

THE QUILL

"The Quill" is published by the Quill Club of the University of Pittsburgh under the direction of the Department of English. Manuscripts should be addressed to the Editor, room 324 Alumni Hall. The price of a single copy is ten cents. No yearly rates or schedule are offered.

APRIL 1922

No. 1

CONCERNING "THE QUILL."

This little magazine of four pages must serve a double purpose at the University. Since the failure of the "Pitt Review", a very slight but very insistent request has been made for some opportunity for original student writing at Pitt. On the other hand, the freshman English course, with its attention to written English in the classroom, has also given rise to a large amount of class material which (in more permanent form than it is in at present) might make interesting reading. "The Quill" hopes to satisfy both these needs in its extremely limited space. We hope it will be interesting; we expect to see in it original paragraphs, books reviews, poems, and sketches which many students will find worth filing in their note books and in bundles of themes.

SECTION ONE FRESHMAN COMPOSITION

"At Last I have Written a Poem"

I have often wished that I could write really good poetry. In high school I have wasted much valuable time trying to write poems—poems about the glitter of the sun on burnished steel; poems describing the splendor of the tournament; poems rhyming "castle walls" and "baron's halls" and "court balls". I have tried my hand at blank verse, and the result would have astonished you. I have run races with Pope in rhymed couplets, and have tested my skill by chanting alliterative songs such as the old Anglo-Saxons delighted in. I have expressed my thoughts in Spenserian stanzas with Alexandrines scattered through them, in Shakesperian sonnets with the last lines rhyming, and in Italian sonnets praising Laura's eyes. I have sung charming little songs addressed to Phyllis and Cloe in the Horatian manner. I have toyed lightly with delicate French rondeaus and triolets, and more than once have at-

tempted a ballade with the usual meaningless but musical refrain and with the moralizing envoi attached. But I have never written a poem which I felt was really good. It was, therefore, with great joy that I read the following which the author had handed to me with the request that I give it to the world as my own; I say, with joy, for I recognized great worth in it, and realized that my reputation would be made as soon as it appeared in print. The name the author gave it was "Apologiis Guilielmo Wordsworthio"; and although I have my doubts as to its correct spelling, and am far from certain of its meaning, I have nevertheless let it stand.

Apologiis Guilielmo Wordsworthio

He dwelt among the untrodden ways,
Our dear theme reader did,
For no one saw him, if you please,—
They only saw the words he said
Upon the bottom of the page,
In letters fiery red,—
And saw the checks and minus signs
He put upon their themes at times.

A violet by a mossy stone
Had nothing upon him,
He was so modest that no one
Had even heard his name.
For all about him that was known
Was that he wrote, in words of flame,
Upon each theme a word or two,—
And then you flunked—or passed
right through.

He lived unknown, and few could know
His name or pedigree,—
His father's age no records show—
Or if he had T. B.
They only knew that down below
Their theme's last line they'd see
A word or two in red ink writ,
Stating what mark (and why) they'd
git.

Even though the real author refused to put his own name to this for fear that something would suddenly happen to his English grades, I shall sign my

name to it; for then I shall have the credit of having written a really good poem.

SAYING GOODBYE TO PROBOSCIS

If on my way to the grocery store, I ever turn into the short cut that runs by the apple orchard and past the cottage on Apple Lane, I'm sure to meet the chubby little brown dog with the jaunty little white ear, which jumps all over me, licks my hand, barks, and wags his stumpy tail. Maybe you think I don't have a job saying good-bye to the affectionate little scamp on mornings when I leave for school. I've tried every possible way to slip past, but he's always on the watch. I hear a sharp bark and he comes skidding around the corner; he stops a few feet away to spread his awkward legs, cock his head, raise that one white ear straight up, and look at me out of those wise little eyes as if to say, "Well, where do you think you're going?" What can I do but growl in answer and tumble him around a bit, (the rougher the better he likes it). And the way he growls back and snaps and kicks, is enough to make anybody's blood run cold. When I start on, he changes tactics: he begins to grovel on his roly-poly stomach, and to whine reproachfully and wag himself. (He has hardly any tail). He is a wary little schemer, he is; he knows I can't resist him. Yet as a last resort I do manage to ignore him and start off whistling and apparently viewing the tree-tops. Out of the corner of my eye, though, I watch him. He is alert, and he follows along as far as the corner. There he stops to give voice to a last protest; then he turns and trots mournfully back stopping once or twice to squirm half around and look after me—the "ungrateful wretch". I'd like to wave to him, but that would never do, and so I have to content myself with thinking, "Cheer up, Proboscis. We'll soon have another visit."

9LH1
9P69P59

YE HOT DOG

It's an ideal football day, the kind when you wish your nose and other extremities weren't so isolated, and you prance around trying to keep warm, your overcoat buttoned up to your chin, your hands plunged deep into the pockets, your feet playing a tattoo on the cold pavement. Your breath rises in a puff of white vapor; you are just about half or three-quarters frozen if you will only admit it, but you wouldn't miss any of the games for the world. Just as soon as the whistle blows at the end of the first half, you're off for one of the best things about a football game. On a stiff-legged run you make for the Forbes Field basement, colliding with any number of other warm-blooded rooters rushing in the same direction. By the time you reach the bottom of the last incline, you feel comfortably warm all over; your toes are tingling and your cheeks, you know, as red as a winter apple. Finally you manage to push through the healthily jostling crowd gathering around the little stand in the corner and to get your fingers (which behave most like thumbs) on the little dime nestling in the warmth of your vest pocket. At the magic word, "hot dog", the white aproned "coon" behind the counter thrusts a hot bun between your palms, and you give up the dime without a misgiving. You find it is somewhat an art to coax a bottle of mustard within reach, but you do it, and as soon as you've embalmed your hot dog in yellow, oozy mustard, you call signals over again to yourself and make another ten-yard buck through the boys back to the outskirts of the growing aggregation. There you gaze at your prize hungrily for just a moment of anticipation,—cold, game, everything forgotten. Then, what a sensation! You sink your teeth into that sizzling, juicy, "hot dog"; once, twice, three times—at most, four. And the best part of it is, there's another game next Saturday.

A Few Errors from Class Themes.

The blackmailers conjured to carry away the girl.
She lay in a vogue (light stupor).
He liked his work precariously.
The man's residence was rampant on his neighbor's property.

SECTION TWO

VERSE

RAIN

Summer rain,
Cool, silver-liquid benediction
Brushing my windows at insistent intervals.

And with it wind,
Touching my curtains with nebulous fragrance.

I am awake,
I know that tomorrow's sun
Will reflect a glad earth,
Clean, new blessedly refreshed,
And at peace.

Rain falls into my heart,
Tears for the dreams that cannot be
quieted at will.
And tremulous winds yearn over me,
The strange new sorrows that follow in
the wake of love.

For I am not one with a neutral earth;
I am spirit
And flame,
And with me there is no peace,
Only the exquisite pain of longing.

Summer rain,
Night wind,
Dreams of you.

JULY AFTERNOON

Thin waves of heated quivering air
surge

From the hot dry road where sun
baked yellow dust

Lies smothered with summer. Even
the yarrow weed

Along the road is withered and parched
with thirst.

Countless tiny insects make the air
noisy

With their insistent hum. Not a leaf
stirs;

No breath of cool, damp air do the
woods yield

To the tired traveler faint with wander-
ing;

His eyes, stung into pain by a blazing
sun,

Follow the aimless flutter of butter-
flies.

Gorgeous in color, and dazzling, but
drowsy-winged

As they creep close to earth. From
neighboring fields

The monotonous whirr of a thresher
comes to tell

Of bounteous harvest in sheaves of
golden wheat.

The lazy cattle standing in the shade
Blink stupidly. The intense heat curls
and wavers

As the long summer day swoons to
a weary close.

SECTION THREE

SHORT STORY BEGINNINGS

Which beginning promises an in-
teresting story based on the opening
situation?

"The Quill" will be glad to publish
the best letter answering this question.

I

Mary plastered a balky spit-curl in
place, adjusted a rakish puff of golden
brown hair, slid a chamois over a
freckled nose, and turned from the mir-
ror.

"Look me over, Betty. Do you like
me?"

"Sure. But for heaven's sake hurry
up and get your coat on. Tom said he'd
meet us at Randon's drug store at half
past eight. He's getting harder to
handle every day. Like as not if we
ain't there on time he'll beat it."

"Ain't his friend with him?"

"Huh?" With one sweeping move-
ment Betty shoved a stick of gum be-
tween her over-red lips. "No, Al got
put on the committee and has to take
tickets".

"Oh, darn!"

"Say, Mary, I believe Al's got you
goin'".

"Why, I don't even know him. I
only....."

"Come on kid. Get into this coat.
You're gonna tell me you saw a pair
of Irish blue eyes and a pay-day morn-
ing smile and you fell. Didn't you,
now? Honest?"

"Oh, I don't know. He's nice look-
in' and he dances swell, even if he is
a copper, but....."

"Yeh", Betty drawled, "Al's the first
cop I ever seen that could dance and
dress like a human being".

"Darn it, I can't find my goloshes". Mary was down on all fours looking under the bed.....

II

He came in answer to my advertisement, and I saw at once that he was not a chauffeur. His dark blue suit had the unmistakable fit of an expensive tailor, and his fair skin glowed with the healthy sheen which is produced by the daily shower bath and fresh linen. His tallness, the spread of his shoulders and the set of his head indicated the trained athlete. I was eager to classify him.

"But you look like a college graduate to me." I wanted to find the key to the unusual situation.

"Princeton, Miss Tyler." He said it with steady voice and steady gaze.

Evidently he was not going to help me. I opened the memorandum book which I had brought when I came down the stairs. For three years past I have had to save my steps, as my right ankle insists that it was intended for riding and not for walking purposes. I fear it will eventually win the argument.

I held the pencil poised for the first entry, and he moved a little nearer my chair.

"What is your name, please?"

"Henri Stefanson."

This explained the blond, wavy hair, the blue eyes and the color in his cheeks.

"Were you born in Sweden?" It seemed an unnecessary question for his English was flawless.

The answer came quickly. "Oh no, I was born right here in Pittsburgh, and my mother and sisters lived here until quite recently."

"And your age?"

"Twenty-five." I made the entry, and added "Unmarried" after it.

I pulled myself up, determined not to be swayed by his personality. I would be stiff and rude.

"I presume that your driving knowledge is all right, but would you care to have your friends see you in this position? I could not permit you to wear a mask while driving or to stop the car and climb a tree every time you saw an acquaintance coming."

He turned quickly, and it seemed to me that the blue of his eyes deepened. "It's honest work, isn't it? Besides, they wouldn't notice me in a uniform."

III

Perhaps it was the spring air that did it, or perhaps it was the sulphury, soot-filled smoke of the railroad yard. Perhaps—but any rate there he was, close against the iron rail-work that marked the beginning of the train shed. Why any grown man of middle age should leave a desk full of work to stand in a train shed and watch untold trains come in and out, he did not know. But there he was.

He squirmed when he thought of telling Sarah that night, when over the tea and muffins, he would recount his day's doings. Sarah never let the seasons worry her; there was too much housework. The only note she ever took of the coming of spring was to change her old hat for a new. How could anyone tell things to a woman who marked the seasons by a variation of hats? And yet he always told.

"Mac, does that train go to Idlewild?" The question came from a soiled newsboy who gazed in a rapture through the grating of track nine. The dirty face turned towards spring-smitten John when the question was asked; then back went the nose to the iron bars.

"It does," John answered, "to Idlewild and hot dogs and raspberry pop."

"Aw, gee. Gee!"

A light flashed above the boy's head and threw into large black and red letters, "Latrobe, Connection to Ligonier and Idlewild."

John chanted softly, "Idlewild, hot dogs, pop." He looked and then he...

SECTION FOUR
MORE FRESHMAN WORK

The old switch engine of Brownsville seemed like a mother to her crew and to the cars stored in the yards. Patient? All day long she shuttled in and out among her children, placing a carload of flour at the mill, taking some coal to the powerhouse, and then backing a string of empties on track nine, where they could be easily

picked up by a passing freight train. So on the bitterest day in winter and on the most blistering summer afternoon, she plied back and forth with only a wheeze now and then to let the crew know that she was human. Often when the limited was behind time or when a coal train came through with a load of twenty hundred tons, old 702 hooked on behind and gave a boost that sent them flying over the steep grade, for this mother would not have her children late. In the busy mid-winter season, though they made her work far into the night and early again the next morning, she was happy, for even then she never had to leave her work unfinished. Yet there came a time when, like all mothers, the faithful old engine finished her work. One Thursday night after she had helped the president's special over the hill, she wheezed a sigh of relief, slid down the grade, and made for the roundhouse. She never reached home, though, for the crown-sheet burned out. The wrecker took her away the next morning and a gloom settled over Jack Burlow and the crew. They swore a little less that day.

The chief impressions of one who stood outside Thompson's Restaurant were of crowded streets and vivid electric lights. The black slime on the sidewalks had dried into the natural gray of the cement, and the wind that had dried them was dying down with the setting sun. The six o'clock crowd jammed the sidewalks from show-window to gutter, massing and breaking, weaving and crowding, like huge cakes of ice grinding together in a swollen stream, forced here and straining there with the slightest break in the jam. Street cars, trucks, automobiles, bicycles, taxis, drays—vehicles of all kinds and for all purposes—filled the streets, and jumped checker-board fashion across the town, square by square, each move, carefully studied, made by the traffic "cop" with steady eyes. Noisy motors, grinding car-wheels, heavy horseshoes on the paving, roared in one continual thunder peal, punctured by shrill traffic whistles. Thousands of electric lamps in the signs that had been lighted very early, slowly brought into focus outlined figures in tiny sparkling lights.

A red and green snake crawled up and down the front of McVicar's theatre, stopping at least once each trip to thrust out its flaming, barbed fang at the program for the week in large white lights. United States tires rolled from the top of a high building into the black night. A timid nurse 20 stories above the street, dropped fiery drops of Murine into the blood-shot eye that winked down on the hungry mass below, where each window was now brightly lighted. Before Thompson's a large arc hung; smaller incandescents encircled the white tile front; and on the huge, lighted windows some giant had enamelled "Thompson's" in bold spencerian scrawl. Beneath this arc light the crowding and the harsh glare were centrally focused where Thompson's blazoned windows beckoned all the senses. It was like shouting "dog-fight" in Chicago's face and pointing at Thompson's.

THE CAPTIVE BIRD

A captive bird will always want to fly; so will a school-bound bird to whom Uncle Sam had given a pair of wings. The first few days at home are happy enough; for a while the lessons go well; everything is new and interesting. The boy folds his wings and decides that after all the best time to learn is now while the mother bird is still scratching up the worms for him. In a few weeks, though, his spirits start on a long downward glide. Not long ago he was as free as an eagle to sail wherever he pleased; he was always doing and seeing new things. Now it is the same dull routine; the same subjects, the same teachers, the same long hours. He droops about, sadly pruning his feathers. Every morning he looks out at the bright sky with its silver clouds. How many new flights he could try in the clear still air this morning! What fun it would be to play about in those fairylands with their delicately-tinted hills, valleys, and pecked castles. And that same day he hears far over-head the steady drone of a fellow-birdman and watches him swoop and dart happily about. That is the last call! Tomorrow he will unfold his wings again,

stretch and fly far away. Why should he want to stay and learn when there is so much that has never yet been seen, and so much that has never yet been done? Why learn how to make nests? He'll never need one; he'll always keep on the wing..... That night the snow falls heavily and it turns bitter cold. At dawn a dejected bird presses his face to the window and spends a long hour in deep thought. Well,—nests are warm and comfortable in cold weather, and birds really ought to know how to build them, just out of curiosity if for no other reasons. Had he not better stay at home, for a while, at least until the winter is through?

THE GOOD OLD TIMES

If only the good old times would come back again—those good old times when sultans and viziers walked the streets of Bagdad, and no one could tell them from the ditch diggers and porters with whom they fraternized; when fairies and djinns were yet on good terms with the humans; and huge rocs flapped by, far above the earth, carrying shipwrecked sailors to the diamond fields, where they might make their fortunes. What a carefree life we college students would have had then! And what concerns me the more, what an easy time I should have had. I should never need to study any lessons, and could be at the Grand every afternoon and the Alvin every evening, if I wanted to; and yet get all "A's" the next day. I could go to a dance every time one came around, without once having to hurry over my lessons before supper, or to cram them down whole at six o'clock the next morning. For you see, merely by rubbing a ring, I will summon a genius, who is more than delighted to learn my lesson for me,—one whom I do not have to ask twice before he consents to take my place. At the end of the day he will walk nonchalantly into my room, toss an armful of laurel wreaths on the bed, and disappear until the next time he is needed. When my English teacher has asked for a theme to be developed by negative details (a method which I thoroughly abhor) and the only subject I can think of deals with "ro-

bust redbrest robins" which "gullups" down huge red cherries, pits and all,—then all I have to do is to reach over to the table, and touch, ever so gently, the most treasured possession the room boasts: that antique, cupshaped bronze lamp, with its floating wick hanging out over the edge. In an instant a neatly folded theme of five or six pages will flutter and rustle down through the air, and land noiselessly at my feet; for Aladdin's lamp has never been known to fail. The next day I take my Wishing Cap to class in my pocket; and when I think the right time has come, I clap it on my head and utter a wish. At once the theme reader erases the long minus sign he has put on my theme, and marks two big, fat checks on the outside page, just below the date, and immediately beneath them writes, "This is wonderful work! Please make a copy for our pamphlet." When I oversleep in the morning do I hurry on with my clothes, and rush down to public speaking class only to be late? No! I take my time in dressing, even being particularly fastidious about the exact angle at which I part my hair, and spending more time than usual in making sure that the worn place in my tie is on the inside of the knot. Then I pull out my little Oriental Prayer Rug from its hiding place under the bed, and, gathering my books in my arm, I step into the magic circle which some old Arabian wove into the rug when the black arts yet lived and magicians walked the earth. Almost at that very instant I find myself standing outside my public speaking room in the new Alumni Hall. Having shoved my Rug behind a convenient radiator, I open the door, and walk in alertly, just as the professor comes striding down the hall. "Ah", I sigh, "if only those good old times would come again,"..... But the friendly rocs passed long ago, with their fields of fist-large diamonds. The kind fairies and djinns who used to help us mortals over rough places have all disappeared. Only the sultans and viziers remain; but they wander listlessly through their once beautiful palaces and gardens, now overrun with rank weeds and fungi, and dare not show their faces on the street, lest the ditch diggers mob them.