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Flamingo

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Flamingo

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EDITORIAL

To the members of the staff, the editors, Dr. Starr, the
printer, and the readers:

MANY THANKS!

—Z. V. W.



MITCHELL

A Short Story by
JAMES McMENEMY

WE moved to Connecticut right after my grandmother died in 1935. She owned a bungalow in Stamford, one of the wealthy little cities dotting the shore of the Long Island Sound. The house was a typical old-fashioned New England frame building situated in a very snooty district known as Shippan Point. It didn't take us long to get settled in our new surroundings. I had come up several times to visit grandmother and had met most of the kids before. Billy Murray, the boy across the street, took charge of me. I met all the gang and soon fell into the lazy summer existence that most youngsters enjoyed in those days. In the mornings I would help mother around the house, cleaning up the yard or mowing the lawn. After lunch, Billy would come over and we would go down to the beach at the end of the point.

I remember the first afternoon that I went to the beach. It was a very warm day and by the time Billy and I had arrived, everyone had already gone in. We ran down to the water and tumbled into the heaving surf. The water was very cold and I could feel the goose bumps standing at rigid attention on my skin. It was only a matter of minutes before I decided to get out.

"Hey, where are you going?" It was Billy.

"I'm freezin'. I think I'll get out."

"Say," one of the boys broke in, "has Jack seen Mitchell yet?"

"Who's Mitchell?" I asked.

"Oh, he's the hunchback that delivers papers down here. Lives in a garage down the street from my house. He comes around every afternoon about five. Want to see him? He can't talk." He eyed me eagerly.

"You bet," I said. I was tingling with excitement. I had never seen a real hunchback before.

"Okay, it's almost time for Mitchell to come around. Let's go," he said, sloshing through the water. "I'll race you to the towels."

Twenty minutes later found the two of us hiding behind a small clump of bushes on our corner. I was shivering partially from apprehension and partially from the cool easterly wind playing on my wet bathing suit.

"It's best to stay back here," Billy said.

"Why?"

"Because . . . well, my dad says to keep away from him. The other day, I hit him square on the hump of his back with a rock. Boy, was I scared when he turned around and waved his fist at me."

"Has he ever caught you?" I asked nervously and then continued without waiting for an answer. "What will he do?"

"I don't know, but I wouldn't like to have him catch up with me, that's for sure. Shut up. Here he comes now."

I held my breath and peered through the bushes. Approaching on the opposite side of the street was the ugliest creature I had ever seen. He was dressed in an ill-fitting pair of brown pants that were open at the knees. Held together by a ragged brown tie was the filthiest white shirt. His back was enormous, dwarfing the rest of his stooped frame. His head was small, covered by a reddish mop of uncombed hair hanging over one of his narrow, oyster-like eyes. His nose was running and the drippings clung to an unshaven growth that covered his chin. As he limped down the street his head rocked slowly back and forth in time with his peculiar, shuffling gait. Under one arm hung a cluster of newspapers, while the other fell apelike almost to the ground.

"I don't want to look at him any more," I mumbled.

"What's the matter, scardie cat? Think he'll bite you? Watch this." With this, Billy picked up a loose

rock and hurled it straight for Mitchell who was trudging up the street. I watched tensely as it curled towards him and then fell harmlessly behind him. Billy reached for another and I grabbed his arm.

"Don't do that."

"Why not?" he sneered back at me. "He can't catch us. Oh, well. Okay, let's go over to my house and get something to eat. My mom said she was cooking some fudge this afternoon."

A few nights later, I was helping mother with the dishes when the door bell rang. Dad went to the door and we heard voices in the living room.

"Ann, Mr. Murray is here. Will you come in a moment?"

Mother wiped the soap off of her hands, told me to finish the dishes, and went out of the kitchen. There wasn't much left to do and I soon had everything put away on the shelves. I turned the light out in the kitchen and made my way down the hall. As I got to the stairs, I heard Mr. Murray say something about Mitchell. I stopped and listened as he went on.

"... you can tell by only being here for a month that this is a highly-restricted residential district, Mr. Smith. It's a fine neighborhood and we want to keep it that way. Last night at the Shippan Point Association meeting the subject of this loathsome creature came up for the third time since Mitchell moved into the Smathers garage. We've drawn up a petition for every member of the point to sign. At the next Town Council meeting we hope to have action against Mitchell. I tell you the man is a menace to our homes and to our children."

"Has he ever harmed anyone, Mr. Murray?" my mother asked softly.

"No, not physically. But mentally he has caused undue strain to the parents of the point. Even the children are frightened. Billy comes home with lurid tales about being chased by Mitchell. The poor wretch must be put away for his own benefit as well as ours. We're going to go to any extreme to see that he leaves—and soon."

Just then my father called me. I waited for a moment and then pushed the door open. As I went in he asked:

"Son, have you ever seen this hunchback, Mitchell?"

I said that I had.

"What does he look like?"

I thought back to the other day and blurted, "Oh, Dad, he's awful looking." I could see Mr. Murray smiling from his chair.

"Are you afraid of him, son?"

"I don't know, Dad. Maybe."

"You see," Mr. Murray interjected, "they're all afraid of him. The boy just doesn't want to admit it. My son is the same way."

My face flushed because it was true and it made me mad. I turned and ran up the stairs, stopping halfway. I heard Dad go to his desk for his pen and I knew he was going to sign Mr. Murray's paper.

It was late in the afternoon about two weeks later when it all happened. Billy and I had gone down to the rocks which were clustered on the end of the point. It was great fun to play down there, but dangerous if the tide came in too high and left you stranded. We had gone out a little too far and were so engrossed in looking for starfish and crabs that we didn't notice the weather about us. The sun had become obscured by dark grey storm clouds that had slipped in with quiet tread. The tide was moving about us, stirring uneasily against the rocks. As we searched, the spray of an incoming wave drenched us to the skin. We turned to go back, only to see that the tide had completely cut us off from the mainland. The mounting wind had pushed the angry clouds overhead as we looked hopelessly at each other, powerless to call for help above the roar of the tide. The rain and spray cooled the hot tears that were tracking down my florid face. The water was now over our heads and we remembered only too well the stories of the tricky tide waters running through these rocks. I slipped down to the leeward side and began to sob as the icy waters rushed over my legs. My hands tried to grip the side of the slimy seaweed-covered boulder and I began calling for my mother hysterically, only to have my words swallowed up by the noise of the sea and the wind. It was then that I saw Mitchell. He was taller than we, and his head was visible as he struggled with the darkened waters, trying to reach us. I was crying his name out over and over while he fought with the turbulent swells pitching against him. I can't remember how long I lay

there, perhaps only a minute, when a huge hand lifted me clumsily into the air. The water still wasn't over his head as we started back, rocking crazily through the water. As I watched the waters swirl by me I became sick and the last thing I can remember was retching miserably into the sea.

When I awoke I was lying on the floor of a room illuminated by one small bulb hanging from the ceiling. My stomach felt funny and my throat was sore from crying so hard. I knew that I was not at home but I began calling for my mother. Surely she would be there to help me. Outside the wind was dancing with the shingles accompanied by the music of the rain crashing relentlessly against the roof. I turned my head and noticed Billy lying face down in a small puddle of water that had dripped from his clothes. Where were my mother and father? Why hadn't they come when I called. I called out louder this time and my voice rattled around the dismal room. I sat up as the door opened revealing Mitchell, his grotesque form partially visible in the semidarkness. As I saw him there I knew I was no longer afraid of him, for he had saved my life. He shuffled forward until he stood towering over me. For a time he just stood there eyeing me and then he reached down and began patting my head like anyone patting his dog. The rain continued as his rough hand roamed aimlessly through my soggy hair. Suddenly, the door flew open and the men came in. Mitchell turned and saw the angry group milling into the room, their clothes dripping with rain.

"You're right, Al." It was the tall man in front. I stood up and backed, speechless, into the corner.

"It's Mitchell, all right," cried another. "He took them down here thinking we wouldn't suspect him because of the storm. Get Smith and Murray and tell them that their kids are here safe and sound." One of the men turned and hurried out of the room. Another busied himself with Billy, who was still lying unconscious on the floor.

"What have you got to say for yourself, Mitchell?"

The hunchback just stood there, his swollen eyes wandering from the men to the floor and back again. His arms hung limply almost to the floor and he looked like some great caged animal.

"He can't talk, Ed. He's dumb."

"Pretty damn dumb, if you ask me. I met one of these kinda guys in a bar once. It makes me sick to even think about it."

I didn't know what they were talking about, but just then my father and Mr. Murray rushed in and for a few minutes I didn't hear anything that was said. Then one of the men said that this was the chance they had all been waiting for. Now they could get rid of Mitchell.

"You can't!" I cried. "He didn't hurt us. He saved us from the rocks."

"Look, men," the tall man said. "The hunchback is obviously a fairy. We've got an air-tight case against him. There's nothing more to say."

All the men chimed in agreement. Mitchell just stood there breathing heavily. His eyes were welling up with tears and his giant frame was shaking as they spoke. As they started to take him away he turned back and tried to smile, a smile of understanding, I felt, but all that came out was a horrible, toothy, slobbering grimace. The men shoved him through the door and my father said:

"Come on, son, let's go home. Here, put this blanket around you. You've had a pretty tough night."

NIGHT WIND

Clouds rise to meet the setting moon and break
In silent waves against the watered light.
A midnight wind distorts the quiet lake
And mars the mirrored strength of constant stars.

—J. F. Leonard

STUDENT

F O R U M

Questions:

**Whom are you
voting for in 1948 ?
Why ?**

Discussed By:

**Jan Chambers,
Jane Freeman,
Jim Wray, and
Jack Sayers**

I want, as next President of the United States, the Honorable Arthur Vandenburg, senior senator from Michigan. In my estimation Senator Vandenburg is one of the few men in our government today with a sufficiently enlightened outlook on national and international affairs to serve us as President. His service in Europe as advisor to Secretary of State Byrnes, and his service as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, prove his ability and his desire to cut across party lines in an effort to serve the people of the United States. His long service and experience in the Senate, his knowledge of European (especially Russian) diplomacy, and his sincere desire to affect the kind of peace I want demands my support of his candidacy.

Jack T. Sayers

I am carrying the banner for Dwight Eisenhower for President on the Democratic ticket. I believe he is the only man strong enough to unite both the Democratic party and the United States as a whole. As a military man it has been necessary for him to make quick and accurate decisions, to understand a situation correctly and to make true judgments of people and their character. It has been necessary for him to look at things with a long-range view and not for the immediate and momentary value. Eisenhower is firm and strong, fully capable of dealing with the powerful and wily leaders of other countries. All of these abilities will enable him to meet the crisis that is inevitably coming with experience and understanding.

Jan Chambers

Henry Wallace offers the only program with which I can agree. He calls for construction of 5,000,000 low-cost homes; the equivalent of a college or technical education for all, with federal aid where necessary; tax relief for the low income brackets; national health insurance; action to curb inflation; repeal of the Taft-Hartley Law; and positive action to secure and guarantee civil rights to all citizens.

Last and most important, Henry Wallace is for a reversal of the present unilateral foreign policy and a return to the United Nations. He believes we should help the Greek people get back on their feet instead of helping the Greek king keep them flat on their backs. He believes that the test for our giving food is an empty stomach, not the color of a political opinion.

I believe Mr. Wallace's program is the only one offered by a presidential candidate that will lead to prosperity at home and peace in the world.

Jim Wray

The fact that Stassen is experienced and ably qualified to promote good government, good labor relations, and world peace makes him best qualified for presidential office.

During the San Francisco United Nations conference the world correspondents voted Stassen one of the two outstanding men of the conference. Stassen worked with Eden, Atlee, Molotov, and Gromyko during this conference, and, recently, in a post-war tour of Europe, talked with Stalin.

As governor of Minnesota Stassen made peace between labor and industry, reducing the number of strikes seventy per cent. He cut the public payroll one-third with increased efficiency, put business sense into government, and appointed capable executives.

Jane Freeman

THE NEBULAE

It was a strange sight, this,
Rather like a pagan festival,
Or an old fairy tale come alive.
Around the room were groups of
Maidens. Nebulous maidens, these,
For tomorrow they would be born.
But now they stood in groups,
Murmuring, as they would murmur
In another world, another time.
There was an agelessness about them,
As a mist.
And suddenly they were silent:
God had entered.

He smiled at them and called
Them one by one before Him.
As each passed by, He gave to her
A trait, until they all seemed gone.
He sighed then; He was tired.
But still another maiden
Came before Him.

"Sir!" She cried, "You have given
Happiness to no one.
May I not be happy?"

"I can give happiness
To no one. Only the tools
By which it may be built.
To you I shall give
Understanding."

The maiden winced.
"Dear Father, I meant not to
Wound you so deeply. Pray, make
My punishment less severe.
If I must walk on earth
Among my fellow men,
Let me walk with them,
Side by side. Not set apart
By knowing all their fears.
Let me love one, not all.
Let me discover, one by one,
That all your truths are truths.
Put me not upon the earth,
Knowing what is good, and what is right.
For if I know these things, I
Shall be scorned, and I shall not
Despise those who scorn me.
I shall understand the
Fear they have of someone who
Is sure. Pray, father,
Let some other trait be mine . . ."
She stopped. Her face was pale,
Yet she smiled.
"Already it has begun."
And God said, "Yes,
You understand."

—Mary Malta Peters.

POME

Our mankind is just like a discomfited kitten
That has chased its own tail,
and has won—
and has *bitten!*

—Jack Teagarden



NIGHT SHADE

A Short Story by

JESS GREGG

FURTIVE as a ghost, she crept through the dark rooms. The shadows cringed back from the light of her candle, disclosing each article in its usual place, yet she felt no reassurance. Although she had examined her silver and jewelry, even counted the money hidden behind the portrait, other things of value had not yet been checked, and foreboding, dense and illusive as mist, still haunted her.

Silent, save for the whisper of her silk robe, she unlocked her desk and bent over the contents of each drawer. At last, with growing confidence, she touched a secret spring, slid open a little panel and reached inside. A gasp caught in the stricture of her throat. Trembling, she held the candlestick nearer and peered into the shallow compartment. It was empty.

For a moment, she crouched there, frozen. Then, freed by the heat of her fury, she ran to the stairway and glanced up. The door at the top landing betrayed a sliver of light. So violent was the drumming of her heart, she scarcely had the strength to ascend. Cautiously, she pushed against the door. It was locked. She rapped upon the panel, urgently.

"Let me in, at once," she ordered. "I've got to see you."

There was only a snicker in reply. Threatening, entreating, she pounded on the door with such violence the wax rained from the pewter candlestick. Abruptly, the key ground in the lock and the door began to open.

Suddenly, she awoke.

With the wild surge of energy her dream had so uselessly summoned, she wrenched herself upright in bed, crying aloud. Then, to her dismay, there was a stumbling in the hall, and her maid, Mattie, anxiously peered in.

"What is it, Miss Fenn?" she gasped. "That dream again?"

Helen bit her lip. "No." Possessively, she added, "I don't have that dream any more. It was nothing. Go back to bed, Mattie."

When she was alone again, Helen huddled down in bed, waiting for sleep; but, like a fickle woman, it remained distant when courted. Impatiently, she stared into the darkness, trying to induce the familiar aspects of the dream.

"I was knocking at the door," she whispered. "The key was turning in the lock. This time I must get into that room—"

The promise of felicitous weather had drawn Helen to Hampton, but it was the Herrick house that held her there. Because the health resort had been crowded, she had decided to take a house for the season; but available houses were few and none met her fancy. Fretfully, she had been ready to give up, when the agent, taking a desperate chance, had brought her to the old Herrick place.

It was an unlikely haven for a young woman suffering from shock. Ornate, ponderous, the house had gained nothing with age, neither beauty nor distinction. For years before Mrs. Herrick's death, the house had been closed up. Shutters had long hung on their hinges, unheard, and the tall grass, pulsing in the breeze as if breathing, was the last illusion of life here.

"It isn't for rent," the agent had apologized. "We're trying to dispose of Mrs. Herrick's estate, so the house is only for sale. However, the price is very low—"

Almost indignantly, Helen had refused. Yet, as she had walked away, she felt compelled to turn and look again at the house. All that night its memory plagued her, and the next day she was drawn back, again to inspect the premises. Each dark room, crowded with bulky shapes beneath dust sheets, was like a shadow world inhabited by the ghosts of old furniture. Mattie had not been wrong in terming the place gloomy; but Helen's yet unsheathed sensitivity seemed to recognize some affinity between herself and the house.

"It's empty, except for shadow. So am I," she told Mattie in a wan attempt at humor. "Maybe the responsibility of bringing this house back to its old self will help bring me back to my old self." Despite the maid's protest, Helen's determination to have the house grew with each visit. And, finally, she bought it.

At first, the rigors of redecoration seemed to rouse Helen. The old furniture had to be sold and replaced, the walls repapered, the fireplaces unbricked, the gardens planted anew, until, at last, the place began to function again. Yet when Helen moved in she once more sank into apathy, as if the house were preying on her for its life. It was then that the dream first began to recur.

"Doctor, I took it on myself to call you," Mattie told the lean young man. "She's acting strange. Still brooding over that auto accident, I expect. She don't eat, and when she tries to sleep she dreams bad. And she hears noises, even the trolley, a whole mile away. All day she just lies there, staring at nothing, or maybe crying."

"That's not unusual with concussion," the doctor replied, briskly. He was still new in his profession, Earl Faber, and his apprenticeship had made him impersonal as a scalpel. For all his training, he was less dispassionate when ushered into Helen's presence. Beneath the dark wing of her hair, her skin, almost transparently pale, adhered tightly to the miraculous austerity of her bone structure. As if her fragility shamed him, he sought to hide his hardness; yet, too intense was his pressure when he took her pulse, his fingers registered only the strong throb of his own blood.

She answered his questions mechanically. Yes, her name was Helen Fenn. Her age, twenty-five, unmarried. No, there was no pain, although colors, vibrations and sounds plagued her, gave her headaches—.

"That'll clear up," he pledged. "We'll soon have you well again."

"It makes no difference to me," she said. "I have nothing to live for."

As he left that afternoon, Faber gripped Mattie's hand earnestly. "We've got to get her mind off that accident," he said. "We've got to give her a new direction, a new interest—and we're going to do it!"

After that, he dropped by the old Herrick house every day, laden with puzzles, games, novels, books on hobbies. Helen, acutely perceptive to all undercurrents, was well aware that his visits exceeded mere professional duty. She did not resent his intrusion into her melancholy; indeed, she came to anticipate his appearance each day. But for the hobbies he prescribed, she could contrive no enthusiasm whatsoever.

"Does nothing interest you?" he begged, at last.

"Some things," she said, thoughtfully. "Dreams interest me. One dream, anyway." At his prompting, she tried to describe it, but so delicate, so intangible was its substance, the memory dimmed before her words could give it body.

"Forget it," he advised, when she had failed, again and again, to concretely describe the dream. "I'd rather have you concentrate on healthier things anyway. This interest in dreams is just sidestepping reality. It's living again, the real things, that I want you to face."

"Where are the real things?" she scoffed. "Can you put your hands on vigor? Can you taste excitement? Can you smell exhilaration? Those are real things, but I can't find them in what you call reality. But in my dream—it's a whole new world. I feel alive there—."

Yet, to please him, she promised to forget about the dream. In the long, barren wastes of the day, however, when he was not there to distract her, memories of the accident would hound her, and she would seek refuge in thoughts about the dream. Or even unbidden, her mind would take this turn, and hours later, aching from passionate concentration, she would suddenly realize how she had trespassed in the forbidden territory. At last, in secret, she gave herself over, entirely, to pursuit of the dream.

It was all so familiar, yet so nebulous. Dredge her memory as she might, she could never quite bring the dream to the surface. Only one detail survived wakefulness: a desk, dark-hued and elaborately carved, stocked with papers which she would intently sort. She had only to envisage this to sense, if fleetingly, that same vigorous release she enjoyed in the dream. To sustain this exhilaration, she tried sketching the desk, and, although she carefully hid each copy, Mattie happened to find one.

"Give me that!" Helen cried, interrupting the maid's scrutiny.

"Didn't know you was given to drawing, Miss Fenn," Mattie said, handing back the picture. "Did it all from memory, didn't you?"

"What do you mean, from memory?" Helen gasped, guiltily.

"That desk. It was in the parlor when we first moved in here."

"Nonsense," Helen said, impatiently. "I've never even seen this desk. I just—dreamed it up."

"It's the same desk, all right," Mattie insisted. "You'd have remembered, if you'd thought you was going to have to dust all that carved stuff. Was I glad when you sold it to that antique lady." She nodded her head. "Oh, I'd know that desk anywheres."

There had been a desk in the parlor, but Helen refused to believe the desk she dreamed of could be patterned after anything so mundane. Yet, plagued by Mattie's accusation, she finally sought out the antique dealer who had bought the old furniture. Miss Cutter's was a cluttered little shop where the unselect residue of yesterday was sold for tomorrow's prices.

"I want to see a desk!"

The fierceness of her voice whirled the proprietress around like a weathervane in a wind.

"I have some quaint things in pickled oak," Miss Cutter said, with mercantile coquetry. She was a dumpy little creature with dust on her nose and face powder on her shoulders.

"Mine is mahogany!" Then Helen saw it, half-submerged into the shadows. For a moment, the mood of her dream so overwhelmed her, it was only with enormous effort that she managed to point her finger. "That desk."

"A lovely piece," crooned Miss Cutter. Helen watched jealously as the antique dealer sidled up the desk. "And like many antiques, it has a weensy secret." Deftly, she pressed the panel work and revealed a small compartment. She glanced up at Helen, but rather than the delight she anticipated, the young woman seemed to have expected this. "I have other desks—" she bid, anxiously.

"No," said the girl. "I must have this desk. And at once!"

There was a satisfaction in just having the desk near her. Only with effort did she relinquish polishing and arranging it, to go to bed. At dawn, when she was torn from her sleep, she crouched in concentration, trying to capture the dream before it faded. This time the desk had appeared clearer than ever; but there was something more. She seemed to recall birds. Yellow birds against a russet sky. She pondered this, for a time, before remembering.

Hastening down to the parlor, she ran her trembling hands over the new green-striped wallpaper. Only when she reached the base did she find a place where the border was loosely joined. After saturating this with hot water, she peeled the new paper from the walls until her fingernails ached. When Mattie came downstairs at seven that morning she found the parlor littered with shreds, and Helen gazing transfixed at the design of yellow birds on the old russet wallpaper.

"I hear you've been a bad girl," Faber teased, that night.

"Earl," she said, "remember how well I was when I decorated the place before? Well, I've decided to do over the whole house again." With a burning enthusiasm he had not before seen in her, Helen clasped his hand. "Please say you'll let me. I'm sure strong enough now."

Her face was flushed; her eyes, brilliant. Even had he thought her plan unwise, he was so shaken by her beauty, he would have given in. But, had he disapproved, Helen would still have gone ahead. This was something she had to do. It was all so plain to her now. Each fragment fitted into place. The house in which she dreamed she wandered was her own house—but furnished as when she had first seen it. Perhaps, she thought, if the house were equipped again, as it was in the dream, that splendid sense of release could be permanently evoked. Driven by this desire, she hastened to the antique shop the following morning.

"I sold you the furniture from the Herrick house recently," she told Miss Cutter. "I want it all back." The antique dealer's surprise demanded an explanation, and hastily Helen lied: "The former owner was my—my aunt, and—I want to keep her memory alive by having the house just as she had it—"

"Madge Herrick was your aunt?" Miss Cutter peered into the young woman's face. "Why I didn't know she left a single relative. Unless Ed's still alive."

"Ed?" Helen said. "I wouldn't know."

"Probably not," Miss Cutter sighed. "All that was before your time. Thirty years ago that he left her." Though still staring at Helen, her eyes were fixed on the past. "Madge and I were girls together, you know. And

we all warned her what sort Ed Herrick was, but she would marry him—”

“About the furniture,” the girl interrupted.

“Yes, the furniture,” Miss Cutter said. “A lovely collection. It’s just a wonder Ed didn’t show up and claim the house and everything in it when Madge died. Because he bled her for everything else. But he never came back, did he? Oh, when I think of her waiting for him, year in, year out, passing up other chances—but I guess she loved Ed to the end. Poor Madge.” She jabbed at her untidy coiffure. “But about the furniture—”

“Is all of it here?” Helen demanded.

“I’m afraid I sold some of it,” the dealer apologized.

“Buy it back,” dictated Helen. “I want every stick of it. I don’t care when it costs, but *I’ve got to have it all back!*”

Even in September, when the town began to empty, Helen could not tear herself away. Day by day, the house grew nearer its dream appearance. The heavy plush drapes, the tiers of pictures on the walls, the incoherent clutter of furniture—these things which Helen had once been eager to dispose of, she now welcomed back. To exactly duplicate her dream she carried out each new detail as it unfolded to her in sleep. She hid an envelope of money behind a portrait in the parlor; she had her seamstress fashion a dark robe, spilling with lace, such as she wore in the dream; to perpetuate the feeling of night, the windows were always shuttered. And in the hall, by the front door, she placed a leather suitcase. Hour after hour, she wandered peacefully through the house, re-enacting as much of the dream as she could recall. Gradually, she could scarcely distinguish between her sleeping and waking hours. Reality became dreamlike, and the dream became reality.

This illusion was betrayed by several things, the worst of which was Mattie. Time and again, Helen was dragged back to actuality by the housekeeper’s concern with menus, laundry lists and bills; or, in the midst of her charade, Helen would whip around to find Mattie watching in astonishment. She was fond of the old woman. Mattie had cared for her, been her only friend, in the dark days after the accident. But Helen had no choice now. If she was to pursue her diversion successfully, Mattie would have to go.

"I ain't going to leave you, Miss Fenn," the maid said, staunchly, upon receiving notice. "You ain't well yet. Something's—come over you. Your voice is different; you walk different. You're like someone else, and it—scares me. Until you're yourself again, someone's got to take care of you."

Helen thought quickly. "Someone is going to take care of me, Mattie," she bluffed. "Surely you don't think the doctor comes here every day because of my health. I'm going to close up this house and marry him." Fondly, firmly, she pressed an envelope into the maid's hand. "This can never repay all you've done for me, my dearest friend."

Eventually, she heard the front door close, and from her window Helen triumphantly watched Mattie, laden with suitcase and laundry bag, trudge beyond the shadow of the Herrick house, out into the brightness of the street.

It was less easy to deal with Earl Faber. Helen found him warm, appealing, and although he was anachronistic to her dream world, she was reluctant to banish him entirely. Yet, while it comforted her to know she was loved, she tried to forestall his declaration. In this, she was no more successful than King Canute commanding back the tide. Earl's every glance was an encroachment upon her isolation.

"Why did you let Mattie go?" he asked that night. Helen glanced at him guiltily, and knew that the maid had included him in her farewells before leaving town.

"She wanted to go," said Helen. "Besides, I don't need help now. "I'm well, aren't I?"

"You've improved."

"Really, I don't need your care any longer, do I?" Something compelled her to say this.

"Mattie led me to believe I was going to make a career of caring for you, Helen," he said. "I expect you know I love you very much." He quieted her restless hands. "You can't be very happy rattling around this gloomy old house. Why not rattle around my gloomy little apartment, instead? Having you there would make it seem very bright." Her conflict distorted her face, and she turned it from him. "Don't shut me out, Helen," he begged. "You've closed yourself up with the past—imprisoned yourself. Are you going to forfeit every chance of happiness just to keep some shadows company?"

"What shadows?" she whispered.

"The automobile accident. Your grief—"

"Oh—that!" She breathed easily again.

"I told you once to face things as they are," he continued. "Let me face them with you, Helen. When you need strength, borrow mine. And there will be many times when I'll need your strength. Couldn't you look forward to the future with me, rather than living in the past, alone?"

It all seemed so right while he spoke, so inevitable while he held her. Impetuously, she lifted her face to him. When at last her lips were again free to speak, she could find no words.

"You don't have to answer me until you wish," he said, tenderly. "But think about it, Helen."

She could think of little else as she lay in bed that night. Her elation, as she phrased and rephrased her acceptance, countermanded fatigue. Yet, towards dawn, so subtle was the summons of sleep that, without knowing it, she crossed the devious boundary.

Once more she searched the desk; once more she crept up the midnight stairs, pounded and entreated at the locked door. When, at last, it swung clear open and she was able, for the first time, to look inside the room, she awoke. With a cry of frustration, she ran down the corridor and wrenched open the door at the head of the stairs. The chamber was dark, empty. "But I nearly learned what was here, in the dream," she whispered feverishly. "I've got to find out what it is—I've got to! Nothing must stop me—"

When Faber called the following morning, he found a note from Helen slipped under the heavy front door, asking him not to come again. She did not answer the bell, nor later, did she respond to his ardent letters. This withdrawal was not easy for Helen. Although her bondage to her phantom world was stronger than love, she could not see Earl's letters without pain. As if locking away part of herself, Helen hid them in the secret compartment of her desk.

She was alone in the house, at last. Having obeyed this command of her obsession, she now waited in joyful expectation for the dream to develop, to unfold its promise, the secret of the locked room. But there was no such reward. Instead, each night, the dream kept repeating and

intensifying the same inconclusive incident. No longer did it fill her with vigor and a sense of release; rather, her slumber became tinged with some intangible terror. From this, there was no respite, for she could no longer tell where reality ended and the dream began. Possessed, worn down by this hounding, she cringed behind the locked doors of the house, waiting, waiting—

It was already evening again when the sharp clangor of the bell sounded. Helen wheeled around as though trapped. A hundred times a day she imagined she heard someone at the door, and as many times she furtively peered through a chink in the shutter. This time, someone was actually there.

"Who is it?" she demanded, fearfully.

"I—Miss Cutter."

Warily, Helen withdrew the bolt, unlocked the door and inched it open. "What do you want?" she whispered, brandishing the lamp.

Miss Cutter gaped at her, then, bleating feebly, sagged against the door. Quickly, Helen helped her inside.

"What's the matter?" she cried.

"Nothing." Trembling, the antique dealer searched Helen's face. "I made a mistake. In the dark, with your hair that way, and—that black robe, you looked like—" She sank into a chair. "I thought you were someone else."

"What do you want here?" the girl asked, suspiciously.

"I—came across something else from the Herrick house," Miss Cutter said, with effort. "It isn't much, but you kept saying you wanted everything back. This was bent, oh, quite badly, so I had it fixed—"

Helen unwrapped the brown paper and held up a heavy pewter candlestick. Something stirred in her memory. She had seen this before. Each night, in her dream, she carried it. Her lips tightened. She felt no joy in the possession, but rather a kind of dread. Each new acquisition to the house had always furthered the dream in some way. Perhaps on this candlestick hinged the dark denouement. The terror that had welled in her for weeks seemed to ooze in moisture from every pore in her body. Possibly the next time she slept, she would learn what lay behind that locked door. She would know what she had been striving to know, when instead, she realized, she should have been fleeing from the secret, locking doors to protect herself from it.

"Well—I'll be going," Miss Cutter said, edging toward the door.

"Going?" Helen said, stupidly. Suddenly, she thrust the candlestick from her as though it were some evil talisman. "Don't go," she said, trying to smile. "Couldn't you stay awhile? Perhaps you could spend the night here—?"

"No, no," Miss Cutter shuddered. "I must be on my way."

"Please," Helen begged. "You must stay. I can't be alone here any more." She barred the dealer's way. "Please, please—"

"You let me out of here!" Miss Cutter gasped. In panic, she pushed Helen aside and rushed out into the darkness.

Uneasily, Helen locked and bolted the door, and then, irresistibly, her eyes turned to the pewter candlestick. "I've got to get away," she said. The echo of her own voice gave her courage, and she cried to the dark house, "I'll sell you, do you hear? I'll close you up, go away; I'll—" And then she knew the solution. She would go to Earl. Only with him was there safety.

She ran all the way to Faber's office, but it was closed for the night so she hastened to his apartment. He was not there, either, nor did he return in the hour she waited. Finally, she shoved a note under his door, bidding him to come to her at once. Then she made her way back to the Herrick house.

The knowledge that Earl would soon be there heartened Helen, but although she was weary, she would not lie down. "I will not sleep," she told herself. "I shall not sleep in this house again." The slow tick of the clock measured her stride as she paced back and forth in the parlor, battling exhaustion. Coffee, rather than stimulating her, merely warmed her chilled body, inducing drowsiness. "But Earl will come. I'll wait up for Earl." She repeated these words until they became a meaningless chant that lulled her. She sank down on the couch by the window and peered out into the night, determined to watch for him. That was the last thing she remembered. Weighed down by fatigue, she submerged into the dark depths of slumber.

It was not the lights flashing in her eyes nor the sounds in the house that eventually aroused her; it was the realization that she had left the front door unbolted. Fumbling her way through the darkness, her foot struck something. Kneeling, she ran her hands over it. Then, after lighting a candle in the pewter holder, she investigated more closely. It was a leather suitcase stamped with initials she knew and dreaded. He had come back!

He had come back after all these years, as she had feared he might. Abruptly, she remembered the lights and sounds which had dimly pierced her slumber. While she had slept, he had been prying into her things. Of course he had! He hadn't come back for nothing. But for what?

Furtive as a ghost, she crept through the dark rooms, holding high her candlestick. Apprehensively, she checked the silver, examined her jewelry, even counted the money hidden behind the portrait; but nothing was missing. Silent, save for the whisper of her black silk robe, she unlocked her desk and bent over the contents of each drawer. At last, with growing confidence, she slid open the secret compartment. A gasp caught in the stricture of her throat, and she held the candle nearer. The niche was empty. The love letters were gone.

For a moment, she crouched there, frozen. He would not have bothered with those letters unless he knew he could use them for profit. The knowledge of this stirred, cold as a salamander, amidst her fire of anger. She ran to the stairway and glanced up. The door at the top landing betrayed a sliver of light. Breathlessly, she climbed up and, with caution, tried the door. It was locked. She rapped urgently.

"Let me in, at once," she ordered. "I must see you!"

When she heard his shrill little laugh, she began entreating and threatening, and at last hurled herself against the door with such violence the wax from her candle rained to the floor. Abruptly, the key ground in the lock and then swung open. Hesitantly, she entered the room. He bowed with a flourish.

"Somehow, I thought it might be you," he said, sardonically. His eyes took a leisurely course over her. "You haven't changed, I see. Still wear black and still don't comb your hair."

He had altered little, himself, in the five years he had been gone; the fair hair was thinning, and he had put on weight, but no trace of his viciousness yet marred that simple, child-like face.

"What did you come back for, Ed?" she demanded, rigidly.

"Why, Madge!" His pretense of reproach mocked her. "A husband's place is beside his little wife, in his little home."

"This isn't your home, Ed Herrick, it's mine, and I wish you'd stay away from it, and from me."

"I gather you didn't miss me." He cocked his head, derisively. "No, I gather you didn't. Someone took my place, eh, Madge?"

"What?"

"'My darling,'" he quoted, "'I was so sure of your love, so certain of your answer, last night—'"

"Give me back those letters!" she cried fiercely.

"'Dearest, dearest,'" he continued, amiably, "I could not be so mistaken about what you felt for me. Too often in our days together, I have sensed it, reveled in it—' Not exactly the kind of letters a young man should write a married woman, is it, Madge?"

"Give me back those letters, Ed Herrick, and get out of my house."

"You'll get your letters back, but on my terms," he said, softly. "I want to retire. I like this house as well as any—but I don't want you around it." He smiled easily. "Couldn't we make a trade, dear Madge? The house for these letters?"

"If I say no, what?" she asked. "It wouldn't be like you not to have a threat up your sleeve."

"Not a threat," he reproached, "but after all, you have been meeting this young man alone. My position has been injured. I should hate to read his letters in a divorce court."

"I need only remind you that you deserted me, five years ago," she said, bitterly. "They'd throw your case out of court."

"What of that?" he cried, gaily. "After these letters were heard—and the newspapers printed them—your young man's career would be ruined. He's young, isn't he? What a pity, oh, what a pity!"

She sank into a chair, staring into his pleasant, remorseless face. Then, without inflection, she said, "Take the house. I imagine you already have the papers drawn up. You always plan everything so well." She signed the document wearily and then held out her hand. "Now, give me my letters."

"Not just yet," he said, pocketing the paper. "After all, Madge, it's your fault that I developed expensive tastes. I may need extra cash, now and again. When I do, these letters may encourage your charming generosity." He blew her a kiss and went to the door. "Have you any milk on hand?" he asked. "Business always makes me thirsty."

As he started downstairs, her resentment, her misery, damned back all these dark years, burst and surged in deafening cataract about her. Blindly, she caught up the heavy pewter candlestick and hurled it after him. It struck the back of his shoulder, catching him off balance. Convulsively, he clawed for the bannister, and then, with deafening tumult, hurtled down the steep stairs.

Stricken, she rushed down and knelt beside the inert body. How strange, she thought. One of the first things she remembered of Ed was his jaunty, boyish way of cocking his head. And now, crumpled at the foot of the stairs, his head was cocked to one side. But not jauntily.

"Ed," she thought. "Ed, dead!" The rhyme raced chaotically about her brain. "Ed, dead; Ed, dead!" Intentionally or not, she had killed him, and she would pay for it with her own life. But first, there would be long days in court, and into this her lover's name would be dragged. Even in death, Ed would carry out that promise of disgrace.

"Then they will not find this body," she resolved. "No one need ever know he's dead." After all, Ed had been gone for five years. Even had someone seen him in town tonight, his habits were known. Who would question his absence? "You know Ed," they would snicker. "Here today, gone tomorrow." It would be as simple as that.

It was less simple, however, to find some place to hide the body. At last, in desperation, she crept down to the cellar. The floor was concrete, and although she struck it again and again with a crowbar, it did not crack. It was the pile of bricks and sack of mortar left over from repairing the house which gave her the idea. She flourished

her lamp through the darkness. Jutting out from the wall, she saw two broad concrete buttresses which had once closeted a water heater. In this space, she decided, Ed Herrick would rest in peace.

He was heavy. The strength of desperation was scarcely sufficient to move him. With revulsion, she started to drag him across the hall when, suddenly, the silence was splintered by the shrill carillon of the doorbell. Panic-stricken, she clasped Ed to her so tightly, her heart seemed to hammer for both of them. Each sharp peal of the bell cut away her breath; perspiration slid down her brow and there was an acrid, metallic taste in her mouth. Perhaps some neighbor had heard the fight or the fall; perhaps it was the police. Locked by fear, she waited. After an eternity, the bell stopped, yet she cowered, frozen, long after the footsteps had died away down the street. At last, she once more bent to the loathsome task.

When at last she dragged herself up the cellar stairs again, her work was finished. In the shadows, below, loomed a freshly bricked wall. Swaying, she made her way to the parlor. It was still night, and in the dim room, each familiar piece of furniture crouched, malignant witness to her crime.

"I can't stay here any longer," she thought. "I'll close up the house; I'll go away." Slowly, the room seemed to revolve around her. "I won't even say goodbye to him. It's better if we don't see each other again—" Then, the darkness, swirling at her feet, rose, filling her eyes, her ears, her mind—.

It was a torturous path back to consciousness, and dimly she became aware of Earl Faber bending over her.

"Helen," he said, in relief. "Oh, Helen, my dearest—"

"Go away, Earl," she gasped, sitting up. "I can't see anyone tonight."

"As soon as I found your note, I came here," he said, "but no one answered the door bell. I was worried, so I routed a locksmith out of bed—"

"I must have slept heavily," she said, uneasily.

"You were unconscious," he said. "You need care, and I'm going to see that you get it. This time, you're coming with me."

Hopelessly, she took her hands from his grasp. "I'm going away, Earl." He winced so painfully, she felt compelled to soften the blow. "It isn't that I don't love you, my dear. But sometimes things happen that make all we long for impossible. That's why I must go away."

"I don't understand," he said, bitterly. "I've never understood. You say you care for me, but you won't let down the barriers; you've never shared anything with me, neither your joys or your troubles."

She sat silently for a long time. "All right," she said, at last. "I'll tell you, but it will weigh on you all your life, and I won't be there to help you bear it." Because she could not endure to see his face as she spoke, she turned from him. "Tonight, my husband came home—"

"Your husband!" He smiled. "Helen, what are you talking about? You're not married."

"I am Mrs. Ed Herrick," she said slowly. "Or rather—I was. I'm a widow now." Faber tried to interrupt, but suddenly, the words poured from her as though it were her system rejecting poison. "I killed him tonight, killed him, Earl, killed him—" He looked at her with horror. "Now you know why I must run away, why I must never see you again. I'm a murderess!"

"Helen," he murmured. "Helen, my dear—." Slowly she understood. His horror was not at her crime. He thought her insane.

"It's true, Earl," she sobbed.

"I believe you, Helen." But he said it patiently, like one trying to soothe a querulous child.

"I'm not insane." Her anger rose with the dawn of her own doubt. "I'll prove it to you." Beckoning, she led him down to the cellar, and with his flashlight, indicated a brick wall. "He's back of that," she whispered.

"I believe you," he said, tautly. "Now let's go upstairs."

She flung him a fierce glance and then, catching up a crowbar from the tool bench, beat it against the wall.

"Helen, Helen," Faber cried. "For God's sake, come upstairs."

"Very well," she gasped. "I'll come upstairs. I'll admit I'm mad. I'll do anything you say. But first, do something for me." She thrust the crowbar into his hands.

"Up at the top of this wall, I ran out of mortar. The bricks are loose there. Strike them."

Clenching the bar as if to bend it, he stood motionless. If there was a body behind the wall, she was a murderess. If not, she was insane. Although she was lost to him either way, he dreaded to know the truth.

"Strike!" she ordered.

He rammed the iron rod against the masonry. The bricks did not give. The wall was solid.

"Again!" she cried, frantically.

Once more, he struck the wall. A brick moved inward beneath the impact. Incredulously, he battered the bricks until they loosened. As he removed them, one by one, Helen turned away. Not again could she look into the distorted, child-like face of Ed Herrick; not again could she bear to see his head so unnaturally cocked to one side. She waited swaying, as he flashed his light into the opening in the wall. At last, with effort, he spoke.

"We'll go away from here, Helen." The fear in his voice made her turn. His face was white, agonized. "Far away, where you can forget—"

"Or hide?"

"Hide? No. No, to rest—"

"But I'm not sick, I tell you. I'm not insane."

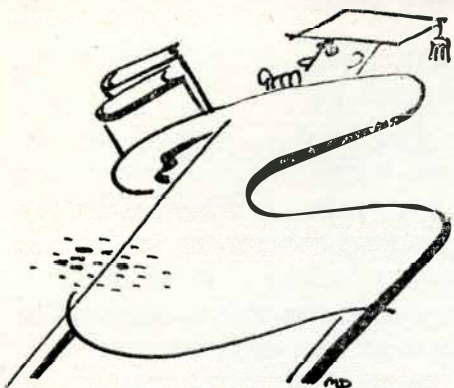
"No, not insane." He took her in his arms, protectively. "Sensitive. Over-sensitive, but—but not insane." His words rang false, as if he were trying to convince himself of something. "There's been a mistake—"

"There's no mistake," the girl cried. "I killed him tonight. Killed him and walled him up in there—" In frenzy, she snatched the flashlight from his hand.

"Don't look, Helen," he cried. But she had already flashed the torch into the opening.

Whether it was that she dropped the light or fainted, she never knew. But that glimpse was enough. Even months later, when she was on her way to recovery, she remembered that dust-laden skull, askew on those fleshless shoulders.

THE CRITICS CORNERED



SUBJECT:
IS ARAM
KHACHATURIAN'S
"GAYNE SUITE"
GREAT MUSIC ?
WHY ?

I think not; because:

Though its themes almost hypnotize the mind at their first sounding, they return—in almost every one of the movements that I can remember—only in the exact way they announced themselves. This usage, repetition, is perhaps the simplest of all composition devices and the quickest to bore. Composers use it as commonly as John Smith walks down Main Street. Stretch its listening time to a half hour, and you automatically ban your music from the list of great. Thus, I believe, Khachaturian has done. He is merely walking with John down Main Street.

WHAT ABOUT "THE SABRE DANCE?"

For about five minutes, Khachaturian is walking—is strutting, on a tight rope.

—Kenneth C. Newburn

The "Sabre Dance" seems to be about the only part of the Khachaturian "Gayne Ballet" Suite that is very widely known—granted it is giving Ravel's Bolero a run for its money. (If you think very hard about it, it can be rather shocking.)

However, Khachaturian not only writes phenomenal rhythms, but combines poignant melody with the rhythms . . . I speak of the "Dance of Ayshe," commonly known as "Woman's Dance."

I think Aram Khachaturian is a great composer in his own way: his fine interpretation of the basic human emotions that most people seem rather eager to ignore.

Mickey Branning

Whether or not the Gayne Ballet (pronounced Guy-nuh Ballay, with Guy sounding as in "He's a good guy," meaning Khachaturian, of course) is great music is not an important point. An important point is that the first movement of the suite will be banned in Boston as soon as they hear about the scene that was cut from Shostakovitch's opera "Lady Macbeth of Tzinsk."

If one listens to the Lullaby of the suite and knows that Khachaturian got his tunes from the Armenians and Russians, one also knows where Gershwin got his tunes for Porgy and Bess. But is not then Porgy and Bess an American creation? Well, is not the Gayne Ballet just as American, or at least accepted wholeheartedly by the Americans? We may safely say they both are American. They are Russian and Armenian too. In fact they both contain a universal appeal.

In summary: The Gayne Ballet is universal music, and it is because it appeals to the simple, elemental emotions that every human being has. In that sense it is great music.

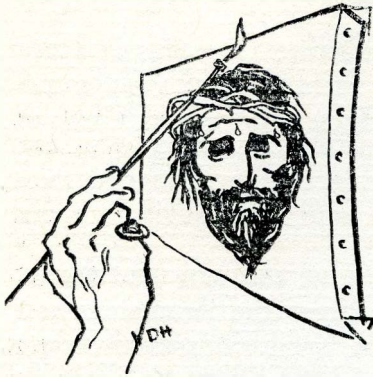
Charles Gordon Rex

The ballet by Khachaturian that is sweeping the country certainly has appeal. Whether this appeal is of the quality that will place the Gayne Ballet Suite in the ranks of lasting music remains to be seen. The skillful use of instruments give a brilliance and color to the music. The solo passages are made extremely expressive by the selection of the right instrument to provoke a positive response in the listener. This use of orchestral color is combined with strong rhythms and lilting melodies that keep repeating themselves in the memory of the listener after they cease to sound.

An invigorating quality of the Gayne Ballet is its variety, from the exciting, stirring Sabre Dance to the quiet calm of the Lullaby. The composer uses folk music of America colored with the qualities of Russia, and with the combination of these two, he introducec both Eastern and Western characteristics in his music.

These qualities are sufficient to gain popularity for the suite now, and may suffice to give it lasting appeal.

Terrell Weaver



A FABLE

A Piece by
SAM BURCHERS

THERE once lived a great artist. He was known throughout the country as the most realistic portrait painter alive. His renown was largely due to his skill and insight in the painting of the human eye. The eyes, he said are *the keys to the lock of canvas imitation*. There are many similar foreheads, chins, and lips, but the emotion in the eyes is never the same.

His fame spread to many lands. The religious leaders of the Vatican heard of his talents and summoned him to appear before them. He was then commissioned to paint the head of Jesus. He confined himself to his studio for several months. Then he took his painting of Jesus to the men of religion. As they unveiled it, to their surprise they saw a self-portrait of the artist, only where his eyes should have been, there was blank canvas.

"What's this?" they cried. "Do you dare to call this Jesus? Get out, man, and take your sacrilege with you!"

The artist was not allowed to explain his actions. He was removed from the Vatican and told never to return. Taking his self-portrait to the National Museum, he hung it alongside his masterpieces. No one objected, as he was an eccentric artist, and his genius gave him much leeway to do foolish things. Only one man questioned him. Mozab, the critic, came to the artist and said: "Why is it that you call your self-portrait Jesus? And, even so, why is it that there are no eyes?"

"Because," the artist explained, "surely one as sinful as I has not the eyes of Jesus. The face in itself is nothing. The flesh and bone of my face are only the image of Jesus. The eyes are the mirror of the soul."

That is why I now leave to search for one with the eyes of Jesus. Only then can the portrait be complete. Who knows, perhaps somewhere lives such a man with the qualities of the Son of the Lord. If that be so, his eyes will show it."

For eight years nothing more was heard of the artist. Travelers reported having seen him wandering in foreign lands, but these were only rumors. It was believed by some that he was dead.

But this was a false rumor. For at the close of the eighth year the artist returned to his native land. Only a few saw him as he called at the Museum, wrapped up his self-portrait, and left as silently and mysteriously as he had come. Shortly thereafter he returned and proclaimed to the world that his portrait of Jesus was complete.

All the populace, including the religious leaders, attended the unveiling. When the wrappings were removed, the audience bowed their heads in humbleness. The face was still that of the artist. The eyes made the difference. They symbolized every desirable quality in man. They were the eyes of an angel, humble, devoted, and possessing a spiritual holiness. The religious men from the Vatican pleaded that they had been hasty. The artist removed the painting and offered it to their leader. "Take it," he whispered. "Perhaps you can make use of it."

As they were leaving, handling the portrait as gently as they would have the new-born babe in the manger, Mozab, the critic, stepped forth and raised his hand. Addressing the artist, he asked: "Where did you get the eyes?"

"Yes," everyone questioned, "who is it that has the eyes of Jesus? We must find him."

"For eight years I searched the world," answered the artist. But nowhere could I find eyes such as these. Neither the good nor the bad, the rich or poor, had the eyes I sought. But one morning as I walked through a village in Corsica, watching the sun ascend from the horizon, I heard someone crying. It was at that moment that I knew where to find the eyes of Jesus. The answer was so simple, and yet so true. There are many that for a short time reflect no evil in their eyes. The eyes you see here are those of a new-born babe.

BROTHERS

Have you not heard them say:
"Human frailty will not permit
That man should love his
Brother as himself.
But I love every man."
Have you not heard them cry:
"This will take time;
Man cannot so quickly grasp
This new approach to life.

They sit with their eyes bright
And their hearts full,
Their tongues dripping
Beautiful sentiments for their
Brothers across the sea.
Brothers who cannot grasp
That they are brothers.
Brothers afflicted with
Human frailty.

Have you not heard them say:
"He is as I am,
Is every man.
Skin tone—nose form,
These are superficial things.
Underneath we are the same.
It is too bad that all
Cannot be as I, and
Understand these things."

Oh, lovers of the world,
Do you not know
What you have said?

Have you not heard them say:
"But because
All cannot understand,
We must not strive for
Perfection.
Let us aim for part."

Lovers of the world,
Is it the world you love?
When you repeat,
"That is all very well, but—"
"This is good, but—"
Then I must say to you:
"It is not good.
There is no almost good,
Nor almost right."

—Mary Malta Peters.

SONNET

There was a youth who asked, "What worse than Death
Exists in this strange universe of ours?"
His question balanced in the air for hours.
Then as he slowly took a sighing breath
To ask a second time, he turned to gaze
With eyebrow arched upon an ancient man
Whose wrinkled face had age-old lines that ran
The way Life has of showing many days.
"The fear of dying, Son—," the old man said,
"That dreadful, painful fear of leaving earth
And all it means to us in sensual joy—
Is worse than Death. For, when you've long been dead
You'll know that Death is much the greater birth
Into a Life which nothing can destroy."

—Weston L. Emery



THE OLD DOG

A Short Story by
ZOE VAIL WESTON

ALL at once Grandpa Starbuck knew he'd had enough. He couldn't stand it any longer. He got up out of his chair and took his rifle down from its brackets over the coat rack. He felt up in the cubby hole over the cellar door and brought down a few cartridges. These he dropped into the pocket of his sheepskin windbreaker which he then lifted from its hook. He put on the coat, went into the pantry and came out with a slab of cheese. This he wrapped in newspaper and put in his pocket, too.

"You know how she likes cheese," he said to his son. "Come, Bess."

The old dog, who had been crouching under the table, shuffled out over the linoleum. She gallantly swung her tail and walked a little faster when she saw the rifle in the crook of the old man's arm. Cliff's wife was still talking loudly, her cheeks very red. Cliff followed his father out into the yard.

"Let me do it, Dad," he said, reaching for the gun. "It'll be too hard for you."

The old man shook his head and put his right hand firmly over the breech of the rifle.

"No, Cliff," he said, "if it's got to be done, I'll do it myself. One clean shot and her troubles are over. No more scolding and shouting. No more chasing with a broom. You know, well as I do, 'taint the first time I've had to do a thing like this. Wouldn't be surprised, though, if it's the last."

"What do you mean, Dad?" the younger man quickly asked.

"Mean? Why, I mean I'm getting too old, Cliff. Getting? Heck, I've got! Me and the dog both."

His son still walking with him, he went to the granary where he selected a clean burlap bag. This he rolled and tucked under his arm.

"Ground's froze too hard," he said. "Couldn't do a thing with a spade. Now you go back in the house and quiet her down. When you married again, we both hoped you'd get a good housekeeper. Well, you got one. So let her know I don't hold it against her, 'cause that's the way we wanted her, and that's the way she is. Dog's old—oldest dog I ever had. But a sight too good for the kind of treatment she's been getting lately. Come on, Old Girl."

The three of them still walking together, they reached the gate that led into the orchard. Grandpa opened the gate for himself and Bess; then shut it against Cliff. After a few moments of indecision, Cliff turned and went back. He didn't go to the house. He went by the side of the house, crossed the road between the two elms and entered the barn.

It was a cold, clear afternoon in February. That winter the January thaw had melted most of the snow except where it lay on the north and east sides of the stone walls. The orchard sloped down toward the river. It didn't go all the way down. Between the orchard and the river was a grove of hemlock, pine, and walnut. The February freeze had driven the thermometer down to zero and had held it there for a week.

As Grandpa Starbuck and Bess walked through the orchard, the old man began to talk. Ordinarily he was very frugal with his conversation, and after Cliff had brought his new wife home, he had become more sparing than before. If you had known this and could have heard him talking to his dog as they walked away from the house, you might have thought that he was making up for lost time. Or that he wanted to keep his mind from dwelling on a task which he didn't care to think about until he couldn't put it off any longer.

"Bright, cold day," he remarked. "Aint going far, Bess. I know you don't like walking lately, and my knees are nothing to brag about. Should have rubbed them more lately but she doesn't like the smell of liniment in the kitchen. Things ain't as they should be in that house any more. Used to be at night I could pull my chair right up

to the stove and open the oven door and get my knees good and hot. Liniment used to strike in then and I could walk upstairs and get to sleep without any trouble."

The old dog looked up at him, surprised perhaps that he was talking so much. She was a setter, rather small for her breed. Her white coat was stippled with black spots. Her face was nearly all black except around the mouth where age had turned the black to gray.

"Tell you where we're going," continued Grandpa Starbuck. "To the apple tree that was blowed down in the hurricane. You can set down there on the sunny side of the log. On this bag that I've brought for you. Sort of a picnic, you might say, 'cause I've got something in my pocket that I think you're going to like."

Bess stiffly plodded along by his side. She knew, of course, that he had his gun; but she also knew that she needn't scent until he spoke the word. So she didn't try. When and if it came time to hunt, he'd tell her. She had built a lifetime of confidence in his judgments—on his words of command.

They came to a rough strip which broke the smoothness of the frozen grass.

"Never told you before: used to be a stone wall here," he said. "This was the bottom of the orchard when I was a boy. Then when I came to own the farm, that orchard wasn't big enough for me. Oh, no; not for me. Big enough for my father, and big enough for my grandfather, but not for me. So I cleared this bottom piece and planted more trees. Then I moved the wall that was here and used it for the footing of a new barn. Still standing across the road. Sills most gone now, but we'll let Cliff worry about that. Ain't nothing a man can build that lasts forever."

They had reached the blown-down tree. Most of it had been cut and hauled away. The knotty trunk had been dragged to one side and left there. Grandpa Starbuck up-ended his rifle and spread the bag on the sunny side of the log. Because of the slope of the land they couldn't see the house.

"Now you sit there," he said, "and I'll see what I have in my pocket."

He brought out the cheese and unwrapped it.

"Oh, yes," he said, ". . . Now just in case a rabbit or a squir'l comes along—"

He loaded two cartridges into the rifle and pumped the first one into the breech. This done, he up-ended the rifle against the log again and broke off a piece of cheese. Bess drooled as she watched him. She wolfed it down and looked at him with large, adoring eyes.

"Not so fast now; not so fast," said Grandpa Starbuck. "Maybe you'd take a little more time if you knew—" He didn't finish that. "Well, anyhow, let's eat a little and talk a little and I'll save you the biggest and best piece for the last. Now wait till I get my pipe a-going and I'll give you another nice chunk."

There wasn't much tobacco in his pouch. "Enough, though," he said. "Haven't been smoking as much as I used to, or I'd have got some more on Saturday. She doesn't like the smell of tobacco smoke in the kitchen. Pulls faces. Tell you, Bess, things ain't as they should be in that house any more. Me, though, I guess I'm too old to argue. Or maybe too old to see the sense of arguing. If you're right, you don't need to argue. And if you're wrong, you can yap all day and you'll still be wrong at night."

He broke off another piece of cheese.

"Now you eat this more slowly," he said. But the old dog didn't. It went right on down her. She rested her chin on his knee and stared up into his eyes with a look of mingled affection and pleading. He cupped her head between his hands and fondled her chops with his thumbs. She liked that and she let him know she liked it. But she kept one eye on the cheese which Grandpa Starbuck had placed on the log between himself and his rifle.

"If anybody's to blame," he said, "I'm to blame as much as Cliff is. After his wife died—remember?—we tried to keep house ourselves. But what with the farm work and the children we finally knew we were licked. So Cliff and I talked it over and he started looking around till this Bertha Gallup said yes, she'd marry him and help bring up the children. She'd been a teacher till she had a falling out with the school superintendent on whether or not one of the boys in her class should be expelled because of some reproductions of famous paintings of nudes she found in his desk."

Grandpa puffed on his pipe for a while to keep it from going out.

"So you see," he continued, "she wasn't Cliff's first choice; she just happened to be the first one to say yes. For all that, she's a good cook and housekeeper. Still, I do wish for Cliff's sake, she didn't have such a sharp voice and didn't keep hammering away with it from the time she gets up in the morning till she goes to bed at night. As if she was still a-teaching school and was the only one who knew the right answers. And I do wish Cliff wouldn't keep a-giving into her. Still, 'taint for me to say. She's his wife; not mine."

He tossed Bess another piece of cheese and laughed when she caught it.

"I was just thinking of the first time I ever throwed you something and you caught it," he said. "Why, you were nothing but a puppy yet, and I don't know who was proudest: you or me. It was a piece of cold meat from a leg of lamb, and we were both in the pantry. Remember? And I said to you, 'Bess, I'll keep on throwing till you miss.' But you didn't miss, and I'd made you a promise; so I kept on cutting and throwing till we worked that lamb right down to the bone. Got a good wiggling from the women folks, both of us, and had fried eggs for dinner next day instead of lamb."

Bess, sitting on her haunches, started to lift her right front paw and place it on Grandpa's knee. Half way up she whimpered for a moment and put her foot back on the ground.

"Poor old girl," said the old man. "Shoulder knotted up on you then—didn't it! My own fault. I never should have put you out in the woodshed these cold nights. I ought to have known you'd catch cold and then you'd be worse than ever. Like me with my knees lately. At night they won't stop aching long enough for me to go to sleep. And the less I sleep, the more they seem to ache."

With an air of great carelessness he picked up the gun and laid it across his lap. Because he might forget, he snapped off the safety catch.

"Now I'm going to give you all this cheese but one piece," he said, "and that last piece I'm going to tuck 'way under this log here. That's so you'll have to put your head down to look for it instead of looking at me. You've lived

a good life, Bess. You've had twelve litters—all fine dogs—and them that was lucky enough to get 'em have been mighty proud of 'em. . . . Now what's the matter? What you looking at?"

For the old dog had turned her head and was staring down toward the river.

"What is it?" whispered Grandpa Starbuck, staring, too. "Deer? Hunters? Birds? Squir'ls?"

He heard it then: the voices of children over the brow of the hill. They were chanting in unison, "*Mary's mad and I am glad and I know what will please her—*"

"Been walking home from school along the river road," said Grandpa Starbuck. "I thought they'd come in the bus to the front of the house. We'll have to wait awhile now."

The young voices drew nearer. Presently two children appeared on the path which led up from the river road. Their faces were serious; they were having a lovely time singing together. Grandpa Starbuck hurriedly put the safety back on his rifle and wondered how long it would be before they saw him.

Alice saw him first. She was the older of the two. She was ten. Little John was eight. They both had the Starbuck nose—thin and high bridged. They were both beautiful with youth and health and hope and happiness.

"Hello, Grandpa! . . . What you doing, Grandpa? . . . Hunting? . . . What you hunting, Grandpa? . . . We saw partridge down by the river . . . And deer tracks . . . Oh, Grandpa—"

"Yes, John?"

"Can I come to the barn with you this afternoon? Can I, Grandpa? And throw down hay and help with the cows and the horses? Like I used to?"

"Now, John, you know well as I do that she doesn't like you to go down in the barn. You get yourself dusty up in the hay and you get yourself dirty down among the cows. Now run on home and be a good boy. And ask your dad if you can't go skating. The ice on the pond is plenty thick. You tell him I said so."

"Oh, goody-goody-goody!" cried Alice.

"Oh, goody-goody-goody!" echoed little John.

They continued their walk by way of the garden and past the garage, singing with a volume that gradually

diminished as they neared the house: "*One-ery, two-ery, Ickery-Ann—*"

By the time they reached the back door, their voices had faded into silence. They carefully wiped their feet and walked into the warm kitchen. Their father was standing at the window which overlooked the orchard.

"I didn't hear the bus," he said, quickly turning from the window. "Which way did you come?"

"Along the river road," said Alice, staring at the urgency of his manner.

"Did you see Grandpa?"

"Why, yes," she said. "He was at the bottom of the orchard. We stopped and talked to him."

"Was Bess with him?"

"Huh-huh. Sitting by his side. And he had his rifle across his knees. I think they were waiting for squirrels."

"I told you he'd be all right," Bertha called out from the pantry.

"Dad, can we go skating?" asked little John. "Down on the ice-pond? Grandpa said to ask you. He said the ice was plenty thick."

"No, you can't go skating," said Bertha from the pantry before Cliff could answer. "You'll only come home half frozen. I've enough work to do around here without having you children sick on my hands."

Cliff waited till she had finished. "Yes, you can go skating, both of you," he said then. "Go get your skates."

After they had gone he called out, "Next time they ask me a question, don't you answer it. I've answered their questions a good many years and I'm still able to do it." Weakening somewhat then because of the silence which greeted this he added, "Can't you understand? That Dad wanted the children out of the way?"

Continuing her silence, Bertha came out of the pantry. Her hair, a dark ginger, was drawn into a knot at the back of her head. Her blouse was buttoned high around her neck. Her apron nearly covered her dress. Her lips were tight. She put a pie in the oven and flounced back into the pantry.

Cliff went to the east window of the kitchen and watched the children crossing the pasture toward the ice-pond. They were singing again, and dancing over the frozen ground. Cliff restlessly walked to the west window

and stood there waiting for the sound of the shot when he saw Judge Bradford and Bill Cantwell and Bill's dog Prince come into the yard from the direction of the sheeplot. Bill and the Judge paused uncertainly by the willow tree. Cliff hurried to the door. Perhaps they had seen something.

"Come in and get warm?" he asked. "And have a drink?"

"'Tis mighty cold and that's a finding of fact," said the Judge. "We've got plenty to drink, Cliff, thanks for that, but a few minutes in front of your stove won't hurt us a bit."

"Bring the dog in, too," said Cliff, and was more than pleased he had said it when he heard a snort from the pantry.

Bill and the Judge laid their guns across the kitchen table. They turned toward the stove.

"Got a mite worried about your father, Cliff," said Bill. "Saw him back there at the bottom of the orchard a few minutes ago and at first he didn't even look up when we hailed him. Just sort of sat there, leaning over his dog, and the dog was licking his face."

"He's feeling bad," said Cliff. "Guess he couldn't talk much. I wanted to do it myself, but he wouldn't listen to me."

"Wouldn't listen to what?" asked the Judge.

"It's the old dog. She's nearly sixteen and having a bad time. I was waiting to hear the shot when you came in the yard."

"That accounts for it," said the Judge. "No wonder he couldn't talk. Now me, I could never do it myself; but then again my father always did. Either dogs or horses. Said somebody else might bungle it—that a man ought to be able to take the bitter with the sweet. Poor Bess. She suffered much?"

"Lately, yes. More'n Dad could stand to see."

"Poor old girl. A good dog—none better. Of course you know my Liz was one of her pups."

"You didn't bring Liz today," said Cliff, looking at Prince who was lying as near as he could get to the side of the stove without burning himself.

"No; she had another family yesterday. Eight of 'em. Never saw a prettier litter. One of 'em's spotted and has a black face like Old Bess. Little female, too."

"Bound to be good dogs," said Bill. "Had a fine father." With his thumb he proudly pointed to Prince who was basking luxuriously in the heat of the stove. "Go back to champions on both sides of their pedigree."

"You know, Cliff," said the Judge. "I've been thinking. The old gentleman's going to feel mighty bad about Bess. Now he gave me Bess's daughter and wouldn't take a cent for her. So now I'm going to turn around and give him that little spotted female I told you about—Bess's granddaughter. She'll take his mind off the old dog—give him something else to think about—first getting her housebroken—then training her—"

"Judge," said Cliff. "I feel sure you couldn't offer him anything that would please him more. I'll tell him the minute he comes in."

They left and turned up the road toward the woodlot where they had parked their car in a barway. A few minutes later they drove past the house, Prince on the front seat between the two men, fathers all three, pleased with the lives they led and the things they could do. Cliff watched the car go out of sight and then came back into view around the bend of the road. It passed the icepond where the children were skating and disappeared across the brook.

Bertha came out of the pantry. She took a quick look in the oven.

"So we're going to have a puppy in the house now, are we?" she asked, speaking almost between clenched teeth, as if she had to force herself to say it.

"That's right," said Cliff easily. "You heard us. Why do you ask?"

"And who's going to do the housebreaking of this puppy? Do you mind telling me?"

"Don't mind a bit. We'll all help. You'll help, too. Remember that."

She might not have taken it if it wasn't for what she had just heard while she was in the pantry—that and her argument with the school superintendent. "Either that boy is expelled or I'm resigning," she had said. She was so sure that the answer would be in her favor that she had hardly waited for it. She didn't know till later that the boy's father, who was an artist, had brought the pictures back from Europe where he had been stationed during the

war. This, however, she soon did know: that the superintendent was quietly saying, 'All right, Bertha, if that's the way you feel, your resignation's accepted.' So perhaps now she might get another surprise if she let her tongue run away with her. She rattled the stove instead and was hanging the shaker back on its hook when a rifle shot rang with crisp authority from the direction of the orchard.

"He's done it!"

Cliff turned from the window. Bertha was still standing by the stove. She hadn't moved since she had heard the shot. "I'll go down and help him," said Cliff, and went to the back kitchen for his arctics.

"The ground's frozen. You can't do anything," said Bertha.

"He took a bag. I'll carry it for him."

He had trouble putting on his arctics—his hand wasn't as steady as it might have been. He was reaching for his coat when a second shot rang out with the same note of sharp authority as the first.

"That's queer," said Cliff.

"Nothing queer about it," said Bertha in a too-loud voice. "He had to shoot twice: that's all."

"Don't you believe it. Not Dad. And not with so much time between."

Almost before he had finished speaking he was out of the house and Bertha was with him. Together they ran through the orchard. They came to the rough strip where the wall had once stood. There was no one—nothing—in the bottom of the orchard.

"They're somewhere in the woods," said Cliff. "May take quite a while to find them among the brush."

"Oh, Cliff—" began Bertha in a strange voice.

"You go back to the house and call the children," interrupted Cliff. "Don't say anything about this, but tell them to go to the barn and feed the stock. They know how. Tell John to throw down some extra hay. Milking may be late tonight." He gave her a look which didn't help her any and, hurrying toward the woods, he added over his shoulder: "Hope you're satisfied now."

Bertha walked uncertainly back toward the house. So again she had failed—this time worse than ever. After what she had heard in the pantry she knew she would get

no sympathy. She had always liked Judge Bradford—he would have been her father-in-law if she hadn't been such a fool—and she knew the Judge had been deeply touched when he had heard about Grandpa and Bess. And it wasn't only the Judge—everyone would soon know what had happened on the Starbuck farm that afternoon. She had told too many listeners that the dog was old and ought to be put out of the way.

"Well, he was old, and more trouble than he was worth," she reasoned.

The wind was cold, and she felt numb. "As for Harry Bradford, he was the fool, not I. The idea of wanting me to marry him before I had graduated from normal college! I'm just as glad he married the Hanson girl."

She walked on towards the house, and kicking a pebble in the road, she muttered between clenched teeth, "I haven't failed! I was right, too, about the pictures I found in the boy's desk. A boy that age had no right . . ."

Her thoughts were interrupted by a shout from the lower end of the orchard. She turned and there, breasting slowly up the rise, were two familiar figures. Cliff had the bag over his shoulder and when he came a little higher, Bertha saw he was carrying the rifle under his arm. And, finally, walking stiffly between Grandpa Starbuck and Cliff sniffing now and then at the bag, old Bess came into view. Bertha turned and ran into the house. Never in all her life had she felt such an overwhelming sense of relief.

"Couldn't do what I came for," Grandpa Starbuck had told Cliff. "Wasn't far from it when these two gray squir'ls came over the orchard wall and cut down here into the woods. Think they're the same two that's been eating the corn in the granary. Going up the butternut tree and through that hole in the gable-end that you made for your pigeons when you were a boy. Well, sir, when they ran across the orchard, old Bess set 'em and she looked at me out of the side of her eyes as if she was saying, 'Well, what you waiting for? Why don't you go after them?' And Cliff, I just couldn't disappoint her. She had that much confidence in me. Soon got the first one but nearly lost the second. Hit behind a limb. Fat as butter they are. Make a good pie for the children."

When they were nearer the house, Grandpa said, "Tell you what I been thinking, Cliff. Got it all figured out. You know that cot in the harness room down in the barn. Slept there many a night when one of the cows was overdue, especially if it was her first calf. Well, sir, I'll get me an oil stove and Bess and I'll move in down there till the stiffness goes out of her legs. I'll rub her good with liniment. Worth trying anyway. She's old—yes—but shucks, so'm I—and both of us may be good for longer'n you think—"

Cliff interrupted him: "Bertha," he called in a stern voice as they reached the yard.

Bertha appeared in the kitchen door. Her face was flushed. Before she had time to say anything, Cliff continued, "Come give me a hand with the box Bess sleeps in in the woodshed." And then in an even firmer tone, "We are going to put it at the end of the stove where the other dog lay this afternoon."

"Other dog?" demanded Grandpa. "What other dog?"

"Tell you later, Dad," said Cliff. And then, to Bertha, "Well, what are you waiting for?"

Bertha was still standing at the door. She hadn't moved. Now her face was solemn. She looked at Cliff, then at Grandpa, and finally at Bess. She hesitated a moment longer, and then slowly opened the door and went with Cliff for Bess's bed.

Bess loved her bed in its new location. She could hardly wait to get into it.

"Now you sit down," said Cliff to Grandpa. "Bertha will mix you a hot toddy. You must be nearly frozen."

The old man's eyes hadn't been so round for a long time as when Bertha put the kettle on and went into the pantry to get the bottle out of the locked cupboard. "What's happened?" he asked as soon as she was out of hearing.

"Sh!" said Cliff. And again, "Tell you later."

At least Cliff told him some of it without waiting too long. Grandpa was sitting in his chair cuddling his steaming glass between his two gnarled palms.

"Bertha spoke about another dog being here this afternoon," said Cliff. "Judge Bradford and Bill Cantwell dropped in while you were out. With Bill's dog Prince. Liz had her pups yesterday—they're Prince's, too—and

the Judge is saving one for you. Spotted and has a black face. Thought you might like to train her this Spring—and now that you'll have the old dog to keep her steady—”

Outside the children could be heard in the distance, their voices high with health and happiness. Grandpa Starbuck felt the warmth of the toddy between his hands—felt warmth, too, in his heart and in the comfort of his mind. He didn't know how long this would last, but as long as it lasted it wasn't for him to question it. Over by the end of the stove, Old Bess stretched herself and sighed with satisfaction. Grandpa gave her an echo. It was as if one had said, “It's good to be back in the house again,” and the other had added, “—and find everything as it should be.”

THIS I BELIEVE

When crickets will not sing at night,
And stars no longer light the sky;
When God is but a satellite,
Then life shall end, and time shall die.

When simple things are not the best,
And nature we must modify;
When music cannot give us rest,
Then life shall end, and time shall die.

When trees are not a thing of grace,
And nature's beauty men decry;
When brooks have won their sparkling race,
Then life shall end, and time shall die.

When children cease to play and sing,
And kindness we all deny;
When every man must be a king,
Then life shall end, and time shall die.

When love's uncharted bounds we find,
And hatred we can justify;
When faith can hurt a troubled mind,
Then life shall end, and time shall die.

Hugh C. Davis

LAKE OKEECHOBEE

"Wellspring of the Everglades"

A Book Review by JEAN LIPSCOMB

LAKE Okeechobee is more than the biography of a lake—it is also the account of the rise and fall of an Indian Nation and the notorious Ashley gang, explorers and politicians, millionaires and fly-by-night real estate dealers. It is the story of America's oldest, and at the same time, newest frontier. It is the story with its beginning almost 400 years ago and with its ending not yet in sight.

The book is the ninth of the American Lake Series to be edited by Milo M. Quaife. Authors Alfred Jackson Hanna and Kathryn Abbey Hanna have probed deep into state and national records and publications, periodicals, newspapers, and manuscript collections and they have made intensive research and interviews to present a notable and valuable contribution to the record of American life.

Okeechobeeland, an area so rich that new settlers have been cautioned to be careful what trash they throw out because anything will grow, is equal in size to the combined states of Connecticut and New Jersey, or 12,500 square miles. Oblong in shape, it extends 250 miles southeast from Orlando to Miami. Its western base is almost a straight line south through the Everglades National Park to the Florida Keys. Its width across the peninsula is 50 miles.

The lake, named "Big Water," by the Seminoles over a century ago, is, next to Lake Michigan, the largest expanse of fresh water wholly within the United States. It covers an arear of 730 square miles. Forty miles to the east is Palm Beach on the Atlantic; eighty miles to the west, past Ft. Myers, is the Gulf of Mexico.

Discovered by Spanish explorers during the early sixteenth century, the isolated region, overgrown with tropical shrubs, did not draw white settlers until three centuries later. Tongue in cheek, the authors speak of those

early settlers as "Pioneers . . . scared away (by marauding Seminoles) . . . "Many who made the venture departed precipitously either for Heaven or Georgia."

The Hannas' history of Okeechobeeland contains accounts of the Seminole War which starred "Old Rough and Ready" Zachary Taylor and the Seminole leaders Osceola and Billy Bowlegs. The authors describe, too, the still unsolved drainage problem, the lashing hurricanes of 1926, 1928, and 1947, the growth of lumber camps, vegetable kingdoms, catfish and argo-industries, the unique egret plume and alligator hide businesses.

But the most colorful chapters are those which deal with the people who settled in the Everglades. There was Bill McCoy, steamboater and rumrunner, of whom the Hannas write, "Bill's early life was associated with water, the latter part with booze." There was Disston, the cattle king. There was "Alligator" Platt, who, in order to save gunpowder and shells, rode the alligators to shore before stabbing them. Finally, there were the rich women "whose hearts yearned to remove the barbs from the saw grass." Of all the characters, probably those which make for most exciting reading are Pogy Bill, sheriff, Brother Dunklin, "sinner hunter," and John Ashley, murderer.

Before becoming sheriff of Okeechobee County, Pogy Bill dabbled in politics, the art of fisticuffs, and fishing. His life had been lawless, and yet he had his own code of justice. He made an excellent officer, fighting, imprisoning, and invariably subduing his former cronies. Pogy Bill did not favor prohibition, so he supervised rum-running in his territory. Unfortunately, federal officers caught him and one of his deputies in the act of guarding the road while trucks were loaded at a nearby lumber company which "provided a liquid center."

Brother Dunklin rode circuit for seventeen years—by motorboat. He proclaimed that he was a "sinner hunter" and that the lake region seemed as prolific in sinners as it was in egrets, alligators and catfish. At one of his first services, the collection totaled "thirty cents, two pieces of gum, two buttons, half a match and a couple of bullets." But the preacher was never discouraged and even baptized one of the Ashleys, hoping that it would "take."

John Ashley headed one of the most notorious gangs ever to blaze a trail of lawlessness through the Everglades. During the decade the Ashley dynasty ruled, they murdered, jail-broke, robbed banks, ran rum from the Bahamas, hijacked other bootleggers, and exacted tribute from those they allowed to remain in business. John also acquired a sweetheart, Laura Upthegrove, named "Queen of the Everglades" by the press. There was soon a collection of hoodlums from other states, joined with the Ashleys, who came to hide from the law and stayed to break it. Finally, in 1924, "the flabby arm of the law grew muscular" and reached out to grasp John and the majority of his henchmen. "The Queen," dethroned, swigged down the contents of a bottle of lysol to draw the curtain on a colorful career.

The Hannas have supplemented historical accounts with anecdotes, and fact with legend. Dr. Hanna, professor of history at Rollins, and Mrs. Hanna, for fifteen years head of the department of history at Florida State University and chairman of the State Library Board, are well qualified to write the history of Okeechobeeland. The finished 379-page product, illustrated with photographs and maps, is a noteworthy volume which is of interest to the people of the nation as well as of the region and state.

THOUGHT

Soft from the valley the forgotten rains
Send up their ghosts. They move on sea-blown winds
To fill the night and blur the moon that wanes,
A curving note against the silent sky.

—J. F. Leonard

KITTEN IMAGINATION

There are tigers in the grasses!
She'll bask in the sun a while;
Then she'll catch one as it passes—
As I sit and watch and smile.

Now she's tensed. Anticipation
Makes her shoulder muscles twitch.
Her inspiring concentration
Would do credit to a witch.

There: she springs, and like an arrow
She goes streaking to the fray.
All her knives are sharp and narrow:
She'll be killed—or kill this prey.

But it's gone. It's sudden fleeing
Threw her rolling on the ground.
Still she's dignified, this being—
There will be another round!

Then she brushes in the dun-light,
Makes her hair all look its best;
Preen for cameras in the sunlight,
And enjoys a well-earned rest.

Jack Teagarden

EARLY SPRING

Lush-leafed the sheltered seedlings wait,
Still barren, snow-freed fields lack warmth.
But, as the evening fires burn,
The last of winter wood reflects
The whirl of wings above the hearth.
Once more the chimney swifts return.

—J. F. Leonard

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