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THE EARTH AND MAN

A little sun, a little rain,
A soft wind blowing from the west—
And woods and fields are sweet again,
And warmth within the mountain breast.

So simple is the earth we tread,
So quick with love and life her frame;
Yet thousand years have dawned and fled,
And still her magic is the same.

A little love, a little trust,
A deft impulse, a sudden dream—
And life as dry as desert dust
Is fresher than a mountain stream

So simple is the heart of man,
So ready for new hope and joy;
Ten thousand years since it began
Have left it younger than a boy.
—Stopford A. Brooke.

THIS, THAT AND T'OTHER

A Page From The Diary Of A Country Editor

Up fairly betimes, and find a typical Kentucky morn, of the kind when the ringing call of the crow comes clearly across miles of sparkling sunshine; when the pastures are grey with frost, save for steaming patches where fat cattle have slept. On such days the smoke rises like a wispy arrow straight to heaven, one remembers hog-killing and the steaming lard kettles, the fat, juicy sausages and cracklin' bread. Such days in Kentucky did always make me think of the rural England of Pickwick and Sir Roger de Coverley, of kitchens hung with hams and pepper pods, of ruddy, apple-cheeked squires rollicking at their hunt breakfasts. All of which is some of reading, no doubt, if ancestral memories be discounted, for I have never been in England and doubtless never will be, save through the eyes of books.

So to breakfast, of wheat cakes and fresh eggs, golden mested and lightly boiled and coffee of a patency to warm the cockles o' one's heart, wherewith I am cheered mightily and fat to reading the Sunday papers with an eagerness unusual (for they invariably oppress me with their bigness) and note the usual Sunday morning crop of murders and robberies. And I read of one woman who has lost her husband, a practice that we males must, of necessity, frown upon, yet I wonder why more of it is not done. And 'tisould be, doubtless, a woman who has learned tactfulness through the centuries and prefers to use "spins and cranks and various wiles" in preference to pistols, when she would bring the male to heel. Failing all of which, there remain tears, the which no male worthy of the name may withstand.

It does seem to the casual observer that the world grows worse, what with murders and fiendish happenings, and thoughtful scriveners of the press are at their wits end to account for it all. Many do blame the Eighteenth Amendment and make out a good case for their arguments, which theory is refuted by many statistics by t'other side. So that one knows not what to blame for this reign of lawlessness that plagues us, nor what means of correction there may be. As a consequence there is a deal of hopelessness in the outlook of many, a tendency to consign this old world to the dominion how-wows and have done with it. A witness is a correspondent of The Mercury, who wrote last week:

The cold wave hit our people quite hard, but the crime wave sweeping our state and others seems to be hitting us harder. We doubt if the world in general is growing better.

Which is a sentiment I cannot accept, believing that the world does grow better, as it has grown better through another cycle of years. Plentiful crimes and waves of lawlessness are but infinitesimal phases of growth, in my opinion, like the old "growing pains," doubtless the result of infected tonsils that plagued the youth of those of us who were young in the days of the puffed sleeve and the bustle. I believe that Tennyson actually did "dip into the future far as human mind could see" in his Locksley Hall, and in that extraordinary poem I find a line that may be pondered by those who doubt the

ability of the life that walks and creeps and crawls on this whirling sphere to adjust itself to a destiny magnificent, a destiny undreamed of in our philosophy—

"For I doubt not, through the ages, one increasing purpose runs;
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."

Another way, forsooth, of saying "God's in his Heaven; all's right with the world," a preachment much hated in churches, but put to scant practice and given little faith, else there would be no fear and much more contentment among those who strut and fret their brief hour upon the stage of life. Bless Lord! I do preach, a role I would not usurp from the dominies.

Pretty soon so done by the fire and from my chair I may see my sugar maples, which I permitted a journeyman trimmer to trim last week, after making sure that he had heard and appreciated Joyce Kilmer's "Trees." A very expert he proved to be, thinning out the limbs, close to the trunk with a saw and not chopping out the tops with a dull hatchet, a form of butchery that prevails in this town and irks the soul of one who loves a tree. So it may be that I will see my lawn grassed this summer, which is a recompense of sorts for the pruning saw to a tree.

Now, thinking of the graceful beauties of my sugar maples in May, when they are honey-noisy covers for shy, slim catbirds, I am conscious of a hunger for the things, a hunger that this day of sparkling winter sunshine, bearing its gifts of frosty beauties to eye and ear and nostril, does but whet somehow. Last night I dreamt that a purple martin came and perched upon the comb of a nearby house and I wondered to see him; today the mood is upon me for the gardening, which is a pleasant pastime that the purveyors of seed catalogues most delightfully allure and abet with their gaudy books. Given an armchair by the fireside and a sheaf of these colorful books and one may raise him rows of crisp red radishes, beds of bright green lettuce, vines of luscious red tomatoes. He may see his bitterbean tents hung with pods, may dream a regiment of green stalks, bearing their corn-cob piping knapsacks of ivory or golden ears. And the flowers! There are lady hollyhocks by the garden wall, the lilac bush in the corner, the spraying gold of the forsythia and the cascading foam of the bridal wreath. Later will come roses—romantic roses, or so they will be always to me, mingled in memory with the vision of a blue-eyed witch—a queen sleeping upon a bed of roses. The bed was only a couch; the stage of the pageant but the rostrum of a village school and I doubtless never will be, save through the eyes of books.

Each come guests and to dinner, to which I do full justice always, of a Sunday, though protesting that I care not for a mid-day meal. Then to sit about the fire with much pleasant chit-chat until the sun goes down into a flaming west and I know we shall have another day of perfect winter, a typical Kentucky winter's day, when the caw of the crow is as comforting as a benediction to one who loves this region; when the branch meandering jelly through grey meadows and bare woodlands has a beauty peculiar to the season; when the west flames at evening and the aroma of cornbread, coffee and baron from some humble cabin rises like incense before the altar of the departing sun-god! I do love this Blue Grass Region of Kentucky, in which my life has been spent. Provincial I may be and doubtless am; yet I hope my son will love it and his son, and feel the thrill that rolling pastures at their loveliest winter, a typical lucky winter's day, when the caw of the crow is as comforting as a region; when the branch meandering jelly through grey meadows and bare woodlands has a beauty peculiar to the season; when the west flames at evening and the aroma of cornbread, coffee and baron from some humble cabin rises like incense before the altar of the departing sun-god! I do love this Blue Grass Region of Kentucky, in which my life has been spent. Provincial I may be and doubtless am; yet I hope my son will love it and his son, and feel the thrill that rolling pastures at their loveliest winter, a typical lucky winter's day, when the caw of the crow is as comforting as a benediction to one who loves this