

M'LISS AND LOUIE

By CARL SANDBURG

*WHEN M'Liss went away from the old home
with its purple lilacs in front and white
fence pickets and green grass—*

*Where the slow black covers of evening and
night came dropping softly before the gold
moon came on the yellow roses—*

*Louie, the lonesome, spoke his thoughts to himself,
sitting in that same moonlight coming on the lilacs,
the roses:—*

*Let her win her own thoughts; let her be
M'Liss always; let her sit alone after
whatever happens and see some of the outs
and ins of it;*

*Let her know the feel of the bones of
one of her hands resting on the other;*

*Let her lose love, gold,
names, promises, savings;*

*Let her know hot lips, crazy love letters,
cool heels, good wings, birds crossing big
windows of blue skies, time, oh God, time to
think things over; let her be M'Liss;*

*Let her be easy with all meanings of quiet
new sunsets, quiet fresh mornings, and long
sleeps in the old still moonlight;*

Let her be M'Liss always.

*Well . . . well . . . it was growing late in the evening of
that day when M'Liss went away, late, late into the
night, as Louie, the lonesome, sat sleepy in the gold
of that same moon coming on the fence pickets and
the green grass, the purple lilacs, the yellow roses.*

He was sleepy. Yet he could not sleep.

THE DEVIL BORN IN THEM

BY CHESTER T. CROWELL

IN our community people often spoke of Rose and Violet English. They said, "Those two girls have got the Devil born in them." Having read the Scriptures, that sounded quite natural to me. Only I wondered why someone didn't cast him out. According to all I knew on the subject, characters with devils were introduced into the story in order that the devils might be cast out. I hoped I'd be present with my target rifle when the event took place.

The first time I ever saw Rose and Violet they were standing in the bright sunshine, with a background of rich green ferns that covered a giant boulder, and both of them were stark naked. A little stream of water not more than a quarter of an inch in diameter spouted over the top of the boulder into a pool eight feet below; the pool was a mere basin of pebbles and white sand, surrounded by a carpet of grass. Rose, who was about fourteen years old, was standing with one foot on each side of the little pool, her head tipped back and her bare, marble-white arms gracefully extended upward while she caught the stream of water in her open mouth. Violet, who was less than a year younger, stood beside Rose with her arms extended like a bird's wings and her body gently tipped forward. So delicately was she poised that it seemed a zephyr might cause her to fall. She was sipping the spring water as it trickled from the chalice of Violet's lips.

Only Rodin could have appreciated the scene adequately. My acquaintance with Art at the time was limited to circus posters of beautiful women in fluffy

skirts poised on one toe on magnificent white horses. However, I did not miss the beauty of it entirely. No one could. It was too perfect. If I had ever heard of Art I might have known the full wonder of it, but my sensation at the time was that of a new-born and instinctive sense of beauty struggling feebly with an overpowering accusation of guilt. I had seen something I had no right to see. The thought didn't occur to me that the girls ought not to have been twenty yards from the house without clothing. I felt guilty of something and I didn't know what.

For perhaps ten seconds I stood transfixed, not knowing whether the agony of guilt or the glory of such beauty held me. Then Rose and Violet flew away. Their dainty feet seemed scarcely to touch the ground. Three steps placed them on the far side of the boulder. I do not know whether they saw me or sensed my presence or were merely continuing their usual play. But at the time it seemed as though they knew I was there and intended that I should pursue them. It was as though I should also have been naked. They were nymphs. My rôle was faun.

But I had come to see their brother Harvey and deliver to him the usual notice about work on the county roads. In our part of Western Texas, it was the custom to work five days on the county roads. In other parts of the State, where people had more money, they paid a certain sum into the county treasury in lieu of the five days of labor. But money was scarce, yes, it was rare, among us. Therefore, we watched for these notices in order that we might work instead of finding our-