

*THE*



*FOSSIL*

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**CHARLES A. A. PARKER**  
photo by Sheldon Wesson



**Parker Home**  
114 Riverside Avenue, Medford, Massachusetts

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT AN ABUNDANCE OF "THANK YOU'S"**

Guy Miller

In my October report I made mention of plans to transfer publishing and printing activities of *The Fossil* to a new process via internet "with the help of Gary Bossler." I am certain that you discovered that the October issue was the product of that transfer and that this January number has been produced in the same way. Hopefully this new, improved method can continue. What you need to know is that this transformation has come about, not with the help of Gary Bossler, but because of Gary Bossler. As scheduled, Gary trekked from Massillon to 2951 Archer Lane (several hours travel) with the intent of showing me how to perform this production miracle; but he soon found that my woeful lack of experience added to the absence of certain "applications" left me totally unprepared to step up to the challenge. The result was that he decided that it would be far simpler for him to take over publication of *The Fossil* than to spend hours—yea, days—trying to teach complicated tricks to a befuddled old dog. So, Gary and Editor Ken Faig will be working together, and I will only have to approve expenditures. So, once again—as he has done so often in his ajoy career—Gary has ridden to the rescue.

Which brings up another subject: Expenses. Long-time Fossils are aware that the organization for many years has operated with a meager treasury (presently it stands at \$5,493.74), and that several undertakings have been possible because of donations, *The Fossil* and the Gold Composing Stick Award being prime examples. Some of these donations have been large. Others have been more modest, and at this moment I'm thinking of the steady support of members like Fossil Kent Clair Chamberlain, who regularly encloses a dollar or more in his correspondence. "Little drops of water/Little grains of sand..." Thanks to you all.

Sticking to the subject of service and finances, I reported in the October issue that we were considering the disbandment of the LAJ Committee in favor of a new framework to oversee our holdings now in the care of Special Collections at the University of Wisconsin/Madison. After careful consideration of the discussions among the principals involved, as Fossils president I determined that our best course is to stay with the LAJ Committee structure. At the request of Ken Faig, I have relieved him of the chairmanship responsibilities and in his place have asked Board of Trustees member Stan Oliner to assume this post along with his other activities, which as I mentioned in the October issue, are many. Otherwise, the Committee, consisting of Stan, Ken, Lee Hawes, and Mike Horvat, will remain intact. And, while we all know that Stan is the obvious choice to chair this committee, still I cannot leave this discussion without emphasizing the deep obligation we all owe to Ken Faig who contributed both personal resources and uncounted hours in engineering the transfer of our collection from Stayton OR to its present location. Our "thank you's" seem weak, but they are sincere.

In the meantime, Stan reports that work on the Graham-Wesson papers and volumes goes on. Now, that is a complicated job indeed, and our little world of amateur journalism is, indeed, fortunate to have such a knowledgeable member like Stan to handle and seek placement of this mass of material. We are proud to say that both AAPA and NAPA have followed through with their pledges to help finance this venture. On behalf of the Fossils, I have written Presidents Mike O'Connor and David Warner expressing our appreciation.

So, this has been a banner period in the work of the Fossils. The one downer was news of the death of Ann Vrooman. Ann made a definite mark as a member of NAPA (1967) and still earlier as a joyous participant in the popular *NAPA West*. We are honored to report that Ann joined the Fossils in October 1975 and remained a loyal member of our group until her death at 92 on August 24, 2010. During her

affiliation with NAPA, Ann served as president, official editor, and several times as chairman of the bureau of critics and, in addition, was a steady contributor of fiction and nonfiction pieces to our journals. Truly, she was an “amateur’s amateur.”

## **LET’S SAVE OUR PRAIRIES**

Martha E. Shivers

Prairie lands of long ago  
Were splendid with brooks,  
Flowers, seed;  
Timbers protecting the wildlife,  
Grasses fulfilling the soil’s needs.

Sod buildings gave way to timbered,  
Churches and schools helped the plan  
To improve daily living  
For children, women and men.

Soil gave birth to sustenance  
Brooks nourished plants in  
Countryside.  
Birds trilled songs from trees  
And bower.  
Life was rewarding far and wide.

Then man raped land for profits,  
Casualties appeared by the score.  
Lands that had served many people  
Were threatened to serve them no more.

Save the prairie, wise ones shouted:  
Don’t allow destruction to be their fate!  
Save pastures, brooks and timber  
Save the land before it’s too late!

**HAPPY EIGHTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY TO MR. FOSSIL  
GUY MILLER  
BORN JANUARY 21, 1926**



July 8, 2010

Dear Ken,

When the church congregation sang “Happy Birthday” to me, I would sing back to them a jingle similar to the one I have composed for Guy. No one will be singing this to him, but I don’t think he will object to reading it in *The Fossil*:

Happy Birthday dear Guy.  
You are now eighty-five.  
Happy Birthday dear Guy.  
We’re glad you’re alive.

We are glad for two reasons:

1. You are a great person, a good Guy.
2. You do an excellent job of printing *The Kitchen Stove* for us.

Louise Lincoln and A. Walrus.

**Editorial Note**

I first find Guy Miller on the membership roster of The Fossils in the July 31, 1959 roster published in the October 1959 number of *The Fossil*. In that era, The Fossils, under the guidance of Edward H. Cole and Edna Hyde McDonald, functioned as an “honor society” of ajay veterans, and required fifteen years of activity for membership. Guy joined us nearly as soon as he was eligible, and he has been with us for over fifty years of continuous membership. I think it’s fair to say that without his energy and devotion to the cause, The Fossils would likely have floundered during the past decade. The photograph of a youngish Mr. Miller reproduced with this birthday tribute originally appeared with Guy’s new members sketch in *The Fossil* for July 1960:

“Guy G. Miller, long time stalwart, printer and publisher, of the National Amateur Press Association, and from time to time active in the American and United Association as well. Now a teacher in his home city of Springfield, Ohio, Guy had a brief fling at professional printing when he was younger, an outgrowth of his amateur printing, which in turn had grown out of semi-pro work.

“He joined the NAPA in September 1943, and has published the *Reviewer* and *Potpourri*, the *Amateur Amateur* with Grace Phillips, and *Pro & Con*, an extraordinary journal of debate on current ajay topics,

with Alma Weixelbaum. Various editorial articles have appeared under his name in the amateur press as well.

“A 28-page booklet written by him, entitled *New Boston, Clark County’s Vanished Town*, was published by the Clark County Historical Society in 1956.

“Guy has served the NAPA as Mailing Manager, Recruiting Chairman, Manager of the Manuscript Bureau and Secretary-Treasurer.

“He served in the U.S. Army for two years during the Korean War.”

Guy’s mentor as a young NAPA recruit in 1943 was veteran member and 1942-43 NAPA President Charles A. A. Parker. So, it is fitting that this birthday tribute number of *The Fossil* be dedicated largely to Guy’s mentor.

**CHARLES A. A. PARKER**  
**(1878-1965)**  
**THE STORY OF A BOSTON AJAY PIONEER**

Ken Faig, Jr.

(Dedicated to Guy Miller)

In the 1880 U.S. census of Saugus, Essex County, Massachusetts we find enumerated on June 3, 1880, the following household:

Parker, Daniel A., head, white male, age 32, teamster, born MA of MA-born father & ME-born mother;

Parker, Alice R., wife, white female, age 30, housekeeper, born MA of ME-born father and MA-born mother;

Parker, Alice M., daughter, white female, age 6, at school, born MA;

Parker, Charles A., son, white male, age 2, born MA.

Phocler, Daniel, father-in-law, white male, age 60, carpenter, born ME of ME-born parents;

Newhall, George F., white male, age 37, teamster, born MA of MA-born parents.

We lack the 1890 U.S. census (destroyed by fire), but in the 1900 U.S. census of Everett, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, we find enumerated at 90 Baldwin Avenue on June 14, 1900, the following household:

Parker, Daniel A., head, white male, born August 1848, watchman, born MA of MA-born father and ME-born mother;

Parker, Alice R., wife, white female, born August 1846, born MA of ME-born father and MA-born mother;

Parker, Charles A., son, white male, born April 1878, jewelry, born MA;

Parker, Pierce R., son, white male, born January 1885, jewelry, born MA;

Parker, Effie J., daughter, white female, born February 1887, at school, born MA.

Perhaps daughter Alice (born 1873/74) had already married and left home by the time of the 1900 U.S. census. These two census listings, I believe, tell us what we can easily learn about the family origins of amateur journalist Charles A. A. Parker.

Writing to Guy Miller in 1944, Parker asserted that he had created his own amateur publications as early as the mid-1880s and that he was involved with organized amateur journalism as early as the mid-1890s. The United Amateur Press Association, founded in 1895, would have been the logical starting place for a teenage recruit in the 1890s, and indeed Spencer's History (p. 86) mentions Parker as a United recruit. I first find Parker listed on the rolls of the National Amateur Press Association in *The National Amateur* for September 1900 and indeed he had begun publication of *The Literary Gem* from 110 Tremont Street in Boston in March 1900. The first number lists Parker as Business Manager, with Joseph Bernard Lynch as Literary Editor and George J. Curtis as Associate Editor. The long-lived Gem continued in semiannual volumes (each consisting of six monthly numbers) through at least September 1911 (vol. 24, no. 3). Credits for the Gem varied considerably over its long publication run. By the third number dated May 1900 Ethel May Johnston (1882-1971) (later Mrs. Denys Peter Myers) had replaced George J. Curtis as Associate Editor; Curtis continued as co-publisher with Parker. With the first number of vol. 2 (dated September 1900), Ethel May Johnston became editor, with Parker & Curtis continuing as publishers. However, the same number announced the dissolution of the partnership of Parker & Curtis, and with the next number (dated October 1900), Parker became Editor and Miss Johnston Associate Editor. As early as the next number (dated November 1900) Miss Johnston was advanced to Editor and Parker became Publisher. However, Curtis was soon back as co-publisher with the number dated January 1901 and Curtis became sole publisher with the number dated May 1901. With the August 1901 number, Parker and Johnston again became co-editors and Curtis retired. Parker published the announcement:

As per announcement on another page, we are now connected with the N.A.P.A. We, Miss Johnston and I, wish it understood that we have severed all connection from the Heins faction of the U.A.P.A., and that in the future, our spare time will be used to further the objects and interests of the National Amateur Press Association.

In the rest of his announcement, Parker criticized both the politics and the quality of publications in the rival United Association. Sometime before July 1902, Nelson G. Morton joined Parker and Johnston on the *Gem's* editorial roster; Clifford A. Blackman and Walter Howe Carey were added with the December 1902 number. Carey dropped from the roster with the January 1903 number and Miss Johnston with April 1903 number; Robert W. Holmes was added by the August 1903 number. By August 1904, Parker was publisher and Blackman and Morton editors. By February 1905, Parker remained as publisher, and Morton and John Leary Peltret were editors. By September 1906, Parker and Morton were once again co-editors. Parker and Morton remained as co-editors through the September 1911 number—the last I have seen.

After breaking with the United in 1901, Parker remained linked first and foremost with the National Amateur Press Association and secondarily with the Massachusetts Amateur Press Association and the Hub Amateur Journalists' Club. He opposed the more political aspects of amateur journalism and with Mrs. Minter supported the Interstate Amateur Press Association as an alternative to associational politics. In 1906, he met the charming Augusta Louise Müller (born April 1883 MA of German-born parents), who had become active in the Hub Club in her own right. Parker and Müller married on September 3, 1906, while the Interstate's Boston MA convention (which elected Mrs. Minter as President for the 1906-07 term) was still transpiring. Mr. and Mrs. Parker elected to attend the Interstate convention in lieu of a honeymoon. The young couple initially made their home in the Boston suburb of West Everett. With young Mrs. Parker's wonderful cooking, their home soon became a popular locus for Hub Club meetings: January 10, 1907, progressive whist and manuscript papers; March 19, 1907, special guest William R. Murphy. In September 1907, the Parkers travelled to Philadelphia for the Interstate convention, where Charles was

elected President for the 1907-08 term.<sup>1</sup> On January 9, 1908, the Parkers entertained the Hub Club for progressive whist at their home at 32 Everett Street in West Everett; later that month, the young couple relocated to 29 Walnut Street in the Boston suburb of Malden. A first daughter, Elinor Louise Parker, was born to the couple in Malden on March 22, 1909.

The 1910 U.S. census recorded the young couple at 29 Walnut Street in Malden, Middlesex County, Massachusetts on April 29, 1910:

Parker, Charles A., head, white male, age 30, clerk (broker's office), born MA of English-born father and MA-born mother;

Parker, Augusta L., wife, white female, age 27, born MA of German-born parents;

Parker, Elinor L., daughter, white female age 1 1/12, born MA.

Note that Parker claimed an English-born father and shaved two years from his age (assuming actual birth in April 1878) in reporting his data to the 1910 census enumerator.

In July 1909, with firm backing from James F. Morton, Mrs. Minter had been elected the first female President of the National Amateur Press Association, for the 1909-10 term. But her New York-dominated official roster denied her cooperation, and early on she had to discharge George Julian Houtain as Official Editor. In Houtain's stead, she appointed Parker as Official Editor to complete the volume of *The National Amateur*. As early as October 1906, Parker had editorialized in *The Literary Gem*:

The size of the official organ of the National Amateur Press Association should be within the price it can afford to pay. You conduct the affairs of your home, of your business within your means, why not of the N.A.P.A.?

Entrusted with the direction of *The National Amateur* for the balance of the 1909-10 volume, Parker adhered to the so-called "Parker Principles," and produced the official organ within the means allocated in the association's budget. Earlier editors, including notably Charles Heins, had plowed personal funds into producing large-sized volumes of *The National Amateur*. Parker succeeded in producing a creditable, if much-reduced journal within the official budget.

*The Literary Gem* had won editorial laureates from the National Amateur Press Association for co-editor Nelson G. Morton in 1903 and for Parker himself in 1904. When their National terms of service ended in July 1911, however, Minter and Parker were ready to refocus their interests. For one thing, Parker's own family was growing. A second daughter, Dorothy, was born in 1910, and a son, Charles A. Jr., about August 1916. Parker's emerging interest as a publisher was marked in 1911 by publication of a 48-page chapbook of Arthur H. Goodenough's verse under the title *My Lady's Shoes and Other Poems*, with the imprint:

MALDEN  
CHARLES A. A. PARKER  
THE CASLON PRESS  
1911

Goodenough's collection was to be the first of many such chapbook publishing projects. As his young family grew up, Parker probably had more time and resources to devote to his publishing enterprise. Meanwhile, on Sunday, May 28, 1911, the Parkers hosted the first annual reunion of the Massachusetts Amateur Press Association at their home at 29 Walnut Street in Malden. Fifty cents per plate was requested from those attending and they were probably amply rewarded with Mrs. Parker's excellent cooking. Parker

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<sup>1</sup>In addition to serving as Interstate President in 1907-08 and as NAPA President in 1942-43, Parker also served a year as Massachusetts Amateur Press Association President during the 1911-15 period. He also served as President of the Hub Club (year not known to me) and also served as editor of the Hub Club Quill (e.g., in 1903, in succession to Walter Howe Carey).

did not completely abandon amateur publishing after *The Literary Gem* ended in September 1911; the Moitoret index lists a publication *Under den Linden*, four issues produced in Linden MA between January and July 1914. I do not know whether the title of this journal had anything to do with Mrs. Parker's German heritage. Parker also issued four numbers of *The National Post* with W. Paul Cook from Linden MA beginning with vol. 1 no. 1 on August 15, 1913. I do not know how long the Parker family resided in Linden MA. They apparently remained renters until they acquired their final family home in Medford MA in the mid-1920s.

The 1920 U.S. census recorded the Parker family at 21 Waite Street in Malden, Middlesex County, Massachusetts on January 2, 1920:

Parker, Charles A. A., head, white male, age 39, bookkeeper (broker's office), born MA of English-born father and MA-born mother;

Parker, Augusta L., wife, white female, age 36, born MA of MA-born parents;

Parker, Elinor L., daughter, white female, age 10, born MA;

Parker, Dorothy, daughter, white female, age 9, born MA;

Parker, Charles A., son, white male, age 3 4/12, born MA;

Owens, Hazel M., boarder, white female, age 4 2/12, born MA of MA-born parents.

I do not know whether Hazel Owens was a relative or just a young girl being boarded by the Parkers. (The Parkers did make a home for Edith Minitier in their Malden home in 1924-25, before Edith returned to her birthplace of Wilbraham, Massachusetts to spend her final years.) Parker himself continued to claim an English-born father and shaved yet another year from his age. In January 1921, Parker published the first number of the small press journal *L'Alouette*, which he continued to publish into the mid-1930s. The format would undergo some changes over the years but the image of a fir tree on the cover would remain constant. By November-December 1930, Parker had changed the title to *L'Alouette: A Magazine of Verse* and was asking 50 cents for a single number or \$2.00 per volume (of six numbers). By 1930, Ada Borden Stevens had joined him as Assistant Editor and Ellen M. Carroll, May Folwell Hoisington, Edith Minitier, Elizabeth Davis Richards, and Virginia Spates were Contributing Editors. The colophon is worth quoting:

¶ Edited, put into type, printed and published by Charles A. A. Parker, of Riverside Avenue in Medford, Middlesex County, Massachusetts,— ¶ Originating in the Studio Under the Eaves.— ¶ *L'ALOUETTE* has no regular or set date for publication.— ¶ Six numbers count as a volume. Subscription, Two Dollars (\$2.00) per volume. Single copies, Fifty Cents (50ct). No free list.— ¶ Advertising rates on application.— ¶ Unsolicited manuscript is sent at author's risk, no responsibility is assumed by the publisher. Manuscript to receive editorial consideration must be accompanied by return postage on self-addressed envelope.— ¶ All accepted manuscript is paid for with copies of magazine with published verse. All rights of republication, except right to include, if reprinted in *CHANSON L'ALOUETTE, An Anthology of Reprinted Verse*, is surrendered to the author when credit is given this publication.— ¶ Address all communications to the editor personally.

I do not know whether the anthology *Chanson L'Alouette* was ever published. In 1934 and 1935, Parker edited and published (with Marcia A. A. Taylor as co-editor) the hardcover poetry anthologies *Threads in Tapestry*. An advertisement for *Threads in Tapestry* in the January 1934 number of *L'Alouette* contains details regarding its publication basis:

ANNOUNCING/THREADS IN TAPESTRY/FOR 1934/

Compiled By/

Rachel Hall—Marcia A. Taylor—C. A. A. Parker

Illustrated by Merwin Coe

¶ A Subscription Anthology in a strictly limited edition that will be numbered as subscriptions are received. ¶ Printed by hand from hand-set type and hand-finished. ¶ Poetry to be included must

pass the Board of Editors. ¶ Poems may be written especially for the Anthology or may be reprints. (If reprints, be sure and give name of publication). ¶ Closing date: June 1, 1934. Delivery guaranteed in time for holiday use. ¶ Subscription: \$5.00 per page. (A page will carry approximately 30 lines of type or its equivalent). ¶ A \$5.00 subscription entitles you to 2 copies. Additional copies may be ordered at \$2.00 each. ¶ The edition will be limited to advance orders. ¶ If you wish to be represented on more than one page, send \$5.00 for each extra page. ¶ Check or money-order for full amount must accompany all subscriptions. ¶ Poetry not acceptable will be returned with remittance. ¶ Enclose stamped and self-addressed envelope. ¶ WHO'S WHO. Subscribers are requested to send for publication in this section, 100 words in the nature of a brief biography.

Make checks, etc. payable to C. A. A. Parker, Publisher, 114 Riverside Ave., Medford, Mass.

I do not know just how successful Parker was as a subsidy publisher. Volumes of *Threads in Tapestry* were published for at least 1934 and 1935. Each is a substantial hardcover volume. There were later additions to the roster of Contributing Editors for *L'Alouette*: Ellen M. Carroll, in 1931; George Burt Lake and Edith Mirick, in 1932. With the hard times of the Depression, *L'Alouette* appears to have achieved only about one number per year: vol. 4 no. 1, dated November-December 1930; vol. 4 no. 2, dated 1931; vol. 4 no. 4, dated 1932; vol. 4 no. 5, dated 1932 [1933 on cover]. Then with vol. 5 no. 1 (dated November 1933) Parker attempted conversion to a monthly schedule and published vol. 5 no. 2 (dated December 1933) and vol. 5 no. 3 (dated January 1934). I do not know how long Parker was able to continue with this aggressive schedule. The December 1933 number contained the ominous notice:

Due to a series of regrettable and unfortunate conditions, which we will not enter upon here, the plans as outlined for this magazine are, for the time being, delayed. All monthly issues will be published as quickly as conditions will permit and the indulgence of our friends and subscribers is requested. Our sincere thanks and appreciation to the friends who have written so encouragingly.

These 1933-34 numbers of *L'Alouette* contain a paid advertisement for revision services placed by H. P. Lovecraft:

#### **Revision and Constructive Criticism**

of verse undertaken by critic of seventeen years  
experience. Reasonable fees based on length of  
text and required amount of development.

H. P. Lovecraft, 66 College St., Providence, R.I.

When the 1930 U.S. census was enumerated, Charles Parker and his family were recorded at 114 Riverside Avenue in Medford, Middlesex County, Massachusetts on April 19, 1930:

Parker, Charles A., head, white male, age 56, writer, born MA of English-born parents;

Parker, Augusta, wife, white female, age 46, born NY of German-born parents;

Parker, Dorothy, daughter, white female, age 20, assistant secretary (publishing company), born MA;

Parker, Charles Jr., son, white male, age 13, born MA.

This time, for the census-taker, Parker shaved a full six years off his age and claimed both parents born in England. He had apparently either lost, or retired from, his longtime job as a bookkeeper in a broker's office. I suspect his younger daughter Dorothy was working for her father's publishing company. Elder daughter Elinor had apparently moved away from home. (By the forties Parker had a granddaughter Dorothy or "Dot" Hixon.) I do not know how Parker fared as a publisher over the period 1925-35 of his greatest activity. He published at least two poetry collections in hardcover (apart from *Threads in Tapestry*): Edna Hyde's *From Under a Bushel* (Saugus, Massachusetts, C. A. A. Parker, 1925; "Creation *L'Alouette*") and Henri DeWitt Saylor's *Mauve and Magenta* (Medford, Massachusetts, C. A. A. Parker, 1930). The latter title, however, looks like it may be one of a few copies of a chapbook bound in hardcover. Edna

Hyde's collection has a standard red cloth cover, while Saylor's collection is bound in black boards closely resembling the black cardboard covers (of varying stiffness) used for many of Parker's chapbook publications.

The advertising pages of *L'Alouette* list many of Parker's chapbook editions. Those actually lent to me by Stan Oliner include:

Mary Hovey, *Butterflies* [undated];

Muhammad Khan, *Charbaita: Tears On Your Cheeks As You Grieve* (trs. by May Folwell Hoisington), 1925 (reprinted ten times through 1933);

May Folwell Hoisington, *Carved Beads* (1929);

Ada Borden Stevens, *Days Royal: A Triolet Sequence* (1930);

Sophonisba [Charles A. A. Parker], *Once in a Green Moon* (1930);

Ada Borden Stevens, *New England Coast* (1931);

Gaylord Parks, *Burning Gift* (1932);

Marcia A. Taylor, *The Cup* (1932);

George Whitefield D'Vys, *Cheering Some One On* (1933);

Isabel Anderson, *A City Built In A Night* (1937).

The 1933-34 numbers of *L'Alouette* list many other titles as published or in preparation. I do not know how many were eventually published; over the years *L'Alouette* announced some titles like Jennie Dowe's Five Little Gossoons (announced in 1924) that were apparently never published. The bibliography of Parker's private press is yet to be undertaken.<sup>2</sup> That he was in business as a general subsidy publisher is evident from an advertisement in *L'Alouette* for November 1933:

#### **Publish that Book or Brochure**

#### **We will help you**

This office is prepared to fill orders for artistic printing, the kind that secures attention by skillfully combining originality of effect with good taste. Every effort will be made to produce an example of the very finest printing in each commission put forth, to which result the best of inks will be employed, on superfine stock. Individuality and inventiveness as employed since 1924 on this magazine will be retained as permanent aids.

Like other amateur journalists with printing equipment, Parker also printed amateur journals for fellow hobby members without their own presses. One such notable fellow amateur was H. P. Lovecraft. As N.A.P.A President in 1922-23 in succession to Bill Dowdell, Lovecraft was obliged to be active in his own right (that is, to publish his own amateur journals in addition to his official duties); and Parker printed for him the final number (whole no. 13) of his *Conservative* dated July 1923 and very likely the next-to-final number (whole no. 12) dated March 1923 as well (q.v., S. T. Joshi, *I Am Providence*, p. 179).

Parker's business as a subsidy publisher seems to have wound down after 1935.<sup>3</sup> In that year, he began

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<sup>2</sup>The bibliography of Parker's publications is challenging because they overlap amateur and semiprofessional/subsidy publishing. *The Literary Gem* (1900-11) and *Bavardage* (1935-44) are probably his best-preserved publications in amateur journalism collections. Parker's volume of *The National Amateur* (1909-10) is quite rare. Because Parker's private press was in part a subsidy publisher, it is not as well-collected as many other private presses. *L'Alouette* (1921-34?) in particular seems to be very poorly preserved and is rarely found in either private or institutional collections; Parker had few subscribers and severely restricted complimentary distribution to amateur journalists or others. The great Moitoret Collection contains only five numbers of *L'Alouette*, dated between 1921 and 1924.

<sup>3</sup>The Moitoret Collection index lists under Parker's name five numbers of *The Portfolio*, official organ of the Manuscript Club of Boston, issued from Medford MA, between Autumn 1938) and Autumn 1940. I do not know whether this was an amateur or professional publication.

publication of his amateur magazine *Bavardage*, at first in small size but later graduating to larger editions. With the assistance of his granddaughter Dorothy (“Dot”) Hixon, Parker continued to publish *Bavardage* in his printshop at 114 Riverside Avenue in Medford, the so-called “Studio Under the Eaves,” through at least 1944. Parker explained his title in the very first number:

¶ BAVARDAGE, a literal translation is senile garrulity.

He proudly composed most of his own copy “in the stick,” while other contributors like Michael O. White and Ernest A. Edkins sent manuscripts for publication. Parker sometimes contributed material under the names of his alter egos Sophronisba and Anastasia. Hopefully, the selections in this issue of *The Fossil* will provide today’s reader with some flavor of the contents of *Bavardage*. Parker published *Bavardage* on an approximate quarterly schedule in 1942-44, perhaps in part related to the activity requirement imposed on the National Amateur Press Association President, which office he held in 1942-43, after defeating Alfred Penn Babcock.

By 1945, Parker seems largely to have abandoned printing, on account of his health.<sup>4</sup> As recorded in his letters to Guy Miller, the contents of his printshop at 114 Riverside Avenue were eventually destroyed when a heavy load of wintertime snow collapsed the roof. But Parker continued to make small booklets by typewriting the contents and binding them using cord and needle. *Bavardage* did not go into the N.A.P.A. bundle but rather was circulated on a “request” basis and of course Parker’s typed booklets were one-of-a-kind creations intended solely for their recipients, his friends like Guy Miller and other long-time amateur acquaintances.

Parker lost his beloved spouse Augusta in 1953 but remained, alone, in his home at 114 Riverside Avenue in Medford. His health did not permit him to attend conventions and other gatherings, but he continued to be visited in his home by amateur journalists, including Sheldon Wesson, who took the photograph reproduced on the cover of this number of *The Fossil*. Most of his old friends, like Michael White, died. Parker died on June 1, 1965, aged 87 years. Of the figures from the glory days of Edith Minter’s Hub Club he was survived only by his early *Literary Gem* co-editors Nelson G. Morton and Ethel May Johnston-Myers, who died in 1968 and 1971, respectively.

## GEMS FROM BAVARDAGE

Charles A. A. Parker  
Selected by Ken Faig, Jr.

No. 3, 1936

*Bavardage: Breezelets of verbal confetti of a Semi-ancient & his Son* originating in the Studio Under the Eaves in Medford, Massachusetts, for which its Editor & Publisher, Charles A. A. Parker, Sr. & Jr. are responsible. Drawings by Merwin Coe.

Since the advent of *BAVARDAGE* many interesting letters have come to the S.A.<sup>5</sup> in his “Studio Under the Eaves.” By mail and by press his return to activity has been commented upon most favorably. Mrs. Editor,

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<sup>4</sup>The Moitoret index does list an amateur publication *Interim*, eleven numbers issued by Parker from Medford MA between July 1, 1942 and June 11, 1957. I’ve not seen these, but presume they were printed. The Moitoret index also lists *Letters of Sophronisba Bavardage to a Dear Friend*, dated August 7, 1945, at Medford MA.

<sup>5</sup>Semi-Ancient—Parker’s self-deprecating term for himself—KWF.

too, was heard to express pleasure, making it unanimous. (The conceit of the man!) ¶ The prize letter, however, came from an amateur who, struggling not to offend and earnestly and sincerely desiring to be of help and encouragement, wrote that the first effort was quite praiseworthy and the writer was certain that, in time, this little paper would be well among the leaders. Success in amateur journalism came, the writer added, only through long and serious work and a constant effort to improve. Altogether too much attention is given petty politics, abuse, and cheap wise-cracking mis-labeled editorials. The letter was more an essay, really, on the pitfalls of amateur journalism and permission was asked to reprint certain portions for it expressed clearly the ideal in amateur journalism. ¶ Unfortunately when the writer learned more of the history of the S.A., there came profuse apologies and request for the return of the letter at the same time exacting a promise not to divulge its authorship. With considerable regret this promise was given. In quoting this little from memory it is not the intention to undermine a confidence. ¶ This youthful prefers-to-be-anonymous writer has learned, and absorbed, the benefits, the real value of amateur journalism and from what the S.A. has seen of the writer's contributions to the amateur press, one of these days, and a day not too distant, will see the author's name among the elite of the craft. ¶ It may be well to add here that this is not offered as a complimentary excuse of sweet alibi for an exercise in memory. ¶ At the same time the opportunity to twit this young writer must not be passed up. It is quite evident that the previous numbers of this thumb-nail were read a bit hurriedly. Now, confess. Isn't it so? Why, the pages just reek, literally reek with the mould of the centurial. ¶ George A. Thomson, once of Medford, wants to know "where in the heck" he could find the word. On the chance of gaining an unearned reputation as a scholar and linguist, the word, dear Georgie-boy, comes, not from the Portuguese, but from the Norman-French and means, literally, garrulity of an ancient. Pronounced, bav-vahrr-dah-zgzhayee, only the long sound in the final e's is made short, you know, when you order coffee and you are given cocoa. ¶ It's a gift, Georgie-boy, like socks at Christmas. ¶ *FLAME AND SONG and other poems* by Marion Lee. Printed by hand from hand-set type by Will Bates Grant in the Hermitage on the Hill in Greenwood, Massachusetts. 20pp. Done on Japanese hand-made paper in an edition of forty-eight numbered copies. ¶ Both poet and publisher have combined and created an unusually attractive brochure. Not particularly original as an expression of appreciation, is it, yet all the adjectives, bromides and what nots in that dictionary the French savants took so many years in the compiling can say little more. Just twelve short, all too short, poems make the content of this beautiful brochure; each of exceptional merit; each an illustration of the poet's cleverness in the art of imagery; each with its own and particular appeal to the reader.

#### TRANSPOSING

Only the pine of all the trees  
 Has caught the murmur of the seas  
 Whisp'ring it softly oe'r and oe'r  
 For ears that cannot reach the shore.

It does seem unfair to use this particular poem when the others have such charm and attraction especially "Departure," that wistful bit of sadness, just to mention one other. ¶ It certainly is, however, a tribute to Mrs. Lee's artistry that she can use the archaic contractions, like oe'r, etc., gracefully and naturally. ¶ *FLAME AND SONG*, typographically, is truly the most artistic production in many years of the S.A. in Amateurdome and he feels both honored and complimented in being among the "48". Congratulations to both the poet and the publisher for this attractive and noteworthy production. ¶ The artist's signature to the hand-colored frontispiece fails to come up under the glass and the S.A. has no hesitancy in saying that the poet is under suspicion. ¶ It might be well to add that a group of poems from *FLAME AND SONG* will appear in the 1935 edition of *THREADS IN TAPESTRY* as a gesture in appreciation of Mrs. Lee's fine work in her latest brochure. ¶ Again paging Will Bates Grant. This time with *THE FRIENDLY QUILL*, which he describes as "a hobby magazine in belles letters" and done by him in the Hermitage on the Hill.

The S.A. has several times been a guest at the Hermitage on Blueberry Hill and....but that can do for another time. ¶ In Will Bates Grant Amateurdome has an example (came near making that concrete....there must be fifty steps up to the Hermitage) of the true amateur, an artist in the art of printing and editing. ¶ Will says he is of ancient vintage, old-fashioned, and all that. Maybe so. Praise be for all the oldsters, they yet can show the youngsters a thing or two worth remembering. ¶ Will's aphorisms are clever and funny. (Sophronisba had best look to her laurels and not bask too long in the glory of *Literary Digest* reprints.) ¶ The S.A. welcomes the Hermit of Blueberry Hill on his return to activity and extends the heartiest of congratulations for his really fine work. ¶ So many fine letters and cards in high praise of *BAVARDAGE* have come to the S.A. that, on the word of Sophronisba, his new slouch hat just had to be re-blocked.

### No. 5, Autumn 1940

The question: What is the ideal amateur publication?  
might well be answered in Yankee fashion:

What is the ideal amateur?

Not who, please note, but what, and a very big what at that. Generosity never made for editorial ability. Paradoxically, it isn't what you publish but what you don't publish that makes your paper interesting. To determine the ideal in this or that publication, idealism itself must be understood. Ideals should never be measured in dollars and cents. It is something vastly superior to the materialism of Mr. Roosevelt's deflated but none the less elusive coin of the realm. In these days it is to be feared that there exists in the minds of many amateurs a confusion 'twixt the idol and the ideal. Shall we measure our ideal of an amateur paper for its literary excellence? If so, *CAUSERIE* has no competition. Shall we measure our ideal amateur paper for its "largesse"? Then *THE CALIFORNIAN* most decidedly is it. Which brings us back to sense versus cents. The ideal amateur paper has yet to be published and continues to remain a delightful hypnotic figment of the imagination, the Peter Pan of Amateur Journalism.

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Do you know, I really believe I am getting old. It seems but yesterday she came a-toddling, all smiles to me for a "toree", and we would sit on the steps at 114 and I would make up a story, "Once upon a time..." When it ended happily, as all stories for children must, she would curtsy and say, "I go, go mamma now." Then, with her little hand in mine, I would be her escort. Today, all smiles, all excitement, in her graduation dress, she greeted me while on her way to the graduation exercises at the High School, a tall Miss of sixteen. I said: "Of course, Cathy, you know the old and honored custom at graduation?" But Cathy was suspicious. "The custom is that immediately upon leaving school after graduation the very first boy she meets can claim a kiss." And Cathy, now that she has grown up, knows when I am teasing and minds me not the least. Still she likes so stop and chat although she no longer asks for a "toree". Yes, I greatly fear age is upon me.

### Winter 1940

Another admirable suggestion was a "training school for presidents". A member should at least be five years a member before election to any important office, particularly the presidency. In every society of importance members start with the minor office and by degrees graduate to the highest. Too many have been rushed into the presidency of our association with little or no knowledge of its history and unfortunately, with disastrous results. A member should mature in our association before holding office. It is not an unfair or unreasonable requirement.

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## HOBBY DE LUXE

The Hermitage is reached after climbing a steep wooden stairway, a winding flag-stoned path over a slippery pine-needled sward.

Too, you have arrived at the crest of Blueberry Hill, a beautifully secluded spot in Greenwood, Massachusetts (far from the madd'ning throng) where you can look down upon the world and its cousins and its aunts. And the only near neighbors are squirrels and chipmunks, bees and butterflies.

Here, so ideally located, is the home of *THE FRIENDLY QUILL*, Hobby Magazine de Luxe, designed, edited and printed by Will Bates Grant. Hand-set and hand-printed on imported papers in very limited editions this artistic and truly delightful magazine, now in its fifth year of publication, has already become a collectors' item.

And here one may browse among books in rare editions; wander with Thoreau along the shore of Sandy Pond; delve into the pleasures of countless amateur papers covering every period of activity for Grant has the largest collection of amateur publications in all New England.

The Hermitage was built from Grant's own plans and stands in warm evidence of his personality and artistry: the home of an Amateur Journalist de Luxe.

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The ladies of the households of our amateur editors are very much in evidence these days as assistant editors, secretaries, mailers, and just boss, in the making of an amateur publication. Nancy Ann, aged two, dropped in at the printery and made pi for grandpa.

Spring 1941

With Will Bates Grant, editor of *The Friendly Quill*, in his bright new Oldsmobile the editor of BAVARDAGE dropped in on C. W. Smith, the Perpetual Tryout Man.

We looked over his Printery.

We observed his almost negligible equipment, so lacking indeed that our meager outfit seemed an American Type Foundry by comparison. And that by no means is an overstatement.

And we greatly marveled that under such a stupendous handicap his enthusiasm and love for Amateur Journalism persisted all these years.

And as *Bellette* says (we now have numbers 5,7,8), "we admire his intestinal fortitude" in overcoming obstacles that would shrivel and discourage the enthusiasm of most amateurs.

C. W. is charming, likeable, and quite captivated Sophronisba. These two just reveled in stories of amateurs of other days. It was: "Do you remember when..." back and forth like a shuttlecock, with their arms about each other.

And W. B. G., himself no amateur journalism chicken-recruit, just stood, literally, in open-mouthed wonderment, hypnotized, at their circumlocutory hyperbolic peregrinations as Bianchi would enjoy saying.

When a trio of amateurs reminisce they make a magpie sound as chatty as Mona Lisa, says the silent one of the shanty.

### Spring Interlude 1941 [no. 8]

Howard Phillips Lovecraft has left us, yes, but in the memories of each of us who knew him, he lives an ever considerate, likeable and loveable gentleman. Many times a guest in our home and a prime favorite with Mrs. Parker. ¶ Edward Harold Cole has accomplished many fine things in Amateur Journalism but to my mind one of the finest things ever to his credit is his lasting tribute in memory of Howard Lovecraft in an Olympian for Autumn, 1940.

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Sophonisba says a real honesty to Betsy dyed in the wool Amateur Journalist is never inactive—he just hibernates.

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Harold E. Bessom, its good to see his name back on the membership list of the N.A.P.A., further proof that Will Snow was right. Harold, for many years, was editor of *The Black Cat*, a popular magazine in its day and the forerunner of *Weird Tales* and other pulps featuring the weird and unusual in short stories. His reputation as an editor was enviable to a marked degree. When Fox Films bought the *Black Cat* Bessom was retained as editor-in-chief, but New York held no charms for him and he returned to Boston where he is happily located. Harold's visits to 114 always result in extended reminiscences of Amateur Journalism, so, when the composing stick was brought forth to publish BAVARDAGE he just could not contain himself and his reinstatement as a member is assured. Now he is scouting around for a press and type. When the novelty of the new arrival, a daughter, and a new home wears off, a new Forum is a possibility.

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November 28, 1940. Thanksgiving Day and snow, deep snow everywhere, brings to mind, as I stand here at this type case tonight, other Thanksgiving Days. Days when Harold<sup>6</sup>, he has now reached the years of dignity and a family and become Edward, but he will ever be Harold to us at 114, and his mother and Mrs. Editor and I would do a real good job on turkey. ¶ Too, well do I remember how he would hustle off with hat and ulster and make a hurried saunter to the pantry to get first hand information, and samples. It was fun to watch him gloat over the row of cakes and pies: apple, mince, squash. What, no plum pudding! The plum pudding was there alright, on the shelf above, in his anxiety Harold just failed to look that high. And nuts, and fruit, and candy! ¶ There never was a bit of delay in the service at this meal. And, like children, Harold and I, would see which could eat the most! But every time he would win out. I always insisted that the long ride from Tower Street, in Somerville, placed me under a handicap, which, of course, he would indignantly deny. ¶ Then we'd top off the dinner with a slow and labored walk around the block to settle everything only to have him return and cry: "Where's supper!" Yes, those were the days, gone, alas, forever. ¶ But memories, however, remain, and as I stand here, dreaming...I give thanks, my heartfelt, sincere thanks. I have memories.

The proof of the pudding, declares Sophronisba, is in licking the thible. It is not dignified, or polite, but who cares.

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It is doubtful if in Amateur Journalism there is a printshop of an Amateur Journalist housed within walls as ancient as these, for, 114 is reputed to have been built during the last decade of the 17th century. Located in the heart of Medford, overlooking the famed Mystic, where once were Medford's historic ships, and the Salt Marsh. ¶ The printshop looks out upon an extensive garden that in summer has many times been referred to as one of the beauty spots of the town by none other than our purveyor of news, *The Mercury*. It is an old fashioned garden, with old fashioned flowers, fenced by a hedge of lilacs, twelve foot high, that in late spring is crowned with beautiful clusters of pale blue blossoms that give forth a delightful scent. (Sophronisba says the most compelling scent she knows of is the combined odors of lilacs, printer's inks and the editor's pipe.) ¶ The printshop, leading from the editorial sanctum-and-library, is about ten feet square, low ceilinged, with windows on two sides. ¶ This is the birthplace of BAVARDAGE, a word missing from the dictionaries of Vondy, George Thomson, and other amateurs. Here, when in health, may be found the SemiAncient and more or less notorious Sophronisba, both speeding up Old Father Time in a way that at this date, 11-11-40, has made Edkins speechless (or should it be writingless?); and George Thomson, who once published the *Bay State Advocate*, disturbed about pre-holiday greetings; and Robert

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<sup>6</sup>Parker is writing of Edward H. Cole (1892-1966)—KWF.

Holman, who believes something better may yet appear from this printery by the river's side; and Ralph Babcock, alias the Blushing Bantam, alias the migratory Red Bird, etc., concerned about headroom and Sophronisba; and Will Bates Grant, who delights in comparisons.

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Many of our young writers who aspire to (for) realism know no more than what is told them by Webster, observes Sophronisba. Instead, in their childishness they are sophists and mockers in an environment of their own making, never real from dusk to dawn. They read books by their adolescent friends loudly acclaimed as masterpieces of realism, usually works whose purpose and theme are but bald-faced portrayals of sex—baudy volumes—irreligious ideas—all a travesty on youth and education. ¶ Restless, impatient youth, dissatisfied with what is, not knowing or unable to tell just what it wants but willy-nilly insisting on having it, should wait awhile, in fact, that's all can be done about it. It is nothing more serious than growing pains coupled with an intellectual tummyache.

Some things are better left unsaid, as the old adage goes, but it is impossible to tell that to Sophronisba.

### Winter 1941 [no. 11]

The fact that a paper is most attractive in appearance by reason of unusually fine workmanship should not be an influence against the mimeographed paper or one less appealing. As a matter of fact *BELLETTTE* and *WALK ONE FLIGHT*, both mimeographed, are of more interest and importance than certain of our so-called finer publications. A man may be judged by his raiment, a dog by his bark, but an amateur paper never because of its unusual press work, deckle-edged paper and colored inks; the real worth is: content.

### Spring 1942 [no. 12]

SOPHRONISBA SAYS—

¶[To judge by many of the contributions one reads in the Amateur Press these days, observes Edkins, food for thought must be among the items strictly rationed. ¶ The cosmetologists, in convention at Boston recently, selected a Miss Massachusetts and a Miss Jupiter. Joe Lynch, who wows 'em all, says Miss Massachusetts is the one with the clothes on. ¶ Once an amateur—try and live it down.

### Summer 1942 [no. 13]

I Join the National  
Michael White

On a hot June day in 1902 by the side of a dusty road, leading from Waterbury to Winstead in the state of Connecticut, I rested my bicycle under the shade of an oak tree. I was presently joined by another bicyclist wholly unknown to me, dressed in knickers, and a dark green jacket bordered with wide black braid.

The newcomer, as I afterward learned, was Carl French, country correspondent of the Waterbury Republican. He was, moreover, a crusading member of the N.A.P.A. His pockets were stuffed with Amateur Journals. His job on the paper was only incidental to his higher mission of spreading, like Paul of Tarsus, the doctrine of his hobby. He spoke a lot and laughed a lot about Warren Brodie and *The Shillelagh*. I did not at the time quite grasp the significance of the name. He pronounced it Shil-alla, which is of course

erroneous. I thought that “shillala” was one of the terrors of the free. That day when Carl rode off on his bicycle, merrily whistling *The Good Old Summer Time*, two dollars of mine,—a whole day’s pay,—reposed in his billfold. One dollar for membership in the National, the other for the Connecticut Amateur Press Association. I didn’t know for years afterwards that there was some kind of a law in this country against highway robbery.

I accompanied Carl French to the National Convention in New York a few weeks later, and saw some of the leading members of the fraternity. Edith Minter was buttonholing everyone in the interests of Peltret of the “villainous Boston Gang.” Although I was not entitled to vote I was assured it would be all right to cast a ballot for the Hub candidate. Charley Parker was pointed out to me. He looked about the same as he does today. There were many pretty girls racing back and forth, as usual talking incessantly and writing down names and comments on endless sheets of paper. They all strove to be “Gibson Girls,” and it must be admitted, that with their long sweeping dresses, slender waists, picturesque pompadours, and high laced boots, they had the edge on the Convention ladies of today.

Here, too, I met for the first time Franklyn Curtiss-Wedgé. He had the manners of a courtier and the face of a refined lady. His beautiful long blond wavy hair fell down in shimmering waves over his coat collar. He wrote poetry that would bring tears to the eyes of a longshoreman. His poetic themes were always the same: the false and heartless female spurned his affections till the heart in his bosom practically ceased ticking. In gazing at Franklyn the mind of the beholder reverted back instinctively to Narcissus and the Spring. When Peltret was defeated Franklyn refused to be comforted and looked like the King of Diamonds after a late night.

When the shooting started at the Convention I thought at last that those tales of Nick Carter that had nourished my boyhood under other skies were a real part of the American scene. My friends can testify that I am brave even to recklessness but discretion, too, must be considered, so I suddenly remembered that I had some friends in Brooklyn, so I left the Convention for more tranquil scenes.

It was a great season for kitchen shindigs I ran into. Accordions ground out mazurkas that Chopin would be unable to recognize. Two-steps and break-downs in varying degrees of violence weaned my mind away from the mob mayhem of the N.A.P.A. free-for-all.

In all N.A.P.A. Conventions worthy of the name there are always two heroes and two villains, according to the viewpoint. The heroes, like Sir Galahad, are in shining armor, ready to meet all antagonists for the honor and glory of the cause. The villains are endowed with a diabolical desire to wreck our sacred institution. In modern days offices have to be forced on unsuspecting and innocent victims. Hotel fire-escapes in our day are crowded with those who escape the Convention Hall in a wild desire to get away from being nominated for something or other. In our best years every office was sure to be contested.

Years of great activity followed the New York Convention where Anthony Wills was nominated and elected President, and Connecticut was the one bright spot. Carl French published *The Idler*, George Brooks, of Torrington, brought out a paper the name of which I forget. Franklyn Curtiss-Wedgé, secretary to the Principal of the Winstead High School, was an editor. Harriet Woodruff Lewis sent forth *Stray Items*, and I in one year brought out two issues of *The Nutmeg Review*.

Due to the influence of Carl French the *Waterbury Republican* devoted whole columns to reviews of our booklets.

We held meetings once a month at the homes of members. A collation was invariably served. In the summer it consisted of johnny cake with whipped cream, home-made bread, plum conserve, washed down with copious beakers of dandelion wine. In the winter, when the bleak winds roared through gaps in the Litchfield hills, we were treated to oyster stew. Those who have not tasted Connecticut oyster stew can never know the heights to which the culinary art can ascend.

The base of the stew was goat's milk. Burgundy, claret or benedictine contains, it is said, all the vitamins of literary inspiration but goat's milk has all the wines of fame running a poor second.

In the evening of the meeting we hired a horse and buggy for \$2.00 and headed for Winstead, Waterbury, Plymouth, Northfield, Litchfield, Watertown or Torrington. A red bow adorned the whip handle. The Sweetest Girl in the World sat demurely in front. We called at detached farm houses and picked up "Mother's Helpers" and gave them a lift to the meeting place. A "Mother's Helper" today is a domestic servant who receives less money and more work for her duties. In those peaceful days she was generally the eldest daughter of the family. She did the canning, forked hay in the meadows, made quilts of many colors out of Joseph's discarded coat, made wine, was the architect of her own dresses, wrote stories, poetry, essays and book-length novels which she hid under her pillow!

Tennyson's "beast that took its license on the field of time" was a model of social ethics compared with a livery stable horse. In its stall all day it ate oats, middlings—cracked corn, bran, hay, straw and barrels of water. It started out like Sea Biscuit. But when it came to a busy intersection all delicacy was forgotten, all decorum was cast to the winds, all modesty was eliminated, and with sundry contortions, straining and stampings, held up all traffic till the thing was over. It seemed a personal matter. No amount of scuffing of the feet, bleating of beautiful scenery or quotations from Browning could hide the horrible fact. The Sweet Young Thing, provoked beyond endurance, could only murmur: "Get a different horse next time." The evening was spoiled and the white ostrich plumes on Nellie's hat waved in silent protest long after the horse decided to resume the journey.

Harriet Woodruff Lewis, poet, essayist, critic, commentator, and arbiter of all our fates, was our most prominent member. She had large dark eyes and wrote poetry. She inclined to the Grecian in dress. Over her bosom and waist the drapery was thin and pressed close to the body, allowing the noble form to show through. No feeble little sister she, squeezed up tight in a corset. How she pitied our deformed young women with their bent ribs and starved lungs. Like the Venus of Melos her beauty was largely that of exuberant health, of perfect adequacy. She had the figure of a goddess. Yet she condescended to correct our feeble efforts at writing. She wrote poetry for the *Utica Saturday Globe* and the *New England Homestead*. She advised us on the correct style of buttons to adorn a dark velvet fancy vest. She signed her name to her letters with the inspiring slogan: "Yours For Progress."

It was the age of literary material and social up-lift. Orison Swift Marden edited *Success Magazine* and in his view the accumulation of money was the meaning of "success." Correspondence schools flourished like young bay trees. Longfellow's disciples were toiling upward in the night while their companions slept. Rockefeller, Carnegie and Gould were the composite deity,—the glass indeed at which each noble youth should dress himself.

Everyone was taking a course. The grocery clerk was preparing himself to be an architect; the soda fountain dispenser was studying to be a lawyer; the rolling mill puddler had an announced ambition to engage in magazine editing. According to the doctrine of the day nothing was impossible to the student who studied hard and paid his dues promptly to the International Correspondence Schools.

The papers read at our meetings reflected the times. The village good-for-nothing, who, unknown to everyone, was taking a course in Transportation, was depicted in the story, as making good in a distant city, and comes back, to the surprise of all the gossips, to rescue his schoolboy sweetheart from a fate worse than death at the hands of the local ticket agent of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railway.

Admiral Dewey was the current hero. Hobson got all the female hearts a-flutter. Tom Lawson was a "wizard," because he could manipulate the stock market in a way that would land him behind the bars in our day. He wrote Friday the 13th. Opper conceived *Happy Hooligan*. Davenport put dollar signs on the coats of the "Tru\$tS." Hearst and Pulitzer were pulling each other's hair,—a good imitation of Pearson

and Harmsworth across the Channel; William Jennings Bryan reverberated across the land; “Pitchfork” Tillman was a great statesman; and James Whitcomb Riley was a great poet.

Trouble nipped the happiness of the Garden of Eden as well as of other idealistic institutions and a rift was at last discernible in the Connecticut Amateur Press Association. As usual in such cases a woman was directly responsible. One of our bright married men bestowed on a lady member a real pearl necklace, selected out of Sears Roebuck Winter Catalogue money-back-if-not-satisfied. It must have cost all of two dollars but was worth more. No Puritan who ever burned a witch or set up a gallows can be half as puritanical as an Irishman where Demon Sex is concerned. I was for driving the erring pair, with a bottle of water and a loaf of bread, like Hager and Ishmael of old, into the wilderness. More judicious minds however, pointed out that this method would only be compounding a felony. We compromised by making them sit apart at our meetings, but our Club never really recovered from the blow.

We arranged for a great meeting of the N.A.P.A. in Odd Fellows Hall in the little town of Thomaston where Seth Thomas made clocks when George Washington was in rompers. It was my second home. We cajoled the local band of the Turnverein to meet President Anthony Wills who had arranged to come on the 7.15 from New York. Wills came as he promised,—a cultured gentleman and a credit to the best traditions of the National. The whole town was out. He forgot completely our opposition at the late convention. He rode in the best livery stable carriage in town, the little fife and drum band in front. It was a great day for Amateur Journalism.

Just as the meeting was getting under way I was handed a telegram. After forty years the words are still vivid: “Hattie<sup>7</sup> and I were married today and are bound for a honeymoon in New York.” It was from Carl French. I could almost have forgiven him everything if he hadn’t called her “Hattie.” Then and there a dozen masculine hearts were broken. Mr. Wills was speaking but we did not heed or hear him. The earth once more was without form, and void. Amateur Journalism would be to us henceforth a farce, a delusion, a snare. Harriet was lost to us forever and nevermore could we depend on her to guide our literary efforts, or to give advice on our sartorial correctness. Nevermore would we partake of her johnny cake and plum conserve. Life ceased to have meaning.

Fourteen years later I sat in a hall of the Y.M.C.U. in Boston attending a meeting of the Brown Mice, a literary society. A young man requested permission to address the gathering. He spoke to us about the United Amateur Press Association. I had a talk with him at the close of the meeting. He revived my interest again in Amateur Journalism. The speaker was the late Howard Lovecraft.<sup>8</sup>

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¶ Little Dot’s idea of the millennium is rationed spinach...what girl wants to look, and talk, like Popeye!

### **Autumn 1942**

De Rebus Omnibus  
Ernest A. Edkins

Amateur Journalism is the last stronghold of unbridled Liberty. Within its cock-eyed circle every

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<sup>7</sup>Harriet Woodruff Lewis—KWF.

<sup>8</sup>White also wrote about this 1917 meeting with Lovecraft in an article in the January 1948 number of *The Fossil*, but in this recollection he specifically remembers the name of the literary society that Lovecraft addressed (the Brown Mice) and asserts that he personally conversed with Lovecraft after the meeting.

eccentricity of the human mind is permitted,—even brief paroxysms of nascent intelligence. On waxen wings we dare the empyrean, with faunesque feet we tread the antic hay,—or rally in innocent revel around the jolly old May Pole, while Pantaloons pursue the Columbines of their fancy, and fumbling poets clutch at the flying skirts of their elusive Muse. It is not unlike a Mardi Gras in which the zanies raise merry hell and King Carnival reigns supreme. Shall we, then, forswear our principles by damning the critics, when *no other* lunacy is proscribed? Perish the thought! Let the hew-gags hew and the ding-bats howl, let the jerks gyrate and the wahngdoodles chase their caudal appendages, all in the spirit of good, clean fun. You agree that these curious diversions are eminently proper? Then why discriminate against the demented critics? There they huddle in a corner, poor witless blighters, playing what seems to be a foolish game,—and with what are they playing? Alphabet blocks, my dear? Or maybe it is a sort of cross-word puzzle or, as some allege, a puzzle of cross words, though I wouldn't know about that. The consensus is that their case is absolutely hopeless; believe it or not, they actually labor under the delusion that amateur journalism has some remote connection with the art of writing.

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A year ago, W. Paul Cook printed his Memorial to Lovecraft,—an edition limited to 94 copies. The booklet of 77 pages is handsomely printed on heavy deckle-edge paper and copies were distributed to a few of Lovecraft's admirers. Printing a page at a time Mr. Cook spent three months in running off of about 7300 impressions, and turned out a job that might well throw Tim Thrift and Ralph Babcock into ecstasies of admiration. The Memorial is made up of Mr. Cook's recollections, estimates and appreciations, scantily documented, chary of fulsome praise but disclosing in every line the author's deep affection for his subject. Those who are so fortunate as to possess a copy of Derleth and Wandrei's compilation of Lovecraft's tales, *The Outsider and Others*, would be even more fortunate in the possession of this sympathetic study of Lovecraft's personality, as amazing as any fantasy from his prolific pen. It is not in the strict sense a biography, yet it is one of the most definite accounts I have ever read,—the biography, not of a life, but of a rare soul. Some measure of Lovecraft's greatness as a person, aside from any ultimate evaluation of his place as a writer, may be surmised from his ability to inspire the sort of friendship of which this Memorial is a monument. It is more than a tribute; it is a masterly piece of literature.

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HELEN<sup>9</sup> SAYS that "Ajay" (abominable locution) "is like a tight sweater,—you can only get out of it *what you put into it!*"—probably the best recruiting slogan ever created to lure young men to their doom. No wonder Hollywood clamped down on tight sweaters.

### Spring 1943 [no.16]

As for the quartette of alibis: The election of the Ancient<sup>10</sup> came as a great surprise as it was to his "letter writers." He entered the campaign "to make things interesting," but what the Ancient failed to properly value at the time was the popularity of Vondy, his campaign manager, and her Committee, Willametta, Rusty and others. Had his opponent this galaxy of stars...Unfortunately, things were taken for granted, cock-suredness was at the reins, votes right in their own bailiwick were overlooked, and last minute postals were of little or no avail. Moral: It is always too late to pump wind into a punctured tire;—and on the tire, clearly, indisputably, this trade mark: APB-1942-3-BC.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Helen A. (Vivarttas) Wesson—KWF.

<sup>10</sup>Parker was elected N.A.P.A. president for the 1942-43 term—KWF.

<sup>11</sup>APB and BC probably stand for Alfred Penn Babcock and Burton Crane—KWF.

## Summer 1943 [no. 17]

### Riverside Sketches

#### Sophonisba

It was a miserable derelict thing; more forlorn, I think, than is the skeleton of a once proud, brave ship rotting at an abandoned wharf. The house had been a notable and historic land mark in its day, but it was now half fallen; the transepts crumbled masses of masonry; here and there tumbled and shapeless heaps marked where the stables stood. The trees round about, all venerable and some decaying, were as mutes about a dead man's door. Whatever the place may have been before the vandals fell on it, all that now was could be said in one word,—“Ichabod!”

Dawn burst in a fling of vivid color over the rim of the distant hills. First a drab grey creeping into the elms and maples to set them looming like solitary misshapen objects of color,—red, pink, orange, rose. A flame...the tip of an infant sun popped into the key, a sky that soon became brassy, metallic...a breathless sickening calm that gave warning of another day of blistering heat to add to those that had gone before.

The murky twilight thickened into murkier night. The wind came up in howling gusts, driving the rain in sheets before it to turn the avenue into a roaring, angry cascade of water, debris and what not. New storms rolling out of the north-east burst with deafening crashes of thunder. The din was awesome, terrifying. Peal followed peal until they merged in one continuous roar that seemed to rock the house as one would rock a cradle. Vivid flashes of lightning tore the sky, burned brightly for a fraction of an instant, vanishing to leave an impenetrable blackness in its wake. The air was heavy with the stench of sulphur, of a sun-seared garden, sodden now and dripping. Added to this, the downpour which human eye could scarcely penetrate. Enveloping darkness...a stygian storm swept void. One final terrific, ear-splitting crash then,—silence...a deathless fearsome silence as if some great unknown god had cast a spell. Winds ceased their howlings, the thunder quieted, the downpour finished,—and between dodging, scurrying clouds peeped an inquisitive moon.

Slowly, sullenly, Dawn appeared in a ghostly grey veil that seemed to wrap with an eerie stillness and strangle Morning to a breathless silence. Every thing dripped moisture. Bushes were weighed with countless bright jewels. Spidery laces, torn from the robe of Night, lay strewn on the grass. Odd little wisps of fog dangled like forgotten favors on a Christmas tree. Rose petals lay about reminding one of sodden gay confetti after a night's revel. Flowers, so cheerful, so friendly the day before, drooped dejectedly. And, for the nonce, the King of the Garden, the arrogant, raucous blue jay, was stilled.

#### Spirit Transitory

A certain Mister Patrick Michael O'Ginnis, late of Dublin and now numbered among the elite of Charlestown, South Boston and the Tamany Club, used to have a job as outside janitor at Bunker's Hill where the Battle of Bunker's Hill was not fought and which the British won and the Americans, Indian givers, just would not let them keep it. So, on Saint Patrick's Day, an Irishman named Sullivan told them to get off'n the hill and they went. And Boston carted away one of the hills and made a big square, a part is known as Sullivan Square and the rest is owned by the Boston El.

It was the duty of Mister O'Ginnis to mow the grass, trim the few scraggly hedges, sweep the paths when the wind didn't do it for him, remember to water the lawns, hedges and bushes occasionally, if not oftener, and be step-father to a gang of harum-scarum wild rascallions, active in more ways than one.

Mister O'Ginnis was a stout patron of a near-by Thirst Shoppe for his job was indeed a very, very dry one.

One day, returning from a prolonged social visit to the afore-mentioned Shoppe and quite happy with himself, Mister O’Ginnis was surprised to observe the diaphanous, pellucid form of a British Grenadier of the class of 1775 in complete accoutrement suddenly appear, and with equal nonchalance, disappear, vanish.

Mister O’Ginnis was not only surprised, but disturbed.

And how!

While not gifted with the Grenadier’s superlative ability to vanish quickly, Mister O’Ginnis, however, quite approved of the suggestion and immediately proceeded to put it into operation.

Wildly swinging the rake he had picked up, Mister O’Ginnis laid down a perfect bunt, and stretched it so successfully that he never stopped until he reached home, upon which he enthusiastically quit his job as chambermaid and wet nurse to a monument to departed heroes.

He was a firm believer, said Mister O’Ginnis, in the closed shop, and he, positively, absolutely, refused to work with a scab employee of the Sassenach, George the Third, or any other refugee from a graveyard.

Authorities were mystified, however they succeeded in identifying the fugitive spectre as one of a lot of British stationed in Boston in 1775, or 1776, when, one calm evening, the entire company were demobilized with the completeness, precision, dispatch, éclat, and all that, of a Hitler-Himmler-Nazi purge by the explosion of a powder magazine.

A bit of nonchalance on the part of the Colonists.

Eh,—what!

Just why this particular Grenadier returned with a hand grenade at the ready, or, for that matter, how he came in possession of one of those instruments of liquidation Mister O’Ginnis neglected to inquire. It could be that the Grenadier was in search of the Mess Sergeant. One can never foretell the doings of a buck private, can one, particularly a defunct and obsequious minion of George the Dutch.

The State Department at Washington has made a vigorous protest to Number Ten Downing Street. Even allowing for the bi-weekly crisis of the Empire, Winnie’s sudden aërial jaunts thither and yon, the ever present threat of “a Common question,” Ghandi’s pants, the latest in Rugby scores, the latest indiscretion [of] Sir Reginald Cecil Cyril Clarence Claude von der de van der Fitz-Noddle-Schnitz at Brightelmestone, and all that, even so, it is deemed culpable, reprehensible, and considered an unnecessary, unfriendly act, yes, quite, to conscript the class of ’75-’76 and station them right at the very doors, so to speak, of Mister O’Ginnis and in the shadow, too, of the Tamany Club, when they might appear to better advantage at an unidentified sector lately in the press because of its special and generous, considerable and protective attention on the part of Adolf and Heinrich, those kindly, lovable, dear, sweet boys.

Nicht wahr?

Strong objection has been voiced to reviving the spirits of the Seventies on the part of the W.C.T.U.

## **Autumn 1943 [no. 17]**

### **Riverside Sketches**

#### **Sophonisba**

It was the night of the first blackout. ¶ The fog had withdrawn with the quiet unobtrusiveness peculiar to fogs. ¶ The wind, down from Gallows Hill, made the darkness heavy and damp, stir coldly. There was no moon. The few stars, bright against the blue-black velvet patches of the sky, in their loneliness appeared to wink invitingly to cloud-hidden stars...come see, come see, come see. ¶ Slop, slop, along Hangman’s Beach the waves crowded and fell over one another in their haste to reach the shore, slop, slop. ¶ It was the

night of the first black-out and Riverside Avenue, tunnel-like, was long, dark and strangely tempting. The night...closer...still...secret...tense. ¶ The house-boats, moored in the channel, sepulchral grey silhouettes, rocked in clumsy rhythm with the waves; a nightbird, like an escaping soul from out the blackness, rose with a strange, piercing, wild cry and speedily disappeared; from the distance came the mournful howl of a dog; from nearby, the plaintive cry of a baby. Over there...on a tree on Gallow's Hill...something...something...

From behind a grey-silver cloud a shy young moon watched a mischievous Dawn, standing a-tip-toe, blowing out the stars, one by one, like candles on grandpa's birthday cake. ¶ Suddenly, Dawn burst into view,—all red, and rose and pink,—smiling and laughing a joyous welcome to the new day. ¶ Sometimes Lake rippled as if tickled by the whispers of the morning breeze. ¶ The gaily painted house-boat, with its red and white striped awning, moored above Hangman's Beach, rocked in clumsy appreciation at the joy of it all. And from within there came, portentously:

Don't sit under the Gallow's Tree  
With anyone else but me,  
Till I come sailing home.

While far down the river, with steam up and impatiently tugging at its hawsers, was a dark, dull grey boat...

I know a sun-drenched garden  
where the land in beauty dips  
in robes of summer splendor  
to the Mystic's smiling lips.

## Spring 1944

### Riverside Sketches

#### Sophonisba

It was Ground Hog Day. That bashful little fellow had seen his bizarre shadow and scuttled to cover again with the speed of a scared rabbit.

But already the days were lengthening.

The sun climbed farther north each day and smiled down triumphantly in cheering, friendly warmth.

The wind and rain, snow and sleet of a week or more ago were but a vague memory, now. Even the snow had melted from all but the most sheltered places.

With swift change of mood, so characteristic of our New England climate, the Easter storm had passed...and Spring, poised restlessly, fretfully, in the wings, impatiently awaiting her call to appear "midst thundrous applause and acclaim." More often as not, her royal march strewn with gentle light green carpets, her exit in a vivid splurge of color.

-o0o-

The color tones of the Observator Garden are always changing. One particular pleasure is to watch the gradual transformations. Now, the yellow daffodils and forsythia, and the red and yellow and blue tulips give way to the iris, the lilac, the pansy, the hyacinth and the violet. The Garden, in the words of Anastasia, "is a symphony in color."

-o0o-

Nature was bored to tears by the parched land and sultry, oppressive heat. Now, with ripping, deafening, reverberating crashes, blinding, twisting, tortuous flashes, she tore great ragged fissures across black, sullen, angry skies, and poured torrential rains through them in a slanting, slashing drive that beat unmercifully on fragile flowers and bushes to leave a trail of poor, bruised and squashed petals (as confetti after a wild party), broken twigs and branches, leaves, and what not, to litter sodden lawns and walks, choking catch basins forming pools and miniature lakes, and through these would race the passing automobiles, splashing and showering passers by, without fear or favor, leaving screams, maledictions...and profanity.

-o0o-

The western sky was blood-red,—like a celestial slaughter house, the air above the Mystic appeared the color of old port as evening drew near.

By eight o'clock all that was left of day was a shaded purple ribbon, frayed and raveled at one end, lying along the western horizon.

Far to the northwest and north lightning flickered about and through massed clouds, lighting up their snowy virgin hearts coyly hid by the falling veils of a June rain. At the moment the muttering thunder held no menace, so distant it was.

As if from some vast oven, hot humid waves of moist breezes stirred lazily only to add to the discomfiture of a sweltering oppressive evening, an evening of sweating lassitude and uneasiness.

From fast approaching ominous black clouds there broke a bolt of lightning that zig zagged over Winter Hill to plunge into the still waters of the Mystic sending up a mountain of steam as though fired by Calefactor of ancient times.

Then,—all hell was rampant as crash upon crash rocked the Observatory across from Hangman's Beach. In a nearby court an old dwelling in course of demolition was flattened. Down the avenue a bit a chimney went sprawling over a bed of old-fashioned flowers. An aged maple in the historic grave yard tottered and fell across the railroad tracks.

All power was off, telephones too, as bolt of lightning trailed bolt of lightning. During all this confusion it poured,—as if Old Pluvius himself had taken a hand and dumped the waters of the Mystic to flood the valley.

Down from the high lands came the racing water and with it all manner of débris,—leaves, branches, papers, twigs, umbrellas, wood, dirt, sand...

A sudden almost deafening silence,—quickly followed by a brisk cooling wind,—and the storm had passed out to sea. Windows were raised. Lights came on. A phone call from my boy friend in one of the Newtons railing at the service and to acquaint me with the news that all was quiet along the Charles.

P:S:—In the excitement of “our return to posterity” the electric clocks were forgotten but no one was late for work, praise be, for the next day was the birthday of the Gentle Philosopher,—and a holiday.

**THE LETTERS OF C. A. A. PARKER**  
**(reprinted from The National Amateur, December 1987)**

114 Riverside Avenue  
Medford (55), Massachusetts  
March 7, 1944

Dear Guy Miller,

Welcome thrice welcome to the National Amateur Press Association...and a special brotherhood of editors and publishers. It's a great brotherhood as you will soon learn, now that you really are “in.” I know,

for I have been a member and an editor and publisher for more than forty years...I published my first paper in the mid '80's and I learned of amateur journalism in the mid '90's.

March 28, 1944

"A many years ago, when I was young and charming," I became an editor of a column: *Little Stories of the Town*. The perpendicular and egotistical pronoun was a hindrance to my particular style of transposition. So, Sophronisba grew overnight, as did Anastasia. They companioned me in my career as an amateur journalist, and have become invaluable in my literary associations.

Amateur journalism gave me my start as a writer. And it was through amateur journalism that I met the young lady, Augusta Louise (von) Miller, who later became Mrs. Parker. Yes, I owe much to amateur journalism.

April 11, 1944

*Bavardage* is printed one page at a time on a hand press from handset type. My granddaughter does the press work, and I do most of the type setting. Most of my stuff is written with stick in hand; and, as [Burton] Crane has remarked on various occasions, it shows it. [Ernest] Edkins and [Michael] White are more concerned with what they write and do give their copy considerable attention.

April 19, 1944

Short story writers are mighty scarce in our little world of letters. It's laborious work. Then again, so many say so much to say so little. Words are their tools, and they fail to realize that the more they use them the duller they get. Again, you cannot write convincingly of unfamiliar matter. I remember the late Tony [Anthony] Wills delighted in writing of Paris and dukes and earls and lesser lights of the several nobilities.

Too many do not plan and plot, but just sit down and write, expecting the typewriter to do the job for them. Once when I was editing a magazine, a woman in Chicago wrote me that she had a new typewriter and so was ready to give me any kind of material I was in need of. Some typewriter.

May 5, 1944

By the time this assortment from Webster arrives, you will have received the winter '43 *Bavardage*. You will note that there are twenty-six pages. Sir Miguel [Michael White] brought copy for two additional pages; and, as the other pages were in type, it seemed best to make use of them in the hope that some sort of reaction would greet my suggestion that we do away with laureate entries entirely. In this way, everything published is automatically entered. The bureau of critics are more capable than professionals to pass judgment on our work because of their intimate knowledge of the hobby and for their sympathy and understanding.

June 11, 1944

Years ago the Hub Club was famous for its roundups. Every time an amateur came to Boston, it was an excuse for a roundup of the local amateurs. All we needed was the excuse, and many times we didn't need that...we gathered for a good time and a gab fest. The roundup here at 114 is the Sunday before the convention. It is something in the way of a compliment to me and my inability to attend the convention...The doctor has turned thumbs down on the idea.

June 17, 1944

During your visit you might find your way to Greenwood. The Hermitage, the home of Will Bates Grant and *The Friendly Quill*, is atop Blueberry Hill where one can see for miles around. It's a most attractive place, deep in the woods, except where he has made a clearance for his garden and loggia where he can loll about at ease. "Will o' the Greenwood" has an extensive library of amateur papers, publications and books. Burton Crane dubbed me "The Gentle Philosopher" because I didn't go after folks hammer and tongs. I dubbed him "The Great Elizabethan," and he does not enjoy it.

June 25, 1944

*Bavardage* has a selective mailing list, I admit it. The magazine is mailed to all who care enough for it to request it. [Harold] Ellis, for example, complains about the selective list, but fails to write a postal, while it takes days to complete the average amateur publication, even if it be but the size of *The Hobo*.

August 13, 1944

Walter Squire Goff is one who has been dropped from our mailing. If Goff wants *Bavardage*, Goff must do as have others...write to have his name on the list...and if he does any demanding...

P.S. No word at this writing from Goff.

August 23, 1944

All has been quiet after the convention. I am very glad you had a good time. It has been said that to become a real amateur you must publish a paper and attend a convention; and after that, says your great aunt Sophronisba, there is no hope for you.

September 9, 1944

At the Bellevue in Philadelphia I was custodian of the ballots. I also roomed with [George] Houtain to reduce expenses. But, I placed the ballots in the safe of the hotel with instructions that the package was to be delivered only to myself. Reverend that he is today, George's reputation then was of the flimsiest; and I was taking no chances. As a politician, nothing was secure or safe with George about. As for [Charles] Heins, in one of his Phoenix you will find his boast where they brought in anyone and supplied the credential and cash to join...It's politics and no real hard feelings.

September 25, 1944

Bre'r Alfred [Babcock], as I have written him many times, rushes into print when he gets an idea and then gets into hot water. On occasion he has some good ideas, but never thinks them out as he should. He has ideas about his office. I suggested that we had a constitution and that he follow it. Initiative is a good thing as a rule, but there are times when one can go too far.

September 30, 1944

Will you announce in the next *Mailer* that Will Bates Grant is in the hospital and suggest that members send him words of cheer and to josh him along mentioning that the attractiveness, etc. of the nurses are retarding his recovery. Don't mention my name...it is a way of mine to help show appreciation of his visits to me when I was incarcerated, now that I am unable to visit him.

October 17, 1944

Vondy [Edna Hyde McDonald] I've known since she was in her 'teens, and what a delightful girl she was, and is. I have always regretted that she failed to do more with her poetry, for she would have gone far.

In many ways Willametta [Turnepseed, now Keffer] reminds me of Vondy in Vondy's days of activity. The same likeableness, the same push and go-ahead, the same degree of sensitiveness.

November 10, 1944

Will [Bates Grant] was buried Sunday; and in attendance at his funeral were Harold Bessom, Edward Cole, Tim Burr Thrift and Michael White. I was unable to attend. His collection of amateur papers is to go to the Worcester Library<sup>12</sup> of Worcester.

Mike White is a quitter! And you may broadcast it far and wide. He heartily approved of having the small press and a couple cases of type here. He said printing *Bavardage* would keep me occupied, and he had a fine spiel. So, when Mrs. Parker arrived home, I suggested that he use his persuasive eloquence upon Grandma. He quit, and quit cold...not only that, ran away in "disorder," leaving me a rear guard without support. Ain't it awful to be henpecked!

November 21, 1944

Got a nice letter from Tommy Whitbread and an advance copy of *The Berkshire Breeze*. For a first effort Tommy did well with his printing, far better than I with mine. I had one of those earlier small presses where the type was set in the chase, and I set it from the wrong end!

December 7, 1944

All we compose is, in a certain sense, rewrites; but we give our own personal touch, our own words, our own construction. A member has the right to publish such matter as suits his particular fancy; as an amateur he is morally bound to give space to amateur affairs.

We oldsters are slowly, but none the less surely, petering out, and with the same sureness it devolves upon you youngsters to carry on for us.

February 1, 1945

Editor Crane has left for parts unknown, and Vondy has taken over. It is a tough spot to be put in, particularly when you lack the equipment such as had Crane. But Vondy will do a good job of it.

A letter from [William] Gander of The Red River Rambler reports that he was bucked up considerable

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<sup>12</sup>Parker probably intended to write the American Antiquarian Society of Worcester.

with the favorable notice given him in the December *Amateur* and hopes to retain my good opinion. His is the only reply, outside of Thrift, who has paid any attention to my comments. It was the teenagers whom I most wished to hear from and so could add more in the way of encouragement.

April 24, 1945

To claim that there is nothing to write about is an expression of editorial weakness. The very fact that there is nothing to write about becomes a matter for discussion. Wordsworth best expresses this lack of something to write about in this well-known excerpt from "Peter Bill":

A primrose by a river's brim  
A yellow primrose was to him,  
And it was nothing more.

Right now things have taken a turn with me that makes printing very much of an uncertainty. I've had a seance with "the gentleman in the little black bag," as [Sheldon] Wesson dubbed him; and, as the matter stands, I have had my sentence to this room extended for an indeterminate period.

May 21, 1945

The other day I carefully negotiated the stairs and slowly wended my way to the printshop, when my very suspicious lady accosted me and demanded to know just what I intended doing. Why, I just looked in to see if the dust had collected to any appreciable extent over the presses and type cases. Words of one syllable followed in a voice most emphatic, and it was a demand for unconditional surrender. The tale of woe was stressed to the MD that very day, and he was fifty per cent encouraging. He suggested that it might improve my eyesight if I gave a bit of attention to the type only now and then when the weather permitted.

July 1, 1945

This week's mail brought a chatty letter from Bob Northrup, now in Germany. Apparently there is a mimeograph close by, and his chief interest is to manufacture a perfectly good reason whereby he may have its use. He did not say so in so many words; but you and I, being amateurs, can read between the lines. Not that he has all the time in the world, but leave it to an amateur to find time.

The last *Amateur* was mighty good, and Vondy deserves mountains of credit. Big numbers are all very well, but it is a mark of ability to produce a smaller and more capably edited paper. Heins gave us a very large and generous volume but, unlike the one just closing, was lacking in literary merit.

July 24, 1945

How large an official organ we may have under Bill Haywood depends upon the amount of money he has at his disposal. He has the ability. Has he a full knowledge of the association? Is he sufficiently imbued with the history and ideals of the NAPA? Time will tell. Bill will do his best to give the association a worthwhile organ. And "Tillie" will help, be sure of that.

July 27, 1945

Years ago it was Hadley Smith's stunt to throw out the proxies any and every time he could when his candidate appeared to be losing. He and [Charles] Burger were our trickiest politicians with Heins right up front with them. They succeeded at New York in 1902 and elected Tony Wills, one of the hottest and most exciting conventions of the association. Houtain, like Heins, was a yes-man...What the National needs is a shot in the arm of a really good political fight.

September 1, 1946

Miss Turnepseed was here for a brief stay last week, a stay that was all too short. She arrived during housecleaning, which may or may not have shortened her stay...Do you know of anyone who would care to purchase this outfit of mine? I might decide to keep one case of type and the hand press in the hope that I might be able to resume, but frankly I have doubts. Do not advertise this in your paper, please; it will be tough enough to have it go.

September 13, 1946

As a publisher I am through. However, I hope to continue as a contributor. As a life member and ex-president, I do not need an activity; but I've been too long active to go on the shelf.

December 28, 1955

The old house hasn't been the same since Mrs. Parker passed on [1953]...Tempus must fugit.

December 26, 1956

I miss the printshop, but it was to be, I guess. The blizzard piled snow on the roof of the printshop which collapsed under the weight, ruining just about everything.

Amateurs drop in occasionally. Being alone, I am unable to entertain as I'd like. But, I did have Vondy, Ed Cole, Dorie Moitoret, and Wallace Tibbets.

December 16, 1959

The enclosed picture of me (on the cover) will remind you of a visit you made to 114 and is offered as an expression of regret in failing to meet you at the convention last July. We did have a few visitors and I was very glad to see them, Charley Russell in particular, whom I hadn't seen since Philadelphia in 1906. And to my surprise, as well as to the surprise of Russell and Cole, I knew him at once.

The photograph was taken by Wesson on his first visit, and a remarkably good likeness. Perhaps you may remember. But enough.

With best wishes,

Cordially yours,  
Charles A. A. Parker

## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

I have to thank Trustee Stan Oliner for suggesting that a number of *The Fossil* be dedicated to Charles A. A. Parker. To help make this happen, Stan loaned me a box of precious materials relating to Mr. Parker, including early bound volumes of *The Literary Gem* (once the property of Parker's associate Ethel May Johnston-Myers) and a large number of Parker's chapbook publications of the 1920s and 1930s, when he was also issuing his literary magazine *L'Alouette*. The photograph of Parker's home at 114 Riverside in Medford, Massachusetts and the photograph of Parker taken by Sheldon Wesson also appear here through Stan's courtesy. Stan's well-deserved Gold Composing Stick Award recognizes over fifty years of achievement in amateur journalism, most recently highlighted by his coordination of the rescue of the Daniel Graham ajay collection. I also thank Stan for relieving me as Chair of The Fossils' LAJ Committee, so that I can concentrate my energies on my duties as editor of *The Fossil*. I hope that the future holds a rich diversity and wealth of resources as respects institutional holdings of amateur journals.

I am also grateful to Guy Miller for providing corrected copy for the reprint of the selections from his letters from Charles A. A. Parker which originally appeared in *The National Amateur* for December 1987 and to Louise Lincoln and her co-scribe A. Walrus for the poem in honor of Guy Miller's eighty-fifth birthday. Louise will be celebrating her own ninety-ninth birthday—the start of her one hundredth year of life—on February 12, 2011. Guy Miller hopes to be with her again in Tucson to help celebrate her birthday, as part of a planned month-long visit to his former student Ken Metzgar.

Guy and I both thank Gary Bossler for helping to bring *The Fossil* into the twenty-first century with his coordination of our design and printing starting with the October 2010 number (with its beautiful color covers!). Starting with my WordPerfect copy for the text portion of *The Fossil* and illustrative material in various formats, Gary uses his magic to deliver a well-designed *Fossil* to a professional printer. Gary's magic has also permitted our Webmaster David Tribby to begin posting PDFs of *The Fossil* (with illustrations fully embedded!) on our website ([www.thefossils.org](http://www.thefossils.org)) beginning with the October 2010 number. In recognition of Gary's contributions, I have given him credit as Publisher & Designer beginning with this number of *The Fossil*. I am equally grateful to our President Guy Miller, whose Pot Pourri Press provided these same services during the first six years of my editorship of *The Fossil*, from the number dated October 2004 through the number dated July 2010. Guy's services to *The Fossils* over more than fifty years of membership would require a small dissertation of their own for enumeration. His work spans half of our organizational history, from the Cole-McDonald "honor society" of the forties and fifties to the present.

If *The Fossil* is to prosper in the coming years, it needs a diversity of contributors. Perhaps our new, improved format will attract some contributors from outside our own ranks. Our subscriber Dale Speirs has already done yeoman's work in contributing a wonderful article on round-robin publications to our October 2010 number and a wonderful bibliography of nineteenth-century private press items to our October 2009 number. Bill Groveman generously provided some commentary for the photographs from his ajay scrapbook which also appeared in our October 2010 number and has generously done some editing on the Metchap history slated for publication in a future number.

But it to our membership that we must look for our primary support. Any contribution, large or small, for these pages is very welcome. Was there an ajay who particularly encouraged you in your involvement in our hobby? If so, a small sketch to honor your mentor would be very welcome. Photographs and reminiscences of past ajay gatherings are also very welcome. I do wish to thank *Fossil* Kent Clair Chamberlain for the occasional short poems which have adorned our numbers, as well as for the donations which have helped with the cost of reproducing illustrations for *The Fossil*.

From a hobby alumni social group to an ajay honor society to the present, The Fossils have evolved over the years. Our original membership criterion of activity prior to 1890 was performance eased to thirty, and then fifteen years, of ajay activity over the years. Today, anyone interested in our mission of preserving and recording the history of this wonderful hobby is welcome as a member of The Fossils. So long as interest in the amateur journalism hobby endures, I believe the prospects for an organization dedicated to the preservation and writing of its history will be good.

I hope The Fossil under my editorship has done a tolerable job of reflecting the rich history of our hobby for its first century, say the period 1850-1950. The portrait of Charles A. A. Parker in this number rounds out a series which has included luminaries of ajay's formative era like Ernest A. Edkins and Edna Hyde McDonald. Perhaps coverage has been better for the half-century 1900-1950 than for the prior period 1850-1900—I am after all an unreconstructed fan and admirer of the writings of H. P. Lovecraft and the 1900-1950 half-century includes his period 1914-1937 in the hobby. I hope that the glorious resources available for the 1850-1900 period at the American Antiquarian Society will eventually facilitate new writing about that period of the amateur journalism hobby. If anything, The Fossil for the last six years has probably been weakest in its portrayal of the period 1950 to the present—the memorial issues devoted to Helen V. Wesson, Victor A. Moitoret, and James F. Guinane being notable exceptions. The period 1950 to the present is, after all, the period of living memory, and it is the period that I hope living amateur journalists will help us better to recall in future issues of The Fossil. Please think about contributing something from your living memory to a future issue—recollections of notable ajays, local clubs, memorable zines—all is welcome!

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# THE LITERARY GEM.

VOL. 1. • MARCH 1900. • NO. 1.

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Price 25 cents.

BY  
ARTHUR H. GOODENOUGH

# The National Amateur.

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE NATIONAL AMATEUR PRESS ASSOCIATION.

VOL. XXXII.

MALDEN, MASS., JULY, 1910.

NO. 6

## PROGRAM

Of the Thirty-fifth Annual Convention of the National Amateur Press Association to be held at Cleveland, Ohio, July 4, 5 and 6, 1910, as outlined by T. B. Thrift, Chairman Entertainment Committee, which, in addition to the regular order of business as specified by the By-Laws of the Constitution, will be carried out.

### Monday, July 4

At 9 A. M., reception to the delegates; at 10 A. M., address of welcome by Tim Thrift, President of the C. A. P. C. and Chairman of Committees.

In the afternoon, after adjournment, there will be a two-hour trolley ride about the city in a private car, tendered by the C. A. P. C.

In the evening, at 7.30, a "Talkfest" will be held at the House of Thrift, 10010 South Boulevard. Light refreshments will be served.

### Tuesday, July 5

As this will be the day of the election of officers the afternoon has been left open in order that as much time as necessary may be taken for that important business.

In the evening the C. A. P. Club will act as hosts to the delegates at a theatre party to the Euclid Avenue Garden Theatre.

### Wednesday, July 6

In the afternoon, after adjournment, a trolley ride will be given to Euclid Beach and there each delegate will be furnished with tickets for the various attractions.

In the evening, at 8, the banquet will be held at Finley's. The Beefsteak Dungeon and Café Egregious have been reserved for the exclusive use of the delegates and the affair will be unique in every respect. A good toast list is promised.

#### ENTERTAINMENT COMMITTEE

Tim Thrift, Chairman; C. B. Harris, S. E. Loveman, A. V. Fingulin, Mrs. Thrift.

#### RECEPTION COMMITTEE

Tim Thrift, Chairman; A. V. Fingulin, S. E. Loveman, Richard Kevern, Mrs. Ziegler, Mrs. Thrift.

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

##### HOTEL RATES

Room, without bath, one person, \$1 day up
Room, " " two persons \$2 " "
Room, with bath, one person, \$2 " "
Room, " " two persons, \$3 " "

These rates are all based on European plan. Make all reservations for rooms direct with The Hotel Euclid.

The Hotel Euclid is one of the best hotels in Cleveland; centrally located on Euclid Avenue in the down-town district; fireproof construction; accommodations and service first-class in every particular. A handsomely appointed Assembly Room on the second floor will be used for the sessions of the convention. The headquarters of the C. A. P. C. will be on this floor. Upon arrival, all delegates will please register there and receive their badges and programs.

Arrangements have been made with Finley's Phalansterie for meals. A room

will be set aside for the exclusive use of the delegates for noon and evening meals. An excellent meal can be secured from 25c up. This will enable delegates to hold expenses down to \$2.00 a day, if desired. The Phalansterie is only two blocks from the hotel, on the same street.

The banquet will be \$2.00 a plate. Tickets may be obtained any time before the event from Tim Thrift, Chairman of Committees, box 177, Cleveland. All inquiries regarding the convention should also be addressed to him. It is desirable that you notify him if you expect to attend the meeting. This will assist the committees greatly in arranging details.

Attend the convention. It promises to be a hot one. You can't afford to miss it.

## THE SPRING MACAZINES

After a year that has been characterized by some inactivity, a number of editors have come to the front during the spring months with such really noteworthy issues that after all the record for the year is considerably enhanced. One is especially gratified by the editions *de luxe* that have appeared. Without any desire to slight the thumb nail journals, which are always welcome and provide a very desirable index to the activity of the amateurs, it cannot be denied that well-written matter presented in dainty and diversified garbs is a joy forever and a potent means for interesting prospective members in the hobby.

The Aeolian, by James Gallagher, of Lancaster, Ohio, is a fat but exceedingly attractive little magazine brim full of contributions from amateurs for the most part new to the Association. Mr. Gallagher's poem "Aurora" is a well-words picture of the dawning day, although there are a few slips to betray the hand of the amateur. For instance, one could hardly speak of darkness as being "inane" as the word has lost its physical application in modern usage. Two other bits of verse by the same writer entitled "Memories" and "Fragmentum" are greatly inferior in merit, both of them lacking point. The first chapter of a continued story by Milton K. Burns has all the elements of a penny thriller as far as it goes, not even the time-honored "Gimme them papers" being omitted. As the reader reaches the end of the installment to find the heroes crashing downward into a vast abyss, it is fervently to be hoped that the next issue of this journal will not be long delayed. An excellent description of the hotels in Yellowstone Park and several other well-written articles complete a magazine of

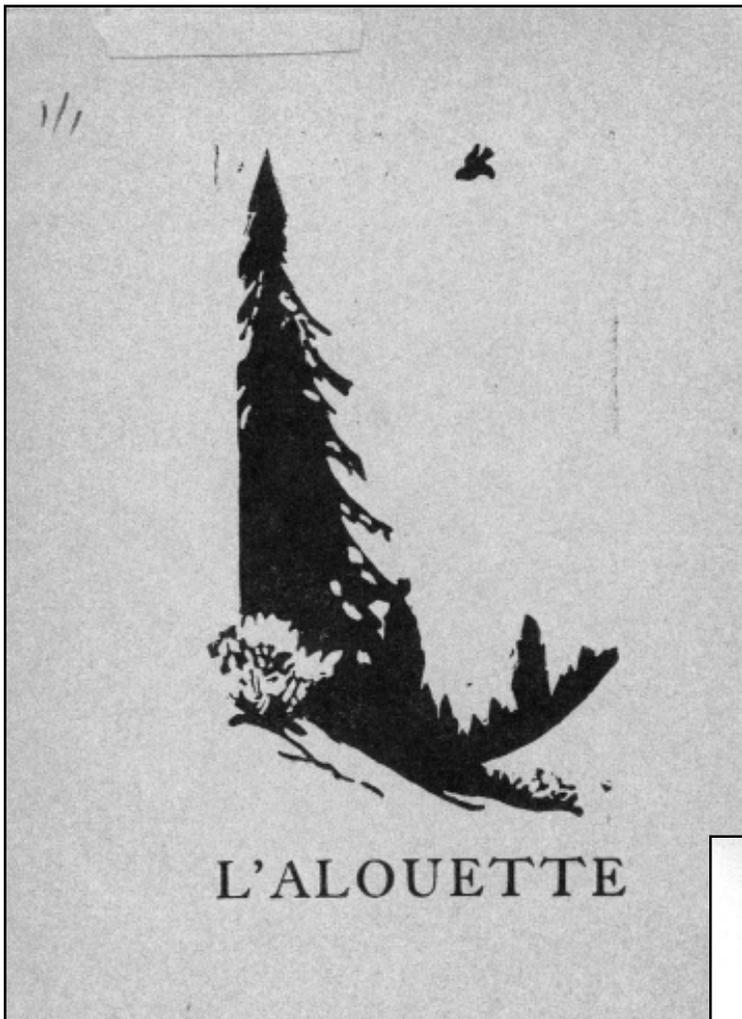
rather unusual and varied interest. The neat typography and the judicious use of stock cuts add greatly to its attractiveness.

Justin B. Atkinson, by virtue of his Watchout and Puritan, issued in March and May respectively, takes his place among the foremost of the younger publishers. The Watchout with its neat black-faced type and salmon-colored initials looks actually good enough to eat, and the contents, while scanty, are full of life and interest. The Puritan, with a similar pleasing make-up, is much more pretentious as to contents, the editor having secured from Morton one of his usual sterling essays as a leader and supplemented it with poems by Mrs. Dowe, Goodenough and Greenfield.

Two more numbers of Kramer's Ozark have appeared, each of them admirable in many respects. The principal contributions are from the prolific pen of Henry Wehking, whose poetry is showing some improvement, although there is still an occasional note that does not ring quite true. In the March number, Miss Genevieve O'Grady's "Amateur Soliloquy" is an unusually clever parody on the much abused passage in "Hamlet." While one may not always agree with Mr. Kramer's editorial opinions, it must be conceded that he has the ability to put a certain snap into his work that makes it very readable.

The arrival of a "Lucky Dog" is always an event, and the gorgeous April number which came only today is no exception. The Pilgrim's description of a scene in a slum tenement is realistic to the point of gruesomeness. Mrs. Thrift's critique of "Wuthering Heights" is interesting and makes one who is a stranger to the book want to get it and read it immediately. And last but not least there is a "fragment" by Samuel Loveman written in that style of his which no one could—or would—attempt to imitate. The poor ordinary layman feels that here at least is true poetry because forsooth he doesn't understand what it is all about.

It was by the merest chance that the critic was lent a copy of the January Quaker, the editor for some reason not having seen fit to favor him with this issue. Mr. Oliphant has enlarged the paper to the standard amateur size and bettered its appearance in every way until now it is fully worthy of a place on the roll of honor. What makes this issue especially distinctive, however, is that it ushers a new luminary above the amateur horizon. Even the most fault-finding critic will have



# L'ALOUETTE

# L'ALOUETTE

Vol. 1 JANUARY 1921 No. 1

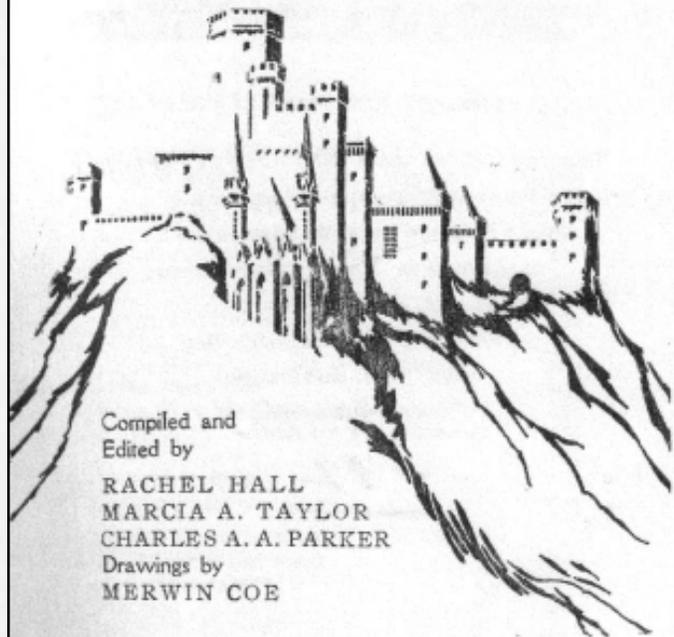
## THE CRITIC'S CORNER

GENERALIZING is a dangerous thing, but there may be some benefit in pausing from time to time in the course of a flow of specific criticism to rehearse some of the fundamentals of writing. As a news editor for many years the writer has edited or rewritten literally thousands of news "stories" turned in by correspondents, some experienced and well educated, others almost illiterate, and by staff editors and reporters, ranging from the "cub" to the man of years' work in the newspaper field. The rules and practices governing the writing of news are not always applicable to other forms of literature—yes, news writing can be and sometimes actually is literature!—but by an intelligent modification the principles underlying them may be found very useful by any author.

# THREADS IN TAPESTRY

1 9 3 5

## AN ANTHOLOGY OF VERSE



Compiled and  
Edited by  
RACHEL HALL  
MARCIA A. TAYLOR  
CHARLES A. A. PARKER  
Drawings by  
MERWIN COE

1935  
C. A. A. PARKER  
Publisher  
MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

# Bavardage

a periodical of sorts



Spring 1943

¶—Every object you see, every word you read, every sound you hear, is carried off by the mind to a quiet corner where it can study and fondle the idea.

—Helen Adam in *The Open Door*.

¶—The fundament of milk toast is bread, familiarly called the Staff of Life and said by the Palmists to strengthen the heart of man. I pass by with scorn the armor plated hand grenades served by the New York hotels in what is supposed to be a bread-basket.

—Frank Roe Batchelder in *Literary Newsette*.

Forgetting is an armor  
It takes a while to make;  
But O, in one brief moment  
A heart can break.

—Eleanor A. Chaffee in *Soundings*.

¶—The letterwriters won at the New York Convention due to four reasons: First they had written lots of letters. Second, part of the backbone of the association, the ex-presidents and life members, were ineligible to vote, as at previous conventions. Third, the young printers were being called to the colors. Fourth, Parker had published four large issues of *Bavardage* in the preceding year.

—Alfred P. Babcock in *Semi-Occasional Kitty Kat*.

¶—Again and again it has proved true that when the energy of a generation of active young members wanes and the association has one foot on a banana peel and the other in the grave, the older members have awaked from lethargy, salvaged the wreck, and developed another active generation.

—Edward H. Cole in *Interlude*.

¶—Letters opened!—to be sure they are, and that's the reason why I always put in my opinion of the German-Austrian scoundrels. There is not an Italian who loathes them more than I do; and whatever I could do to scour Italy and the earth of their infamous oppression, would be done *con amore*.

—George Gordon in *Memoirs*.

¶—I learn things every day. Have about decided that the best way is not to search or ask but just guess. People are very ready to correct you if you are wrong but don't give a tinker's dam about helping to save your making a mistake.

—Alfred P. Babcock in *Memoirs*.

No, Pain, we are not strangers!  
We've lain in a close embrace:  
But you gave my life new meaning,—  
You taught me a healing grace.

—From *Rusty's Laureate Poem*.

¶—I have always been a Happy Hooligan and probably always will be.

—Mabel M. Forrer in *Memoirs*.

Life is short, you might as well  
Make it merry too;  
Love is but a carnival,  
What's a kiss,—or two?  
—Vondy.

### Resurgam

C. A. A. P.



#### BURMESE PROVERB:

These days and nights pass like wild parrots in flight . . . let them go to their nests in peace.

—Maj. E. C. Parker, V. C.

From a letter, written many years ago, to his nephew in Boston.

AGE, sometimes, is a certificate of virtue, as in old wine, observes the Jack o' Diamond; and sometimes quite the reverse, as in an egg like . . . Sophronisba notes that up to a certain age limit birthdays are celebrated; beyond . . . they

Bavardage interior pages - Spring 1943

## THE FOSSILS

<http://www.thefossils.org/>

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. (The Library of Amateur Journalism Collection is not yet open for use at University of Wisconsin at Madison.) 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.