawl over her head. She bent over the boy and kissed him on the forehead.

"My son," she said, "apply yourself to your studies. God be with you." She bowed to the schoolmaster.

"God be with you."

"God be with you."

He felt strangely forsaken. Slowly, he turned to look around the room and his glance rested on the birch-rod that hung from a nail above the teacher's chair. The schoolmaster noticed at once, and seizing him by the arm, peered into the drawn, white face.

"Come along with me!" he cried. "I'll appoint a seat for you!"

He was given a place opposite the old faded map that flapped from a peg on the wall. The sight of the scarred benches, to-

gether with the bareness of the room, and the loneliness that was his and that was a part of him, made his heart contract painfully. Nausea swept over him. He was ashamed of tears at the back of his eyes.

He tried to get used to it, the strangeness, the fear, and the lessons that were impossible. Always he was quietly miserable, and so unhappy, so alone and terrified that only the darkness was partner of his fear. He was afraid of the students, of the master, of a new day. The boys laughed at his thin body and delicate frame. In the yard he moved alone or stood silently, his nervous hands tearing at his cap. His schoolfellows despised him enthusiastically and at last ignored him.

One day he wrote a letter home. "— I cannot remember the exercises. Everything slips through my head. The first day here was the best, for I watched the snow fall all through the afternoon and there were no lessons that day. There is a clever fellow here, Stepan Mihailovich Liadoff. They call him the "Fox" for the schoolmaster never catches him at his tricks. Usually I receive the beatings that are rightfully his. But I don't care, I love Stepan. He is my only friend here —"

He idled over his lessons, his thoughts drifting always. The schoolmaster's voice could not penetrate the recurrent dream in which he found himself, content and drowsy in the grass, the warm sun on his face, care lost in the freshening morning mist. Often he longed to see his mother, but after that first day, she never came.

He wrote a private composition one day, and slipping it into his notebook, forgot about it. "—how I hate it all and the dreary books. I should like to set the school afire. Then I could run away, perhaps to America —" One of the boys discovered it and promptly handed it to the master. The next day he was sent home to Mlastovoi.

His mother was tearful at his return, but as winter descended upon them, she was grateful for her misfortune. Winter came, severe and long. Food was scarce. Then the mother fell ill. They had no cabbage and no potatoes. Hunger sent him out, into the fields where snow and grey gloom covered the earth and he wandered, praying, tears in his eyes, but without fear. He was home.

His mother's half-sister took in washing and in the long weeks that followed he earned a bit sorting goose-feathers. He was content then to sit on the great stove in a neighbor's warm

kitchen, where the women gathered of evenings to stuff pillows and mattresses and exchange gossip. They filled his ears with stories of the great wealth in the new land, "a land of riches, milk and honey, where gold flowed in the streets."

Winter gave way reluctantly to spring. His mother would have liked him to continue his studies, but she knew it would be more profitable in the fields. Now that she was ill, she was glad to have him at home. When the planting began, he went into the fields and engaged himself to a farmer. That day, as he mowed in the open, a strange joy burned in his heart. He had a little black Bible in his pocket, and now as he sat at the foot of a giant tree, he opened it to the Old Testament and read with labored delight the account of the ancient wanderers, seeking in the wilderness the promised land of milk and honey. While the peasants worked, he remained in the field, seated in the tall grasses, his thoughts endlessly telling the beads of time. He raised his eyes and gazed upon the richness of the sky in the Russian sunset. It was glowing with a passion of color and the air lifted its fresh smell of glowing things skyward. Evening came on, filling the spaces between heaven and earth. The stars struck out, like bayonets appearing on a darkened battlefield, and the moon came up peacefully. He crept down to the little creek that divided the fields and stripped off his clothes. As he swam in the gathering darkness, the joy in his breast turned to a familiar sadness. The creek, the fields brown in autumn, now rich with planted wheat and blanketed in winter with snow, this Russian sky, they were friends. This world about him was the world he loved, the home of his birth and comfort of his youth.

The water was suddenly chill. A shiver ran down his back. Quickly he climbed on to the bank, dried himself in the bush with his undershirt and started home.

When he came home to supper, he heard his mother's frightened voice in the kitchen, and the farmer who had hired him that morning was shouting.

"Ah-ha, you rascal!" the peasant cried at sight of him. "Do you think I will pay you to sit and catch birds? You are a fine chap! Go and hire yourself out to a princess!" He threw him two kopeks for his service, and left the house.

The following winter the mother remarried. Her husband was a clerk turned farmer, a man of cold temperament, harsh, forbidding, strong-willed. With the marriage things in the larder were better. They had greens and white bread. But for the boy there were beatings and abuse. Not even the restraining hand of

the mother saved him. At night, when the rest had gone to bed, he escaped to the loft and listened to rain beating on the roof.

The next year his studies were resumed. The step-father hired a tutor for him, so that he could continue at home, but he was not happy at it. He got on badly with the tutor, learned little, and his lack of progress enraged his step-father. He hated the tutor and his father alike, for they sat apart, arguing, while the morrow's lesson waited. In the kitchen the two men sat bickering over a glass of tea or warm milk. The tutor waved his arms wildly, shouting in his sing-song voice, "If a man's tree is growing into his neighbor's yard, ought not the neighbor to have a share of its fruits?" The step-father stroked his beard before replying.

"No." He spoke slowly. "If a man's got a tree, and the tree has roots in his yard, everything on that tree belongs to him. Including the shade."

"*Boishe-moi!*" the tutor pulled at his hair, "how can you say such a thing, Ivan Mihailovitch? The sun that shines on the leaves and the air which a tree breathes are as much the neighbor's property —" and the lessons were over for the day.

He sat alone and unnoticed in a corner with the books in his lap, half-awake, dreaming of escape to a land where the streets were paved with gold. Evenings, when they sat down to their meal, the step-father interrogated the step-son.

"Well, Boris Gregorovitch," he began, smacking his lips over the soup-bowl, "what did you learn today?" He looked up with dull eyes. He had difficulty tearing himself away from the dream, and the questioning unnerved him. He managed to choke on the soup, or to become convulsed with coughing, and then, quickly, he left the kitchen.

The ruse did not work long. When he was without adequate replies, the step-father worked himself into a temper, and falling upon him with savage blows and curses, threatened to turn him out. The barn was his refuge when fear and anger choked him, robbing him of rest till the moaning of wind in the trees lulled him to sleep.

Early in the following year, the mother was with child, and in the late summer a son was born. It was then that hostility pressed upon him with cold fingers, strangling him from within. The mother seemed to forget his existence. But it was the father who forbade him the house.

He passed through wheat fields, and from the orchards half a mile off the wind lifted, bringing the smell of apple trees in bloom. He stopped and repeated the evening prayer. It was

after sundown, and the peasants had gone home. He owned nothing but a pen-knife, an old pocket Bible and two kopeks tied in a kerchief. The night air was cool in his ears as he trudged on to Sversk. Hunger and fatigue welled in him whether he walked slowly or paused to rest. It was nearly morning when he reached the town. At the hour of dawning, he lay down under a tree and fell asleep, the morning prayer on his lips.

At high noon, the sun, brilliant overhead, woke him with its heat. He lay upon his back, sleep still heavy on his eyelids. A gnawing in his stomach woke him completely.

In Sversk he found the sweet shop of his old school-fellows. When he recognized the shop-keeper he threw himself into the arms of the old man and poured out his tale. The old man listened, crossing himself many times. Pity and avarice struggled in his face while he weighed the matter mightily.

"You may stay here," he said. "But you will soon be old enough for the Czar's army. Then what, my tame fellow?"

He could not speak without betraying the tears of his emotion. He sat on a potato sack, chewing the tail of a salt-herring. That night he dreamed that Stepan the Fox was Czar Nicholas III. He was a soldier and the Czar stood over him on the battlefield. He could not raise his gun to kill the enemy, so the Fox beat him senseless. The next morning he told the old man his dream.

He was not afraid of death, but he was afraid to kill, afraid that he would be made to kill. He wanted to be forever among the green fields and the cows and the calm things of land and earth. The old man listened gravely. He furrowed his brow, his slow thought spurred to action. "In a few days," he said, "I will help you."

The next week the storekeeper steered him into the kitchen and locked the door. He sat down on a broken chair and cupped his hands to guard a whisper. "I have a passport for you to America." The boy drew in his breath.

"Where did you get the passport?" he asked. The storekeeper gave him a sly smile.

"Never mind." He lowered his voice. "Practice writing this signature." He handed him a slip of paper with a strange name scrawled on it. Bewildered, he stared at it, not understanding at first.

"Practice," the old man told him, "and when you have mastered the signature, destroy the paper." He stuffed the signature into the boy's hand and hustled him into the cellar of the shop.

In a few days he was on his way to the border, with money for a ticket and bribe-money if questions were asked. On the train he looked out of the window at the countryside rolling past. It was wheat country, long and beautiful. Barns slid past in the sea of field and grain. America could be no lovelier than this land, he thought, but there he would be happy. No threat of soldiering could touch him—or the harsh reality of interrupted dreaming. Bread and cheese. Bread and cheese, a pasture by day, the stars by night, that was all. The train stopped at the station; he had to get out. Oh, land of promise! A prayer rose to his lips; his heart pounded in his throat.

"Your name?" inquired the severe official. He did not answer immediately. He was thinking of a flower he had seen once growing under some dark trees. It was pink, deep red and scarlet, a bold thing that scattered its beauty on the shade. There was a sign planted in the midst of the blooms, "Don't Trample." His thoughts lingered pleasantly.

He looked up abruptly. "Boris Gregorovitch Kazoff," he said. And then he signed the strange signature. He put the pen down and waited. The room was crowded and the smell of tobacco hung heavily in the air. Suddenly a rough hand seized his shoulder. He heard them shouting at him. "False, false!" they cried in a chorus, shaking their heads, "a serious offense! The name he has given and the signature do not correspond!" He was dazed. The realization of what he had done rushed upon him, and swiftly terror clutched at his brain. The harsh cries fell about his ears and he stood still, in the midst of a circle of gendarmes, storming with pretended anger as they hemmed and waited. He did not know that this was the signal to buy them off. Dimly, he heard their threats and promises of punishment. He saw the dream slipping away, and a soldier with a bayonet rose in his mind's eye. One of the gendarmes led him into a corner and began to threaten him, rubbing his hands and cocking his head insinuatingly. The boy did not understand. They exchanged angry words; the gendarme struck him a blow on the face. The anger that flooded him then took possession of his throat, spurring his action. He drew out his pen-knife and quickly, silently dug it into the man's neck . . .

Blood and blows and curses. The sin that weighed upon his soul had lifted and now he felt a lightheartedness, a freedom he had not known. They were shouting. He tried to open his eyes under the tight band. "—aim, fire!" He fell forward on his face, and as he fell, a worn pocket Bible and two kopeks scattered on the ground.

THE FLAMINGO

FULFILLED

I've walked beneath an ebon sky
With Nature's diamonds gleaming,
And, languid, lain by a river's side,
By lapping waters dreaming.

I've seen the sun-king's glory flame
In bands of molten gold;
My soul has knelt to see your love
Its trusting buds unfold.

I've reveled in a crisp, clean world,
New-laundered by the snow.
My baby's petal cheek I've kissed;
I've soared where eagles go.

I've lived in purest ecstasy —
I could not ask for one
More heady moment. No regret
Have I — my course is run.

Weep not, beloved, but rejoice
With me — for I've drunk deep
Of Life's elixir. Heart at peace,
I welcome quiet sleep.

— Janet Haas.



THE FLAMINGO

SYMPHONETTE IN DISHARMONY

I have listened to the melody of sadness
Breaking rhythms in the secret of my soul,
Heard the crashing chords of half-inspired madness
But I cannot make the broken fragments whole.
I have searched the plaintive echoes that go trembling
On the wings of some departed memory,
Where the eloquence of silences assembling
Formed the pattern of a troubled harmony.
I will ask the moon, now slow in heaven turning,
"What answer shall I write into my heart?"
I cannot sound the intermittent yearning
That stirs within, and sets the soul apart.
Come, song of songs, thus strangely spin yourself until
The spell shall break — and then be still.

— Rosalind Darrow



THE MILLENIUM

If dawn breaks bright upon that distant time
When war and tears are hushed in worlds-ago,
Pain but the badge of some unhappy clime,
And truth the only beauty we can know;
Praying to the moon, the old gods shall be cast
Into that well of unrecorded space
Where sits the fallen one, with eyes aghast,
Lucifer, whom God in anger hurled from grace.
Then, Memory, please to rouse one cherished mind
That I shall point to in that looked-for dawn.
Burnish the rust from thoughts, and deeper, find
The teeming promise of a day now gone
Which, though he since has learned how to forget,
May through the mind's first vision struggle yet.

— Rosalind Darrow

THE FLAMINGO

SUMMER

Summer is alive.
Heavy, close heat caressing me as I move.
The hum of the air as it breathes,
Striving to snatch all life for itself,
Sapping animation and strength from me,
But awakening all my dormant senses
Like a skillful lover.
The black seductive night,
Full of hope and happiness,
Holding promise of expectation fulfilled.
Enveloping me in a warm,
Overpoweringly sweet cloak of oblivion.

My love is brown and blue and white.
Deep eyes, blue in a brown face.
Gentle brown hands and sturdy arms
Against a white shirt.
Brown and blue are strong, kind colors.
White is clean and good.
My love is brown and blue and white.

— *Patience Thompson*

* * * *

NAMELESS

I'm a swallow in flight,
Wind in the leaves,
Softness of grass — and the
Green in the trees.
I'm the motion of clouds
Blue on the mountains
All darkness and light—
A rose that is white.
I am the sun as I course through the sky,
Steadfast and silent, bold, strong am I.
Round as the fire, quicker than silver,
Alone I have come, alone must I go.

— *Alice Haines.*

WITHOUT A SWORD

By BEN BRIGGS, JR.

HE WAS the sort of a man that people saw in the streets and turned to look at again. He was not finely clad; the meanest Roman legionaire wore better clothes than his tattered robes. His station was just above the slave—an illiterate shepherd of a conquered people. Yet sometimes even the strutting, pompous men of Imperial Rome saw him and tried to laugh away their respect with some crude joke. "A warrior of David," they would say, "born a few years too late." They laughed because all they could see was a tall, bronzed young man with smooth rippling muscles, of which they were absolute masters. They saw his flashing black eyes which were the borderline between them and the inviolate realm of the mind. They were obsequious when they faced a Roman, but in their depths still burned a wild, untamed longing for freedom. Behind them was a mind free to hate the Romans. His father and sister trembled in their lonely hillside house where the Romans never came when they heard his awesome imprecations of the overlords. But the Romans never saw his strong, calloused hand clench or his lips press in a fine line as he walked through his conquered city.

How could this man walk in servitude when his mind screamed each moment for freedom? Even when his brother was made a galley slave on a merchant trieme for some false crime and his sister had been used by a drunken legionaire, he held his peace. For it was wrtiten that a man would come, a son of David, to restore the ancient empire. This was the hope he clung to in all the hours of despair. For all Palestine was in need of hope, and these ancient writings were a wildfire that smouldered throughout the oppressed land. Each new Roman atrocity but lent it greater spirit. Every occurrence was interpreted as a sign of approaching liberation. Each new-born child was looked upon with the thought, "Is this the Conqueror?"

And David, for this man was named David after the King, believed with the others that they need only wait for a leader. They formed little bands to meet on appointed nights to drink to victories not yet won. The women stayed at home, fretting that their men should let well enough alone.

David remained to tend his father's herd when most of the boys were married. "I will marry when I can protect my wife as well as cherish her, when she may walk in Bethlehem as mistress and not as slave." The desperate singleness of his purpose

THE FLAMINGO

had advantages. To be a mighty warrior he made himself a great hunter. Whenever a wolf ravaged the herds he was summoned; he loved to imagine that the beast was a Roman legionaire. But for all his fury against Rome, he was known as a good man and a valuable friend. A friend of David was always safe; nor did he hesitate to pause by the road to help a stranger, even if it were only with a good-natured smile and a kind word. He was perhaps a man of many moods. For a moment he would amuse his gathered friends with a gay anecdote or the lines of a ballad, while the next instant he would keep their fury alive with the gruesome details of a Roman atrocity.

And the time of waiting crept on. Season after season finally made the years. The years of the mad King Herod came like a dreadful plague upon the land while they yet waited. David many times thought of launching the revolution with the eager multitude, but he was not the leader to organize such a confusion. And all men's eyes were set on a miracle rather than on a single ordinary man.

David's twentieth winter brought unusually severe winds screaming from the north. Mad Herod felt the unrest in his domain. He proclaimed a census because Rome ordered it and because he wished to know more of his people to remind them of mighty Rome. The Eternal City was a legend — a city of another world from whence came men who were more than men. But Herod knew this illusion was framed with the swords and spears of his army.

Thus David huddled in his tattered robes by a tiny fire while his family had gone down to their city to register their miserable existence on the scrolls of the Eternal City. A star of incredible brightness had risen, and he followed its course out of the East. A sign he thought—but there had been so many signs—and he was cold. The star was nearly overhead when he made out the figure of a man coming up the hill toward him. He smiled, for it was rare fortune to have a visitor on these cold nights. He placed another stick of wood on the fire to better the comfort of the man whom he now discovered as a shepherd like himself. The man was in a great hurry.

"It has come," the man proclaimed between excited breaths. "I lay asleep by my fire, and a vision of an angel appeared and told me a savior was born in the City of David."

The announcement was more than David could appreciate at once. He refused to believe lest his hopes be dashed. "Perhaps it was a dream." The man was old and might be given to fancies.

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"Two men I have met had the same dream tonight. Always the words — a savior in the City of David. They said more but I was too excited to notice."

"We shall go and see," David said quickly, his eyes aflame with a spirit that had never been permitted life before.

"And there were three travelers who came to Bethlehem today. Three kings of Eastern lands, and they sought a new ruler of men because all the signs of the Zodiac converged on our little city. The great star came to point out the city." He pointed a bony finger at the star. Indeed it did point the way to Bethlehem by a slender, fiery tail that stretched half the width of a Zodiac house across the starry garden of the heavens.

David began to believe, and he felt his spirit aroused against the confines of his body like a bird that beats its wings against a cage. He turned to the older man. "Do you go to the city with me?"

"No, my hair is touched by the snow of life's wintertime. I am no longer a warrior. Your youth and strength will help the savior drive out the tyrant. I envy you; my eyes have thirsted for Roman blood for near sixty hard winters."

"You will look after my flock while I'm gone?"

"My neighbor cares for mine. We wished you to go quickly to the city." In the brilliant light of the comet David could see the hopes of an oppressed people reflected in the graven lines of the ancient man's face. His eyes were brilliant with new-found youth. David thrilled under the feeling of responsibility.

David left the man with a quick warm smile. He had only his bare, strong hands as weapons as he walked directly down the half-defined trail that led to the ancient road to Bethlehem. He was again a striking figure, striding at a constant, unslackening pace to the city. The road bore unusually heavy traffic in men and families going to and from their city of Bethlehem. Some were rich merchants who rode fine Arabian horses and wore handsome clothes, but most were tattered shepherds clad like himself in a cheap cloth of skins. Occasionally the road was cleared for a pompous legionaire in his gleaming armor. And once there came a great caravan surrounded by mounted soldiers, and the soldiers proclaimed that it was the caravan of King Herod himself. David, as he waited for them to pass, caught a glimpse of the Tetrarch himself. He wore a stern frozen expression on his plump, cruel face. He looked neither to the right nor left, and the smooth gait of his huge horse left him motionless. He was short and flabby from a too easy life. David thought of the feel of a knife in the soft fat of the dread king. Soon, soon, perhaps.

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The savior was just born, they had told him, but a miracle could make him full grown and ready to lead at once. With Herod about he would have no chance to reach manhood at normal speed.

David had never seen the little city as it was that night. The streets were thronged with people, Roman and native. He was surprised to see the Roman soldiers undisturbed on the streets, laughing and joking unless they were on duty. There was no sign that the coming of the savior had touched their arrogant lives.

He found a man clad as a shepherd huddled against a stall in the deserted market place. "I have heard them speak of the savior," he said sleepily. "But I was very tired when I arrived and there was no room left at the inn. Perhaps you should ask at the inn — but be careful whom you ask. The Tetrarch is there and he does not like this prophecy of a savior."

David let him sleep on and went to the inn. Armored Roman guards paraded around the main building. There was no one here to ask. He stood pondering for a moment; then a legionaire spoke. "What do you wish, shepherd?"

"I . . . I was looking for someone," he stammered. He held an inherent fear of the bronze-plated Romans.

"Look elsewhere, shepherd. The Tetrarch does not wish to be disturbed."

"Is — is there an inn — to spend the night?"

"This is the only inn. It is full. But some of the late comers have found places in the stable. You are welcome to look for yourself. The smells couldn't disturb a shepherd."

David thanked him and went to the stable behind the inn. The building was open to wintry winds that made the oil lamp flames quiver with stark shadows. At one end of the long group of stalls in a partly enclosed storage room, he saw a small group of men gathered. He was afraid to think now. Afraid that this tiny group made up the army that he had thought would be gathered to defeat Rome. He walked toward them resolutely. A shepherd turned at the sound of his footsteps and recognized him.

"Ah, David, we knew that you would come."

"Where is the savior? Is he to lead an army?"

"Wait, David, and hear my words." He took the younger man's arm and led him out into the night.

"They said a savior was born in the City of David. He is the one whom the prophecies said would defeat the Romans and make our ancient land great and free."

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"You did not hear all their words, my son." The man was old and his voice was cracked and slow, but David respected age in spite of his burning impatience. "You did not hear their words carefully. They proclaimed good tidings of great joy to all people. And I heard a man ask of them if they meant Romans, and they answered saying that the savior was for the greatest people and for the least of people and also for the people who are neither Romans nor slaves. Then all the angels pronounced in a great single voice that on the earth would be peace and good will to men."

"There can be no peace with tyrants," David objected half-angrily.

"Come and see the new King, my son. Perhaps you will understand better than through my poor words." He led David back into the room, and the little group parted so that they might pass through to their midst. The straw that carpeted the floor crunched under their feet. And David saw the sight that painters were to immortalize for thousands of years to come. As if in a center of a dais, a baby lay wrapped in many thicknesses of oriental blankets with only a diminutive, ruddy face visible to the observers. David saw nothing spectacular about the child and his eyes stole to the woman half reclining on crudely stacked straw somewhat back of the brilliant illumination from an incredible collection of lamps. She was young, very young and very beautiful, with brilliant dark eyes that sparkled with tears and a wreath of fine, curling black hair. David read wonder and fear and love all in the tear-stained eyes that watched the child. "It is no surprise that she looks with wonder. For hers is the first child since we dwelt in the garden that was not born of sin." The man whispered softly as the two stood gazing down on the edge of the strange, unmarked dais. "An angel placed it in her arms."

David saw the man now standing beside the woman. He was tall and slender, so that her head was scarcely above his shoulder. His face was gentle, as if he could not be imagined to speak a harsh word. And his eyes reflected the patience that all Palestine had known while it waited for a thousand years. His very gesture was tenderness for the woman — the smile as he looked down at her and the easy touch of his hand on her slender shoulder. It was a worn hand, injured by the marks of endless toil, but a hand that love now made softer than the finest silk.

"Does this mean that it was written that we will remain forever the slaves of Rome?" David whispered. For he was bitterly disappointed even at this moment.

"I don't know, my son. You have seen what I have seen and you have heard what I have heard."

David turned and pushed his way back through the group. He wanted to escape now. He felt a hand upon his shoulder and turned, expecting to see the old man who had first spoken to him.

Instead it was a younger man, about his own age. He seemed foreign by his dark hair and eyes and the manner of his speaking. "You are David of whom I have heard as the leader of men. I am Dequa, prince of a kingdom of the East — a kingdom of more extent than Rome — that knows Rome only by its merchants and travelers. I am one of the three kings of which you have heard. Only I am not a king and never shall be, for I have a score and seven brothers who are before me." David and the man stepped outside in the night to talk. "My father, the great king, gave to his sons portions of the world's knowledge to learn, so that among them should be everything that man had ever learned. In that way he hoped we would be great leaders, for he is a wise and noble man. To us three were given among other things astrology and Rome and her colony of Judea." David had a little difficulty in following the man's unusual grammatical forms and wondered what the stranger would say. He was interested in any man who did not quail under the power of the Roman Emperor. "And among the things I learned was that men of Rome labored in darkness with no high power to turn to when in need. And I told my brothers of the darkness in Rome and we wept for the Romans. But we soon turned back to our books for we could not think that darkness would prevail forever. And we read of Judea and found that there was light, though clouded by many false understandings. But our astrology told us of a great day that would come when all the planets would converge their radiance on a city of Judea and from that city would come light to repay the gathering heavens. And though it takes five thousand years, eventually all the earth will be lighted." He paused, perhaps to give David time to speak. But the shepherd was too awed by the words to find voice.

"And because there was darkness in my land, we three came to learn what we could. We bore gifts over stormy mountains and streaming marshes and fiery deserts. And we were finally led by a comet until we came to your city, and we have stayed the night to learn."

"What have you learned?" David found voice to inquire.

"We know that those which appear to be weak will be the strength from this day forth. We know that our world will be ruled by a gently guiding hand, not an iron-mailed fist. But the weak will not be strong just because they are weak. For weakness may be good or evil and strength may be good or evil. But the good will be strong whether or not they appear to be weak. If Rome is good, it may endure for five thousand years; but if it is only strong it will pass and be a memory. Even though you dwell under the tyrant's heel for a hundred years, yet you may be good and therefore strong, and the day will come when your strength will be known."

But David was suddenly disconsolate. He had listened to this man, believing that he had some hope for him. But the prince spoke of five thousand years, and he had thirsted for personal vengeance to begin this night against the tyrants.

"How do we know this is the savior" objected David. He had forgotten that he addressed a prince in this soul-shattering moment.

"We might know from the stars, or we might know because he was not born of woman, and we might know from the angels. Or again we might simply know from within ourselves."

David knew that the prince was right — that this was the savior he had awaited all his life, but he did not wish to admit the fact even to himself. He still hoped the child would become a great leader to drive out the oppressors. But he was aware of the dignity of the prince and could find no words to object.

"Shall we go inside? The night is cold." David complied. He stood at the edge of the little group and for a moment began to think that peace was very good. In this scene of love he could scarcely remember the atrocities of the Romans; they had occurred on a world apart. He stood alone for a time that he did not measure. Other shepherds came and stood in the same thrilled fascination that none would ever be able to explain. They came until they filled even the huge stable.

But at last came an armored Roman officer and several soldiers with him. David saw the officer as he pushed his way through the group until he reached the center. He was big, a giant with heavy, knotted muscles and thick, brutal features. They supposed he had been sent to disband the group gathered in the stable; Romans disliked to have conquered men gather in large groups. David could still see him when he stood by the child because he stood a head above the men gathered there. He unrolled a scroll of paper and read it in a raucous voice in Latin that few under-

THE FLAMINGO

stood. Then he translated it briefly. "The great Tetrarch Herod has learned that a rebel leader has been born in this city tonight. For the sake of the peace of the Eternal City all babies born in this city tonight will be put to the sword. By the order of King Herod of Judea, whose authority is Caesar Augustus of the Imperial City."

No one fully appreciated what the man had said for many moments. An utter, living silence possessed all of them. The soldiers had formed a ring around their leader, who now drew his gleaming sword of flashing bronze. The lovely dark-haired woman took in the situation first and moved towards the child, but the ring of legionnaires stopped her. The huge man tore away some of the blankets and stood with his sword poised. The child had suddenly awakened and held out his hands in fascination toward the bright object. He smiled a little although the Roman did not see. A soldier did and looked away. By this time the surrounding men began to understand and some tried to press forward, but the soldiers held them at sword's point. The brutal man saw their helplessness and was amused. "If this was sent from heaven to lead you against Rome, it's time a tongue of flame came out of the sky and ate me up." He laughed hugely at his jest and moved the sword tantalizingly. But not even his soldiers joined his merriment. David looked at his strong but helpless hands. Then he knew how this moment defeated the ideals of good against strength that the prince had mentioned. A tongue of flame would have solved this problem, but that was strength and that was long ago.

The legionnaire's leering face saw the laughing child grasping vainly at the brilliant sword. He started to speak and then stood silent. Finally: "I have a child in Rome and the boat tells me I have a new baby." He turned to the man and woman who were the parents. His face was still harsh and his voice was raucous. "You'd better take the child and go as far from Judea as you can. The King will never hear of him. I think Rome can take a chance."

And after a little while everyone knew, as David knew, that Heaven had found a substitute for a tongue of flame. A substitute that made one hate Romans less and feel that perhaps even they were distantly related brothers. And David found a satisfaction in this new knowledge that he could never have found had he stood amid the ashes of the Eternal City.

SUBURB OF THE U. S. A.

By JUNE ELLEN STERN

NEW YORK is a city of glitter, glamour, gals — and occasionally God. It is the crossroads of the world though it hardly knows it. And if it paused on its merry-go-round, could not tell you how it came to be so.

The real New York is a kaleidoscope of intangibles. The dog walkers who air their small charges up and down her teeming streets, the soap-box orators at Union Square and grease painted chorines relaxing at Walgreen's. It's the way the pigeons strut so arrogantly across the steps of St. Patrick's Cathedral. It's the "Times," the "News," and the "Daily Worker"—it's heaven.

I love New York dearly, yet I am not blind to her city sins, as much a part of her as Sardi's or the Stork. It is the part of New York you seldom hear of, successfully masked by her Chambers of Commerce and long-haired coteries. It's her Bowery flophouses and Hell's Kitchen, dead-end generations and water-front brawls.

These are her city sins, yet in spite of them, New York is a city of magic. The magic of the "Village" and Central Park in the spring, of gaunt granite canyons and unfathomable regions of the B. M. T. It's finding cabbies who write poetry and cowboys from Brooklyn. It's knowing there is a broken heart for every light on Broadway. It is a nation in itself, a land of neon signs and rusty el's. You may have your wide open spaces, your quiet nights and country days. Just let me walk down my home town pavements, drink in her city air, and I'll let you mutter quietly under your breath, that we're the greatest hicks on earth.

ON HEARING SCHUMANN'S "ICH GROLLE NICHT"

I do not complain because your love is not,
Nor do I weep aloud, but through the night
My sigh is borne to that unknown
Where yesterday has flown.
I do not complain, my tears are brave, unshed.
I stand forlorn, here in the moonless night
And offer you my old, forsaken heart.

— Rosalind Darrow

THE FLAMINGO
PICTURE PUZZLE IN WHITE

Trees,
A fancy lace border,
Against the Quaker-gray petticoat of the sky.
Snow flakes,
Rocking merrily down,
Flirting happily with one another.
Snow,
Lying in an alluring blanket,
Daring the small wonderstruck child
To disrupt its complacent smoothness.
Tracks,
Fresh wounds in the snow,
Rapidly becoming scars,
And then
Merely memories.
Black cat,
Posed piously against the snow.
Lithe, fluid loveliness
As she flies up the steps,
Then stops,
Peering gently down
In greeting.
Two footprints
In the snow,
Where she had been sitting.
Tiny,
Bold.
Black cat and white snow.
Snow growing finer now.
Swift silent winter dusk blurring the scene.
Evening,
Rushing on with sleek movements.

— *Patience Thompson*



AND CHILDREN LISTEN

By ZELL ROGERS-SESSIONS

“WHERE we going?” Michael chirped.
“Over to a Mrs. Laurie’s house. She lives out in the country. She has a big house set way back off the highway. It’s not far from the river. We’ll come to a little town first where we’ll get off, and then someone will take us out to Mrs. Laurie’s. Tomorrow’s Christmas. We’re going to spend tonight and tomorrow at Mrs. Laurie’s house in the country.”

“How do you know it’s in the country? How do you know it’s near a river?”

“Because . . .”

“Have *you* ever been to Mrs. Laurie’s house in the country?”

“I . . . yes, Michael. I spent last Christmas there.”

Jeffry hadn’t said a word for miles. He was humped over on the wooden seat, his green-knickered legs tucked underneath him. He had part of his brown overcoat stuffed on the window sill to cushion an elbow. His other hand in his lap was buried in a pocket of the traveling overcoat. One glove was on the floor. His dark, straight hair was tousled, and his grave-gray eyes rode the landscape. He slid his hand away from his mouth and pushed it into his cheeks.

“There won’t be any snow for Christmas,” he said.

“You have snow in England for Christmas?”

“Uh-huh. Only it’s been a long time since I’ve been in England.”

“We have snow for Christmas in France too,” Yvonne said.

“I’m an American,” stated Michael. He was proud to know he was an American. He’d throw his blond head back and look any man straight in the eye and tell him he was an American. It was the one thing he remembered that his mother had told him. He didn’t know much about Christmas. He wasn’t old enough. This would be probably the first Christmas that he would remember.

Yvonne drew thin worry lines together between her black eyes.

“We’re all just children,” she said.

She sat still, her small hands crossed in the lap of her wool skirt. Jeffry’s eyes had a long-lost look. Michael played his thumb between his upper and lower lips. He sat very still too.

There was no snow, but there was a certain Christmas chill in the air. The green and yellow grasses in the swampland were festooned with icicles. An enormous bird swooped over the low

country land and was gone. The open swamp marshes merged into thick, moist-green woodland bearded by gray moss. One could see patches of fields in between the breaks in the trees, and there was the river over a bit farther, drifting along its course. The train stopped at all the thimble-sized villages and every once in a while it would stop out in the middle of a bare field—a farmer would climb down and start away on the cold, narrow path which led to his house. Jeffry watched him as he went until he was no more than a dot threading its way over the bleak ground.

Michael turned and twisted. Then suddenly he became intensely interested in something. The man across the aisle had been sitting reading his newspaper all this way, but now he stood up and reached for his packages. He put them on the seat while he himself put on his overcoat and hat. The train was slowing and he was preparing to leave. There were three parcels on the seat, two gaily wrapped packages and one big brown bag with peppermint candy canes popping out the top. Yvonne was reading Dickens' "Christmas Carol." The man began to pick up the packages and bag. Michael's eyes nibbled on the peppermint sticks. Jeffry would make a sideways glance, too, and then turn towards the window again with red and white walking canes strutting up and down in his mind. The man turned around with everything tucked under his arm. He was confronted with two candy-eyed little boys.

He gave a hearty laugh. He slipped his giant hands into the bag and fingered the peppermint sticks. He handed one around to each of the three children. Yvonne looked up and shyly smiled.

"Merry Christmas," the big man boomed.

The boys were jubilant. Jeffry licked his red and white stick, but Michael poked his in his mouth and sucked hard. He took it out once or twice to beam triumphantly at the giver. The big man was six feet two and had a crop of cotton white hair. His weathered face was deeply lined with pleasant wrinkles as he watched them.

"We thank you very much," Yvonne said.

"Oh, never you mind," he said, "this is Santa Claus' day to give presents away."

The train lurched. He turned and went toward the rear door to get off. A woman in a purple plaid and loaded down with packages stumbled along behind him. Michael stood up on the seat.

"Good-bye, Mr. Santa Claus," he sang.

"Mr. Santa Claus," Jeffry laughed. Michael rolled upright from one corner of the seat to the other.

"He sort of reminded me of my papa, in a way," Yvonne said, "My papa was a big man like that and he had a wonderful laugh. Only I think my papa was handsomer. Mr. Santa Claus had a pretty big nose."

"My Dad has a wonderful laugh too, but he isn't very big. He's a soldier, my father is, and he's one of the best. He's fought in lots of the big battles," Jeffry's model of perfection was in the memories of his Dad.

Jeffrey and Yvonne chattered on about their fathers. They compared their respective fathers' merits particular by particular, each trying to outdo the other. They jested, and they'd roll up in balls laughing at each other. They were feeling good. They didn't stop, they just kept on licking candy and talking.

"Bet your father can't play cricket," Jeffry challenged Yvonne. Tears stained Michael's cheeks.

"Don't cry, Michael. Why are you crying? Please, don't cry, Michael. Michael, please . . . why are you crying?"

"I've never known my father. I have no father."

"Yes, you have a father," Yvonne whispered, "God is your father, Michael."

"He's the best father of all, isn't He, Yvonne?" Michael sat in deep thought for a moment. Then he brightened up.

"Merry Christmas," he grinned. Yvonne and Jeffry looked at one another and finally at Michael. They all said it together.

"Merry Christmas."

The train drew to a fussy stop. Black smoke plumes floated in the winter sky. A few holiday lights were dancing in the village shop windows. A dozen people crowded from the coaches onto the station platform. A great, fat man in a stuffed overcoat bellied his way through them. He gave his cigar a huge, cheery puff and shouted across the street to a scrawny man propped in front of the general merchandise store. "Merry Christmas, Josh," he said. A little boy in a drooping, red-serge cap, his arms decked with holly, squirmed in and out among the spirited crowd. The postman was overbusied with sacks of Christmas mail.

The children stepped from the coaches with the crowd and stood in their midst . . . excited, exalted, expectant. Michael pranced to the edge of the platform and warbled "Merry Christmas" to anyone who came near. He was all alight with happiness.

THE FLAMINGO

Yvonne caught his hand and held him close to her as the crowd dispersed. She stood prim and serious. She shut her eyes quickly once, and when she opened them they glowed with child wonder.

"Here they come!" she cried gleefully.

"Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas!" Michael chanted. He jumped up and down and clapped his hands together.

"Sh," Jeffrey said, "and listen. Yvonne, do you hear? There're bells ringing. They're bright, tinkling bells, and they're coming closer. They're beautiful bells, laughing bells, little bells. Yvonne, listen, Michael . . . when I'm as old as the man with the peppermint canes I'll remember when I was little and heard sleigh bells one Christmas Eve."

Michael waved his little-boy hands high over his head and caroled, "They're coming . . . they're coming down the street . . . listen!"



YOU DID NOT KNOW

You passed this way not many days ago.
Since then,
A million restless feet have trod this stair.
I know them not, nor do I even care.
Their intricate paths of life are nothing.
Now as I hesitate upon this step,
Time fades to that instant
When you passed this way
And, deep in thought, unknowingly glanced at me
And smiled.

— Barbara Brauer.

INTEGRATION OF THE AMERICAS

By JANET HAAS

HIPS swaying sensually to the rhythm of the rhumba—slo-eyed senioritas languishing in the moonlight—dashing caballeros conquering maddened bulls—this is the kaleidoscopic impression the average citizen of the United States has of Latin America. To the minds of the vast majority, Latin Americans are continually taking siestas or strumming guitars. "Isn't Latin America romantic!" sigh aging blondes, soulfully gazing at a picture of a mounted gaucho. And "These hard, cold, North Americans!" mutter our neighbors to the south, viewing with disdain our clacking, grinding machines. Latin Americans think of us as a throng of noisy, mercenary individuals, who are ever rushing madly hither and yon, who have no capacity for deep emotion. Life in the United States, to Latin Americans, is one long succession of "slick chicks," juke boxes, and rattling, banging street cars. They think of us as materialistic, hard-boiled, shallow money-changers; we, on the other hand, scorn Latin Americans as impractical, idealistic, unbusinesslike children.

Naturally, both these viewpoints are based on insufficient information and ignorant prejudice. It goes without saying that one cannot generalize about Latin America, with its intensely interesting and individual countries, each with its own rich and meaningful national heritage; nor can one generalize about the United States with its cosmopolitan background. To the countries of the Americas have come men of all creeds, races and nationalities; and into the American melting-pot have gone the talents, ideologies, and personalities of all these. Rich and savory, the resultant concoction contains many and varied ingredients—it takes both the nutritious and the exotic to really satisfy. In our very dissimilarity, then, we have a common bond as nations whose fundamental natures are so differing—whose patterns are woven with such many-hued threads that there is no rubber stamp which can be applied to us all.

Considerable encouragement may be derived from the progress that has been made in Pan-American relations. The recent trend has been more adult, more intelligent, and more in keeping with the ideals for which we have prayed and labored, fought and died. Roughly speaking, Pan-American relations have passed through three stages—the big brother, the policeman, and the good neighbor. The big brother attitude was caused by the egotistical idea that we of the United States were the inventors of American-

ism, and that the other countries of the Western Hemisphere were merely obliging little sheep, tagging along in our footsteps. If we condescended to notice them at all, it was with a lofty pat on the head. The second phase, that of the policeman, was the most outrageous in the entire evolution of our policy. Pan-Americanism was having growing pains—pains which were wellnigh fatal. United States imperialism was at its height, going full steam ahead with no regard for the rights of the little nations which are rapidly becoming flattened out by the relentless roller of the "Big Stick" policy. The "Colossus of the North" controlled elections, suppressed uprisings of all sorts, sent marines to place a nation under martial law—and in general stifled the spirit of autonomy in the little countries.

The fire of resentment—dark, ugly coals of it—burned brightly in the hearts of all. Our behavior during that period has left a vivid impression upon Latin Americans, and many of them still feel that our motives are not those of friendship. We have done a great deal to deserve their distrust—Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, Mexico, the Canal Zone—have all received imperialistic treatment at the hands of the United States.

The Pan-American Conference at Montevideo in 1933 was of epochal significance in the progress of Inter-American harmony. It was there that Cordell Hull spoke for President Roosevelt and set forth the new Good Neighbor Policy, which said that "in the field of foreign policy, I would dedicate this nation to the policy of the good neighbor—one who respects his own rights, and, by doing so, respects the rights of others." From that time on, we have endeavored to pursue a "hands off" policy in the New World. Unfortunately, we have slipped from grace all too often, and Latin Americans are, on the whole, wary of their neighbor to the North. Certain nationalist elements in each country are pulling against too much influence from the United States, for fear that the individuality of these lands may be swallowed up in the huge maw of the industrialized United States.

The most outstanding case of reluctance to enter upon friendly agreements, or to assist by participation the program of Inter-American friendship is Argentina. Intensely jealous of her own prestige, she dislikes the idea of being inferior to any other in the Western Hemisphere. Unlike many other Latin American countries who complement the United States, and whom we complement, in produce, Argentina and the United States are constant competitors. For example, in the case of Brazil, we need

her tropical products, such as coffee and rubber; she needs our manufactured goods. On the other hand, the Argentine competes with the United States in the selling of beef, wheat, and corn to Europe. It is easy to see why there is no love lost between the two, since professional jealousy is one of the strongest of all motivating forces. Then, too, with her advanced civilization and modernity, Argentina has become the United States of South America—the only difference being in, perhaps, the degree of power and progress. Argentina does not wish to be overshadowed by us, and feels that a non-cooperative attitude will preserve her precious national individuality better than participation of a wholehearted nature, which would lead to her being but a carbon copy of us—to her playing Trilby to our Svengali. Argentina is taking the same stand on world policy as Britain, France, and the United States did at the outbreak of the war and still do, to a small degree. This stand is that no danger from Fascism is so great as the Communist menace. Since Argentina is a capitalist nation and still in the experimental stage, it is easy to see why her fear of Communism is so great. She is jealous of her new-found industrialization and will suffer none to subjugate her. Far from intending to share power with the United States, Argentina intends to supplant the United States in hemispheric influence.

No stone is being left unturned in the earnest endeavors of the United States to bring about hemispheric solidarity. Now, more than ever before, we need Inter-American understanding, in order to present a common front to the world. Geographically forced to band together, we are even more closely united in our faith in the common man. Each American nation has bled for its freedom—freedom from tyranny and suppression of the rights of man. The Americas exemplify for the rest of the world the shining ideal of democracy, and all eyes are turned toward us. In order to be worthy of this trust, we must understand one another and act together. If a whole is divided into twenty-one parts, each acting in a different direction, no progress toward a common goal can be made. If, however, these twenty-one parts unite to form an integrated whole, our goal of peace and democracy throughout the world can, and will, be reached. Realizing this, the United States has launched a program of Pan-Americanism which, by means of Pan-American Conferences, the office of the Co-ordinator of Inter-American Affairs, the Pan-American Union and many other media of understanding, is endeavoring to foster knowledge and appreciation among the nations who cling to the

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American ideal of freedom. Accentuated by the war and its demands upon economic self-sufficiency and political unity, our need for brotherhood among the American nations causes us to exert every effort to make of the American nations a united group which will set an example for world-wide union against the fiend—war.

And so—out of stringent need, determination is born—and through this determination may we learn to know one another. Then, in truth, we will be brothers in democracy, fitting at long last into the pattern for which we were created.

THE QUARREL

When I am hurt, I shall be wrong, and know that I am
wrong, and know

With each fierce hurt my heart cries out
I make one dear to me less dear.

When I know this, all this and yet,
Driven by momentary spite,
Let each word blindly, cruelly smart *him* more than
each before;

Knowing, not caring, that the morrow,
Sobbing, tearing at my pillow,
I will shriek from deep inside me
With each all-too-crystal mem'ry
Of each look, each mocking syllable,
Knowing this, not caring.

Give me soft words then, dear God,
A word that makes me *me* again,
And not a snarling, spitting monster
That is wounded and would wound.
Give me a smile then, then, dear God

When my brain is drunk with hate and, knowing this,
thirsts for more;

A smile, a glance to set me right.
He'll know that I am I again. *He'll* know and love
will reign.

Give me a soft word soon, dear God, or I'll not
love again.

— Muriel Fox.

TRIANGLE

By DANIEL PAONESSA

ERNEST DIDWAY surveyed his lathered face in the mirror. It was the face of a meek little man with greying hair, a rather large nose, and wide, almost babyish, blue eyes.

He studied the lathered face in the mirror. It wasn't such a bad face, he thought. He wished something could be done about the nose, although he had never received any complaints about it, except from Ethel. But then, Ethel had seen it for fifteen years. He wondered if she would miss him.

He dipped the razor into the water and drew it across his cheek in short, nervous strokes.

He had washed the soap from his face and was applying talc when he heard the honking of an auto horn. He peered out of the bathroom window just in time to see the skinny left leg of a woman disappear into a taxi. A hand reached out and slammed the door, and the taxi drove away.

Didway put his razor away carefully. Ethel shopping again, he thought. If she didn't miss him, she'd at least miss his money. He wondered if she was out shopping for another present for Steve . . . It was hard to have one's wife stolen by a man's best friend.

Didway, standing in front of the mirror, threw his head back and struck the pose of a martyr.

"I shan't stand in her way," he said, dramatically.

Ernest Didway went into the bedroom and sat down on one of the mahogany twin beds. He propped his chin up with the palm of his hand, looking and feeling miserable; for no matter how hard he tried to convince himself to the contrary, he still loved Ethel. His love for Ethel was like the devotion of a Pekinese pup to a Guernsey heifer.

He drew out a pack of cigarettes and lit one. He coughed and tears streamed down his newly-shaven cheeks as he tried to make smoke come out of his nose. He had been smoking for only two days now and then in the privacy of the bathroom, or his bedroom. Ethel disapproved of smoking, saying it was bad for one's health.

Didway puffed again, and this time with a little success. He was able to contain his coughing so it was hardly noticeable. He wanted to learn how to smoke so he could stroll along the street—Fifth Avenue—with a four-inch cigarette holder, like a sophisticate. He shut his eyes and he was in Cafe Society, a cigarette be-

tween his lips, a champagne cocktail before him, making passionate love to his companion—a beautiful blonde creature who looked like Alexis Smith and who—the elite whispered secretly—was his mistress.

He lit another cigarette from the half-inch butt, coughing slightly as he did so. He'd learn to smoke, by God. Steve smoked, and Ethel loved Steve. So Earnest Didway was going to learn to smoke, by God. There was something to it. He imagined smoking had some vague connection with sex appeal.

Steve was the last person he thought would try to steal Ethel from him. Steve, of all people! Steve, his buddy, his best friend, a guy he had been working in the same office with for seventeen years.

Didway crushed out his fifth cigarette and lay back on the bed. He was beginning to feel dizzy and slightly sick from so much smoking. The white light globe on the ceiling appeared to be slowly rotating counterclockwise, and whenever he turned his head a little, the chest of drawers in the corner would weave gracefully. It was rather disheartening to Didway to see the room behave like that, but he reached for the pack of cigarettes and grimly lit up another.

Didway wondered how long Ethel had been cheating on him. It might have been going on for years, he thought; luckily he had found out in time. He pulled out a slip of paper from his pocket and stared at it. It was only a bill from the jewelers, but Didway was sure it was going to change his life. The bill was sent to Ethel for merchandise sent to Steve. He wondered just what she sent to Steve — pen, tie-pin, watch, cuff-links, pen . . . Didway sighed; it didn't matter to him. He didn't care if Ethel sent Steve a platinum-plated bedpan. To hell with them both.

And he had pretended not to notice the phone calls Ethel had been getting the past week — and the way she would flush when the phone would ring. But they weren't putting anything over on him! Not Ernest Oscar Didway!

How anyone could want Ethel — that was what puzzled Didway most. Lord knows Steve was ugly, but his ugliness was nothing unusual. You saw people like Steve every day on the street. He had a homely, mutt-like face that you could get used to, perhaps even grow to like, if you were hard enough and not too particular. Certainly Steve could get something better than Ethel if he tried.

But Ethel — ah! Didway marveled at her singular ugliness

long before that day, over fifteen years ago, when she proposed to him. In all those years of living with her he couldn't get used to her. At night, when she would wiggle at her corsets and things before retiring, he would lay back in bed and stare at her, fascinated.

God molded bodies of women into various shapes and forms. Some were pear-shaped, some barrel-shaped, some were shaped like Coca-Cola bottles, and others like telegraph poles. But God must have been in a mean mood the day He modeled Ethel, and He must have destroyed the mold when He finished with her, for Ethel was a non-conformist; she was individualistic. She was carrot-shaped.

Ethel had the shoulders of a Notre Dame half-back, breasts the size of papayas, a ridiculously small waist, no fanny to speak of, and two bean-pole legs — each one dotted with door-knob knees. Her disposition was rather stormy. She was generally mad at Didway for something or other, and at the apex of her storms she was a great hand at throwing dishes, usually in the direction of Didway. But in spite of her shortcomings, Didway loved her. She was Ethel. She was his wife.

He heard a taxi drive up and stop in front of the house and Ethel booming at the taxi driver about the fare. Now's the time to tell her, he thought; get this thing straightened out once and for all. He stood up suddenly and grasped the bedpost to keep from falling. The room was spinning furiously now. He stuffed the cigarettes into his pocket, walked unsteadily along the hall and started down the stairs. His foot missed the second stair, and he felt himself half-falling, half-floating down the carpeted staircase.

Now he was sprawled flat on his face on the living-room floor, and Ethel was towering over him.

"Have you been drinking, Ernest?" Ethel boomed, glaring down on him.

He stood up hastily and started to brush the dust from his clothes. "Uh — no, m'dear, I — uh — slipped." He laughed weakly.

He clutched the banister and steadied himself. Now's the time to tell her, he thought. He coughed and cleared his throat. He could feel his face getting red.

"Ernest — " Ethel was opening her purse. " — today is your birthday — "

Didway was startled. So it was. He had forgotten all about it. But —

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" — So I bought you this last week." She handed him a small package. "I think you'll like it," she said, almost gently, "I had that man down to your office help me pick it out and keep it for me."

He unwrapped the tiny package and opened the leather case — it contained. A gold pocket watch gleamed up at him.

"Gee, Ethel," he said. He examined it. On the back there was an inscription: *To Ernest Didway from Ethel Latrina Didway, 1944.* "Gee," he repeated.

"Now maybe you'll get home from work on time," Ethel snapped and strode from the room.

Didway stood motionless for several minutes. Then he chucked the half-empty cigarette pack into the waste basket.

"I never wanted to smoke anyway," he said to himself.

GARDENIA

Creamy, smooth deceiver,
Framing your charms
In waxy green leaves . . .
Creamy petals inviting
The touch of a seeking,
Caressing hand,
And then, shrieking as a coy maiden,
Revealing the deception
In brown bruises
Marring your delicate flesh.

— *Patience Thompson.*

AS FROM THE DRAGON'S TEETH

Senascent night pales into weak, gray dawn.
Stars blot out behind the hazy sunshine,
Not fading slowly, but suddenly vanishing,
As if a malignant breath
Had seared their lives away.
For a moment all is dead and motionless,
Hung in space:
Then, springing triumphant, the new-born day
Stands erect and fully armed,
As the warriors stood —
Transformed from nothing into life.

— *Patience Thompson.*

MIRACLES

We faithless men cry out for miracles
Before we would admit that there is God;
And yet we know a miracle each moment;
I know I do;
Whether I breathe the song of blossoms
singing their love for life and me,
Or feel the steps of my home squeaking beneath
my feet,
Or search *his* eyes and see there what is
blazing in my own,
Or wash a baby,
Or dry his tear,
Or count his outcry, motion, breath,
And know that these were none a year ago;
Or walk exalted, washed by splashing rain,
And know each drop has kissed no face
but mine,
Or know the happiness of shedding tears,
Or hear the ocean's fearless cadence
And wonder how many waves, or drops, or sounds
The boundless mass of boundless sea contains,
And learn to know what Fate is from the
inevitable tides,
Or taste my mother's mellow kiss,
And know that she was young and I shall
soon be old,
Or hear a wrinkled darky singing low
A song that brings him nearer God than I
shall ever be,
Or see the subtle quiver of a leaf caressed by
breeze,
Or hear a robin, or a 'cello, or the subway's
unabashed roar,
Or smile with the laughter of a lad and
lass in love, and remember and anticipate,
Or smell the spring, or a worker's sweat,
or an antiseptic sick room,
Or sing around a campfire, dreamy, warm,
Or salute my flag, or pray in chapel,
Or know the winter's cold and feel the
summer's heat, and complain about both.
Oh, these are miracles, exalted miracles,
And the greatest of all — Life.

— *Muriel Fox.*

