

# THE FOSSIL

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## THE INVITATION

**Martha E. Shivvers**

Down over the lawn where  
green grasses grow  
is a man-made pond now  
covered with snow.

But summer's hot days  
under skies of blue  
brought fish from the bottom—  
Luke cooled there, too.

Now, Luke is the neighbor's  
big black dog  
who trots up our lane all agog  
wanting affection and  
to swim in that bog.

The waters ripple as he swims away  
as many as three or four  
times a day.

Cattails hide bass down in  
the deep, while frogs sing  
their sonorous Beep, Beep, Beep.

One day a pair of geese came  
this way—are there enough  
reeds for them to stay?  
She swam in circles from shore  
to shore while he searched  
for cover...is there anymore?

With masculine honk—Mate, let's roam—  
there's not enough here to  
make this our home.

The pond keeps inviting  
all who come near  
to enjoy her offerings  
cloudy or clear.

## RUSS PAXTON REMEMBERED

### President's Report

**Guy Miller**

The Russell L. Paxton Memorial Award for Service to Amateur Journalism has been regarded as a singular recognition since its unveiling by sponsor John C. Horn on December 13, 1986. At that time it was devised to personally honor a journalist's most devoted servant Russell L. Paxton, a household name yet today in many corners of our little journalism world. Later, observing the fact that it was not for other faithful stewards such as Russ, amateur journalism as we know it could not long function, John C. Horn deemed it a worthy move to extend this honor to other members who have "given freely of his or her time solely for the benefit of their fellow amateur journalists." Adds the donor, "As an example of 'service to amateur journalism,' one need only look at Russ Paxton."

The objective of the award is certainly commendable and most certainly throws a challenge to those who have the responsibility of determining the recipients of such a distinction. Thus it was recognized as a high compliment when the donor asked The Fossils to undertake the task of making those choices. History attests that succeeding administrations have striven conscientiously to assure that the award has been well placed. And while the donor does not stipulate how often this award should be bestowed, over the years the pattern has developed that The Fossils have made it a yearly event with the result that 17 members have been chosen from the major journalism groups, i.e., AAPA, NAPA, and the United factions (presently, UAPAA).

It is our pleasure to announce that Awards Chairman Lee Hawes chose to present the 2005-6 Russell L. Paxton Memorial Award for Service to Amateur Journalism to **GARY BOSSLER**, an exceptionally active member of NAPA who has also served AAPA and The Fossils over his more than 30

years association in our beloved hobby. Fossils remember that Gary served as our president for 1995-96 and for five years as our secretary-treasurer. More significantly Gary has given full devotion to the NAPA as a publisher, by way of letterpress and computer, of both private and convention journals. Furthermore, he has served, not only when urged but also as volunteer, in various NAPA offices, including Mailing Manager, President, and Official Editor. In his latest stint as Official Editor, Gary has had to fill in as Critic, Historian, and Nominating Committee Chairman when for one reason or another these offices were left vacant. In fact, had it not been for his diligence, the NAPA ballot for this year, except for nomination of the 2007 convention site, would have appeared with nary a candidate to choose from. As it is we in NAPA were favored with a complete slate. And in respect to the 2007 convention site, note that the NAPA convention will meet next July in North Canton, hosted by none other than the man whom we have chosen for this prestigious award.

Gary received The Paxton Award at the NAPA Convention which met in New Orleans this past July 2-4. Myself unable to attend, I prevailed upon NAPA Secretary-treasurer Bill Boys to do the honors. He graciously consented to do so; and I am indebted to him for performing this service for the Paxton Award Committee.

Award donor John Horn's own contributions to our hobby can readily be seen in his carefully crafted issues of *The Leadstacker* as well as other works of art which have issued from his presses over the years. More insight into the extent of his activities in the arts comes by way of the March 2006 edition of *Art & Antiques* which cites John and his wife Robyn (complete with photo) in a list of artists and collectors who have made special efforts to advance appreciation of the arts and artists. States the article: "John and Robyn Horn began collecting glass and expanded into clay, baskets, metal and wood. Robyn, herself an artist, is dedicated to promoting contemporary crafts and helping the artisans represented in their collection. The Horns have achieved their goal by donating works from their extensive collection to institutions such as the Minneapolis Institute of Art, Yale University Art Gallery, the Mint Museum in Charlotte, North Carolina, and the Museum of Art & Design in New York. Not only do their gifts raise awareness of the field, but as Robyn notes, 'We want to enable these artists to continue to work, and having their pieces in these museums means a lot to them.'"

More could be added by those who have visited the Horns' home and have delighted in the results of Robyn's varied talents and in John's massive collection of

presses, types, and related equipment. But, you get the picture of what had motivated John to devise this salute to Gary Bossler and others before him who have "given freely of his or her time solely for the benefit of their fellow amateur journalists."

**OUR CENTERFOLD THIS ISSUE**  
**ORIGINAL HOLOGRAPH MINUTES OF THE**  
**FIRST ANNUAL NAPA CONVENTION 1876**

Compls [Compliments] Will T. Hall

Copy of original minutes of  
1st annual convention N.A.P.A.  
1876

The Centennial Amateur Convention, held July 4, 1876, at the Philadelphia City Institute Hall, northeast corner of 18th and Chestnut streets, under the auspices of the N.A.P.A., of Philadelphia.

Programme

Chairman's Opening Address; Address of Welcome, by James M. Beck, Philadelphia; Election of Officers; Delegation Business; General Business; Poem, "On the Brink," by Richard Gerner, Hoboken, N.J.; Address, by J. Winslow Snyder, Richmond, Va.

The programme contained the following numbers that were not carried out: Forney's Letter; Humorous Poem, by M. W. Benjamin; New York City; Address by Charles M. Cohen; Address by Franklin Barritt; Valedictory, by Charles Heuman, New York City.

Convention called to order at 1:35 p.m. by Richard Gerner, the Chairman pro tem., who made an opening address which was received with great applause. James M. Beck, of Philadelphia, made the address of welcome. Messrs. Fynes, White and Hosey presented the following:

**Resolved.** That the only authorized voters in the National Amateur Press Convention are those who are, or who have been, actively engaged in amateur affairs. Adopted.

For Chairman Messrs. Gerner, White, Snyder, Hoadley, Allen, Kendall and Hall were proposed. John W. Snyder ("Winslow") of Richmond, Va., was chosen.

W. T. Hall, of Chicago, was elected Secretary by acclamation.

It was moved, seconded and carried that the N.A.P.A. of Philadelphia be dissolved, and that with the other amateurs from all parts of the United States a National Amateur Press Association be formed. It was then decided that the Chairman and Secretary just elected

be made the President and Secretary (Recording) of the newly-formed organization.

Messrs. Richard Gerner (“Humpty Dumpty”), Charles C. Heuman (“Romulus”) and — Barritt [Franklin Barritt of New York City—ed.] were appointed a committee to draft a constitution and by-laws, to be presented at the next meeting.

J. A. Fynes, of Boston, was elected Treasurer; Evan A. Riale, of Philadelphia, Corresponding Secretary; New England Star, Official Organ.

A vote for place of holding the 1877 meeting resulted as follows: Long Branch, 16; Chicago, 5; Niagara Falls, 2; New York City, 8; Washington, 12. Accordingly it was determined to hold the next convention at Long Branch in the month of July, the date to be decided by the Committee of Arrangements.

There were about 60 amateurs present. On the vote for Chairman Snyder received 32 votes and Gerner 28. Among those present were Richard Gerner (“Humpty Dumpty”), Hoboken, N.J.; Charles C. Heuman (“Romulus”), New York City; J. Winslow Snyder (“Winslow”), Richmond, Va.; W. T. Hall (“Biff”), Chicago, Ill.; J. A. Fynes and Correll Kendall, Boston, Mass.; E. R. Hoadley, Evan R. Riale, James M. Beck, Philadelphia; Bennett Wasserman, M. W. Benjamin (“Feramorz”), Franklin Barritt, Charles McColm, New York City; — White [J. Guilford White of Alexandria, Virginia—ed.], — Allen [Clarence G. Allen of Washington D.C.—ed.], Will Leaning, — Duhamel [James F. DuHamel of Washington D.C.—ed.], F. K. Vondersmith, and J. Edson Briggs, of Washington, D.C.

*This wonderful historic record of the first convention of the National Amateur Press Association was discovered by Fossil Trustee Stan Oliner in a recently-recovered bound volume of The National Amateur. The following note written by Edwin Hadley Smith was attached to the first page of the minutes: “October 14, 1911. These Minutes were written by Will T. Hall, given to Will S. Moore in 1885, and presented by Mrs. Ragland (formerly Mrs. Will S. Moore) in September 1911 to the Edwin Hadley Smith Collection. See writeup in November 1911 Boy's Herald. Edwin Hadley Smith.” If the editor had that issue of Boy's Herald currently in hand, he would certainly reprint Smith's article here. I thank Stan Oliner for making these historic minutes available for reprinting in The Fossil.*

*Readers will want to compare the account of the first convention provided by these minutes to the account contained in Spencer's History at pp. 30-33. Virtually all of the names cited in Moore's minutes can be identified in the list of attendees provided by Spencer at pp. 209-210. (I have added information only for those*

*names given only in part in Moore's minutes.) Two names mentioned by Moore not contained in Spencer's list are Morris W. Benjamin (“Ferramorz”) (author of the amateur book The Fatal Feud published by C. L. Hine in Washington D.C. in 1877, q.v., Spencer, p. 225) and Franklin Barritt of New York City. While both Spencer's account and Moore's minutes are in accord that Barritt was appointed to the committee charged with drafting a constitution and by-laws, the fact that Moore notes that Barritt's “Address” was “not carried out” is indication that he himself was not present at the convention. The same comment applies to Morris W. Benjamin, whose “Humorous Poem” Moore notes was “not carried out.” There are some conflicts in home town citations between Moore's minutes and Spencer's list: Will Leaning (Moore, New York City, Spencer, Fly Creek, N.Y.); Charles McColm (Moore, New York City, Spencer, Cleveland, Ohio) Frank K. Vondersmith (Moore, Washington, D.C., Spencer, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania); Bennett Wasserman (Moore, New York City, Spencer, Baltimore, Maryland). Spencer (p. 31) notes that the convention was called to order at 1:30 p.m. on July 4, 1876, while Moore's minutes specify the time as 1:35 p.m.—a difference of five minutes! There were two Kendalls (Correll and Frederick of Boston, Massachusetts) and two Allens (Clarence G. of Washington D.C. and Willis H. of Carbondale, Illinois) at the convention, but Spencer's account (p. 32) makes clear that Correll Kendall and Clarence G. Allen were the two individuals nominated for chairman. (Perhaps William T. Hall of Chicago, Illinois declined his nomination, for Spencer's account does not record any vote for him for chairman.) Moore's minutes do provide the vote for the next meeting place, not given in Spencer's account. Moore's minutes indicate that “about 60” amateurs were present while Spencer's list fixes the number at 65. A name I had not noticed on Spencer's list before reviewing Moore's minutes was that of James Douglas Lee of Washington, D.C.—many years later, he served two terms as Fossil Librarian in the early 1930s. The last survivor of the “Boys of '76” is generally acknowledged to have been James F. DuHamel, who lived into the 1950s. I have never seen an obituary for him.*

## **LAVENDER AJAYS OF THE RED-SCARE**

**PERIOD:  
1917-1920**

**Ken Faig, Jr.**

*Editor's Note: This article deals with the participation of gays and lesbians in the amateur journalism hobby at*

*the end of World War I. It is followed by an extended anthology of their writings and the writings of their critics. With limited exceptions, the amateur journalism hobby has always been open to persons of all races, religions and sexual orientations—the common love of the printed word binds together all the divers participants in the hobby. While I feel an obligation to take note of gay-lesbian participation in our hobby during this period, it has never been my policy to invade the private lives of hobbyists. Roswell George Mills (1896-1966) and Elsa Gidlow (1898-1986) were early, public exponents of their respective sexual orientations. Graeme Davis (1881-1938), NAPA Official Editor in 1917-18 and President in 1918-19, was one of the leading intellectual lights of amateur journalism in his day. He played an important part in the events narrated and he could not be omitted. Each reader must make his or her own judgement regarding the objectivity and the reliability of the sources used. My aim has been to tell the story of these cultural radicals from the Red Scare period in a fair manner for the historical record. As much as possible, I have tried to allow them to tell their own stories in their own words. Naturally, these early amateur writings, reprinted herein from the public domain, should not be taken as representative of the mature works of their authors.—Ken Faig, Jr.*

The First World War brought the emergence of the United States as a world power. The United States finally entered the conflict in April 1917, nearly three years after its beginning in August 1914. The debate over entry into the war and the sacrifices which this decision entailed brought many stresses and strains to American society. The amateur journalism hobby felt the affects of world events. Andrew F. Lockhart and John T. Dunn, among acquaintances of H. P. Lovecraft, went to prison for resisting the draft. I have never seen a roster of amateur casualties of the First World War, but I feel it is likely that more than a fair share of amateur journalists made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia in November 1917. A cease-fire with Germany and her allies took affect on December 15, 1917, and the Soviet regime finally accepted the proffered peace terms on March 3, 1918. The threat of Germany released from two-front warfare raised grave concern among the Allies, but the sudden military collapse of the Central Powers in the fall of 1918 ended with the signing of the armistice on November 11, a little more than a year after the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia. Soon all the established regimes of the Central Powers were toppling, and many feared that the Bolsheviks would seize power. The execution of Czar Nicholas II and all of his

immediate family by the Bolsheviks in Ekaterinburg on July 16, 1918 sent shock waves around the world. A Bolshevik government under Kurt Eisner was installed in Munich and Berlin stood on the edge of seizure of power by the Spartacists in December 1918 and January 1919. The moderate socialist government of Ebert and Scheidemann consolidated control in Berlin following the murders of Spartacist leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg in mid-January. The Spartacist government of Kurt Eisner in Munich was overthrown by federal government troops on May 1, 1919, and Eisner was killed. In March 1919, Bela Kun and the Communists took power in Hungary. This government lasted until August 1919. The world seemed to be on the edge of revolution in the months following the end of World War I.

In the United States, draft-resisters like Lockhart and Dunn were prosecuted and imprisoned. The teaching of German language was removed from secondary schools and universities. In the Great Plains states, a number of pro-German citizens were prosecuted and imprisoned for sedition. In the wake of the armistice and the fall of the Central Powers in 1918, the U.S. Communist party was founded in 1919. Beginning in the fall of that year, the Department of Justice under A. Mitchell Palmer made mass arrests of political and labor agitators. Two hundred forty-nine aliens who had been detained, including the anarchists Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, were deported to the Soviet Union on the U.S.S. Buford on December 22, 1919. On January 2, 1920, government agents carried out raids in thirty-three cities and took 2,700 persons into custody. The raids had terminated by May 1920.

Perhaps the strongest voice of dissidence which the amateur journalism hobby experienced during the war years came from the north, from Montreal, where Canada had already been committed to the war from the beginning. Young Elsie Alice Gidlow, born December 29, 1898 in Hull, Yorkshire, England, had made the journey to Canada with her parents and siblings in 1904. Initially they had settled in the working class Montreal suburb of Tetreauville. Some years later, the family moved to better quarters in Montreal. Eventually, seven children were born to Samuel and Alice (Reichardt) Gidlow: sisters Elsie, Thea, Ivy, Ruby and Phyllis and brothers Stanley and Eric. Samuel Gidlow had a good job with the railway system (promoting safety practices), but times were still difficult for the large family and Elsie was largely self-educated. She entered the business world in Montreal in January 1915, shortly after her sixteenth birthday, and began contributing to the support of her family.

This young Elsie Alice Gidlow was destined to

become the noted poet Elsa Gidlow, whose collection *On A Grey Thread*, published by Will Ransom (1878-1955) in Chicago in 1923, was the first collection of lesbian poetry to be published in the United States. (Ransom, a famous type designer and printer, honored The Fossils with his membership from 1949 until his death.) Gidlow recalled in her autobiography (Elsa, p. 148): "It had not troubled Ransom that all the love poetry was obviously addressed to women. He never commented on that fact, nor did anyone else at the time." Elsie found the drudgery of office work oppressive, so in the late autumn of 1917, at the age of eighteen, she contributed a letter to the "people's column" of *The Montreal Daily Star* asking if an organization of writers and artists existed in the city. A week later, she contributed a second letter stating the time and place for an initial meeting. To her surprise, a number of congenial souls reported for the first meeting, and the club continued to grow over the next several years. She had hoped her advertisement might attract some "rebels," and her hopes were realized when Roswell George Mills, a young reporter for *The Montreal Star*, turned up. Nearly sixty-five years later, in her autobiography *Elsa: I Come With My Songs* (San Francisco: Booklegger Press, 1986), Gidlow recalled: "The most astonishing, elegant being was a beautiful willowy blond" (p. 69). Mills was unabashedly gay in an era when most homosexuals were still under "deep cover," and he and Gidlow became lifelong friends. As a lesbian, Gidlow found that her most long-lasting friendships with men were platonic (Elsa, p. 365), so her relationship with Mills was ideal.

Gidlow was a meticulous record-keeper, but she was not correct that Mills was aged nineteen when their first meeting occurred in the late autumn of 1917. Roswell George Mills was born to Howard B. Mills (1869-1919) and Mabel (Sheehan) Mills (1875-1943+) in Buffalo, New York, on July 4, 1896. In his father's line he was descended from the seventeenth-century Dutch immigrant Pieter Wourterse van der Meulen (1622-1710), who settled in Windsor, Connecticut. Interested readers can refer to Helen Schatvet Ullman's *genealogy Descendants of Peter Mills of Windsor, Connecticut* (Penobscot Press; also available in summary form on Rootsweb). Roswell had brothers Foster Leighton and Stanley and a sister Mabel. The family later removed to Montreal, Canada, where Roswell was working as a newspaper reporter when he met Elsa Gidlow. In "The Literary Decadence of E.G." in *The American Amateur* for July 1920, Miss Gidlow wrote of six years' experience in amateur journalism, which would date the beginning of her involvement with the hobby to 1914-15 rather than 1917.

Gidlow's group of writers and artists saw some

amateur papers and decided to try one of their own. They had access to a mimeograph machine which according to Gidlow's memoirs produced "smudgy looking, glaring purple type" (Elsa, p. 82). They originally titled their publication *Coal From Hades*, but after a few issues, changed the title to *Les Mouches Fantastiques* [*The Fantastic Flies*] at the instigation of Mills. Gidlow recalled in her autobiography (Elsa, p. 83):

About half of the material was written by Roswell and me. Besides our poetry, he contributed translations from Verlaine, articles on "the intermediate sex," and one-act plays sympathetically presenting love between young men. My poetry was obviously addressed to women. My editorials satirized what I saw as society's stupidities and injustices and the wrongness of the war. The hundred or so copies went locally to our friends and the amateur journalists ("AJ's") in various parts of the U.S.

Today, these early mimeographed (or were they spirit-duplicated?) issues of *Les Mouches Fantastiques* are among the rarest treasures of early gay and lesbian literature. The American Antiquarian Society has three issues from the first volume—dating to March, April and June of 1918—while the University of South Florida (Haywood Collection) has one.

The content of *Les Mouches* naturally stirred a considerable amount of controversy within the amateur journalism hobby. We reprint some of the exchanges in this issue of *The Fossil*. The controversy would doubtless have been even greater had the circulation of *Les Mouches* been wider. W. Paul Cook was a broad-minded editor and printed a poem by Gidlow entitled "Song" in *The Vagrant* for November 1917—before *Les Mouches* even began its run. In June 1918, he printed poems by both Gidlow and Mills. Later, he published Mills's short play "Tea Flowers—A Chinese Play" in *The Vagrant* for October 1919. Long after Gidlow and Mills had left the hobby, he issued *The Vagrant* for Spring 1927, containing "Phoebe to Narcissus" by Gidlow and "Roses" by Mills—in all probability the last appearances of their work in amateur journals.

As early as July 1918, H. P. Lovecraft weighed in with commentary on *Les Mouches* in his paper *The Conservative*. Lovecraft contrasted the worship of "the Dionaeon Eros" in *Les Mouches* with the "worlds of beauty—pure Uranian beauty—...utterly denied them on account of their bondage to the lower regions of the senses." Just what he intended by the phrase "pure Uranian beauty" may be in doubt—the English school of Uranian poets in fact were best known for celebrating love between men. Correspondence among amateur journalists doubtless spread the word concerning *Les Mouches* and its editors far wider than its readership of one hundred persons. Edward H. Cole's large correspondence files—subsequently burned by his son E. Sherman Cole—would doubtless have been a source of

contemporary amateur “intelligence” concerning Les Mouches and its editors. The younger Cole concluded from the review of his father's correspondence files (The Fossil, April 1979, p. 5):

As I studied the accumulated exchanges of sixty years, I became aware of several disquieting aspects: (1) Edward H. Cole had been the confidant [sic] of just about every amateur journalist in this century, (2) there was more hanky-panky rampant in a.j. than in Peyton Place and (3) the indiscretion of the writers was only matched by the recipient's saving the letters. Marion and I consigned them to the rubbish...

Les Mouches and its editors did find one champion within amateur journalism—Rev. Graeme Davis (1881-1938), elected President at the NAPA convention in Chicago, Illinois in July 1918 after a successful year as Official Editor under President Harry E. Martin (1917-18). Frank Graeme Davis had been born in Sturgis, St. Joseph County, Michigan, on July 23, 1881, the son of Joseph Chapman Davis (1845-1914) and Ella Albertine (Graham) Davis (1851-1928). Joseph Davis was the son of Benjamin F. Davis (1829-1914), captain of a coastal vessel based in Sag Harbor, Long Island, and Marie [Mary] V. C. (Penny) Davis (1831/32?-1860+). Joseph served with the Union forces in the Civil war. By the time of the 1870 census, he was a merchant's clerk in Sturgis, Michigan. On April 7, 1875, he married Ella A. Graham, the daughter of Cyrenus Graham (1823-1903) and Mary M. (Stoughton) Graham (1830-1912). Cyrenus was one of eight children (third son) of “Squire” William R. Graham (1784/85-1870+) and his wife Anna (—) Graham (1788/89-1870+). “Squire” Graham had been born in New Hampshire, but settled in Perry, Lake County, Ohio. His son Cyrenus married Mary Stoughton on December 25, 1850. She was the daughter of a Vermont-born Baptist clergyman, James Carter Stoughton, and his wife Sarah [Sally] (Bresee [Burzee]) Stoughton. A second child, a daughter Mary Ruth Davis, was born to Joseph and Ella Davis in March 1885. She was named for Joseph's mother Marie [Mary] and stepmother Ruth (Smith) Davis (1830-1893). In 1883, Cyrenus and Mary Graham removed from Sturgis, Michigan to Vermillion, South Dakota, and commenced farming. In 1887, Joseph Davis and his family followed.

The University of South Dakota (USD), founded in 1862, was based in Vermillion. For many years, it operated both a preparatory and a collegiate division. Both of the Davis family children, son Frank Graeme and daughter Mary Ruth, attended USD. Perhaps it was the preparatory division which Frank Davis entered at the age of fourteen (c. 1895). An uncle—perhaps his mother's younger brother Charles Stoughton Graham (1867-1900+)—gave young Davis the press on which he did his first printing. Davis's father Joseph Chapman Davis had at least two younger

brothers—James Freeman Davis (1854-1931), a captain and merchant of Sag Harbor, Long Island, New York and Frank Addison Davis (1858-1930+), an attorney of Columbus, Ohio—who might have been this uncle. He also had sisters—including at least Emily C. (Davis) Purdy (1842-1914+) (Mrs. John Purdy), a farmer's wife of Leonidas, Michigan, and Elizabeth Davis (b. 1859/60)—who might also have supplied this uncle by marriage. (Another sister, Emma Davis (1853-1941), seems not to have married.) However, because of age, I consider Charles Stoughton Graham the likelier candidate. Graham and his Canadian-born wife Christie K. Barr had a son Carlyle Barr Graham (born December 19, 1892 in Clay County, South Dakota, who at the time of the 1930 census was living with his wife and children in Los Angeles, California.) Davis himself told the story in A Letter from the Lingerer in 1937:

Once upon a time an uncle but a few years older than the writer had a press upon which he printed an amateur journal copies of which, it is certain, have never been seen by American amateurs—Le Petit Ecrivassier...In due time avuncular benevolence (a polite term for youthful surfeit) turned the outfit over to the writer, and nepotic emulation produced a few issues of Le Grand Nain de l'Univers, which later underwent a metamorphosis and appeared as The Midget. after the budding publisher began reading English regularly, and had avidly coned over accounts of amateur journalistic activities in Harper's Young People [1897—ed.]. Then came a 5x8 Kelsey Excelsior press, a correspondence with amateurs of long ago, notably Dwight Anderson and Charles King, the latter slightly more interested in Volapük than in amateur journalism, and with their collaboration an ambitious amateur journal The Magazette, was launched [1898—ed.], but did not prove sea-worthy. Then came El Gasedil [1899—ed.], sometimes home-print, sometimes printed by others, in two editions, one containing amateur journalistic fumbblings, largely due to the urge of Harry Marlowe, to whose influence may be accredited in large measure such amateur activities as I have engaged in—or been guilty of—since joining the National Amateur Press Association near the turn of the century.

Davis's associates in publishing Magazette—Dwight Anderson (d. 1953) of Cleveland, Ohio and Charles R. King (d. 1956) of Toledo, Ohio—were later members of The Fossils, Anderson serving as President in 1946-47. Anderson, publisher of Pen, became a notable public relations professional in New York City. King, publisher of Hawk, became a distinguished ear-nose-and-throat specialist in Toledo. In his later years, he published the distinguished amateur magazine The Feather-Duster. Harry R. Marlowe published The Search-Light from Warren, Ohio as early as 1895. Marlowe, who once owned a collection of 35,000 amateur journals, probably inspired Davis as a fellow collector of amateur material. Davis himself lost virtually all of his collection of many thousands of amateur journals in an attic fire in his then home in Momence, Illinois about 1923. A professional printer by trade, Marlowe later served as Official Editor (1924-25) and President (1929-30) of NAPA.

In December 1899 Davis commenced publication of *El Gasedil* ("The Little Newspaper"), conducted in the international language Volapük invented by Johann M. Schleyer (1831-1912). *El Gasedil* eventually circulated to twenty-seven countries and enjoyed second-class postage rates. Davis published both a series of larger numbers conducted wholly in Volapük and a series of smaller numbers with some amateur departments in English. *El Gasedil* concluded with an issue dated Winter 1904-5. Davis joined NAPA in 1901, coincident with commencing collegiate-level studies at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion. During his three years (1901-04) at the University of South Dakota, Davis was a member of the Jasperian literary society and the leader of a Buddhist study group. He wrote an early letter dated April 27, 1901 to the editor of *Light of Dharma* magazine (published in the June 1901 number) about his experiences as leader of this study group, cited by Thomas A. Tweed in his study *The American Encounter With Buddhism 1844-1912* (University of North Carolina Press, 1992). The 1902 group photograph of the Jasperian Literary Society reproduced from the 1903 number of *Coyote* on p. 90 of Cedric Cummins's *The University of South Dakota 1862-1966* (Dakota Press, 1975) includes Davis, but it is difficult to identify him. In 1903, he and his recruit Donald Fellows published *Par Moi*. After completing his studies in Vermillion, he spent six months each in Minneapolis and Chicago, where he became acquainted with local amateurs. The spring of 1905 found him back in Vermillion where he was working as a clerk in the post office when the state census was enumerated. (Amateur journalists were notorious for their heavy use of the mail; and publishing *El Gasedil* in 1899-1905 must have made Davis quite familiar with post office operations.) Then in 1907 he completed his studies at Seabury Seminary in Faribault, Minnesota and commenced his "deacon's year" at the Church of the Good Shepherd in St. Ignace in the Upper Michigan peninsula, on the Straits of Mackinaw. During this period, he contributed to W. R. Murphy's *The Pioneer*, and served as co-editor of Louis M. Starring's *The Reflector* (1908-10). He appears to have obtained leave, however, and studied at the University of Liège in Belgium for three years, before concluding his diaconal service. By April 1910 he was back in St. Ignace, where eighteen-year-old student Chester C. Cussie was in his household. While still in St. Ignace, he printed the first number (1910) of his amateur magazine *The Lingerer*. Its fifty pages contained contributions from the leading amateurs of the day.

Ordained to the Episcopal priesthood in Cleveland in December 1910, Davis served first at the cathedral and then as an associate in St. James parish. He

returned to Vermillion in September 1912 to officiate at the wedding of his sister Mary Ruth Davis to Adam Spencer Bower (b. December 14, 1884), a farmer of Leonidas Township, St. Joseph County, Michigan. By 1930, Mary Ruth (Davis) Bower was a widow living with her parents-in-law Henry A. and Viola A. Bower in Leonidas Township. She had children Ruth Emily, aged fifteen, Spencer Davis, aged twelve, and Joseph Henry, aged nine, and supported herself as a teacher in the rural school. (Davis did maintain some communication with his sister in later life; when their mother died in March 1928, Mary Ruth came to Chicago to accompany her mother's body back to Vermillion for burial.) Davis's connection with amateur journalism lapsed when he took his own first parish in Marshfield, Wisconsin in February 1913. In the spring of 1916, following what he described in his Ahlhauser sketch as "a physical collapse," he returned to live with his widowed mother in Vermillion, South Dakota, where he became vicar of St. Paul's Church, university chaplain, and assistant professor of French (1918-20). William T. Harrington (*The Coyote*) helped to reacquaint Davis with amateur journalism after he returned to South Dakota. Soon he was the leading literary light of the National Association—the same role H. P. Lovecraft played in the rival United Association. In the winter and summer of 1917, Davis printed two new numbers of *The Lingerer*. Lovecraft rebutted Davis's attacks on the rival association in his article "A Reply to *The Lingerer*" in *The Tryout* for June 1917.

Davis rose quickly in the National ranks upon his return, and was elected official editor for the 1917-18 term. He produced four creditable issues of *The National Amateur* for President Harry E. Martin during his term as official editor. During this period he also published several issues of *The National Amateur Review of Reviews*, for overflow criticism. He personally attended the National's convention in Chicago in July 1918, where he was elected President for the 1918-19 term. His ambitious program of growth for the National was evidenced by a motion he offered to incorporate all members of the United as members of the National. This was placed "on the table," for fear of further straining already delicate relations between the two associations. W. Paul Cook was elected his Official Editor for the 1918-19 term, and Cook proceeded to publish in six numbers the largest-ever volume of *The National Amateur*. Davis, however, was not able to conduct the ambitious program as President which he had intended. In September 1918, when the influenza epidemic was at its height, he was stricken gravely ill with pneumonia. He had a long and difficult recovery and was left with a serious heart condition. *Les Mouches* must have been among Davis's reading in the heady days leading up to

his election as National President. In its convention-defying editors he believed he had found true soulmates.

Davis was soon corresponding with Roswell George Mills. Probably in the spring of 1919 he completed the printing of a seventy-two page issue of *The Lingerer*, which contained a seventeen-page, highly laudatory review of *Les Mouches*. Davis probably sent copies to Gidlow and Mills as soon as *The Lingerer* emerged from the press, although he did not mail copies to amateurs at large until late summer or early autumn. In the summer of 1919, Davis took leave from his clerical duties and travelled east toward Montreal. He stopped in New York only long enough to meet with Doc Swift and a few other amateur journalists, and then travelled on to Montreal, where he stayed an entire month with Mills and Gidlow. Davis excused himself from the National convention, which met in Newark, New Jersey over the 4th of July holiday in 1919. Davis's decision to skip the convention—which he would have traditionally attended as the retiring president—ruffled a few feathers, but the convention nevertheless paid Davis the traditional honor of election as one member of the three-member panel of Executive Judges.

From a distance of nearly sixty-five years, Gidlow wrote (Elsa, p. 117):

I found Graeme a warm, stimulating, sad, and fascinating man. Older than either of us, probably in his thirties, he was traveled, sophisticated, able to tell of places we had dreamed of seeing and people we admired... In his black suit and white shirt, even without the clerical collar which he did not wear while with us, Graeme looked priestly. He was tall, lean of body, in no way effeminate. His grey eyes looked dark and reflective. There was a sprinkling of grey in his nearly black hair. His cultivated baritone voice was warm, persuasive. I could imagine him influencing congregations and wondered what sort of sermons he preached to his flock in Vermillion, South Dakota.

One needs to approach Gidlow's recollections in "Crimson Clerics" (Elsa, pp. 111-118) both with respect for her careful attention to factual details and with caution on account of her strong anti-clerical feelings. Elsewhere in her autobiography, Gidlow makes clear her basic antipathy for Christianity (p. 262):

I had early questioned and rejected the Christian-inspired concept of art: art wrung from its creator by agony. The whole Christian attitude promotes an acceptance of victimhood, a wallowing in it with the passivity of resignation. Christianity's omnipresent "agony of the cross," the bleeding feet, hands, heart, and the thorn-pierced brow I saw in clear light as pure masochism. No life was lived without pain. But the act of creation itself, on any level, can transmute it to joy.

Brought up in a protestant family, Gidlow hated the priestly establishment in Montreal, which she blamed for encouraging women to bear child after child in harsh conditions (Elsa, pp. 14-15). Davis apparently attempted to explain the aesthetic appeal of the church but Gidlow

remained unsympathetic (Elsa, p. 118):

He spoke with a lover's veneration of the symbology, ritual, chants, illuminated manuscripts, the devotion of monks in certain medieval periods to the creation or preservation of sacred art that he saw as embodying the highest achievements of the human spirit...This esoterica was for "initiates." I saw that these initiates with their acolytes were all male. I remained silent, unable at that time to explain my feelings of being an outsider, even in the affectionate atmosphere of these friends.

Gidlow remarked that Davis, during his month-long visit, "was totally absorbed by Roswell—bewitched might be more accurate." She described the end of Davis's visit (Elsa, p. 118):

Before Graeme's month-long visit ended, he had almost persuaded Roswell to agree to join him in Vermillion. He held out the bait of freedom for Roswell to devote himself to music and play-writing as Graeme's lifelong companion. That this was an unrealistic dream was spelled out in the letters of agonizing doubt I received during the next couple of years from Graeme as Roswell vacillated over what course he would take. It ended with Graeme coming to me with the news that he was entering a monastery in New York state. The order he entered permitted no communication after he took his vows, so I have no idea how he fared in that adventure.

(I have tried to report here, within "fair use" limitations, some salient portions of Gidlow's vivid, firsthand account of Davis's visit to Montreal in the summer of 1919. Her chapter "Crimson Clerics" also contains secondhand information obtained from her friends Mills, Lucien Lacouture and Henri Lamy. I have not reported this secondhand information here and refer interested readers to Gidlow's autobiography. Most of this secondhand information concerns alleged sexual abuse by Catholic clergy in Montreal. However, it would be intellectually dishonest for me not to state that Gidlow also reported Mills's allegation that Davis wrote to him of "his lifelong love and affection for young boys." Gidlow provided this information in the form of a reconstructed conversation with Mills (Elsa, pp. 112-113). I do not have enough evidence or expert knowledge to comment further on Mills's allegations.)

Gidlow soon captured the attention of amateurdom once more with the article "Life for Life's Sake" which she published in Horace L. Lawson's *The Wolverine* for October 1919. Therein she argued that life ought to be lived for its own sake in the wake of the death of the gods mankind had formerly believed in. This article waved a red flag in front of conventionally religious amateur journalists, for whom Maurice W. Moe soon replied (place of publication not known by me). Moe maintained that belief in a divine order was the necessary basis for all systems of ethics and that without such belief mankind would be reduced to a state of barbarism. The other replies—from H. P. Lovecraft and James F. Morton, Jr.—were longer in coming—published in John Milton Heins's *The American Amateur* for September and November 1920, respectively. Lovecraft



argued that Miss Gidlow's discovery of the lack of a divine plan had been known to Democritus centuries before Christ, but that her hedonistic philosophy had also been rejected as inadequate by the ancient Greeks. Morton tried to find some truth in each position in the threefold controversy.

Gidlow broke away from Montreal to New York City in April 1920. Before she left, in March 1920, she and Mills published a professionally printed first number of the intended second volume of *Les Mouches Fantastiques*, which they subtitled "A Bi-Monthly Publication Devoted to the Arts." This issue contained Gidlow's account of a poetry reading by William Butler Yeats that she also recalled in her autobiography (Elsa, pp. 83-84). Perhaps Mills and Gidlow went to the expense of producing this issue of *Les Mouches* as a calling card for U.S. amateurs, since they both intended to remove to New York. Mills followed Gidlow to New York within a few months. I am not aware that they published any further issues of *Les Mouches* after their advent to New York.

Writing in *The American Amateur* for November 1920, editor John Milton Heins (all of fourteen years old!) recalled going with Joseph Thalheimer and his father Charles W. Heins to visit Roswell Mills and Elsa Gidlow in the latter's apartment in 34th Street on September 25, 1920. Heins recalled: "Under a sawed off Japanese umbrella that screened the light Miss Gidlow sat on a little box like a throne." Less than a month later, on October 17, 1920, Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Heins and their son entertained a large group of amateurs at their home at 16 Winant Avenue in Ridgely Park, New Jersey. Elsa Gidlow and Roswell Mills were among the invited guests. Heins wrote:

Of course we dressed up for it, killed a few chickens, dug potatoes, parsnips, beets, pulled celery and lettuce and picked apples, peaches and quinces to prepare for it...I don't mention corn because my father said he chased Miss Gidlow and Mr. Mills into the corn patch to get more as I had failed to get enough.

The amateurs probably knew that young Gidlow and Mills required no chaperon. Heins listed the amateur journalists who attended this gathering:

Richard Kevern, Bill Kevern, Tom Pendleton, A. M. Adams, Elsa Gidlow, Rheinart Kleiner, Katherine Collier, Edna Hyde, R. G. Mills, Dora Singleton, Paul Keil, Virginia Weeks, Adeline Leiser, Iva and E. A. Dench, Joe Thalheimer, H. M. Konwiser, Pearl K. Merritt, Della S. and Otto Knack, Cele and Herman Weckstein, Vincent Haggerty, Jas. F. Morton Jr., Charles W. Heins, were there, besides Charles [Junior], Virginia, Paul, Gladys and Helen of my own family.

In reality, Miss Gidlow had already sung her swan song in amateur journalism some weeks before the gathering at the Heins household on October 17, 1920. Responding to a postcard received from D. G. Gourman, UAPA Official Editor, inquiring about the reasons for her inactivity, she had written a blistering article, "The

Literary Decadence of E.G.," which John Milton Heins had published in *The American Amateur Journalist* for July 1920. I reprint this blistering article here, along with the response by Pearl K. Merritt published in the same journal for September 1920. Gidlow compared her departure from the amateur fold to Jesus's disappearance after he disputed with the Elders in the Temple at a young age. While she conceded "limitless" possibilities to the hobby, she found the existing participants a hopeless lot from the literary point of view. She delivered stinging criticisms of the poetry of Goodenough, Lovecraft and "Ward Phillips"—a pseudonym of Lovecraft, whether she knew it or not. It is interesting to note that D. G. Gourman was Official Editor of the Erford-Noel faction of UAPA in 1919-20. If Gidlow's principal activity had been in the Erford-Noel UAPA faction rather than the Hoffman-Daas faction, to which Lovecraft belonged, her Erford-Noel affiliation might have been yet another source of friction with him. Gidlow excepted only Graeme Davis' *The Lingerer* from her general condemnation of amateur publications. Heins reported in *The American Amateur* for January 1921 (citing the October 1920 issue of *The Brooklynite*) that George Julian Houtain (1884-1945) had launched a new literary society with Mills and Gidlow—a unlikely combination if ever there was one. Houtain was soon preoccupied with his romance with Elsie D. (Grant) MacLaughlin (1889-1980), who was elected President of NAPA in July 1921 and married Houtain in August 1921. Gidlow and Mills had their own destinies to pursue.

For the further life of Elsa Gidlow, the reader should refer to her extremely readable autobiography. She was fortunate to obtain a position as assistant editor under Frank Harris on *Pearson's Magazine*. There she obtained the practical editorial experience which her old adversary H. P. Lovecraft lacked when he came to New York as a married man to seek employment in 1924-26. (As far as I know, Lovecraft and Gidlow never met.) After her removal to San Francisco in 1926, Gidlow worked as managing editor for *The Pacific Coast Journal of Nursing*, but devoted most of her career to freelance writing. In 1928-29, she took a European tour, spending part of her time with Roswell Mills. After the publication of *On A Grey Thread* in 1923, she published her own work only sparingly—mostly slender chapbooks except for *Sapphic Songs* originally published by Diana Press in 1976 and republished by Booklegger in 1982. In California, Kenneth Rexroth and Alan Watts were among her good friends. She had two long-term lovers, Violet W. L. Henry-Anderson, who died in 1935, and Isabel Grenfell Quallo. Beginning in the mid-1940s, she cared lovingly for her widowed mother Alice (Reichardt)

Gidlow in her final years. Sadly, two of her siblings, Ivy and Eric, died in mental institutions, the latter a suicide. She devoted many of her final years to the artists' community of Druid Heights. She travelled to Japan and China in her old age and was widely admired as a warrior for women's rights. She died shortly after the publication of her autobiography in 1986. Her papers are maintained at the GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco and contain much unpublished literary work. Amateur journalism remains a small but important footnote to her literary career. There are several good websites devoted to her life and literary career, with samples of her more mature verse. No one reading this issue of *The Fossil* should form an opinion of the merit of her work without reading further.

Roswell George Mills had taken the Indian engineer Khagendrenath Ghose as lover by 1922, effectively ending any chance of a continuing relationship with Graeme Davis. When he registered for the draft in July 1943, he was an employee of *The Brooklyn Eagle* and living with his widowed mother Mabel in Brooklyn. Most of Roswell George Mills's surviving correspondence in the *Gidlow Collection* complains of the difficulties he encountered in later life; however, he and *Gidlow* remained close friends. By 1961, Mills removed to Miami, Florida, where he died on May 25, 1966, a few weeks short of his seventieth birthday.

If Rev. Graeme Davis did enter a cloistered monastery at any point during his career, it was probably only for a short stay. In September 1920 he resigned his position as vicar of St. Paul's in Vermillion to take a new parish in Momence, Illinois. He remained there through December 1923, when he transferred to Waupun, Wisconsin. He was dismissed from the Episcopal priesthood by the Bishop of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin on August 7, 1925. He may have devoted some of the next several years to travel in Europe. He became a disciple of the French occultist and magnetic healer Henri Durville (1887-1963). (Durville also published several works on Egyptian magic, which may help to explain his disciple Davis's interest in "Egyptology.") He also became affiliated with the Liberal Catholic Church founded by James Ingall Wedgwood (1883-1951) (presiding bishop, 1916-23) and Charles Webster Leadbeater (1854-1934) (presiding bishop, 1923-34), both also members of the Theosophical Society. It is possible that Davis was received into the Liberal Catholic Church by Bishop Edwin Burt Beckwith (1870-1929), consecrated as a bishop by Wedgwood on July 18, 1926 for service in Chicago. Beckwith would probably have ordained Davis as a Liberal Catholic priest *sub conditione*, since Liberal Catholics generally doubted the validity of Anglican

orders. Pope Leo XIII had declared Anglican orders null and void in 1896, whilst the Anglican Lambeth Conference in 1920 declared null and void all Liberal Catholic orders descending from Old Catholic Bishop Arnold Harris Mathew (1852-1919).

Not later than July 1927, Davis and his mother relocated to Chicago, Illinois, where they rented the second-floor apartment at 2533 North Burling Street—a large brownstone duplex (2531-2533) which is still standing. When Davis and his mother moved to their apartment on North Burling in mid-1927, there were two active Liberal Catholic congregations in the city—St. Francis, generally meeting in rented quarters on East Van Buren Street, under Bishop Edwin Burt Beckwith, and St. Raphael's, at 1105 Lawrence Avenue, under Rev. Edmund Walter Sheehan (1892-1988). (Rev. Sheehan subsequently received episcopal consecration on June 23, 1935 from Bishop Charles Hampton.) The St. Francis congregation also apparently had a "mission church" at 1206 South Newberry Street, south of Roosevelt Drive near the current University of Illinois Circle campus; the 1928-29 Chicago Directory lists Francis G. Davis as pastor of this church. Chicago Tribune listings of religious services show Rev. Davis conducting religious services at the Van Buren Street address between May and September 1928. Most Liberal Catholic congregations offered a morning and an evening service, but Rev. Davis offered a schedule of three morning masses at the Van Buren Street address. Some of Davis's Liberal Catholic sermon topics as reported in *The Chicago Tribune* are interesting to note: "Faces Set Forward" (May 20, 1928), "Seeing the Unseen" (June 3, 1928), "The Possibility of Attainment" (June 10, 1928), "The Discipline of Discernment" (August 19, 1928), and "Renewal of Heart" (September 9, 1928). On May 6, 1928, Dr. Ernest Wood (1883-1965), a senior official of the Theosophical Society in Adyar, lectured at the Church of St. Francis on "The Science of Love" and "The Science of Occult Law." When Mrs. Annie Besant, the President of the Theosophical Society, died in 1933, Liberal Catholic Bishop George S. Arundale (1878-1945) and Dr. Ernest Wood were the two candidates to succeed her; Bishop Arundale prevailed, but Dr. Wood continued to serve the Society for the rest of his life.

After September 1928, there was a gap in services of the St. Francis Liberal Catholic congregation. Davis apparently accepted episcopal consecration from an Old Catholic bishop, possibly from Henry Alfonso [aka Carmel Henry] Carfora (1878-1958), whose headquarters were in Chicago. (Davis used the title "Right Reverend"—denoting episcopal consecration—in his membership listings in *The National Amateur* in the 1930s.) Whether he broke formally or not with the

Liberal Catholic Church may be questioned. However, accepting episcopal consecration from an outside, Old Catholic Church bishop would probably have been perceived as a hostile action by Liberal Catholic clergy and laypeople. Bishop Beckwith was himself too ill to resume charge of the St. Francis congregation; after six months of illness, he died at his Chicago home on March 3, 1929. By 1930 Rev. A. F. Hardcastle had taken charge of the St. Francis Liberal Catholic congregation, then meeting on South Wabash Avenue. After many years of meeting in rented quarters, this congregation built its own church in Villa Park, Illinois, in the late 1970s, and still survives. In the 1940s the Liberal Catholic Church split into several divisions, of which the most numerous (in the United States) is that to which Villa Park's St. Francis congregation belongs. This Liberal Catholic faction does not recognize Davis's episcopal consecration in its table of apostolic succession.

Soon after the death of his mother in March 1928, Davis relocated to the ground-floor apartment of a three-flat building—now demolished—at 2234 Orchard Street in Lincoln Park, where he maintained his residence for the rest of his life. After his break with the Liberal Catholics in September 1928, he operated his “Old Catholic Church of the Mystic Way” at 2234 Orchard Street for the rest of his life. Neither Liberal Catholic nor Old Catholic clergy generally receive any stipend, so Davis probably maintained himself on his own resources or donations from parishioners. (His rent at 2234 Orchard Street was \$35 per month at the time of the 1930 census.) The Theosophical Society in Chicago had a number of wealthy adherents; Bishop Beckwith was himself a physician as was Weller Van Hook (1862-1933), whose son Hubert Van Hook (1895-1984), later a Chicago lawyer, had early been considered by Bishop Leadbeater as a candidate for the “avatar” role for which Krishnamurti was eventually chosen. There is some indication that Davis's family had significant financial resources—Cyrenus Graham was a successful entrepreneur (having been engaged in the manufacture of agricultural implements in Canada in 1861-64) while his wife Mary Stoughton was the daughter of a clergyman and the sister of two lawyers. Davis himself was a substantial collector of antiquarian books, a hobby which would have required some financial means. Left with a severe heart condition as a result of his illness in 1918, he spent seven months at a European sanatorium in 1932, during which time he translated Fr. Wittemans' history of the Rosicrucians (published by Aries Press in Chicago in 1938). Back to Chicago in 1933, he continued to preside over his small “Mystic Way” congregation from his home. His church appears in only two religious service listings in the Chicago Tribune: for April 2 and 9, 1933.

On April 2, he spoke on “Claim You Divinity” at 10:30am and on “Cosmic Rays” at 7:30pm; on April 9, he spoke on “Christ On Guard” at 10:30am and on “Overcoming Death” at 7:30pm. Despite his acceptance of episcopal consecration from an Old Catholic bishop, Davis still considered himself a Liberal Catholic clergyman—his 1938 death certificate states that affiliation. One may speculate whether The Tribune's religion editor considered the Mystic Way Church too minor to warrant continued coverage; or whether pressure was exerted by Episcopal or Liberal Catholic clergy to stop listing Davis's small church. Davis's church was probably too small a phenomenon to be noticed by Roman Catholic Archbishop George Cardinal Mundelein and his clergy; historically, fractious Old Catholics were a much greater source of trouble for Episcopal clergy. Excellent coverage of breakaway churchmen like Davis may be found in Henry R. T. Brandreth's *Episcopi Vagantes* (SPCK, 1947) and Peter F. Anson's *Bishops At Large* (Faber & Faber, 1964). Both of these important books were reprinted by Apocryphile Press of Berkeley, California in 2005.

Davis attended NAPA's 1934 convention in Chicago, where he was warmly greeted by oldtime amateurs like Jennie Plaisir and interested to meet “Young Blood” like President-elect Ralph Babcock. His swan song in amateur journalism was the mimeographed publication *A Letter from the Lingerer* which he published in September 1937. Edward H. Cole gave it a respectful review in *The National Amateur* for December 1937. Davis died in Chicago on June 19, 1938, about a month short of his fifty-seventh birthday. Chicago publisher Aries Press (Abraham Roth (1894-1965), proprietor) also published Davis' *The Way of Wisdom* under the pseudonym “Durvad” (= DUR[ville] + [sj]VAD <Davis backwards>) in the year of his death. While hampered with archaic language, it is a short synthesis of his philosophical and religious beliefs at the end of his life. I do not know if he lived to see its publication. Davis's dedication of *The Way of Wisdom* speaks to his strong pastoral motivation:

To M. Henri Durville, chère maitre, great seer, great teacher, inspirer and 'onlie begetter' of the following pages, they are dedicated by one who seeks to translate his teaching into deeds as well as words, with grateful homage. + F.G.D.

Like Bishop Leadbeater's erstwhile “avatar” Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986), Davis rejected all the grades and degrees of conventional esoteric organizations. He emphasized a gradual advancement with emphasis on knowledge and mastery of self. The image of the Sphinx and the Tarot deck were important tools in his scheme of progression. Beset with severe heart disease in his later

years, he recommended a strict corporeal culture: “A vegetarian regime, chosen exercises, rhythmic gymnastics, cold baths, a very strict hygenics kept the Pythagorean in good health and weight; his sobriety was his strength” (The Way of Wisdom, p. 15). There was little separation of body and spirit in Davis's philosophy—they were destined to be an harmonious unity as contrasted with the conflict contemplated by more conventional Christian thinkers. That his teachings meant a lot, at least to a limited circle of followers is apparent from the inscription which I found in my own copy of The Way of Wisdom, acquired from a San Francisco bookseller:

Beloved [name omitted]  
from  
- A Pal -

One Cosmic Brotherhood,  
One Universal Good,  
One Source, One way  
One law beholding us,  
One Purpose moulding us,  
One Life enfolding us,  
In love alway -

Anger, resentment, hate  
Long made us desolate;  
Their reign is done,  
Race, color, creed & caste  
Fade in the dreamy past  
Man awakes to learn  
at last  
All Life Is One.

I have seen only limited samples of Davis's distinctive handwriting; this inscription does not appear to be in his hand. Nevertheless, I feel it probably represents an accurate reflection of the author's own sentiments at the end of his difficult life.

The publications of Davis's private press—both amateur and otherwise—remain a matter of considerable mystery. It is doubtful that any copies of *Le Grand Nain de l'Univers* (1897), *The Midget* (1897) or *Magazette* (1898) survive, unless in family hands. Davis lost most of his stock of *The Lingerer* in the fire in his attic in Momence, Illinois in 1923, but the American Antiquarian Society has a full file of all four issues, plus *A Letter from the Lingerer* (1937). In addition, South Dakota State University in Brookings, South Dakota owns the fourth and final number of *The Lingerer*, and The Western Reserve Historical Society has a file of *El Gasedil*. What we miss most is any hint of the devotional literature written mostly in French and possibly also published by Davis. Simple seed for simple folks seems to have been Davis's credo as a preacher—see Gidlow's account (Elsa, p. 117)—but the samples of Davis's writing

that we have in *The Lingerer* exhibit neither stylistic simplicity nor conventional spirituality. After his dismissal by the Episcopal Church in 1925, Davis's interests veered toward the esoteric and the occult. I have no idea as to what two hundred-page books issued from his private press at 2234 Orchard Street in 1928-38. I have never seen Graeme Davis or *The Lingerer Press* listed in reference works concerning private press publications. We do know from *A Letter from the Lingerer* (1937), that Davis possessed a mimeograph in addition to his trusty Caslon press acquired in 1916. Perhaps there is a whole series of mimeographed bulletins of the “Old Catholic Church of the Mystic Way” awaiting discovery.

We are really not much richer in tangible objects relating to Davis's clerical career. Davis did apparently have some skill in developing and counselling potential benefactors. In his work *Clay County: Chapters Out of the Past* (Vermillion Chamber of Commerce, 1985), Herbert S. Schell tells something of Davis's service as vicar of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Vermillion in 1916-20. During these years, the congregation had a very distinguished member in Robert L. Slagle (1865-1929), President of the University of South Dakota from 1914 until his death. Slagle was a devout churchman and served as reader for the congregation. The church building had been moved from its original site to the Episcopal property on Dakota Street (adjoining the University of South Dakota campus) in 1894. In 1917, the widow of recently-deceased Bishop George Biller raised \$4,000 for the construction of Biller Hall, a two-story building connected to the chapel with sufficient space to house thirty students. Twenty young men lived there in the fall of 1919, but Biller Hall was not used as a dormitory after 1920. Following Rev. Davis's resignation in 1920, the post of vicar was vacant for about a year until assumed by Rev. John K. Burleson. The Episcopal Church in Vermillion eventually constructed a new St. Paul's Church on Linden Avenue in 1951. In 1959, the university tore down the old chapel and Biller Hall to make room for an addition to Julian Hall. Davis's service as rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Momence, Illinois in 1920-23 was also marked by a substantial donation. In 1921, Mrs. Clara L. Baker donated to the church a magnificent hand-carved wooden altar with statues of Christ the Good Shepherd (center), King David (left) and St. Cuthbert (right). The statues were carved in light wood against a Gothic style background of finished black walnut, with matching canopies over the stained glass windows on either side of the altar and a matching credence table. The altar pieces are believed to have been carved by Anton Lang of Oberammergau. The altar is surely a most impressive

work of art for a small rural church. Rev. Irwin St. John Tucker of St. Stephen's in Chicago is reputed to have said: "They had a \$10,000 altar down there and no running water in the church." The parish's centenary history *The Church of the Good Shepherd 1882-1982* records that water was finally brought to the vestry in 1948. The donation of such an impressive work of art bespeaks the rector's strong interest in the cultural heritage of the church. Interestingly, the old Catholic priest and bishop Rev. Francis Xavier Resch (d. 1976) was the priest-in-charge at this small church in Momence from June 1951 through December 1954. (Some Old Catholic factions consider Resch as Carfora's successor as patriarch of the church in North America.) Perhaps he was attracted to the church by the beautiful altar installed during the tenure of Rev. Davis. Old Catholic priests with suitable credentials were sometimes accepted as priests-in-charge of Episcopal parishes; they seldom if ever became vicars or rectors. In summary, we may opine that despite his difficulties within the Episcopal Church, Rev. Davis sometimes succeeded in achieving important developmental goals.

Many puzzles concerning Graeme Davis remain. One of the most intriguing is the ghostly visitation which he reportedly paid to his old friend Elsa Gidlow at the moment of his death on June 19, 1938. Gidlow recalled this visitation in her autobiography (Elsa, p. 118):

Years later I had a dream so vivid that it has stayed with me to this day. Was it a dream or a visitation? Graeme stood before me, a dark, gaunt figure. He spoke my name, saying, "I have come to say goodbye." When I woke—if I had been sleeping—I had the conviction that the visit was at the moment of his death.

Davis died at the ghostly hour of 3:16 a.m. which would have been 1:16 a.m. Pacific time. In many ways, Davis remains a specter today—nearly seventy years after his death. His writings and publications are very poorly known. While many of the churches where he served during his twenty-year career as an Episcopal deacon and priest (1906-25) still stand, there is little to recall the memory of Rev. Frank Graeme Davis unless one counts the magnificent altar in the Church of the Good Shepherd in Momence, Illinois. Part of this obscurity of course derives from Davis's own choices. The obituary which Vincent B. Haggerty wrote for *The National Amateur* in December 1938—herein reprinted—reported that Davis was survived by a son, but it is not easy to fit a marriage into Davis's known career. (His mother's obituary in *The Dakota Republican* for March 8, 1928, mentions her three grandchildren by her daughter Mary Ruth (Davis) Bower but no grandchildren by her son Frank Graeme Davis.) All of the surviving census records which I have

found for Frank Graeme Davis—excepting 1920 which I have not found—give his marital status as single, never married. Davis's death certificate—for which the informant was his son—is the sole record I have found giving his marital status as divorced. In the same death certificate, the informant denied knowledge of the names of the decedent's parents or of the name of his former wife. It is quite possible, of course, that Davis instructed his son to deny such knowledge. (He himself had denied knowledge of his father's name in providing information for his mother's death certificate in 1928.) In the absence of additional evidence, it seems to me equally likely that (1) Davis, formally or informally, adopted a son and heir or (2) Davis did in fact marry at some point during his twenty-year (1906-25) career as an Episcopal clergyman. He was a handsome man in a prestigious occupation and could probably have acquired a spouse very readily. Clergy in the Episcopal Church, the Liberal Catholic Church and most factions of the Old Catholic Church are permitted to marry. (Among the clergy Davis probably knew in his later years, Beckwith, Sheehan and Carfora were all married.) Parishioners will often try to find matches for unmarried younger clergy. Another writer than I will have to tell the story of Davis's son Alexander V. Davis. I like to imagine that Frank Graeme Davis inspired him to pursue an intellectual career and that his father's "Way of Wisdom" helped him to live a rich and full life.

It seems likely that with additional effort we could acquire additional knowledge of Davis's family background—especially in his maternal Graham and Stoughton lines deriving from New England. If "Squire" William R. Graham (1784/85-1870+), father of Cyrenus, was indeed of New Hampshire birth, there were but four Graham households in the 1776 New Hampshire census to provide him a cradle: George of Concord, Hugh and Hugh Jr. of Windham, and John of Hillsborough. Further, there were no Graham households in the 1732 New Hampshire census, indicating that the family probably derived from lower New England. These censuses were published by Jay Mack Holbrook in 1976 and 1981, respectively. Further, Holbrook's *New Hampshire Residents 1633-1699* (1979) contains no Grahams. Laura G. Graeme's magnificent *Or and Sable: A Book of the Graemes and Grahams* (Edinburgh: William Brown, 1903) covers the Scottish Graham-Graeme family and was probably a work known by Rev. Davis—whether through a personal copy or the one in the Newberry Library in Chicago. His Graham line is not included in Helen Graham Carpenter's *The Reverend John Graham of Woodbury, Connecticut and His Descendants* (Chicago: Monastery Hill Press, 1942). Some LDS records identify a James Carter Stoughton

born March 26, 1803 in Middlesex, Washington County, Vermont, the son of Joseph Stoughton and Phebe D. Carter. The LDS record also states that he married Sarah Burzee in Bangor, Franklin County, New York, in 1826, and died on September 13, 1873. The Vermillion obituary of Mary (Stoughton) Graham (1830-1912) states that she was born in Moira, Franklin County, New York. Her death certificate gives the name of her parents as James Stoughton and Sarah Bresee, although it differs from the 1850 census Ohio census record in giving their birthplaces as New York rather than Vermont.

Whether Davis's paternal lines can be pushed back beyond his paternal grandparents Captain Benjamin F. Davis (1829-1914) and his first wife Marie V. C. (Penny) Davis (1831/32?-1860+) of Sag Harbor, Long Island is a more difficult question. Joseph Chapman Davis's obituary in *The Dakota Republican* for August 27, 1914 noted that he came from "a family closely connected with the early history of this country." (Frank Davis did travel back to Vermillion from his then posting in Marshfield, Wisconsin, to preside over his father's funeral with Baptist minister Rev. Mr. Stevens of Sioux City, Iowa.) It seems that Davis, Penny and Chapman are all surnames in Davis's paternal ancestry. Twice widowed, Captain Benjamin F. Davis spent his final years in the home of his son Frank Addison Davis in Columbus, Ohio, where he died on March 1, 1914, in his eighty-fifth year. Captain Benjamin F. Davis is buried with his second wife Ruth (Smith) Davis and her parents in Oakland Cemetery in Sag Harbor, Long Island. (His son James Freeman Davis and other relatives are buried in another lot in the same cemetery. The Davis family relationships are complex and I have certainly not linked every relative mentioned in Joseph Chapman Davis's newspaper obituary. Capt. Benjamin F. Davis and his first wife Marie (Penny) Davis were a very young couple—however, it is difficult to believe that Marie's stated age of eighteen in the 1850 census is correct if her daughter Emily's age was then seven.) I searched for older Davis burials in Louis T. Vail's *Grave Stone Inscriptions from Oakland Cemetery, Sag Harbor, Long Island* (microform ms.), but failed to find any. Nor does Harry D. Sleight's *Sag Harbor In Earlier Days: A Series of Historical Sketches of the Harbor and Hampton Port* (1930) mention Captain Davis and his family. It seems to me likely that Frank Graeme Davis himself—if we could still communicate with him—would likely regard such investigations as immaterial or irrelevant. The scarce writings from the period of his friendship with Elsa Gidlow and Roswell George Mills which we reprint in this issue of *The Fossil* probably reveal more about their author than many more hours of burrowing in historical records could ever reveal. Davis used many different

variations of his given name over the years of his life. Perhaps this signifies that there will always remain many different perspectives from which we can view his life. Davis the fervent proponent of NAPA in the amateur journalism hobby, Davis the friend of Elsa Gidlow and Roswell George Mills—these are only two of many different aspects of a life which I think is fairly viewed as both complex and difficult.

H. P. Lovecraft was doubtless stung by Elsa Gidlow's harsh words in her article "The Literary Decadence of E.G." In *The United Co-operative* for April 1921, he wrote:

In the July *American Amateur*, the precocious Miss Elsie (alias Elsa) A. Gidlow of Les Mouches fame refers with admirable courtesy to "Mr. Lovecraft with his morbid imitations of artists he seems not even able to understand." Possibly Mistress Elsie-Elsa would prefer that the amateurs follow her own example, and perpetrate morbid imitations of morbid artists whom nobody outside the asylum is able to understand.

In private correspondence, Lovecraft could be considerably harsher. He wrote to Rheinart Kleiner on November 21, 1920 (*Letters to Rheinart Kleiner*, p. 190):

As to day-dreams & Rossie George [Mills]—I am afraid that the wildest of his flights is rather tame compared with what I have seen in other universes whilst asleep. He can't even get off this one poor planet, or rise much above the animal instincts here. Carcass-worshippers like Rossie & Elsie make me so infernally sick & tired that I lack patience with them. This reminds me—I never shewed you that putrid fellow's letter, which he wrote me last summer. I promised to do so, & will enclose it herewith. My personal comment is twofold: (a) Nobody home. (b) Throw it in the garbage pail behind the house & cover well with chloride of lime. Kindly return this bit of mental & moral aberration for preservation as a horrible example in my private museum of mental pathology.

I do not know whether the letter from Roswell George Mills to Lovecraft survives in the latter's papers. The recipient was certainly unusually anxious to preserve such a heinous missive. It is probably merciful that Lovecraft never met Mills and Gidlow. Certainly Sam Loveman's homosexual friend the poet Hart Crane (1899-1932) had little use for "Sonia Lovecraft's piping-voiced husband." At the same time, Gidlow and Lovecraft were both autodidacts with common features like high intelligence, vast vocabulary, interest in science, and a love of the feline species. Lovecraft did apparently take some of Gidlow's criticisms of his verse to heart. After 1920, he wrote much less verse for the amateur press. As verse critic for the *National* in 1931-35, while still emphasizing the importance of mastery of proper form, he nevertheless concentrated his attention on poetic imagery and the larger question of "what belongs in verse." His private correspondence contains unfortunate outbursts against foreigners, blacks, Jews, homosexuals. However, by late in life, his views on many matters had moderated: he became a moderate socialist, and became more tolerant of foreign cultures. (He travelled three

times to Miss Gidlow's Montreal.) He kept his personal life and sexual preferences private; although his oft-expressed preference for male company and his appreciation of the poetry of Samuel Loveman have led many to wonder whether there was a homosexual component in his makeup. His late poem "To a Young Poet in Dunedin," written for Allan Brownell Grayson, certainly shows that he was attentive to male beauty at least in a platonic sense (The Ancient Track, p. 179):

You haunt the lonely strand where herons hide,  
And palm-framed sunsets open gates of flame;  
Where marble moonbeams bridge the lapping tide  
To westward shores of dream without a name.

Here, in a haze of half-remembering,  
You catch faint sounds from that far, fabled beach.  
The world is changed—your task henceforth to sing  
Dim, beckoning wonders you could never reach.

It is not impossible that Lovecraft's late story "The Evil Clergyman"—believed to have been excerpted from a 1933 letter to Bernard Austin Dwyer—may be based on some of the gossip he heard about Rev. Davis and his own transformation from the ultra-conservative of 1917-18. Lovecraft died of cancer in March 1937. Perhaps Graeme Davis, himself very ill with heart disease by then, noted with satisfaction that he had at least outlived his old nemesis Lovecraft. From the publication his "N.A.P.A. manifesto" in the winter 1904-05 issue of his *El Gasedil* onward, Davis had made his exclusive allegiance to NAPA an article of faith. (He spent only a few weeks in UAPA in 1909 before resigning—long enough to win an essay laureateship award which he had to decline.) Lovecraft's own amateur career was exactly the reverse—his primary allegiance was to the Hoffman-Daas UAPA faction and he only joined NAPA in 1918 after assurance that Davis would curtail his aggressive recruiting activities. Writing in *A Letter from the Lingerer* in 1937, Davis recalled "a mutual tongue-in-cheek treaty with Howard P. Lovecraft that we would 'be good.'" As far as I am aware, no correspondence between Lovecraft and Davis survives. What Davis thought of Lovecraft's surprise call to the NAPA presidency in 1922-23 (after the resignation of William Dowdell) is unrecorded.

Among the other players in this 1917-20 drama, W. Paul Cook died in 1948 after an unparalleled career in the hobby. He spent his final years operating The Driftwind Press in North Montpelier, Vermont for the widow of Walter J. Coates. In the mid-1920s, James F. Morton, Jr. became curator of the Patterson, New Jersey museum, a position which he continued to hold until his death in 1941. In 1934, he married Pearl K. Merritt, a

fellow veteran member of the Blue Pencil Club. Pearl (Merritt) Morton continued to be active in the Blue Pencil Club until her death in 1959. I do not know anything of the later career of John Milton Heins, the young publisher of *The American Amateur*, who published so many of the amateur writings of Gidlow and Mills.

All the players have long left the stage—but the reverberations of Elsa Gidlow's and Roswell George Mills's brief involvement with amateur journalism in 1917-20 still echo. Writing in September 1937, Rev. Graeme Davis expressed the opinion that amateur journalism was valuable for the freedom of expression it provided to its participants. Whatever we may think of the radicals who from time to time enter our ranks, hopefully we will cherish that freedom as well. For gays and lesbians, *Les Mouches Fantastiques* is a cultural treasure of immense value. Hopefully, gay and lesbian researchers will be welcome in archives like LAJ, and our publications can help illumine the careers of gays and lesbians who participated in our hobby.

*I wish to thank Cleo Erickson of the Clay County (South Dakota) Historical Society for research assistance and the Glenview (Illinois) Public Library, the Newberry Library, and the Seabury-Western Theological Seminary Library for research facilities. William H. Groveman, Stan Oliner, the late Hyman Bradofsky and the late Victor A. Moitoret all provided research materials relating to the amateur journalism hobby. I am grateful to the American Antiquarian Society for the image of Les Mouches Fantastique. I remain solely responsible for any factual errors and all opinions expressed herein.*

## THE YOUTH OF THE YEAR

[Unsigned]

*(Reprinted from The Lingerer (whole no. 1), undated [1910].)*

A dancing boy is the roistering Spring,  
With the chime of his voice the meadows ring.

All day he lies in the shadows cool,  
Mocking his face in the forest pool;

All night he drinks from the vineyard cup  
And sings while the golden sun comes up.

Cradled and fed on the Essence of Joy,  
The bursting Spring is a Virgin Boy.

## ONCE

**Roswell George Mills**

*(Reprinted from The Vagrant (whole no. 7), June 1918.)*

Once, when all the world was sleeping,  
And I dreaming, too,  
Love, whose wings they say are silver,  
Came on wings to me.

Once, when all the world was weeping,  
And I weeping, too,  
Love, (whose wings they say are silver),  
Smiled a smile at me.

Once, when all the world was laughing,  
And I laughing, too,  
One, whose face was bandaged, said  
Something unto me.

Once, when all the world seemed happy,  
And I happy, too,  
Lust, whose face is veiled in color,  
Laid a hand on me.

Once, when all the world was hidden,  
I in garden close,  
One, (whose face was bandaged), came  
Slowly o'er the grass.

Once, when all the world was drunken,  
And I drunken, too,  
Lust, (whose face is veiled in color),  
Kissed me on the breast.

Once, when all the world was smiling,  
And I smiling, too,  
Love, (whose wings they say are silver),  
Took his flight from me.

Once, when all the world was singing,  
I alone was still;  
Lust, whose lips had kissed the mystery,  
Tore the veil away.

## TWO LOVERS

**Elsie Alice Gidlow**

*(Reprinted from The Vagrant (whole no. 7), June 1918.)*

I have two lovers who woo me unceasingly:

One is very beautiful;  
His countenance is as the face of a god, and radiates a  
light that is intoxicating;  
Through his transparent skin I can see the warm blood  
leaping in his veins;  
The even beat of his pulse is as the restless tide of a  
thousand oceans;  
But he is very fickle.

I know that he would love me well, but only for a little  
while.

Yes, he is very fickle.

He is as a little yellow bee that draws the warm honey  
from flowers, then passes on his way;

He is as a seducer that robs young maidens of their  
sweetnesses, and then mocks at them;

He is as a radiant morning sun-cloud that swallows the  
little lingering pale stars;

Yes, he is very beautiful and desirable, but he is very  
cruel.

The other is not fair or lovely:

He has long fingers with nails that are pointed and  
tipped with purple,

And his hair that flows free is iron grey and very lank;

There are little grooved wrinkles in his brow that make  
him seem very old;

But his eyes are young.

They are as the eyes of a child that looks upon  
suffering innocently, not comprehending,

And yet they are so compassionate;

I love his eyes because they are so compassionate.

His soul is very beautiful:

It is a pool of light that is depthless;

(I should like to bathe in that pool).

I think that he is constant.

He would love me very deeply, and through the  
forever that is ageless;

Yes, he is very constant.

He would hold me in his restful arms and touch my  
lips with soft kisses;

He would cover my eyes, that burn hotly, with little  
green leaves to cool them;

He would breathe sad songs to me so sweetly they  
would seem happy;

Ah, he is unlovely to look upon, but his soul is very  
beautiful.

They are Life and Death.

I have two lovers who woo me unceasingly:  
Which shall I take?



## LES MOUCHES FANTASTIQUES

H. P. Lovecraft

*(Reprinted from The Conservative (vol. 4 no. 1) for July 1918.)*

Extreme literary radicalism is always a rather amusing thing, involving as it does a grotesque display of egotism and affectation. Added to this comic quality, however, there is a distinct pathos which arises from reflection on the amount of real suffering which the radical must, if serious, endure through his alienation from the majority.

Both of these aspects lately impressed The Conservative with much force, as he glanced over a new and most extraordinary amateur publication entitled Les Mouches Fantastiques, published by Miss Elsie Alice Gidlow and Mr. Roswell George Mills of Montreal. Miss Gidlow and Mr. Mills are sincere and solemn super-aesthetes, fired with the worthy ambition of elevating dense and callous mankind to their own exalted spiritual plane, and as such present vast possibilities to the humorist; but it is also possible to view their efforts in another light, and to lament the imperfect artistic vision which imparts to their utterances so outré an atmosphere.

The Gidlow-Mills creed, so far as may be discovered from their writings, is that Life is a compulsory quest of beauty and emotional excitement; these goals being so important that man must discard everything else in pursuing them. Particularly, we fancy, must he discard his sense of humour and proportion. The skeptical bulk of humanity, who cannot or do not enter upon this feverish quest, are (as Miss Gidlow tactfully tells us) "unnecessary."

And of what do these great objects of Life, as revealed in the pages of Les Mouches, consist? The reader may, up to date, unearth nothing save a concentrated series of more or less primitive and wholly unintellectual sense-impressions; instinct, form, colour, odour, and the like, grouped in all the artistic chaos characteristic of the late Oscar Wilde of none too fragrant memory. Much of this matter is, as might be expected, in execrable taste. Now if this Life? Is human aspiration indeed to be circumscribed by the walls of some garishly bejewelled temple of the Dionaeon Eros; its air oppressive with exotic fumes of strange incense, and its altar lit with weirdly coloured radiance from mystical braziers? Must we forever shut ourselves in such an artificial shrine, away from the pure light of sun and stars, and the natural currents of normal existence?

It seems to The Conservative that Miss Gidlow and Mr. Mills, instead of being divinely endowed seers in

sole possession of all Life's truths, are a pair of rather youthful persons suffering from a sadly distorted philosophical perspective. Instead of seeing Life in its entirety, they see but one tiny phase, which they mistake for the whole. What worlds of beauty—pure Uranian beauty—are utterly denied them on account of their bondage to the lower regions of the senses! It is almost pitiful to hear superficial allusions to "Truth" from the lips of those whose eyes are sealed to the Intellectual Absolute; who know not the upper altitudes of pure thought, in which empirical forms and material aspects are as nothing.

The editors of Les Mouches complain very bitterly of the inartistic quality of amateur journalism; a complaint half just and half otherwise. The very nature of our institution necessitates a modicum of crudity, but if Miss Gidlow and Mr. Mills were more analytical, they could see beauty in much which appears ugly to their rather astigmatic vision.

## FOREWORD

Graeme Davis

*(Reprinted from The Lingerer (whole no. 4), 1919.)*

Edith Sichel bids us consider that "Michael Angelo's great painting of the newly created Adam on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel might be taken as a symbol of the Renaissance, of the time when man was, as it were, re-created more glorious than before, with a body naked and unashamed, and a strong arm, unimpaired by fasting, outstretched towards life and light. Definitions are generally misleading, and it is easier to represent the Renaissance by a symbol than to define it."

Methinks it is only as man strips himself, not in wantonness but on pride of Beauty and in quest of Venture in sensation, of those trappings and trammels imposed on his body by an acquired and vitiating pudicity and fettering his mind by an unnatural and mucid prudery, that he can emerge into an atmosphere of "sweetness and light."

Such emergence, whilst bringing as heritage many traditions of the past, is into an environment so different from the confines whence one is delivered, that to call it a new birth is more than an use of merely the language of symbolism.

With all who have "acknowledged man's body to be the exponent, not the adversary, of his soul," I welcome joyously and tender glad homage to those who have thus emerged, the more when they bring to Amateur Journalism a new, noble, and glorious era of belles lettres. such as has never been attained therein.

**LES MOUCHES FANTASTIQUES:  
AN ESSAY IN REVIEW**

**Graeme Davis**

*(Reprinted from The Lingerer (whole no. 4), 1919.)*

Some time ago I determined to plead to and to work for a renaissance in amateur belles lettres, and, lo, it is with us in full bloom, as gorgeous, as rare, as exotic as an orchid, and as precious and as fragrant. Based securely upon those eternal principles of art which, notwithstanding the most varied derivative forms, serve to preserve an essential underlying unity amongst schools apparently unrelated and antagonistic, it should appeal to and be given the kindly, unprejudiced consideration of every lover of beauty.

Gilbert Murray crystallises a mighty truth when he tells us that "the greatest triumph that any tradition can accomplish is to rear noble and worthy rebels." Those who adhere to tradition for its own sake and who decry any departure from its prescribed forms, are the dismal and fallen angels of death, the advocates of decay. In their protests against those rebellious movements to achieve new forms for persisting life and new birth for manifestations of beauty, they become blind leaders of the blind whose ultimate and perhaps near goal is the grave yawning for human culture.

Art and life are one, and must have infinitely numerous and varied forms for manifestation. To the critic of genuine insight, Mr. Arthur Symon's plea for "Art for Life's sake" is in the final analysis nothing more than a re-statement of the creed he claimed to have outgrown: "Art for Art's sake." Art and life, one and the same in the fullest development of being, require the fullest cultivation of every latent potentiality, subject only to the restraint of indispensable form. Form is limitation, but form should no more be permitted to become set, inflexible, invariable than should life itself be permitted to conform to determined conventions.

Whenever convention, the corpse of tradition, becomes dominant over either life or form, there appear rebels against convention, and thus comes to pass a renaissance of art. And dead tradition can be stupendously potent—consider the dominance of the odour of putridity. Rebels against convention, inspired ever by the divine beauty of life and the forms through which life manifests, must not forget that if their message is to be delivered to and is to reach those about them, there must be more or less acceptance of means of communication common to all. In other words, tradition cannot be entirely neglected by the most original

innovators, else they are as those who say nothing however furious may be the noise of their utterance.

Intellectual rebellion is very apt to become one-sided—if technique is ignored, there remains conventionality of thought; if ideas fresh and vital with the insistence of actual creation appear, they may, as new wine in old bottles, wreck the traditions of artistic craftsmanship. Anarchy is as deplorable in either realm as is convention itself. Those who are the instigators and guiding spirits of any renaissance are ever to be found able to dispense with the traditional thought or the traditional form, almost at the command of whim as well as of will, but seldom or never with both at once.

Those who to-day have been instrumental in ushering in a new era in amateur belles lettres, and who will continue to be its sponsors and its conscious, pre-eminent leaders are not only innovators, at least among amateur journalists, in the razing of old barriers, the disregard of the outworn condemnations of convention, the expression of fresh beauty and new joy, but they are also true to very ancient tradition, both of thought and form, whilst able to see with freshness of vision and to discard old forms. In no small degree are they in the way of being masters of idea and of expression, and therefore they are interpreters of life, or artists.

Strange must seem to convention-sodden men the inner content and the outward form of any re-awakened appreciation and expression of beauty and of emotion enkindled by beauty. Almost as the myriad and weird Lepidoptera hovering over and deriving sustenance from nature's orchidaceous blossoms must they seem to those unemancipated from the death-in-sleep of the votaries of the merely empty shells of tradition.

It would seem in recognition of such a view of their aims and work that Elsie A. Gidlow and Roswell George Mills have named their journal *Les Mouches Fantastiques*. More exquisite satire is not to be found than is conveyed to some of us by that title. One who cannot appreciate its delicate, trenchant wit cannot be expected to understand, much less appreciate, the sweetening, light-giving, life-renewing, and art-enriching character of that which they are creating and proffering to us with such "passionate feeling for the past," such reverence for the glories of passing beauty, and such influence towards a greater, freer, and more potent future.

From the "Autumn of the Body" they have delivered its Spring-child, the Youth of the Body, eternal, supreme, and ever renaissant. "Torch-bearers" are they and of the cult of the Phoenix, "noble and worthy rebels," and in the line of succession of mighty, noble, rebellious and ever misunderstood men who have been maintaining the race toward that goal beyond which life and art are

consciously one.

Very much have they in common, particularly in their worship of beauty, and especially as it is manifest in and to the human body, by the senses of which alone can beauty be appreciated and supremely known. Both have a rare reverence for the value and potency of the verbal symbol, and a consequent mastery of word and phrase. Each is alike ardent in striving to catch and embody in enduring form the exquisite sensations and the aesthetic splendours of each moment of life in its swift passing. Yet they differ radically and essentially, not only in their re-actions to the stimuli of experience, but also in their interpretations of life and their modes of expression.

Miss Gidlow is determinedly wilful, adventurous, and recklessly forceful with that daring which over-leaps every obstacle. She does not wait for life to come to her laden with gifts or with griefs, but pursues life at swift pace and possesses herself of life's treasures, and of its rifled wealth she unhesitatingly casts aside much that she may add to her store of those pearls she deems of greatest price.

Her valuations are both derived and originated. From the Decadence of the Eighteen-Nineties she has as heritage a penchant for certain definite points of view and the traditional terms expressing them. Indeed, she harks back to a predecessor of the Decadents of whom Mr. Lewis E. Gates has said:

Poe is fond of inversions and involutions in his sentence structure, and of calculated rhythms that either throw into relief certain picturesque words or symbolise in some reverberant fashion the mood of the moment....Poe's fondness for artificial musical affects is seen in his emphatic re-iteration of specially picturesque phrases, a trick of manner that every one associates with his poetry, and that is more than once to be found in his prose writings.

Only Miss Gidlow entirely lacks that insincerity and hardness too often to be found in Poe's work. She is consequently in advance of the school to which she owes much, nor can she be accused of merely imitating any of those whom she has studied.

Her own force carries her into realism of her own and enables her to create word-combinations of surprising freshness and attention-holding beauty. A true child of tradition, she often shows herself to be a competent technician in verse, yet she is able and prefers to dispense with tradition in favour of free forms of her own making.

In her verse especially is Miss Gidlow's colour-sense found to be fine and strong. Vivid are the pictures she paints by the frequent and surprising choice of an highly coloured adjective, and, true to type, sight and hearing are interchangeable sensations for her. Tonal values are continually to be found in this connection throughout her poems.

So striking is the very recurrent imagery that

one would suspect it to be ingenious rather than spontaneous were it not that forcefulness of thought and expression is, as has been said, dominantly characteristic of Miss Gidlow. She is a Diana, ranging to unfrequented solitudes in her hunt for trophies of imagery, and with splendid freedom clearing the impediments which would daunt more wary mortals, and therefore with a natural and pleasing insolence at times.

One ceases to consider the merely picturesque in Miss Gidlow's verse as one is swept irresistibly on by this force and spontaneity—it is impossible to pause in reading long enough to protest against the continual use of well-worn words, and it is this alone which saves her from the danger of becoming a cliché addict.

Notwithstanding the poignant passion and habitual assonances so sweetly sounded in her verse, Miss Gidlow is not lyrical. But in this she is very modern. Jessie B. Rittenhouse has a statement which applies here:

It is not that the modern poet is unable to produce such, but that he does not choose. It has gone out of fashion, to state the case quite frankly, to write with a singing cadence; something rare and strange must issue from the poet's lips, something inobvious. Art lurks in surprises, and the poet of to-day must be a diviner of mysteries, a searcher of secrets, in nature and humanity and truth, and a revealer of them in his art, though he reveals oft-times but to conceal.

While Miss Gidlow is well revealed in her poetry, it is to her prose that we must go for an exposition of her creedal views of art and life. Into her prose she carries many of the qualities of her verse, and in addition a deliberate exposition of the views slightly concealed in her poetry.

Imagery and rhythm are here to be found in no scant measure, with a more munificent vocabulary and a direct application of mental and spiritual power. One may, I imagine, disagree radically with many of Miss Gidlow's articles of artistic faith, but not without an uneasy suspicion or conviction that his own views need a long neglected inspection and re-statement. Those who are only the opinionated adherents of prejudice instead of maintainers of a genuine creed in art, those who know not the difference between a moral and an artistic judgment, will of course be blind to the beauty and the truth Miss Gidlow consciously knows and which she deliberately promulgates and emphasises in all of her work.

Yet Miss Gidlow herself is not free from bitter and narrow prejudice. She refers in too strong and often uncouth terms to the prevailing Faith commonly opposed to the Paganism she advocates, and therefore to the disadvantage of her own cause. Apart from this lamentable weakness, her philosophy merits respectful consideration, and she should remember that the nobler leaders of the Italian Renaissance, and of later days,

desired and attempted to reconcile Christianity and Paganism—nor entirely failed. The beauty and the power in the best of both are originally closely related if not essentially one.

But, when one recalls the final spiritual haven of Verlaine, of Huysmans, of Retté, or Aubrey Beardsley, and of many others, one—wonders. Naturally, perhaps, and unfortunately, both editors of *Les Mouches Fantastiques* are equally limited with respect to this prejudice. One wishes that what Holbrook Jackson said in comment upon the Anthem of Earth might be true of them, if only for the greater depth and breadth which would enter into their work:

Such earth-love is Pagan rather than Christian, yet it was not foreign to the Christianity of Francis Thompson, whose orthodoxy did not curtail his worship of Life in many of her manifestations.

There are those who claim that the Decadence was a more or less inconclusive conflict between orthodoxy and heterodoxy and that it has nothing further to achieve. As a matter of fact, it is still and will long continue to be a wide-reaching influence, one which may be discerned in the work of every artist who is in advance. And it is this advance in art of which *Les Mouches Fantastiques* is an advocate.

Arthur Symons shows us that

A man who goes through a day without some fine emotion has wasted his day, whatever he has gained by it. And it is so easy to go through day after day, busily and agreeably, without ever really living for a single instant. Art begins when a man wishes to immortalise the most vivid moment he has ever lived. Life has already, to one not an artist, become art in that moment. And the making of one's life into art is after all the first duty and privilege of every man. It is to escape from material reality to whatever form of ecstasy is our own form of spiritual existence.

The basic cause of all the unrest which, in its various aspects, is summed up in the general category of the "Social Problem" is the ignorance and oppression which robs men of their opportunities and means to realise this "first duty and privilege of every man." The greatness and the appeal of William Morris, of John Ruskin, and of other exponents of an artist's socialism, is due to their recognition and partial statement of this fundamental need and their endeavour to provide for its performance and satisfaction.

The coming of a genuine democracy depends almost, if not quite, wholly upon this "escape from material reality." Unless it be vivid, spiritual, aesthetic, democracy at best can be but an ever darkening delusion, a sordid, lifeless, hopeless, and inadequate palliative. And we have become so apathetically resigned and inured to conventional barrenness and ugliness of living that any rebellion seems to be exotic and immoral. As a matter of fact, almost all immorality so-called, except that of a cheap and injurious nature, is little or nothing more than a defiance of established custom. As rebels

against this social death-in-life are Miss Gidlow and Mr. Mills "noble and worthy rebels."

At one in their revolt, the editors of *Les Mouches Fantastiques* follow separate paths in their artistic modes. Where Miss Gidlow is torrential in intensity, Mr. Mills is tranquil though no less intense and passionate; where her work is colourful and abounding in imagery, his is rich in music and symbolism. Not that music and colour are not to be found in abundance in the writings of both, but that each stresses one or the other.

Mr. Mills is highly endowed with lyrical power and has not neglected the development of his talent. He hears with his eyes, and on an organ of many stops he touches with sure fingers and fine technique the keys which release the manifold melodies and the full harmonies of his verse, making us to see with our ears. The Lydian measures sweep on softly, smoothly, seductively, with a strange superiority to the mere mechanics of the musician's skill. One cannot but recall the phrase,

Linkèd sweetness long drawn out.

And Mr. Mills does sing in Lydian strains, whereas Miss Gidlow is more given to Phrygian mode. It is in his moods of simple directness, of most wistful sincerity, that the musical control is most evident, as is seen, for instance, in such verses as the following:

Dear boy, there are so many things to say  
I could not speak, so many songs to sing  
I could not pluck the chords for new, nor play  
Even the old strains over, remembering  
That I loved you, who wantoned down the way,  
Half fearfully, perhaps, in that first spring.

The verses show also the author's fine, sure intuition for the inevitable word, so that there is no sense of effort or of strain to be found.

"In nothing more than his attitude toward nature, does the modern betray himself." Mr. Mills' poems show him to have an open eye for the vistas upon and above the waters and the hills, but to him all nature speaks in the language of symbolism. And what he sees he transmutes into music such as we hear from the muted strings of a violin the distance. His landscapes are full of ensilvered witchery, softly playing through purple nights and blue-shadowed places of sylvan caverns,

Beside the narrow stream  
And through the forest sombre,  
Where evil blue flowers gleam.

Mr. Mills' manipulation of the caesura is remarkably able. It is the secret of the intensity and poignancy in his *vers libres*, which clutch at the throat like one's own passionate impulses. But, all consideration of technique aside, his poetry is lustrous with beauty, ardent in that adoration of beauty which makes one to become conformed to the object of one's worship. And because of this, there is reason to hope that the thin note

of plaintive and querulous morbidity and protest against fate now and then to be heard within the fuller, richer over-tones, is transient, that the consecration of the man to art and to its finest manifestations will keep him strong and ever productive. For him to lose his ardour would be to maim his power most sadly. To quote Jessie B. Rittenhouse again,

Excess of conviction is a safer equipment for art than a philosophy already parting with its enthusiasms by the trespassing of life, being more likely to undergo the shaping of experience without losing the vital part.

A poet of the temperamental, of the wanton mood, and of mystic passions, a singer of "worthy Uranian song," Mr. Mills should have our tenderest consideration, and no less our invincible insistence that he give himself over wholly to the dream-world in which he wanders free, that he should deliberately blind himself to and forget the ugliness and misery and ignoble limitations of the outer environment. As said Eleanor Duse,

We must bow before the poet, even when it seems to us that he does wrong. He is a poet, he has seen something, he has seen it in that way; we must accept his vision, because it is a vision.

Mr. Mills' prose is not a thing apart from his verse—even an editorial from his pen shows close kinship with the prose-poem that is the spontaneous product thereof. The rhythmic, opalescent sweep of the throb of song beats and shimmers ever in his work, whatever form it assumes. This it is that gives to his direct pleas for his art and its content their tremendous appeal, which is evidence of the fundamental elements of life, of instinctive processes of human nature, in their most highly evolved and refined manifestations.

As a play-wright, Mr. Mills is sheer symbolist, rather than dramatist. His is too subjective a world and temperament to present in aught but potential language the inner realities of life. This he does with inexorable logic, with "tonal imagery, and melodic evocation," far more convincing than the most objective and kinetic mimicry of experience. To Mr. Mills' prose-poems and his plays Walter Pater's description of another form may be well adapted: "It is a beauty wrought from within....the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions."

As James Huneker says of Pater himself:

A suggestion of morbidity may be found in the writings of every great writer from Plato to Dante, from Shakespeare to Goethe; it is the faint spice of mortality that lends a stimulating if sharp perfume to all literatures. Beautiful art has been challenged as corrupting. There may be a grain of truth in the charge. But man cannot live by wisdom alone, so art was invented to console, disquiet, and arouse him. Whenever a poet appears he is straightway accused of tampering with the moral code; it is mediocrity's mode of adjusting violent mental disproportions. But persecution never harmed a genuine talent.

## MERE MUSINGS

Graeme Davis

(Reprinted from *The Lingerer* (whole no. 4), 1919.)

### I

There are men and women who to-day are trying to think, honestly and purposefully. They have tried to work out scheme after scheme which might serve towards a interpretation of conditions, an interpretation looking towards a solution of problems. But no reasoned theory has been able to stand under its own weight. Consequently these thinkers are being reduced to a humility of impotence that may make it possible for them to become useful in constructive service. Out of a growing realisation of the futility of much human learning, of the blindness which, having eyes, yet cannot read the lessons of millennia of experience, they are beginning, in their earnest groping, to feel the presence of some of the "eternal verities."

One is distressed beyond any telling by the attitude of people in general towards the situation now confronting the world, and the blindness, in the very face of experience most bitter, to continuing propaganda. Certainly what has been done, and is being done, is fairly screaming with messages of vital importance, which one can fail to hear and to understand only by a traitorous indifference or wilfulness.

The complacent attitude into which the public is falling is quite as deadly a menace as the Hun at his most triumphant and worst military strength. One grows almost desperate when considering how little people realise, how little they have been touched in either heart or imagination by that which even across seas can turn the blood of men who heed into icy streams.

There is reason to fear that as a result of the long established habit of not practicing in their lives what they profess with their lips, too large a proportion of men and women are going to be content with mouthing what may soon become outworn platitudes about "reconstruction," "a new world order," etc. With a cowardly deliberation, hypocritical in its refusal to avoid camouflage, the multitude wants an actual reconstruction of the old order. And that, of course, arouses and breeds anarchy and bolshevikism.

But among the minority there are great numbers of awakened men and women who will seek and labour, strive and fight, and agonise unceasingly, with utmost sacrifice, to make potent for good, for the construction of a new order the enthusiasm which unquestionably has been engendered. But it cannot be made potent unless its

loyalty is pledged to something very definite and very personal. And, somehow, one cannot feel that the "League of Nations" is sufficiently definite, per se, to call forth the loyalty necessary to transmute enthusiasm into result-getting power. Somehow there must be a personal note made to sound through, to dominate the idea and the experiment.

The real conflict is still ahead. Furthermore, the war-worn men must continue to bear the brunt of it—they, as they return home, have got to fight the already organising forces of obstruction, of return (so far as may be) to the status ante bellum—yet not alone: they will find at home many already engaged to the utmost in the struggle. And all must join forces, find common ground, cultivate camaraderie, avoid dissension as conscientiously as the Allied Powers were obliged to do during the war.

The main problems are how to connect up, how to educate and be educated in a vital way, and how to utilise for reality in living those ideals which have been quickened and which have once more brought reality into contact with daily life. The emphases have all been changed for the men who have gone through discipline and on into more or less active service on the front. They have got to be changed for all who had to remain at home. The latter cannot do it for themselves: the former cannot do it for them; and those changing emphases will not hold for the returning soldiers if they do nothing but either wait for or scornfully criticise the home-folk and organisations for not having, without equally energising stimulus and disciplinary experience, progressed as far as the men who have waged war overseas.

We must all get together somehow, and soon, as soon as possible connecting up the old and the new, and, together co-operating with the Unseen Reality, drive on to a transformation which shall be the result of combining the best in the old with the best in the possible. And thereby will come the new education, truly an education by doing. There is good unto a superlative degree in the old, else it would not have endured in strength and none of that good may safely be lost. We must learn what it is that is good and essential and beautiful, and why, and then get more of it and by it crowd out the less good, the bad, and the ugly.

We are told by men in the ranks (for some of them do think on these things) that the men are going to demand more of religion after they get back. Well and good if they demand it of religion. But if they demand it of religionists, or even of those who are as yet but humbly, stumblingly groping toward religion (which is right relation), then woe to us all!

We are asked by the same men, "What vision has the war given to those who have been fighting the

battle at home?" It is to be doubted if any can yet put it clearly into words: men are still blinded by its glory, as was Saint Paul on the road to Damascus. But it includes a new understanding of Him Who is the heart of every true vision; and the understanding it is giving is of depth sufficient to know that no mere political and economic leaguings of nations will preserve the fruit of victory—not yet fully won. It is an understanding that surmounts (not abolishes) national barriers, and envisions a new world order in which the dignity of manhood and the worth of man shall take their proper place among true and enduring standards of value, making all political and economic functions subservient to the best interests of men, so that there shall become eventually a working, dominant brotherhood for the mass together with an emphasis of the dignity and worth of the individual.

## II

Rabindranath Tagore begins *S\_dhan\_* with the statement that "The civilisation of ancient Greece was nurtured within city walls. In fact all modern civilisations have their cradles of brick and mortar." He then leaps to a conclusion that:

These walls leave their mark deep in the minds of men. They set up a principle of "divide and rule" in our mental outlook, which begets in us a habit of securing all our conquests by fortifying them and separating them from one another. We divide nation and nation, knowledge and knowledge, man and nature. It breeds in us a strong suspicion of whatever is beyond the barriers we have built, and everything has to fight hard for its entrance into our recognition.

It is true that the life of the ancient Greeks did centre in the city-state, but when we consider "that the whole of their religion shows an intense feeling for the processes and beauties of nature," that their poets often described exquisitely and at length these things, and that their deities were largely personifications of natural phenomena, of Nature's aspects, it is impossible to concur in the corollary of Tagore's statement, and believe that their civilisation had its origins and inspirations within city walls.

Yet we cannot but agree with Tagore in that our civilisation is one which not only separates us from affinity with and appreciation of nature, but that it also separates us in an individual isolation which renders us so suspicious of others that on the close approach of a stranger, or even of many with whom we are well acquainted, every perceptive faculty cries out its warning: 'Ware poachers! Thus was it possible for someone to write the truly terrible sentence, "Perhaps he had been seized with a dislike for complete silence, such as comes upon men in recurring hours of depression, when the mind is submerged by a thin tide of unreasoning melancholy"—and I believe that to be one of the most

tremendous indictments of modern life I have ever read, the more awful because it is an unconscious indictment.

### III

There is a passage in Ruskin's *Modern Painters* which affords some comfort and much enlightenment:—

For there was never yet the child of any promise (so far as the theoretic [remember that Ruskin substituted the word "theoretic" for the word "aesthetic"] faculties are concerned) but awaked to the sense of beauty with the first gleam of reason; and I suppose there are few, among those who love nature otherwise than by profession and at second-hand, who look not back to their youngest and least learned days as those of the most intense, superstitious, insatiable, and beatific perception of her splendours. And the bitter decline of this glorious feeling, though many note it not, partly owing to the cares of weight of manhood, which leave them not the time nor the liberty to look for lost treasure, and partly to the human and divine affections which are appointed to take its place, yet has formed the subject not indeed of lamentation, but of holy thankfulness for the witness it bears to the immortal origin and end of our nature, to one whose authority is almost without appeal in all questions relating to the influence of external things upon the pure human soul:

"Heaven lies about us in our infancy,—  
Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
Upon the growing boy.  
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows  
He sees it in his joy.  
The youth, who daily from the east  
Must travel, still is nature's priest,  
And by the vision splendid  
Is on his way attended  
At length the Man perceives it die away  
And fade into the light of common day."

The man who has sold his youth for the baubles by whose reflections of the glare of common day he is blinded, is snooping about us on every side, ever ready and eager, as is a buzzard for the enfeebled traveller, to descry and denounce the little lambent flames which we who are nature's priests keep forever burning upon strange altars.

It is a horrible situation we are in when we cannot worship Beauty in its manifold forms without being perpetually on guard against every chance-comer. What wonder we no more see fauns and satyrs dancing by, and too seldom hear the lilt of Pan's lute!

### IV

Again I have been reading *A Drop of Dew* by Lafcadio Hearn, characteristic of the writer, as of the Orient, and instinct with a delightful, albeit depressing, paganism. And it is all art! And art is youth and passion and beauty and song. Of youth Theodosia Garrison has written:

What do they know of youth who still are young?  
They but the singers of a golden song....  
We only—youth no longer, old so long—

Before its harmonies stand marveling—  
Oh, we who listen—never they who sing....  
Only we know, who linger overlong,  
Youth that is made of beauty and of song.

But however wistful the aged may be toward youth, I doubt if they can appreciate it as do they who realise their own youth. For youth is superbly self-conscious. Those whose years are few and those who do "not guess its worth or wonder" are children still. And where the spirit of youth abides, notwithstanding the fading of the body, beauty lingers. Passion has its metamorphoses and may retain its potency if not futilely flung away. And where there is passion there must be the beauty of youth. Nor can one conceive of passionate, beauteous youth which does not express itself in or else inspire song.

We know that to hold communion with what we worship is to partake of the nature and qualities of the object of our worship, be it personal or impersonal, especially if our worship find its expression, as it should, in outward form and ceremonial. Even so is it, then, for those of us who worship youth and its beauty. We need never grow old but in years.

Our worship of youth ought, therefore, not only to have its forms as beautiful as poesy can make them, but also its ceremonial, most gorgeous, in which there should be an appeal to and a satisfaction for each of the senses.

Of course, this is bringing ethics and æsthetics into such close relation that they are wedded, and it is as far from the asceticism which has been imposed upon and interwoven into Christianity as is Paganism. But it is to be seriously questioned if the current conceptions of conduct are truly Christian. They have their roots, of course, in Pauline ethics, which have origins and sources other than in their author's Christianity. To recognise this is to open the way for entirely different standards of morality than are commonly proclaimed—and seldom or never conformed to.

Youth, passion, beauty, and song are vital and inevitable elements of human life, and any form of religion must fail ultimately in so far as it neglects them.

Is this a drift toward paganism? Well, was not pure paganism the flowering of humanity as such, the logical outgrowth of the latent potentialities with which man was endowed by his Creator? And He Who came not to destroy but to fulfil could not have intended to abolish that which in its flowering was attaining a perfection of beauty. He came to add the beauty of divinity to the beauty of humanity—ethics to æsthetics, if it so please you.

### V

A letter, like genuine conversation, must ramble more or less if it is to be at all satisfactory; it can no more follow a definite sequence of balanced thought than can spontaneous talk which ever is wandering into by-paths. No correspondent will ever be faulted by me for indulging in that most delectable practice, to which I am addicted as these Musings prove. And in this the informal writer is great with Emerson—of him it is recorded by tradition (and by himself referred to somewhere in his writings) that over the door of his study-library he inscribed the word “Whim.”

In truth, to be whimsical is to be like unto the gods, exercising Olympian prerogatives, exempt from the petty exactions of earth-blinding conventions, and unilluminated reason's tyrannies. How can we soar if we clip the wings of fancy? How can we escape the humdrum monotony of a visionless, bloodless existence if we conform our ways of thinking to the shackled will of the creeping, crawling majority?

When we dare to be wilful, wistful, and whimswayed, then for us

The world's great age begins anew,  
The golden years return,

and instead of being used, and hardly used, by life, we find the use of life. Did I not pity, I should scorn and damn the world about us for its leaden life and its fear of an antagonism to the impulses that are divine. We can but cry, with mingled tears and laughter,

Ah, foolish world, too sadly wise,  
Why didst thou e'er let fade away  
Those ancient, innocent ecstasies?

And they were innocent, for they were indulged in by the godlike sons of Greece, the land where dwelt the gods themselves, and they, too, revelled in the same ecstatic, beauteous pleasures. Aye,

Once more to distant ages of the world  
Let us revert, and place before our thoughts  
The face which rural solitudes might wear  
To the unenlightened swains of pagan Greece.  
—In that fair clime, the lonely herdsman stretched  
On the soft grass through half a summer's day,  
With music lulled his indolent repose:  
And, in some fit of weariness, if he,  
When his own breath was silent, chanced to hear  
A distant strain, far sweeter than the sounds  
Which his poor skill could make, his fancy fetched,  
Even from the blazing chariot of the sun,  
A beardless Youth, who touched a golden lute,  
And filled the illumined groves with ravishment.

It may be well that the gods of eld derived their existence, as they did their customs, largely from the singing thoughts of men. But they were none the less real for that, and real do they become to us as we become capable of appreciating Beauty and seeing it in nature, human or other. It is the very human qualities of the gods which endear them to us, whilst it is their mystery, shared

from Nature, the aspects of which they personify, that gives them majestic importance in and authority over the living ways of men.

In the gods men and nature found unity, or, rather, the close sympathy between men and nature found its unity in the gods. In so far as we find and have recognition for the gods, life becomes song, passionate with eternal youth and beauty.

Gods arose alive on earth from under stroke of  
human hands;  
As the hands that wrought them, these are dead,  
and mixed with time's dead sands;  
But the godhead of supernal song, though these  
now stand not, stands.

## IN THE GERM

Graeme Davis

(Reprinted from *The Lingerer* (whole no. 4), 1919.)

The wreck-strewn highway of literature affords ample and indubitable evidence that the way of the translator is hard. Those who have fallen because of unseemly dissipation therein are, however, of the tribe that has translated for lucre's sake, not for art's, confirming the fact that the love of money is the root of *all* evil.

There are those who make the phrase-mongers swallow their ancient canard of *tractuttore traditore*. For they bring over not only the intellectual and emotional content of the beautiful in divers and strange tongues, but even the form with no loss of rhythmic music and subtle power.

In the translations which appear in this issue of *The Lingerer*, both body and soul of the originals have been presented to us: tone, rhythm, colour, and structure, and with even happier graces and richer music. The inspiration of the authors is more than sustained by that of the translator.

M. René Doumic, the very conservative critic of the *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, “where particularly under the Brunetière régime, he maintained the solemn standard of that periodical,” makes the following statement at the close of the preface to his study of *les jeunes*:

Fully persuaded that a literature cannot live, except on condition that it ceaselessly renews itself, I have followed with attention and sympathy all the “novelties” which have seemed to me to have any significance and any capacity. I have thought, on the other hand, that the duty of the Critic is to say always what he believed to be the truth, in every case, to everyone—and even to the younger writers.

This his view, *and his catholic attitude*, is recommended to our own critics, with the very important amendment that they substitute the “older” for the “younger” writers. We have some too influential author-



critics who are determined to foist upon us all, as a criterion from which we may not be allowed to deviate, certain narrow standards which are unethical in inverse ratio to what they regard as ethics, and which are usually as lacking in scholarly acumen and balance as they are plethoric with prejudice.

The essay on the Decadents [by Remy de Gourmont, translated by Roswell George Mills—ed.] should be of special interest to most readers of these pages because of its references to amateur journals of France. A study of the innumerable small magazines published, as labours of love, in the land of *belles lettres* during the past half century affords abundant material not only for several fascinating essays, but also for a very valuable thesis. There has been scarcely a writer of note, scarcely a movement of importance in literature and art, that has not at some time in the period published or contributed to the publication of those free-lance papers which we in America choose to call amateur journals.

In this connection, I earnestly commend to those of my confreres who may be ignorant of it the study of the French language. The English we speak is not an “Anglo-Saxon” tongue, but a French dialect, standing in the same relation to French that the latter does to Latin. In structure, grammar, and vocabulary modern English is of French derivation and complexion.

Since the Battle of Hastings, the prose and the poetry of English literature have been more or less constantly dominated, in both form and content, by French influences. And to-day France is beginning to pay a debt she owes America. Poe and Whitman have been dominant factors in the literary life and art of *les jeunes* of France, and now our younger and most gifted American writers are so under the influence of the French that it is becoming increasingly difficult for an American to appreciate the work of his country's authors unless he has a knowledge of the French language and later literature. In a few years it will be difficult even to understand the coming work in the realm of American art and letters if handicapped by that ignorance.

Though classed by most critics as one of the minor poets, Lionel Johnson is easily the greatest of them. As a critic he is acknowledged to be foremost in the first rank of his generation. An avowed disciple of Walter Pater, it is to be feared that many lovers of the master have not listened to the haunting melodies of Lionel Johnson's verse nor been enlightened by the kindly, incisive, ever sure and brilliant critical appreciations he has left us in too small volume.

I have long desired to introduce to my readers his ever exquisite, serene, grave, and flawless work, and for that purpose I have chosen one of his shorter and one of his longer poems. [Davis reprinted Johnson's poems

“The Precept of Silence” and “De Amicitia” in this issue of *The Lingerer*—ed.] The latter, surely, will make us all mourn with Frank Harris who says,

I always hoped he would write some great lyric page on friendship for he was singularly gifted with sympathy, a soul like some Aeolian harp tuned to respond to every breath of affection and with this rare sensitiveness, an equable kind temper, a mind of high lineage.

Great is my regret that [neither] time nor strength permit me now to include an essay in appreciation of the crystal genius of the elfin poet and creator-critic whose work is for the few.

It may be that this is the swan-song number of *The Lingerer*, although I have many plans and wistful hopes for further issues. Begun nearly a year ago, it is now completed, after many months of illness, thanks to the assistance of my mother and other friends.

## SILENCE

Roswell George Mills

(Reprinted from *The Lingerer* (whole no. 4), 1919.)

Why do you ask me for words?  
I have given you too many to give you  
any more  
Now, when I feel that silence with you is dear.

The dead autumn leaves dance round our feet  
as we go through,  
Between the naked trees, towards the hill.  
You let me put my hand in yours, as we climb  
Up the steep slopes.  
There is no word for that.

And if I weep a little when we reach the top,  
Seeing so much of loveliness laid out below,  
wrapt in the blue haze of autumn,  
Feeling suddenly your dearness,  
And you kiss me,  
There is no word for that.

And yet, you ask for words!  
Can you not see how my eyes speak,  
Telling you love?  
There is no word for that.

## O LOVE, I'M BEATING ON YOUR DOOR

For Mr. Davis

Roswell George Mills

(Reprinted from *The Lingerer* (whole no. 4), 1919.)

O Love, I'm beating on your door with my  
 two hands,  
 And you will not open to me.  
 Thin as a silver dream the day has risen over  
 the hills  
 And fallen to sleep behind the narrow fringes  
 of trees  
 At the edge of the lake.  
 Far over, deep in the crimson of the sky, a bird  
 Flies heavily.  
 The water darkens before me, and sings me a  
 lullabye, kissing the sand at my feet.

O Love, do you not feel the night approaching,  
 And are you afraid for me?  
 The water sings me such songs, and the winds  
 Kiss me so softly.  
 You should be afraid for me, Love.

Open your door, Love, I'm bearing on it with  
 my two hands.  
 The water, Love, and the winds that bear songs,  
 They call me and call me.

And you, Love, behind your door.....  
 I'm beating on it with my heart, and you do  
 not hear,  
 You do not open to me.

O Love, open your door, open your door!  
 I am afraid for you, Love,  
 I am afraid.....

### ON SUMMER NIGHTS

*To Louise*

**Elsie A. Gidlow**

*(Reprinted from The Lingerer (whole no. 4), 1919.)*

Weaving webs is fruitless work  
 Any day;  
 But when the moon is like a pulse  
 Beating at one's passion's gate  
 Urgently  
 And feverishly,  
 Weaving webs is less than vain.

Dreaming dreams is sad enough  
 Any time;  
 But on those quivering summer nights

When stars and stars are all spilt out  
 Everywhere,  
 Like careless love,  
 Dreaming dreams is terrible.

Thoughts of you hurt more than pain  
 Any night;  
 But when the winds sing passion songs  
 And even all the airs are mad,  
 Exquisitely,  
 With love and love,  
 They are more than I can bear.

### NIGHT-LAUGHTER

**Elsie A. Gidlow**

*(Reprinted from The Lingerer (whole no. 4), 1919.)*

To-night there is laughter, laughter, everywhere:  
 Everything seems to laugh to-night but I;  
 O love, why?  
 Once the moon dropped tears in her pale, long hair  
 And hid her face on the breasts of the sky  
 So that none should see the sadness there.  
 Now I can hear her laugh.  
 The slender stars quaff  
 The wine of Joy,  
 And dance and dance.  
 I have never seen the stars spin so  
 And the measure they tread is far from slow.  
 The shadows—even the shadows are mad:  
 They are flitting about between the lights  
 Like grotesque clowns  
 In ladies' gowns,  
 Shrieking out they will be glad  
 I think the ghosts have left their graves:  
 I hear them laughing, like drunken knaves  
 After a riotous night,  
 With weird and morbid delight.  
 Everything laughs too much.  
 Even the dusky winds that play with each  
 other's tresses  
 And flirt their shimmering dresses.  
 The pale brown moths that woo the light  
 Cannot laugh aloud, but they dance,  
 (Life is a toss of Chance).  
 And though they die while the lamp stays bright  
 They win an hour's madness from night.  
 Laughter everywhere.  
 It sounds so harsh and bare.  
 There would be more of sweetness in a moan.....  
 But everything, everywhere, laughs in its deeps:

I am the only thing in the night that weeps.  
O, it is terrible to be so alone!

June 28, 1919.

### THE OFFICIAL EDITOR

**W. Paul Cook**

*(Extracted from The National Amateur (vol. XLI no. 6),  
July 1919.)*

Athol, Mass., June 20, 1919.

At the present writing, it seems improbable that President Davis will render any lengthy report to the convention or attempt in any way to sum up the achievements of his administration. If he renders a short summary, it seems probable that he will give undue credit to others for that which should largely be assigned to himself. To let another say it for him, then—Mr. Davis's administration has been an unqualified success.

It is generally known that Mr. Davis has not been well, but it is not generally known that he has been at death's door, and that more than one of his messages and of his letters have been dictated in whispers to an amanuensis beside his bed. The program of work he laid out for himself remains uncompleted, but it was begun so well that his record of personal publishing activity is by no means a small one. His loyalty to his officers and his unqualified support of them, his splendid work in backing them up, will not soon be forgotten by those who served with him. He leaves office with a compact, paid-up, enthusiastic membership on the rolls of the association, with a healthy treasury, with all debts paid, with a system of book-keeping up-to-date and accurate. These things could not have been accomplished with a narrower-minded man than Mr. Davis in the executive chair. In our list of competent executives let us place Graeme Davis high.

### FROM THE MINUTES OF THE FORTY-FOURTH ANNUAL NAPA CONVENTION

**Newark, New Jersey, July 3-5, 1919**

*(Extracted from The National Amateur (vol. XLII no. 1),  
September, 1919.)*

[July 3, 1919]

The report of President Graeme Davis was then read—

Vermillion, South Dakota

To the Annual Convention of the National Amateur Press Association.

Your retiring President sends his loving greetings with all good wishes for a successful and inspiring convocation: he believes that you will elect officers capable of carrying on wisely and energetically the affairs and interests of the Association, and he is confident that there will be increased activity, meritorious endeavor, and achievement during the coming year. He grieves that he has been able to contribute so little the past year and regrets that he cannot be with you.

GRAEME DAVIS

Per S.

On order of the chair this was referred to a committee on the presidential message. The committee appointed consisted of Messrs. Cole and J. M. Heins and Miss Outwater.

[July 5, 1919]

Mr. Cole gave the following report as Chairman of the Committee on the Presidential Message:

The National Amateur Press Association, assembled in its forty-fourth annual convocation, is deeply conscious of the noble service of President Davis throughout the past year. It is a source of keen regret that he is unable to be with the delegates at Newark, but the aspirations and the inspirations which his message convey bring us in close contact with the spirit which animates, even though the person be absent. The association feels that such a spirit is enduring; it realizes that the President's own example of service and idealism has already begun an activity so energetic and so wholesome that it is certain to accomplish the ambitions which Mr. Davis held so precious.

Edward H. Cole, Chairman,

Marjorie H. Outwater,

John Milton Heins.

### FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

**W. Paul Cook**

*(Extracted from The National Messenger (vol. 1 no. 3),  
September 1919, published by NAPA President W. Paul Cook.)*

Athol, Mass., Sept. 22, 1919

Ex-President and Executive Judge Davis has mailed a wonderful issue of *The Lingerer*, which in size alone marks an achievement in Amateur Journalism, and in contents is so great an advance in amateur thought and style that it will not be properly appreciated. However, Mr. Davis' paper, although mailed recently, properly should be credited to his own administration, for the work on it was done some months ago.

**GRAEME DAVIS**  
**52nd President**

**William C. Ahlhauser**

*(Reprinted from Ex-Presidents of the National Amateur Press Association: Sketches, published by W. Paul Cook in Athol, Massachusetts in 1919.)*

Graeme Davis, 52nd President of the National Amateur Press Association, became acquainted with amateur journalism in his tenth year through the columns of Harper's Round Table, and the following year he printed a voluminous number of *The Magazine* containing contributions by noted amateurs of the period and an extended editorial department; but few copies were mailed, however, and the edition is still stored with his first press. Prior to his learning of organized amateur journalism, he had been publishing amateur journals for local distribution, one of which, *The Midget*, was one of the two papers published by the members of a large juvenile commonwealth or "nation" which he had organized in his home town.

Mr. Davis' real entry into the Dom was made when he added an amateur department to *El Gasedil*; this was a miniature paper devoted to the international language movement, enjoyed second-class rates, and subscribers in twenty-seven countries. None of the larger editions of each number, printed wholly in international language, were ever mailed to amateurs. His best work appeared as contributions to other journals, notably *The Pioneer*, and one of them was awarded the essay laureateship of the United Amateur Press Association in 1909; this honor Mr. Davis had to refuse because he had resigned his membership a few weeks after joining that association.

He joined the National Amateur Press Association in 1901 and has since been devoted to that association alone. The same year he was appointed a member of the Recruit Committee and also in the year following. In 1903 he became a member of the Minneapolis Amateur Journalists' Club, and in 1904 of the Chicago Amateur Press Club. In 1909 he was

appointed a member of the Bureau of Critics; in 1917 he was elected Official Editor; and in July, 1918, he was elected President.

In December, 1899, Mr. Davis began the publication of *El Gasedil*, concluding it with the strong and all-amateur Winter issue of 1905. In 1903 he collaborated with Donald Fellows, one of his recruits, in publishing *Par Moi*. From February, 1908 until 1910 he was co-editor with Louis Starring of the latter's *Reflector*. In 1910 he began the publication of *The Lingerer* with a fifty-page issue of "literary and sumptuous typographical work." Last year he began the publication of *The National Review of Reviews* as a supplement to the official organ. This year he will continue the publication of the two journals last named.

At the age of fourteen, after a few weeks in high school following private tutoring, Mr. Davis entered the University of South Dakota. Three years later he left there to continue his studies in Minnesota, Chicago, Europe and Seabury Theological Seminary. In December, 1910, he was ordained to the Priesthood, serving part of his Diaconate and six months as a Priest at the Cathedral in Cleveland, Ohio, and then became pastor of a parish in that city. In February, 1913, he moved to Wisconsin where he built up a strong parish, was chairman of the Social Service Commission, and appointed to other diocesan offices. In the spring of 1916, following a physical collapse from incessant labors he returned to his early home and college town, and is now chaplain at the State University, an Examining Chaplain and a member of the Board of Religious Education of the diocese, and has been elected a member of the National Council of Collegiate Work. He is also professor of French in his University. He has engaged to some extent in professional journalism and has published pamphlets and books of a devotional and ecclesiastical character written mostly in French.

Mr. Davis has an immense collection of amateur journals dating from the sixties, and has a very large private library, especially rich in books printed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and in rare volumes and manuscripts, in first editions, autographed and presentation copies, and privately printed books. From his own press has issued a number of privately printed books. He is a painter in oils, an etcher, and president of the University Art Club.

*(Davis's predilection for deducting six years from his actual age is reflected throughout the text of this biographical sketch—for which he was undoubtedly the primary (if not the sole) informant. In fact, July 23, 1887 is the date of birth which the informant—his son—provided for Davis's 1938 death certificate.*

However, early draft registration and census records make it virtually certain that Davis's correct date of birth was July 23, 1881. Davis's assertion that he commenced his studies at the University of South Dakota at the age of fourteen is consistent with the misstated 1887 birth year and his commencement of studies in 1901. His statement that he became acquainted with mainstream amateur journalism through Harper's Round Table at the age of ten is consistent with the misstated 1887 birth year and 1897 for Harper's Round Table and 1898 for *The Magazette*. If Davis's public school education ended at the age of fourteen (c. 1895), we may speculate that he pursued his education with private tutors and self-study between 1895 and 1901. We know that study of the international language Volapük was one of his primary interests during this period from his own recollections and from the launch of *El Gasedil* in 1899. He had probably also commenced his study of Buddhism before his matriculation at the University of South Dakota in 1901. His leadership of a "boy nation" in Vermillion ca. 1887-97 may be compared to H. P. Lovecraft's organized boyhood play activities—copiously described in his *Selected Letters*. Davis's *The Midget* (originally *Le Grand Nain de l'Univers*) may be compared to Lovecraft's own juvenile publications like *The Scientific Gazette* and *The Rhode Island Journal of Astronomy*—which, unlike Davis's juvenile publications, are largely extant today at the John Hay Library in Providence. Davis's early reading and speaking ability in the French language is presumably attributable to his Francophile uncle—perhaps Charles Stoughton Graham—who according to Davis published his own French-language amateur magazine *Le Petit Ecrivassier*. There is certainly much about Davis's early intellectual development that is likely to remain unknown. I do not know whether he held any degree from the University of South Dakota nor at what institutions he studied in Minneapolis and Chicago—ed.)

## TEA FLOWERS

### A Chinese Play

*To Sappho*  
[Elsa Gidlow]

Roswell George Mills

(Reprinted from *The Vagrant* (whole no. 10), October 1919.)

How sweetly heavy the night air is! The perfumes of an hundred flowers, the incense from the

valley temple, the soft spice-laden winds that come from over yellow seas, all mingle here in this quaint garden which lies so lightly on the hillside, seeming to dream beneath the pallid moon that, from a wan mouth, drops a mist of dew on a drowsy world. Narrow, sanded paths, thin white lines thrown on the earth, twist in and out amongst the shrubbery, between the great dark bushes with their brown blooms. A brooklet, spanned by a slender bridge over which a wisteria vine crawls, purls down a silver-pebbled bed; against the tinkling sound of water, from scented purple depths, a drab-throated bulbul shrieks hoarsely for her mate.

Little Loy Fah, standing on the bridge, leans over the rail and stares into the shallow water under her. She is very sad, and unfallen tears hang on her thickly gummed lashes.

A huge white moth comes fluttering about the wisteria blooms. After a moment, Loy Fah strikes at it with her fan and the injured insect, beating its wings feebly, drops into the stream, to be washed away over the silver stones.

Little Loy Fah herself, in her pale coat, is very like a moth as, swaying, halting on her tiny feet, she descends painfully from the bridge, to sink on the grass at the edge of the water.

Tahmat comes silently through the gloom from among the bamboos.

TAHMAT

Loy Fah! O my moon flower!

LOY FAH

Tahmat! Tahmat! It is you! I am so glad that you have come!

TAHMAT

My little moon flower! Your face is all wet with tears! There are tears still in your eyes. O my moon flower!

LOY FAH

It is no use. I shall be married.

TAHMAT

You will be married? Who has said it?

LOY FAH

It is my father. He has sent the marriage broker away with a favorable answer. I shall be married to Tamai Lo, for my father has sent him presents, and he wishes it. But I...

TAHMAT

It is the custom. Tamai Lo will take you away to his bamboo house, with all its colored screens; he will give you dolls to cosset; and you will have a little mirror, to see to paint your cheeks. He will put cherry blossoms in your room; and, sometimes, when he wishes to be amused, he will come and see you, lying on the silken pillows. You will dance for him, perhaps, and wave your

folded black fan, while he will smile with his narrow eyes, watching you dance delightfully. He will put ornaments of silver in your hair, and bracelets of jade on your wrists, that he may remove them in his play; he will cover your bosom with silk, that he may pleasure in uncovering its flowers, those swelling green-flower breasts of yours; he will lay his head on you, he will put his hands on your delicate body—Loy Fah, Loy Fah, he will ravish that sweet body I adore!

LOY FAH

Let us not speak of it, let us not speak of it. It does not matter that we speak of it. I shall be married.

TAHMAT

O Loy Fah, do you remember how we have come to love each other? How I used to wade about in the rice fields or pull the strings that frightened the redbirds when they came to eat the soft seed? And how, sometimes, you would come to the water edge, swaying on your bandaged feet, to watch us?

LOY FAH

I used to see your feet with the mud and water dripping from them, just as you came from the fields. I thought your feet were beautiful because they were so strong.

TAHMAT

I thought that you were adorable, you were so dainty and so yellow. The round red spots on your yellow cheeks were like spots on a lily.

LOY FAH

I do not remember when it really began.

TAHMAT

It was a night like this, heavy and soft. I could hear the singers in the valley and their music followed me as I came up the hillside, hoping, for no reason I could name, to see you. When I had come to the edge of the garden, I was afraid to climb the trellis. I was afraid, but only for a space, for I saw you, sitting in the moonlight at the foot of the oleander tree, moving your long brown hands with their purple nails, for all the world in your grey coat like a silk-moth on the grass.

LOY FAH

I only remember when you put your face before mine, and looked at me with your almond eyes.

TAHMAT

Your breath was sweet as you blew it in my face. It was sweet with cloves.

LOY FAH

I shall never lean against you any more after tonight. You will never more take off my vest or see my little crooked feet undone.

TAHMAT

Your little feet have always a rosy glow. They are so small they lie in my cupped hands like grains of

rice, like grains of polished white rice.

LOY FAH

Do you remember how we drank our tea, sitting there on the grass, and ate some cakes? It seems a long time ago.

TAHMAT

It is not very long ago.

LOY FAH

There is no nearness in our tears to happiness.

TAHMAT

O moon flower! Let us save the fragments of this hour by looking in the crystal of our love. Let us dream that we are happy, although you wet your silken square with salt, and my lips quiver.

LOY FAH

There is nothing to be said. We have loved, Tahmat, that is all.

TAHMAT

It is enough, yet not enough. Feel how the moon drops down her swaying threads of light, like skeins of tawny silk twining themselves about our thoughts. We shall, never, perhaps, be like this again.

LOY FAH

We shall never lie against each other in the moonlight after this.

TAHMAT

We shall be apart forever.

LOY FAH

Forever! No, Tahmat, no! I cannot! I have seen men look at me when I have been carried out, and I do not like their eyes. They have such heavy lids. Tahmat, Tahmat, it is very quiet now; even the bulbul has ceased her calling. And I, I shall end mine, too. I wonder if the god sits really in the little house under the mulberry tree, where the poppies are sown, the white poppies and the blue. The god has always his eyes downcast, and a little smile on his lips; he keeps his hands folded across his knees so that the silver ring on his thumb may show. He has very long nails. I wonder if it is the god who sits there. I shall go to him in a little while, because it will be necessary. Tahmat, Tahmat, dear Tahmat who are so good, with your long fingers take the tassles from my hair; take out the ivory pins, the carved ivory pins that I wear. Ah! Fasten my scarf tightly, fasten it very tightly; I shall let down my hair.

TAHMAT

O moon flower!

LOY FAH

There is nothing more. Tahmat, you will believe that I have loved you. You will believe that we shall meet sometime.

TAHMAT

Sometime! We shall not meet sometime. We

shall never be apart. I shall go with you. We will go together.

LOY FAH

Tahmat, Tahmat! It is too much that you should go with me, for I take an infinite journey.

TAHMAT

Loy Fah, think you that time could weigh with me? I will go with you to that white moon who, it is written, hauls lovers into Heaven if they love enough. I will let down my hair that the lady moon, when she stretches out her arm for you, may grasp me also. Smile, Loy Fah, look into my eyes and smile. It is the only thing.

LOY FAH

I am smiling at you, Tahmat. I will smile at you always as I go.

TAHMAT

I will wave my hand as I follow after you, who walk on tiny, rosy feet.

LOY FAH

They will never offer us flowers or fruit as we go on. We shall have no place upon the shelves with the dead.

TAHMAT

They will not know why we have gone so early.

LOY FAH

I have knotted my black scarf around my throat, Tahmat. Let us go to the shrine of the god under the mulberry tree. Perhaps he will unlace his fingers or lift up his drooping eyelids. Perhaps he will even know how much we love, that little bronze god. He should know everything. Let us go to his shrine. Let us go to his little house.

Silently, in the gloom, the two girls rise and move away over the frail bridge with its purple wreaths to the shrine of the god under the mulberry tree, where the poppies are sown, the white poppies and the blue.

### **LIFE FOR LIFE'S SAKE**

**Elsie A. Gidlow**

*(Reprinted from The Wolverine (whole no. 5), October 1919.)*

Now that all the gods are cast down, now that they, products of the golden dust of human imagination that they were, are indistinguishable from the dust of the dead things that they mix with, now that they have become altogether disintegrated, so many are asking, What of us, what of the universe? What of life, to what purpose everything? Truly the first new blankness that comes after one's exchange of Gods and Eternities for

Nothingness is very crushing, devitalizingly deadening, and the resultant persisting that is, This is life, then death; a flash of rainbow, then endless, cold grey; a light, then no light, something—nothing...middle distance that. There are also the extremes: extreme nearness and the furthestmost distance, and with these two the that is the same, that that being—what but Life for Life's sake? In the former it should not be called a that for it is unconscious and an excellent example of instinctive truth, whereas in the latter it is supremely conscious, extending into the future, even the most distant future, far beyond itself.

Life for Life's sake, therefore, is the simple and complete creed, for those who require a creed, to live by, and it is also the reply to all why's. Being the least complicated, it is as well the most complex answer to all the questions of the Universe, covering, as it does, every point, probing every depth, extending over every distance.

The usual accusation of materialism need not be advanced to meet Life for Life's sake for it is too absurd. If logic and scientific truth are materialism, we need more materialism, for it is healthy and strong and selfish, and antagonistic to the sentimental idealism that the weak-willed, weak-charactered, weak-minded lean to and that is the cause, or one of the causes, as well as the effect of their weakness. That idealism is almost synonymous with self- and world-delusion is proof sufficient of this, I think.

The acceptance of the idea of Life for Life's sake would strengthen and healthify life to a degree beyond the first conceived that and eliminate the plethora of unnecessities that it is so cluttered with now, most especially in the domain of morals, where present antiquity has always been a guarantee of indefinite future usage. And how much joy it would synchronously bring with it! Man cannot realize until he has cut it from him, what an unseemly and tiring burden life as a task for God's, or Eternity's, or a future Heaven's, sake is, and what a feeling of freedom, of lightness succeeds the disburdenment.

Vertibly, Life for Life's sake does everything but promise sugar to the good child at the end of the day, which is the probable reason for its not being accepted before this. It may be that a few of us have now developed beyond the stage of wanting sugar?

### **GOD AMUSES HIMSELF**

**Roswell George Mills**

*(Reprinted from Les Mouches Fantastiques (vol. II no. 1), March 1920.)*

In a vast shadowy place pierced by sharp stabs of sunlight an old man sits. His face droops low over his withered hands, and the long end of his dusky garment winds interminably through space. It trails across a world, and on it gleam innumerable eyes, as stars. And as He sits, wrapped in silence, His ministers, whose names are Pleasure and Pain and Love and Suffering and Despair catch in a huge net myriad birds, and lay them fluttering before Him. And He, with His slender fingers, that seem like claws, so long have the nails grown, slowly, feather by feather, plucks the struggling things, and strews the feathers about Him riotously. When they are nude and dumb with agony, He flings them among the length of His garment, to become a star, perhaps. I have been told that they become stars.

### SUICIDE

**Roswell George Mills**

*(Reprinted from Les Mouches Fantastiques (vol. II no. 1), March 1920.)*

They told me that I must play at chess with God, for all men play that game with Him. They brought me before Him in a mighty house where all was silence save for the ticking of an enormous clock that marked the rise and fall of centuries. And when the dull red and black board was laid across our knees, and He moved His pawn a square, I heard a woman's scream, and saw, when I moved it to play, that my hand was the hand of a child. I looked on the Face, and saw nothing, only emptiness, with a faint gleaming deep in the void.

And the clock ticked monotonously, repeating through infinite corridors.

Again He moved, and it was a queen He shifted, and when I moved my knight, I saw that my hand was the hand of a man. But my moves were always false, and one by one I lost my men.

The clock ticked monotonously, monotonously, and the echo came faintly from the infinite length of corridors.

The game went on interminably; He won continually. I felt the weight of time bend on my spirit as my hands waved feebly about the board. I looked again at the Face, and found it blank as before, save from the cruel glimmering in the emptiness. His hand shifted quickly, and the fingers were thin, with ridges at the joints.

Tick! The clock sounded interminably. By and by, I heard nothing but the horrible ticking of that clock. I would not move my hands to play, I wanted to stop the

game. Only His implacable hand came out relentlessly, monotonously, like the ticking of the clock in its insistence.

Suddenly, I kicked violently, and upset the board with its fantastic array of men in God's lap.

And I heard the clock no more after that.

### COME AND LIE WITH ME

**Elsa A. Gidlow**

*(Reprinted from The American Amateur (vol. I no. 4), May 1920.)*

Come and lie with me and love me,  
Bitterness.  
Touch me with your hands a little,  
Kiss me, as you lean above me,  
With your cold, caustic kisses;  
Wind your hair close, close around me,  
Pain might dissipate this blandness.  
Hurt me even, even wound me!  
I have need of love that stings.  
Come and lie with me and love me,  
Bitterness.  
So that I can laugh at things.

### MY NEW LAUGHTER

**Elsa A. Gidlow**

*(Reprinted from The American Amateur (vol. I no. 4), May 1920.)*

I can laugh now.  
Have you not heard my laughter?  
It leads the winds  
That come tumbling and bubbling after.

I have learned to laugh.  
I have learned to laugh with my spirit  
And with my soul.  
Listen! Do you not hear it?

I shall quench the world.  
I shall burn the stars with my laughter;  
Consume the moons and the suns,  
And make new ones after.

I shall weave my life  
Out of its spirit and essence  
In vivid colors,  
Patterned goldly with degenerescence.



For Life's skeleton  
I shall make flesh from desires;  
Then, of my mounting laughter,  
Build it a temple with mocking spires.

I shall laugh to heaven.  
I shall laugh below hell and above.  
I shall laugh forever.  
(It was laughter God died of)–

### THE LITERARY DECADENCE OF E.G.

**Elsa Gidlow**

*(Reprinted from The American Amateur (vol. 1 no. 5),  
July 1920.)*

Seattle, Washington,  
February 23, 1920

Miss Gidlow:–

In looking over the history of the United Amateur Press Association of America, I have come across your name very often. You have been active and showed signs of growth and development.

According to the latest reports you have not been active. You did not publish, recruit, nor write for publication. You have not been an amateur journalist.

Why this inactivity? I am interested in the causes of decay and in the causes in inactivity among literary expression. I would be much obliged to you if you could enlighten me on the subject.

Yours for an honest reply,  
D. G. Gourman,  
Official Editor of U.A.P.A.

After receiving the above quoted disquieting card a great sadness should have fallen about me. I should have suddenly and with trembling realized my decadent state and stirred painfully in my bed of moss and mould. I should have stretched stiff fingers toward my rotting and forgotten pen and stared wearily at my dried ink, blankly sorry that I had no tears to weep for my atrophied literary sense. I should have become suddenly conscious of the fungi overgrowing my brain, the blue flies buzzing about my decaying imagination and the long worms undulating to and fro over the ruins of my retarded “growth and development.” A series of indignant ghosts should have crystallized before me: the reproachful shade of my active Vice-Presidency; the specter of my Presidency, baleful-eyed-and threatening;

the spirit of my Directorship, pitiful for my degeneracy; and trailing behind, understanding and forgiving, but very sad, the wraiths of the abused Les Mouches Fantastiques.

But, curiously, none of these things happened.

Instead, I laughed a live and healthy laugh and wondered what was the matter with Mr. Gourman.

A long time ago there was a boy named Jesus who was often seen in the temples with the Elders arguing and conversing, and prophets hearing him, foretold that he would be great. Then, Jesus went away and none knew what had become of him. He was no longer seen at the feet of the Masters nor speaking with the Elders. He had retired into the wilderness to meditate. He had gone away by himself to think and to grow.

For it is not well to wash oneself and robe oneself in public.

When Jesus came again to the City he found money changers in the temples. It is almost certain that the money changers were there before, but He had not seen them. Now His eyes saw, for they had been made keen by distance of the desert as His ears had been sharpened by silence.

If Jesus had not gone into the desert and remained there alone with his spirit, we should not have known of him, for he would have argued with the Elders in the temple as long as he lived and died as forgotten as they.

Is this not so, Mr. Gourman?

Because my voice does not sound, now, in the temples of amateur journalism and I am no longer discovered arguing with the Elders or talking wisely to the Masters Mr. Gourman decides that I have fallen into decadence and mournfully commences to write an epitaph for my literary activity. Well, I suppose that, when Jesus went away, the priests lamented that he had not fulfilled the promise of his youth.

But I intend to take Mr. Gourman's request seriously and give him the “honest” reply he craves, for—who knows?—he may be contemplating the addition of his findings in the field of literary decay to Mr. Max Nordau's epic “Degeneration.”

When I returned from the wilderness much grown and with eyes and ears sharpened I found, insofar as Amateur Journalism was concerned, not money changers in the temple, but asses congregating about its doors and braying loudly. What is the matter with them? I asked my spirit. “Oh, they do it for pleasure,” my spirit answered. And I thought: What a futile pleasure.

That is what is wrong with amateur journalism: it is futile. None of its members appear to have anything to say, yet they write unceasingly. I have read all amateur journals that have appeared during the past six years and

I can truly say that I have not found in those journals, in all of that time, as many as six original ideas, or six artistic expressions of any sort of ideas.

There is hardly one that justifies its existence (always excepting Mr. Graeme Davis' *Lingerer* which is thoroughly artistic, refined, and delightful to read), none that one is moved to treasure for a beautiful thought, a brilliant flash of wit, an artistically wrought idea, something new, or modern or different. All amateurdom is pervaded by an atmosphere of middle-age, mustiness, fossilism. Every pseudo-poet writing in A.J. imitates or plagiarizes Poe, Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth or Pope, and some bend their muse to lengthy pastorals. The favorite subjects of the prose writers are mysticism, politics or theosophy, evidently culled and rehashed from Sunday afternoon forums and newspapers.

If these were the first fluttering attempts of younglings, one could be tolerant, trustful of development, but this is not so. Most of these offenders are middle-aged, settled and hopeless and they will ride their wooden "hobby" at a dull, satisfied jog-trot till it or they shall crumble.

There is Mr. Goodenough with his rhymed very-moral maxims; Mr. Lovecraft with his morbid imitations of artists he seems not even able to understand; Mr. Ward Phillips who admires Poe wisely and far too well, since he mimics him so laboriously; and a host of others, male and female, who apart from having no new word to speak, cannot write three consecutive rhymed verses in even metre, although they raise their voices continuously and wildly against "modern" poetry and that in their opinion heretical expression of a perverted intellect, *vers libre*.

This opinion, in the main, applies to the N.A.P.A. The "United" displays more youth and spirit but less, if possible, literary ability, its A.J.'s being mostly filled with slangy recruiting propaganda or banal opinions on President Wilson's or somebody else's attitude under such and such circumstances. The contributors to these journals also run to imitative verse.

The possibilities of Amateur Journalism are limitless. That I have always believed. But its development is retarded by the majority of its members' too-obvious limitations.

I know many people will consider that I am being intolerant and unjustly harsh, but in my opinion there is no greater crime than the perpetration of bad poetry and idea-less prose. If, through my harshness, one of the asses is persuaded to hearken for a moment to his own voice and, suddenly becoming ashamed, to hasten from the courtyard of the temple, I shall consider that I have benefitted the living and the dead, and rejoice thereat.

EDITORIAL NOTE [John Milton Heins]—Of course Miss Gidlow assumes entire responsibility for the above article. In our opinion it is not too violent and may do a great deal of good. If nothing else it will start a lively controversy which the author evidently does not seem to mind. The subject is worthy of further discussion.

### AMATEUR JOURNALISM IS *NOT* FUTILE

Pearl K. Merritt

*(Reprinted from The American Amateur (vol. 2 no. 1), September 1920.)*

The second paragraph on page 68 of the July *American Amateur* has caused me a good deal of disquiet. I frankly do not agree with Miss Gidlow's opinion of Amateur Journalism as stated in that paragraph or in the rest of her article for that matter. Most emphatically Amateur Journalism is not futile. Any article written by an Amateur Journalist is not useless if it has done the writer any good to write it, or if it has done even one reader any good to read it.

Miss Gidlow admits that Mr. Graeme Davis' *Lingerer* to her is thoroughly artistic, refined and delightful to read. Therefore she has received some benefit from Amateur Journalism. Personally I received absolutely no good from reading the last *Lingerer*, and I do not remember previous issues.

It must be remembered that Amateur Journalists combine in their membership every imaginable class of persons. Every kind of freak is represented, almost every grade of mentality. A poem which I would pass by with scorn may influence some other reader to try to write. No matter how poor that poem may have seemed to me, it would have been worth writing and worth printing, if some one else had been inspired to write. Also the writer of the poem may have spent hours in improving it. When finished it may have been the best of which he was capable. Quite a few of us can remember with amusement some of the first efforts of some of our members who now make very good success with their writing, not only earn their living by what they write, but have achieved not a little modest fame. Other Amateur Journalists who have been successful in other professions yet give full credit to the practice and discipline they received in Amateur Journalism.

Miss Gidlow mentions Mr. Lovecraft. I confess I've tried manfully to read his poetry and have gone to sleep over it. Yet I have read his few stories with genuine pleasure. I recall that one night I let the moon shine in my eyes because I was afraid to get up and pull down the

shade after reading one of his stories, "Dagon" I think it was. No doubt other readers would toss it aside and remark that they could do better than that. Perhaps they could and perhaps some of them tried. A good deal of Mr. Goodenough's poetry is medium, but he has written a few gems I'd give a good deal to have written myself.

It is perfectly true that there is no greater crime than the perpetration of bad poetry, but most poets have to write poor poetry before they can write good poetry. The crime is when they insist upon writing the same grade of poetry always, making no effort to improve.

It is never possible to tell when an article in an Amateur paper will do some particular bit of good. As I remarked before we have a good many freaks in Amateur Journalism. I recall that I considered myself a misunderstood, as one apart, not-like-the-world-around-me, sort of person, which is a very good definition for freak. Most of us have that sort of sensation to a more or less degree sometimes, the frequency depending upon how close we are to the border land of nutdom. I was indulging in this I'm-different-from-other-people sort of morbidity when I picked up an Amateur paper and read an article which informed me in no uncertain terms that I was commonplace, that what I wrote was commonplace, that what I thought was commonplace. You can imagine the shock. I jumped back into the land of common sense pretty swiftly. That article did me more good than the writer could have ever imagined; for whenever a morbid mood strikes me I remember that I'm commonplace, and being blessed with a sense of humor along with my morbid tendency, I turn sensible until the next time comes along. I do not always remember that article as quickly as I might, but I always do eventually.

The point is that no writer realizes whether what he writes is to accomplish any good or not. I do most thoroughly believe that the great majority of writers in Amateur Journalism do not send in an article for publication without hoping that it will be read with pleasure if not benefit, by some one. There are few who do not feel the better for having written. To many there is a satisfaction in seeing what they have written in print entirely out of proportion to the merit of the article. If this feeling of satisfaction encourages the writer to work a little harder to make something of himself, it cannot be said that anything which enables him to write and publish his article is futile.

To be sure we have our black sheep in Amateur Journalism, those who do not see their need of improvement, those who are scornful of the efforts of their fellow writers, and who value what they write only in terms of possible money value. But as a rule Amateur Journalists are strangely tolerant. They strive as no other class of people do to understand other writers who think

differently and act differently from the way they do. They try to see the beauty and the best traits, to establish a feeling of fellowship, rather than to see only flaws and to condemn merely because they cannot understand. Personally I think Amateur Journalists are the most tolerant, broad-minded and understandable people I have ever met.

As for Mr. Gourman's accusing Miss Gidlow of mental decay, it is all a matter of personal opinion. I remember in my early Amateur days reading an article I considered decidedly improper. Only an accident prevented me from informing the writer of my opinion, and shortly after I learned he was studying for the ministry. It was quite a shock. He is a very well-liked minister now and I've often wished I had the courage to ask him what he now thinks of that article, but I never have.

If Amateur Journalism was really futile it would not last. It could not. But I for one do not believe it is futile, or from its very nature, ever can be futile.

## LIFE FOR HUMANITY'S SAKE

H. P. Lovecraft

*(Reprinted from The American Amateur (vol. 2 no. 1), September 1920.)*

It is with great interest that I have observed the widespread literary hostilities engendered by the publication of Miss Elsie A. Gidlow's article on "Life for Life's Sake" in the October, 1919 Wolverine. Its subject is one which attracted my speculative attention since earliest youth; and which has, on account of my decided opinions, frequently drawn me into controversy. In offering additional comment my object is to touch upon the philosophical phase so promptly combated by Mr. Maurice Winter Moe, yet so oddly neglected by those who have held dispute on the artistic phase. Possibly my remarks will develop into a collective reply to Miss Gidlow and Mr. Moe, rather than a reply to the former alone; since despite their opposite views on theism, both seem curiously alike in their narrowly doctrinal as distinguished from generally philosophical attitude.

Miss Gidlow has discovered the fact that there is no vast supernatural intelligence governing the cosmos—a thing Democritus could have told her several centuries B.C.—and is amazingly disturbed thereat. Without stopping to consider the possibility of acquiescence in a purposeless, mechanical universe, she at once strives to invent a substitute for the mythology she has cast aside; and preaches as a new and surprising discovery the ancient selfish hedonism whose folly was

manifest before the death of its founder Aristippus. There is something both amusing and pathetic about the promulgation of hedonism in this complex age of human interdependence. While of course the ultimate basis of every human act is selfishness, manifested as a craving from self-approval, it is easy to perceive the utter and destructive impracticability of any system exalting that crude and unmoral selfishness which has not been refined into a delicate altruism. Such a bestial relapse means the end of human harmony and co-operation, and therefore of civilisation.

Mr. Moe, fully alive to the absurdity of the Gidlovian philosophy, unfortunately chooses the most primitive, antiquated, and fallacious of methods to refute it. Rejecting the ready weapons supplied by sociology and common sense, he falls back upon the archaic notion that brutal selfishness can be fought only by belief in the supernatural; thus attacking hedonism purely as a theist, and actually strengthening Miss Gidlow's position by assuming that it is the one logical position of the rationalist. Mr. Moe, in his zeal for an outgrown faith, damages the cause of practical virtue by binding religion and mortality so closely together that the precious verities of the latter must needs sink with the obsolete dogmata of the former.

How sickening is the eternal quest for "creeds" and "ideals" in which theists and atheists are alike engrossed! Why will not Miss Gidlow and Mr. Moe step down to earth for a while and face the problems of life as they are? We are all negligible, microscopic insects of a moment; 'waifs astray in infinity, born yesterday and doomed to perish tomorrow for all time. We have no reason to ask the trite questions of "whence, whither and why," for it is only our finite, subjective, rudimentary intellects which conjure up the notion of cosmic purpose. According to all the evidence we can command, we came from chaos and will return to chaos; drifting in a blind mechanical cycle devoid of anything like a goal or object. So much Miss Gidlow will perhaps concede, yet her rationalism seems to end at this point. Its futility having been demonstrated, mankind as a whole interests her no longer. She is joyously "disburdened," and flies to individualistic gratifications.

A real ethical philosophy can be founded only on practicalities. We do not need to seek for a goal, since the goal of mental evolution and the subordination of pain stands so conspicuously before us. We can do nothing save try to make life tolerable for the greatest number of persons, and to do this we must supplant crude selfishness by that subtilised selfishness which is expressed in moral sacrifices of immediate pleasure for the common good and tranquility. We need not look up to imaginary idols in the empty sky, but we must not

relapse into the primitive selfish savagery from which we have evolved. Let us adopt the soundest motto of all—Life for Humanity's Sake!

## BEFORE SLEEP

Elsa Gidlow

*(Reprinted from The American Amateur (vol. 2 no. 1), September 1920.)*

There is an Autumn sadness upon me,  
A sadness of bared trees,  
And mist, and delicate death of flowers.  
There is an Autumn sadness upon me,  
And a falling of leaves in my soul.

There is an Autumn sadness upon me,  
A dreamfulness in my heart,  
And a wistful sense of decadence.  
There is a faint moaning music,  
Like cries of departing birds.

There are trembling hands on my eyelids,  
A dim foreknowledge of tears,  
And dreams patterning ultimate slumber.  
There is an Autumn sadness upon me;  
There is a falling of leaves in my soul.

## TO BE CONSIDERED

James F. Morton, Jr.

*(Reprinted from The American Amateur (vol. 2 no. 2), November 1920.)*

In the three-cornered controversy among Miss Gidlow, Mr. Moe and Mr. Lovecraft, is it not possible that each is the spokesman of an essential truth? The dispute is an ancient one, and seems no nearer settlement than ever, inasmuch as each of the protagonists speaks a language unintelligible to the others. The words may be clearly understood; but the appreciation of the psychological attitude is wanting. Miss Gidlow is the hedonist; Mr. Moe the theologian; Mr. Lovecraft the positivist. Each would make the most of life, be it for self's sake, for God's sake or for humanity's sake. The problem for all alike to consider is just how the most may be made out of life.

While Mr. Lovecraft is over-hasty in assuming that "a purposeless mechanical universe" is a demonstrated fact, Mr. Moe is equally without warrant in the unqualified conviction that without a belief in God

there can be no sound basis for ethics. Nor is Miss Gidlow justified in the view that a complete life can be possible without the interplay of mutual good will and service required by the gregarious instincts of man and his place as a social entity.

The one outstanding fact made palpable by modern science and buttressed by an overwhelming mass of corroborative proofs is that we and the universe in which we live are elements in a huge evolutionary process. Whether this is the result of mechanical necessity, as Mr. Lovecraft maintains, or involved in a divine plan of infinite wisdom, the result is the same. We are not self-created beings nor each brought into being as an isolated phenomenon, but are part of something immeasurably larger than ourselves. Whether blindly operating or purposive, the force which controls our destiny is not to be defeated or outwitted. We are here as elements in a life-urge which reaches far beyond the present. We are drops in the ocean of being; and our consciousness can by no means isolate itself from the general consciousness. Our fate is bound up with that of our fellows to a greater degree than many of us realize. The group of faculties or potentialities which make up a human being reflect the inevitable trend of the macrocosm; or, if we recognize a divine power behind the manifested universe, they reveal the plan of God with regard to our development. In either case, the obvious purpose of life, the rational course to pursue to make existence count for as much as it can for each of us, is the complete development of these germinal powers, an all-round growth in every direction. Evil is simply inharmony, a departure from the norm which, in overaccentuating certain aspects, stunts the nature on other sides. In other words, all wrong is on-sidedness.

At this point, religion, science and philosophy converge, and enforce the same lesson. Here we find the stone on which whoever falls shall be broken. We cannot dodge universal law, whether it is the product of mechanical conditions or the will of a divine lawgiver. We are at every moment in its grasp, even when we imagine our freedom of will to be most complete. If, then, we wish to reap the most satisfaction out of life, it is evident that our surest course is to quit trying to fight the inevitable, to find out as best we can toward what it is trending, and to get in line as closely as possible. It is not heroic, but childish, to dash our heads against a stone wall.

Such a conclusion is far from making puppets of us; for it gives us the biggest of all jobs, in the necessity it lays upon us to expand our individuality and enter into conscious cooperation with the natural forces. The prime zest of life can be found in no other way.

## FAREWELL TO AMATEURDOM

Graeme Davis

*(Extracted from A Letter From The Lingerer, dated September 1937.)*

Ave Amateurs!

Has Gabriel tooted his horn? From tombs of oblivion are erupting phantasms of the past in surprising numbers—one of whom even refers to himself as a “resurrected Pharaoh”—we’ll concede the title, for he is a regal relic and has a better claim to it than the countless re-incarnationists who tell us they were Cleopatra, Aspasia, Tamerlane, or Buonaparte.

Amateur Journalism begins to resemble a museum of revived mummies—quite à la mode, for is it not rumored that the mummy of an old Rameses recently sat up in his case in a British Museum, smashed the glass, and spat out bloody curses upon his captors?

And in this day of resurrections we hark to many a doleful sound from deserted tombs—some of these Spectres from Sheol cast a very hasty glance at present-day amateur journalism and proceed to proclaim:

How weary, stale and unprofitable  
Seem to me all the uses of this world.

(Readers referred to Truman J. Spencer.)

Once a plutocrat in wealth of collected amateur journals, I’m but a pauper now, having at hand few others than those sent through the mailing bureaux of the past six or seven years and none for the year 1934. But what an array of once familiar names! ...

I have had great joy in amateur journalism, I am finding great joy now in it—and have not lost hope of further joy in it. The genuine amateur journalist cares little for the opinion, expressed or withheld, of his confreres—his pleasure is in his own participation in amateur affairs, his reward is his own satisfaction in such activities as he may indulge in now and then—now as well as then.

True, mine is an anomalous position. I’m not ancient enough to be a Fossil—and the status of fossil or mummy hath no appeal for me. Nor could I qualify as an Alumnus—especially as I cannot conceive of that brevetcy in connection with amateur journalism. Surely, anyone who has been truly imbued with an activated by the amateur spirit could but echo the words from *The Tempest*: “What’s past is prologue.” ...

And, oh, the summers of those years [1917-19—ed.]. They would open in a suite of rooms, ever the same ones, at an old hostelry just off Washington Square, in New York City, to which would come Doc Swift to sit till near the dawn of day, dropping gems of pungent,

pithy comment on amateur journalists, “sprinkled along the waste of years,” and spinning gorgeous yarns of sheer Rabelaisian vintage. And afternoons with Frank Harris listening to him reading from the original manuscript which later appeared in several volumes privately printed in Europe, but in a somewhat less temerarious form. Rare occasions when Dick LaGallienne would still charm the ears with lush language and siren song. Rarest occasions when it was possible to see and hear Edgar Saltus pontificate in purple pomp. Then hectic weeks in old Montreal with the editors of *Les Mouches Fantastiques*, Roswell Mills and Elsa Gidlow, and their brilliant phosphorescent clan!...

Under the same roof that houses me, I have a print-shop, of sufficient capacity so that books of several hundred pages have issued from its presses. Perhaps, perhaps—another Lingerer may be printed therein, if I linger long enough this side the tomb, and receive acceptable contributory co-operations from amateurs of other days and these.

But why not a printed Lingerer now, instead of this Letter? Because no “copy,” no time, no strength, at present, to do it—and there would be no fun in having it done, nor, it seems to me, would it be playing fair. Place and position is to be accorded to him who, pressless, pays for having his journal printed. And too there is place and need for amateur printers such as Hale and Ericson were in our realm. But fie for him who can print and doesn't. Meanwhile why let it be idle a corps of secretaries, stenographers, typists, and mimeographists who, after all, are but an equipment for production?

As Mr. Edkins mooned two years ago in *The Californian*, there are problems involved—now as always—in the statu quo of amateur journalism. But I hope that never the time may come when “the problem in essence should be solved by the amateurs of to-day, as a plain and simple duty to posterity.”

I fear me that in the past I have been guilty of prolonged pompous philosophising anent amateur journalism. But now, to use his own terms, I'd like to “kid” (but not “coddle”) Mr. Edkins, and all the other amateurs who have been not only “kindling new flames upon old altars,” but rekindling old flames and maintaining the fire at all costs.

But even this writer would not venture to be great enough to vent to the “obscenity” provoked by prim presumption of responsibility for posterity. Amateur journalism is for amateur journalism's sake—and the personal pleasure thereof and therein. May it grow no less, nor ever cease!

'Tis a free field, however, and probably room should be permitted priggishness and politics as well, putrid as they may be. Perhaps even here might apply

Havelock Ellis' averment: “To deny the obscene is not merely to fetter the freedom of art and to reject the richness of Nature. It is to pervert our vision of the world and to poison the springs of life.” And again the same authority says, in another volume of his *Impressions and Comments*, “It would be pleasant to think that in the presence of men who in their gay and daring and profound way present life in its wholeness and find it sweet, it may some day be the instinct of the ordinary person to enjoy the vision reverently, if not on his knees, thanking God for the privilege vouchsafed to him. But one has no sort of confidence that it will be so.”

I have found that many amateurs have been gay and daring and profound, I have experienced that the life of an amateur journalist is sweet, and I thank my God that such privileges have been vouchsafed me. My personal hope and private prayer is that through many years to be there will continue a succession of amateur journalists who, not ordinary persons, will carry on joyously and unaccountably. And, somehow, I have “confidence that it will be so.”

#### CACOPHONY

A Letter From the Lingerer, for Oldsters to read at their leisure, Youngsters at their peril. It is positively the last appearance, under this impressario, unless *Deus Mori* withholds his hand, and we can be prevailed upon to reappear à la Bernhardt—but no ghost performance promised. Done in typewriter infantile elite upon a resurrected Hammond, a mimeograph, and various abetting agencies and impish instruments, upon 36lb. Parity Text paper, and brackish inks of varying densities.

Dictated but  
(perhaps it will be)  
Not read.

#### REV. FRANCIS GRAEME DAVIS

**Vincent B. Haggerty**

*(Reprinted from The National Amateur (vol. LXI no. 2), December 1938.)*

Rev. Francis Graeme Davis, the 52nd President of the National Amateur Press Association, died at his home in Chicago on June 19, 1938, from a heart attack. On June 21, 1938, services were held quietly from a funeral parlor and he was cremated.

He was born in 1882 in South Dakota and entered the University of South Dakota at the age of fourteen, Three years later he left there to continue his

studies in Minnesota, Chicago, and at the University of Liège, Belgium. For several years he taught French at the University of South Dakota and then studied for the ministry at the Seabury Theological Seminary. He was ordained an Episcopal clergyman in 1910 and served as pastor in churches in Ohio, Wisconsin, and South Dakota. He engaged to some extent in professional journalism and published pamphlets and books of a devotional and ecclesiastical character written mostly in French. Later he left the Episcopal Church and joined the Old Catholic Church, a schismatic offshoot of the Roman Catholic Church. The denomination has about 40,000 adherents in this country. He was ordained Bishop of his denomination in 1928 and was stationed at the Old Catholic Church of the Mystic Way in Chicago at the time of his death. He is survived by one son, Alexander V. Davis. He was active in teaching and lecturing up to the end, although suffering for a number of years with heart trouble.

Mr. Davis joined the N.A.P.A. in 1901, when he published an amateur paper called *El Gasedil*. In 1903 he collaborated with Donald Fellows, one of his recruits, in publishing *Par Moi*. From Feb. 1908 until 1910 he was co-edit with Louis M. Starring of the latter's *Reflector*. In 1910 he began the publication of *The Lingerer* with a fifty-page issue of literary and sumptuous typographical work. In 1909 he was appointed a member of the Bureau of Critics; in 1917 he was elected Official Editor and in July, 1918, he was elected President. His administration was notable for the mammoth official organ published by the official editor W. Paul Cook, who issued the largest volume of *The National Amateur* ever published, consisting of over 300 pages 9 x 12 inches. The last issue alone consisted of 144 pages. Mr. Davis began the publication of *The National Amateur Review of Reviews* during the year he was official editor and continued that paper during his term as president.

Rev. Davis took great pleasure in doing his own printing and issued a number of privately printed books. He was a linguist and a profound student of Egyptology. He was also an etcher and a painter in oils. He has a very large private library, especially rich in books printed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and in rare volumes and manuscripts, in first editions, autographed and presentation copies, and privately printed books. His immense collection of amateur papers, dating from the sixties, was destroyed by fire some years ago.

His enthusiasm and admiration for the National Amateur Press Association never ceased. He attended the Chicago convention in 1934 and a short time before his death, issued a mimeographed paper called *A Letter from the Lingerer*, full of reminiscence and enthusiasm.

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This journal is the Official Organ of The Fossils, a non-profit organization whose purposes are to stimulate interest in and preserve the history of independent publishing, either separate from or organized in the hobby known as "Amateur Journalism" and to foster the practices of amateur journalism. To this end, The Fossils preserved the Library of Amateur Journalism, a repository of amateur papers and memorabilia dating from the 1850s, acquired in 1916 and donated in 2004 to the Special Collections Department of the University of Wisconsin Library, Room 976, Memorial Library, 728 State Street, Madison, WI 53706. Individuals or institutions allied with our goals are invited to join The Fossils. Dues are \$15 annually—\$20 for joint membership of husband and wife. Annual subscription to *The Fossil* without privileges of membership is \$10. Make remittances payable to The Fossils, and mail to the Secretary-treasurer.