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# The South Carolina Review

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*The Review* is edited by a cooperative editorial staff from three South Carolina universities.

The editors solicit literary manuscripts of all kinds: essay, fiction, poetry, criticism, opinion, social comment, scholarship, and reviews. South Carolinians, native and transplanted, are especially encouraged to contribute.

Manuscripts should be addressed to the Editors, *The South Carolina Review*, Department of English, Box 28661, Furman University, Greenville, S. C. 29613, and should be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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*One for Opi*

Snow in the morning  
 And you to wake beside me;  
 Beyond the window,  
 Hills and trees veiled  
 By white flakes falling—  
 We drink our coffee from one cup,  
 Then out,  
 You stepping in my tracks.

HENRY MITCHELL

*Editorial*

Is there a place in South Carolina for a magazine of writing that clarifies, moves, provokes, and inspires? We believe there is, and this first issue of *The South Carolina Review* is evidence of our optimism. We feel sure that in our state and our region there is a body of readers for the kinds of essays, poems, and fiction here included. In fact, we sincerely hope that interest in the *Review* will extend beyond regional boundaries. Another question to which this issue should itself furnish an answer is whether there are South Carolina writers capable of supplying the kind of material we think appropriate. In the following pages appear, we believe, a varied and excellent sampling of work being done by, for the most part, native and adopted South Carolinians. Pulitzer Prize winner Harry S. Ashmore reviews the origins of his interest in racial justice and comments on the contemporary social scene. The noted critic Louis D. Rubin, Jr., evaluates the achievements of Charleston poet Beatrice Ravenel. Novelist Max Steele and critic Lodwick Hartley give us short stories with a distinctive local flavor. Among the poets represented are Kinloch Rivers and Girdler B. Fitch, two of the state's most gifted practitioners. And subsequent issues of the *Review* will carry such names as Raven I. McDavid, John Dickson Carr, and C. Hugh Holman — to cite only a few. In addition, the editors are making a persistent effort to discover new talents and to offer them an audience.

The policy of the *Review*, however, is not parochial. Contributors will not be required to furnish South Carolina birth certificates or tax receipts. In the tradition of Southern hospitality, writing of excellence from any source is always welcome. Nothing will be published merely because it is local; nothing will be rejected merely because it is not.

Though the state boasts many magazines reflecting specialized interests, not since 1949, when *American Letters: A Monthly Review* expired in Charleston, has South Carolina been the home of a journal devoted to creative and critical writing. *The Libertarian* of Greenville, published from 1923 to 1926, was the most ambitious effort in this century, but produced no lasting literature. From 1921 to 1932 the *Year Book of the Poetry Society of South Carolina* gained national attention and introduced several poets (most of whom later became novelists and playwrights), but it was, and still is, limited strictly to verse. The real flowering of South Carolina magazines was an antebellum phenomenon. Between 1795 and 1860 Charleston was the cradle of some twenty-five

literary journals, notably the *Southern Review* and *Russell's Magazine*. But since "The War" they have survived only as bound volumes in libraries.

The tradition of a journal to sustain a local literature has long since disappeared from the state. South Carolina has played a negligible role in the widespread and brilliant emergence of Southern letters in recent decades. Whatever the cause of this sad fact, the editors are convinced that it is neither literary sterility nor the absence of perceptive and receptive readers.

Concerned about the absence of a literary magazine, the present co-editors began a correspondence in the summer of 1967 that led to the approval by Furman University of the creation of this *Review* within the *Furman Studies* series. Since that time the mails have been kept busy with the continuation of this collaboration. Former colleagues, the co-editors enjoy a meeting of minds regarding the service such a magazine can perform and share a belief in the necessity of judging local and regional writing by real critical standards, not by paternal lenience. To the co-editors, good writing is good only when it is so recognized both at home and abroad. To employ any other measures for acceptance would do the authors and the readers a disservice. South Carolina Literature must be Southern Literature, and Southern Literature must be American Literature.

For this first issue, the co-editors have worked in unison. They have resolved initial problems, arrived at mutually satisfactory policies, and shared in the responsibilities of soliciting and judging manuscripts. Assistant editors Bates and Calhoun have given helpful advice. In addition, Bates has read and judged many unsolicited manuscripts and has assisted the co-editors with technical details; Calhoun has been busy arranging a panel of authors who will write critical essays on selected early South Carolina authors for a forthcoming issue.

The editors gratefully acknowledge the willing and generous cooperation of their contributors. They are especially indebted to the administration of Furman University for its endorsement and financial support. The editors recognize also the encouragement given to the project in the form of a matching grant to Furman by the national Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines. For permission to use, in Louis Rubin's critical essay, the poems of her mother, Beatrice Ravenel, the editors thank Miss Beatrice St. Julien Ravenel of Charleston. For pro-

viding some of the facts about previous literary magazines, the editors are grateful to E. L. Inabinett, Librarian, the South Caroliniana Library in Columbia; Miss Virginia Rugheimer, Librarian, Charleston Library Society; and Guy A. Cardwell, now of Chapel Hill, author of *Charleston Periodicals, 1795-1860* (Chapel Hill, N. C., Unpublished Dissertation, 1936). The co-editors and the authors, however, assume full responsibility for the contents of *The South Carolina Review* and for the opinions expressed.

A. S. R. and F. D.

### *Exhibit A*

The prosecuting attorney points to the evidence:

Burnt

taper

Spoilt

linen

Tarnished

silver

the only remains of an affluent age.

CAROLYN W. LIPSCOMB

## *Reflections of an Expatriate*

HARRY S. ASHMORE

My sometimes vocal concern with racial matters always has been a matter of geography and occupation rather than personal predilection. To be born in South Carolina in my day, with the full complement of two Confederate grandfathers, was to be introduced into the Southern Way of Life when, for all practical purposes, it embraced the Negro population of the United States. Here were rooted what were to become the dominant moral and social issues of our time. These would become inescapable for one who followed the practice of journalism from the fountainhead of nullification to the outer reach of the Confederacy; and some years ago I came to rest in Little Rock, as editor of a 150-year-old newspaper of high institutional quality and acute historical sense, when that river town became the site of bizarre events that one day may be ranked alongside those that occurred at Harper's Ferry.

When I resumed my westward migration, and came finally to the golden shore, it was as a fellow in a center committed to the study of democratic institutions—and everywhere in the United States, and indeed in the world, democratic institutions are being ravaged by the pressures and tensions of race. One afternoon I sat before a television screen watching a substantial section of the city of Los Angeles go up in flames, and heard a native Californian at my side suddenly snarl: "Damn them to hell, that's *my* town they're burning down! They're nothing but animals! They ought to be sent back to Africa . . ." He didn't really mean what he said, but he *felt* those familiar words—the old cry wrung by the combination of rage, frustration and fear that is now epidemic on both sides of the color line. The litany of my youth also had made the journey from coast to coast.

If I had to define the single most compelling characteristic of the racial confrontations of our time I would locate it here, in the void between rhetoric and reality. This has not been perceptibly narrowed since I first encountered it, in the years when circumstances still left Negroes largely mute. The white South then had a substantial monopoly on the mythology of racism, and had generated a whole galaxy of romantic fictions under which men of different color did manage to live for a while in relative harmony.

### REFLECTIONS OF AN EXPATRIATE

7

#### I

Every myth has its quota of truth, and so did the South's. Examining my early memories now in the light of experience, I remain certain that the truncated view of my childhood was not false—that the South Carolina upcountry was as I then saw it, a place of lovely vistas, with gentle people usually in the foreground. But of course, this was not all; there was more to be seen by any growing boy who did not work hard to acquire the doubtful comfort of moral myopia.

I don't know when I first began to take note of the discrepancies between my native community's professions and its practices. I do know that I acquired an increasing skepticism of the Southern Way without benefit of those agitators so beloved of the mythmakers. Like all those around me I was dependent for practical tutelage upon my elders, black as well as white. For formal instruction in matters of morals and ethics I was exposed alternately to the First Baptist and Fourth Presbyterian Churches, and I sought historical perspective at Hayne Grammar and Greenville High Schools.

In that time and place the Southern Way unquestionably was generally exalted, but I do not recall that it was much talked about—at least I have no recollection of formal instruction in the virtues or necessities of my heritage. Still, the sense of the community came through, and I have tried to describe it:

People came in two clearly defined castes: those who wore neckties and business suits and handled the affairs of the community with wisdom and rectitude, and those who wore faded blue overalls to work in the factories and fields and tended to be shiftless. There was another group, too, but it didn't count for much—Negroes, who took care of menial chores and performed personal services, and were to be treated with tolerance and even affection, but were not exactly people. Negroes, I understood, were inextricably bound up in the Southern Way, but in that simple time they had not even risen to the status of a Problem.

Exposure to books, and to an occasional inspired teacher, undoubtedly ventilated this view in some fashion as I passed through the public schools. But I recall no sense of active rebellion, no impulse to go forth and right wrongs. What I did acquire was a notion the community would ultimately judge to be equally dangerous—the conviction that perhaps, after all, the Southern Way might not be immutable.

This may very well have been less a product of personal insight than of the generally unsettling impact of the Great Depression, which coincided with my college years. Even so I enjoyed about as much immunity as a man could have, for in the fermenting years of the New Deal's birth I was sealed away at Clemson. I believe my fellow alumnus, Senator Strom Thurmond, would agree that our alma mater has not been noted as a hotbed of insurrection.

There were doubtless signs of great social dislocations and latent upheaval all around me when I began my apprenticeship on the Greenville *Piedmont*. Yet I do not recall associating these events as a counterpoint to the civic club speeches I usually covered in return for free lunch. All that really comes back sharp and clear across these thirty years is the comfortable drone of Rotary, a restful sound like that made by bees in honeysuckle.

In due season I was transferred to the *Piedmont's* senior partner, the morning *News*, and posted to the legislature here in Columbia. Down the street at the statehouse, where I am pleased to observe that the scars of General Sherman's artillery shells are still unrepaired and well marked, I first came to appreciate the looking-glass quality of political discourse, and to understand that it is designed to reflect what the beholder wants to see. The fascination of those days has stayed with me, and it accounts for my faintly guilty feeling that, in the light of hindsight, my memories ought to be a good deal more morbid than they are.

The fact is that I recall the South Carolina General Assembly as a great human comedy, identical in antic spirit with the legislatures I would later frequent in North Carolina, Georgia and Arkansas. In all the years I did journalistic battle with them, I never lost my fondness for the jackleg lawyers, farmers, undertakers, hardware merchants and the like cast up by the workings of grass roots politics. They also were among my teachers, and if the proportion of mountebanks and scoundrels ran fairly high, they were rarely mean in spirit.

Certainly I could not plead these branch-head Burkes innocent of the tragic consequences of their action, and lack of it, when the racial crisis finally broke over the Southern region. Still, I am sure that few were touched by black hatred. For most, the emotional range never rose above a sort of foot-stamping petulance, induced by the stubborn fact that the demand for Negro rights would not, as they had promised the voters, simply go away. As they went about enacting the preposterous

neo-nullification statutes they knew would never stand the test of judicial scrutiny, or even of common sense, they did not bear the look of desperate men attempting to stem the tide of history; the resemblance, as noted by a perceptive editor of an Ozark weekly, was much closer to that of hound dogs caught sucking eggs.

If my inability to identify authentic villains among those who must be held accountable for acts of genuine infamy is not a product of my own sentiment and prejudice, it is a matter of significance. I would suggest that the phenomenon is not different from that pointed out by Hannah Arendt in her dissection of the Eichmann trial, when she concluded that the ultimate horror was recognition of banality as the real quality of the man who had efficiently supervised the final solution in the Nazi gas chambers. Miss Arendt's view of the Jewish catastrophe, and the nature of evil in general, has stirred a sprightly intellectual controversy. At a somewhat less exalted level I am often similarly charged with being deficient in "a sense of tragedy, of an understanding of it as a condition of life widespread," and it may very well be so. In any event I have to record the fact that I still recall the towns and cities and country places of my youth as characterized by a civility I have not known since, in this country or abroad. And the impression persists despite the fact that, with the passage of a few decades and a few Supreme Court decisions, these placid communities provided the cast of characters for one of history's great morality plays, and in public reckoning I have had to count among the forces of darkness most of the relatives and friends who populate my fondest memories.

I remember my then colleague on the *Charlotte News*, C. A. McKnight, observing that if he were forced to render a moral judgment on racial segregation there could be only one answer -- and that he suspected that this was so for many Southerners, and was the reason the race problem had to be dealt with in other, more pragmatic terms. Yet there are, I think, reasons beyond mere prudence for conceding the ultimate moral judgment, while still avoiding its final application. As I have suggested, what is important here is what is *felt*, no less than what is *known* -- the understanding that the region is not a matter of geography but a place of the heart.

None of this can be said to mitigate the harsh truth that in all the bleak passage from slavery through segregation the Negro people in the South were subjugated by force; certainly the laws and the institu-

tions, which were the sole property of the whites, were arranged for that purpose. To preserve human dignity under these circumstances required the development of stratagems to avoid or soften the system's calculated degradation. It is evident that sometimes in some places many Negroes were dehumanized by the deprivations and indignities of a system that left them defenseless before bigoted white neighbors. It is equally evident that this did not happen to all or, it is possible to hope, even to most Southern Negroes. In the rising clamor of the civil rights movement it is understandable that one aspect of this record should be emphasized and the other ignored, and sometimes even denied; to do otherwise is to run the tactical risk of conceding that for many Negroes the old segregated society was tolerable.

## II

Exactly why, and even when, that toleration began to dissipate is not entirely clear. Robert Penn Warren, in scores of lengthy interviews recorded in *Who Speaks for the Negro?*, has inquired into the special combination of circumstances that caused the massive protest against segregation to take form after World War II. Some Negro leaders thought that without the accident of external events the movement might have come earlier — after the first war, or in the unrest of the depression — but most saw the drive for civil rights as necessarily a long, cumulative process.

This is my own view. I believe the Negro's social progress has been made possible primarily by the steady erosion of the South's isolation in the course of this century. The massive white and Negro migrations that began with World War I; the coming of the gasoline engine and the new mobility provided by the automobile; the increasing penetration by national communications media, printed and electronic — all these developments progressively undermined a social system that rested upon a pervasive innocence. There is no way of knowing how many Negroes believed the sustaining myths of white supremacy, and how many only accepted their manifestation as an expedient of survival, but there can be no doubt that the proportion significantly changed over the years. The region came, inexorably, to the effective end of the Southern Negro tolerance, and by all the means that came to his searching hand let it be known that he rejected the conventions and practices of segregation.

As the restive Negroes in the Southern communities came to the

end of their innocence the whites tended to exalt their own, looking away to that cloud-cuckoo land called Dixie. A white Southerner may very well be telling the truth when he says in rage, or sorrow, or the usual combination of both, that he just can't understand what's gotten into the niggers. A collective flight from reality on such a scale requires a mythology that embraces more than the simple shibboleth of Negro inferiority. What the South needs, one of its educators once declared, is an objective history of the Civil War written from the Confederate point of view. The South has had that, and more — a sort of *de facto* censorship that usually succeeded in silencing local dissidents through forms of social sanction, and denaturing the criticism of meddling outsiders by branding them biased and uninformed.

In seasons of stress this applied parochialism has been carried to remarkable lengths; it was frequently suggested in the literature of the White Citizens Councils that the *Arkansas Gazette's* opposition to Orval Faubus stemmed from the fact that its editor was not a natural-born Arkansan, but a radical outlander who had been "sent in" from Carolina to stir up trouble; in this view, John C. Calhoun's native state, which is mine too, became indistinguishable from a Soviet socialist republic.

It is understandable that those of us who complained about the inherent injustices of the Southern Way became pariahs. The loss of a war, an American experience unique to Southerners, tends to sanctify the past; current racial practice was part of the Confederate heritage, and to condemn it required heaping moral guilt upon the honored dead. But we were denounced with equal fervor when we did no more than point out the evident fact that Southern Negroes had acquired the support of the federal courts as they systematically rejected the demeaning absurdities of segregation. I reaped my greatest harvest of epithets when the 101st Airborne Infantry descended upon Little Rock to confirm the *Gazette's* prediction that federal force would be the inevitable consequence of Governor Faubus' anarchy. Nobody, I quickly learned, is quite so outrageous as a vindicated prophet.

One of the pragmatic areas where most Southerners can find common ground is in the effort to bring the region back into the economic mainstream. Yet even here the myth endures, for there are those who remain convinced that prosperity for the white majority can be achieved without reference to the black minority — or, if they are more forward-looking, that the proper economic rights of Negroes can be secured without regard to the basic issues of justice. Thus the South continues

to invest much precious time and energy in the effort to ignore the ultimately inescapable fact that the Negro has been the enduring exception to all the white South's own rules — and that this, not the lost war, is the root cause of the region's poverty. State and local governments proclaimed universal suffrage and denied him the vote. Religious denominations dedicated to brotherly love wouldn't permit black men to kneel with whites in the house of God. Courts lifted the blindfold of justice when colored men stood before the bar. A system of competitive free enterprise made minimal use of the Negro's skills and denied him the right to compete with his white peers. Under these circumstances there could be only a marginal economic return from Negro labor and purchasing power, and of perhaps greater importance, these actions created their own tensions, demanding of white Southerners a debilitating effort to convince themselves that what they saw and sensed was not so.

I think it is clear now that we have exported a variation of this institutionalized schizophrenia along with what now amounts to a majority of the Negro population. The South created a mythic black man, a stereotype, and gave him a limited, supporting role on the stage of history. The rest of the country denied him even this minimal status, and for as long as possible simply rendered the transplanted Negro invisible. The descendants of the Abolitionists pointed with pride to the thin upper crust of black society, which did effectively merge with the white middle class in the North, but they lifted up their eyes to some Beulahland beyond the swarming black masses in the ghetto.

Invisibility is not a new affliction for the Negro, and I would not argue with those who contend that it is the root cause of the deep psychological trauma that has now produced a reverse version in Black Power — the theory under which Negroes demand the right to shape their own destiny and ignore the white sea that surrounds them. Ralph Ellison chose *Invisible Man* as the title for perhaps the best of the contemporary novels by and about Negroes, and elsewhere he wrote: "Negro Americans are in a desperate search for identity . . . . Their whole lives have become a search for answers to the questions: Who am I? What am I? Why am I? and, Where?" The sense of invisibility also moves those who cannot articulate it; they march not only to push for specific reforms, but to be seen, to force the white community to recognize that they are there, perhaps to prove their existence to themselves. And, *in extremis*, they light up their ghettos with wanton destruction, attracting "Whitey's" attention with the arsonist's torch.

Hannah Arendt has noted that this special handicap of the dispossessed tends to become even more acute after their more urgent material needs are met. In *On Revolution* she wrote: "Hence the predicament of the poor after their self-preservation has been assured is that their lives are without consequence, and that they remain excluded from the light of the public realm where their excellence can shine; they stand in darkness wherever they go." The condition was much on the mind of at least one of the founders of the American republic. John Adams wrote:

The poor man's conscience is clear; yet he is ashamed . . . He feels himself out of the sight of others, groping in the dark. Mankind takes no notice of him. He rambles and wanders unheeded . . . he is not disapproved, censured or reproached; *he is only not seen* . . . To be wholly overlooked, and to know it, are intolerable.

Adams' conviction that darkness rather than want is the ultimate curse of poverty was extremely rare in his time, and is only now beginning to be widely shared. Yet, even as he made this remarkable insight, the second president wore a set of blinders apparently in universal use among his compatriots. He simply did not see the 400,000 Negroes who lived in the newly-minted United States along with 1,850,000 whites. Thus the proportion of population subject to total destitution and misery was probably higher here than in any of the European countries which marveled at what Thomas Jefferson called the "lovely equality" made possible by widespread American prosperity. Miss Arendt writes:

From this we can only conclude that the institution of slavery carries an obscurity even blacker than the obscurity of poverty; the slave, not the poor man, was "wholly overlooked." . . . And this indifference, difficult for us to understand, was not peculiar to Americans and hence must be blamed on slavery rather than on any perversion of the heart or upon the dominance of self-interest. For European witnesses in the eighteenth century, who were moved to compassion by the spectacle of European social conditions, did not react differently. They too thought the specific difference between America and Europe lay "in the absence of that abject state which condemns [a part of the human race] to ignorance and poverty."

One who desires to join in the endless historical speculation on what our founding fathers really had in mind might make out a fair case that the matrix for the affluent, libertarian American society of



today was provided by the existence of this socially invisible population — the submerged mass of black slaves John C. Calhoun called the “mudsill” necessary to provide the base of a great civilization. Calhoun reached back to classic Greece for the thesis he embodied in his fateful defense of slavery, not as a transient necessity in a new land, but as a positive good.

It has been a long time now since anyone, South or North, has overtly defended Calhoun’s premise. In our automated society even our most virulent racists want only to be rid of the Negro entirely, now that cheap, sub-standard labor is a drug on the market. The new technology has replaced the sub-stratum, the commonwealth has flourished — in a material way, at least — and about all we have left of Calhoun’s soaring dream is the frayed myth of white supremacy, and its rancorous counterpart, Black Power.

That, of course, is still quite a package, and under the best of conditions we will be a while sorting out the residue from the hundred years of segregated limbo to which we assigned Negroes after we recovered from slavery. The one thing we can be sure of is that we have come to the end of the time when we could quiet our consciences by pushing all but an exceptional few Negroes beyond the psychological pale, leaving them unseen by most white Americans, and viewed by those in the South through a distorting screen of prejudice and sentiment.

Now we are being forcibly reminded that this condition also produced grave distortions in the Negro vision of the white world. I have never been able to take seriously the argument of some *avant garde* writers that alienation somehow has struck the scales from Negro eyes and given them a precise and telling insight into the corrupt society dominated by their white exploiters. This seems to me no more likely than the thesis that sharp-eyed Negro body servants knew the most intimate secrets of their masters and therefore alone were able to piece together the hidden truth about the Old South. Richard Wright, I believe, was much closer to the mark when he borrowed Nietzsche’s term, “frog perspective,” to characterize the view of Negroes who have had thrust upon them the white man’s assumption that they exist on a lower moral and social plane. “A certain degree of hate combined with love is always involved in this looking from below upward,” he wrote in *White Man, Listen!* “And the object against which the subject is measuring himself undergoes constant change. He loves the object because he

would like to resemble it; he hates the object because his chances of resembling it are slight, remote.”

In any case, it must be assumed that illusions are being shattered on both sides of the color line by the mass advent of Negroes who have not only burst into view on the national scene, but have arrived surrounded by an aura of militance. At least it can be said that we have reached a critical point in the long journey when no responsible leader can again cry out, as did the good Methodist bishop of Los Angeles upon surveying the charred ruins of Watts: “How could we not have known?”

It is now fashionable, in praise or panic, to refer to the civil rights movement as a Negro revolution, and to argue that it has passed from protest to revolt. In the company I presently keep I am in a minority when I challenge this thesis, contending that even the most militant black organizations still cannot meet the minimum test cited by C. Vann Woodward when he pointed out that “no movement is a revolution in a classical sense that derives overt support from the established government, that strives to realize rather than destroy traditional values, that seeks to join rather than overthrow the social order.”

The issue is not one of semantics. I believe the distinction is essential to an understanding of the continuing Negro agitation, and to the evolution of the new policies and programs the situation demands. White prejudice feeds upon the tendency to equate spontaneous flares of violence with a sustained, organized revolutionary campaign of subversion, terror and sabotage. Across the color line, Negro hopes soar to unrealistic heights under the promise of instant redress for their multitude of grievances, and sag back into a bitterness that has attracted a new swarm of young radical leaders waving the red banner.

I do not myself think we have any reason to be surprised that we have come to this pass. Yet the compelling fact is that up to now the greatest of all the failures recorded by the Communist Party, USA, has been in its total inability to attract a Negro following beyond a tiny fringe of black intellectuals. And this, I would suggest, flies in the face of the most durable and damaging aspect of the Southern racial myth — the obstinate contention that any and all disturbances between the races can be attributed to the subversive influence of outside agitators.

## III

The mere existence of President Johnson's bipartisan National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders indicates that at the highest level of our government there is recognition of the gravity of the racial crisis that now confronts us. The fact that the Commission was able to bring out a strong and forthright report that contrasts with the usual watered-down compromise findings of such bodies ought to mean that every American would take it seriously. However they may divide over the specific programs proposed by the Commission, it seems to me reasonable men, North and South, cannot reject its principal finding:

This is our basic conclusion: our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white — separate but unequal . . . To continue our present course will involve . . . ultimately the destruction of basic democratic values. Large-scale and continuing violence could result, followed by white retaliation, and, ultimately, the separation of the two communities in a garrison state.

Of equal significance is the warning against the "indiscriminate and excessive use of force." This report is not a moral judgment but a practical warning, although, of course, the issue of justice underlies it. The commission does not suggest that violence in the black ghettos is tolerable. It does proclaim the evident fact that we cannot rely on the simple use of force to contain such violence without creating conditions equally intolerable.

I do not believe it is possible to deny that proposition without beating another retreat to cloud-cuckoo land. In that regard, I would say that one of the saddest dispatches I have read from my native state was not the one that recorded the senseless slaughter of Negro college students in Orangeburg, but the report that followed a day or so later proclaiming that high officials had concluded that the student unrest was the work of imported black militants. For television purposes the investigators finally were able to dig up one transient black man with bushy hair and an African costume to explain why unarmed Negro youths were found dead and wounded with police bullets in their backs and the soles of their feet.

I suggest that we can no longer afford this kind of diversionary effort to devise a spurious conspiracy to avoid facing the hard truths cast up by our own history. It does not convince anyone outside the

state, and I doubt that very many at home believe in the theory, even though many may applaud the lie. It has always seemed to me that South Carolinians, who are perhaps excessively given to looking backward, are uniquely equipped to understand that the Orangeburg tragedy had its origin at points in time long before a few Negro students decided they wanted to bowl in a white man's alley.

I was myself present thirty years ago at the hatching of one of the chickens that came home to roost at Orangeburg. A rumor had reached the legislature that a Negro was going to try to enroll in the law school of this university, and some of the more nervous legal experts correctly divined that the United States Supreme Court was embarked on a course that would progressively narrow, and finally eliminate the doctrine of separate but equal. There was a meeting of the elders of the Senate and the House at which it was decided that the out-of-state tuition scheme then in vogue might prove vulnerable. One of my old friends among the House leaders emerged to announce that a satisfactory alternative had been found: the sovereign state of South Carolina would honor its obligation to provide equal treatment to the would-be Negro attorney by establishing a law school at South Carolina State in Orangeburg.

Someone inquired if that wasn't a pretty expensive way to educate a single student.

"Oh it won't cost much," the leader replied, with a grin and a wink. "All we're going to do is hire a nigger lawyer for a faculty, and send 'em a Sears-Roebuck catalogue for a law library."

The Negro protest movement was the unwitting product of the white politicians who practiced this sort of casual bad faith, and of the complacent white constituency that let them get away with it — and more often than not chuckled and applauded their sly tricks. But they are not getting away with it today. There are South Carolina judges ready and waiting to shoot down these fraudulent schemes with an injunction, although they still have to do so from a federal bench. And, most important of all, it would appear that the rising generation of white South Carolinians is openly expressing its growing impatience with these insults to its intelligence.

That, at least, was the burden of one of last spring's issues of the Clemson student newspaper I once served as editor. As I suggested ear-

lier, there is no reason to suspect an unusual incidence of radical dissent up there in the hills at John C. Calhoun's old home place. But the *Tiger* had sent its own staffers to Orangeburg to interview students at State and establish the facts to their own satisfaction. Their views were reflected in the quotation chosen for the front-page headline: "I HOPE THE DEATHS WERE NOT IN VAIN."

My eye was caught, too, by a sort of sidebar comment on the editorial page by Chuck Whitney, one of the editors. Whitney listed several outstanding Negro football and basketball stars from South Carolina and observed that none could have played for Clemson since, while they now might possibly be admitted to the college, the Athletic Department still does not grant athletic scholarships to colored students. Whitney conceded that it was likely that some alumni might withhold financial support if Clemson started fielding Negro athletes, but went on to ask the pertinent question:

What if they do? There would be at least the satisfaction of being right in the face of bigotry and hypocrisy. Which is better than now. And it might be fun to see a national champion in something.

I particularly admire the way my young successor worked in that last, unkindest cut, and treated bigotry and hypocrisy as co-equal sins. He has, I think, already arrived at the beginning truth. One may feel compassion and sympathy for a white man who turns on Negroes in wild and unreasoning fear that they somehow constitute a threat to his way of life. But what can one say for the larger number who know that this is not so, and could not possibly be so, but choose to stay silent rather than face the hot passion of the True Believers?

#### IV

I am perhaps indulging in my own form of Southern romanticism when — in the face of all the unnerving contemporary evidence — I refuse to abandon the notion that we may yet find an answer to the racial impasse in the common history whites and blacks have shared in the United States. That, for better or worse, is still primarily a Southern history. Except for a small minority of both races, it was only here that the two races have lived together — walled apart by white prejudice in some aspects of their common existence, but drawn together by common necessity in many others. Perhaps it could not be said that there

was ever much love between the races, except in a condescending and sentimental sense, but there was *knowing* — an almost instinctive understanding of how a man of the other race would react in a given situation, and why.

The great Negro migration of recent years, and the isolation from the white community that comes with passage into the urban ghettos, in time will erase the visible marks of the Southern heritage. But it is still there, unto the second and third generation of black expatriates, no less than white. When I see young Negro militants these days dressed in their defiant African finery, baiting Whitey in every way they can, with cynical glee exploiting the self-abnegation of the white radicals who seek to use their movement as group therapy, I find myself thinking: How Southern they really are! The beards and the beehive hair, the sandals and the brocaded robes, cannot conceal the soft accent and liquid laughter and off-beat inflection I have been hearing with familiar pleasure all my life. And there is what I regard as a final test. We laugh at the same things at the same time — frequently to the shock and astonishment of Yankees and other aliens who do not understand the lesson learned at birth by the children of slaves and defeated soldiers: that there is no final separation of comedy and tragedy, and laughter is the saving grace.

Separate but equal was a bad joke when white men put it into practice on their own terms, and everyone knew it, white and black. Although I can understand its tactical use, and its attraction to the dispossessed and the insecure, I do not believe separate but equal would make any more sense if it were called Black Power and instituted on terms dictated by black men. The problem is not to find some means of living apart; we have always been able to do that if we so chose. Any man who could count must have recognized the paranoid quality of the segregationist thesis that a small colored minority of the population would somehow overwhelm the dominant white majority unless they were forcibly kept in their place. Conversely, the very vitality and militance of the Negro movement today offers the best evidence that, with all the odds on their side, whites cannot overwhelm blacks. They have endured.

We understood that once in South Carolina. When the old Confederates took over again after Reconstruction, a suspicious Englishman, Sir George Campbell, came to Columbia to see how the freedmen were

faring. Wade Hampton told him, "The better class of whites certainly want to conserve the Negro." And Sir George saw for himself what that meant in practice, reporting that "the humblest black rides with the proudest white on terms of perfect equality, and without the slightest symptom of malice or dislike on either side. I was, I confess, surprised to see how completely this is the case; even an English Radical was a little taken back at first."

A decade ago I borrowed that anecdote from C. Vann Woodward for the closing passage of a book I chose to call *An Epitaph for Dixie*. I include it again here as an offering at the bier from a prodigal son who still hopes that those who call themselves conservative will recall General Hampton's use of the word before time runs out.

### *Walking Him Through*

The time is late July.  
I walk him through a field  
of corn. Copperheads hunt  
mice, and mice hunt. I lead  
him to the irrigation ditch,  
and mark the rows. This  
yearly act sustains, and  
so he moves knowingly  
among the stalks, alone.

RONALD MORAN

### *Note to the Artist*

FOR JULIA HOMER WILSON

It was more than bleak winter that kept me watching the trees  
for the first hint of green that would blur the dark limbs.

Spring is too symbolic: the hope that lies in the unfurling leaf,  
the quickening breath of the March wind!  
Spring seems all, and the circling months a long hiatus.

Yet on the first day of spring,  
fresh from watching for its heralds,  
I came to your show.  
There to catch my thoughts, a winter scene:  
your painting of the little yard behind Cartwright Gardens!  
A yard I didn't know, for it was filled with snow and frolicking  
students.

You saw pulsing red in the brick wall  
and made it a burst of splendor in the snow,  
and I remembered it was the wall of a garage  
with idle mechanics smoking in summer windows.  
Under the snow I felt the thick weeds, the dusty earth;  
your snow-draped tree, when I knew it, had blocked the sky  
and broken the sunlight into gold medallions and flung them on my  
wall  
mesmerizing me into dreams of oriental splendor.  
The Italian maid in the basement window  
had strummed her guitar and sung of love and joy  
to the weeds and the tree and the dark garage wall.

Spring was no longer necessary;  
I had gold medallions, a song, and your picture.

Your picture! There is more than the winter, more than the tree,  
 more than the greenness, more than the spring,  
 and you give it to us cupped in that thin, gold frame.

KINLOCH RIVERS

*Lines Written on Reading a Novel on the  
 Life of Shakespeare*

This WS is nothing like the sun,  
 Nothing like my Will who turns night red  
 With inspiration; the noon of this is dun.  
 He charms, 'tis true, though not the heart, but head.  
 These pages bear a wit in black and white,  
 But I have seen his Rosalind's soft cheeks  
 With color tint the page and bring delight  
 Or breathed the air with which old evil reeks.  
 This one is great, is even good, I know;  
 This slander has a reasonable sound,  
 But reason has so short a way to go.  
 My Will still lives though molded in the ground,  
 And since he lingers in a dream so rare,  
 I can forgive these sins of false compare.

KINLOCH RIVERS

*The Ragged Halo*

MAX STEELE

During the five years that he was in Europe, Richard Gates' mother had written in almost every letter how fast the little Piedmont town was changing, how suddenly it was becoming full of Northerners and other outsiders, and how if he didn't hurry home he would not even recognize Main Street.

But as the "Cotton Queen" braked to a hush in the station he could see no change whatsoever. In the murky dawn, there it stood: the grimy, painted-red, brick station with its steep and sooted tile roof and gingerbread trimmings. After having admired the magnificent clean lines of the cool post-war railroad stations in Rome and in Florence and in numerous little German villages, built in part or in all with American dollars, he wondered why Leesville had not managed to get itself onto a War Relief list.

The day before, as the *Ile de France* was docking, a cabin steward had handed him a cable. The unsigned cable had simply said: "Phone home immediately." He had written to his mother that he planned to go to Indiana to see Kathryn even though they were no longer engaged and so he could not imagine why she should, after this long, be so impatient; but mainly he wondered how the seventy-year old lady had known in what way to cable a passenger on an in-coming ship. The truth was that by such thinking he was delaying panic until he could get through Customs and to a telephone. He had not been at all surprised, in fact, when Hattie, his oldest sister, answered in a tear-tightened voice: "Richard, can you come on home . . . Right now. Mama's awful sick . . . two days ago . . . No She won't go to the hospital. Dr. Henry Beetle's afraid she won't live till you get here . . . she doesn't know I cabled, but she keeps asking if you're on your way yet. Deliah got in from California yesterday and we're all just waiting for you now . . . well, it's *real* real good to heah you, heah?" In spite of the sorrow, the voice was pleasant and so Southern he'd almost laughed.

Standing outside the grimy station, the heavy packs in hand, he scanned the asphalt square for one of his brothers or sisters. All the new cars were the same to him: all outlandishly long: pastel: pinks, blues, creams, like the ridiculous shirts which even the workmen were wearing. The whole country looked like a Danny Kaye musical.

"Reechiel Reeecchie Gates!" Across the square a car door opened. A frail little lady, Miss Annie Pickens, was waving a newspaper and making a song of his name: "Ree-e-e-chie! Ree-e-e-chie Gea-a-tes!" Her white hair, cropped short in an Italian cut, framed her face in silver light. With apeline elegance, his knees bent and his arms extended by the luggage, he swung across the square.

"Honey, it's so *good* to see you!" Miss Annie Pickens turned her spinster cheek to be kissed and held him till he'd touched his lips quickly and without pressure to her dry, wrinkle-webbed face. Before he could tell her that she was certainly looking well, she stepped back and cried: "Look at me. I'm sixty-eight. Same age to the very week as your Aunt Mamie. Neeavah felt bettah in mah life!" She did a Suzy-Q in her baby-blue tennis shoes, her fresh pink seer-sucker flaring up and out. "Get in the car. I'm gonna take you to your Mama." She had come expressly to the station to fetch him. He didn't really know her that well, had never really talked to her except once: she had invited him to tea to brief him on his European trip and since then they had exchanged a few picture postcards.

She talked all the way through town as though they were the oldest of friends: "Chicken! I know if there's two there's a dozen fried chickens in that house this minute. Everybody in town. Cantaloupes! And potato salad! I told your sister Hattie, that sweet thing, just to politely shut the door in the face of anyone else who couldn't offer anything better than their old potato salad. In weather like this, I wish you would!" She raved on about the frozen pistachio-pear salad she herself had made and carried: "Cream! Pure cow's cream and a quart of it. But I don't reckon there's anybody what 'preciates your mama like I do. We *know* what she's been through."

As he lifted his bags out of the car and asked her again to come in and have breakfast with him, she said what he'd been waiting for her to say but which out of respect for the gravity of the illness she had refrained from uttering: "But I want to heah all about your trip to Europe." Meaning, of course, that she wanted to tell him in detail about her locally famous (and secretly ridiculed) tour of Europe with her father, after the death of her mother, some fifty years ago.

In the same way a barren woman attaches herself to pregnant women, Miss Annie attached herself to anyone either going to or returning from Europe, and made them share with her the excitement of that

eighteen-year old girl who would be forever on a cafe terrace sipping her first wine. "Chianti! Honey, did you drink any Chianti when you were over there?" Now an avid W.C.T.U. leader, Miss Annie, nevertheless, sparkled when she asked in lowered voice: "Isn't it the *best* thing you ever did taste?" Later he would go sit on her porch and hear again how the yellow-gold, butterfly broach, which had belonged to her mother: "Just kindly dropped off and fluttered to the silver floor of that beautiful Blue Grotto. And I didn't care! Didn't care one teenie bit! That's how foolish I was over that Italian fisherman. Ugliest man in the world! Had a fishhook scar on his left jaw! And I'd never even laid my eyes on him before that very morning. He couldn't speak a wuhd of English. Not a wuhd. But with those eyes he didn't need to!"

He shut the car door and leaned through the window to thank her again for getting up early enough to meet the six o'clock train. "Can't come in. Got to go this minute and put myself in a big tub of cold water . . ." Suddenly she interrupted her social voice with one quite different, intimate, and sober: "You didn't find yourself a wife while you were over there?"

He was tempted to tell her about Kathryn and their plans to be married if they liked each other as much in the States as they had in Paris, but suddenly he saw in his mind the letter from Kathryn breaking the engagement. "You don't," he was uncertain whether to shock her or not, "have to get married in Paris."

For a second she caught her breath. "Don't wait too long." She looked directly at him, then laughed her easy, social, meaningless laugh as the car rolled out and away from the curb. "Tell your mother I love her."

The full milk bottles were still in the basket on the wide, shrub-darkened porch. Richard Gates slid his luggage to rest by the column and sank onto the swing, over which a crape myrtle was shedding burgundy blossoms. Waiting for lights or for footsteps in the house before twisting the brass bell handle, he could hear over and over, as one does after a night without sleep, the last words spoken to him: "Tell your mother I love her."

He could predict and hear his mother's answer: "Wish she and some of her fine friends might have shown it earlier. When you children needed help and before you got out doing things on your own. Think

she'd ever have gone to meet you if you'd been coming in without even carfare, like you used to, from the University?"

Ordinarily his mother was not a bitter woman nor a cynical one, but when she suspected slights against her children, she could be both with pride and with fury.

But still, Miss Annie had met him and had, as far back as he could remember, always seemed especially interested, however briefly and distantly, in each of them. And she had said: "Nobody 'preciates your mama more than I do. Cause I *know* . . ."

Many people in the town said the same, but what really did they know, most of them who had never even seen her? That she had borne ten children, two dead, and raised eight? That for 35 years she had had children to send off to school each September? But did they know that for 20 years she had made the dresses and petticoats, coats and scarves for four daughters and the shirts for four sons and a husband? That during the Depression she had handwashed their clothes, and on hands and knees, steamed and pressed their suits on the kitchen floor when she was too tired to stand to iron? And that she had cooked for them and fed them all, sometimes, as in the summer of 1932 on as little as ten cents a meal?

He had been seven years old that summer and the Depression was only a vague word to him. To keep him out of the house, which, with the three sister-in-laws, now held 13 people, his job was to mow the front lawn and side yard, rake the leaves, and trim the crape-myrtle which, otherwise, hung into the porch and over the steps. Each morning he was given a nickel with which to buy the biggest watermelon which the Negroes pushed by in their carts; and he was to send Uncle John McGraw to the door if he had pole beans by the gallon or roastnears by the dozen.

He had been too young then to know what was happening to his mother. She was simply the tall, angry woman who pushed back her sweat-drenched pompadour with a dripping hand, and removing her apron, swooped from time to time into the yard to issue sharp orders to him or to Deliah who sometimes helped with the weeding. From morning till night she had not a moment to listen to him, and when she spoke it was to remind them that without her they would be triflin', goodfornothin', lazy young'uns who would never get anywhere in this world.

Her fury subsided only when she occasionally cried and pleaded forgiveness: "My back is killing me and my feet are like boils." Too proud to wear house slippers, and too poor to buy new shoes, she, for awhile that summer, had made her way from sink to stove to sink in the painful steps of a Chinese bound woman. Finally, Mrs. Carlisle had given her a pair of old satin dance slippers with heels cut low. The black satin was in strings and the thin soles loose at the toe, but they were exactly large enough to remove all pressure and yet give support. Every day after that when the thirteen of them sat down to dinner, his mother with a clean afternoon dress on and her hair newly combed and with a more pleasant face than they had seen that summer, his father would end the blessing, saying: "And bless Mrs. Carlisle for those satin slippers!"

However, the day had finally come, late in July, when even his father could not make them laugh: again that day, as every day, there were only greenbeans, cornbread and cantaloupe to eat. But no one laughed at his new joke about the monotonous menu. Instead, when he expressed his surprise at the lunch, a terrible silence hung over the table, with only the silver tinkle of ice in the tea glasses making fine eddies of sound in the still air. Elizabeth and William, who sat at the far end of the table and gossiped usually about the university and how and if they could manage to go back in the fall, began, in the terrible silence, to speak very quietly in French.

His mother leaned forward, a strange and puzzled look on her face.

"Mama," he had wanted to tell her that for seven cents, only two pennies more, he could have bought a thirty pound watermelon for that afternoon, but her hand closed over his and pressed for silence. She listened to Elizabeth and William speaking French and turned her head in a querulous fashion. Everyone was watching her, alarmed. Elizabeth stopped in the middle of a word and, with arched brows and tilted head, stared down the table at her mother, demanding explanation.

"Elizabeth," his mother said, and a shy, wounded smile distorted her face. "What kind of talk is that?"

"French?" Elizabeth said.

"Is *that* what we're sending you to college to learn?" His father would make a joke of it yet. (Even later, on his death bed, he had made jokes to help them.)

"Hush, James!" his mother said. "Go on," she pleaded, suddenly timid before Elizabeth. "Speak some more."

Elizabeth stammered through another sentence and then William answered, fluently but briefly, for the silence closed in over his words.

"Go on!" his mother prompted.

They tried to speak a little more, but abruptly, his mother, smiling oddly, pushed back her chair, and without excusing herself, fled from the room.

He was not allowed to follow. While he and Deliah peeped from the kitchen window and the older ones from the backdoor, his father went out to where she was sobbing, huddled over on a small box, under the fig tree, which was in bloom with three dozen drying dinner napkins.

His father had talked awhile, picked a green fig, examined the milkdrop, tossed it aside and returned to the house.

"Leave her alone. Come finish your dinner. She needs to cry awhile."

They had followed him back to the table where he began telling a long story about Mrs. Roosevelt and a Negro which no one, not even Deliah, listened to.

"But what's she crying about," Elizabeth asked. "We weren't talking about her."

"It's her age."

"But my God!" William put down his fork. "It's been her age for ten years now. Any other doctor would have stopped it five years ago."

Richard and Deliah had exchanged glances over the table and at a signal had excused themselves, unnoticed, carried their dishes and glasses to the cooktable and fled to the backyard where their mother sat, still weeping, but softly to herself. They had stood quietly, one on each side of her, and held their fingers to their lips. Even without looking up, she knew they were there. "Children," she said in attempted firmness, "go on back in and finish your dinner."

Deliah fingered the lace at her mother's neck and touched with outstretched fingertips the cameo. "Mama, why are you crying?"

"I don't know, baby."

"Is it because you're getting old?"

"I'm just so tired."

"But you don't cry every day."

"I feel like it. When I look at the way you're being brought up. When I think what Ma would say . . ." She shook her head from side to side. "I don't even have time to teach you proper manners."

She dried her eyes on the hem of the voile afternoon dress and pushed them away. "Don't stand so near. It's too hot." She stood, sighed heavily, and began plucking the stiff napkins from the tree. They had, the older children, argued with her to use paper napkins, but she had answered that they would have linen and silver at every meal even if they didn't have a bite to eat. Often she was washing table cloths at midnight; and he and Deliah, every Sunday after church, had to polish silver.

"They weren't talking about you," he told her.

"Who?" She was gathering the napkins in slow, uncertain gestures.

"William and Elizabeth."

"Why were you crying?" Deliah asked again.

With no warning, as though her knees had lost all strength, she sat down again on the box. "I'm so silly." She tried to dry her eyes. "I just happened to remember something. That was all."

At first she had been reluctant to tell them, but finally when they were sitting on the grass, begging, knowing it was one of those stories that would go back almost to the Civil War, she remembered again, aloud.

"I was no older than Deliah. And Ma, your grandmother, got us up real early one morning on a day as hot as today. 'Children! She said, 'you must help me this morning. We're going to have company.'"

Richard and Deliah had been told over and over how their grandmother, who was married during the first year of the Civil War, had been brought up never to lift her hand. "She didn't even wash her own feet," their mother had once told them, "until after she was married." Meaning that she'd had a servant to bathe her; but they, misunderstanding, had been delighted with their grandmother's apparent unhygienic condition and had reported it, with great pride, to all of the children at Park Lawn school.



"She wouldn't tell us," their mother continued, "who was coming, but we knew it was special cause she made spice cakes and muscadine punch all morning." She, herself, had swept and cleaned the yard, and Aunt Mamie had helped in the kitchen. "That was the way she brought us up: Mamie was the house-hand, I was the yard nigger."

At three on that faraway afternoon the farmyard had been raked clean, the low, country house swept spotless. And soon afterwards a horse and buggy drove up the dusty drive and a lady, very like their grandmother, had stepped lightly out. The two women had embraced and cried and laughed and cried and acted like young girls. "Her name was Elizabeth. The only person I ever heard Ma call by first name." She'd been one of the twelve bridesmaids in their grandmother's wedding. The two women had sat talking on the porch; and the children, (their mother and Aunt Mamie), had sat on the front step, waiting for the moment when the spice cakes and muscadine punch would be served on the crystal plates and in the ringing cutglass goblets.

"We were pinching — I remember as well as this morning — the last crumbs of gingerbread off the plates when Ma and Aunt Elizabeth started talking in a way we couldn't understand. You've never seen more puzzled young'uns than Mamie and me. We giggled and acted so silly Ma had to shake her finger at us. They talked on that way for an hour, only now and again dropping a word we could catch."

His mother's voice had suddenly stopped and in the shade of the fig tree, tears had rolled down her face again, and without bothering to prevent them with the dry napkins which she held in her lap, she whispered above her weeping: "And I didn't know until this very day that it was French she was speaking. Like Elizabeth and William." She wept without sorrow, almost in joy. "I was just a little yard nigger to her, my own mother, and now to my own children."

Standing quickly, impatient to see her, remembering now with full understanding the impact of her sorrow, Richard Gates, stepping without caution on the carpet of fallen crape myrtles, arterial red in the morning sun, moved, as in a dream across the porch to the heavy front door.

"Tell me something pretty. Something I know nothing about." It was late afternoon, and the house, after being full of visitors all day, was quiet and dark. His mother was lying flat in the bed, so thin as

to make scarcely a fold in the cover. Her black hair pressed into the pillow and her dark eyes burned deep in the sockets.

Two days before, she had fallen in the huge, empty house, unable to move her legs. She had lain, calling in her thin voice to Mrs. Carlisle, but without hope, knowing that she could not make herself heard through the tall closed windows of her own house, or across the heavily shrubbed yards to where, perhaps, with luck, Mrs. Carlisle might have been sitting on her side porch.

Pulling herself, face down, on outstretched arms, sleeping a bit from time to time to gain strength, she had, during the next three hours, managed to drag herself the twenty feet to the telephone. Luckily, as she reported later, a band of sunlight had been slanting through the hall window, falling exactly onto the telephone so that she could see to dial. "Elizabeth," she had said into the phone. "Come see about me. I'm sick." Then she had lain and waited.

To Elizabeth and the doctor she had cried: "I've done my best." And in spite of their reassurances she had insisted: "I made them all get out and away from me. Where they could learn something and improve themselves. I made them go."

That morning she had not cried, as Richard had expected her to, when he walked into the room. During the day she had watched her children, all grown now and greying, with the distant and detached interest of a mother cat regarding an old litter.

"I've been waiting so long to hear," she said now that she and Richard were again alone in the almost empty house.

He protested that, after so much company, she must be tired, must need rest, and that there was too much to tell.

"Then just one pretty party or house you went to. Something pretty I can think about in my sleep."

For a long while he thought. "Last spring, a year ago, when the Sorbonne exams were completed, André gave a dinner party for us." (Kathryn, even then had rebelled, had refused to buy an appropriate dress, and had at the last minute put on blue jeans and gone to sit in a cafe while he went off alone to make her excuses for her.) He had written his mother about André, a French student with whom he exchanged French-English lessons.

André, himself, was exceedingly poor. His father, when Hitler moved in, had lost both his own and his wife's fortune in a toy factory in Czechoslovakia. Often the only refreshment André could offer when they studied together in his unheated attic room, was a square of sugar, picked up from a table on a cafe terrace.

"No. I know that sort of life," his mother protested.

"I was going to tell you about his friend, la Baronne de Montefair. Actually she was a girlhood friend of André's mother."

"Now a baroness," his mother said. "Is that the same thing as an aristocrat?"

"It doesn't mean much anymore." He explained a bit about the French revolution to her and about the present economic retardation of the country.

"But she still had a nice home?"

"You remember the card I sent you of the little island in the middle of the Seine? The Ile St. Louis? Just back of Notre-Dame."

"Notre-Dame." His mother Americanized the word. "Seems like I've heard of it."

"The cathedral."

"I looked it up in *The World Book* when you wrote home about it. Seems I can't remember anything anymore." His mother read their letters twice, first to see about their health, and then to copy out words and places which in the long evenings she searched for in the encyclopedias which she had, out of the household money, bought for them when the oldest were children.

"Notre-Dame," he said again.

"She lived there then. This aristocrat."

"Yes, m'am. On the Ile St. Louis where the river divides. It's a wonderful, quiet little island in the center of the city. With trees bending over toward the water and bright colored little fishing boats, orange and blue and green, anchored to the cobblestoned quais."

He attempted to describe to her the huge green doors of the 16th century mansion, the magnificent lions' heads, the fine wrought iron balustrade, etched in brass, bordering the worn marble steps which curved graciously upward to the apartments of the baroness. He tried

to carry her with him through the double mahogany doors into the elegant rooms, panelled in white, traced in gold, and to let her see the delicate, gilded chairs dancing across the rose and grey carpets, all reflected in a dozen extravagant mirrors that reached from floor to ceiling and to show her the baroque splendor of the heavily candelabred table, the tense thin goblets, the dusty bottles of deep red wines and the silver buckets of cooling champagnes. He wanted her to taste the potage à la reine Margot, the thon mariné, the fricassé de poulet, the rôti, the salades, the bleues, the coupes des fruits with fine clear kirsch . . .

But in a flat, exhausted voice she interrupted: "I don't know enough to know what you're talking about."

"Food," he said.

"Sweet one, are you hungry? Is there anything in the house to eat? I've plumb forgotten you poor children." She seemed for the moment not to realize that she was mortally ill and that they were grown.

He told her what Miss Annie had said about the hams and chickens and what she had instructed Hattie to do with people bearing gifts of potato salad.

"Leave it to Annie Pickens to try to say something."

"You don't like her, do you?"

"I'm not studying that woman." She pressed her lips together and let her eyes shut to hide the truth. "I've nothing against her. She's been nicer to me than I have to her."

"She seemed very pleasant this morning."

"Oh, she's clever enough. I've never known of her saying a word of harm about anyone." His mother waited. "I've never in fact heard of her ever talking about anything except taking a bath and going to Europe."

Richard laughed. "Does she really talk that much about it?"

"You'd think to hear her tell it," his mother sighed, "that she lived in a tub all summer and Europe all winter."

"She couldn't come in this morning because she had to go get in the tub."

"I just plain out told her once when she caught me cleaning out the stove, with my head all done up in a rag . . . and there she sat

just as fresh as a daisy talking about going home to get in the tub . . . I just came right out and said, 'Annie, you must be awfully clean or awfully dirty one to take so many baths.'

"I don't remember her ever coming here."

"Not much, she didn't. But she never failed to when I had a new baby. She'd come and hold it and say: 'You've got so many, you've got to give this one to me!'"

For awhile he sat silently trying to imagine his overworked mother's temptation, which could explain in part her peevish attitude toward Miss Annie. "She probably envied you," he ventured.

"Mel" his mother said, incredulously. "Annie Pickens?"

"You've lived a pretty full life compared to hers." His mother could never appraise herself in such terms and now she lay, trying hopefully to see if there were any truth in his words.

"Wonder," he thought aloud, "why she never married?"

"Too proud. Like most the Pickens."

"I mean the real reason."

"She used to say when she was young and could have married, 'The pickin's are too good'. But everybody understood she meant *Pickens* were too good. Then after she got back from Europe, she had that nervous trouble and had to go away for another year, and when she came home to stay, all changed, everybody was already thinking of her as an old maid. By the time she was twenty-five she was just like she is today."

"That's how old Kathryn is." He'd told his mother earlier about the letter breaking the engagement, mainly to reassure her that her illness was not an inconvenience to him, that she was in no way "holding him back."

He hadn't told her how empty, as a result of the letter, he had been feeling, as though his own life were a play which he was watching, without too much interest, through the wrong end of opera glasses. Somewhere during the last five years he had lost contact with himself and only Kathryn, he felt, could have saved him from complete and perhaps permanent isolation.

"You never said much about her background."

"Oh bullshit!" he wanted to shout. "What's background got to do with anything?"

But he remained silent, knowing that he had been guilty of the same sort of thinking and that that was why Kathryn always called him a snob and all Southerners "proud hypocrites." It was precisely why, once back in the States, in the democratic Midwest, away from the strict social order of France and the implicit ones of the South, she had seen their different values more clearly and known that a marriage between them would be foredoomed.

When he glanced back to the bed his mother was studying his clenched jaw and narrowing eyes. With her usual tact she did not press further. Instead she tried to raise her head, but let it fall back. "Over there, under my sewing basket. I got it out when you wrote you were coming."

He leaned over to the drop-leaf table and slid a book out from under the basket. It was an old book, suede and leather, dusty, with gold letters hardly traceable in the worm-eaten leather. A flowerprint rag, evidently as old as the book itself, was tied in string fashion to keep the cover from falling off. "Aunt Elizabeth gave it to Ma. I've had it in her trunk all these years. But I want you to have it." She added, almost with timidity, her voice weakening: "If it's worth having."

He held the spine to the lamplight and tried unsuccessfully to make out the embossed letters.

"See if you can read any of it."

He untied the careful knot, let the unglued binding fall back, and read the small print midway down the brown page: "Resté dans l'angle, derrière la porte, si bien qu'on l'apercevait à peine, le *nouveau* était un gars de la campagne, d'un quinzine d'années environ, et plus haut de taille qu'aucun de nous tous. Il avait les cheveux coupés droit sur le front, comme un chantre de village, l'air raisonnable et fort embarrassé . . ."

When he glanced up, his mother was watching him with the cold eyes of a stranger. She brushed the sheet smooth with her worn hands and asked in a peculiar voice: "And what's that trying to say?"

He told her briefly that it was the description of an awkward country boy, Charles Bovary, entering a new school.

"Couldn't they have said it just as well in English?" It was a note of near-anger which was giving the peculiar quality to her voice.

"Maybe," he laughed, not unkindly. "But it's pretty in French, isn't it?"

"It's pretty enough, I reckon. If you know what the words mean."

"Quoi qu'il ne fut pas large des épaules . . ." He began again, but over the book he could see his mother's impatient hand on the sheet. She sighed deeply and let her head turn away from him. When he stopped reading she spoke.

"I'm just so tired," she said without opening her eyes. "Everything seems so useless. So foolish."

He kissed her on the forehead and, turning off the little lamp, left the room in the growing twilight.

For awhile he stood on the wide porch and watched a hummingbird hanging and darting and hanging again over the crape myrtles. The dread emptiness, which before his nap he had ascribed to lack of sleep, seeped back into him, with the difference now that it seemed permanent, as though it would never leave. In that moment, at least, he was no longer a young man.

"Don't wait too long," Miss Annie had said about his marrying, and she had stared at him in a strangely penetrating way.

"Poor Miss Annie," he thought. Then, in a happy, fleeting moment, he realized that it was not a yellow-gold, butterfly brooch Miss Annie had lost at Capri! There had never been a butterfly brooch! That was merely her way of declaring to them without revealing. Nor had it been simply her virginity which she had lost there. In the deepening dusk, he knew with certainty and with sadness that lost also, in the ensuing complications, was that part of her being which could have spun out webs of love strong enough to bind her permanently to another human being. Now there were left only broken wisps of feeling, making about her an impractical, ragged halo of affection.

He shivered and felt immediately the need of light and of human voices. He walked compulsively into the dark house, clicking on lamps as he went. At the telephone he looked up the number and dialed rapidly, without knowing what he would say.

"Miss Annie?" he faltered a moment, then fairly shouted into the

phone, "this is Richard Gates. I was just wondering if I dropped a gold cuff link in your car this morning."

There was a long pause and then that charming, meaningless, social laugh, cultivated eventually by each isolated person whose only life is public. "Why honey," she said in the teasing voice of the perpetual flirt, "you know you had on shawt sleeves."

### *The Station*

These notes of humanity swirl about, mill  
 Through the halls, beneath skylights of vast waiting  
 Rooms. Enveloped in a swathe of sound,  
 I float through high-domed aisles, seeking  
 One face to crystallize my own, one voice  
 To let my words reveal the vaults within.  
 But only a child approaches my side, to trace  
 The tricks of my pen. The dust settles, shapes  
 Appear, her wonder weaves this wisp of me.

LARRY RUBIN

*Porcelain Eggs*

I have certain expectations  
 Of eggs that have little to do  
 With these porcelain possessions  
 That are serried here for you  
 For soul-stroking on this silver tray.  
 This exhibit is, I believe,  
 A futile powerplay.  
 You have ceased to live  
 From the egg to be  
 Outlived by the egg. You say it consoles  
 You to know that among men who scarce see  
 Grace there are souls  
 To make such eggs; and yet I learn  
 From an egg's making a man more will  
 To live. This egg painted as the Grecian Urn  
 Will outlast the egg of a bird; but real  
 Eggs, by God, the bravest of us all, are  
 Good eggs only when ravished, sacrificed,  
 Never pursuing permanence, nor  
 Disparaged for impermanence until I saw  
 Your dummies. (I hold one here  
 In my hand.) Your fragile porcelain monuments  
 To your own implacable fear—  
 Your pitiable failure to grasp grand moments.

MARY VANN FINLEY

*Daphne*

LODWICK HARTLEY

Miss Daphne Sparrow's middle name was smartness. That was plain to see, and Mr. Trueblood said as much to all the men down town. Miss Myra Farrell, his previous stenographer, had been perfectly capable of writing, "We take it for *granite* that you have *recieved* ours of the thirty-first *ult.*" Spelling was not Miss Farrell's talent. And that wasn't all she couldn't do. She couldn't punctuate, she couldn't add, and she couldn't make heads or tails of the cotton quotations that a colored boy brought over on yellow slips of paper from the telegraph office in the depot.

Miss Daphne could do all these things. Besides, she was pert, cheerful, and determined. Sitting there primly at the shining green Oliver typewriter, making her fingers run like little white mice over the keys, she was a model of business efficiency. Though she was not pretty, she had a vividness about her that made people look at her twice. Her hair, a fine bronze, was piled up in a neat pompadour rising from her forehead. Her eyes were a luminous brown; her nose, short and saucy; and her skin, as white as the crisp shirt-waist that she fluffed out around her bosom and anchored on one side with a gold chatelaine watch. Her neatly tight black skirt all but concealed her feet. But it had just a touch of naughtiness in a little slit that revealed a minute flash of cerise silk when Miss Daphne walked.

Miss Daphne, people said, didn't come from much. The Sparrows, just a shade above poor white trash, lived in little more than a shack out at the Mt. Moriah crossroads, some seven or eight miles from town. Miss Daphne's mother, it is true, had had decent connections. She was a Weyburn who had married a "no account." (Miss Daphne's lovely little watch came from the Weyburn side, people said.) Old Mr. Sparrow was a palpable fraud. Having once been a Justice of the Peace, he persisted in putting himself forward as a petty political figure, attending all the rallies and serving as a teller at every election. Weekly he'd still come to town driving his two mules hitched to a battered wagon, with Miss Trannie, an older daughter who kept house for him, riding behind in a cane-bottomed kitchen chair — a large hat on her head, a shawl around her shoulders, and (especially from April to November) a palm leaf fan in her hand. Old Mr. Sparrow himself never failed to

wear his Jim-Swinger coat, greenish and sleazy with age, a wing collar, a black string tie, and a shapeless felt hat. His nose was bulbous, whelked, and ruddy — a plain advertisement of his addiction to the bottle.

Miss Daphne had been determined not to let her upbringing be an obstacle. So when she finished the seventh grade in the Mt. Moriah one-teacher school, she came in to town to high school, driving a mule and a rickety buggy. Nobody paid much attention to this little beaver in cheap but neat gingham dresses. But she didn't seem to care. She worked hard, made good grades, and graduated as salutatorian of her class. Then she borrowed the money from Judge Bartow, making the arrangements herself.

At the precise moment when Mr. Trueblood had finished firing Miss Myra, she applied for the job. She got it in a flash. Then she had only to arrange for room and board at Mrs. Cartwright's and she was snugly established — in almost less time than it takes to say so.

Mr. Trueblood wrote insurance, lent money, and bought cotton in a cavernous and dingy one-room office with a pot-bellied stove in the back. Since the place was just around the corner from Main Street, most of the leading business men used it as a club. Practically everybody dabbled now and then in cotton futures, and the discussion of the market, crops, politics, and local gossip went on in Mr. Trueblood's office interminably.

And everybody who came in to Mr. Trueblood's office had a good word to say both to and for Miss Daphne. For all she had a cheerful smile and a bright remark. Moreover, she could work away efficiently at her books or her correspondence in the midst of whatever hullabaloo was taking place. Nobody could quite believe that she was old Sparrow's daughter; but the fact that she was — taking into account what she had apparently taken pains to make of herself — brought her esteem rather than shame.

That is, it did among the men. The women young and old remained more conservative. Miss Daphne might be entirely admirable in trying to improve herself, but no Sparrow could possibly be acceptable at their Coca-Cola and bridge parties. At nineteen, however, Miss Daphne gave no evidence of caring too much. Her office hours allowed her no time for the kind of social life that the local ladies indulged in. Besides,

what she had mapped out for herself did not immediately concern her own sex; and the world of men in which she lived proved entirely sufficient to her present purposes.

When a young bachelor merchant like Allen Jenkins called on Miss Daphne with a box of Nunnally's chocolates on an evening or two and sat with her in the parlor at Mrs. Cartwright's, nobody took much notice of the fact. But when Mr. Cadwallader sent her a dozen American beauty roses that came by express from Stanton, the news spread like wildfire; and everybody sensed that Miss Daphne's acumen was beginning to pay off in an unexpected direction.

Mr. Cadwallader could easily have been Miss Daphne's father. He was a man of moderate build with a tendency toward softness and pudginess. His shirt was always impeccable and his suit, though never attempting the newest fashion, was always well brushed. His crescent shaped moustache was always precisely trimmed. But his fat hands implied sensuality; and his little eyes and heavy breathing faintly suggested the porcine. He had buried two wives, both of whom had died in childbirth; and, not counting the stillborn ones, he had had nine children, all but three of whom were now for all intents and purposes grown. He owned a sprawling general merchandise establishment spilling over into several stores and warehouses. The tan brick front of the biggest unit rose two impressive stories on Main Street, flaunting a sign in tall white letters across the top reading "Thomas Cadwallader Co." Mr. Cadwallader was also recognized as a big man in cotton futures.

In precisely eleven months and five days Mr. Trueblood was once more out looking for a stenographer who could spell and do a little bookkeeping. That was the time it took Miss Daphne to land Mr. Cadwallader.

Forthwith she moved into the Cadwallader house as crisply and confidently as you please, and she assumed the role of lady of the house not only as if she were ten years older than she was but also as if she had studied all her life for the part that she was now playing. The place was not exactly a mansion. It had been built thirty years before, ostensibly with the main idea of enclosing and dividing enough space to house the progeny that Mr. Cadwallader expected in the course of nature to produce. The main portion of the building was a big, white, green-trimmed two-story box with a complex of porches stuck on — upstairs and downstairs across the entire front and on the one side from

which did not project the lumbering one-story wing with a porch of its own running lengthwise. A quantity of scrollwork and louvered blinds led up to a roof bristling with lightning rods with their glistening colored globes and probing spears. Had the place not been partially obscured by two formidable magnolia trees, the intricacy of its decoration might have produced severe dizziness in any spectator. As it was, the house, though quite domeless, nevertheless managed to suggest King Edward's pavilion at Brighton as it had appeared in an old *Harper's Illustrated Magazine*.

To Miss Daphne the Cadwallader residence was a dream house rather than a nightmare; and she moved swiftly and surely to make it her own. A week after the honeymoon was over, Miss Elvira Cadwallader, who had been keeping house for her brother, moved out to open a genteel boarding establishment a block or so down the street. And with her went Jennie, the oldest child in the family. Thomas, Jr., and Emmie and Virgie and Sophie and Cecile were married and living away from home — Cecile having eloped a few weeks prior to her father's marriage in order (it was rumored) to escape a young step-mother. So Miss Daphne had actually only three of the children to cope with: Blanchard, a burly, hearty, uncouth boy of seventeen who lingered dully in high school; Beryl, a languid girl with stringy hair and protruding teeth that always seemed to need brushing; and Marian, the pick of the lot, a bright, cheerful, neat little body, fragile enough to be blown away by any random gust of wind.

As if the family weren't large enough already, Miss Daphne turned in and produced children of her own, one a year for four years: Carol first, then Elvira (so named as a peace offering to Miss Elvira, who hadn't concealed too well the fact that she had left her brother's house in a huff), then Lura, and finally a little premature lump of gray clay that turned into a baby named Edwin. It was a triumphant baker's dozen of children for Mr. Cadwallader and an equally triumphant four some for Miss Daphne, who had grown more and more ladylike with each lying-in and had acquired for herself all the little trinkets with which grateful husbands reward productive wives.

The house had not been materially changed, though the private hedges had been clipped and the lawn had been trimmed far more neatly than they had been during Miss Elvira's regime. Yet certain appurtenances of luxury had made their appearance. First of all, Miss Daphne supplied herself with enough Negro servants to be a sultan.

("Isn't it just like a Sparrow to overdo things," the local ladies said. "She'd never even *seen* a servant before in all her life.") At least five of them ate dinner every day in the Cadwallader kitchen and took food home with them on their heads in enamelware pans wrapped with newspaper. And the Cadwallader's Chalmers, spacious though it was, had been exchanged for a seven-passenger Packard: a huge, majestic, lumbering vehicle elaborately accoutred with brass fittings. Miss Daphne managed to look almost regal in it when Mel, with a black jacket over his blue jeans and a regular chauffeur's cap on his kinky head, drove her down town to shop.

As a matter of fact, the Packard was far more than a mere appurtenance of luxury. It was an instrument for effecting a species of social victory. Not only was the dignity of the car obliged to win respect for its mistress, but also its eleemosynary use put the whole town under obligation to her. When there was a funeral, the bereaved family rode to the cemetery in Miss Daphne's car. When there was a wedding, the bride and her family rode in it to the church. Time and time again it served in lieu of an ambulance in transporting patients back and forth from the hospital in Stanton. Pretty soon everybody in town had ridden for one reason or another in the combination omnibus and Juggernaut.

So if there had ever been any doubt as to whether Miss Daphne should be "invited," it simply had to disappear. And hostesses began including her — though, of course, they did not stop saying mean things like: "Being connected with the Cadwalladers and riding in a big car can't take the 'c-o-m' out of her." Miss Daphne, however, "declined" fairly often. She was too busy having children, and she now seemed to prefer pursuing slow, sure progress in consolidating her position. Everybody said that Miss Daphne showed her smartness in this respect.

And then, too, she was not around in the summer time when most of the visitors came to town and the ladies were giving bridge parties, linen showers, picnics, and teas around the clock. No, Miss Daphne had decided that it was fashionable to take a house in the mountains from June to September, like the Bridgemans, the banking family who lived aloof in a fine brick house down the street and who had had a house in the mountains for years. So every summer when school was over Miss Daphne packed the car up with children and servants and took off to higher altitudes. Of course, Miss Daphne never intimated that

the move was more for form than comfort, or that she wanted to prove herself as good as the Bridgemans. Miss Daphne's stated reason was an airish revelation that she was simply adhering to tradition. After all, low country residents since colonial days (though she didn't quite live in the low country) had been escaping miasmatic malarial vapors and anopheles mosquitoes (Miss Daphne put the right name on everything) by taking themselves to the nearest range of the Blue Ridge.

So the outward impression of Cadwallader wealth and prestige blossomed under Miss Daphne's expert and careful nurture. Mr. Cadwallader got fatter and sleeker and more sybaritic. His diamond ring and tie pin were no longer necessary symbols of his affluence. He looked rich all over, and he spent money like water. And all the time, he was going more and more heavily into cotton futures.

Beryl, with a big car at least partially at her disposal, and a big house and yard to have parties in, was indubitably a social leader on her own. Though she didn't give evidence of brushing her teeth any oftener, she did something to her hair and she began wearing clothes that Miss Daphne bought for her through a professional shopper in New York. It soon became evident that Beryl was aping some of the airs of her step-mother; and she not infrequently announced to her school-mates that her father was "the richest man in town."

The first turn of fortune came with the defection of Blanchard — an event that was scandalous but that did not seem so ominous at the time as a backward look makes it. Nobody was exactly shocked about the boy himself. He ran, it was rumored, with a crowd of hoodlums who smoked, played cards, and drank vanilla extract in various stables about town. And he could never pass the tenth grade. So the news that he had disappeared under a cloud of some sort was no great shock or surprise. There were several versions of the affair. One was that he had got a girl into trouble, the daughter of a farmer in the outlying area, and had had to leave town to keep from being perforated with buckshot. Another report was that he had been caught taking money for his gambling debts from the safe in the store. It really didn't matter which. And nobody really knew whether it was either.

Miss Daphne, of course, did not admit by word or deed that anything had gone wrong. "Blanchard has always been so full of energy," she explained, "that school just *didn't* interest him. The high school is so *poor* now, you know. So his father has sent him down to help

manage our citrus interests in Florida. Too bad for him to be out of school; but he'll take up his books again in time. And he's learning to make a living, which is so much more important."

Thus Blanchard made his exit, starting a chain reaction, illogical though it may have been. At any rate, three months later Mr. Cadwallader himself made a more permanent and shocking departure. One morning he was found dead on his sleeping porch. He had 'accidentally' swallowed a handful of bichloride of mercury tablets. Once Marian had stuck a nail in her foot while she was playing in the back yard, and Miss Daphne (so she said) had got some tablets from the drugstore to use as a disinfectant. They were still in the cabinet when Mr. Cadwallader with a bad early morning headache — he suffered from dyspepsia — went to the bathroom to get some soda mints.

It turned out to be a matter of pure coincidence that Mr. Cadwallader had lost disastrously in the cotton market in the previous months and that the Thomas Cadwallader Co. was ready to be forced into bankruptcy.

Anyway, Mr. Cadwallader had one of the very biggest funerals in the history of the town. All the stores closed for an entire afternoon, and flowers came pouring in from half the state.

Miss Daphne met the whole situation with splendid stoicism. The very first moment she could decently do so, she sent her maid Pansy running over to Mrs. Bridges, the seamstress. When Mrs. Bridges arrived, she found Miss Daphne pale but calm, and quite able to specify exactly the kind of dress and hat that she wanted for the next day. In some borrowed black clothes she later drove with Thomas, Jr., down to the undertaker's parlor and selected the casket herself: a massive bronze affair that was destined to make eight pallbearers stagger. And she herself saw to it that the most important people in the town and county were invited to be honorary pallbearers — all reported by name and rank in the *Stanton Herald*.

The funeral the next day at the Methodist Church was a social success. "You can't say that she didn't put him away handsomely," everybody was forced to say. — But by the next week, of course, there were skeptics who added: "But will she ever pay the bills?"

Miss Daphne didn't pay the bills. For the next ten years, she didn't pay any bills to speak of. And that was another side of her smartness. She never paid Mrs. Bridges for the fine black crepe de chine dress,



the material of which the seamstress had bought with her hard-earned money. She never paid Hadrian Morgan for the casket. And she kept on going like that. Just how nobody knew.

Whatever the bankruptcy proceedings of the store were, Miss Daphne moved into them quietly. Several times Mel drove her down to old Judge Bartow's office, and she was seen getting out of the Packard, her black veil billowing elegantly behind her. And several times she drove over to the Court House.

At the time Miss Daphne gave no intimation that her circumstances were at all reduced; and only in retrospect can one see the masterly scheme of transition that she worked out. Quietly she dropped one servant and then another until finally only old Clara and Mel were left. In the summer after Mr. Cadwallader's death she decided not to take a house in the mountains because she had developed (she hinted) a heart condition, slight but enough to make her doctors advise against high altitudes. Besides there were some affairs involving the estate, some securities to be sold advantageously; and that would keep her busy at home.

Gradually the Packard went out of circulation. First it was sent to fewer funerals and weddings. Then Miss Daphne took up walking now and then the few blocks from her house to the stores. ("The exercise is so good for one, you know.") Within a year, the automobile was staying permanently in the big garage painted white and green to match the house. Finally, it disappeared entirely — spirited away. Before day-break one morning Mel had driven it over to Stanton and had turned it over to a used-car dealer. Or so the gossip ran. Actually it was several months before most of the townspeople realized that the landmark was gone.

If Miss Daphne was doomed permanently to walking, she walked proudly. If she had any problems or fears she confided them to nobody. She bought groceries and didn't pay the grocer. She had charge accounts in several drygoods stores and didn't pay the bills there either. She kept Clara to cook for her and to do the laundry in an iron pot always boiling in the back yard. Whether she paid Clara, nobody could say. But Clara was never heard to complain. Though Mel got himself a regular job in the handle factory, he, too, stayed around the place in his off hours, doing little jobs, seeing that the lawn was mowed and the hedges were cut.

Gradually some decay began to show in the house. The white paint grew dingy and the green flecked off in scales as large as Caladium leaves. The blinds began hanging askew and losing louvers, one or two here and there like missing teeth in a grinning mouth. Clara finally left and only Mel came to keep the place from growing into a wilderness. Beryl went away to college, and Marian took over nursing the children and being a sort of slave around the house.

All the time, Miss Daphne lost none of her pride and confidence. And she would never be caught admitting to anybody that she wasn't as rich as she was the day when she rode in a Packard and had five servants.

Everybody still thought that Miss Daphne was smart, though her smartness exasperated them; and they talked about her scandalously: "She's got her cap set for the first comer, you can just bet. But no sane man's going to want a ready-made family like hers . . . She couldn't tell the truth if she met it in the street . . . She never pays a bill. They say she owes everybody in town, literally everybody . . . She's still a *nobody*, and she shows it. The Cadwallader name and all those airs of hers can't fool a soul."

But Miss Daphne went right on being proud and clever and not appearing to notice. And when Beryl caught a beau and got herself engaged, Miss Daphne marched right down to Miss Lottie Parker's dress shop and carried away a complete trousseau on approval. For years to come Miss Lottie would call aside the local women who came into the shop and tell them in her mousy voice, as if it were an awful secret, how Miss Daphne had treated her, taking home all those clothes just for Beryl to try on, keeping them, and paying not a cent — not a red cent.

Actually, in time a lot of people began openly complaining that Miss Daphne owed them money. The curious fact, however, was that all of the complainers seemed either shame-faced or apologetic, and a good deal of Miss Daphne's credit persisted. Every now and then she began paying a bill somewhere, probably a little bill that didn't amount to much but the payment of which enabled her to revive her credit at some crucial point. And everywhere there still seemed to be the unexpressed feeling that, come what may, Miss Daphne would win in the end.

But though Miss Daphne grew engagingly round and plump in figure and though her face became prettier as she grew older (with creamy skin under the deepening bronze of her hair), she made no progress in catching a beau. Not that she didn't get nibbles. She did. Every now and then a man would turn up from somewhere and take Miss Daphne out driving, always in the afternoon and perfectly decorously. Really, there was not enough to start tongues wagging.

So finally people stopped talking about Miss Daphne's trying to catch a beau and even about her not paying her bills. No matter how old-fashioned and made-over her clothes began to look, Miss Daphne still kept up a fantastic pretense that she'd never departed far from her old days of wealth and luxury; so people didn't entirely quit saying that she couldn't tell the truth. Yet in her poverty her social position became far surer than it had ever been before.

One reason may have been that she took pains to set herself up in good works. Consequently, she became president of the Mission Circle and chairman of the Civic Improvement Committee of the Woman's Club. When she took over the promotion of Clean-Up-And-Paint-Up-Week, things began to hum and evidences of her executive ability appeared in all directions. She even wangled enough paint out of one of the local hardware stores to put a thin coat of white on all except the back part of her own house; and the carpenter at the City Hall knocked off some of the decaying ornamental woodwork for her and repaired the sagging blinds.

As a part of her reward for beautifying the town, she was elected to membership in the Seven Arts Club; and she promptly read a paper on "Sculpture through the Ages" that most of the club members had to admit was a creditable performance. Naturally, there were a few die-hards who remarked that the whole thing had come from an old set of the *Britannica*, easily located in the Cadwallader living room in a case with a large sepia print of the Coliseum hanging over it. But, after all, didn't all the ladies crib their papers from books or magazines; and hadn't Mrs. Jenkins's preceding paper, "Travel in Our Times," been plainly an ill-connected collection of snippets from some old *National Geographics*?

When Miss Daphne announced through the columns of the paper that she was going to write insurance, everybody agreed that she was now entering on a career for which she was eminently fitted and which

might easily provide for her a profitable and interesting sort of life. By this time Marian had worked her way through college and was settled in a job, and Miss Daphne's own children were well on their way to independence. Even Edwin was by this time a senior in high school. Thus for Miss Daphne the years of struggle seemed over; and as a successful business woman she might legitimately assume the confidence that she had all along so gallantly and equivocally flaunted. Her future success was now a foregone conclusion, because she had never lost the way with the business men that she had had from the second she went to work for Mr. Trueblood. And everybody was still sure of her cleverness.

She had barely launched herself on her promising new career when Mr. Denham came to town. He must have been at least seventy — about the age Mr. Cadwallader would have been if he had survived the cotton market. He was a massive man who wore decently appropriate dark clothes and who, though never uttering more than a few croaking sounds, preserved a specious appearance of genteel success. Though he might have been over age for such a job, he seemed still employed as a traveling representative for a nitrate company, and he came to town for leisurely visits to keep an eye on big fertilizer interests in the locality. A childless widower, with a well-established family connection in Westbrook (just eighty miles away), he awakened once again in Miss Daphne her fatal dream of position and wealth.

To Mr. Denham, Miss Daphne doubtless *seemed* as wealthy as he did to her. She always put on a good front in more ways than one. On the prospect of her success as an insurance agent, she had borrowed enough money to paint the whole exterior of her house and have the magnolia trees cut down. Except for the mended blinds, the horrible green trimmings were all gone now, and the house gleamed in chaste whiteness. And, of course, from the way Miss Daphne talked, anybody would think that she was just waiting for a large bunch of gold-edged debentures to mature.

When the two "courtiers" had dinner together one night at the hotel and appeared in the same pew at church a Sunday or two later, everybody knew that the die was cast. It was a matter of equal certainty that Miss Daphne was finally and unalterably making a fool of herself and that nobody could stop her. Plainly she was as proud of her conquest as if she had landed a prince of the blood with a dozen castles to

his name. She beamed like a schoolgirl, and she'd never looked prettier. Mr. Denham moved more dully and phlegmatically, it is true; but he too let it be seen that he was mightily and genteelly pleased.

At last, the whole town was suddenly on Miss Daphne's side, tensely wanting to do something to keep her from the ultimate folly; but nobody could say a word or make a gesture that would do a bit of good. The paralysis was everywhere, like the kind that grips you when an unspeakable horror impends. And practically everybody who was anybody somehow felt involved in a ridiculous debacle.

But, of course, Miss Daphne couldn't see that it was a debacle. She married the old man, accomplishing the deed one Wednesday night after prayer meeting. It was as simple as that. Miss Daphne and Mr. Denham had come in late and had sat at the very back of the church. Nobody saw Miss Daphne's orchid or otherwise seemed conscious that they were there until the Reverend Mr. Cathey announced after the final hymn that he would delay the benediction briefly while he performed one of his "happy pastoral functions." Then up walked Miss Daphne on the arm of Mr. Denham, and the vows were said before a twittering prayer-meeting group.

The old man kept his job about a year after the marriage; then he quit. If he had any wealth or any retirement pay, he showed no evidence of it. Miss Daphne had to redouble her efforts at selling insurance while Mr. Denham sat for hours on her front piazza, his big feet propped on the bannisters and his old black felt hat pulled down over his scowling face. When he wasn't in that position, he was walking gauntly down to the post office and back, tapping his cane on the paved sidewalk as if he were a blind man and saying no word to anybody. Then pretty soon he was varying the routine by making Miss Daphne take him back and forth to the doctor and to the hospital.

The worst part of the whole affair was that none of the men down town could stand Mr. Denham. "He married Miss Daphne for her money," they began laughing when they saw him, "and she married him for his; and, Gosh, didn't they both get roundly diddled!"

So the sour, hulking old man became merely a local curiosity, walking along on the street to the post office, beating a tattoo with his cane, and preserving his silence — not living, and too ornery to die.

Miss Daphne's face began to look drawn now and her fine head of hair grew murky. She went about her insurance calls with doggedness

but with tense uncertainty. She who had heretofore been able to sense the town's grudging admiration and to exploit it with miraculous skill was no longer able to convince herself that she and her bluff had not been exposed. And as never before she became conscious that she might yet lose the battle to the ruthlessness that had so often threatened to destroy her. So whatever fight she made, she made with grimmest resolution.

If she had to give up other activities, she clung desperately to the Seven Arts Club. When her turn came to entertain, she dug deep into her chest for the best and daintiest remnants of the Cadwallader linen; and she polished her battered old silverplate so that it shone like new. Though the wallpaper in the living room was dingy and blistered and though the chintz slipcovers on the furniture were faded and patched, she had made as a focal point of the room a tall Heppelwhite secretary. The only tangible or — at least — visible thing that Mr. Denham had brought as a dowry, it was magnificent — rich walnut, delicately inlaid. The graining of the splendid tree from which it came and the consummate craftsmanship of the hands that fashioned it commanded instant respect. Somebody was always obliged to mention it.

Miss Daphne's stock reply was simply — "It's been over a century in Barry's family, ordered direct from England. It really belongs in a museum."

This was as close as possible to the complete truth and it may have been a final triumph that she could take refuge in it. Or it could have been a kind of reverse irony that, like her remote namesake chased by Apollo, she came finally to be imprisoned in a tree?

*Letter*

Yes, things are much the same. The town is quiet;  
 The train stops twice a day.  
 The nights are hot. You smell the valid cooking  
 Along the way  
 That brings you home at night to the same people,  
 Their scarcely varying talk;  
 For themes are few and each has its known comment.  
 Sometimes I walk  
 Down to the bridge—you know. The same rocks battle  
 The water, and the same  
 Rail bends, though less since I alone lean on it,  
 And still your name  
 Is carved with mine, below. My fingers find it  
 For reassurance, though  
 We chose a place no passer-by would notice,  
 Smiling to know  
 We both believed it childish, and both wished it.  
 And then sometimes I may  
 Walk farther, to our pasture. That is special,  
 Not every day.  
 What is for every day is that I write you,  
 And if herein you find  
 My only news is sameness, let that token  
 My heart and mind.  
 I have no words to talk about the wonder  
 That has not dimmed at all;  
 Just let me tell you that the same vines cushion  
 The old green wall.  
 There will be time to talk in other language  
 As soon as you are here:  
 Of us, and of the world and of our future.  
 Just now, my dear,  
 I sit at this same desk to write my letter,  
 Assured you will come back  
 Thursday, as promised, brought by the same engine  
 Down the same track.

GIRDLER B. FITCH

*Different*

The people who have seen houses staring at them  
 Mix with the people who claim no house could stare,  
 And that anyone is daft who would raise the question  
 Or even care.

They talk together, transact affairs—yes, marry—  
 Agree that the hour is late or the soup is hot:  
 The people who have seen houses staring at them  
 And those who've not.

But it isn't a little thing when a house stares at you,  
 Shocked in its every window, its door agape;  
 Surprise has sprung from another to your world;  
 And none escape

Unchanged the sight of another world than our world.  
 Embarrassed reason may hurry to mend its blunder,  
 But the people who have seen houses staring at them  
 Are doomed to wonder.

GIRDLER B. FITCH

*Etude Grottesque*

In the sea below the sea, the garden of the devil,  
 Eels' eyes eye eels, each exuding evil,  
 Monsters lock in fierce embrace of phosphorescent duel,  
 Crabs' claws claw crabs, cutting, crunching, cruel.

Down amid the galleons, the broken glass, the trifles,  
 Down deep, deep down, where the sea-plant stifles—  
 There our bones will lie, my friends, when we no longer float;  
 And for birds above our heads, the shark, the passing boat.

GIRDLER B. FITCH

*Inch Worm*

I had to crawl with a trowel  
 Into the dankest hole  
 To observe you, perverse creature,  
 As you traverse rocks,  
 And sticks, and bits of earth,  
 Your forked posterior fixed fast  
 As you reach with the rest of you,  
 Contorting in the search for something  
 Solid, worth holding onto,  
 And when you have anchored,  
 Convulse yourself forward  
 By once the length of you.  
 For long minutes I have followed  
 Your path that leads nowhere  
 And wondered with fear  
 If it may not be  
 That direction has nothing to do  
 With this constant wrenching of you.

MARY VANN FINLEY

*The Poetry of Beatrice Ravenel*

LOUIS D. RUBIN, JR.

During the 1920s, as is well known, there was a literary Renaissance in the Southern states of the American Union. For the first time in many decades, poetry and fiction written by Southern authors became of national and even international interest and importance. There were little poetry groups throughout the region, new literary magazines were founded here and there, and Southern writing graduated from the genteel idealism of local color into a medium whereby writers of intelligence and imagination wrote novels, stories, poems and essays that readers of similar intelligence and imagination could take seriously.

In poetry, the chief centers seemed to be Nashville, Tennessee, and Charleston, South Carolina. In Nashville the young Fugitives — John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, Donald Davidson, Merrill Moore — were producing a magazine, *The Fugitive*, which soon won an international reputation. In Charleston, DuBose Heyward, Hervey Allen, and John Bennett organized the Poetry Society of South Carolina, whose annual prize contests and lecture programs became widely known.

Among the Charleston poets was a lady in her fifties, Beatrice Ravenel. Though not closely identified with the Poetry Society, she served as an officer at first, attended its meetings and reading programs, and won several of its annual prizes. She published some of her poems in national magazines, and won a certain amount of renown, but when the Poetry Society entered into a decline in the late 1920s as Heyward began concentrating on fiction and playwriting and Allen left Charleston to write novels, Beatrice Ravenel's work dropped into obscurity.

The poetry of the leading Charleston poets — Heyward, Allen, Josephine Pinckney — has long been out of print, and is for the most part forgotten. The group did not have the staying power of the Nashville poets, several of whom went on to become and remain among the leading literary figures of the twentieth century. There were numerous reasons for the failure of the Charleston poetry to survive its time, the chief one being that at its best the Charleston poetry was noteworthy primarily for its novel use of the picturesque Carolina Low-country locale, and attracted attention mostly because of that. Unlike Ransom, Tate, Warren,

and Davidson of Nashville, the Charleston poets were not vitally interested in language; their work exhibited little originality of diction or imagery. Since it is through its use of language that poetry survives its immediate occasion, the Charleston poetry was soon forgotten. Heyward today is remembered for writing the libretto of the folk-opera *Porgy*, and Allen for *Anthony Adverse*. John Bennett's early children's story, *Master Skylark*, still has some vogue. Otherwise the group is forgotten. The Poetry Society still exists, but its importance is now only local. As for Beatrice Ravenel, nothing of hers is still read today.

In 1928 the late Addison Hibbard published an anthology designed to show off the work of the best Southern poets. It was entitled *The Lyric South*, and contained poems by dozens of writers. Most of the poets and most of the poems have long since been forgotten, and for good reason. For the most part the poetry in Hibbard's anthology is shallow, mannered, sentimental. Reading through the collection today, one finds very few memorable poems, or even lines: the verse of Ransom and Davidson stands out sharply (Tate and Warren did not have poems included.) The work of all the other poets represented is sentimental, verbally uninteresting, very much dated forty years later — with one exception. There are five poems included by Beatrice Ravenel, and several of these alone show, of all the work by the poets other than Ransom and Davidson, a lively imagination at work in the medium of language. In the poetry of Beatrice Ravenel, there is life in language, so that they read as well today as when *The Lyric South* was first published.

If one becomes interested in these poems, and secures a copy of her single book, *The Arrow of Lightning*, published in 1925, he will discover that her best work, however little noticed during the 1920s and thereafter, possesses a sturdiness, a quality of imagination, an excitement of imagery and diction, that are much superior to the work of any of the other Charleston poets. Her poems are not only more interesting than those of DuBose Heyward, Hervey Allen, and Josephine Pinckney; they are better than any other poetry being written in the South during the 1920s outside of Nashville. They are, I think, worthy of continuing attention. They deserve to be anthologized, read, and remembered; they do not merit the oblivion that has been their fate.

Because Beatrice Witte Ravenel is forgotten, except among those residents of Charleston who knew and remember her as a person, a biographical sketch is in order. She was born at 321 East Bay Street

in Charleston, South Carolina, on August 24, 1870, the third of six daughters of Charles Otto and Charlotte Sophia Reeves Witte. A German, Witte came to America as a young man, setting up in New York in the importing business. In the 1840s he was sent down the Atlantic Coast to Charleston. He liked the city, settled there, married, went back to Germany immediately following the Civil War but returned afterward, and became an extremely successful banker. His wife was from an old Charleston family of Huguenot ancestry. Witte possessed impressive wealth at a time when there was very little wealth in war-devastated Charleston. In 1879 he bought a large home at 112 Rutledge Avenue (now the Ashley Hall School for Girls), entertained widely, played an active role in community affairs, served as German and Scandinavian consul, and until his death in 1908 was among the most respected citizens of the city.

The Witte children were educated privately and at Miss Kelly's Female Seminary in Charleston, and as they grew into young womanhood and entered the community's social life, they became very much the center of admiration of local society; there are still elderly residents of Charleston who remember the aura of the 'Witte girls,' all of them as legend has it, brilliant and beautiful. Eventually all married well; Alice became the wife of Earle Sloan, a geologist; Fay married the journalist William Watts Ball, for many years editor of *The News and Courier* and author of *The State That Forgot*, a memoir of post-Reconstruction up-country South Carolina that is still widely cited by historians; Carlotta married Francis S. Van Boskerck, an officer in the U.S. Coast Guard; Belle married the prominent lawyer and banker Julian Mitchell; and Laura, the youngest, became the wife of Thomas R. Waring, editor of the *Charleston Evening Post*.

Of the six Witte girls, it was Beatrice who was the intellectual. Her sister Laura wrote many years later, in a memoir, that "Beatrice, dubbed the 'book worrum,' was gifted with the brains of the family. Her father said her memory was colossal. She inherited that from him. She cared more for books and for reading than for other things, but she had a tremendous range of other interests, drawing and painting, writing plays and going with her friends. She could tell wonderful stories to the spellbound children. She had beautiful thick curly dark hair and blue eyes, and was always most vital and interesting." She began writing poetry quite early; her daughter has in her possession a small pamphlet,

bound in ribbon, entitled "Christmas Poem, by Miss Beatrice B. Witte," with the further title of "Christmas Eve, Read before the Pupils of the Charleston Female Seminary, December 23rd, 1885."

Having completed the curriculum of the Female Seminary, Beatrice Witte might have been expected to enroll in one of the fashionable 'finishing schools' which young Southern ladies of her day customarily attended. Instead, however, she applied for admission and was accepted at the Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women of Cambridge, Massachusetts, known after 1893 as Radcliffe College, the women's division of Harvard University. She was a student there for three years, 1889-1892, and in 1895 returned for two more years of work. She did not study for a degree, but took special courses, mostly in English, French and German literature and philosophy.

Apparently she was as exciting a personality on the Harvard scene as in Charleston. She wrote for the *Harvard Monthly*, was one of its editors, published poems in the *Advocate*, and was one of a brilliant group of young men and women, including the Hapgood brothers, Norman and Hutchins, and the poets William Vaughn Moody and Trumbull Stickney, who cut a considerable figure in Cambridge intellectual circles. Norman Hapgood, soon to be famous as the editor of *Collier's* during its 'muckraking' days, was very fond of her, as was his brother Hutchins, who later produced important studies of slum life in New York City. In his autobiography, *The Changing Years* (1930), Norman Hapgood wrote of her at the time:

At the [Harvard] Annex my friendships were highly intellectual. Always I have felt a need for the thought of women, alongside the thought of men. For a time the *Harvard Monthly* had an associate board of girls, to keep track of what was written in the Annex, and it included Beatrice Witte, now Beatrice Ravenal [sic], whose 'Poe's Mother' shows her quality in verse, as in prose she has shown it both in short stories and in editorials. Her fitness for editorials was indicated by the daily themes that were an outstanding element of our English work, and of one of her most-talked-of themes I was the butt. It was a picture of me as she saw me one day walking down Brattle Street, with a visiting young woman whom Beatrice described as a 'wily society girl,' who was going through the motions of intense interest in the soulful opinions I was pouring out, and the theme bore the ironical title of 'Sancta Simplicitas.'

Another engaging anecdote of Beatrice Witte at Harvard is furnish-

in Hutchins Hapgood's autobiography, *A Victorian in the Modern World* (1939). He describes the salon of a prominent Cambridge matron:

The house of Mrs. C. H. Toy stands out prominently in my remembered experience. Her husband was Professor of Semitic Languages in the university, and he was one of those scholarly, wise, sweet-tempered old men who always have had so much attraction for me. He had a spark of fire in his dark eyes: he was a Southerner and, on the surrender of Lee, was one of those who wished to retreat to the mountains and keep up guerilla warfare. His wife was very much younger, and I think it fair to say that she was the social leader of that part of the community. She loved to have the lions with her, and there the lions were either brilliant teachers or promising young students. She gave many successful dinners, where could be found William James, George R. Carpenter, George Santayana, to mention some of the well-known names; and dazzling young students like William Vaughn Moody, who at that time also showed his talent for poetry, and my brother Norman, much admired in the university; and Beatrice Witte, the most brilliant student at the Harvard Annex (afterward Radcliffe College).

Miss Witte was the only girl I remember in college who was noticeably gifted as a writer. She wrote for the *Harvard Monthly* and the *Advocate*, and was adored by young intellectuals like Norman, William Vaughn Moody, and Robert Lovett, whose enthusiasm for the forms of the mind enabled them to be attracted by superior girls. But Miss Witte was not only gifted mentally; she had an attractive and baffling personality, and was apparently lacking in the soft sentimentality which the superior young Harvard man disliked. One little incident illustrates the popularity which she justly held. William Vaughn Moody one evening took her out somewhere, probably to a concert, and they had a long walk home from Boston, but without exchanging a word. That was a sign of great superiority. But when they arrived at her house, Moody weakened sufficiently to say a bitter good night. "If you hadn't said that," remarked Miss Witte, "I would have had some respect for you."

Throughout this period she did much writing. Not only did she publish in the *Monthly* and the *Advocate*, but a short story, "A Case of Conscience," was accepted and published in *Scribner's Magazine*, and another, "A Little Boy of Dreams," appeared in the *Chap-book Magazine* and was reprinted in the second number of *Chap-book Stories*, an annual. Several poems appeared in a short-lived little magazine, *Knight Errant*, and an article in the *Harvard Monthly*, "The Coming Man in Fiction,"

was reprinted in part in *The Literary Digest*. Meanwhile she earned high grades from such scholars as William James, Barrett Wendell, C. H. Kittredge, George Santayana, and George Pierce Baker, studying Elizabethan and Nineteenth Century drama with Baker in the year just before he set up his famous '47 Workshop.

The poetry that she wrote during these years was typical of the idealistic verse of the period; it was filled with poetic language, regularly rhymed, and devoted almost exclusively to the subject of Love. For the most part it was no worse and no better than most magazine verse of the 1890s, though occasionally it shows signs, despite its highly mannered diction, of an originality of language that in part redeems it from sentimentality. For if Beatrice Witte appeared notably free of soft sentimentality to the young Harvard intellectuals of the period, the poetry she was writing then is nevertheless mainly composed of just such sentiment.

What manner of poet Beatrice Witte might ultimately have become if, instead of returning home to Charleston, she had decided to remain in the Northeast, or perhaps go to England or the Continent for further study, it is impossible to say. She had talent, imagination, intelligence, among friends some of whom later became important literary figures; she was highly respected. But few young women of good family did such things in the 1890s, especially if they were from an old Southern city such as Charleston. Whether she ever considered remaining in the North and pursuing a literary or academic career, there is no evidence one way or the other; very probably her family would have opposed it if she had proposed doing so. (One suspects that Norman Hapgood would not have been uninterested in her staying in the North, to judge from several of his letters of some years later.) There is, however, no indication that she went back to Charleston reluctantly. For by the time she had met Frank Ravenel.

A year older than she, Francis Gualdo Ravenel (1869-1920) was tall, good-looking young man, cultivated and witty, with what DuBois Heyward later described as a "peculiarly endearing charm of manner." His mother, Harriet Horry Ravenel, was a writer of some note, and was author of a biography of Eliza Lucas and a volume of social history, *Charleston, The Place and the People* (1906). Though of distinguished social position, Frank Ravenel, like many another young Charlestonian, was very poor. They were married in 1900, and it was emphatic

a love match; a little poem written in the early 1920s after Frank Ravenel died, entitled "Salvage," is evidence enough of that. Upon his death in 1908 C. O. Witte left a sizeable fortune to his daughter. Apparently Frank Ravenel invested most of it in real estate operations, all of which proved unsuccessful, for by the mid-1910s the Ravenels had very little money, and the income that Beatrice Ravenel began earning from the writing of magazine fiction was an important part of the family's budget. For some years the three Ravenels — a daughter, Beatrice St. Julien, was born in 1904 — lived at Ocean Plantation, which despite its imposing name was a highly swampy farm in the Low-country south of Charleston. It is very probably the locale for one of Beatrice Ravenel's best poems, "The Alligator."

During all this time, she wrote almost no poetry. From 1902 to 1917, her manuscript book shows only one lyric which she apparently considered significant enough to copy out. It was not until 1917 that she began writing verse again to any extent, seemingly moved to do so by the emotional impetus of the American entry into the First World War. A friend showed some of her new poems to the editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, who accepted several of them, whereupon she began once again writing poetry in earnest. It was at this time, too, that for financial reasons she began turning out popular magazine fiction. Most of it was published in *Ainslie's*, for which she continued to write up through 1925. Other stories appeared in *Harper's* and *The Saturday Evening Post*. One, "The High Cost of Conscience," was reprinted in the *O. Henry Memorial Prize Stories* for 1919.

In 1919, too, Mrs. Ravenel began writing editorials and other articles for the Columbia, S.C., *State*, of which her brother-in-law, William Watts Ball, was the editor. Her speciality was foreign affairs, and evidently she possessed a skill that ran above the usual standards of newspaper editorial writing, if we are to judge from something that Norman Hapgood wrote to her, and also mentioned in his autobiography. In 1922, he informed her in a letter, he was dining with the columnist "F. P. A.," Franklin P. Adams of the *New York World*, and the conversation turned to editorial writing. "I said there were only two — possibly four — good editorial writers in America," Hapgood wrote, "and I named them. He said, 'I have found another. I noticed certain editorials in the Columbia State and wrote to the editor about them. They were by a woman named Ravenel.' He pronounced it Ray-vanel.



"What is her first name?"

"I don't know."

"Is it Beatrice?"

"Yes. That is it."

The poetry that Beatrice Ravenel began writing again, though it was published in good magazines, represented little technical advance at first over what she had done back at Harvard in the 1890s; it was for the most part highly abstract and very sentimental. One poem, "Missing," first published in *The Atlantic*, was subsequently reprinted in several collections; a war poem, it is full of the sentimentality and patriotism of popular verse of the period, and its renown was no doubt due to its theme.

Apparently, however, in writing and publishing poetry again, Mrs. Ravenel also began paying serious attention to what was being written by good poets of her own time. She subscribed to *The Dial* during its most brilliant years, the early 1920s, which coincided with her own renewed development. The shock of her husband's death in 1920 also doubtless had its effect on her work. In any event, with her formidable intelligence and her feeling for language, she was not long in perceiving the defects of her verse. For in 1920-1921 there is an abrupt and startling change in her writing. It is as if she had come upon the poetry of Amy Lowell, the Imagists, and other moderns, had suddenly realized what it was possible to do with language in a poem, whereupon she began doing it. Almost overnight she put aside the sentimental ideality of the poetry of the waning genteel tradition, with its poetic abstractions, ornate and artificial literary language, and its strained diction, and began writing in free verse, with notable economy of diction, a sharp precision of language, and vivid, evocative imagery. In the poems that now followed, she began utilizing her intelligence to the fullest extent, producing verse that conceded nothing in richness of vocabulary and complexity of thought.

It is likely, as H. Morris Cox suggests in his doctoral dissertation on the Poetry Society of South Carolina, that the coming into being of the Poetry Society in 1920-1921 also had much to do with this abrupt development in Mrs. Ravenel's poetry. She was not among its immediate founders, but was elected to its first executive committee, and was affected by the general interest in contemporary poetry that the formation

of the Society helped to stimulate. One notes that during the first year of the Society's existence, among the poets brought to Charleston to give readings was Carl Sandburg, whose well-known use of *vers libre* must have interested Mrs. Ravenel. But there is little real affinity of attitude there; it seems more likely that Amy Lowell and the Imagists proved more useful to her. The main influence of the Poetry Society upon her work was probably that it set Charleston to talking about, reading, and writing poems.

In 1922, the second year of the Society's existence, Amy Lowell came to Charleston to read. One of the poems which had been awarded a prize, and was read by Miss Lowell, was Mrs. Ravenel's. They spent some hours with each other, and a correspondence ensued which continued through the remainder of Miss Lowell's life. In the quite feminine, yet intense and intellectually bold personality of Amy Lowell, Beatrice Ravenel found someone who understood what she was doing, and apparently the same was true for Miss Lowell, who wrote often and referred once to "that odd something which makes one person sympathetic to another." The letters they wrote are lengthy, expressive, and affectionate.

Mrs. Ravenel evidently mentioned to Miss Lowell that she hoped to bring out a book of her verse, for Miss Lowell asked to examine the manuscript, went through 71 poems, and rated them from "excellent" to "poor." "Certainly you have a very rare and unusual talent," she wrote, "but it does not seem to me that you are quite critical enough of your own work yet." The manuscript included a number of the earlier poems as well as her most recent work in free verse, and Miss Lowell noted that the work seemed to break into two distinct halves. "Metre seems to put your whole mood backward into an earlier time," she wrote, "and the particular touch which you show in your later poems is not present in most of those poems which are written in metre. . . . One of the objections to the metrical poems is your tendency to lapse into the old, discarded poetical jargon with 'thees' and 'thous' and 'haths' and 'arts.' There is a leaning toward the merely pretty and sentimental in these metrical poems which lies in wait for you when you write metre, and which is entirely absent in your cadenced verse." The poems that Amy Lowell liked and thought worth publishing were numerous; she singled out for special praise "The Yemassee Lands" which she said was superb, and offered to recommend a manuscript of the best poems to the Houghton Mifflin Company.

Meanwhile "The Yemassee Lands" received the Poetry Society Prize of the Poetry Society of South Carolina for 1922, and was published in the *Year-book*. Mrs. Ravenel now proceeded to produce a number of her best poems, which were published in various magazines. Her book manuscript, which she entitled *The Arrow of Lightning*, was offered to several commercial publishers, but was turned down, and eventually it was brought out by the young publisher Harold Vinal in 1925, with Mrs. Ravenel bearing part of the expense. For the sake of Beatrice Ravenel's contemporary reputation it was unfortunate that Amy Lowell died before the book was published; undoubtedly she would have seen to it that *The Arrow of Lightning* received attention from critics and reviewers. As it was, the volume earned almost no national notice.

It seems odd that none of the young Nashville Fugitive poets recognized the merit of the work of the only other Southern poet whose interest in language and whose uninhibited intellectual attitude toward poetry were in any way similar to their own. During this time there was considerable liaison between some of the Fugitives and the South Carolina group; poems by Ransom, Tate and Davidson were awarded several of the Poetry Society prizes, and when *The Fugitive*, the Nashville group's magazine, was on the verge of expiring in 1925, several of the Fugitives considered merging it with the Poetry Society's *Year-books*. Despite the association, however, it seems never to have occurred to any of the Fugitives to comment on Beatrice Ravenel's work. The chances are that they were simply not aware of it at all; she was not receiving the national recognition that Heyward and Allen were getting at the time. Her reliance on free verse may also have put them off; they were not writing in that meter and were in general unsympathetic to it. Yet free verse or not, Mrs. Ravenel's poetry was closer in spirit and attitude to what the young Fugitives were doing than was the rhymed and metered work of her Charleston contemporaries.

In any event, though Beatrice Ravenel continued to write poetry for several decades and more, she published little of it, never brought out another book collection, and except for occasional republication of poems in a few anthologies and textbooks, dropped out of public notice as a poet. In 1926 she was married again, and to another Ravenel. Her second husband, Samuel Prioleau Ravenel, was only distantly related to her first husband; his family was originally Charlestonian, but he was born in Paris, where his family had moved following the Civil

War. A lawyer, he had lived for a number of years in Asheville, North Carolina. With her second marriage, Beatrice Ravenel's need to support herself and her daughter through journalism and fiction writing ended. During the late 1920s and the 1930s the Ravenels travelled extensively. Mrs. Ravenel now produced little poetry, though she wrote one group of poems, based on the West Indies, unpublished during her lifetime. Samuel Prioleau Ravenel died in Charleston in 1940. Beatrice Ravenel resided there, in the house at 126 Tradd Street where her daughter still lives, for the rest of her life. She continued to read extensively. One of her favorite authors was William Faulkner, whose work she admired from the first, even when he was considered a scandalously sensational author. Her daughter recalls that the Charleston Free Library, after complaints from members, refused to add additional Faulkner novels to its collection, and when Mrs. Ravenel sent her daughter to find a new Faulkner work, the librarian at the desk "slammed me down." In 1956, at the age of 85, Mrs. Ravenel died.

Of the poems that Beatrice Ravenel wrote during the 1920s, among the best, I believe, are those that make up a three-part work having to do with the Indian past of the Carolina Low-country. Though Beatrice Ravenel did not draw on locale for its immediate exotic and picturesque uses, as her Charleston contemporaries were accustomed to doing, some of her best work arises out of her strong sense of place and of history. She possessed, as H. Morris Cox has noted, a kind of historical sensibility that went beyond the mere recital of incidents and events from the past. "The Yemassee Lands," and its two companion poems "The Alligator" and "The Arrow of Lightning," take for their basic theme the presence, in the Carolina Low-country of two hundred years previously, of the Yemassee Indians, and of their subsequent dispersal and extinction. William Gilmore Simms had used the same subject for one of his best novels, *The Yemassee* (1835); doubtless Mrs. Ravenel was familiar with it, and also with some of the historical accounts of the Yemassees and their final raid on the English settlements near Charleston which resulted in their defeat and ultimate extinction. In the poems, she is concerned with the unchanging fields, forests and swamps of the Low-country, and the contrast between human attitudes toward time and that embodied in the natural world, as manifested in the complete disappearance of the once populous Yemassees and the coming of the white man's civilization, while the locale remains intact. The three Yemassee poems, it seems to me, are as effective a use of locale and of history as exists in Southern

poetry. They demonstrate the quality of Beatrice Ravenel's art at its best. A subject that might have been so easily sentimentalized, and presented as merely picturesque and quaint, has been set forth concretely and vividly, in its own right, with the images and metaphors containing and not merely alluding to, the meaning. What is most striking is the choice and use of words, the sensuous, evocative recreation of mood in language. The imagery is alive and functional, not sterile and merely ornamental. Few Southern poets, for example, could, in seeking to show the presence of the Yemassee in the thickets of Indian Summer, come up with the verb that Mrs. Ravenel chose for this image: "Out of the snarling keen-toothed vines/Berries wink with the cunning obsidian gleam/Of the arrow-head . . ." The use of an animate word to convey the inanimate movement of light on the vines, so as to suggest the imagined Indians, is quite beyond what her Charleston colleagues were capable of; it was only in Nashville that such things were being done with language in the South of the early 1920s. The entire sequence shows not only a remarkable eye for descriptive imagery and a grasp of the sensuous properties of words, but a restraint of diction, a freedom from clichés and from empty, emotive abstractions, that permit the poem to speak for itself, and to depend for its success not upon the preconceived attitude of the reader to the theme, but upon the creativeness inherent in the language and imagery. The poem, in other words, does not stand for a Poetic Idea; it is a poem.

It is precisely this quality, I believe, that characterizes the best work of Beatrice Ravenel. A craftsman with words, she wrote, in her best poems, lines and stanzas that avoid almost entirely the sentimental abstraction that is the bane of so much second-rate poetry during the dwindling but — in the 1920s and 1930s — still formidable tradition of genteel idealism in Southern poetry. The poems in Addison Hibbard's anthology *The Lyric South* are full of such posturing. Only the Fugitives and Beatrice Ravenel, of all the Southern poets of the period, seem to have avoided it.

It is not without relevance, I think, that like the Fugitives, Beatrice Ravenel was university trained. Her work, like theirs, involves an un-bashed use of the intellect, and is not content with the easy poetic words and undemanding language of so much Southern verse. Her poems are not over-simplifications of their subjects; they are not "written down"

Consider, for example, her description, in a poem entitled "The Humming-bird," of a summer garden after the rain:

Clear, precise as an Audubon print,  
The air is of melted glass,  
Solid, filling interstices  
Of leaves that are spaced on the spines  
Like a pattern ground into glass . . .

Then she describes the humming-bird

Splitting the air, keen as a spurt of fire shot from  
the blowpipe,  
Cracking a star of rays; dives like a flash of fire,  
Forked tail lancing the air, into the immobile trumpet;  
Stands on the air, wings like a triple shadow  
Whizzing around him.

There is a precision and a concrete specificity of language and imagery here that are possible only because the poet knew that the connotative properties of words, and not Poetic Ideas, are what makes a poem stay alive.

The poems that Beatrice Ravenel produced late in her life, and which have never before been published, are among her best work. They are based on life in the West Indies, about which she read extensively, in particular the books of William Seabrook having to do with the prevalence of black magic and voodoo customs among the islanders. Like the poems of *The Arrow of Lightning* in the 1920s, they are in free verse, but in form and diction they are more terse and concentrated than ever before. They were apparently written in the 1940s, and there is a directness and even a sensuality about some of them that is startling to come upon in the verse of a Charleston matron in her seventies. "At the Sacre Coeur in Paris / They took me for white," begins one lyric entitled "Jeane Fille Octaroon." It is about a half-breed girl educated in convent schools in Paris where in an art class the students were made to "swear in the chapel / Never to work in a life class / Where the models went without robes." But now comes temptation: ". . . the air of tonight / Is pressing against my body, / Insistent, harsh as a thorn-bush, / Saying, What can be this?" and the poem concludes with the native drums throbbing, "abroad in the air, / Crying! Crying! Tearing the gauze of dusk / In the grove of the plunging shadows."

In another such poem, "Love Song," a woman thinks that "my blood is caught in my veins as the fish is caught in the net. / The sense of my veins all over my body is full of the struggle, the gasp and the anguish. / Don't be afraid." Physical passion is imaged in these poems in a way that one seldom encounters in Southern poetry; the immediate example that comes to mind is John Crowe Ransom's "The Equilibrists." Devotees of the sentimental poetry that customarily filled and still fills the little magazines and yearbooks of the numerous poetry societies and groups in the South and elsewhere are accustomed to speak of the work of poets such as the Fugitives and Mrs. Ravenel as "intellectual," even "cerebral." Intellectual Mrs. Ravenel's poetry is, in that it makes full and uninhibited use of the intelligence, and involves thinking. But the fact is that in an important sense — indeed, in the only sense that really matters — Mrs. Ravenel's poems are far less "cerebral," and far more "emotional," than the kind of "simple" poetry usually cited for its emotional quality. For Mrs. Ravenel does not deal with the Ideas of emotions; she does not haul out the vague, sentimental abstract words that supposedly stand for feelings. Rather, she uses the connotative and denotative resources of language to convey, through images, the emotions themselves. She is not satisfied with second-hand ideas and pat phrases. She explores the imaginative properties of words, to recreate not through idea but through suggestion and association the *feeling* of experience. In this way she can communicate emotion to others. What is remarkable about the West Indian poems which follow is the way that they go across not merely the poet's thoughts, but her feelings — the sense of passion, physicality, love and hate, the sultry feel of primitive existence in a tropical climate pervades the poems. I know of nothing else quite like them in modern Southern literature.

The relevance of the poems that follow, then, and those published in *The Arrow of Lightning*, is twofold. They are well worth reading and preserving, I think, because of their solid achievement; they are among the more interesting work done by Southern poets of the twentieth century. And they also represent, in their accomplishments and their unevenness, a fascinating 'might-have-been.' Given Beatrice Witte Ravenel's genuine talent, what kept her from developing into the poet she might have become? What was there about her circumstance — the life of a young woman of good family growing up in an old, conservative Southern seaport city, and after a five-year stay in the Northeast marrying and remaining very much a part of the society of that city, so

throughout her twenties, thirties, and forties she was in effect isolated from almost all of the ideas, interests, and attainments of the most vital literature of her day — what was there in her environment that would not let her break loose, or even *want* to break loose?

It is an interesting problem in Southern cultural and social history, with implications for anyone who would seek to understand the region and its literature. One thinks, for example, of a close contemporary of Beatrice Ravenel's, Ellen Glasgow. She too was born of good family into an old Southern community. She too was intellectually gifted beyond most of her contemporaries. But unlike Beatrice Witte Ravenel, there were factors in Ellen Glasgow's circumstance that specifically barred her from active participation in the everyday life of her community. Deafness, poor health, a very unpleasant and ugly family situation — these were part of Ellen Glasgow's life as they were not of Mrs. Ravenel's. Attractive, a member of a close and happy family, very much a part of the Charleston community, she was not forced into the kind of withdrawal and social isolation that helped to make Ellen Glasgow both conscious of and highly critical of the attitudes of the community into which she was born, and which led Miss Glasgow to a single-minded commitment to the literary and intellectual life. In Miss Glasgow's case the result was a long series of novels that, however marred by sentimentality at times, explored and dissected her society both in love and anger. Beatrice Ravenel's work contains evidence of no such total commitment. What she learned and experienced at Harvard did not have the effect of cutting her off from the community into which she had been born. And had she ever written an autobiography, it is doubtful that it would have reflected the degree of overwhelming loneliness, unhappiness, frustration, and also the egotism, that characterize Ellen Glasgow's *The Woman Within*.

No one would project so simple a causal explanation of what produces important writers as that of the mere environmental presence or absence of such factors in the writer's immediate circumstance. Yet the social question does indeed arise, and students both of Southern literature and of the whole business of the causes, conditions, and psychology of literary creativity will find ground for speculation in Beatrice Ravenel's poetry.

Here, then, is a group of unpublished poems by Beatrice Ravenel. In the autumn of 1969 the University of North Carolina Press will publish

a collection of her work, including both these poems and the best of work in *The Arrow of Lightning*. Perhaps the appearance of these poems several decades after they were written and at a time when there is servedly so much interest in the literature written in the South during twentieth century, may help to secure for them, and for their authors, some of the notice and the respect that I think is so well merited.

#### HAITIAN POEMS

##### *Jeune Fille Octaroon*

At the Sacré Coeur in Paris  
They took me for white.  
I sat with the daughters of ducs and maréchals.  
One day Soeur Marie-Martre made us swear in the chapel  
Never to work in a life class  
Where the models went without robes.  
We bathed in a chemise.

But the air of tonight  
Is pressing against my body,  
Insistent, harsh as a thorn-bush,  
Saying, What can be this?  
This is the enemy. This is between us.  
And the Radi drums are abroad in this air,  
Crying! Crying! Tearing the gauze of dusk  
In the grove of the plunging shadows.

#### *Warning*

Oh, do not be his sacrifice,  
The lover who fondles you under the palms.  
Tell him, You are my pleasure, I take you.  
Do not say, I am yours.  
All that you offer to gods or to lovers, as you offer to fire,  
They take.  
Do not burn yourself in his passion, insatiate, long-toothed.  
When the gods love a worshipper too well  
They devour him.

#### *Duty*

Tread lightly.  
Speak like the soft texture of magnolia  
That bruises at one light graze to brown silence.  
Be lovely, be invitation and calling to the touch,  
Melt like the dance, swelling to graciousness.

Ti Phina is a good woman.  
It squeezes her heart to be lavish but she doles to the church.  
When her mouth-corner twists to abuse she forces kind words.  
She wrings her kindness out of a sour heart-pulp  
Like bitter cassava cakes.

But men do not love her.  
The angels may love her  
But surely they do not visit her.

*Love Song*

Zozéphine!

Beat a woman all you want if you'll only love her.  
Burn her caille over her head, swing her out of the door,  
If you'll only pick her up and love her.

Zozéphine!

Come to the Danse Congo,  
My blood is caught in my veins as the fish is caught in the net.  
The seine of my veins all over my body is full of the struggle, the  
gasp and the anguish.

Don't be afraid.

*Don' mind if I sharpen my claws on yo' hide, your smooth pulpy  
arms,*

*Same like a kitten on the banana trunk.*

*Same like all married people.*

Zoséphine, Zozéphine!

This man loves you plenty!

*Judge Achille Fontaine*

Folk-ways are final, supreme, holding the only authority;  
Crystalized they are law.  
Our folk-ways now climb the peak  
Like the peak of the *mornes*.  
We wear long-tailed coats, we specialize forks,  
We flatter Americans. Hé, we behave ourselves.  
It is the law. It is right.

But one fine day, O Legba! O Dumballo!  
The Radi drums shall shatter the Champ de Mars,  
And the god who delights in death, in death with blood,  
Whose name I dare not name—  
(Or you or I should die in the year, but probably I)—  
The only god of the blacks who has power over the whites,  
That god would be sated!

He would pick his teeth,  
He would droop his lids in the smug postprandial nap.  
And the ancient ways, the ways of the ancient folk  
They would be ours once more.  
O Legba! O Dumballo! O Voodoo Pantheon!  
Our folk-ways then would be Law.  
They would be right.

*The Selfish Woman*

Love me or leave me alone.  
You shall no longer cling about my lap,  
Your love that will not level  
Your separateness that will not go away!  
If you were gone  
I could be all creation in myself.  
But not with you to lead me and frustrate me—  
Your hesitations, your half-tones, your cowardice.  
I run the gauntlet like a savage captive,  
Torn into ravellings  
Not by the spears of men but by the gold pins of the women!

*Compensatory Fidelity*

The century-plant is nowadays swift to bloom  
O Melinital  
Nor the love of a poor old man . . .  
But it will not blossom swiftly for another.

*Advice From a Mamaloi*

Too much virtue is unseemly  
And uncondusive to grace in the dance.  
Throw a few crumbs to the devils,  
Be a little to blame.  
You sweet one! Lovely!  
Would old Father God have been so anxious to save the world  
If it had been soft and easy to tame?

*Aboriginal*

The queerest thing about Haiti—  
 (Said the American officer)  
 You'd think that a dark residuum  
 Of primitive passion, nearer-to-nature impulse,  
 Lingered under the Frenchified eau-de-toilette  
 Of the inner circle?

Well, sir, I tell you, *c'est vé' itab'*.  
 Girls who were convent-bred, gentile, alluring,  
 Marry—yes, with a *dot*.

By Gad, sir. Maybe the primitive law of our nature—  
 Maybe the female apes  
 Came to the husband's tribe  
 Laden with calabash cups and coconuts,  
 Or else they died old maids.

*Elegy on a Lover*

The night closed round him like a candle  
 But I was the flaming bud on the wick.  
 The waves of the air ebbed from him full of my pulses,  
 His thoughts swam in my blood,  
 Why should he know my secrets?  
 He turned my arteries inside out.  
 He rasped my heart with his nails  
 And my own eyes looked at me, under his wing-shaped eyebrows—  
 Woman-eyed! Horrible . . .  
 I am glad that he is dead.

*Success*

One man came to my caille,  
 Stood in the shade of the mango,  
 One night when I danced with my shadow.  
 His face was stupid and hard and distorted with love.  
 My breath died out in my throat  
 As though I were under the manchineel branches.  
 One night I told him, "You are my man.  
 You would not beat me."

I cooked him a pot of plantains,  
 With pepper, with fish and chicken.  
 Then memory woke in his eyes.  
 His dry ribs rattled like pods,  
 The smell of the earth came from him.  
 He ran—his fingers crooked to dig up the earth,  
 To hide in his grave.

I thank, I thank old Legbal

I shall go dance in Port-au-Prince,  
 Make all the money!  
 Even the zombies, the zombies, the zombies  
 Come to stare at my dancing out of the grave.