

the Phoenix Nest

THE INNKEEPER'S CAT

THE cat climbed into blazing night
along the palm's elliptic stem,
a speck in overwhelming light,
to prowling the roofs of Bethlehem.

Midnight was chill, so he crawled
back
by the inn stable where he knew
warm creatures slept, but through a
crack
strange radiance made him pause
and mew.

A man as splendid as a king
opened the door and let him in;
he saw the gold, he heard them sing,
his fur got prickly on his skin.

He could not hum the hymns he heard,
nor mumble prayers, but in caress,
he tiptoed to the Child and purred,
and rubbed against His Mother's
dress.

—ULRICH TROUBETZKOY.

* * *

ONE CHRISTMAS EVE

I went out into the argent evening:
It seemed a moment we were cool,
unbothered.

Wordsworth and I, fed up with our
own scribbling,
Felt fractious earth was being nursed
and mothered.

Yes, it seemed the world was less for-
lorn:

Sextons, on stony knees, were dusting
pews.

Appeased that Christ and rheumatism
were born—

And then some philistine turned on
The News.

I heard old Satan blow his wreathed
corn.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. Taylor: "Twinkle, Twinkle,
Little Star." 2. Fitzgerald: "Rubaiyat."
3. Watts: "How Doth the Little Busy
Bee." 4. Byron: "Destruction of
Sennacherib." 5. Longfellow: "Hia-
watha." 6. Hemans: "Casabianca." 7.
Scott: "Lay of the Last Minstrel."
8. Burns: "John Anderson." 9. Cook:
"The Old Arm Chair." 10. Moore:
"The Harp that Once through Tara's
Halls." 11. Moore: "'Tis the Last Rose
of Summer." 12. Proctor: "The Lost
Chord." 13. Poe: "The Bells." 14.
Gilbert: "Patience." 15. Longfellow:
"A Psalm of Life." 16. Goldsmith:
"When Lovely Woman Stoops to
Folly." 17. Wordsworth: "She Dwelt
Among the Untrodden Ways." 18.
Gray: "Elegy." 19. Hunt: "Jenny
Kissed Me." 20. Scott: "Patriotism."

Who trades my holy night for rented
air?

Free Enterprise? cathartics? or gents'
wear?

Shall life with lather, or some cream
for hair

Bejitter me?

Cross fingers, hope to die;
Look up and see, how many light-
years high,*

Orion strolling, backward, through the
sky.

Counsel me, Star Kings, in my brief
moment?

Wordsworth and Orion said, No Com-
ment.

—BARCLAY HALL.

* According to Lecky: "Wrinkles in Practical
Navigation" (BETELGEUSE) (alpha Orionis)
is distant about 148 light-years. We see it now. I
suppose, as it was when the "Lyrical Ballads"
were published?

* * *

SWEET MYSTERY OF LIFE

Why dance bands stop

I'll never know

Just when I start talking

Fortissimo.

—B. JO KINNICK.

* * *

The spring issue of *Voices: A Journal of Verse*, to be edited by Howard Griffin and a co-editor, will be partly given over to poetry by ex-GIs. Their original poetry will not necessarily be that written during the last war, but afterward. Manuscripts should be sent to Howard Griffin, 401 Fulton Street, Westbury, N. Y. It is to be hoped that one or two prizes may be offered and those who care to make contributions to this fund may send them to Harold Vinal, 687 Lexington Avenue, New York, N. Y. This same issue will also be open to other contributions, which may be sent to Mr. Griffin at the above address.

* * *

BALLAD OF EUDORA

Eudora, a hellion, brash and fair,
clean as a breath of mountain air,
lithe as a sapling growing up,
had a tongue that could chip a porce-
lain cup;

her face was warm as an April day
telling the earth Spring's come to
stay,
and her hips were wide enough to
hold
generations manifold.

Eudora's youth was a shameful riot.
She came naturally by it.

Folks, predicting she'd end in shame,
clucked dispraise about her name;
but she, like a heifer who charges
fences
and sees stars splatter about her
senses,
shook off gossip when young men
were
pillars of flame because of her.

Eudora knew what there was to
know:

the earthy pulse of the way things go;
her throbbing blood like a singing
choir

divinely caroling her heart's desire.

In church when the young men sidled
past her,

what if the minister preached disaster
as he thumped on the lectern till the
oak stand shook

with his thumping as he quoted from
The Holy Book!

Eudora's flesh didn't thrive on prayer:
her soft dove's eyes went everywhere;
and everywhere for a breathless
second

a young man hoped it was he she
beckoned;

the oldsters grinned, but the women
loosed

invective on a chit who'd come home
to roost

as a daughter-in-law, The Lord for-
bid!

Sure as God made apples, Eudora did!

Not a hand-me-down, but the likeliest
fellow

Eudora picked for her marriage pil-
low;

the likes of her had the gall to choose
an up-and-coming farmer with the
liveliest thews;

a proper man, she had snared him
proper,

with many to warn him and no one
to stop her,

for he was a man and a woman was
she,—

a white birch leaning on a maple tree.

—I. L. SALOMON.

* * *

—WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

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RECORDINGS SECTION

IMPRESSIONS

UNLESS present portents are grossly in error, the long-standing ban on new recordings will be lifted before these observations appear in print. The irony of it all may be that the men who found their holiday season disrupted last year by emergency recording in anticipation of the ban may now find a similar situation in the wake of its removal.

If anyone can point out any way in which a year's cessation of recording has benefited either labor or management in this dispute, or any single way in which a concession of value has been wrung from one side or the other, I will be the first to agree that it served some useful purpose. The musicians are returning to work—if not immediately, whenever they do—under a wage agreement no different from that which obtained before.

The manufacturers will pay a royalty of some sort into a welfare fund of some sort, exactly as they did before. It will not be administered by President Petrillo, but by a trustee acceptable to both labor and management. Since management is content with the status quo, and not much concerned with the spending of the money it pays into this fund, the probability is that it will continue to serve much the same function as it did before—as an evidence of Petrillo's interest in his unemployed dues-payers—whether you explain it on grounds that are sociological, technological, or merely illogical.

The only party to the dispute not represented in the settlement is the public. It has no voice in decisions though its outlay is the only factor concerned in the haggling. It is not consulted on the justice of a work cessation, though that cessation has taken a whole year from the recording span of Arturo Toscanini, deprived us of a host of performances which

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were prepared for public hearing in that time and would, in the normal course of events, have been preserved in recorded form. Years may elapse before they are duplicated, and some may be gone forever.

The trustee, whoever he may be

whenever he is appointed, should bear in mind that recordings, though made and sold for a profit, are as much a public utility as telephones or railroads.

IRVING KOLODIN,
EDITOR, SRL RECORDINGS.