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Belles Lettres



1937

Belles Lettres

An annual anthology of student writing sponsored and published by the Canterbury Club of Eastern Kentucky State Teachers College

At Richmond, Kentucky

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VOLUME THREE

1937

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Forword

Two years ago the Canterbury Club of Eastern Kentucky State Teachers College conceived the idea of publishing a magazine devoted entirely to student writing. This volume they termed BELLES LETTRES. In selecting the material for the present volume of this magazine, we, the editors, have striven to maintain the high standards which the title indicates, and we present Volume Three with the hope that it will be amicably received by the public.

Kentucky's Illusion

By Hiram Brock, Jr.

In 1792 our state won the right to be the fifteenth to join the Union. For a few years we developed by leaps and bounds. No state of our age surpassed us in any office of achievement. But something in our mechanism has broken. No longer is the name of Kentucky synonymous with a state of great possibilities. In its stead are black marks of murder, feuds, riots, and hangings. Has decay set in and completely covered our commonwealth? Would not the travelers of that old "Wilderness Trail" turn in their graves if they knew what is happening in Kentucky? True, there are no more Indians to be killed, nor any more land to be claimed. But is that all that can be done? Does not our state rank with the lowest ten in the field of education? Do not unlawfulness and crime go unpunished? Are there not sections within our state where it is dangerous to uphold the law?

Kentuckians, look around you! Is there not great room for improvement in any direction in which you turn? Kentucky, Kentucky, of which Boone was proud, have you gone forever? Where is the Kentucky of which songs are sung and of which poems are written? Boone's Kentucky, Walker's Kentucky, Harlan's Kentucky, are you as the ever fleeting pot of gold at the end of the rainbow? Kentucky, you are like a garden which has been forgotten after the first planting—spotted in a few places with flowers of profound beauty but surrounded by a growth of black thorny briars.

Has it not been said that wherever good seeds are sown in fertile soil from there shall be reaped many fold? I ask you, was not the soil fertile? And the seeds were tested many times at Boonesborough and Fort Harrod.

Oh! Kentuckians, look around you! Do you not see those empty "newgrounds" staring you in the face? What happens when such sights are abundant? What does this mean? I'll tell you, fellow Kentuckians. It means dissension, disorder, crime, and immoral conduct. When young men, who should be in the fields, or at some other honest labor, are loafing on the street, sipping sweet drinks, tasting dainties, and chatting such futile words as no language can describe, no poet would portray, no musician would undertake to sing, then there must be a defect somewhere. When

puny weaklings stand in soda fountains and barrooms and strut and brag of "how many pints I killed last night," then something is badly wrong.

Old Wilderness Trail, sleep on and on. Wake not in this new day of speed. For thou art also sleeping with Boone, Walker, Harlan, and Bell. No longer does the cumbersome ox cart wheel along thy winding face, but in its place is the gasoline hand of death.

Kentuckians, is the blood of Boone and his followers flowing quietly through your veins? Blood of Boone, of Harlan, of Walker, of Bell, surge up, lest we perish in a thoughtless world!

Oh! stricken Kentucky, will you wrap yourself snugly with your blanket of legends and lie down on the couch of history?

POEM

By George Evans

Each star, by destiny, must travel its course through,
Until, by destiny, it wavers from its path.
Then, falling, burns its light out in the spaceless skies
And ends in nothingness, no stone, nor epitaph.
But let this be the script each tombstone bears
If ever one is placed for fallen star:
"I varied from my route to have some play.
I wonder where my fruits of pleasure are."

Each star must travel out its given course.
So, every man must live his own life to its end.
Or else live victim of his own remorse
And never fight with life, or never self defend.

THREE POEMS

By Helen Anthony

MELODY

A wisp of a
Tune—
Threading its way
Through the twilight.
Escaped,
Perhaps, from another
Day:
A fragrant of an air,
Pale,
And like the flame of a candle,
Lingering.

TO MY MOTHER

Warm brown hair,
So dear, because it is
Yours.
The sweetness, deep
In your eyes;
Consoling,
Forgiving the wilful
Way of a child,
Not yet so wise.
Your hands,
So filled with wisdom:
They know
How deep the love
Lies in my
Heart.

TORCH SONG

Etched on my heart:
A memory—
Tall white candles
Lighted and
Glowing,
Until you were gone.
Without sunlight,
The day is filled with
Shadow—
The night
Weeps.

MY HEART'S MADNESS

By Carmel Leon Jett

I once saw the flowers of heaven
And smelled their sweet perfume.
I know of places one and seven
Where bright red roses bloom.

The sunbeams kissed the dewdrops,
And the dewdrops kissed the leaves.
But my heart hushed up the kissing
For it knew not these.

My aching eyes see beauty
Which my soul does not divine.
Though I'm bound to iron duty,
I stole a sip of love's red wine.

The skies are bright above me,
But a shadow's shade flits by.
And soft voices whisper gently
Words which love cannot deny.

Voices whispering through the treetops
Which beckon as they sway,
"Oh, forget life and its duty.
Come let love have his way."

And the moving shadow falls,
And the stars shout from the sky.
Life is not worth the living,
Yet for love I dare not die.

Come and sit here beside me,
For the grass is soft and cool,
And the loving you denied me
I shall give to fortune's fool.

Life is pleasant in the Springtime
When the gardens are in bloom,
And soft winds come whispering
To that old, old tune.

"Love me now, or love me never,"
Every shy flowers seems to say.
"When I pass I'm gone forever,
Oh, let love have his way."

But the dark blades of grasses
Are much stiffer than the rest.
"Love is but a thing that passes.
Practicality is best."

TWO POEMS

By Genevieve Parris

BECAUSE OF YOU

I've scaled the heights of glory;
Sipped nectar with the gods;
I've eaten of forbidden fruits;
Trodden paths untrod;

I've broken faith with our fathers;
Rent mystery's veil in two;
I've drunk the dregs of black despair;
I've even tasted hell
Because of you.

A VOICE

I hear a voice that's calling
Gently calling me.
It comes not o'er the mountain
Nor the deep blue sea.

It comes not from the northland
Nor a southern zone.
I pause, I strain to hear it.
Yes, the call's my own.

It seems to me to falter
Then go on again.
The whisper that's rebounding
Brings the same refrain.

The voice that's calling haunts me,
Pulls my heart strings so,
I list to catch the message.
Does the sunset glow?

What turned those clouds to brightness,
Made my path anew?
'Twas the radiance of the dreams
Whispered me by you.

SECOND JOURNEY

By Donald Michelson

Bonny Akers had never been on a train before. Oh, of course, she used to watch the late afternoon train pass through Blackpit every day, and she used to wave at the two or three passengers who happened to glance out the window. As the mournful wail of the locomotive whistle cried itself out, Bonny would try to imagine the sensation of riding on a train and waving at dirty little kids like herself. Well, here was her chance.

The mines had shut down in Blackpit and Bonny and her father were on their way to Louisville, where a promised job awaited Mr. Akers. This trip was like starting life all over again—without Mother though. After those eleven bedridden years since Bonny was born, Mrs. Akers had slowly faded until even three years before she died she looked like a corpse in her bed.

Bonny's grief was diverted now—this was a great adventure. She was a sure-enough passenger on the L. & N. local, bound for Louisville. Even between fitful spells of cat-napping, Bonny found in each new stopping place (the "local" stopped at every pig path) fresh approval for the squat waiting stations that hovered over scrawny children and drab adults who waited, expressionless, to board the dingy train. The folk were just like herself. Maybe they, too, were leaving their squalid huts to embark upon an adventure in Louisville.

Paw Akers was sitting beside her snoring unevenly. He would growl as he shoed the flies away from his droopy tobacco-stained mustache, which hung in an unkept manner above a weak, cleft chin. Opening his bloodshot eyes, eyes half blind from years of heavy drinking, he stared at the cluster of dimly lighted electric bulbs on the ceiling.

"Funny thing about Paw," thought Benny, studying him as he grunted a little and began snoring again, "he's always pretty well likkered up, but when he's sober and his eyes are clearer, those eyes that look at you so sad-like, that it makes a body feel that heaviness inside that Maw always said is your heart crying."

How sorry she would feel for Paw on those nights when Maw had those awful coughing spells. Paw would hold Maw's hand and stroke her forehead until she fell asleep again, then he would go out on the porch and sit in the rocker and cry real quiet-like.

The train was picking up speed, and darkness settled itself for the night. Bonny pressed her forehead against the cool window glass and admired her reflection there, changing the expression on her face many times for various effects. She must have fallen asleep a few minutes later, for that window pane and the picture of herself she saw there was the last thing she remembered until the train screeched to a stop in Louisville.

"C'mon, dumplin', we're here now," her father called to her.

A taxi took them out into the suburbs, where they approached a large estate and turned into the white graveled roadway. It was nearly morning, and the trees and grass sparkled the pearly gems given them by last night's rain. Bonny thrilled at the prospects of entering the great rambling house that loomed before her. The massive white pillars, the broad veranda, and the ivy covered lattice were incredible to the eye of one who had found beauty only in her world of make-believe; for Bonny knew only the drab surroundings of the mining village from which she had come.

A handsome, white-haired lady met them on the veranda and ushered them into a reception room whose rich furnishings were becoming hazy outlines to the starry-eyed girl.

"You'll stay with us, Bonny," said the tall woman. "Your father is leaving you with me. You see, I have never had a daughter—and now that you have no—that your mother is gone, I am going to be your mother."

"You'll stay with us, Bonny," said the tall woman. "Your You wouldn't want me, lady. I don't know how to act—this house. No, no, Paw, don't let her take me!" she cried.

"Now, now, dumplin'," soothed her father, "before yer Maw died she ast fer you to stay with this here woman. Now be a good little 'un and let your Paw go about his bizness."

And without a further word her father left her sobbing in the arms of the stately lady.

"Bonny, my dear, you are tired. Let me help you bathe; and then you can lie down until I fix something for you to eat."

Despite her bewilderment Bonny obeyed the kindly woman who asked to be her mother.

After bathing in a white coffin-like affair which the lady said was a bath tub ("Funny thing to call a bath tub," thought Bonny, comparing it to the wooden trough sometimes used as a bathing receptacle in her home), the wide-eyed girl was shown to a bed. She fell soundly asleep in less than five minutes

It was hunger rather than sufficient sleep that caused Bonny to awake early in the afternoon. She did not want to open her eyes for a few moments, preferring to languish in her new found comfort Comfort! What comfort? Why, the mattress was hard and lumpy and the pillow smelled dank and filthy! But the lady the bath tub the soft bed! No Bonny did not have to open her eyes to assure herself that she was not having hallucinations.

There was no need of looking about the room. She knew too well her surroundings, even though she had been there but six hours Yes the mattresses were lumpy and the pillows did stink at Ferndale Reformatory for Girls And the trip to Louisville was a reality too, every bit of it; only it happened eight years ago, and she re-lived all of it today in her dreams after she had fallen on the bed exhausted from the harrowing experiences of the court trial yesterday, the all-night ride on the train, and the routine beating that all neophytes are administered at Ferndale Reformatory for Girls. That "grande tour" eight years ago to Louisville, where life was to begin anew, was her first journey this trip to Ferndale Reformatory for Girls, where life had a wa of beginning and ending at the same time; this was her second journey.

INTERLUDE

By Robert James Hatton

Life is but an interlude.
 You and I cannot tarry long.
 Our loves and hates are fleeting things
 Like faint echoes of an evening song.

But while you and I are here,
 My love bridges eternity's great span.
 To have you would make this interlude complete,
 Yet now I know I never can.

TWO SONNETS

By Clyde Johnson

(Upon beholding the body of a friend who had committed suicide)

I passed into a room of quiet, where death,
 The silent, spoke. "No youth has lived and dreamed
 The dream of youth, but heard a whispered breath
 That said, 'Your fate is not of common kind'."
 Yet, lies in state, a youth, its dream, and faith.
 Deep bedded down in silks lies laughter too,
 A still cold form the grave shall sift to dust—
 A breast where once was hope, and young love grew.

I bowed before the silent face of death
 And wept, for this I knew: though strong our trust,
 It may despair. Convictions often wrought
 In one's own mind are not confirmed by life.
 My dream and faith like his may come to nought.
 What claim have I, who too may know the knife?

When yet a child, I heard an old tale spun
 Of how immortal gods in ages past,
 For jealous envy of the mortals lest
 They soon become more splendid than the sun,
 For man was then a radiant creature born,
 Rent wild the new born heavens, and the last
 Of that fine race were split in twain; then cast
 Abroad upon the earth to grieve and search.

Last evening as the sun went down; against
 The warm lit sky, I saw two figures move
 Along the rim of yonder hill. I wist,
 They moved toward each other in the west,
 And in the silent embrace when they kissed
 Was all the fire of man's wild search for love.

THE SUN AFTER RAIN

By Lucile Nunnelley

The sun after rain to my soul
brings a peace.
And to my day a calm;
As the caged bird sings for his
release
I rejoice for my heart's balm.
The rainbows dancing in the pools
on the ground
Recall God's promise of yore;
I enjoy a quiet sweeter than I've
found
And a hope never felt before.
Perhaps the trees by the rain
bent down
Are restored the same as I,
For a sheen of gladness is spread
around
And a rainbow lights the sky!

POEM

By Edith Haddix

YOU showed me the beauty of work,
Made me feel the need of it.
Life is not empty space of time,
But minutes filled with
adventure,
love, and
friendship.

YOU did not make me wish to be an Alexander
Who "conquered all the world and cried
for more to conquer
Nor a slave to work and worry,
But one who found
adventure,
love, and
friendship.

TRIUMPH

By Dord E. Fitz

The trees seemed to reach up and touch the sky;
Their spreading boughs interlaced above my head
And shut me in.

Suddenly like a wild quick flash,
I towered into the heavens.
My raven hair brushed the soft, white clouds of eternity.
I raised my face and drank in their misty fragrance,
Then cast glory blinded eyes back to Earth.

There like a transparent bubble She played,
Bathing Her face in the long violet shadows
Of an eternal morning.

WHO IS SAVAGE

By Joseph E. Dyer

If anyone can deny that universal happiness should be the goal of civilization, then I can deny that he is born for any reason. Granting that there will be no such denials, I am left in the position to say that we are here to make other people happy. We are not happy of our own accord. We are so according to the goodwill bestowed on us by others. There is nothing left but a logical sequence of thought, then, which should make plain that we must occupy ourselves with making other people happy. In no other way will we find contentment, for if we must receive from other people, surely we must refund goodwill to them. Otherwise, we shall receive without appreciation; and as appreciation is happiness, we receive nothing. To live in contentment is to deal in happiness.

I am not saying that you must accept this point of view, but tear it to pieces if you can. If you agree, then read on. If you do not think there is one decent, simple thought stated, then stop.

The black man of French West Africa was once subservient to none other than his god. The French came. The railroad began at Dakar. That is where the black began toiling—and dying. For each mile laid, three thousand died. The railroad reaches only to the headwaters of the Congo—twelve hundred bloody miles—but that is not nearly so long as a chain of black corpses reaching twice as far.

The "native," the French; judge between the two and answer unbiased as to which was the more savage during the period of the black's subjugation. The hours were long, the sun hot, fever

prevalent, the whips were cruel and men died—no exchange of happiness there. The French do not even appreciate the work of the black. France should dedicate each cross tie along the Congo ribbons of steel in commemoration of the dead negro who fell by the iron. He lay there rolling his horrible white eyes in pathetic emotion, then closed his panicky, black lids forever and cried his ghost away, still wondering as to the objectives that might exist in two meaningless lines of scorching steel that faded away into the jungle. His quiet black body gives no vent to an answer to the sweating, toiling men of its kin as they work and wonder how a railway should bring happiness to their people.

You might say that this inhumanity was a means to an end; yes, to an end for what race? Should one race die that another might reach the gold fields—or if there are no gold fields, we can tax the black. Oh, yes, he will pay—he carries the spear, we carry a machine gun.

The Hamites, Hottentots, and Bantus of South Africa were once free to roam, hunt, or work in the forenoon; to lie in the shade, their toes in the dust and their backs to the heavens in the afternoon. Then whites (Cecil Rhodes and others) found diamonds under their beds. They were driven from their rest—that is, all except those who died from eating too much lead. Rhodesia was conquered; thousands of blacks were murdered, their lands plundered; they were under subjugation. It was done for civilization, of course, not for money. The Transvaal was invaded by the English. Was this for civilization? The Dutch were there—or are they a civilized people?

For the sake of civilization Italy invaded Ethiopia. The savage must be civilized! On the other hand, we might say with some degree of truthfulness that civilization is becoming the means for an organized system of cooperative savagery.

Wherein does the distinction between savagery and civilization lie? If it is concerning religion—Ethiopia is said to possess the oldest and most original forms of Christianity—Africa as a whole is no less spiritualistic than Christian or Mohammed nations. Even though a minor part of their religion may consist of fetishism and sun-worship, it serves their purpose. Our God, who sits on a golden throne, serves ours. If their gods dwell in trees, the sun, the bush, the animals, and our God in a golden city with gates of pearl, does that answer the questions or mark the differences between the so called savagery of the black and the so called civilization of the whites? If it does answer the questions, I might add for further consideration that the unmorality and crime of Abyss-

sinia has never equalled the immorality and social injustices of our own United States.

If it is a savage thing for the tribal blacks to fight and kill a few of each other, then what term would justify the whites for the wholesale slaughtering of a hundred thousand negroes within six months—maybe wholesale slaughter isn't savage, for only civilization can accomplish that. Maybe it isn't savage to kill a million people, or over—yes, a million would be an excellent line of demarcation between savagery and civilization. At any rate the civilized races murdered a few more than that number in the last great war. Thank heaven, we are becoming a more civilized world; if you doubt that fact you have only to view the new world appropriations for modern "defense" measures for verification.

Is there any difference between the savage and the civilized man? Oh, I should say a few major ones; you might not agree with me, but at any rate you can not disagree. The savage sometimes, in rare instances, hunts for the head of a rival. After his quarry is found and killed he displays the skull as a sign of prowess. The civilized man finds his quarry and leaves thousands of dead on the battle fields—yes, he buries them; nevertheless, they are as dead as any black man whose skull decorates the girdle of his once mortal enemy.

Immortality is granted both white and black; the black savage goes to a happy hunting ground. "There is no such place," says the white Christian as he leaves for an eternal peace in a city with streets paved of gold.

The tribal dances are vulgar and sensuous. The savage should be more modest; he should get some pointers from our night clubs, stage hits of Broadway and burlesque shows; most likely the poor black would be shocked within an inch of his life.

Some of the blacks do not marry; they only live together, for quite a long while, too. Whites marry; well, divorces may be for the best any way.

The black races of Africa, left alone, are largely happy. The white man usually worries his life away hunting for happiness.

Even though the natives of the "Dark Continent" are unmoral, it is much worse to be "immoral," which is a common term in our society.

To say which contributes the more to universal happiness; to say which has the more applicable code of ethics from their own point of view; and to say which of the two, civilized man or slave, can evolve a more complete system of catholic contentment for the human race—I leave for you to decide.

MEN ARE SLAVES TO MAGIC DREAMS

By Dord E. Fitz

Oh, would I could be that in dreams I make me!
 For I'm but a savage beside my own ideal.
 But the god of wild dreams is kind and takes me
 As free as a thought that haunts the will.
 Soaring with the mad wind across a dark sky,
 On, on, to the land where dreams never die.
 And in that strange region fair
 The fragrance of eternal flowers floods the air,
 And with their glowing petals,
 As pure as the skies,
 I wash the earth dust from my tired eyes;
 And then with vision that is and yet has never been,
 I see how god-like are all men.

A halo travels ten thousand miles around my soul.
 Ten million god-like rays penetrate my soul.
 And I am transparent with joy.

Ah! Strange eruptions of happiness that burst from
 My heavy heart!
 Ah! Joy that swells from out thy hiding place within
 My soul
 And sets my thoughts aflight in search of eternal pastures!
 Some day, I shall make your magic a part of me for always.
 Forgive me, God, if I trod on ground forbidden to earthly
 Beings,
 I know I'm but a bridled child, and a slave to magic
 Dreams.

DRAB SEPULCHRE

By Donald Michelson

That letter I wrote to you—and did not mail—
 Well, you'll never know it, but today it's
 A flimsy sheath of jet-black flakey ashes—
 Hardly the noble pyre last year I swore
 Our love would immortalize itself upon.

SHADOWS

By Robert J. Hatton

From each ecstatic memory of you
 I cannot flee.
 The fire burns on unending for you,
 A fantasy.
 Like the rumble of some far distant surf,
 Pounding, beating
 Your name.
 Bit of lavender and old lace;
 Faint scene of rare perfume,
 A memory.
 The wistful sigh of departing day;
 Rush of life's unending thousands;
 My head bows down with grief.
 You are gone
 From me.

A LOVER AFTER REJECTION

By Carmel Leon Jett

Am I to be thankful for a love
 That lies dead in my bosom?
 Yesterday I was alive to all about me.
 I moved and felt and had my being.
 I looked and life seemed pleasant.
 Simple it was to pluck its fruit and eat.
 God, I would that I could take back
 The moment wherein I ate!
 Yet, I can as easily stay Christ's
 Twenty century old crucifixion as
 Bring back noon yesterday.
 I cannot think.
 I have no heart and flesh.
 Whence comes this pulsing in my bosom?
 Whence comes this heat?
 The passion's gone.
 Surely it cannot be a stone has breath.
 It cannot be that there is life in death!

DRAMA OFF STAGE

By Clyde Lewis

Terry scowled as only Terry Van Deer could scowl, and rolled the burnt out cigar to the corner of his mouth. "What makes you think you can act?" he asked the man who was standing before his desk.

I put aside a screen book that I had been reading and glanced casually over the applicant; not that I had a thing in the world to do with what was going on. I was only a reporter who was trying to get a story on the forthcoming Van Deer production and who found it pretty hard to read with Terry yelling in my ear. Besides, the man before the desk struck me as interesting—call it a hunch if you like.

"Don't stand there like a fence post." Terry was booming. "Speak up. I won't bite."

The fellow was twisting a battered old hat between thin fingers. He was old; a trifle stoop shouldered with misty blue eyes and sparse graying hair. I wondered when he had eaten his last meal.

"I've been an actor all my life," he began. "Some twenty odd years' experience. The breaks have been against me for the past two years, but with a little luck—"

Terry interrupted him harshly, chewing moodily on his cigar. "We don't gamble on luck around here, mister. Either you're good or you're not, and most times you're not—"

He sounded pretty tough, but I thought that the old guy had made a good impression. There was something in his voice when he talked. He made Terry look a little foolish for all his blustering.

It was two hours later that the director was ready to talk to me. He had spent a gruelling afternoon interviewing a couple of hundred actors, so he was in an ugly mood. I began to think that he wouldn't make such good copy after all.

"Okay, Gleason," he snorted, turning in his chair and looking at me from under shaggy brows. "What do you want with me?"

"Just the low down," I told him sweetly. "Williamson is producing a new show. You're directing it. I want a story."

For a moment I believe he considered having me thrown out. Then he crossed his legs grimly, saying, "Just so you make it snappy. And remember, this has got to be the right kind of a story; good publicity; none of that tripe that you cram your column with."

"Sure," I told him. "Sure it'll be good publicity—and it's not for the column. Now what's the thing all about? Who's going to be the star?"

I was watching him while we talked. You can learn more from watching a man like Terry than you ever could from what he tells you. I felt smart when I saw the cigar droop a little and the lines around his mouth tighten ever so slightly. I knew then just as well as if he had told me with words. Terry was worried. There was something wrong with the show.

"The Star!" He spit the words at me, his eyebrows bristling. "Hell! You reporters are all the same. The only thing that matters to you is the star. We've signed Eva Reins and Ralph Morris for the leads but—"

I said, "What kind of a show is it going to be?"

He didn't answer at once. There was a look that came into his eyes that I had never seen before, and I had been chinning around with Terry for four or five years. It was a look of satisfaction, such as, maybe, you'd see on the face of a painter when he discusses one of his masterpieces.

Then he was saying, "This is the one thing that I've really wanted to do all my life, or ever since I started in this game. It's going to be real, something I can be proud of. Not just another excuse to show a lot of girls' legs."

I nodded, trying hard to look sympathetic, and said, "Something with a soul; I know what you mean."

He looked at me and gulped. It's funny how you find out that lots of hardboiled guys are only acting. And then, "I'm going to trust you, Gleason. This is not for the press, understand? But I've got to tell some one my troubles."

"Troubles?"

He got up and paced the floor. "I suppose you think I haven't got a conscience; that I haven't a heart of my own. But there are times when this job drives me almost crazy . . . Now take that old guy who was in here before."

I have to admit now that I was surprised. I hadn't forgotten the old man, but I had been sure that Terry had not given him another thought.

"He was starving," went on Terry, "and I had to tell him that there wasn't anything for him. He's no spring chicken; a job might fix him up. You might not think anything of it, but you don't have to do that sort of thing every day. You don't have to

look into a hundred of their faces and watch what you see there when you tell them no”

I caught an uneasy feeling growing in the pit of my stomach. My notebook was closed and I hardly knew if the pencil was still between my fingers. “I kind of thought you’d consider him, Terry. He looked pretty good to me.”

The director shook his head. “There are thousands more like him, kid. I know. I’ve been in the game too long. They’re close, but they never make the grade. He’s been just a second rater all his life. Each part in this show must be played perfectly. I can’t take chances.”

“You need a drink,” I told him. I could see that the whole thing was getting on his nerves. He looked like the ghost of his real self.

“You know the part he wanted?” asked Terry, disregarding my suggestion. “He wanted to play Sheldon Thomas. A bum comes in here off the streets and asks to play a part like that. It’s impossible. Why he wouldn’t have the faintest connection with the man he was trying to play. Thomas was one of the most successful actors that ever stood before an audience. It’s the most important part in the show. It must be real”

I glanced at him suspiciously. His voice had become higher and for the moment I was puzzled. “Thomas,” I murmured. “He was that Englishman who was so popular a few years ago. Who’s going to play the part?”

It was then that I knew that I had stumbled upon the solution to Terry’s mood. He ran nervous fingers through his hair and said, “That’s the hell of it. I can’t find the man I want and the first rehearsal is a week away.”

I began to understand what a position he was in. When a director sets his heart on a certain type of actor, there are usually days of anguish until the right one is found.

“I might have given the old guy a chance though,” murmured Terry. “Perhaps he could have acted. But something inside kept telling me not to.”

“Okay,” I said. “Forget it. You’ve got a tough job. You can’t let it get you soft.”

“No,” echoed Terry. “I can’t let it get me soft. Come on, let’s get out of here. I’ll give you another interview tomorrow. I want to get home and rest.”

I happened to be the first to open the door. God knows I was not expecting what I found when I stepped across the sill. For a moment I gazed down at the ground stupidly at the huddled form at my feet. Terry looked over my shoulder and I remember his uttering a low oath. He put forth a hand to touch the body and then drew back as if he had been shocked. His lips were quivering and colorless except for the tobacco stains.

I knelt and turned the body over. It was the ragged old man who had been in the office earlier in the day!

It was four or five hours before things were really clear. By that time I was sitting in a daze in Terry's apartment drinking my fifth or sixth Scoch; I don't remember which.

"The doc said it was suicide," Terry was saying. His face was gray green, the eyes rolling over the modernistic apartment with an effort. "You know why."

I nodded. Sure I knew why. The man had been listening there at the door. Both of us knew that much.

"I'm through with the theater," said Terry, his voice sounding strained and a little cracked. "I'll be damned if I ever go into another show house . . ."

I started to say something, but he was holding out a piece of pasteboard. I heard him saying, ". . . found that on the floor . . ." And then I was looking at the thing, trembling as I understood the full significance of what he had just told me.

It was a calling card, old and greasy and a trifle tattered; but the engraving stood out and seemed to shout its message to me. I read the name aloud, my voice choked to a whisper:

"SHELDON H. THOMAS."

"You're a hell of a reporter," my city editor told me when I got back. "I send you out to get a story and you come back and tell me Van Deer ain't going to direct a show . . ."

I let it go at that. Maybe you think I'm crazy, but there are some things sacred even to a newspaper reporter.

GHOSTS

By Lena Eyer

You ghosts of dreams that died long years ago,
Draw near and listen to me while I speak.
I beg you hear my plea unto the end,
Then let me live in peace, nor haunt me more
With whisperings of your shrouds in dead of night.

You largest ghost of all, who haunts me most,
My dream of supreme goodness of the world,
I mind me well the night I buried you.
It was a night of blackest, black despair,
Without one single star to shed a ray
Within the tomb of sorrow where you lay.
My tears fell fast and hardened as they fell,
To form a silver mound as firm as stone,
With which I closed the entrance to the tomb.

And now you second ghost of smaller size,
With grinning mouth, but solemn burning eyes,
My foolish dream of sacred marriage vows.
For five long nights I struggled, labored, bled,
Before I had you safely in your grave,
Surrounded by those smaller kindred dreams
Which died with you. The wounds you left behind
Have slowly healed, nor barely left a scar
To show the world I suffered when you died.

And now I come to you the smallest ghost,
My dream of law and justice on the earth,
You would not dare to haunt me all alone,
But slink behind your fellows' spectral forms.
'Twas New Year's Eve, just seven years ago
I burned your body on a funeral pyre.
I watched the smoke and flames shoot toward the sky
Then settle, slowly dying to the ground,
And rain dissolve your ashes where they fell.

And just when I began to hope for peace,
Three phantoms come and haunt me in the night.
The mound of tears has melted from the door;
The grave I dug so deep has opened wide;
The scattered dust has gathered from the ground.
Perhaps there still is goodness on the earth,
Perhaps there's still respect for marriage vows,
And law and justice still will reign supreme.
My ghosts! Where are they? Ah, now I can sleep.

SUPPLIANT

By Orville Byrne

Down on my bended knees I said to God:

“I come a pagan to Thy Throne of Grace.

I kneel before Thee, cover fast my face,

Show Thee my untouched heart. Oh, in its place

Put love for Thee. Canst Thou not do it, Lord?”

I raised my head. God answered from above:

“Child, child, this thing that thou hast asked of Me

Must come but through My Son. He gives it thee

If thou wilt but believe in Him and Me.”

And then I said: “I will ask Christ God’s love!”

Before the Crucifix I said to Him:

“See, Christ, my heart is cold. I would know Thee

In all Thy glory. But infirmity

Of humankind is ball and chain to me

And keeps me fettered. — ’Tis an honest whim!”

Christ answered: “Child, in truth thy heart is cold.

Only a woman’s touch can soften thee!

Go thou to Mary on bended knee

Ask help of Her. Say that I sent Her thee.

Mayhap Her love can bring thee to the Fold.”

I knelt before the Holy Mother. There

I spoke no word. In deep humility,

Awestruck and reverent, it seemed to me

I was smote dumb. And all eternity

Hung heavy on me as I waited there.

I raised my head. I did see Mary smile!

And at Her smile I felt there roll from me

The weight of guilt for all the sins that be!

Peace and God’s love came down from Her to me.

Then said She: “Child, I’ve loved thee all the while.”

THOU ART THE MAN

Kelly Clore

I am a pacifist. I am determined not to take part in any war. I will not fight. I may be called a coward for the stand which I take. I may be considered by some to be unpatriotic. But it cannot be said of me that I am a taker of lives, a destroyer of flesh, a drainer of blood, a torturer of souls. I love my America, but I also love my fellowmen. I sincerely believe I can serve my country more by living for her than by dying for her.

Recent happenings in Europe indicate that shortly I may be given the opportunity to prove my resoluteness in this matter. The Spanish controversy is serving only as a whetstone to sharpen the belligerent tendencies of the dominant European personalities. I read a little parody the other day, published in the humorous section of a magazine. But oh, the painful truth, the pathos that the writer has expressed in these lines:

“Sing a song of Europe,
 Highly civilized,
 Four and twenty nations
 Thoroughly hypnotized.
 When the battles opened
 The bullets began to sing.
 Wasn't that a silly thing
 To do for any king?
 The kings were in the background
 Issuing commands;
 The queens were in the parlors
 By etiquette's demands;
 The bankers in the counting house
 Busy multiplying,
 And all the rest were at the front,
 Doing all the dying.

War! It's a long span of time from Neolithic man, who first used metal to advantage, to modern man with his veneer, his polish, his culture. Yet underneath, these men are basically the same with respect to their warring instincts — both are brutes. In spite of the teachings of the Perfect One and all of those others who have propounded the doctrine of peace, in spite of hideous reminders that war has left to mankind, today war seems inevitable among the leading European powers; and once the spark of belligerency bursts into flames there, it will spread like wildfire to the other continents of the world.

How can we bring this scourge of mankind to an abrupt halt? Would to God I knew. I am neither a prophet nor a pessimist, but I can face facts, and these lead me to only one conclusion. It is only by some super-miraculous force that another war can be averted. Masses of humanity bleeding away on barbed entanglements, human beings blown into shreds, cries of dying youth, tears of grief-stricken mothers, sobbing testimonies of those who have experienced the ghastly occurrences—barbarities which led the Duke of Wellington to say, “If you have seen but one day of war, you

would pray God you might never see another," — have not caused us to relinquish the monstrous practices of our primitive ancestors. Plans of specialists and strategists in this field of peace have all fallen short of their goal, and I frankly admit that I have no formula that will at present end war.

I am firmly convinced that there is only one method for banishing war. The key word to this method is **enlightenment**. And enlightenment can come only through long processes of development. If definite work toward the enlightenment of the world had been done in the past, today the probability of war would be immeasurably diminished. Instead the efforts which have been made for peace have been mostly in the form of extolling the beauties of peace and pointing to the horrors of war. Crusading for peace was tried, but it did not achieve its aim. Now we must find some other way.

Today I believe every intelligent person will readily admit that peace is right and war is wrong, and this conviction holds until his brutish emotions are aroused. But when he hears the blaring of bugles, the beating of drums, the trampling of feet, and the so-called "patriotic" speeches of those exploiters who seek to create wars, his emotions predominate over his intellect; his vows against the curse of nations are forgotten; he joins the parade, enlists in the ranks, and—dies. His enlightenment is not deeply enough rooted.

To me there are but two attitudes that one can assume in regard to his fellow men—the attitude of brother or the attitude of brute; there is no middle ground. It is a choice that each individual must make; he is either pre-war or pro-peace. Everyone that is not working for peace is promoting the spirit of war. He will either fight or he won't fight. He either does not care if his brothers are slaughtered, or he will exert his utmost efforts to prevent such perishings. He will either be ruled by his brutish instincts or by his enlightened intellect. I say there is no middle ground. Thou art the man who must choose.

History teaches us that the world moves not by the giant shifts and shoves of its great men but by the infinite tiny pulses of its ordinary folk. Thou art the man!

I believe that the two greatest causes of all wars are misunderstanding and the desire for personal gain. Enlightenment can remove these hindrances to peace. How? Let us see.

Human nature is such that if an overabundance of power is placed in one man's hands, he is going to use that power to assume more control. Here, indeed, has been the occasion that any man at the helm of a government, who has been given unlimited powers, did not become dissatisfied with the status of his dominion and seek, by waging war, to increase his selfish interests in the forms of glory, money, or territory. It is as true of Adolph Hitler and Mussolini as it was of Julius Caesar and Napoleon.

It is not impossible to teach people that they should not tolerate such domination. People can be made to understand that no man has the right to make them give up their lives in order that his selfish ends may be attained. The doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings was long ago proved false.

When a nation realizes that there is no fundamental difference between her sister nation and herself—that physiologically and psychologically all people are the same—warlike hatred cannot possibly exist between these two countries. When the historical and geographical backgrounds of the various countries are well-known, when diverse national customs and cultures are understood and appreciated, when men are taught not to frown upon foreigners and it is recognized that despite race, creed, or color, all men are made of flesh and blood and bone and possessed of immortal souls—then, and only then, shall we find

“Peace! And no longer from its brazen portals
The blast of War’s great organ shakes the skies
But beautiful as songs of the immortal
The melodies of love arise.”

This peace can best be brought about through enlightenment—through education. By education I do not mean formal schooling merely, but the informing and humanizing of people in general, every inhabitant of every county. Enlightenment for the masses has been too long neglected.

In our modern age one does not have to be in the classroom to learn and to become educated. The telephone, the radio, the moving picture, the newspaper, travel, television, can all be used to enlighten the world. Too many of these channels of information are under the censorship of unscrupulous monsters who seek to promote war. These instruments can be used to a better advantage. The people of the world can be reached only if organized steps are taken in that direction. Thou art the man!

But if we had only our public schools, peace could still be taught to the world. The study of psychology can be used to great advantage in understanding the habits and customs of the different people. A sympathetic study of the languages, the literatures, the arts, the industries of other countries can add much to the understanding which we desire. Such practices as exchange students, correspondence with foreign students, and student crusaders for peace can be made most helpful.

One could go on enumerating the various agencies of understanding and enlightenment. Among school subjects should be cited the social sciences — history, economics, government, and geography. Do you realize that the history we study is mainly

made up of warring activities of the various countries, that the **heroes** generally put before the students as models are men who have had military careers — Caesar, Napoleon and Alexander the Great? But nothing is taught concerning the great pacifists like the martyr William Ladd, who literally gave up his life for peace; Elihu Burritt, the wise and gentle blacksmith, whose eyes saw so much farther than other men of his time; and Pierre Dubois, the young Norman lawyer, who so earnestly strove for a permanent tribunal of arbitration. Would not a study of their gallant efforts aid in the furtherance of the cause of peace?

Today economic and social appeal should be added to the former appeals of religion, morality, and philanthropy. Only such efforts for enlightenment will meet the tremendous inertia of human nature. I say with General Bliss, "I think it is our duty to view war in terms of generations of centuries; to regard ourselves not as conceivers of the relatively petty interest of today and tomorrow, but as guardians of the ages to come." World peace can only be established when the people of the world are put in a receptive mood for it. They can and must be enlightened. It may not come in our generation. Procrastination has too long held sway. But it can come to our posterity if only we will act. My simple and sincere message is THOU ART THE MAN to do it.

POEM

By Clyde Johnson

It is afternoon
In the early spring,
And I sit alone
On the quiet bank
Beside a mountain stream.
In the cool shade
I listen to the waves
That touch the warm dry sand
Below me,
In the eddy of a pool,
The flashing minnows play
And dart through shadows in the water.
Above, is a clear sky and the sun.

Oh tragic muse, why do you plague me so
On such a day, that thoughts of death
Play havoc with my soul?
While overhead and all around,
A quiet symphony—
Of early spring.

FOOL'S GOLD

By Donald Michelson

Yellow gold is strewn across the waters,
And gleams among the ripples of the tide.
As eager hands dip in the blazoned surf,
A blackish mantle shrouds the summer sky.

Gone is my glittering treasure—
How near my grasp it was then.
You say it was only fool's gold?
Ah, then so are the dreams of men.

OF DISAPPOINTMENT

By Carmel Leon Jett

When the roses bloomed, I thought you were coming.
I thought you would come, and the roses fell.
Then came the marigolds and the ill snapdragons
And the blue, blue eyes of the Scotch bluebells.
My love was a babbling brook which flowed and overflowed.
And the shafts of sunbeams were spears which wounded
My heart with laughter. I said to myself, "He will come."
And the China asters curled and fell in the Fall sun.
And the puff balls burst, and the princess dropped
Her flaming feathers. In a lifeless garden, I waited
Till the snow was a white blanket, and the winds
Blew blue, and the hoar frost fell. Still I waited on
And dreamed I could forget. It is Spring again. Is it?
Yesterday, I found blue knots on the lilac bush,
But it matters little for I know you will not come.

DEATH

By Evelyn Hume

It comes
Stealthy at night
Soft and sad in the day
Always near, beckoning to us—
It goes.

CRYING FOR YOU

By Dord E. Fitz

Blue moon beams in glory peep
Through leafy trees while the world's asleep.
Red roses bow and scent the air
With a magic sweetness beyond compare.

Again I'm alone with my memories,
Memories and dreams of bygone days
When that mysterious something within our souls,
Held us silent and content.
Why have you gone, I love you so,
Why leave me here alone to lament?

When the night bird cries,
I'm crying for you;
Alone in the shadows, so lonely without you.
Memories and dreams can never console
The longing in my heart,
You're a part of my soul.

How can I go on, how can I forget,
Days long gone, so dear to me yet?
I will ever love you, and ever be true,
When the night bird cries
I'm crying for you.