Domesday Book

by Edgar Lee Masters

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DOMESDAY BOOK

SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY

By EDGAR LEE MASTERS

SOME PRESS OPINIONS

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DOMESDAY BOOK

BY EDGAR LEE MASTERS AUTHOR OF “SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY,” ETC.

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Printed in the United States of America

TO MY FATHER HARDIN WALLACE MASTERS SPLENDID INDIVIDUAL OF A PASSING SPECIES—AN AMERICAN

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DOMESDAY BOOK

DOMESDAY BOOK

Take any life you choose and study it: It gladdens, troubles, changes many lives. The life goes out, how many things result? Fate drops a stone, and to the utmost shores The circles spread. Now, such a book were endless, If every circle, riffle should be traced Of any life—and so of Elenor Murray, Whose life was humble and whose death was tragic. And yet behold the riffles spread, the lives That are affected, and the secrets gained Of lives she never knew of, as for that. For even the world could not contain the books That should be written, if all deeds were traced, Effects, results, gains, losses, of her life, And of her death. Concretely said, in brief, A man and woman have produced this child; What was the child’s pre-natal circumstance? How did her birth affect the father, mother? What did their friends, old women, relatives Take from the child in feeling, joy or pain? What of her childhood friends, her days at school, Her teachers, girlhood sweethearts, lovers later, When she became a woman? What of these? And what of those who got effects because They knew this Elenor Murray? Then she dies. Read how the human

secrets are exposed In many lives because she died—not all Lives, by her death affected, written here. The reader may trace out such other riffles As come to him—this book must have an end. Enough is shown to show what could be told If we should write a world of books. In brief One feature of the plot elaborates The closeness of one life, however humble With every life upon this globe. In truth I sit here in Chicago, housed and fed, And think the world secure, at peace, the clock Just striking three, in Europe striking eight: And in some province, in some palace, hut, Some words are spoken, or a fisticuff Results between two brawlers, and for that A blue-eyed boy, my grandson, we may say, Not even yet in seed, but to be born A half a century hence, is by those words, That fisticuff, drawn into war in Europe, Shrieks from a bullet through the groin, and lies Under the sod of France. But to return To Elenor Murray, I have made a book Called Domesday Book, a census spiritual Taken of our America, or in part Taken, not wholly taken, it may be. For William Merival, the coroner, Who probed the death of Elenor Murray goes As far as may be, and beyond his power, In diagnosis of America, While finding out the cause of death. In short Becomes a William the Conqueror that way In making up a Domesday Book for us.... Of this a little later. But before We touch upon the Domesday book of old, We take up Elenor Murray, show her birth; Then skip all time between and show her death; Then take up Coroner Merival—who was he? Then trace the life of Elenor Murray through The witnesses at the inquest on the body Of Elenor Murray;—also letters written, And essays written, conversations heard, But all evoked by Elenor Murray's death. And by the way trace riffles here and there.... A word now on the Domesday book of old: Remember not a book of doom, but a book Of houses; domus, house, so domus book. And this book of the death of Elenor Murray Is not a book of doom, though showing too How fate was woven round her, and the souls That touched her soul; but is a house book too Of riches, poverty, and weakness, strength Of this our country. If you take St. Luke You find an angel came to Mary, said: Hail! thou art highly favored, shalt conceive,

Bring forth a son, a king for David's throne:— So tracing life before the life was born. We do the same for Elenor Murray, though No man or angel said to Elenor's mother: You have found favor, you are blessed of God, You shall conceive, bring forth a daughter blest, And blessing you. Quite otherwise the case, As being blest or blessing, something like Perhaps, in that desire, or flame of life, Which gifts new souls with passion, strength and love.... This is the manner of the girl's conception, And of her birth:—...

THE BIRTH OF ELENOR MURRAY

What are the mortal facts With which we deal? The man is thirty years, Most vital, in a richness physical, Of musical heart and feeling; and the woman Is twenty-eight, a cradle warm and rich For life to grow in. And the time is this: This Henry Murray has a mood of peace, A splendor as of June, has for the time Quelled anarchy within him, come to law, Sees life a thing of beauty, happiness, And fortune glow before him. And the mother, Sunning her feathers in his genial light, Takes longing and has hope. For body's season The blood of youth leaps in them like a fountain, And splashes musically in the crystal pool Of quiet days and hours. They rise refreshed, Feel all the sun's strength flow through muscles, nerves; Extract from food no poison, only health; Are sensitive to simple things, the turn Of leaves on trees, flowers springing, robins' songs. Now such a time must prosper love's desire, Fed gently, tended wisely, left to mount In flame and light. A prospering fate occurs To send this Henry Murray from his wife, And keep him absent for a month—inspire A daily letter, written of the joys, And hopes they have together, and omit, Forgotten for the time, old aches, despairs, Forebodings for the future. What results? For thirty days her youth, and youthful blood Under the stimulus of absence, letters, And growing longing, laves and soothes and feeds, Like streams that nourish fields, her body's being. Enriches cells to plumpness, dim, asleep, Which stretch, expand and

turn, the prototype Of a baby newly born; which after the cry At midnight, taking breath an hour before,— That cry which is of things most tragical, The tragedy most poignant—sleeps and rests, And flicks its little fingers, with closed eyes Senses with visions of unopened leaves This monstrous and external sphere, the world, And what moves in it. So she thinks of him, And longs for his return, and as she longs The rivers of her body run and ripple, Refresh and quicken her. The morning's light Flutters upon the ceiling, and she lies And stretches drowsily in the breaking slumber Of fluctuant emotion, calls to him With spirit and flesh, until his very name Seems like to form in sound, while lips are closed, And tongue is motionless, beyond herself, And in the middle spaces of the room Calls back to her. And Henry Murray caught, In letters, which she sent him, all she felt, Re-kindled it and sped it back to her. Then came a lover's fancy in his brain: He would return unlooked for—who, the god, Inspired the fancy?—find her in what mood She might be in his absence, where no blur Of expectation of his coming changed Her color, flame of spirit. And he bought Some chablis and a cake, slipped noiselessly Into the chamber where she lay asleep, And had a light upon her face before She woke and saw him. How she cried her joy! And put her arms around him, burned away In one great moment from a goblet of fire, Which over-flowed, whatever she had felt Of shrinking or distaste, or loveless hands At any time before, and burned it there Till even the ashes sparkled, blew away In incense and in light. She rose and slipped A robe on and her slippers; drew a stand Between them for the chablis and the cake. And drank and ate with him, and showed her teeth, While laughing, shaking curls, and flinging back Her head for rapture, and in little crows. And thus the wine caught up the resting cells, And flung them in the current, and their blood Flows silently and swiftly, running deep; And their two hearts beat like the rhythmic chimes Of little bells of steel made blue by flame, Because their lives are ready now, and life Cries out to life for life to be. The fire, Lit in the altar of their eyes, is blind For mysteries that urge, the blood of them In separate streams would mingle, hurried on

By energy from the heights of ancient mountains; The God himself, and Life, the Gift of God. And as result the hurrying microcosms Out of their beings sweep, seek out, embrace, Dance for the rapture of freedom, being loosed; Unite, achieve their destiny, find the cradle Of sleep and growth, take up the cryptic task Of maturation and of fashioning; Where no light is except the light of God To light the human spirit, which emerges From nothing that man knows; and where a face, To be a woman's or a man's takes form: Hands that shall gladden, lips that shall enthrall With songs or kisses, hands and lips, perhaps, To hurt and poison. All is with the fates, And all beyond us. Now the seed is sown, The flower must grow and blossom. Something comes, Perhaps, to whisper something in the ear That will exert itself against the mass That grows, proliferates; but for the rest The task is done. One thing remains alone: It is a daughter, woman, that you bear, A whisper says to her—It is her wish— Her wish materializes in a voice Which says: the name of Elenor is sweet, Choose that for her—Elenor, which is light, The light of Helen, but a lesser light In this our larger world; a light to shine, And lure amid the tangled woodland ways Of this our life; a firefly beating wings Here, there amid the thickets of hard days. And to go out at last, as all lights do, And leave a memory, perhaps, but leave No meaning to be known of any man.... So Elenor Murray is conceived and born. ———— But now this Elenor Murray being born, We start not with her life, but with her death, The finding of her body by the river. And then as Coroner Merival takes proof Her life comes forth, until the Coroner Traces it to the moment of her death. And thus both life and death of her are known. This the beginning of the mystery:—

FINDING OF THE BODY

Elenor Murray, daughter of Henry Murray, The druggist at LeRoy, a village near The shadow of Starved Rock, this Elenor But recently returned from France, a heart

Who gave her service in the world at war, Was found along the river's shore, a mile Above Starved Rock, on August 7th, the day Year 1679, LaSalle set sail For Michilmackinac to reach Green Bay In the Griffin, in the winter snow and sleet, Reaching "Lone Cliff," Starved Rock its later name, Also La Vantum, village of the tribe Called Illini. This may be taken to speak The symbol of her life and fate. For first This Elenor Murray comes into this life, And lives her youth where the Rock's shadow falls, As if to say her life should starve and lie Beneath a shadow, wandering in the world, As Cavalier LaSalle did, born at Rouen, Shot down on Trinity River, Texas. She Searches for life and conquest of herself With the same sleepless spirit of LaSalle; And comes back to the shadow of the Rock, And dies beneath its shadow. Cause of death? Was she like Sieur LaSalle shot down, or choked, Struck, poisoned? Let the coroner decide. Who, hearing of the matter, takes the body And brings it to LeRoy, is taking proofs; Lets doctors cut the body, probe and peer To find the cause of death. And so this morning Of August 7th, as a hunter walks— Looking for rabbits maybe, aimless hunting— Over the meadow where the Illini's La Vantum stood two hundred years before, Gun over arm in readiness for game, Sees some two hundred paces to the south Bright colors, red and blue; thinks off the bat A human body lies there, hurries on And finds the girl's dead body, hatless head, The hat some paces off, as if she fell In such way that the hat dashed off. Her arms Lying outstretched, the body half on side, The face upturned to heaven, open eyes That might have seen Starved Rock until the eyes Sank down in darkness where no image comes. This hunter knew the body, bent and looked; Gave forth a gasp of horror, leaned and touched The cold hand of the dead: saw in her pocket, Sticking above the pocket's edge a banner, And took it forth, saw it was Joan of Arc In helmet and cuirass, kneeling in prayer. And in the banner a paper with these words: "To be brave, and not to flinch." And standing there This hunter knew that Elenor Murray came Some days before from France, was visiting An aunt, named Irma Leese beyond LeRoy. What was she doing by the river's shore? He saw no mark upon her,

and no blood; No pistol by her, nothing disarranged Of hair or clothing, showing struggle—nothing To indicate the death she met. Who saw her Before or when she died? How long had death Been on her eyes? Some hours, or over-night. The hunter touched her hand, already stiff; And saw the dew upon her hair and brow, And a blue deadness in her eyes, like pebbles. The lips were black, and bottle flies had come To feed upon her tongue. 'Tis ten o'clock, The coolness of the August night unchanged By this spent sun of August. And the moon Lies dead and wasted there beyond Starved Rock. The moon was beautiful last night! To walk Beside the river under the August moon Took Elenor Murray's fancy, as he thinks. Then thinking of the aunt of Elenor Murray, Who should be notified, the hunter runs To tell the aunt—but there's the coroner— Is there not law the coroner should know? Should not the body lie, as it was found, Until the coroner takes charge of it? Should not he stand on guard? And so he runs, And from a farmer's house by telephone Sends word to Coroner Merival. Then returns And guards the body. Here is riffle first: The coroner sat with his traveling bags, Was closing up his desk, had planned a trip With boon companions, they were with him there; The auto waited at the door to take them To catch the train for northern Michigan. He closed the desk and they arose to go. Just then the telephone began to ring, The hunter at the other end was talking, And told of Elenor Murray. Merival Turned to his friends and said: "The jig is up. Here is an inquest, and of moment too. I cannot go, but you jump in the car, And go—you'll catch the train if you speed up." They begged him to permit his deputy To hold the inquest. Merival said "no," And waived them off. They left. He got a car And hurried to the place where Eleanor lay.... Now who was Merival the Coroner? For we shall know of Elenor through him, And know her better, knowing Merival.

THE CORONER

Merival, of a mother fair and good, A father sound in body and in mind, Rich

through three thousand acres left to him By that same father dying, mother dead These many years, a bachelor, lived alone In the rambling house his father built of stone Cut from the quarry near at hand, above The river's bend, before it meets the island Where Starved Rock rises. Here he had returned, After his Harvard days, took up the task Of these three thousand acres, while his father Aging, relaxed his hand. From farm to farm Rode daily, kept the books, bred cattle, sheep, Raised seed corn, tried the secrets of DeVries, And Burbank in plant breeding. Day by day, His duties ended, he sat at a window In a great room of books where lofty shelves Were packed with cracking covers; newer books Flowed over on the tables, round the globes And statuettes of bronze. Upon the wall The portraits hung of father and of mother, And two moose heads above the mantel stared, The trophies of a hunt in youth. So Merival At a bay window sat in the great room, Felt and beheld the stream of life and thought Flow round and through him, to a sound in key With his own consciousness, the murmurous voice Of his own soul. Along a lawn that sloped Some hundred feet to the river he would muse. Or through the oaks and elms and silver birches Between the plots of flowers and rows of box Look at the distant scene of hilly woodlands. And why no woman in his life, no face Smiling from out the summer house of roses, Such riotous flames against the distant green? And why no sons and daughters, strong and fair, To use these horses, ponies, tramp the fields, Shout from the tennis court, swim, skate and row? He asked himself the question many times, And gave himself the answer. It was this: At twenty-five a woman crossed his path— Let's have the story as the world believes it, Then have the truth. She was betrothed to him, But went to France to study, died in France. And so he mourned her, kept her face enshrined, Was wedded to her spirit, could not brook The coming of another face to blur This face of faces! So the story went Around the country. But his grief was not The grief they told. The pang that gnawed his heart, And took his spirit, dulled his man's desire Took root in shame, defeat, rejected love. He had gone east to meet her and to wed her, Now turned his thirtieth year;

when he arrived He found his dear bride flown, a note for him, Left with the mother, saying she had flown, And could not marry him, it would not do, She did not love him as a woman should Who makes a pact for life; her heart was set For now upon her music, she was off To France for study, wished him well, in truth— Some woman waited him who was his mate.... So Merival read over many times The letter, tried to find a secret hope Lodged back of words—was this a woman's way To lure him further, win him to more depths? He half resolved to follow her to France; Then as he thought of what he was himself In riches, breeding, place, and manliness His egotism rose, fed by the hurt: She might stay on in France for aught he cared! What was she, anyway, that she could lose Such happiness and love? for he had given In a great passion out of a passionate heart All that was in him—who was she to spurn A gift like this? Yet always in his heart Stirred something which by him was love and hate. And when the word came she had died, the word She loved a maestro, and the word like gas, Which poisons, creeps and is not known, that death Came to her somehow through a lawless love, Or broken love, disaster of some sort, His spirit withered with its bitterness. And in the years to come he feared to give With unreserve his heart, his leaves withheld From possible frost, dreamed on and drifted on Afraid to venture, having scarcely strength To seek and try, endure defeat again. Thus was his youth unsatisfied, and as hope Of something yet to be to fill his hope Died not, but with each dawn awoke to move Its wings, his youth continued past his years. The very cry of youth, which would not cease Kept all the dreams and passions of his youth Wakeful, expectant—kept his face and frame Rosy and agile as he neared the mark Of fifty years. But every day he sat As one who waited. What would come to him? What soul would seek him in this room of books? But yet no soul he found when he went forth, Breaking his solitude, to towns. What waste Thought Merival, of spirit, but what waste Of spirit in the lives he knew! What homes Where children starve for bread, or starve for love, Half satisfied, half-schooled are driven forth With aspirations broken, or with hopes Or talents bent

or blasted! O, what wives Drag through the cheerless days, what marriages Cling and exhaust to death, and warp and stain The children! If a business, like this farm, Were run on like economy, a year Would see its ruin! But he thought, at last, Of spiritual economy, so to save The lives of men and women, use their powers To ends that suit. And thus when on a time A miner lost his life there at LeRoy, And when the inquest found the man was killed Through carelessness of self, while full of drink, Merival, knowing that the drink was caused By hopeless toil and by a bitter grief Touching a daughter, who had strayed and died, First wondered if in cases like to this Good might result, if there was brought to light All secret things; and in the course of time, If many deaths were probed, a store of truth Might not be gathered which some genius hand Could use to work out laws, instructions, systems For saving and for using wasting spirits, So wasted in the chaos, in the senseless Turmoil and madness of this reckless life, Which treats the spirit as the cheapest thing, Since it is so abundant. Thoughts like these Led Merival to run for coroner. The people wondered why he sought the office. But when they gave it to him, and he used His private purse to seek for secret faults, In lives grown insupportable, for causes Which prompted suicide, the people wondered, The people murmured sometimes, and his foes Mocked or traduced his purpose. Merival The coroner is now two years in office When Henry Murray’s daughter Elenor Found by the river, gives him work to do In searching out her life’s fate, cause of death, How, in what manner, and by whom or what Said Elenor’s dead body came to death; And of all things which might concern the same, With all the circumstances pertinent, Material or in anywise related, Or anywise connected with said death. And as in other cases Merival Construed the words of law, as written above: All circumstances material or related, Or anywise connected with said death, To give him power as coroner to probe To ultimate secrets, causes intimate In birth, environment, crises of the soul, Grief, disappointment, hopes deferred or ruined. So now he exercised his power to strip This woman’s life of vestments, to lay bare Her soul, though other souls should run

and rave For nakedness and shame. So Merival Returning from the river with the body Of Elenor Murray thought about the woman; Recalled her school days in LeRoy—the night When she was graduated at the High School; thought About her father, mother, girlhood friends; And stories of her youth came back to him. The whispers of her leaving home, the trips She took, her father's loveless ways. And wonder For what she did and made of self, possessed His thinking; and the fancy grew in him No chance for like appraisal had been his Of human worth and waste, this man who knew Both life and books. And lately he had read The history of King William and his book. And even the night before this Elenor's body Was found beside the river—this he read, Perhaps, he thought, was reading it when Elenor Was struck down or was choked. How strange the hour Whose separate place finds Merival with a book, And Elenor with death, brings them together, And for result blends book and death!... He knew By Domesday Book King William had a record Of all the crown's possessions, had the names Of all land-holders, had the means of knowing The kingdom's strength for war; it gave the data How to increase the kingdom's revenue. It was a record in a case of titles, Disputed or at issue to appeal to. So Merival could say: My inquests show The country's wealth or poverty in souls, And what the country's strength is, who by right May claim his share-ship in the country's life; How to increase the country's glory, power. Why not a Domesday Book in which are shown A certain country's tenures spiritual? And if great William held great council once To make inquiry of the nation's wealth, Shall not I as a coroner in America, Inquiring of a woman's death, make record Of lives which have touched hers, what lives she touched; And how her death by surest logic touched This life or that, was cause of causes, proved The event that made events? So Merival Brought in a jury for the inquest work As follows: Winthrop Marion, learned and mellow, A journalist in Chicago, keeping still His residence at LeRoy. And David Borrow, A sunny pessimist of varied life, Ingenious thought, a lawyer widely read. And Samuel Ritter, owner of the bank, A classmate of the coroner at

Harvard. Llewellyn George, but lately come from China, A traveler, intellectual, anti-social Searcher for life and beauty, devotee Of such diversities as Nietzsche, Plato. Also a Reverend Maiworm noted for Charitable deeds and dreams. And Isaac Newfeldt Who in his youth had studied Adam Smith, And since had studied tariffs, lands and money, Economies of nations. And because They were the friends of Merival, and admired His life and work, they dropped their several tasks To serve as jurymen. The hunter came And told his story: how he found the body, What hour it was, and how the body lay; About the banner in the woman's pocket, Which Coroner Merival had taken, seen, And wondered over. For if Elenor Was not a Joan too, why treasure this? Did she take Joan's spirit for her guide? And write these words: "To be brave and not to flinch"? She wrote them; for her father said: "It's true That is her writing," when he saw the girl First brought to Merival's office. Merival Amid this business gets a telegram: Tom Norman drowned, one of the men with whom He planned this trip to Michigan. Later word Tom Norman and the other, Wilbur Horne Are in a motor-boat. Tom rises up To get the can of bait and pitches out, His friend leaps out to help him. But the boat Goes on, the engine going, there they fight For life amid the waves. Tom has been hurt, Somehow in falling, cannot save himself, And tells his friend to leave him, swim away. His friend is forced at last to swim away, And makes the mile to shore by hardest work. Tom Norman, dead, leaves wife and children caught In business tangles which he left to build New strength, to disentangle, on the trip. The rumor goes that Tom was full of drink, Thus lost his life. But if our Elenor Murray Had not been found beside the river, what Had happened? If the coroner had been there, And run the engine, steered the boat beside The drowning man, and Wilbur Horne—what drink Had caused the death of Norman? Or again, Perhaps the death of Elenor saved the life Of Merival, by keeping him at home And safe from boats and waters. Anyway, As Elenor Murray's body has no marks, And shows no cause of death, the coroner Sends out for Dr. Trace and talks to him Of things that end us, says to Dr. Trace

Perform the autopsy on Elenor Murray. And while the autopsy was being made By Dr. Trace, he calls the witnesses The father first of Elenor Murray, who Tells Merival this story:

HENRY MURRAY

Henry Murray, father of Elenor Murray, Willing to tell the coroner Merival All things about himself, about his wife, All things as well about his daughter, touching Her growth, and home life, if the coroner Would hear him privately, save on such things Strictly relating to the inquest, went To Coroner Merival's office and thus spoke: I was born here some sixty years ago, Was nurtured in these common schools, too poor To satisfy a longing for a college. Felt myself gifted with some gifts of mind, Some fineness of perception, thought, began By twenty years to gather books and read Some history, philosophy and science. Had vague ambitions, analyzed perhaps, To learn, be wise. Now if you study me, Look at my face, you'll see some trace of her: My brow is hers, my mouth is hers, my eyes Of lighter color are yet hers, this way I have of laughing, as I saw inside The matter deeper cause for laughter, hers. And my jaw hers betokening a will, Hers too, with chin that mitigates the will, Shading to softness as hers did. Our minds Had something too in common: first this will Which tempted fate to bend it, break it too— I know not why in her case or in mine. But when my will is bent I grow morose, And when it's broken, I become a scourge To all around me. Yes, I've visited A life-time's wrath upon my wife. This daughter When finding will subdued did not give up, But took the will for something else—went on By ways more prosperous; but alas! poor me! I hold on when defeated, and lie down When I am beaten, growling, ruminate Upon my failure, think of nothing else. But truth to tell, while we two were opposed, This daughter and myself, while temperaments Kept us at sword's points, while I saw in her Traits of myself I liked not, also traits Of the child's mother which I loathe,

because They have undone me, helped at least—no less I see this child as better than myself, And better than her mother, so admire. Also I never trusted her; as a child She would rush in relating lying wonders; She feigned emotions, purposes and moods; She was a little actress from the first, And all her high resolves from first to last Seemed but a robe with flowing sleeves in which Her hands could hide some theft, some secret spoil. When she was fourteen I could see in her The passionate nature of her mother—well You know a father's feelings when he sees His daughter sensed by youths and lusty men As one of the kind for capture. It's a theme A father cannot talk of with his daughter. He may say, "have a care," or "I forbid Your strolling, riding with these boys at night." But if the daughter stands and eyes the father, As she did me with flaming eyes, then goes Her way in secret, lies about her ways, The father can but wonder, watch or brood, Or switch her maybe, for I switched her once, And found it did no good. I needed here The mother's aid, but no, her mother saw Herself in the girl, and said she knew the girl, That I was too suspicious, out of touch With a young girl's life, desire for happiness. But when this Alma Bell affair came up, And the school principal took pains to say My daughter was too reckless of her name In strolling and in riding, then my wife Howled at me like a tigress: whip that man! And as my daughter cried, and my wife screeched, And called me coward if I let him go, I rushed out to the street and finding him Beat up his face, though almost dropping dead From my exertion. Well, the aftermath Was worse for me, not only by the talk, But in my mind who saw no gratitude In daughter or in mother for my deed. The daughter from that day took up a course More secret from my eyes, more variant From any wish I had. We stood apart, And grew apart thereafter. And from that day My wife grew worse in temper, worse in nerves. And though the people say she is my slave, That I alone, of all who live, have conquered Her spirit, still what despotism works Free of reprisals, or of breakings-forth When hands are here, not there? But to return: One takes up something for a livelihood, And dreams he'll leave it later, when in time His plans

mature; and as he earns and lives, With some time for his plans, hopes for the day When he may step forth from his olden life Into a new life made thus gradually, I hoped to be a lawyer; but to live I started as a drug clerk—look to-day I own that little drug store—here I am With drugs my years through, drugged myself at last. And as a clerk I met my wife—went mad About her, and I see in Elenor Her mother's gift for making fools of men. Why, I can scarce explain it, it's the flesh, But then it's spirit too. Such flaming up As came from flames like ours, but more of hers Burned in the children. Yes, it might be well For theorists in heredity to think About the matter. Well, but how about The flames that make the children? For this woman Too surely ruined me and sapped my life. You hear much of the vampire, but what wife Has not more chance for eating up a man? She has him daily, has him fast for years. A man can shake a vampire off, but how To shake a wife off, when the children come, And you must leave your place, your livelihood To shake her off? And if you shake her off Where do you go? what do you do? and how? You see 'twas love that caught me, yet even so I had resisted love had I not seen A chance to rise through marriage. It was this: You know, of course, my wife was Elenor Fouche, Daughter of Arthur, thought to be so rich. And I had hopes to patch my fortunes up In this alliance, and become a lawyer. What happened? Why they helped me not at all. The children came, and I was chained to work, To clothe and feed a family—all the while My soul combusted with this aspiration, And my good nature went to ashes, dampened By secret tears which filtered through as lye. Then finally, when my wife's father died, After our marriage, twenty years or so, His fortune came to nothing, all she got Went to that little house we live in here— It needs paint now, the porch has rotten boards— And I was forced to see these children learn What public schools could teach, and even as I Left school half taught, and never went to college, So did these children, saving Elenor, Who saw two years of college—earned herself By teaching. I choke up, just wait a minute! What depths of calmness may a man come to As father, who can think of this and be Quiet about his

heart? His heart will hurt, Move, as it were, as a worm does with its pain. And these days now, when trembling hands and head Foretell decline, or worse, and make me think As face to face with God, most earnestly, Most eager for the truth, I wonder much If I misjudged this daughter, canvass her Myself to see if I had power to do A better part by her. That is the way This daughter has got in my soul. At first She incubates in me as force unknown, A spirit strange yet kindred, in my life; And we are hostile and yet drawn together; But when we're drawn together see and feel These oppositions. Next she's in my life— The second stage of the fever—as dislike, Repugnance, and I wish her out of sight, Out of my life. Then comes these ugly things, Like Alma Bell, and rumors from away Where she is teaching, and I put her out Of life and thought the more, and wonder why I fathered such a nature, whence it came. Well, then the fever goes and I am weak, Repentant it may be, delirious visions That haunted me in fever plague me yet, Even while I think them visions, nothing else. So I grow pitiful and blame myself For any part I had in her mistakes, Sorrows and struggles, and I curse myself That I was powerless to help her more— Thus is she like a fever in my life. Well, then the child grows up. But as a child She dances, laughs and sings. At three years springs For minutes and for minutes on her toes, Like skipping rope, clapping her hands the while, Her blue eyes twinkling, and her milk-white teeth Glistening as she gurgled, shouted, laughed— There never was such vital strength. I give The pictures as my memory took them. Next I see her looking side-ways at me, as if She studied me, avoided me. The child Is now ten years of age; and now I know She smelled the rats that made the family hearth A place for scampering; the horrors of our home. She thought I brought the rats and kept them there, These rats of bickering, anger, strife at home. I knew she blamed me for her mother's moods Who dragged about the kitchen day by day, Sad faced and silent. So the upshot was I had two enemies in the house, where once I had but one, her mother. This made worse The state for both, and worse the state for me. And so it goes. Then next there's Alma Bell. The following year my daughter

finished up The High School—and we sit—my wife and I To see the exercises. And that summer Elenor, Now eighteen and a woman, goes about— I don't know what she does, sometimes I see Some young man with her walking. But at home, When I come in, the mother and the daughter Put pedals on their talk, or change the theme— I am shut out. And in the fall I learn From some outsider that she's teaching school, And later people laugh and talk to me About her feat of cowing certain Czechs, Who broke her discipline in school. Well, then Two years go on that have no memory, Just like sick days in bed when you lie there And wake and sleep and wait. But finally Her mother says: "To-night our Elenor Leaves for Los Angeles." And then the mother, To hide a sob, coughs nervously and leaves The room where I am, for the kitchen—I Sit with the evening paper, let it fall, Then hold it up to read again and try To say to self, "All right, what if she goes?" The evening meal goes hard, for Elenor Shines forth in kindness for me, talks and laughs— I choke again.... She says to me if God Had meant her for a better youth, then God Had given her a better youth; she thanks me For making High School possible to her, And says all will be well—she will earn money To go to college, that she will gain strength By helping self—Just think, my friend, to hear Such words, which in their kindness proved my failure, When I had hoped, aspired, when I had given My very soul, whether I liked this daughter, Or liked her not, out of a generous hand, Large hearted in its carelessness to give A daughter of such mind a place in life, And schooling for the place. The meal was over. We stood there silent; then her face grew wet With tears, as wet as blossoms soaked with rain. She took my hand and took her mother's hand, And put our hands together—then she said: "Be friends, be friends," and hurried from the room, Her mother following. I stepped out-doors, And stood what seemed a minute, entered again, Walked to the front room, from the window saw Elenor and her mother in the street. The girl was gone! How could I follow them? They had not asked me. So I stood and saw The canvas telescope her mother carried. They disappeared. I went back to my store, Came back at nine o'clock, lighted a match

And saw my wife in bed, cloths on her eyes. She turned her face to the wall, and didn't speak. Next morning at the breakfast table she, Complaining of a stiff arm, said: "that satchel Was weighted down with books, my arm is stiff— Elenor took French books to study French. When she can pay a teacher, she will learn How to pronounce the words, but by herself She'll learn the grammar, how to read." She knew How words like that would hurt! I merely said: "A happy home is better than knowing French," And went off to my store. But coroner, Search for the men in her life. When she came Back from the West after three years, I knew By look of her eyes that some one filled her life, Had taken her life and body. What if I Had failed as father in the way I failed? And what if our home was not home to her? She could have married—why not? If a girl Can fascinate the men—I know she could— She can have marriage, if she wants to marry. Unless she runs to men already married, And if she does so, don't you make her out As loose and bad? Well, what is more to tell? She learned French, seemed to know the ways of the world, Knew books, knew how to dress, gave evidence Of contact with refinements; letters came When she was here at intervals inscribed In writing of elite ones, gifted maybe. And she was filial and kind to me, Most kind toward her mother, gave us things At Christmas time. But still her way was such That I as well had been familiar with her As with some formal lady visiting. She came back here before she went to France, Staid two days with us. Once upon the porch She turned to me and said: "I wish to honor Mother and you by serving in the war. You must rejoice that I can serve—you must! But most I wish to honor America, This land of promise, of fulfillment, too, Which proves to all the world that men and women Are born alike of God, at least that riches And classes formed in pride have neither hearts, Nor minds above the souls of those who work. This land that reared me is my dearest love, I go to serve the country." Pardon me! A man of my age in an hour like this Must cry a little—wait till I can say The last words that she said to me. She put Her arms about me, then she said to me: "I am so glad my life and place in life Were such that I was forced to rise

or sink, To strive or fail. God has been good to me, Who gifted me with spirit to aspire.” I go back to my store now. In these days, Last days, of course, I try to be a husband, Try to be kinder to the mother of Elenor. Death is not far off, and that makes us think. We may be over soft or penitent; Forgive where we should hate still, being soft; And fade off from the wrongs, we brooded on; And cease to care life has been badly lived, From first to last. But none the less our vision Seems clearer as we end this trivial life. And so I try to be a kinder husband To Elenor’s mother. So spoke Henry Murray To Merival; a stenographer took down His words, and they were written out and shown The jury. Afterward the mother came And told her story to the coroner, Also reported, written out, and shown The jury. But it happened thus with her: She waited in the coroner’s outer room Until her husband told his story, then With eyes upon the floor, passing her husband, The two in silence passing, as he left The coroner’s office, spoke amid her sighs, Her breath long drawn at intervals, looking down The while she spoke:

MRS. MURRAY

ALMA BELL TO THE CORONER

What my name is, or where I live, or if I am that Alma Bell whose name is broached With Elenor Murray’s who shall know from this? My hand-writing I hide in type, I send This letter through a friend who will not tell. But first, since no chance ever yet was mine To speak my heart out, since if I had tried These fifteen years ago to tell my heart, I must have failed for lack of words and mind, I speak my heart out now. I knew the soul Of Elenor Murray, knew it at the time, Have verified my knowledge in these years, Who have not lost her, have kept touch with her In letters, know the splendid sacrifice She made in the war. She was a human soul Earth is not blest with often. First I say I knew her when she first came to my class Turned seventeen just

then—such blue-bell eyes, And such a cataract of dark brown hair, And such a brow, sweet lips, and such a way Of talking with a cunning gasp, as if To catch breath for the words. And such a sense Of fitness, beauty, delicacy. But more Such vital power that shook her silver nerves, And made her dim to others; but to me She was all sanity of soul, her body, The instruments of life, were overborne By that great flame of hers. And if her music Fell sometimes into discord, which I doubt, It was her heart-strings which could not vibrate For human weakness, what the soul of her Struck for response; and when the strings so failed She was more grieved than I, or anyone, Who listened and expected more. Well, then What was my love? I am not loath to tell. I could not touch her hand without a thrill, Nor kiss her lips but I felt purified, Exalted in some way. And if fatigue, The hopeless, daily ills of teaching brought My spirit to distress, and if I went, As oftentimes I did, to call upon her After the school hours, as I heard her step Responding to my knock, my heart went up, Her face framed by the opened door—what peace Was mine to see it, peace ineffable And rest were mine to sit with her and hear That voice of hers where breath was caught for words, That cunning gasp and pause! I loved her then, Have loved her always, love her now no less. I feel her spirit somehow, can take out Her letters, photograph, and find a joy That such a soul lived, was in truth my soul, Must always be my soul. What was this love? Why only this, shame nature if you will: But since man's body is not man's alone, Nor woman's body wholly feminine, A biologic truth, our body's souls Are neither masculine nor feminine, But part and part; from whence our souls play forth Part masculine, part feminine—this woman Had that of body first which made her soul, Or made her soul play in its way, and I Had that of body which made soul of me Play in its way. Our music met, that's all, And harmonized. The flesh's explanation Is not important, nor to tell whence comes A love in the heart—the thing is love at last: Love which unites and comforts, glorifies, Enlarges spirit, woos to generous life, Invites to sacrifice, to service, clothes This poor dull earth with glory, makes the dawn An hour of high resolve, the

night a hope For dawn for fuller life, the day a time For working out the soul in terms of love. This was my love for Elenor Murray—this Her love for me, I think. Her sacrifice In the war I traced to our love—all the good Her life set into being, into motion Has in it something of this love of ours. How good is God who gives us love, the lens Through which we see the beauty, hid from eyes That have no love, no lens. Then what are spirits? Effluvia material of our bodies? Or is the spirit all—the body nothing, Since every atom, particle of matter With its interstices of soul, divides Until there is no matter, only soul? But what is love but of the soul—what flesh Knows love but through the soul? May it not be As soul learns love through flesh, it may at last, Helped on its way by flesh, discard the flesh:— As cured men leave their crutches—and go on Loving with spirits. For it seems to me I must find Elenor Murray as a spirit, Myself a spirit, love her as I loved her These years on earth, but with a clearer fire, Flame that is separate from fuel, burning Eternal through itself. And here a word: My love for Elenor Murray never had Other expression than the look of eyes, The spiritual thrill of listening to her voice, A hand clasp, kiss upon the lips at best, Better to find her soul, as Plato says. Too true I left LeRoy under a cloud, Because of love for Elenor Murray—yet Not lawless love, I write now to make clear What love was mine—and you must understand. But let me tell how life has dealt with me, Then judge my purpose, dream, the quality Of Elenor Murray judge, who in some way, Somehow has drawn me onward, upward too, I hope, as I have striven. I did fear Her safety, and her future, did reprove Her conduct, its appearance, rather more In dread of gossip, dread of ways to follow From such free ways begun at seventeen, In innocence, out of a vital heart. But when a bud is opening what stray bees Come to drag pollen over it, and set Life going to the end in the fruit of life! O, my wish was to keep her for some love To ripen in a rich maturity. My care proved useless—or shall I say so? Or anyone say so? since no mind knows What failure here may somewhere prove a gain. There was that man who came into her life With heart unsatisfied, bound to a woman He

wedded early. Elenor Murray's love Destroyed this man by human measurements. And he destroyed her, so they say. But yet She poured her love upon him, lit her soul With brighter flames for love of him. At last She knew no thing but love and sacrifice. She wrote me last her life was just one pain, Had always been so from the first, and now She wished to fling her spirit in the war, Give, serve, nor count the cost, win death and God In service in the war—O, loveliest soul I pray and pray to meet you once again! So was her life a ruin, was it waste? She was a prodigal flower that never shut Its petals, even in darkness, let her soul Escape when, where it would. But to myself: I dragged myself to England from LeRoy And plunged in life, philosophies of life, Spinoza and what not, read poetry, Heard music too, Tschaikowsky, Wagner, all Who tried to make sound tell the secret thing That drove me wild in searching love. And lovers I had one after the other, having fallen To that belief the way is by the body. But I was fooled and grew by slow degrees. And then there came a wild man in my life, A vagabond, a madman, genius—well, We both went mad, and I smashed everything, And ran away, threw all the world for him, Only to find myself worn out, half dead At last, as it were out of delirium. And for four years sat by the sea, or made Visits to Paris, where I met the man I married. Then how strange! I gave myself Wholly to bearing children, just to find Some explanation of myself, some work Wholly absorbing, lives to take my love. And here I was instructed, found a step For my poor feet to mount by. Though submerged, Alone too much, my husband not the mate I dreamed of, hearing echoes in my dreams Of London and of Paris, sometimes voices Of lovers lost and vanished; still I've found A peace sometimes, a stay, too, in the innocence And helplessness of children. But you see, In spite of all we do, however high And fiercely mounts desire, life imposes Repression, sacrifice, renunciation. And our poor souls fall muddied in the ditch, Or take the discipline and live life out. So Elenor Murray lived and did not fail. And so it was the knowledge of her life Kept me in spite of failures at the task Of holding to my self. These two months passed I

found I had not killed desire—found Among a group a chance to try again For happiness, but knew it was not there. Then to my children I came back and said: “Free once again through suffering.” So I prayed: “Come to me flame of spirit, fire of worship, Bright fire of song; if I but be myself, Work through my fate, you shall be mine at last.”... Then was it that I heard from Elenor Murray— Such letters, such outpourings of herself! Poor woman leaving love that could not be More than it was; how wise she was to fly, And use that love for service, as she did; Extract its purest essence for the war, And ease death with it, merging love and death Into that mystic union, seen at last By Elenor Murray. When I heard she came All broken from the war, and died somehow There by the river, then she seemed to me More near—I seemed to feel her; little zephyrs Blowing about my face, when I sat looking Over the sea in my rose bower, seemed The exhalation of her soul that caught Its breath for words. I see her in my dreams— O, my pure soul, what have you been to me, What must you be hereafter! But my friend, And I must call you friend, whose strength in life Drives you to find economies of spirit, And save the waste of spirit, you must find Whatever waste there was of Elenor Murray Of love or faith, or time, or strength, great gain In spite of early chances, father, mother, Too loveless, negligent, or ignorant; Her mother instinct never blessed with children. I sometimes think no life is without use— For even weeds that sow themselves, frost reaped And matted on the ground, enrich the soil, Or feed some life. Our eyes must see the end Of what these growths are for, before we say Where waste is and where gain. ———— Coroner Merival woke to scan the Times, And read the story of the suicide Of Gregory Wenner, circle big enough From Elenor Murray’s death, but unobserved Of Merival, until he heard the hint Of Dr. Trace, who made the autopsy, That Gregory Wenner might have caused the death Of Eleanor Murray, or at least was near When Elenor Murray died. Here is the story Worked out by Merival as he went about Unearthing secrets, asking here and there What Gregory Wenner was to Elenor Murray. The coroner had a friend who was the friend Of Mrs. Wenner.

Acting on the hint Of Dr. Trace he found this friend and learned What follows here of Gregory Wenner, then What Mrs. Wenner learned in coming home To bury Gregory Wenner. What he learned The coroner told the jury. Here's the life Of Gregory Wenner first:

GREGORY WENNER

Gregory Wenner's brother married the mother Of Alma Bell, the daughter of a marriage The mother made before. Kinship enough To justify a call on Wenner's power When Alma Bell was face to face with shame. And Gregory Wenner went to help the girl, And for a moment looked on Elenor Murray Who left the school-room passing through the hall, A girl of seventeen. He left his business Of massing millions in the city, to help Poor Alma Bell, and three years afterward In the Garden of the Gods he saw again The face of Elenor Murray—what a fate For Gregory Wenner! But when Alma Bell Wrote him for help his mind was roiled with cares: A money magnate had signed up a loan For half a million, to which Wenner added That much beside, earned since his thirtieth year, Now forty-two, with which to build a block Of sixteen stories on a piece of ground Leased in the loop for nine and ninety years. But now a crabbed miser, much away, Following the sun, and reached through agents, lawyers, Owning the land next to the Wenner land, Refused to have the sixteen story wall Adjoin his wall, without he might select His son-in-law as architect to plan The sixteen-story block of Gregory Wenner. And Gregory Wenner caught in such a trap, The loan already bargained for and bound In a hard money lender's giant grasp, Consented to the terms, let son-in-law Make plans and supervise the work. Five years Go by before the evil blossoms fully; But here's the bud: Gregory Wenner spent His half-a-million on the building, also Four hundred thousand of the promised loan, Made by the money magnate—then behold The money magnate said: "You cannot have Another dollar, for the bonds you give Are

scarcely worth the sum delivered now Pursuant to the contract. I have learned Your architect has blundered, in five years Your building will be leaning, soon enough It will be wrecked by order of the city." And Gregory Wenner found he spoke the truth. But went ahead to finish up the building, And raked and scraped, fell back on friends for loans, Mortgaged his home for money, just to finish This sixteen-story building, kept a hope The future would reclaim him. Gregory Wenner Who seemed so powerful in his place in life Had all along this cancer in his life: He owned the building, but he owed the money, And all the time the building took a slant, By just a little every year. And time Made matters worse for him, increased his foes As he stood for the city in its warfares Against the surface railways, telephones; And earned thereby the wrath of money lenders, Who made it hard for him to raise a loan, Who needed loans habitually. Besides He had the trouble of an invalid wife Who went from hospitals to sanitariums, And traveled south, and went in search of health. Now Gregory Wenner reaches forty-five, He's fought a mighty battle, but grows tired. The building leans a little more each year. And money, as before, is hard to get. And yet he lives and keeps a hope. At last He does not feel so well, has dizzy spells. The doctor recommends a change of scene. And Gregory Wenner starts to see the west. He visits Denver. Then upon a day He walks about the Garden of the Gods, And sees a girl who stands alone and looks About the Garden's wonders. Then he sees The girl is Elenor Murray, who has grown To twenty-years, who looks that seventeen When first he saw her. He remembers her, And speaks of Alma Bell, that Alma Bell Is kindred to him. Where is Alma Bell, He has not heard about her in these years? And Elenor Murray colors, and says: "Look, There is a white cloud on the mountain top." And thus the talk commences. Elenor Murray Shows forth the vital spirit that is hers. She dances on her toes and crows in wonder, Flings up her arms in rapture. What a world Of beauty and of hope! For not her life Of teaching school, a school of Czechs and Poles There near LeRoy, since she left school and taught, These two years now, nor arid life at home, Her father sullen and her mother

saddened; Nor yet that talk of Alma Bell and her That like a corpse's gas has scented her, And made her struggles harder in LeRoy— Not these have quenched her flame, or made it burn Less brightly. Though at last she left LeRoy To fly old things, the dreary home, begin A new life teaching in Los Angeles. Gregory Wenner studies her and thinks That Alma Bell was right to reprimand Elenor Murray for her reckless ways Of strolling and of riding. And perhaps Real things were back of ways to be construed In innocence or wisdom—for who knows? His thought ran. Such a pretty face, blue eyes, And such a buoyant spirit. So they wandered About the Garden of the Gods, and took A meal together at the restaurant. And as they talked, he told her of himself, About his wife long ill, this trip for health— She sensed a music sadness in his soul. And Gregory Wenner heard her tell her life Of teaching, of the arid home, the shadow That fell on her at ten years, when she saw The hopeless, loveless life of father, mother. And his great hunger, and his solitude Reached for the soothing hand of Elenor Murray, And Elenor Murray having life to give By her maternal strength and instinct gave. The man began to laugh, forgot his health, The leaning building, and the money lenders, And found his void of spirit growing things— He loved this girl. And Elenor Murray seeing This strong man with his love, and seeing too How she could help him, with that venturesome And prodigal emotion which was hers Flung all herself to help him, being a soul Who tried all things in courage, staked her heart On good to come. They took the train together. They stopped at Santa Cruz, and on the rocks Heard the Pacific dash himself and watched The moon upon the water, breathed the scent Of oriental flowerings. There at last Under the spell of nature Gregory Wenner Bowed down his head upon his breast and shook For those long years of striving and of haggling, And for this girl, but mostly for a love That filled him now. And when he spoke again Of his starved life, his homeless years, the girl, Her mind resolved through thinking she could serve This man and bring him happiness, but with heart Flaming to heaven with the miracle Of love for him, down looking at her hands Which fingered nervously her

dress's hem, Said with that gasp which made her voice so sweet: "Do what you will with me, to ease your heart And help your life." And Gregory Wenner shaken, Astonished and made mad with ecstasy Pressed her brown head against his breast and wept. And there at Santa Cruz they lived a week, Till Elenor Murray went to take her school, He to the north en route for home. Five years Had passed since then. And on this day poor Wenner Looks from a little office at his building Visibly leaning now, the building lost, The bonds foreclosed; this is the very day A court gives a receiver charge of it. And he, these several months reduced to deals In casual properties, in trivial trades, Hard pressed for money, has gone up and down Pursuing prospects, possibilities, Scanning each day financial sheets and looking For clues to lead to money. And he finds His strength and hope not what they were before. His wife is living on, no whit restored. And Gregory Wenner thinks, would they not say I killed myself because I lost my building, If I should kill myself, and leave a note That business worries drove me to the deed, My building this day taken, a receiver In charge of what I builded out of my dream. And yet he said to self, that would be false: It's Elenor Murray's death that makes this life So hard to bear, and thoughts of Elenor Murray Make life a torture. First that I had to live Without her as my wife, and next the fact That I have taken all her life's thought, ruined Her chance for home and marriage; that I have seen Elenor Murray struggle in the world, And go forth to the war with just the thought To serve, if it should kill her. Then his mind Ran over these five years when Elenor Murray Throughout gave such devotion, constant thought, Filled all his mind and heart, and kept her voice Singing or talking in his memory's ear, In absence with long letters, when together With passionate utterances of love. The girl Loved Gregory Wenner, but the girl had found A comfort for her spiritual solitude, And got a strength in taking Wenner's strength. For at the last one soul lives on another. And Elenor Murray could not live except She had a soul to live for, and a soul On which to pour her passion, taking back The passion of that soul in recompense. Gregory Wenner served her power and genius

For giving and for taking so to live, Achieve and flame; and found them in some moods Somehow demoniac when his spirits sank, And drink was all that kept him on his feet. And so when Elenor Murray came to him And said this life of teaching was too much, Could not be longer borne, he thought the time Had come to end the hopeless love. He raised The money by the hardest means to pay Elenor Murray's training as a nurse, By this to set her free from teaching school, And then he set about to crush the girl Out of his life. For Gregory Wenner saw Between this passion and his failing thought, And gray hairs coming, fortune slip like sand. And saw his mind diffuse itself in worries, In longing for her: found himself at times Too much in need of drink, and shrank to see What wishes rose that death might take his wife, And let him marry Elenor Murray, cure His life with having her beside him, dreaming That somehow Elenor Murray could restore His will and vision, by her passion's touch, And mother instinct make him whole again. But if he could not have her for his wife, And since the girl absorbed him in this life Of separation which made longing greater, Just as it lacked the medium to discharge The great emotion it created, Wenner Caught up his shreds of strength to crush her out Of his life, told her so, when he had raised The money for her training. For he saw How ruin may overtake a man, and ruin Pass by the woman, whom the world would judge As ruined long ago. But look, he thought, I pity her, not for our sin, if it be, But that I have absorbed her life; and yet The girl is mastering life, while I fall down. She has absorbed me, if the wrong lies here. And thus his thought went round. And Elenor Murray Accepted what he said and went her way With words like these: "My love and prayers are yours While life is with us." Then she turned to study, And toiled each day till night brought such fatigue That sleep fell on her. Was it to forget? And meanwhile she embraced the faith and poured Her passion driven by a rapturous will Into religion, trod her path in silence, Save for a card at Christmas time for him, Sometimes a little message from some place Whereto her duty called her. Gregory Wenner Stands at the window of his desolate office, And looks out on his

sixteen-story building Irrevocably lost this day. His mind runs back To that day in the Garden of the Gods, That night at Santa Cruz, and then his eyes Made piercing sharp by sorrow cleave the clay That lies upon the face of Elenor Murray, And see the flesh of her the worms have now. How strange, he thinks, to flit into this life Singing and radiant, to suffer, toil, To serve in the war, return to girlhood's scenes, To die, to be a memory for a day, Then be forgotten. O, this life of ours. Why is not God ashamed for graveyards, why So thoughtless of our passion he lets play This tragedy. And Gregory Wenner thought About the day he stood here, even as now And heard a step, a voice, and looked around Saw Elenor Murray, felt her arms again, Her kiss upon his cheek, and saw her face As light was beating on it, heard her gasp In ecstasy for going to the war, To which that day she gave her pledge. And heard Her words of consecration. Heard her say, As though she were that passionate Heloise Brought into life again: "All I have done Was done for love of you, all I have asked Was only you, not what belonged to you. I did not hope for marriage or for gifts. I have not gratified my will, desires, But yours I sought to gratify. I have longed To be yours wholly, I have kept for self Nothing, have lived for you, have lived for you These years when you thought best to crush me out. And now though there's a secret in my heart, Not wholly known to me, still I can know it By seeing you again, I think, by touching Your hand again. Your life has tortured me, Both for itself, and since I could not give Out of my heart enough to make your life A way of peace, a way of happiness." Then Gregory Wenner thought how she looked down And said: "Since I go to the war, would God Look with disfavor on us if you took me In your arms wholly once again? My friend, Not with the thought to leave me soon, but sleeping Like mates, as birds do, making sleep so sweet Close to each other as God means we should. I mingle love of God with love of you, And in the night-time I can pray for you With you beside me, find God closer then. Who knows, you may take strength from such an hour." Then Gregory Wenner lived that night again, And the next morning when she rose and shook, As it were night

gathered dew upon fresh wings, The vital water from her glowing flesh. And shook her hair out, laughed and said to him: “Courage and peace, my friend.” And how they passed Among the multitude, when he took her hand And said farewell, and hastened to this room To seek for chances in another day, And never saw her more. And all these thoughts Coming on Gregory Wenner swept his soul Till it seemed like a skiff in mid-sea under A sky unreckoning, where neither bread, Nor water, save salt water, were for lips. And over him descended a blank light Of life’s futility, since now this hour Life dropped the mask and showed him just a skull. And a strange fluttering of the nerves came on him, So that he clutched the window frame, lest he Spring from the window to the street below. And he was seized with fear that said to fly, Go somewhere, find some one, so to draw out This madness which was one with him and in him, And which some one in pity must relieve, Something must cure. And in this sudden horror Of self, this ebbing of the tides of life, Leaving his shores to visions, where he saw Horrible creatures stir amid the slime, Gregory Wenner hurried from the room And walked the streets to find his thought again Wherewith to judge if he should kill himself Or look to find a path in life once more. And Gregory Wenner sitting in his club Wrote to his brother thus: “I cannot live Now that my business is so tangled up, Bury my body by my father’s side.” Next day the papers headlined Gregory Wenner: “Loss of a building drives to suicide.” ———— Elenor Murray’s death kills Gregory Wenner And Gregory Wenner dying make a riffle In Mrs. Wenner’s life—reveals to her A secret long concealed:—

MRS. GREGORY WENNER

Gregory Wenner’s wife was by the sea When Gregory Wenner killed himself, half sick And half malingering, and otiose. She wept, sent for a doctor to be braced, Induced a friend to travel with her west To bury Gregory Wenner; did not know That Gregory Wenner was in money straits Until she read the paper, or had lost His

building in the loop. The man had kept His worries from her ailing ears, was glad To keep her traveling, or taking cures. She came and buried Gregory Wenner; found His fortune just a shell, the building lost, A little money in the bank, a store Far out on Lake Street, forty worthless acres In northern Indiana, twenty lots In some Montana village. Here she was, A widow, penniless, an invalid. The crude reality of things awoke A strength she did not dream was hers. And then She went to Gregory Wenner's barren office To collect the things he had, get in his safe For papers and effects. She had to pay An expert to reveal the combination, And throw the bolts. And there she sat a day, And emptied pigeon holes and searched and read. And in one pigeon hole she found a box, And in the box a lock of hair wrapped up In tissue paper, fragrant powder lying Around the paper—in the box a card With woman's writing on it, just the words "For my beloved"; but no name or date. Who was this woman mused the widow there? She did not know the name. She did not know Her eyes had seen this Elenor Murray once When Elenor Murray came with Gregory Wenner To dinner at his home to face the wife. For Elenor Murray in a mood of strength, After her confirmation and communion, Had said to Gregory Wenner: "Now the end Has come to this, our love, I think it best If she should ever learn I am the woman Who in New York spent summer days with you, And later in Chicago, in that summer, She will remember what my eyes will show When we stand face to face, and I give proof That I am changed, repentant." For the wife Had listened to a friend who came to tell She saw this Gregory Wenner in New York From day to day in gardens and cafes, And by the sea romancing with a girl. And later Mrs. Wenner found a book, Which Gregory Wenner cherished—with the words Beloved, and the date. And now she knew The hand that wrote the card here in this box, The hand that wrote the inscription in the book Were one—but still she did not know the woman. No doubt the woman of that summer's flame, Whom Gregory Wenner promised not to see When she brought out the book and told him all She learned of his philandering in New York. And Elenor Murray's body was decaying In

darkness, under earth there at LeRoy While Mrs. Wenner read, and did not know The hand that wrote the card lay blue and green, Half hidden in the foldings of the shroud, And all that country stirred for Elenor Murray, Of which the widow absent in the east Had never heard. And Mrs. Wenner found Beside the box and lock of hair three letters, And sat and read them. Through her eyes and brain This meaning and this sound of blood and soul, Like an old record with a diamond needle. Passed music like:— “The days go swiftly by With study and with work. I am too tired At night to think. I read anatomy, Materia medica and other things, And do the work an undergraduate Is called upon to do. And every week I spend three afternoons with the nuns and sew, And care for children of the poor whose mothers Are earning bread away. I go to church And talk with Mother Janet. And I pray At morning and at night for you, and ask For strength to live without you and for light To understand why love of you is mine, And why you are not mine, and whether God Will give you to me some day if I prove My womanhood is worthy of you, dear. And sometimes when our days of bliss come back And flood me with their warmth and blinding light I take my little crucifix and kiss it, And plunge in work to take me out of self, Some service to another. So it is, This sewing and this caring for the children Stills memory and gives me strength to live, And pass the days, go on. I shall not draw Upon your thought with letters, still I ask Your thought of me sometimes. Would it be much If once a year you sent me a bouquet To prove to me that you remember, sweet, Still cherish me a little, give me faith That in this riddle world there is a hand, Which spite of separation, thinks and touches Blossoms that I touch afterward? Dear heart, I have starved out and killed that reckless mood Which would have taken you and run away. Oh, if you knew that this means killing, too, The child I want—our child. You have a cross No less than I, beloved, even if love Of me has passed and eased the agony I thought you knew—your cross is heavy, dear, Bound, but not wedded to her, never to know The life of marriage with her. Yet be brave, Be noble, dear, be always what God made you, A great heart, patient, gentle,

sacrificing, Bring comfort to her tedious days, forbear When she is petulant, for if you do, I know God will reward you, give you peace. I pray for strength for you, that never again May you distress her as you did, I did When she found there was someone. Lest she know Destroy this letter, all I ever write, So that her mind may never fix itself Upon a definite person, on myself. But still remaining vague may better pass To lighter shadows, nothingness at last. I try to think I sinned, have so confessed To get forgiveness at my first communion. And yet a vestige of a thought in me Will not submit, confess the sin. Well, dear, You can awake at midnight, at the pause Of duty in the day, merry or sad, Light hearted or discouraged, if you chance, To think of me, remember I send prayers To God for you each day—oh may His light Shine on your face!" So Widow Wenner read, And wondered of the writer, since no name Was signed; and wept a little, dried her eyes And flushed with anger, said, "adulteress, Adulteress who played the game of pity, And wove about my husband's heart the spell Of masculine sympathy for a sorrowing woman, A trick as old as Eden. And who knows But all the money went here in the end? For if a woman plunges from her aim To piety, devotion such as this, She will plunge back to sin, unstable heart, That swings from self-denial to indulgence And spends itself in both." Then Widow Wenner Took up the second letter: "I have signed To go to France to-day. I wrote you once I planned to take the veil, become a nun. But now the war has changed my thought. I see In service for my country fuller life, More useful sacrifice and greater work Than ever I could have, being a nun. The cause is so momentous. Think, my dear, This woman who still thinks of you will be A factor in this war for liberty, A soldier serving soldiers, giving strength, Health, hope and spirit to the soldier boys Who fall, must be restored to fight again. I've thrown my soul in this, am all aflame. You should have seen me when I took the oath, And raised my hand and pledged my word to serve, Support the law. I want to think of you As proud of me for doing this—be proud, Be grateful, too, that I have strength and will To give myself to this. And if it chance, As almost I am hoping, that the

work Should break me, sweep me under, think of me As one who died for country, as I shall As truly as the soldiers slain in battle. I leave to-morrow, will be at a camp Some weeks before I sail. I telephoned you This morning twice, they said you would return By two-o'clock at least. I write instead. But I shall come to see you, if I can Sometime this afternoon, and if I don't, This letter then must answer. Peace be with you. To-day I'm very happy. Write to me, Or if you do not think it best, all right, I'll understand. Before I sail I'll send A message to you—for the time farewell." Then Widow Wenner read the telegram The third and last communication: "Sail To-day, to-morrow, very soon, I know. My memories of you are happy ones. A fond adieu." This telegram was signed By Elenor Murray. Widow Wenner knew The name at last, sat petrified to think This was the girl who brazened through the dinner Some years ago when Gregory Wenner brought This woman to his home—"the shameless trull," Said Mrs. Wenner, "harlot, impudent jade, To think my husband is dead, would she were dead— I could be happy if I knew a bomb Or vile disease had got her." Then she looked In other pigeon holes, and found in one A photograph of Elenor Murray, knew The face that looked across the dinner table. And in the pigeon hole she found some verses Clipped from a magazine, and tucked away The letters, verses, telegram in her bag, Closed up the safe and left. Next day at breakfast She scanned the morning Times, her eyes were wide For reading of the Elenor Murray inquest. "Well, God is just," she murmured, "God is just." ———— All this was learned of Gregory Wenner. Even If Gregory Wenner killed the girl, the man Was dead now. Could he kill her and return And kill himself? The coroner had gone, The jury too, to view the spot where lay Elenor Murray's body. It was clear A man had walked here. Was it Gregory Wenner? The hunter who came up and found the body? This hunter was a harmless, honest soul Could not have killed her, passed the grill of questions From David Borrow, skilled examiner, The coroner, the jurors. But meantime If Gregory Wenner killed this Elenor Murray How did he do it? Dr. Trace has made His autopsy and comes and makes report To the coroner and the jury in

these words:—

DR. TRACE TO THE CORONER

I cannot tell you, Coroner, the cause Of death of Elenor Murray, not until My chemical analysis is finished. Here is the woman’s heart sealed in this jar, I weighed it, weight nine ounces, if she had A hemolysis, cannot tell you now What caused the hemolysis. Since you say She took no castor oil, that you can learn From Irma Leese, or any witness, still A chemical analysis may show The presence of ricin,—and that she took A dose of oil not pure. Her throat betrayed Slight inflammation; but in brief, I wait My chemical analysis. Let’s exclude The things we know and narrow down the facts. She lay there by the river, death had come Some twenty hours before. No stick or stone, No weapon near her, bottle, poison box, No bruise upon her, in her mouth no dust, No foreign bodies in her nostrils, neck Without a mark, no punctures, cuts or scars Upon her anywhere, no water in lungs, No mud, sand, straws or weeds in hands, the nails Clean, as if freshly manicured. Again No evidence of rape. I first examined The genitals in situ, found them sound. The girl had lived, was not a virgin, still Had temperately indulged, and not at all In recent months, no evidence at all Of conjugation willingly or not, The day of death. But still I lifted out The ovaries, fallopian tubes and uterus, The vagina and vulvae. Opened up The mammals, found no milk. No pregnancy Existed, sealed these organs up to test For poison later, as we doctors know Sometimes a poison’s introduced per vaginam. I sealed the brain up too, shall make a test Of blood and serum for urea; death Comes suddenly from that, you find no lesion, Must take a piece of brain and cut it up, Pour boiling water on it, break the brain To finer pieces, pour the water off, Digest the piece of brain in other water, Repeat four times, the solutions mix together, Dry in an oven, treat with ether, at last The residue put on a slide of glass With nitric acid, let it stand awhile, Then take your microscope—if

there's urea You'll see the crystals—very beautiful! A cobra's beautiful, but scarce can kill As quick as these. Likewise I have sealed up The stomach, liver, kidneys, spleen, intestines, So many poisons have no microscopic Appearance that convinces, opium, Hyoscyamus, belladonna fool us; But as the stomach had no inflammation, It was not chloral, ether took her off, Which we can smell, to boot. But I can find Strychnia, if it killed her; though you know That case in England sixty years ago, Where the analysis did not disclose Strychnia, though they hung a man for giving That poison to a fellow. To recur I'm down to this: Perhaps a hemolysis— But what produced it? If I find no ricin I turn to streptococcus, deadly snake, Or shall I call him tiger? For I think The microscopic world of living things Is just a little jungle, filled with tigers, Snakes, lions, what you will, with teeth and claws, The perfect miniatures of these monstrous foes. Sweet words come from the lips and tender hands Like Elenor Murray's, minister, nor know The jungle has been roused in throat or lungs; And shapes venene begin to crawl and eat The ruddy apples of the blood, eject Their triple venomous excreta in The channels of the body. There's the heart, Which may be weakened by a streptococcus. But if she had a syncope and fell She must have bruised her body or her head. And if she had a syncope, was held up, Who held her up? That might have cost her life: To be held up in syncope. You know You lay a person down in syncope, And oftentimes the heart resumes its beat. Perhaps she was held up until she died, Then laid there by the river, so no bruise. So many theories come to me. But again, I say to you, look for a man. Run down All clues of Gregory Wenner. He is dead— Loss of a building drives to suicide— The papers say, but still it may be true He was with Elenor Murray when she died, Pushed her, we'll say, or struck her in a way To leave no mark, a tap upon the heart That shocked the muscles more or less obscure That bind the auricles and ventricles, And killed her. Then he flies away in fear, Aghast at what he does, and kills himself. Look for a man, I say. It must be true, She went so secretly to walk that morning To meet a man—why would she walk alone? So while you hunt the man, I'll look for

ricin, And with my chemicals end up the search. I never saw a heart more beautiful, Just look at it. We doctors all agreed This Elenor Murray might have lived to ninety Except for jungles, poison, sudden shock. I take my bottle with the heart of Elenor And go about my way. It beat in France, It beat for France and for America, But what is truer, somewhere was a man For whom it beat! ———— When Irma Leese, the Aunt of Elenor Murray, Appeared before the coroner she told Of Elenor Murray's visit, of the morning She left to walk, was never seen again. And brought the coroner some letters sent By Elenor from France. What follows now Is what the coroner, or the jury heard From Irma Leese, from letters drawn—beside The riffle that the death of Elenor Murray Sent round the life of Irma Leese, which spread To Tokio and touched a man, the son Of Irma Leese's sister, dead Corinne, The mother of this man in Tokio.

IRMA LEESE

Elenor Murray landing in New York, After a weary voyage, none too well, Staid in the city for a week and then Upon a telegram from Irma Leese, Born Irma Fouche, her aunt who lived alone This summer in the Fouche house near LeRoy, Came west to visit Irma Leese and rest. For Elenor Murray had not been herself Since that hard spring when in the hospital, Caring for soldiers stricken with the flu, She took bronchitis, after weeks in bed Rose weak and shaky, crept to health again Through egg-nogs, easy strolls about Bordeaux. And later went to Nice upon a furlough To get her strength again. But while she saw Her vital flame burn brightly, as of old On favored days, yet for the rest the flame Sputtered or sank a little. So she thought How good it might be to go west and stroll About the lovely country of LeRoy, And hear the whispering cedars by a window In the Fouche mansion where this Irma Leese, Her aunt, was summering. So she telegraphed, And being welcomed, went. This stately house, Built sixty years before by Arthur Fouche, A brick home with a

mansard roof, an oriel That looked between the cedars, and a porch With great Ionic columns, from the street Stood distantly amid ten acres of lawn, Trees, flower plots—belonged to Irma Leese, Who had reclaimed it from a chiropractor, To cleanse the name of Fouche from that indignity, And bring it in the family again, Since she had spent her girlhood, womanhood To twenty years amid its twenty rooms. For Irma Leese at twenty years had married And found herself at twenty-five a widow, With money left her, then had tried again, And after years dissolved the second pact, And made a settlement, was rich in fact, Now forty-two. Five years before had come And found the house she loved a sanitarium, A chiropractor's home. And as she stood Beside the fence and saw the oriel, Remembered all her happiness on this lawn With brothers and with sisters, one of whom Was Elenor Murray's mother, then she willed To buy the place and spend some summers here. And here she was the summer Elenor Murray Returned from France. And Irma Leese had said: "Here is your room, it has the oriel, And there's the river and the hills for you. Have breakfast in your room what hour you will, Rise when you will. We'll drive and walk and rest, Run to Chicago when we have a mind. I have a splendid chauffeur now and maids. You must grow strong and well." And Elenor Murray Gasped out her happiness for the pretty room, And stood and viewed the river and the hills, And wept a little on the gentle shoulder Of Irma Leese. And so the days had passed Of walking, driving, resting, many talks; For Elenor Murray spoke to Irma Leese Of tragic and of rapturous days in France, And Irma Leese, though she had lived full years, Had scarcely lived as much as Elenor Murray, And could not hear enough from Elenor Murray Of the war and France, but mostly she would urge Her niece to tell of what affairs of love Had come to her. And Elenor Murray told Of Gregory Wenner, save she did not tell The final secret, with a gesture touched The story off by saying: It was hopeless, I went into religion to forget. But on a day she said to Irma Leese: "I almost met my fate at Nice," then sketched A hurried picture of a brief romance. But Elenor Murray told her nothing

else Of loves or men. But all the while the aunt Weighed Elenor Murray, on a day exclaimed: “I see myself in you, and you are like Your Aunt Corinne who died in ninety-two. I’ll tell you all about your Aunt Corinne Some day when we are talking, but I see You have the Fouche blood—we are lovers all. Your mother is a lover, Elenor, If you would know it.” “O, your Aunt Corinne She was most beautiful, but unfortunate. Her husband was past sixty when she married, And she was thirty-two. He was distinguished, Had money and all that, but youth is all, Is everything for love, and she was young, And he was old.” A week or two had passed Since Elenor Murray came to Irma Leese, When on a morning fire broke from the eaves And menaced all the house; but maids and gardeners With buckets saved the house, while Elenor Murray And Irma Leese dipped water from the barrels That stood along the ell. A week from that A carpenter was working at the eaves Along the ell, and in the garret knelt To pry up boards and patch. When as he pried A board up, he beheld between the rafters A package of old letters stained and frayed, Tied with a little ribbon almost dust. And when he went down-stairs, delivered it To Irma Leese and said: Here are some letters I found up in the garret under the floor, I pried up in my work. Then Irma Leese Looked at the letters, saw her sister’s hand, Corinne’s upon the letters, opened, read, And saw the story which she knew before Brought back in this uncanny way, the hand Which wrote the letters six and twenty years Turned back to dust. And when her niece came in She showed the letters, said, “I’ll let you read, I’ll tell you all about them”: “When Corinne Was nineteen, very beautiful and vital, Red-cheeked, a dancer, bubbling like new wine, A catch, as you may know, you see this house Was full of laughter then, so many children. We had our parties, too, and young men thought, Each one of us would have a dowry splendid— A young man from Chicago came along, A lawyer there, but lately come from Pittsburgh To practice, win his way. I knew this man. He was a handsome dog with curly hair, Blue eyes and sturdy figure. Well, Corinne Quite lost her heart. He came here to a dance, And so the game commenced. And father thought The fellow was

not right, but all of us, Your mother and myself said, yes he is, And we conspired to help Corinne and smooth The path of confidence. But later on Corinne was not so buoyant, would not talk With me, your mother freely. Then at last Her eyes were sometimes red; we knew she wept. And, then Corinne was sent away. Well, here You'll guess the rest. Her health was breaking down, That's true enough; the world could think its thoughts, And say his love grew cold, or she found out The black-leg that he was, and he was that. But Elenor, the truth was more than that, Corinne had been betrayed, she went away To right herself—these letters prove the case, Which all the gossips, busy as they were, Could not make out. The paper at LeRoy Had printed that she went to pay a visit To relatives in the east. Three months or so She came back well and rosy. But meanwhile Your grandfather had paid this shabby scoundrel A sum of money, I forget the sum, To get these letters of your Aunt Corinne— These letters here. This matter leaked, of course. And then we let the story take this form And moulded it a little to this form: The fellow was a scoundrel—this was proved When he took money to return her letters. They were love letters, they had been engaged, She thought him worthy, found herself deceived Proved, too, by taking money, when at first He looked with honorable eyes to young Corinne, And won her trust. And so Corinne lived here Ten years or more, at thirty married the judge, Her senior thirty years, and went away. She bore a child and died—look Elenor Here are the letters which she took and nailed Beneath the garret floor. We'll read them through, And then I'll burn them." Irma Leese rose up And put the letters in her desk and said: "Let's ride along the river." So they rode, But as they rode, the day being clear and mild The fancy took them to Chicago, where They lunched and spent the afternoon, returning At ten o'clock that night. And the next morning When Irma Leese expected Elenor To rise and join her, asked for her, a maid Told Irma Leese that Elenor had gone To walk somewhere. And all that day she waited. But as night came, she fancied Elenor Had gone to see her mother, once rose up To telephone, then stopped because she felt Elenor might have plans she

would not wish Her mother to get wind of—let it go. But when night came, she wondered, fell asleep With wondering and worry. But next morning As she was waiting for the car to come To motor to LeRoy, and see her sister, Elenor's mother, in a casual way, Learn if her niece was there, and waiting read The letters of Corinne, the telephone Rang in an ominous way, and Irma Leese Sprang up to answer, got the tragic word Of Elenor Murray found beside the river. Left all the letters spilled upon her desk And motored to the river, to LeRoy Where Coroner Merival took the body. Just As Irma Leese departed, in the room A sullen maid revengeful for the fact She was discharged, was leaving in a day, Entered and saw the letters, read a little, And gathered them, went to her room and packed Her telescope and left, went to LeRoy, And gave a letter to this one and that, Until the servant maids and carpenters And some lubricous fellows at LeRoy Who made companions of these serving maids, Had each a letter of the dead Corinne, Which showed at last, after some twenty years, Of silence and oblivion, to LeRoy With memory to refresh, that poor Corinne Had given her love, herself, had been betrayed, Abandoned by a scoundrel. Merival, The Coroner, when told about the letters, For soon the tongues were wagging in LeRoy, Went here and there to find them, till he learned What quality of love the dead Corinne Had given to this man. Then shook his head, Resolved to see if he could not unearth In Elenor Murray's life some faithless lover Who sought her death. The letters' riffle crawled Through shadows of the waters of LeRoy Until it looked a snake, was seen as such In Tokio by Franklin Hollister, The son of dead Corinne; it seemed a snake: He heard the coroner through neglect or malice Had let the letters scatter—not the truth;— The coroner had gathered up the letters, Befriending Irma Leese; she got them back Through Merival. The riffle's just the same. And hence this man in Tokio is crazed For shame and fear—for fear the girl he loves Will hear his mother's story and break off Her marriage promise. So in reckless rage He posts a letter off to Lawyer Hood, Chicago, Illinois—the coroner Gets all the story through this Lawyer Hood, Long

after Elenor's inquest is at end. Meantime he cools, is wiser, thinks it bad To stir the scandal with a suit at law. And then when cooled he hears from Lawyer Hood Who tells him what the truth is. So it ends. ———— These letters and the greenish wave that coiled At Tokio is beyond the coroner's eye Fixed on the water where the pebble fell:— This death of Elenor, circles close at hand Engage his interest. Now he seeks to learn About her training and religious life. And hears of Miriam Fay, a friend he thinks, And confidant of her religious life, Head woman of the school where Elenor Learned chemistry, materia medica, Anatomy, to fit her for the work Of nursing. And he writes this Miriam Fay And Miriam Fay responds. The letter comes Before the jury. Here is what she wrote:—

MIRIAM FAY'S LETTER

Elenor Murray asked to go in training And came to see me, but the school was full, We could not take her. Then she asked to stand Upon a list and wait, I put her off. She came back, and she came back, till at last I took her application; then she came And pushed herself and asked when she could come, And start to train. At last I laughed and said: "Well, come to-morrow." I had never seen Such eagerness, persistence. So she came. She tried to make a friend of me, perhaps Since it was best, I being in command. But anyway she wooed me, tried to please me. And spite of everything I grew to love her, Though I distrusted her. But yet again I had belief in her best self, though doubting The girl somehow. But when I learned the girl Had never had religious discipline, Her father without faith, her mother too, Her want of moral sense, I understood. She lacked stability of spirit, to-day She would be one thing, something else the next. Shot up in fire, which failed and died away And I began to see her fraternize With girls who had her traits, too full of life To be what they should be, unstable too, Much like herself. Not long before she came Into the training school, six months, perhaps, She had some tragedy, I don't know what, Had

been quite ill in body and in mind. When she went into training I could see Her purpose to wear down herself, forget In weariness of body, something lived. She was alert and dutiful and sunny, Kept all the rules, was studious, led the class, Excelled, I think, in studies of the nerves, The mind grown sick. As we grew better friends, More intimate, she talked about religion, And sacred subjects, asked about the church. I gave her books to read, encouraged her, Asked her to make her peace with God, and set Her feet in pious paths. At last she said She wished to be baptized, confirmed. I made The plans for her, she was baptized, confirmed, Went to confessional, and seemed renewed In spirit by conversion. For at once Her zeal was like a flame at Pentecost, She almost took the veil, but missing that, She followed out the discipline to the letter, Kept all the feast days, went to mass, communion, Did works of charity; indeed, I think She spent her spare hours all in all at sewing There with the sisters for the poor. She had, When she came to me, jewelry of value, A diamond solitaire, some other things. I missed them, and she said she sold them, gave The money to a home for friendless children. And I remember when she said her father Had wronged, misvalued her; but now her love, Made more abundant by the love of Christ, Had brought her to forgiveness. All her mood Was of humility and sacrifice. One time I saw her at the convent, sitting Upon a foot-stool at the gracious feet Of the Mother Superior, sewing for the poor; Hair parted in the middle, curls combed out. Then was it that I missed her jewelry. She looked just like a poor maid, humble, patient, Head bent above her sewing, eyes averted. The room was silent with religious thought. I loved her then and pitied her. But now I think she had that in her which at times Made her a flagellant, at other times A rioter. She used the church to drag Her life from something, took it for a bladder To float her soul when it was perilled. First, She did not sell her jewelry; this ring, Too brilliant for forgetting, or to pass Unnoticed when she wore it, showed again Upon her finger after she had come Out of her training, was a graduate. She had a faculty for getting in Where elegance and riches were. She went Among the great ones, when she

found a way, And traveled with them where she learned the life Of notables, aristocrats. It was there, Or when from duty free and feasting, gadding The ring showed on her finger. In two years She dropped the church. New friends made in the school, New interests, work that took her energies And this religious flare had cured her up Of what was killing her when first I knew her. There was another thing that drew her back To flesh, away from spirit: She saw bodies, And handled bodies as a nurse, forgot The body is the spirit's temple, fell To some materialism of thought. And now Avoided me, was much away, of course, On duty here and there. I tried to hold her, Protect and guide her, wrote to her at times To make confession, take communion. She Ignored these letters. But I heard her say The body was as natural as the soul, And just as natural its desires. She kept Out of the wreck of faith one thing alone, If she kept that: She could endure to hear God's name profaned, but would not stand to hear The Savior's spoken in irreverence. She was afraid, no doubt. Or to be just, The tender love of Christ, his sacrifice, Perhaps had won her wholly—let it go, I'll say that much for her. Why am I harsh? Because I saw the good in her all streaked With so much evil, evil known and lived In knowledge of it, clung to none the less, Unstable as water, how could she succeed? Untruthful, how could confidence be hers? I sometimes think she joined the church to mask A secret life, renewed forgiven sins. After she cloaked herself with piety. Perhaps, at least, when she saw what to do, And how to do it, using these detours Of piety to throw us off, who else Had seen what doors she entered, whence she came. She wronged the church, I think, made it a screen To stand behind for kisses, to look from Inviting kisses. Then, as I have said, She took materialism from her work, And so renewed her sins. She drank, I think, And smoked and feasted; but as for the rest, The smoke obscured the flame, but there is flame Or fire at least where there is smoke. You ask What took her to the war? Why only this: Adventure, chance of marriage, amorous conquests— The girl was mad for men, although I saw Her smoke obscured the flame, I never saw her Except with robins far too tame or lame To interest her, and

robins prove to me The hawk is somewhere, waits for night to join His playmate when the robins are at rest. You see the girl has madness in her, flies From exaltation up to ecstasy. Feeds on emotion, never has enough. Tries all things, states of spirit, even beliefs. Passes from lust (I think) to celibacy, Feasts, fasts, eats, starves, has raptures then inflicts The whip upon her back, is penitent, Then proud, is humble, then is arrogant, Looks down demurely, stares you out of face, But runs the world around. For in point of fact, She traveled much, knew cities and their ways; And when I used to see her at the convent So meek, clothed like a sewing maid, at once The pictures that she showed me of herself At seaside places or on boulevards, Her beauty clothed in linen or in silk, Came back to mind, and I would resurrect The fragments of our talks in which I saw How she knew foods and drinks and restaurants, And fashionable shops. This girl could fool the elect— She fooled me for a time. I found her out. Did she aspire? Perhaps, if you believe It's aspiration to seek out the rich, And ape them. Not for me. Of course she went To get adventure in the war, perhaps She got too much. But as to waste of life, She might have been a quiet, noble woman Keeping her place in life, not trying to rise Out of her class—too useless—in her class Making herself all worthy, serviceable. You'll find 'twas pride that slew her. Very like She found a rich man, tried to hold him, lost Her honor and her life in consequence. ———— When Merival showed this letter to the jury, Marion the juryman spoke up: "You know that type of woman—saintly hag! I wouldn't take her word about a thing By way of inference, or analysis. They had some trouble, she and Elenor You may be sure." And Merival replied: "Take it for what it's worth. I leave you now To see the man who owns the Daily Times. He's turned upon our inquest, did you see The jab he gives me? I can jab as well." So Merival went out and took with him A riffle in the waters of circumstance Set up by Elenor Murray's death to one Remote, secure in greatness—to the man Who ran the Times.

ARCHIBALD LOWELL

Archibald Lowell, owner of the Times Lived six months of the year at Sunnyside, His Gothic castle near LeRoy, so named Because no sun was in him, it may be. His wife was much away when on this earth At cures, in travel, fighting psychic ills, Approaching madness, dying nerves. They said Her heart was starved for living with a man So cold and silent. Thirty years she lived Bound to this man, in restless agony, And as she could not free her life from his, Nor keep it living with him, on a day She stuck a gas hose in her mouth and drank Her lungs full of the lethal stuff and died. That was the very day the hunter found Elenor Murray's body near the river. A servant saw this Mrs. Lowell lying A copy of the Times clutched in her hand, Which published that a slip of paper found In Elenor Murray's pocket had these words "To be brave and not to flinch." And was she brave, And nerved to end it by these words of Elenor? But Archibald, the husband, could not bear To have the death by suicide made known. He laid the body out, as if his wife Had gone to bed as usual, turned a jet And left it, just as if his wife had failed To fully turn it, then went in the room; Then called the servants, did not know that one Had seen her with the Times clutched in her hand. He thought the matter hidden. Merival, All occupied with Elenor Murray's death Gave to a deputy the Lowell inquest. But later what this servant saw was told To Merival. And now no more alone Than when his wife lived, Lowell passed the days At Sunnyside, as he had done for years. He sat alone, and paced the rooms alone, With hands behind him clasped, in fear and wonder Of life and what life is. He rode about, And viewed his blooded cattle on the hills. But what were all these rooms and acres to him With no face near him but the servants, gardeners? Sometimes he wished he had a child to draw Upon his fabulous income, growing more Since all his life was centered in the Times To swell its revenues, and in the process His spirit was more fully in the Times Than in his body. There were eyes who saw How deftly was his spirit woven in it Until it was a scarf to bind and

choke The public throat, or stifle honest thought Like a soft pillow offered for the head, But used to smother. There were eyes who saw The working of its ways emasculate, Its tones of gray, where flame had been the thing, Its timorous steps, while spying on the public, To learn the public's thought. Its cautious pauses, With foot uplifted, ears pricked up to hear A step fall, twig break. Platitudes in progress— With sugar coat of righteousness and order, Respectability. Did the public make it? Or did it make the public, that it fitted With such exactness in the communal life? Some thousands thought it fair—what should they think When it played neutral in the matter of news To both sides of the question, though at last It turned the judge, and chose the better side, Determined from the first, a secret plan, And cunning way to turn the public scale? Some thousands liked the kind of news it printed Where no sensation flourished—smallest type That fixed attention for the staring eyes Needed for type so small. But others knew It led the people by its fair pretensions, And used them in the end. In any case This editor played hand-ball in this way: The advertisers tossed the ball, the readers Caught it and tossed it to the advertisers: And as the readers multiplied, the columns Of advertising grew, and Lowell's thought Was how to play the one against the other, And fill his purse. It was an ingrown mind, And growing more ingrown with time. Afraid Of crowds and streets, uncomfortable in clubs, No warmth in hands to touch his fellows' hands, Keeping aloof from politicians, loathing The human alderman who bails the thief; The little scamp who pares a little profit, And grafts upon a branch that takes no harm. He loved the active spirit, if it worked, And feared the active spirit, if it played. This Lowell hid himself from favor seekers, Such letters filtered to him through a sieve Of secretaries. If he had a friend, Who was a mind to him as well, perhaps It was a certain lawyer, but who knew? And cursed with monophobia, none the less This Lowell lived alone there near LeRoy, Surrounded by his servants, at his desk A secretary named McGill, who took Such letters, editorials as he spoke. His life was nearly waste. A peanut stand Should be as much remembered as the Times, When

fifty years are passed. And every month The circulation manager came down To tell the great man of the gain or loss The paper made that month in circulation, In advertising, chiefly. Lowell took The audit sheets and studied them, and gave Steel bullet words of order this or that. He took the dividends, and put them—where? God knew alone. He went to church sometimes, On certain Sundays, for a pious mother Had reared him so, and sat there like a corpse, A desiccated soul, so dry the moss Upon his teeth was dry. And on a day, His wife now in the earth a week or so, Himself not well, the doctor there to quiet His fears of sudden death, pains in the chest, His manager had come—was made to wait Until the doctor finished—brought the sheets Which showed the advertising, circulation. And Lowell studied them and said at last: “That new reporter makes the Murray inquest A thing of interest, does the public like it?” To which the manager: “It sells the paper.” And then the great man: “It has served its use. Now being nearly over, print these words: The Murray inquest shows to what a length Fantastic wit can go, it should be stopped.” An editorial later might be well: Comment upon a father and a mother Invaded in their privacy, and life In intimate relations dragged to view To sate the curious eye. Next day the Times Rebuked the coroner in these words. And then Merival sent word: “I come to see you, Or else you come to see me, or by process If you refuse.” And so the editor Invited Merival to Sunnyside To talk the matter out. This was the talk: First Merival went over all the ground In mild locution, what he sought to do. How as departments in the war had studied Disease and what not, tabulated facts, He wished to make a start for knowing lives, And finding remedies for lives. It’s true Not much might be accomplished, also true The poet and the novelist gave thought, Analysis to lives, yet who could tell What system might grow up to find the fault In marriage as it is, in rearing children In motherhood, in homes; for Merival By way of wit said to this dullest man: “I know of mother and of home, of heaven I’ve yet to learn.” Whereat the great man winced, To hear the home and motherhood so slurred, And briefly said the Times would go its way To serve the public interests, and to

foster American ideals as he conceived them. Then Merival who knew the great man's nature, How small it was and barren, cold and dull, And wedded to small things, to gold, and fear Of change, and knew the life the woman lived,— These seven days in the earth—with such a man, Just by a zephyr of intangible thought Veered round the talk to her, to voice a wonder About the jet left turned, his deputy Had overlooked a hose which she could drink Gas from a jet. "You needn't touch the jet. Just leave it as she left it—hide the hose, And leave the gas on, put the woman in bed." "This deputy," said Merival, "was slack And let a verdict pass of accident." "Oh yes" said Merival, "your servant told About the hose, the Times clutched in her hand. And may I test this jet, while I am here? Go up to see and test it?" Whereupon The great man with wide eyes stared in the eyes Of Merival, was speechless for a moment, Not knowing what to say, while Merival Read something in his eyes, saw in his eyes The secret beat to cover, saw the man Turn head away which shook a little, saw His chest expand for breath, and heard at last The editor in four steel bullet words, "It is not necessary." Merival Had trapped the solitary fox—arose And going said: "If it was suicide The inquest must be changed." The editor Looked through the window at the coroner Walking the gravel walk, and saw his hand Unlatch the iron gate, and saw him pass From view behind the trees. Then horror rose Within his brain, a nameless horror took The heart of him, for fear this coroner Would dig this secret up, and show the world The dead face of the woman self-destroyed, And of the talk, which would not come to him, To poison air he breathed no less, of why This woman took her life; if for ill health Then why ill health? O, well he knew at heart What he had done to break her, starve her life. And now accused himself too much for words, Ways, temperament of him that murdered her, For lovelessness, and for deliberate hands That pushed her off and down. He rode that day To see his cattle, overlook the work, But when night came with silence and the cry Of night-hawks, and the elegy of leaves Beneath the stars that looked so cold at him As he turned seeking sleep, the dreaded pain Grew stronger in his breast.

Dawn came at last And then the stir and voices of the maids. And after breakfast in the carven room Archibald Lowell standing by the mantel In his great library, felt sudden pain; Saw sudden darkness, nothing saw at once, Lying upon the marble of the hearth; His great head cut which struck the post of brass In the hearth's railing—only a little blood! Archibald Lowell being dead at last; The Times left to the holders of the stock Who kept his policy, and kept the Times As if the great man lived. And Merival Taking the doctor's word that death was caused By angina pectoris, let it drop. And went his way with Elenor Murray's case. ———— So Lowell's dead and buried; had to die, But not through Elenor Murray. That's the Fate That laughs at greatness, little things that sneak From alien neighborhoods of life and kill. And Lowell leaves a will, to which a boy— Who sold the Times once, afterward the Star— Is alien as this Elenor to the man Who owned the Times. But still is brought in touch With Lowell's will, because this Lowell died Before he died. And Merival learns the facts And brings them to the jury in these words:—

WIDOW FORTELKA

Marie Fortelka, widow, mother of Josef, Now seventeen, an invalid at home In a house, in Halstead Street, his running side Aching with broken ribs, read in the Times Of Lowell's death the editor, dressed herself To call on William Rummler, legal mind For Lowell and the Times. It was a day When fog hung over the city, and she thought Of fogs in Germany whence she came, and thought Of hard conditions there when she was young. Then as her boy, this Josef, coughed, she looked And felt a pang at heart, a rise of wrath, And heard him moan for broken ribs and lungs That had been bruised or mashed. America, Oh yes, America, she said to self, How is it different from the land I left? And then her husband's memory came to mind: How he had fled his country to be free, And come to Philadelphia, with the thrill Of new life found, looked at the famous Hall Which gave the Declaration, cried and laughed

And said: “The country’s free, and I am here, I am free now, a man, no more a slave.” What did he find? A job, but prices high. Wages decreased in winter, then a strike. He joined the union, found himself in jail For passing hand-bills which announced the strike, And asked the public to take note, and punish The corporation, not to trade with it, For its injustice toward the laborers. And in the court he heard the judge decide: “Free speech cannot be used to gain the ends Of ruin by conspiracy like this Against a business. Men from foreign lands, Of despot rule and poverty, who come For liberty and means of life among us Must learn that liberty is ordered liberty, And is not license, freedom to commit Injury to another.” So in jail He lay his thirty days out, went to work Where he could find it, found the union smashed, Himself compelled to take what job he could, What wages he was offered. And his children Kept coming year by year till there were eight, And Josef was but ten. And then he died And left this helpless family, and the boy Sold papers on the street, ten years of age, The widow washed. And first he sold the Times And helped to spread the doctrines of the Times Of ordered liberty and epicene Reforms of this or that. But when the Star With millions back of it broke in the field He changed and sold the Star, too bad for him— Discovered something: Josef did not know The corners of the street are free to all, Or free to none, where newsboys stood and sold, And kept their stands, or rather where the powers That kept the great conspiracy of the press Controlled the stands, and to prevent the Star From gaining foot-hold. Not upon this corner Nor on that corner, any corner in short Shall newsboys sell the Star. But Josef felt, Being a boy, indifferent to the rules, Well founded, true or false, that all the corners Were free to all, and for his daring, strength Had been selected, picked to sell the Star, And break the ground, gain place upon the stands. He had been warned from corners, chased and boxed By heavy fists from corners more than once Before the day they felled him. On that day A monster bully, once a pugilist, Came on him selling the Star and knocked him down, Kicked in his ribs and broke a leg and cracked His little skull. And so they took him home To Widow Fortelka and

the sisters, brothers, Whose bread he earned. And there he lay and moaned, And when he sat up had a little cough, Was short of breath. And on this foggy day When Widow Fortelka reads in the Times That Lowell, the editor, is dead, he sits With feet wrapped in a quilt and gets his breath With open mouth, his face is brightly flushed; A fetid sweetness fills the air of the room That from his open mouth comes. Josef lingers A few weeks yet—he has tuberculosis. And so his mother looks at him, resolves To call this day on William Rummler, see If Lowell's death has changed the state of things; And if the legal mind will not relent Now that the mind that fed it lies in death. It's true enough, she thinks, I was dismissed, And sent away for good, but never mind. It can't be true this pugilist went farther Than the authority of his hiring, that's The talk this lawyer gave her, used a word She could not keep in mind—the lawyer said Respondeat superior in this case Was not in point—and if it could be proved This pugilist was hired by the Times, No one could prove the Times had hired him To beat a boy, commit a crime. Well, then "What was he hired for?" the widow asked. And then she talked with newsboys, and they said The papers had their sluggers, all of them, Even the Star, and that was just a move In getting circulation, keeping it. And all these sluggers watched the stands and drove The newsboys selling Stars away. No matter, She could not argue with this lawyer Rummler, Who said: "You must excuse me, go away, I'm sorry, but there's nothing I can do." Now Widow Fortelka had never heard Of Elenor Murray, had not read a line Of Elenor Murray's death beside the river. She was as ignorant of the interview Between the coroner and this editor Who died next morning fearing Merival Would dig up Mrs. Lowell and expose Her suicide, as conferences of spirits Directing matters in another world. Her thought was moulded no less by the riffles That spread from Elenor Murray and her death. And she resolved to see this lawyer Rummler, And try again to get a settlement To help her dying boy. And so she went. That morning Rummler coming into town Had met a cynic friend upon the train Who used his tongue as freely as his mood Moved him to use it. So he said to Rummler:

“I see your client died—a hell of a life That fellow lived, a critic in our midst Both hated and caressed. And I suppose You drew his will and know it, I will bet, If he left anything to charity, Or to the city, it is some narcotic To keep things as they are, the ailing body To dull and bring forgetfulness of pain. He was a fine albino of the soul, No pigment in his genesis to give Color to hair or eyes, he had no gonads.” And William Rummler laughed and said, “You’ll see What Lowell did when I probate the will.” Then William Rummler thought that very moment Of plans whereby his legal mind could thrive Upon the building of the big hotel To Lowell’s memory, for perpetual use Of the Y. M. C. A., the seminary, too, In Moody’s memory for an orthodox Instruction in the bible. With such things In mind, this William Rummler opened the door, And stepped into his office, got a shock From seeing Widow Fortelka on the bench, Where clients waited, waiting there for him. She rose and greeted him, and William Rummler Who in a stronger moment might have said: “You must excuse me, I have told you, madam, I can do nothing for you,” let her follow Into his private office and sit down And there renew her suit. She said to him: “My boy is dying now, I think his ribs Were driven in his lungs and punctured them. He coughs the worst stuff up you ever saw. And has an awful fever, sweats his clothes Right through, is breathless, cannot live a month. And I know you can help me. Mr. Lowell, So you told me, refused a settlement, Because this pugilist was never hired To beat my boy, or any boy; for fear It would be an admission, and be talked of, And lead another to demand some money. But now he’s dead, and surely you are free To help me some, so that this month or two, While my boy Joe is dying he can have What milk he wants and food, and when he dies, A decent coffin, burial. Then perhaps There will be something left to help me with— I wash to feed the children, as you know.” And William Rummler looked at her and thought For one brief moment with his lawyer mind About this horror, while the widow wept, And as she wept a culprit mood was his For thinking of the truth, for well he knew This slugger had been hired for such deeds, And here was one result. And in his pain

The cynic words his friend had said to him Upon the train began to stir, and then He felt a rush of feeling, blood, and thought Of clause thirteen in Lowell's will, which gave The trustees power, and he was chief trustee, To give some worthy charity once a year, Not to exceed a thousand dollars. So He thought to self, "This is a charity. I will advance the money, get it back As soon as I probate the will." At last He broke this moment's musing and spoke up: "Your case appeals to me. You may step out, And wait till I prepare the papers, then I'll have a check made for a thousand dollars." Widow Fortelka rose up and took The crucifix she wore and kissed it, wept And left the room. ———— Now here's the case of Percy Ferguson You'd think his life was safe from Elenor Murray. No preacher ever ran a prettier boat Than Percy Ferguson, all painted white With polished railings, flying at the fore The red and white and blue. Such little waves Set dancing by the death of Elenor Murray To sink so fine a boat, and leave the Reverend To swim to shore! he couldn't walk the waves!

REV. PERCY FERGUSON

The Rev. Percy Ferguson, patrician Vicar of Christ, companion of the strong, And member of the inner shrine, where men Observe the rituals of the golden calf; A dilettante, and writer for the press Upon such themes as optimism, order, Obedience, beauty, law, while Elenor Murray's Life was being weighed by Merival Preached in disparagement of Merival Upon a fatal Sunday, as it chanced, Too near to doom's day for the clergyman. For, as the word had gone about that waste In lives preoccupied this Merival, And many talked of waste, and spoke a life Where waste had been in whole or part—the pulpit Should take a hand, thought Ferguson. And so The Reverend Percy Ferguson preached thus To a great audience and fashionable: "The hour's need is a firmer faith in Christ, A closer hold on God, belief again In sin's reality; the age's vice Is laughter over sin, the attitude That sin is not!" And

then to prove that sin Is something real, he spoke of money sins That bring the money panics, of the beauty That lust corrupts, wound up with Athen's story, Which sin decayed. And touching on this waste, Which was the current talk, what is this waste Except a sin in life, the moral law Transgressed, God mocked, the order of man's life, And God's will disobeyed? Show me a life That lives through Christ and none shall find a waste. This clergyman some fifteen years before Went on a hunt for Alma Bell, who taught The art department of the school, and found Enough to scare the school directors that She burned with lawless love for Elenor Murray. And made it seem the teacher's reprimand In school of Elenor Murray for her ways Of strolling, riding with young men at night, Was moved by jealousy of Elenor Murray, Being herself in love with Elenor Murray. This clergyman laid what he found before The school directors, Alma Bell was sent Out of the school her way, and disappeared.... But now, though fifteen years had passed, the story Of Alma Bell and Elenor Murray crept Like poisonous mist, scarce seen, around LeRoy. It had been so always. And all these years No one would touch or talk in open words The loathsome matter, since girls grown to women, And married in the town might have their names Relinked to Alma Bell's. And was it true That Elenor Murray strayed as a young girl In those far days of strolls and buggy rides? But after Percy Ferguson had thundered Against the inquest, Warren Henderson, A banker of the city, who had dealt In paper of the clergyman, and knew The clergyman had interests near Victoria, Was playing at the money game, and knew He tottered on the brink, and held to hands That feared to hold him longer—Henderson, A wise man, cynical, contemptuous Of frocks so sure of ways to avoid the waste, So unforgiving of the tangled moods And baffled eyes of men; contemptuous Of frocks so avid for the downy beds, Place, honors, money, admiration, praise, Much wished to see the clergyman come down And lay his life beside the other sinners. But more he knew, admired this Alma Bell, Did not believe she burned with guilty love For Elenor Murray, thought the moral hunt Or Alma Bell had made a waste of life, As

ignorance might pluck a flower for thinking It was a weed; on Elenor Murray too Had brought a waste, by scenting up her life With something faint but ineradicable. And Warren Henderson would have revenge, And waited till old Jacob Bangs should fix His name to paper once again of Ferguson's To tell old Jacob Bangs he should be wary, Since banks and agencies were tremulous With hints of failure at Victoria. So meeting Jacob Bangs the banker told him What things were bruited, and warned the man To fix his name no more to Ferguson's paper. It was the very day the clergyman Sought Jacob Bangs to get his signature Upon a note for money at the bank. And Jacob Bangs was silent and evasive, Demurred a little and refused at last. Which sent the anxious clergyman adrift To look for other help. He looked and looked, And found no other help. Associates Depending more on men than God, fell down, And in a day the bubble burst. The Times Had columns of the story. In a week, At Sunday service Percy Ferguson Stood in the pulpit to confess his sin, The Murray jury sat and fed their joy For hearing Ferguson confess his sin. This is the way he did it: "First, my friends, I do not say I have betrayed the trust My friends have given me. Some years ago I thought to make provision for my wife, I wished to start some certain young men right. I had another plan I can't disclose, Not selfish, you'll believe me. So I took My savings made as lecturer and writer And put them in this venture. I'm ashamed To say how great those savings were, in view Of what the poor earn, those who work with hands! Ashamed too, when I think these savings grew Because I spoke the things the rich desired. And squared my words with what the strong would have— Therein Christ was betrayed. The end has come. I too have been betrayed, my confidence Wronged by my fellows in the enterprise. I hope to pay my debts. Hard poverty Has come to me to bring me back to Christ." "But listen now: These years I lived perturbed, Lest this life which I grew into would mould Young men and ministers, lead them astray To public life, sensation, lecture platforms, Prosperity, away from Christ-like service, Obscure and gentle. To those souls I owe My heart's confession: I have loved my books More than the poor,

position more than service, Office and honor over love of men; Lived thus when all my strength belonged to thought, To work for schools, the sick, the poor, the friendless, To boys and girls with hungry minds. My friends, Here I abase my soul before God's throne, And ask forgiveness for the pious zeal With which I smote the soul of Alma Bell, And smudged the robe of Elenor Murray. God, Thou, who has taken Elenor Murray home, After great service in the war, O grant Thy servant yet to kneel before the soul Of Elenor Murray. For who am I to judge? What was I then to judge? who coveted honors, When solitude, where I might dwell apart, And listen to the voice of God was mine, By calling and for seeking. I have broken The oath I took to take no purse or scrip. I have loved money, even while I knew No servant of Christ can work for Christ and strive For money. And if anywhere there be A noble boy who would become a minister, Who has heard me, or read my books, and grown Thereby to cherish secular ideas Of Christ's work in the world, to him I say: Repent the thought, reject me; there are men And women missionaries, here, abroad, And nameless workers in poor settlements Whose latchets to stoop down and to unloose I am unworthy." "Gift of life too short! O, beautiful gift of God, too brief at best, For all a man can do, how have I wasted This precious gift! How wasted it in pride, In seeking out the powerful, the great, The hands with honors, gold to give—when nothing Is profitable to a servant of the Christ Except to shepherd Christ's poor. O, young men, Interpret not your ministry in terms Of intellect alone, forefront the heart, That at the end of life you may look up And say to God: Behind these are the sheep Thou gavest me, and not a one is lost." "As to my enemies, for enemies A clergyman must have whose fault is mine, Plato would have us harden hearts to sorrow. And Zeno roofs of slate for souls to slide The storm of evil—Christ in sorrow did For evil good. For me, my prayer is this, My faith as well, that I may be perfected Through suffering." That ended the confession. Then "Love Divine, All Love Excelling" sounded. The congregation rose, and some went up To take the pastor's hand, but others left To think the matter over. For some said: "He married

fortunate.” And others said: “We know through Jacob Bangs he has investments In wheat lands, what’s the truth? In any case What avarice is this that made him anxious About the comfort of his wife and family? The thing won’t work. He’s only middle way In solving his soul’s problem. This confession Is just a poor beginning.” Others said: “He drove out Alma Bell, let’s drive him out.” And others said: “you note we never heard About this speculation till it failed, And he was brought to grief. If it had prospered The man had never told, what do you think?” But in a year as health failed, Ferguson Took leave of absence, and the silence of life Which closes over men, however noisy With sermons, lectures, covered him. His riffle Died out in distant waters. There was a Doctor Burke lived at LeRoy, Neurologist and student. On a night When Merival had the jury at his house, Llewellyn George was telling of his travels In China and Japan, had mutual friends With Franklin Hollister, the cousin of Elenor, And son of dead Corinne, who hid her letters Under the eaves. The talk went wide and far. For David Borrow, sunny pessimist, Thrust logic words at Maiworm, the juryman; And said our life was bad, and must be so, While Maiworm trusted God, said life was good. And Winthrop Marion let play his wit, The riches of his reading over all. Thus as they talked this Doctor Burke came in. “You’ll pardon this intrusion, I’ll go on If this is secret business. Let me say This inquest holds my interest and I’ve come To tell of Elenor’s ancestry.” Thus he spoke. “There’ll be another time if I must go.” And Merival spoke up and said: “why stay And tell us what you know, or think,” and so The coroner and jury sat and heard:—

DR. BURKE

You’ve heard of potters’ wheels and potters’ hands. I had a dream that told the human tale As well as potters’ wheels or potters’ hands. I saw a great hand slopping plasmic jelly Around the low sides of a giant bowl. A drop would fly upon the giant

table, And quick the drop would twist up into form, Become homonculus and wave its hands, Brandish a little pistol, shoot a creature, Upspringing from another drop of plasm, Slopped on the giant table. Other drops, Flying as water from a grinding stone, Out of the giant bowl, took little crowns And put them on their heads and mounted thrones, And lorded little armies. Some became Half-drooped and sickly things, like poisoned flies. And others stood on lighted faggots, others Fed and commanded, others served and starved, But many joined the throng of animate drops, And hurried on the phantom quest. You see, Whether you call it potter's hand or hand That stirs, to no end, jelly in the bowl, You have the force outside and not inside. Invest it with a malice, wanton humor, Which likes to see the plasmic jelly slop, And rain in drops upon the giant table, And does not care what happens in the world, That giant table. All such dreams are wrong, My dream is wrong, my waking thought is right. Man can subdue the giant hand that stirs, Or turns the wheel, and so these visions err. For as this farmer, lately come to town, Picks out the finest corn seeds, and so crops A finer corn, let's look to human seed, And raise a purer stock; let's learn of him, Who does not put defective grains aside For planting in the spring, but puts aside The best for planting. For I'd like to see As much care taken with the human stock As men now take of corn, race-horses, hogs. You, Coroner Merival are right, I think. If we conserve our forests, waterways, Why not the stream of human life, which wastes Because its source is wasted, fouled. Perhaps Our coroner has started something good, And brought to public mind what might result If every man kept record of the traits Known in his family for the future use Of those to come in choosing mates. Behold, Your moralists and churchmen with your rules Brought down from Palestine, which says that life Though tainted, maddened, must not be controlled, Diverted, headed off, while life in corn, And life in hogs, that feed the life of man Should be made better for the life of man— Behold, I say, some hundred millions spent On paupers, epileptics, deaf and blind; On feeble minded, invalids, the insane— Behold, I say, this cost in gold alone, Leave for the time the

tragedy of souls, Who suffer or must see such suffering, And then turn back to what? The hand that stirs, The potter's hand? Why, no—the marriage counter Where this same state in Christian charity Spending its millions, lets the fault begin, And says to epileptics and what not:— "Go breed your kind, for Jesus came to earth, And we will house and feed your progeny, Or hang, incarcerate your murderous spawn, As it may happen." And all the time we know As small grains fruit in small grains, even man In fifty matters of pathology Transmits what's in him, blindness, imbecility, Hysteria, susceptibilities To cancer and tuberculosis. Also The soil that sprouts the giant weed of madness— There's soil which will not sprout them, occupied Too full by blossoms, healthy trees. We know Such things as these—Well, I would sterilize, Or segregate these shriveled seeds and keep The soil of life for seeds select, and take The church and Jesus, if he's in the way, And say: "You stand aside, and let me raise A better and a better breed of men." Quit, shut your sniveling charities; have mercy Not on these paupers, imbeciles, diseased ones, But on the progeny you let them breed. And thereby sponge the greatest waste away, And source of life's immeasurable tragedies. Avaunt you potter hands and potter wheels! God is within us, not without us, we Are given souls to know and see and guide Ourselves and those to come, souls that compute The calculus of beauties, talents, traits, And show us that the good in seed strives on To master stocks; that even poisoned blood, And minds in chemic turmoils, mixed with blood And minds in harmony, work clean at last— Else how may normal man to-day be such With some eight billion ancestors behind, And something in him of the blood of all Who lived five hundred years ago or so, Who were diseased with alcohol and pork, And poverty? But oh these centuries Of agony and waste! Let's stop it now! And since this God within us gives us choice To let the dirty plasma flow or dam it, To give the channel to the silver stream Of starry power, which shall we do? Now choose Between your race of drunkards, imbeciles, Lunatics and neurotics, or the race Of those who sing and write, or measure space, Build temples, bridges, calculate the

stars, Live long and sanely. Well, I take my son, I could have prophesied his eyes, through knowing The color of my mother's, father's eyes, The color of his mother's parent's eyes. I could have told his hair. There's subtler things. My father died before this son was born; Why does this son smack lips and turn his hand Just like my father did? Not imitation— He never saw him, and I do not do so. Refine the matter where you will, how far You choose to go, it is not eyes and hair, Chins, shape of head, of limbs, or shape of hands, Nor even features, look of eyes, nor sound Of voice that we inherit, but the traits Of inner senses, spiritual gifts, and secret Beauties and powers of spirit; which result Not solely by the compound of the souls Through conjugating cells, but in the fusion Something arises like an unknown X And starts another wonder in the soul, That comes from souls compounded. Coroner You have done well to study Elenor Murray. How do I view the matter? To begin Here is a man who looks upon a woman, Desires her, so they marry, up they step Before the marriage counter, buy a license To live together, propagate their kind. No questions asked. I'll later come to that. This couple has four children, Elenor Is second to be born. I knew this girl, I cared for her at times when she was young— Well, for the picture general, she matures Goes teaching school, leaves home, goes far away, Has restlessness and longings, ups and downs Of ecstasy and depression, has a will Which drives her onward, dreams that call to her. Goes to the war at last to sacrifice Her life in duty, and the root of this Is masochistic (though I love the flower), Comes back and dies. I call her not a drop Slopped from the giant bowl; she is a growth Proceeding on clear lines, if we could know, From cells that joined, and had within themselves The quality of the stream whose source I see As far as grandparents. And now to this: We all know what her father, mother are. No doubt the marriage counter could have seen— Or asked what was not visible. But who knows About the father's parents, or the mother's? I chance to know. The father drinks, you say? Well, he drank little when this child was born, Had he drunk much, it is the nerves which crave The solace of the cup, and not the cup Which

passes from the parent to the child. His father and his mother were good blood, Steady, industrious; and just because His father and his mother had the will To fight privation, and the lonely days Of pioneering, so this son had will To fight, aspire, but at the last to growl, And darken in that drug store prison, take To drink at times in anger for a will That was so balked. Well, then your marriage counter Could scarcely ask: What is your aim in life? You clerk now in a drug store, you aspire To be a lawyer, if you find yourself Stopped on your way by poverty, the work Of clerking to earn bread, you will break down, And so affect your progeny. So, you see, For all of that the daughter Elenor Was born when this ambition had its hope, Not when it tangled up in hopelessness; And therefore is thrown out of the account. The father must be passed and given license To wed this woman. How about the mother? You never knew the mother of the mother. She had great power of life and power of soul, Lived to be eighty-seven, to the last Was tense, high voiced, excitable, ecstatic, Top full of visions, dreams, and plans for life. But worse than that at fifty lost her mind, Was two years kept at Kankakee, quite mad, Grieving for fancied wrongs against her husband Some five years dead, and praying to keep down Desire for men. Her malady was sensed When she began to wander here and there, In shops and public places, in the church, Wherever she could meet with men, one man Particularly to whom she made advances Unwomanly and strange. And so at last She turned her whole mind to the church, became Religion mad, grew mystical, believed That Jesus Christ had taken her to spouse. They kept her in confinement for two years. The rage died down at last, and she came home. But to the last was nervous, tense, high keyed. And then her mind failed totally, she died At eighty-seven here. Now I could take Some certain symbols A and a, and show Out of the laws that Mendel found for us, What chances Elenor Murray had to live Free of the madness, clear or in dilute, Diminished or made over, which came down From this old woman to her. It’s enough To see in Elenor Murray certain traits, Passions and powers, ecstasies and sorrows. And from them life’s misfortunes, and to see

They tally, take the color of the soul Of this old woman, back of her. Even to see In Elenor Murray's mother states of soul, And states of nerves, passed on to Elenor Murray Directly by her mother. But you say, Since many say so, here's a woman's soul Most beautiful and serviceable in the world And she confutes you, in your logic chopping, Materialistic program, who would give The marriage counter power to pick the corn seed For future planting: No, I say to this. What does it come to? She had will enough, And aspiration, struck out for herself, Learned for herself, did service in the war, As many did, and died—all very good. But not so good that we could quite afford To take the chances on some other things Which might have come from her. Well, to begin Putting aside an autopsy, she died Because this neural weakness, so derived, Caught in such stress of life proved far too much For one so organized; a stress of life Which others could live through, and have lived through. The world had Elenor Murray, and she died Before she was a cost.—But just suppose No war had been to aureole her life— And she had lived here and gone mad at last Become a charge upon the state? Or yet, As she was love-mad, by the common word, And as she had neurotic tendencies, Would seek neurotic types therefore, suppose She had with some neurotic made a marriage, And brought upon us types worse than themselves; Given us the symbol double A instead Of big and little a, where are you then? You have some suicides, or murders maybe, Some crimes in sex, some madness on your hands, For which to tax the strong to raise, and raise Some millions every year. Are we so mad For beauty, sacrifice and heroism, So hungry for the stimulus of these That we cannot discern and fairly appraise What Elenor Murray was, what to the world She brought, for which we overlook the harm She might have done the world? Not if we think! And if we think, she will not seem God's flower Made spotted, pale or streaked by cross of breed, A wonder and a richness in the world; But she will seem a blossom which to these Added a novel poison with the power To spread her poison! And we may dispense With what she did and what she tried to do, No longer sentimentalists, to keep The chances

growing in the world to bring A better race of men. Then Doctor Burke Left off philosophy and asked: “How many Of you who hear me, know that Elenor Murray Was distant cousin to this necrophile, This Taylor boy, I call him boy, though twenty, Who got the rope for that detested murder Of a young girl—Oh yes, let’s save the seed Of stock like this!” But only David Borrow Knew Elenor was cousin to this boy. And Merival spoke up: “What is to-day? It’s Thursday, it’s to-morrow that he hangs. I’ll go now to the jail to see this boy.” “He hangs at nine o’clock,” said Dr. Burke. And Merival got up to go. The party Broke up, departed. At the jail he saw The wretched creature doomed to die. And turned Half sick from seeing how he tossed and looked With glassy eyes. The sheriff had gone out. And Merival could see him, get the case. Next afternoon they met, the sheriff told This story to the coroner.

CHARLES WARREN, THE SHERIFF

I have seen twenty men hanged, hung myself Two in this jail, with whom I talked the night Before they had the rope, knotted behind The ear to break the neck. These two I hanged, One guilty and defiant, taking chops, Four cups of coffee just an hour before We swung him off; the other trembling, pale, Protesting innocence, but guilty too— Both wore the same look in the middle watch. I tell you what it is: You take a steer, And windlass him to where the butcher stands With hammer ready for the blow and knife To slit the throat after the hammer falls, Well, there’s a moment when the steer is standing Head, neck strained side-ways, eyes rolled side-ways too, Fixed, bright seen this way, but another way A film seems spreading on them. That’s the look. They wear a corpse-like pallor, and their tongues Are loose, sprawl in their mouths, lie paralyzed Against their teeth, or fall back in their throats Which make them cough and stop for words and close Dry lips with little pops. There’s something else: Their minds are out of them, like a rubber band Stretched from the

place it's pinned, about to break. And all the time they try to draw it back, And give it utterance with that sprawling tongue, And lips too dry for words. They hold it tight As a woman giving birth holds to the sheet Tied to the bed's head, pulls the sheet to end The agony and the reluctance of the child That pauses, dreads to enter in this world. So was it with Fred Taylor. But before The high Court shook his hope, he talked to me Freely and fully, saying many times What could the world expect of him beside Some violence or murder? He had borrowed The books his lawyers used to fight for him, And read for hours and days about heredity. And in our talks he said: mix red and violet, You have the color purple. Strike two notes, You have a certain chord, and nature made me By rules as mathematical as they use In mixing drugs or gases. Then he'd say: Look at this table, and he'd show to me A diagram of chickens, how blue fowls Come from a cross of black with one of white With black splashed feathers. Look at the blues, he'd say. They mate, and of four chickens, two are blue, And one is black and one is white. These blues Produce in that proportion. But the black And white have chickens white and black, you see In equal numbers. Don't you see that I Was caught in mathematics, jotted down Upon a slate before I came to earth? They could have picked my forbears; on a slate Forecast my soul, its tendencies, if they Had been that devilish. And so he talked. Well, then he heard that Elenor Murray died, And told me that her grandmother, that woman Known for her queerness and her lively soul To eighty years and more, was grandmother To his father, and this Elenor Murray cousin To his father. There you have it, he exclaimed, She killed herself, and I know why, he said She loved someone. This love is in our blood, And overflows, or spurts between the logs You dam it with, or fully stayed grows green With summer scum, breeds frogs and spotted snakes. He was a study and I studied him. I'd sit beside his cell and read some words From his confession, ask why did you this? His crime was monstrous, but he won me over. I wished to help the boy, for boy he was Just nineteen, and I pitied him. At last His story seemed as clear as when you see The truth behind poor words that say as much As words

can say—you see, you get the truth And know it, even if you never pass The truth to others. Lord! This girl he killed Knew not the power she played with. Why she sat Like a child upon the asp's nest picking flowers. Or as a child will pet a mad dog. Look You come into my life, what do you bring? Why, everything that made your life, all pains, All raptures, disappointments, wisdom learned You bring to me. But do you show them, no! You hide them maybe, some of them, and leave Myself to learn you by the hardest means, And bing! A something in you, or in me, Out of a past explodes, or better still Extends a claw from out the buttoned coat And rips a face. So this poor girl was killed, And by an innocent coquetry evoked The claw that tore her breast away. One day As I passed by his cell I stopped and sat. What was the first thing entering in your mind From which you trace your act? And he said: "Well Almost from the beginning all my mind Was on her from the moment I awaked Until I slept, and often I awoke At two or three o'clock with thoughts of her. And through the day I thought of nothing else; Sometimes I could not eat. At school my thought Stretched out of me to her, could not be pulled Back to the lesson. I could read a page As it were Greek, not understand a word. But just the moment I was with her then My soul re-entered me, I was at peace, And happy, oh so happy! In the days When we were separated my unrest Took this form: that I must be with her, or If that could not be, then some other place Was better than the place I was—I strained, Lived in a constant strain, found no content With anything or place, could find no peace Except with her." "Right from the first I had Two minds, two hearts concerning her, and one Was confidence, and one was doubt, one love, One hatred. And one purpose was to serve her, Guard her and care for her, one said destroy, Ruin or kill her. Sitting by her side, Except as I shall say I loved her, trusted her, Away from her, I doubted her and hated her. But at the dances when I saw her smile Up at another man, the storming blood Roared in my brain for wondering about The words they said. He might be holding her Too close to him; or as I watched I saw His knee indent her skirt between her knees, That might be when she smiled. Then

going home I'd ask her what he said. She'd only smile And keep a silence that I could not open With any pry of questions." "Well, we quarreled, About this boy she danced with. So I said: I'll leave her, never see her, I'll go find Another girl, forget her. Sunday next I saw her driving with this fellow. I Was walking in the road, they passed me laughing, She turned about and waved her hand at me. That night I lay awake and tossed and thought: Where are they now? What are they doing now? He's kissing her upon the lips I've kissed, Or worse, perhaps, I have been fooled, she lies Within his arms and gives him what for love I never asked her, never dared to ask." This brought Fred Taylor's story to the murder, In point of madness, anyway. Some business Broke in our visit here. Another time I sat with him and questioned him again About the night he killed her. "Well," he said, "I told you that we quarreled. So I fought To free myself of thought of her—no use. I tried another girl, it wouldn't work. For at the dance I took this girl to, I Saw Gertrude with this fellow, and the madness Came over me in blackness, hurricanes, Until I found myself in front of her, Where she was seated, asking for a dance. She smiled and rose and danced with me. And then As the dance ended, May I come to see you, I'm sorry for my words, came from my tongue, In spite of will. She laughed and said to me: 'If you'll behave yourself.'" "I went to see her, But came away more wretched than I went. She seemed to have sweet secrets, in her silence And eyes too calm the secrets hid themselves. At first I could not summon up the strength To ask her questions, but at last I did. And then she only shook her head and laughed, And spoke of something else. She had a way Of mixing up the subjects, till my mind Forgot the very thing I wished to know, Or dulled its edges so, if I remembered I could not ask it so to bring the answer I wished from her. I came away so weak I scarce could walk, fell into sleep at once, But woke at three o'clock, and could not sleep." "Before this quarrel we had been engaged And at this evening's end I brought it up: 'What shall we do? Are you engaged to me? Will you renew it?' And she said to me: 'We still are young, it's better to be free. Let's play and dance. Be gay, for if you will I'll go with

you, but when you're gloomy, dear, You are not company for a girl.'" "Dear me! Here was I five feet nine, and could have crushed Her little body with my giant arms. And yet in strength that counts, the mind that moves The body, but much more can move itself, And other minds, she was a spirit power, And I but just a derrick slowly swung By an engine smaller, noisy with its chug, And cloudy with its smoke bituminous. That night, however, she engaged to go To dance with me a week hence. But meanwhile The hellish thing comes, on the morning after. Thus chum of mine, who testified, John Luce Came to me with the story that this man That Gertrude danced with, told him—O my God— That Gertrude hinted she would come across, Give him the final bliss. That was the proof They brought out in the trial, as you know. The fellow said it, damn him—whether she Made such a promise, who knows? Would to God I knew before you hang me. There I stood And heard this story, felt my arteries Lock as you'd let canal gates down, my heart Beat for deliverance from the bolted streams. That night I could not sleep, but found a book, Just think of this for fate! Under my eyes There comes an ancient story out of Egypt: Thyamis fearing he would die and lose The lovely Chariclea, strikes her dead, Then kills himself, some thousands of years ago. It's all forgotten now, I say to self, Who cares, what matters it, the thing was done And served its end. The story stuck with me. But the next night and the next night I stole out To spy on Gertrude, by the path in the grass Lay for long hours. And on the third night saw At half-past eight or nine this fellow come And take her walking in the darkness—where? I could have touched them as they walked the path, But could not follow for the moon which rose. Besides I lost them." "Well, the time approached Of the dance, and still I brooded, then resolved. My hatred now was level with the cauldron, With bubbles crackling. So the spade I took, Hidden beneath the seat may show forethought, They caught the jury with that argument, And forethought does it show, but who made me To have such forethought?" "Then I called for her And took her to the dance. I was most gay, Because the load was lifted from my mind, And I had found relief. And so

we danced. And she danced with this fellow. I was calm, Believed somehow he had not had her yet. And if his knee touched hers—why let it go. Nothing beyond shall happen, even this Shall not be any more." "We started home. Before we reached that clump of woods I asked her If she would marry me. She laughed at me. I asked her if she loved that other man. She said you are a silly boy, and laughed. And then I asked her if she'd marry me, And if she would not, why she would not do it. We came up to the woods and she was silent, I could not make her speak. I stopped the horse. She sat all quiet, I could see her face Under the brilliance of the moon. I saw A thin smile on her face—and then I struck her, And from the floor grabbed up the iron wrench, And struck her, took her out and laid her down, And did what was too horrible, they say, To do and keep my life. To finish up I reached back for the iron wrench, first felt Her breast to find her heart, no use of wrench, She was already dead. I took the spade, Scraped off the leaves between two trees and dug, And buried her and said: 'My Chariclea No man shall have you.' Then I drove till morning, And after some days reached Missouri, where They caught me." So Fred Taylor told me all, Filled in the full confession that he made, And which they used in court, with looks and words, Scarce to be reproduced; but to the last He said the mathematics of his birth Accounted for his deed. Is it not true? If you resolved the question that the jury Resolved, did he know right from wrong, did he Know what he did, the jury answered truly To give the rope to him. Or if you say These mathematics may be true, and still A man like that is better out of way, And saying so become the very spirit, And reason which slew Gertrude, disregarding The devil of heredity which clutched him, As he put by the reason we obey, It may be well enough, I do not know. Now for last night before this morning fixed To swing him off. His lawyers went to see The governor to win reprieval, perhaps A commutation. I could see his eyes Had two lights in them; one was like a lantern With the globe greased, which showed he could not see Himself in death tomorrow—what is that In the soul that cannot see itself in death? No to-morrow, continuation, the wall, the

end! And yet this very smear upon the globe Was death's half fleshless hand which rubbed across His senses and his hope. The other light Was weirdly bright for terror, expectation Of good news from the governor. For his lawyers Were in these hours petitioning. He would ask: "No news? No word? What is the time?" His tongue Would fall back in his throat, we saw the strain Of his stretched soul. He'd sit upon his couch Hands clasped, head down. Arise and hold the bars, Himself fling on the couch face down and shake. But when he heard the hammers ring that nail The scaffold into shape, he whirled around Like a rat in a cage. And when the sand bag fell, That tested out the rope, a muffled thug, And the rope creaked, he started up and moaned "You're getting ready," and his body shivered, His white hands could not hold the bars, he reeled And fell upon the couch again. Suppose There was no whiskey and no morphia, Except for what the parsons think fit use, A poor weak fellow—not a Socrates— Must march the gallows, walk with every nerve Up-bristled like a hair in fright. This night Was much too horrible for me. At last I had the doctor dope him unaware, And for a time he slept. But when the dawn Looked through the little windows near the ceiling Cob-webbed and grimed, with light like sanded water, And echoes started in the corridors Of feet and objects moved, then all at once He sprang up from his sleep, and gave a groan, Half yell, that shook us all. A clergyman Came soon to pray with him, and he grew calmer, And said: "O pray for her, but pray for me That I may see her, when this riddle-world No longer stands between us, slipped from her And soon from me." For breakfast he took coffee, A piece of toast, no more. The sickening hour Approaches—he is sitting on his couch, Bent over, head in hands, dazed, or in prayer. My deputy reads the warrant—while I stand At one side so to hear, but not to see. And then my clerk comes quickly through the door That opens from the office in the jail; Runs up the iron steps, all out of breath, And almost shouts: "The governor telephones To stop; the sentence is commuted." Then I grew as weak as the culprit—took the warrant, And stepped up to the cell's door, coughed, inhaled,

And after getting breath I said: “Good news, The governor has saved you.” Then he laughed, Half fell against the bars, and like a rag Sank in a heap. I don’t know to this day What moved the governor. For crazy men Are hanged sometimes. To-day he leaves the jail. We take him where the criminal insane Are housed at our expense. ———— So Merival heard the sheriff. As he knew The governor’s mind, and how the governor Gave heed to public thought, or what is deemed The public thought, what’s printed in the press, He wondered at the governor. For no crime Had stirred the county like this crime. And if A jury and the courts adjudged this boy Of nineteen in his mind, what was the right Of interference by the governor? So Merival was puzzled. They were chums, The governor and Merival in old days. Had known club-life together, ate and drank Together in the days when Merival Came to Chicago living down the hurt He took from her who left him. In those days The governor was struggling, Merival Had helped with friends and purse—and later helped The governor’s ambition from the time He went to congress. So the two were friends With memories and secrets for the stuff Of friendship, glad renewal of the surge Of lasting friendship when they met. And now He sensed a secret, meant to bring it forth. And telegraphed the governor, who said: “I’ll see you in Chicago.” Merival Went up to see the governor and talk. They had not met for months for leisured talk. And now the governor said: “I’ll tell you all, And make it like a drama. I’ll bring in My wife who figured in this murder case. It was this way: It’s nearly one o’clock, I’m back from hearing lawyers plead. I wish To make this vivid so you’ll get my mind. I tell you what I said to her. It’s this:”

THE GOVERNOR

I’m home at last. How long were you asleep? I startled you. The time? It’s midnight past. Put on your slippers and your robe, my dear, And make some coffee for me—what a night! Yes, tell you? I shall tell you everything. I must tell someone,

and a wife should know The workings of a governor's mind—no one Could guess what turned the scale to save this man Who would have died to-morrow, but for me. That's fine. This coffee helps me. As I said This night has been a trial. Well, you know I told these lawyers they could come at eight, And so they came. A seasoned lawyer one, The other young and radical, both full Of sentiment of some sort. And there you sit, And do not say a word of disapproval. You smile, which means you sun yourself within The power I have, and yet do you approve? This man committed brutal murder, did A nameless horror; now he's saved from death. The father and the mother of the girl, The neighborhood, perhaps, in which she lived Will roar against me, think that I was bought, Or used by someone I'm indebted to In politics. Oh no! It's really funny, Since it is simpler than such things as these. And no one, saving you, shall know the secret. For there I sat and didn't say a word To indicate, betray my thought; not when The thing came out that moved me. Let them read The doctor's affidavits, that this man Was crazy when he killed the girl, and read The transcript of the evidence on the trial. They read and talked. At last the younger lawyer, For sometime still, kept silent by the other, Pops out with something, reads an affidavit, As foreign to the matter as a story Of melodrama color on the screen, Which still contained a sentence that went home; I felt my mind turn like a turn-table, And click as when the switchman kicks the tongue Of steel into the slot that holds the table. And from my mind the engine, that's the problem, Puffed, puffed and moved away, out on the track, And disappeared upon its business. How Is that for metaphor? Your coffee, dear, Stirs up my fancy. But to tell the rest, If my face changed expression, or my eye Betrayed my thought, then I have no control Of outward seeming. For they argued on An hour or so thereafter. And I asked Re-reading of the transcript where this man Told of his maniac passion, of the night He killed the girl, the doctors' testimony I had re-read, and let these lawyers think My interest centered there, and my decision Was based upon such matters, and at last The penalty commuted. When in truth I tell you I had let the fellow hang For all

of this, except that I took fire Because of something in this affidavit Irrelevant to the issue, reaching me In something only relevant to me. O, well, all life is such. Our great decisions Flame out of sparks, where roaring fires before, Not touching our combustibles wholly failed To flame or light us. Now the secret hear. Do you remember all the books I read Two years ago upon heredity, Foot-notes to evolution, the dynamics Of living matter? Well, it wasn't that That made me save this fellow. There you smile For knowing how and when I got these books, Who woke my interest in them. Never mind, You don't know yet my reasons. But I'll tell you: And let you see a governor's mind at work. When this young lawyer in this affidavit Read to a certain place my mind strayed off And lived a time past, you were present too. It was that morning when I passed my crisis, Had just dodged death, could scarcely speak, too weak To lift a hand to feed myself, but needed Vital replenishment of strength, and then I got it in a bowl of oyster soup, Rich cream at that. And as I live, my dear, As this young lawyer read, I felt myself In bed as I lay then, re-lived the weakness, Could see the spoon that carried to my mouth The appetizing soup, imagined there The feelings I had then of getting fingers Upon the rail of life again, how faint, But with such clear degrees. Could see the hand That held the spoon, the eyes that looked at me In triumph for the victory of my strength, Which battled, almost lost the prize of life. It all came over me when this lawyer read: Elenor Murray lately come from France Found dead beside the river, was the cousin Of this Fred Taylor, and had planned to come To see the governor, death prevented her— Suppose it had? That affidavit, doubtless Was read to me to move me for the fact This man was kindred to a woman who Served in the war, this lawyer was that cheap! And isn't it as cheap to think that I Could be persuaded by the circumstance That Elenor Murray, she who nursed me once, Was cousin to this fellow, if this lawyer Knew this, and did he know it? I don't know. Had Elenor Murray lived she would have come To ask her cousin's life—I know her heart. And at the last, I think this was the thing: I thought I'd do exactly what I'd do If she had

lived and asked me, disregard Her death, and act as if she lived, repay Her dead hands, which in life had saved my life. Now, dear, your eyes have tears—I know—believe me, I had no romance with this Elenor Murray. Good Lord, it's one o'clock, I must to bed.... You get my story Merival? Do you think, A softness in the heart went to the brain And softened that? Well now I stress two things: I can't endure defeat, nor bear to see An ardent spirit thwarted. What I've achieved Has been through will that would not bend, and so To see that in another wins my love, And my support. Now take this Elenor Murray She had a will like mine, she worked her way As I have done. And just to hear that she Had planned to see me, ask for clemency For this condemned degenerate, made me say Shall I let death defeat her? Take the breach And make her death no matter in my course? For as I live if she had come to me I had done that I did. And why was that? No romance! Never that! Yet human love As friend can keep for friend in this our life I felt for Elenor Murray—and for this: It was her will that would not take defeat, Devotion to her work, and in my case This depth of friendship welling in her heart For human beings, that I shared in—there Gave tireless healing to her nursing hands And saved my life. And for a life a life. This criminal will live some years, we'll say, Were better dead. All right. He'll cost the state Say twenty thousand dollars. What is that Contrasted with the cost to me, if I Had let him hang? There is a bank account, Economies in the realm of thought to watch. And don't you think the souls—let's call them souls— Of these avenging, law abiding folk, These souls of the community all in all Will be improved for hearing that I did A human thing, and profit more therefrom Than though that sense of balance in their souls Struck for the thought of crime avenged, the law Fulfilled and vindicated? Yes, it's true. And Merival spoke up and said: "It's true, I understand your story, and I'm glad. It's like you and I'll tell my jury first, And they will scatter it, what moved in you And how this Elenor Murray saved a life." ———— The talk of waste in human life was constant As Coroner Merival took evidence At Elenor Murray's inquest. Everyone

Could think of waste in some one's life as well As in his own. John Scofield knew the girl, Had worked for Arthur Fouche, her grandfather, And knew what course his life took, how his fortune Was wasted, dwindled down. Remembering A talk he heard between this Elenor Murray And Arthur Fouche, her grandfather, he spoke To Coroner Merival on the street one day:

JOHN SCOFIELD

You see I worked for Arthur Fouche, he said, Until the year before he died; I knew That worthless son of his who lived with him, Born when his mother was past bearing time, So born a weakling. When he came from college He married soon and came to mother's hearth, And brought his bride. I heard the old man say: "A man should have his own place when he marries, Not settle in the family nest"; I heard The old man offer him a place, or offer To buy a place for him. This baby boy Ran quick to mother, cried and asked to stay. What happened then? What always happens. Soon This son began to edge upon the father, And take the reins a little, Arthur Fouche Was growing old. And at the last the son Controlled the bank account and ran the farms; And Mrs. Fouche gave up her place at table To daughter-in-law, no longer served or poured The coffee—so you see how humble beggars Become the masters, it is always so. Now this I know: When this boy came from school And brought his wife back to the family place, Old Arthur Fouche had twenty thousand dollars On saving in the bank, and lots of money Loaned out on mortgages. But when he died He owed two thousand dollars at the bank. Where did the money go? Why, for ten years When Arthur Fouche and son were partners, I Saw what went on, and saw this boy buy cattle When beef was high, sell cattle when it was low, And lose each year a little. And I saw This boy buy buggies, autos and machinery, And lose the money trading. So it was, This worthless boy had nothing in his head To run a business, which used up the fortune Of Arthur Fouche, and strangled Arthur

Fouche, As vines destroy an oak tree. Well, you know When Arthur Fouche's will was opened up They found this son was willed most everything— It's always so. The children who go out, And make their way get nothing, and the son Who stays at home by mother gets the swag. And so this son was willed the family place And sold it to that chiropractor—left For California to remake his life, And died there, after wasting all his life, His father's fortune, too. So, now to show you How age breaks down a mind and dulls a heart, I'll tell you what I heard: This Elenor Murray Was eighteen, just from High School, and one day She came to see her grandfather and talked. The old man always said he loved her most Of all the grandchildren, and Mrs. Fouche Told me a dozen times she thought as much Of Elenor Murray as she did of any Child of her own. Too bad they didn't show Their love for her. I was in and out the room Where Elenor Murray and her grandfather Were talking on that day, was planing doors That swelled and wouldn't close. There was no secret About this talk of theirs that I could see, And so I listened. Elenor began: "If you can help me, grandpa, just a little I can go through the university. I can teach school in summer and can save A little money by denying self. If you can let me have two hundred dollars, When school begins each year, divide it up, If you prefer, and give me half in the fall, And half in March, perhaps, I can get through. And when I finish I shall go to work And pay you back, I want it as a loan, And do not ask it for a gift." She sat, And fingered at her dress while asking him, And Arthur Fouche looked at her. Come to think He was toward eighty then. At last he said: "I wish I could do what you ask me, Elenor, But there are several things. You see, my child, I have been through this thing of educating A family of children, lived my life In that regard, and so have done my part. I sent your mother to St. Mary's, sent The rest of them wherever they desired. And that's what every father owes his children. And when he does it, he has done his duty. I'm sorry that your father cannot help you, And I would help you, though I've done my duty By those to whom I owed it; but you see Your uncle and myself are partners buying And selling cattle, and the

business lags. We do not profit much, and all the money I have in bank is needed for this business. We buy the cattle, and we buy the corn, Then we run short of corn; and now and then I have to ask the bank to lend us money, And give my note. Last month I borrowed money!" And so the old man talked. And as I looked I saw the tears run down her cheeks. She sat And looked as if she didn't believe him. No, Why should she? For I do not understand Why in a case like this, a man who's worth, Say fifty thousand dollars couldn't spare Two hundred dollars by the year. Let's see: He might have bought less corn or cattle, gambled On lucky sales of cattle—there's a way To do a big thing when you have the eyes To see how big it is; and as for me, If money must be lost, I'd rather lose it On Elenor Murray than on cattle. In fact, That's where the money went, as I have said. And Elenor Murray went away and earned Two terms at college, and this worthless son Ate up and spent the money. All of them, The son and Arthur Fouche and Elenor Murray Are gone to dust, now, like the garden things That sprout up, fall and rot. At times it seems All waste to me, no matter what you do For self or others, unless you think of turnips Which can't be much to turnips, but are good For us who raise them. Here's my story then, Good wishes to you, Coroner Merival. ———— Coroner Merival heard that Gottlieb Gerald Knew Elenor Murray and her family life; And knew her love for music, how she tried To play on the piano. On an evening He went with Winthrop Marion to the place,— Llewellyn George dropped in to hear, as well— Where Gottlieb Gerald sold pianos—dreamed, Read Kant at times, a scholar, but a failure, His life a waste in business. Gottlieb Gerald Spoke to them in these words:—

GOTTLIEB GERALD

I knew her, why of course. And you want me? What can I say? I don't know how she died. I know what people say. But if you want To hear about her, as I knew the

girl, Sit down a minute. Wait, a customer!... It was a fellow with a bill, these fellows Who come for money make me smile. Good God! Where shall I get the money, when pianos, Such as I make, are devilish hard to sell? Now listen to this tune! Dumm, dumm, dumm, dumm, How's that for quality, sweet clear and pure? Now listen to these chords I take from Bach! Oh no, I never played much, just for self. Well, you might say my passion for this work Is due to this: I pick the wire strings, The spruce boards and all that for instruments That suit my ear at last. When I have built A piano, then I sit and play upon it, And find forgetfulness and rapture through it. And well I need forgetfulness, for the bills Are never paid, collectors always come. I keep a little lawyer almost busy, Lest some one get a judgment, levy a writ Upon my prizes here, this one in chief. Oh, well, I pay at last, I always pay, But I must have my time. And in the days When these collectors swarm too much I find Oblivion in music, run my hands Over the keys I've tuned. I wish I had Some life of Cristofori, just to see If he was dodging bills when tuning strings. Perhaps that Silberman who made pianos For Frederick the Great had money enough, And needed no oblivion from bills. You see I'm getting old now, sixty-eight; And this I say, that life is far too short For man to use his conquests and his wisdoms. This spirit, mind, is a machine, piano, And has its laws of harmony and use. Well, it seems funny that a man just learns The secrets of his being, how to love, How to forget, what to select, what life Is natural to him, and only living According to one's nature is increase— All else is waste—when wind blows on your back, Just as I sit sometimes when these collectors Come in on me—and so you find it's Death, Who levies on your life; no little lawyer Can keep him off with stays of execution, Or supersedeas, I think it is. Well, as I said, a man must live his nature, And dump the rules; this Christianity Makes people wear steel corsets to grow straight, And they don't grow so, for they scarcely breathe, They're laced so tight; and all their vital organs Are piled up and repressed until they groan. Then what? They lace up tighter, till the blood Stops in the veins and numbness comes upon them. Oblivion it may

be—but give me music! Oh yes, this girl, Elenor Murray, well This talk about her home is half and half, Part true, part false. Her daddy nips a little, Has always done so. Like myself, the bills Have always deviled him. But just the same That home was not so bad. Some years ago, She was a little girl of thirteen maybe, Her father rented one of my pianos For Elenor to learn on, and of course The rent was always back, I didn't care, Except for my collectors, and besides She was so nice. So music hungry, practiced So hard to learn, I used to let the rent Run just as long as I could let it run. And even then I used to feel ashamed To ask her father for it. As I said She was thirteen, and one Thanksgiving day They asked me there to dinner, and I went, Brushed off my other coat and shaved myself, I looked all right, my shoes were polished too. You'd never think I polished them to look At these to-day. And now I tell you what I saw myself: nice linen on the table, And pretty silver, plated, I suppose; Good glass-ware, and a dinner that was splendid, Wine made from wild grapes spiced with cinnamon, It had a kick, too. And the home was furnished Like what you'd think: good carpets, chairs, a lounge, Some pictures on the wall—all good enough. And this girl was as lively as a cricket, She was the liveliest thing I ever saw; And that's what ailed her, if you want my word. She had more life than she knew how to use, And had not learned her own machine. And after We had the dinner we came in the parlor. And then her mother asked her to play something, And she sat down and played tra-la; tra-la, One of these waltzes, I remember now As pretty as these verses in the paper On love, or something sentimental. Yes, She played it well. For I had rented them One of my pets. They asked me then to play And I tried out some Bach and other things, And improvised. And Elenor stood by, And asked what's that when I was improvising. I laughed and said, Sonata of Starved Rock, Or Deer Park Glen in Winter, anything— She looked at me with eyes as big as that. Well, as I said, the home was good enough. Still like myself with these collectors, Elenor Was bothered, drawn aside, and scratched no doubt From walking through the briars. Just the same The trouble with her life, if it was trouble,

And no musician would regard it trouble, The trouble was her nature strove to be All fire, and subtilize to the essence of fire, Which was her nature's law, and Nature's law, The only normal law, as I have found; For so Canudo says, as I read lately, Who gave me words for what I knew from life. Now if you want my theories I go on. You do? All right. What was this Elenor Murray? She was the lover, do you understand? She had her lovers maybe, I don't know, That's not the point with lovers, any more, Than it's the point to have pianos—no! Lovers, pianos are the self-same thing; Instruments for the soul, the source of fire, The crucible for flames that turn from red To blue, then white, then fierce transparencies. Then if the lover be not known by lovers How is she known? Why think of Elenor Murray, Who tries all things and educates herself, Goes traveling, would sing and play, becomes A member of a church with ritual, music, Incense and color, things that steal the senses, And bring oblivion. Don't you see the girl Moving her soul to find her soul, and passing Through loves and hatreds, seeking everywhere Herself she loved, in others, agonizing For hate of father, so they tell me now? But first because she hated in herself What lineaments of her father she saw in self. And all the while, I think, she strove to conquer This hatred, every hatred, sensing freedom For her own soul through liberating self From hatreds. So, you see how someone near, Repugnant, disesteemed, may furnish strength And vision, too, by gazing on that one From day to day, not to be like that one: And so our hatreds help us, those we hate Become our saviors. Here's the problem now In finding self, the soul—it's with ourselves, Within ourselves throughout the ticklish quest From first to last, and lovers and pianos Are instruments of salvation, yet they take The self but to the self, and say now find, Explore and know. And then, as all before, The problem is how much of mind to use, How much of instinct, phototropic sense, That turns instinctively to light—green worms More plant than animal are eyes all over Because their bodies know the light, no eyes Where sight is centralized. I've found it now: What is the intellect but eyes, where sight Is gathered in two spheres? The more they're used

The darker is the body of the soul. Now to digress, that's why the Germans lost, They used the intellect too much; they took The sea of life and tried to dam it in, Or use it for canals or water power, Or make a card-case system of it, maybe, To keep collectors off, have all run smoothly, And make a sure thing of it. To return How much did Elenor Murray use her mind, How much her instincts, leave herself alone Let nature have its way? I think I know: But first you have the artist soul; and next The soul half artist, prisoned usually In limitations where the soul, half artist Between depressions and discouragements Rises in hope and knocks. Why, I can tell them The moment they touch keys or talk to me. I hear their knuckles knocking on the walls, Insuperable partitions made of wood, When seeking tones or words; they have the hint, But cannot open, manifest themselves. So was it with this girl, she was all lover, Half artist, what a torture for a soul, And what escape for her! She could not play, Had never played, no matter what the chance. I think there is no curse like being dumb When every waking moment, every dream Keeps crying to speak out. This is her case: The girl was dumb, like that dumb woman here Whose dress caught fire, and in the dining room Was burned to death while all her family Were in the house, to whom she could not cry! You asked about her going to the war, Her sacrifice in that, and if I think She found expression there—yes, of a kind, But not the kind she hungered for, not music. She found adventure there, excitement too. That uses up the soul's power, takes the place Of better self-expression. But you see I do not think self-immolation life, I know it to be death. Now, look a minute: Why did she join the church? why to forget! Why did she go to war? why to forget. And at the last, this thing called sacrifice Rose up with meaning in her eyes. You see They tell around here now she often said: "I'm going to the war to be swept under." Now comes your Christian idea: Let me die, But die in service of the race, in giving I waste myself for others, give myself! Let God take notice, and reward the gift! This is the failure's recourse often-times, A prodigal flinging of the self—let God Find what He can of good, or find all good. I have abandoned all control, all thought

Of finding my soul otherwise, if here I find my soul, a doubt that makes the gift Not less abandoned. This is foolish talk I know you think, I think it is myself, At least in part. I know I'm right, however, In guessing off the reason of her failure, If failure it is. But pshaw, why talk of failure About a woman born to live the life She lived, which could not have been different, Much different under any circumstance? She might have married, had a home and children, What of it? As it is she makes a story, A flute sound in our symphony—all right! And I confess, in spite of all I've said, The profit, the success, may not be known To any but one's self. Now look at me, By all accounts I am a failure—look! For forty years just making poor ends meet, My love all spent in making good pianos. I thrill all over picking spruce and wires, And putting them together—all my love Gone into this, no head at all for business. I keep no books, they cheat me out of rent. I don't know how to sell pianos, when I sell one I have trouble oftentimes In getting pay for it. But just the same I sit here with myself, I know myself, I've found myself, and when collectors come I can say come to-morrow, turn about, And run the scale, or improvise, and smile, Forget the world! ———— The three arose and left. Llewellyn George said: "That's a rarity, That man is like a precious flower you find Way off among the weeds and rocky soil, Grown from a seed blown out of paradise; I want to call again." So thus they knew This much of Elenor Murray's music life. But on a day a party talk at tea, Of Elenor Murray and her singing voice And how she tried to train it—just a riffle Which passed unknown of Merival. For you know Your name may come up in a thousand places At earth's ends, though you live, and do not die And make a great sensation for a day. And all unknown to Merival for good This talk of Lilli Alm and Ludwig Haibt:

LILLI ALM

In Lola Schaefer's studio in the Tower, Tea being served to painters, poets, singers,

Herr Ludwig Haibt, a none too welcome guest, Of vital body, brisk, too loud of voice, And Lilli Alm crossed swords. It came about When Ludwig Haibt said: “Have you read the papers About this Elenor Murray?” And then said: “I tried to train her voice—she was a failure.” And Lilli Alm who taught the art of song Looked at him half contemptuous and said: “Why did she fail?” To which Herr Ludwig answered “She tried too hard. She made her throat too tense, And made its muscles stiff by too much thought, Anxiety for song, the vocal triumph.” “O, yes, I understand,” said Lilli Aim. Then stabbing him she added, “since you dropped The Perfect Institute, and dropped the idea Which stresses training muscles of the tongue, And all that thing, be fair and shoulder half The failure of poor Elenor Murray on Your system’s failure. For I chanced to know The girl myself. She started work with me, And I am sure that if I had been able— With time enough I could have done it too— To rid her mind of muscles and to fix The thought alone of music in her mind, She would have sung. Now listen, Ludwig Haibt, You’ve come around to see that song’s the thing. I take a pupil and I say to her: The mind must fix itself on music, say I would make song, pure tones and beautiful; That comes from spirit, from the Plato rapture, Which gets the idea. It is well to know Some physiology, I grant, to know When, how to move the vocal organs, feel How they are moving, through the ear to place These organs in relation, and to know The soft palate is drawn against the hard; The tongue can take positions numerous, Can be used at the root, a throaty voice; Or with the tip, produce expressiveness. But what must we avoid?—rigidity. And if that girl was over-zealous, then So much the more her teaching should have kept Mind off the larynx and the tongue, and fixed Upon the spiritual matters, so to give The snake-like power of loosening, contracting The muscles used for singing. Ludwig Haibt, I can forgive your system, since abandoned, I can’t forgive your words to-day who say This woman failed for trying over much, When I know that your system made her throw An energy truly wonderful on muscles; And when I think of your book where you said: The singing

voice is the result, observe Of physical conditions, like the strings Or tubes of brass. While granting that it's well To know the art of tuning up the strings, And how to place them; after all the art Of tuning and of placing comes from mind, The idea, and the art of making song Is just the breathing of the perfect spirit Upon the strings. The throat is but the leaves, Let them be flexible, the mouth's the flower, The tone the perfume. And your olden way Of harping on the larynx—well, since you Turned from it, I'm ungenerous perhaps To scold you thus to-day. But this I say, Let us be frank as teachers: Take the fetich Of breathing and see how you cripple talent, Or take that matter of the laryngyscope, Whereby you photograph a singer's throat, Caruso's, Galli Curci's at the moment Of greatest beauty in song, and thus preserve In photographs before you how the muscles Looked and were placed that moment. Then attempt To get the like effect by placing them In similar fashion. Oh, you know, Herr Ludwig, These fetiches go by. One thing remains: The idea in the soul of beauty, music, The hope to give it forth. Alas! to think So many souls are wasted while we teach This thing or that. The strong survive, of course. But take this Elenor Murray—why, that girl Was just a flame, I never saw such hunger For self-development, and beauty, richness, In all experience in life—I knew her, That's why I say so—take her as I say, And put her to a practice—yours we'll say— Where this great zeal she had is turned and pressed Upon the physical, just the very thing To make her throat constrict, and fill her up With over anxiety and make her fail. When had she come to me at first this passion Directed to the beauty, the idea Had put her soul at ease to ease her body, Which gradually and beautifully had answered That flame of hers. Well, Ludwig Haibt, you're punished For wasting several years upon a system Since put away as half erroneous, If not quite worthless. But I must confess, Since I have censured you, to my own sin. This girl ran out of money, came to me And told me so. To which I said: "Too bad, You will have money later, when you do, Come back to me." She stood a silent moment, Her hand upon the knob, I saw her tears, Just little dim tears, then she said good-bye And vanished from me.

Well, I now repent. I who have thought of beauty all my life, And taught the art of sound made beautiful, Let slip a chance for beauty—why, I think, A beauty just as great as song! You see I had a chance to serve a hungering soul— I could have said just let the money go, Or let it go until you get the money. I let that chance for beauty slip. Even now I see poor Elenor Murray at the door, Who paused, no doubt, in hope that I would say What I thought not to say. So, Ludwig Haibt, We are a poor lot—let us have some tea! “We are a poor lot,” Ludwig Haibt replied. “But since this is confessional, I absolve you, If you’ll permit me, from your sin. Will you Absolve me, if I say I’m sorry too? I’ll tell you something, it is really true:— I changed my system more I think because Of what I learned from teaching Elenor Murray Than on account of any other person. She demonstrated better where my system Was lacking than all pupils that I had. And so I changed it; and of course I say The thing is music, just as poets say The thing is beauty, not the rhyme and words, With which they bring it, instruments that’s all, And not the thing—but beauty.” So they talked, Forgave each other. And that very day Two priests were talking of confessionals A mile or so from the Tower, where Lilli Alm And Ludwig Haibt were having tea. You say The coroner was ignorant of this! What is the part it plays with Elenor Murray? Or with the inquest? Wait a little yet And see if Merival has told to him What thing of value touching Elenor Murray Is lodged in Father Whimsett’s heart or words.

FATHER WHIMSETT

Looking like Raphael’s Perugino, eyes So slightly, subtly aquiline, as brown As a buck-eye, amorous, flamed, but lightly dimmed Through thought of self while sitting for the artist; A nose well bridged with bone for will, the nostrils Distended as if sniffing diaphanous fire; A very bow for lips, the under lip Rich, kissable like a woman’s; heavy cheeks Propped with a rounded tower of flesh for neck: Thus

Perugino looked, says Raphael, And thus looked Father Whimsett at his desk, With vertical creases, where the nose and brow Together come, between the eye-brows slanting Unequally, half clown-wise, half Mephisto, With just a touch of that abandoned humor, And laughter at the world, the race of men, Mephisto had for mischief, which the priest Has for a sense which looks upon the dream And smiles, yet pities those who move in it. And Father Whimsett smokes and reads and smiles. He soon will hold confessional. For days he has heard nothing but complaints of lovers, And searched for nullities, impediments, Through which to give sore stricken hearts relief: There was the youth too drunk to know he married A woman never baptized. Now the youth Has found another—oh this is the one! And comes and says: Oh, holy father, help me, May I be free to marry her I love, And get the church's blessing when a court Dissolves the civil contract? Holy Father, I knew not what I did, cannot remember Where I was married, when, my mind's a blank— It was the drink, you know. And so it goes, The will is eyeless through concupiscence, And that absolves the soul that's penitent. And Father Whimsett reads his Latin books, Searches for subtleties for faithful souls, Whereby the faithful souls may have their wish, Yet keep the gospel, too. These Latin books Leave him fatigued, but not fatigued to turn Plotinus, Xenophon, Boccacio, Ars Amatoria and Remedia Amoris. And just this moment Father Whimsett reads Catullus, killing time, before he hears Confession, gets the music of Catullus Along the light that enters at the eye: Etherial strings plucked by the intellect To vibrate to the inner ear. At times He must re-light his half-forgot cigar. And while the music of the Latin verse, Which is an echo, as he stops to light His half-forgot cigar, is wafted through His meditation, as a tune is heard After the keys are stayed, it blends, becomes The soul, interpretation of these stories, Which lovers tell him in these later days. And now the clock upon the mantel chimes The quarter of the hour. Up goes Catullus By Ovid on the shelf. The dead cigar Is thrown away. He rises from the chair— When Father Conway enters, just to visit Some idle moments, smoke and have a talk. And Father Whimsett takes

his seat again, Waves Father Conway to a comfort chair, Says “Have a smoke,” and Father Conway smokes, And sees Catullus, says you read Catullus, And lays the morning Times upon the table, And says to Father Whimsett: “Every day The Times has stories better than Catullus, And episodes which Horace would have used. I wish we had a poet who would take This city of Chicago, write it up, The old Chicago, and the new Chicago, The race track, old cafés and gambling places, The prize fights, wrestling matches, sporting houses, As Horace wrote up Rome. Or if we had A Virgil he would find an epic theme In this American matter, typical Of our America, one phase or more Concerning Elenor Murray. Here to-day There is a story, of some letters found In Arthur Fouche’s mansion, under the floor, Sensational, dramatic. Father Whimsett Looked steadily at Father Conway, blew A funnel of tobacco smoke and said: I scarcely read the Times these days, too busy— I’ve had a run of rich confessionals. The war is ended, but they still come on, And most are lovers in the coils of love. I had one yesterday that made me think Of one I had a year ago last spring, The point was this: they say forgive me father, For I have sinned, then as the case proceeds A greater sin comes forth, I mean the sin Of saying sin is good, cannot be sin: I loved the man, or how can love be sin? Well, as a human soul I see the point, But have no option, must lay to and say Acknowledgment, contrition and the promise To sin no more, is necessary to Win absolution. Now to show the matter, Here comes a woman, says I leave for France To serve, to die. I have a premonition That I shall die abroad; or if I live, I have had fears, I shall be taken, wronged, So driven by this honor to destroy Myself, goes on and says, I tell you all These fears of mine that you may search my heart, More gladly may absolve me. Then she says, These fears worked in my soul until I took The step which I confess, before I leave. I wait and she proceeds: “O, holy father, There is a man whom I have loved for years, These five years past, such hopeless, happy years. I love him and he loves me, holy father. He holds me sacred as his wife, he loves me With the most holy love. It cannot be That any love like ours is

guilty love, Can have no other quality than good, If it be love." Well, here's a pretty soul To sit in the confessional! So I say, Why do you come to me? Loving your sin, Confessing it, denying it in one breath, Leaves you in sin without forgiveness. Well, then she tacks about and says "I sinned, And I am sorry. Wait a minute, father, And see the flesh and spirit mixed again." She wants to tell me all, I let her go. And so she says: "His wife's an invalid, Has been no wife to him. Besides," she says— Now watch this thrust to pierce my holy shield— "She is not in the church's eye his wife, She never was baptized"—I almost laughed, But answered her, You think adultery Is less adultery in a case like this? "Well, no," she says, "but could he be divorced The church would marry us." Go on, I said, And then she paused a little and went on: "I said I loved this man, and it is true, And years ago I gave myself to him, And then his wife found out there was a woman— But not that I was the woman—years ago At confirmation I confessed it all, Need only say this time I gave him up, And crushed him out with work—was chaste for years. And then I met a man, a different man Who stirred me otherwise, kept after me. At last I weakened, sinned three months ago, And suffered for it. For he took me, left me. As if he wanted body of me alone, And was not pleased with that. And after that, I think that I was mad, a furious passion Was kindled by this second man, and left With nothing to employ its flame. Two weeks Went by, he did not seek me out, none knew The hour of our departure. Then I thought How little I had been to this first lover, And of the years when I denied him—so To recompense his love, to serve him, father, Yes, to allay this passion newly raised By this new lover, whom I thought I loved, I went to my old lover, free of will, And took his lips and said to him, O take me, I am yours to do with as you choose to-night. He turned as pale as snow and shook with fear, His heart beat in his throat. I terrified him With this great will of mine in this small body. I went on while he stood there by the window, His back toward me. Make me wholly yours, Take no precaution, prudence throw away As mean, unworthy. Let your life precede, Forestall the intruder's, if one be. And if A child must be, yours

shall it be.” “He turned, And took me in his arms....” “And so to make As nearly as might be a marriage, father, I took—but let me tell you: I had thought His wife might die at any time, so thinking During these years I had bought bridal things; A veil, embroideries, silk lingerie. And I took to our room my negligee, Boudoir cap, satin slippers, so to make All beautiful as we were married, father. How have I sinned? I cannot deem it wrong. Do I not soil my soul with penitence, And smut this loveliness with penitence? Can I regret my work, nor take a hurt Upon my very soul? How keep it clean Confessing what I did (if I thought so) As evil and unclean?” The devil again Entered with casuistry, as you perceive. And so to make an end, I said to her, You must bring to this sacrament a heart Contrite and humble, promise me beside To sin no more. The case is in your hands, You can confess with lips, deny with heart, God only knows, I don’t, it’s on your soul To speak the truth or lie to me. Confess And I’ll absolve you.—For in truth my heart Was touched by what she said, her lovely voice. But now the story deepened. For she said, I have not told you all. And she renewed: “Suppose you pack your trunk and have your lunch, Go to the station, but no train arrives, And there you wait and wait, until you’re hungry, And nothing to do but wait, no place to lunch, You cannot leave the station, lest the train Should come while you are gone. Well, so it was, The weeks went by, and still we were not called. And I had closed my old life, sat and waited The time of leaving to begin new life. And after I had sinned with my first lover, Parted from him, said farewell, ended it, Could not go back to him, at least could think Of no way to return that would not dull The hour we lived together, look, this man, This second lover looks me up again And overwhelms me with a flaming passion. It seemed he had thought over what I was, Become all fire for me. He came to me, And said, I love you, love you, looked at me, And I could see the love-light in his eyes, The light that woman knows. Well, I was weak, Lonely and bored. He stirred my love besides; And then a curious thought came in my brain: The spirit is not found save through the flesh, O holy father, and I thought to self, Bring, as you may,

these trials close together In point of time and see where spirit is, Where flesh directs to spirit most. And so I went with him again, and found in truth I loved him, he was mine and I was his, We two were for each other, my old lover Was just my love's beginning, not my love Fully and wholly, rapturously, this man Body and spirit harmonized with me. I found him through the love of my old lover, And knew by contrast, memory of the two And this immediate comparison Of spirits and of bodies, that this man Who left me, whom I turned from to the first, As I have tried to tell you, was the one. O holy father, he is married, too. And as I leave for France this ends as well; No child in me from either. I confess That I have sinned most grievously, I repent And promise I shall sin no more." And so, I gave her absolution. Well, you see The church was dark, but I knew who it was, I knew the voice. She left. Another penitent Entered with a story. What is this? Here is a woman who's promiscuous. Tried number one and then tries number two, And comes and tells me, she has taken proof, Weighed evidence of spirit and of body, And thinks she knows at last, affirms as much. Such conduct will not do, that's plain enough, Not even if the truth of love is known This way, no other way. Then Father Conway Began as follows: "I've a case like that, A woman married, but she found her husband Was just the cup of Tantulus and so...." But Father Whimsett said, "Why, look at that, I'm over-due a quarter of an hour. Come in to-morrow, father, tell me then." The two priests rose and left the room together.

JOHN CAMPBELL AND CARL EATON

AT FAIRBANKS

Bill, look here! Here's the Times. You see this picture, Read if you like a little later. You never Heard how I came to Fairbanks, chanced to stay. It's eight years now. You see in nineteen eleven I lived in Hammond, Indiana, thought I'd like a trip, see

mountains, see Alaska, Perhaps find fortune or a woman—well You know from your experience how it is. It was July and from the train I saw The Canadian Rockies, stopped at Banff a day, At Lake Louise, and so forth. At Vancouver Found travelers feasting, Englishmen in drink, Flirtations budding, coming into flower; And eager spirits waiting for the boat. Up to this time I hadn't made a friend, Stalked silently about along the streets, Drank Scotch like all the rest, as much besides. Well, then we took the steamship Princess Alice And started up the Inland Channel—great! Got on our cheeks the breezes from the crystal Cradles of the north, began at once To find the mystery, silence, see clear stars, The whites and blacks and greens along the shores. And still I had no friend, was quite alone. Just as I came on deck I saw a face, Looked, stared perhaps. Her eyes went over me, Would not look at me. At the dinner table She sat far down from me, I could not see her, But made a point to rise when she arose, Did all I could to catch her eye—no use. So things went and I gave up—still I wondered Why she had no companion. Was she married? Was husband waiting her, at Skagway?—well I fancied something of the sort, at last, And as I said, gave up. But on a morning I rose to see the sun rise, all the sky First as a giant pansy, petals flung In violet toward the zenith streaked with fire; The silver of the snows change under light, Mottled with shadows of the mountain tops Like leaves that shadow, flutter on a lawn. At last the topaz splendors shoot to heaven, The sun just peeks and gilds the porcelain Of snow with purest gold. And in the valleys Darkness remains, Orician ebony Is not more black. You've seen this too, I know, And recognize my picture. There I stood, Believed I was alone, then heard a voice, "Is it not beautiful?" and looked around, And saw my girl, who had avoided me, Would not make friends before. This is her picture, Name, Elenor Murray. So the matter started. I had my seat at table changed and sat Next to my girl to talk with her. We walked The deck together. Then she said to me Her home was in Chicago, so it is Travelers abroad discover they are neighbors When they are home. She had been teaching school, And saved her money for this trip, had

planned To go as far as Fairbanks. As for me, I thought I'd stop with Skagway—Oh this life! Your hat blows off, you chase it, bump a woman, Then beg her pardon, laugh and get acquainted, And marry later. As we steamed along She was the happiest spirit on the deck. The Wrangell Narrows almost drove her wild, There where the mountains are like circus tents, Big show, menagerie and all the rest, But white as cotton with perennial snow. We swum past aisles of pine trees where a stream Rushed down in terraces of hoary foam. The nights were glorious. We drank and ate And danced when there was dancing. Well, at first, She seemed a little school ma'am, quaint, demure, Meticulous and puritanical. And then she seemed a school ma'am out to have A time, so far away, where none would know, And like a woman who had heard of life And had a teasing interest in its wonder, Too long caged up. At last my vision blurred: I did not know her, lost my first impressions Amid succeeding phases which she showed. But when we came to Skagway, then I saw Another Elenor Murray. How she danced And tripped from place to place—such energy! She almost wore me out with seeing sights. But now behold! The White Pass she must see Upon the principle of missing nothing— But oh the grave of "Soapy" Smith, the outlaw, The gambler and the heeler, that for her! We went four miles and found the cemetery, The grave of "Soapy" Smith.—Came back to town Where she would see the buildings where they played Stud poker, Keno, in the riotous days. Time came for her to go. She looked at me And said "Come on to Fairbanks." As for that, I'd had enough, was ready to return, But sensed an honorarium, so I said, "You might induce me," with a pregnant tone. That moment we were walking 'cross the street, She stopped a moment, shook from head to heels, And said, "No man has talked to me that way." I dropped the matter. She renewed it—said, "Why do you hurry back? What calls you back? Come on to Fairbanks, see the gardens there, That tag the blizzards with their rosy hands And romp amid the snows." She smiled at me. Well, then I thought—why not? And smiled her back, And on we went to Fairbanks, where my hat Blows off, as I shall tell you. For a day

We did the town together, and that night I thought to win her. First we dined together, Had many drinks, my little school ma'am drank Of everything I ordered, had a place For more than I could drink. And truth to tell At bed time I was woozy, ten o'clock. We had not registered. And so I said, "I'm Mr. Kelly and you're Mrs. Kelly." She shook her head. And so to make an end I could not win her, signed my name in full; She did the same, we said good night and parted. Next morning when I woke, felt none too good, Got up at last and met her down at breakfast; Tried eggs and toast, could only drink some coffee; Got worse; in short, she saw it, put her hand Upon my head and said, "Your head is hot, You have a fever." Well, I lolled around And tried to fight it off till noon—no good. By this time I was sick, lay down to rest. By night I could not lift my head—in short, I lay there for a month, and all the time She cared for me just like a mother would. They moved me to a suite, she took the room That opened into mine, by night and day She nursed me, cheered me, read to me. At last When I sat up, was soon to be about, She said to me, "I'm going on to Nome, St. Michael first. They tell me that you cross The Arctic Circle going to St. Michael, And I must cross the Arctic Circle—think To come this far and miss it. I must see The Indian villages." And there again I saw, but clearer than before, the spirit Adventuresome and restless, what you call The heart American. I said to her, "I'm not too well, I'm lonely,—yes, and more— I'm fond of you, you have been good to me, Stay with me here.—She darted in and out The room where I was lying, doing things, And broke my pleadings just like icicles You shoot against a wall. But here she was, A month in Fairbanks, living at expense, Said "I am short of money—lend me some, I'll go to Nome, return to you and then We'll ship together for the States." You see I really owed her money for her care, Her loss in staying—then I loved the girl, Had played all cards but one—I played it now: "Come back and marry me." Her eyes looked down. "I will be fair with you," she said, "and think. Away from you I can make up my mind If I have love enough to marry you." I gave her money and she went away, And for some weeks I had a

splendid hell Of loneliness and longing, you might know, A stranger in Alaska, here in Fairbanks, In love besides, and mulling in my mind Our days and nights upon the steamer Alice, Our ramblings in the Northland. Weeks went by, No letter and no girl. I found my health Was vigorous again. One morning walking I kicked a twenty dollar gold piece up Right on the side-walk. Picked it up and said: “An omen of good luck, a letter soon! Perhaps this town has something for me!” Well, I thought I’d get a job to pass the time While waiting for my girl. I got the job And here I am to-day; I’ve flourished here, Worked to the top in Fairbanks in eight years, And thus my hat blew off. What of the girl? Six weeks or more a letter came from her, She crossed the Arctic Circle, went to Nome, Sailed back to ’Frisco where she wrote to me. Sent all the money back I loaned to her, And thanked me for the honor I had done her In asking her in marriage, but had thought The matter over, could not marry me, Thought in the circumstances it was useless To come to Fairbanks, see me, tell me so. Now, Bill, I’m egotist enough to think This girl could do no better. Now it seems She’s dead and never married—why not me? Why did she ditch me? So I thought about it, Was piqued of course, concluded in the end There was another man. A woman’s no Means she has someone else, expects to have, More suited to her fancy. Then one morning As I awoke with thoughts of her as usual Right in my mind there plumped an incident On shipboard when she asked me if I knew A certain man in Chicago. At the time The question passed amid our running talk, And made no memory. But you watch and see A woman when she asks you if you know A certain man, the chances are the man Is something in her life. So now I lay And thought there is a man, and that’s the man; His name is stored away, I’ll dig it up Out of the cells subliminal—so I thought But could not bring it back. I found at last The telephone directory of Chicago, And searched and searched the names from A to Z. Some mornings would pronounce a name and think That is the name, then throw the name away— It did not fit the echo in my brain. But now at last—look here! Eight years are gone, I’m healed of Elenor Murray, married too; And read

about her death here in the Times, And turn the pages over—column five— Chicago startled by a suicide— Gregory Wenner kills himself—behold The name, at last, she spoke! ———— So much for waters in Alaska. Now Turn eyes upon the waters nearer home. Anton Sosnowski has a fateful day And Winthrop Marion runs the story down, And learns Sosnowski read the Times the day, He broke from brooding to a dreadful deed; Sosnowski saw the face of Elenor Murray And Rufus Fox upon the self-same page, And afterwards was known to show a clipping Concerning Elenor Murray and the banner Of Joan of Arc, the words she wrote and folded Within the banner: to be brave, nor flinch.

ANTON SOSNOWSKI

Anton Sosnowski, from the Shakspeare School Where he assists the janitor, sweeps and dusts, The day now done, sits by a smeared up table Munching coarse bread and drinking beer; before him The evening paper spread, held down or turned By claw-like hands, covered with shiny scars. He broods upon the war news, and his fate Which keeps him from the war, looks up and sees His scarred face in the mirror over the wainscot; His lashless eyes and browless brows and head With patches of thin hair. And then he mutters Hot curses to himself and turns the paper And curses Germany, and asks revenge For Poland’s wrongs. And what is this he sees? The picture of his ruin and his hate, Wert Rufus Fox! This leader of the bar Is made the counselor of the city, now The city takes gas, cars and telephones And runs them for the people. So this man Grown rich through machinations against the people, Who fought the people all his life before, Abettor, aider, thinker for the slickers Regraters and forestallers and engrossers, Is now the friend, adviser of the city, Which he so balked and thwarted, growing rich, Feared, noted, bowed to for the very treason For which he is so hated, yet deferred to. And Anton looks upon the picture, reads About the great man’s ancestry here printed, And all the great achievements of his life;

Once president of the bar association, And member of this club and of that club. Contributor to charities and art, A founder of a library, a vestryman. And Anton looks upon the picture, trembles Before the picture's eyes. They are the eyes Of Innocent the Tenth, with cruelty And cunning added—eyes that see all things And boulder jaws that crush all things—the jaws That place themselves at front of drifts, are placed By that world irony which mocks the good, And gives the glory and the victory To strength and greed. Anton Sosnowski looks Long at the picture, then at his own hands, And laughs maniacally as he takes the mug With both hands like a bird with frozen claws, These broken, burned off hands which handle bread As they were wooden rakes. And in a mirror Beside the table in the wall, smeared over With steam from red-hots, kraut and cookery, Of smoking fats, fixed by the dust in blurs, And streaks, he sees his own face, horrible For scars and splotches as of leprosy; The eyes that have no lashes and no brows; The bullet head that has no hair, the ears Burnt off at top. So comes it to this Pole Who sees beside the picture of the lawyer The clear cut face of Elenor Murray—yes, She gave her spirit to the war, is dead, Her life is being sifted now. But Fox Lives for more honors, and by honors covers His days of evil. Thus Sosnowski broods, And lives again that moment of hell when fire Burst like a geyser from a vat where gas Had gathered in his ignorance; being sent To light a drying stove within the vat, A work not his, who was the engineer. The gas exploded as he struck the match, And like an insect fixed upon a pin And held before a flame, hands, face and body Were burned and broken as his body shot Up and against the brewery wall. What next? The wearisome and tangled ways of courts With Rufus Fox for foe, four trials in all Where juries disagreed who heard the law Erroneously given by the court. At last a verdict favorable, and a court Sitting above the forum where he won To say, as there's no evidence to show Just how the gas got in the vat, Sosnowski Must go for life with broken hands unhelped. And that the fact alone of gas therein Though naught to show his fault had brought it there, The mere explosion did not speak a fault Against the brewery. Out from court

he went To use a broom with crumpled hands, and look For life in mirrors at his ghastly face. And brood until suspicion grew to truth That Rufus Fox had compassed juries, courts; And read of Rufus Fox, who day by day Was featured in the press for noble deeds, For Art or Charity, for notable dinners, Guests, travels and what not. So now the Pole Reading of Elenor Murray, cursed himself That he could brood and wait—for what?—and grow More weak of will for brooding, while this woman Had gone to war and served and ended it, Yet he lived on, and could not go to war; Saw only days of sweeping with these hands, And every day his face within the mirror, And every afternoon this glass of beer, And coarse bread, and these thoughts. And every day some story to arouse His sense of justice; how the generous Give and pass on, and how the selfish live And gather honors. But Sosnowski thought If I could do a flaming thing to show What courts are ours, what matter if I die? What if they took their quick-lime and erased My flesh and bones, expunged my very name, And made its syllables forbidden?—still If I brought in a new day for the courts, Have I not served? he thought. Sosnowski rose And to the bar, drank whiskey, then went out. That afternoon Elihu Rufus Fox Came home to dress for a dinner to be given For English notables in town—to rest After a bath, and found himself alone, His wife at Red Cross work. And there alone, Collarless, lounging, in a comfort chair, Poring on Wordsworth's poems—all at once Before he hears the door turned, rather feels A foot-fall and a presence, hears too soon A pistol shot, looks up and sees Sosnowski, Who fires again, but misses; grabs the man, Disarms him, flings him down, and finding blood Upon his shirt sleeve, sees his hand is hit, No other damage—then the pistol takes, And covering Sosnowski, looks at him. And after several seconds gets the face Which gradually comes forth from memories Of many cases, knows the man at last. And studying Sosnowski, Rufus Fox Divines what drove the fellow to this deed. And in these moments Rufus Fox beholds His life and work, and how he made the law A thing to use, how he had builded friendships In clubs and churches, courted politicians, And played with secret powers, and

compromised Causes and truths for power and capital To draw on as a lawyer, so to win Favorable judgments when his skill was hired By those who wished to win, who had to win To keep the social order undisturbed And wealth where it was wrenched to. And Rufus Fox Knew that this trembling wreck before him knew About this course of life at making law And using law, and using those who sit To administer the law. And then he said: “Why did you do this?” And Sosnowski spoke: “I meant to kill you—where’s your right to live When millions have been killed to make the world A safer place for liberty? Where’s your right To live and have more honors, be the man To guide the city, now that telephones, Gas, railways have been taken by the city? I meant to kill you just to help the poor Who go to court. For had I killed you here My story would be known, no matter if They buried me in lime, and made my name A word no man could speak. Now I have failed. And since you have the pistol, point it at me And kill me now—for if you tell the world You killed me in defense of self, the world Will never doubt you, for the world believes you And will not doubt your word, whatever it is.” And Rufus Fox replied: “Your mind is turned For thinking of your case, when you should know This country is a place of laws, and law Must have its way, no matter who is hurt. Now I must turn you over to the courts, And let you feel the hard hand of the law.” Just then the wife of Rufus Fox came in, And saw her husband with his granite jaws, And lowering countenance, blood on his shirt, The pistol in his hand, the scarred Sosnowski, Facing the lawyer. Seeing that her husband Had no wound but a hand clipped of the skin, And learning what the story was, she saw It was no time to let Sosnowski’s wrong Come out to cloud the glory of her husband, Now that in a new day he had come to stand With progress, fairer terms of life—to let The corpse of a dead day be brought beside The fresh and breathing life of brighter truth. Quickly she called the butler, gave him charge Over Sosnowski, who was taken out, Held in the kitchen, while the two conferred, The husband and the wife. To him she said, They two alone now: “I can see your plan To turn this fellow over to the law. It will not do, my dear, it will not

do. For though I have been sharer in your life, Partaker of its spoils and fruits, I see This man is just a ghost of a dead day Of your past life, perhaps, in which I shared. But that dead life I would not resurrect In memory even, it has passed us by, You shall not live it more, no more shall I. The war has changed the world—the harvest coming Will have its tares no doubt, but the old tares Have been cut out and burned, wholly, I trust. And just to think you used that sharpened talent For getting money, place, in the old regime, To place you where to-day? Why, where you must Use all your talents for the common good. A barter takes two parties, and the traffic Whereby the giants of the era gone— (You are a giant rising on the wreck Of programs and of plots)—made riches for Themselves and those they served, is gone as well. Since gradually no one is left to serve Or have an interest but the state or city, The community which is all and should be all. So here you are at last despite yourself, Changed not in mind perhaps, but changed in place, Work, interest, taking pride too in the work; And speaking with your outer mind, at least Praise for the day and work. I am at fault, And take no virtue to myself—I lived Your life with you and coveted the things Your labors brought me. All is changed for me. I would be poorer than this wretched Pole Rather than go back to the day that's dead, Or reassume the moods I lived them through. What can we do now to undo the past, Those days of self-indulgence, ostentation, False prestige, witless pride, that waste of time, Money and spirit, haunted by ennui Insatiable emotion, thirst for change. At least we can do this: We can set up The race's progress and our country's glory As standards for our work each day, go on Perhaps in ignorance, misguided faith; And let the end approve our poor attempts. Now to begin, I ask two things of you: If you or anyone who did your will Wronged this poor Pole, make good the wrong at once. And for the sake of bigness let him go. For your own name's sake, let the fellow go. Do you so promise me?" And Rufus Fox, Who looked a thunder cloud of wrath and power Before the mirror tying his white tie, All this time silent—only spoke these words: "Go tell the butler to keep guard on him And hold him till we come from

dinner.” The wife Looked at the red black face of Rufus Fox There in the mirror, which like Lao’s mirror Reflected what his mind was, then went out Gently to her bidding, found Sosnowski Laughing and talking with the second maid, Watched over by the butler, quite himself, His pent up anger half discharged, his grudge In part relieved. There was a garrulous ancient at LeRoy Who traced all evils to monopoly In land, all social cures to single tax. He tried to button-hole the coroner And tell him what he thought of Elenor Murray. But Merival escaped. And then this man, Consider Freeland named, got in a group And talked his mind out of the case, the land And what makes poverty and waste in lives:

CONSIDER FREELAND

Look at that tract of land there—five good acres Held out of use these thirty years and more. They keep a cow there. See! the cow’s there now. She can’t eat up the grass, there is so much. And in these thirty years these houses here, Here, all around here have been built. This lot Is worth five times the worth it had before These houses were built round it. Well, by God, I am in part responsible for this. I started out to be a first rate lawyer. Was I first rate lawyer? Well, I won These acres for the Burtons in the day When I could tell you what is gavel kind, Advowsons, corodies, frank tenements, Scutage, escheats, feoffments, heriots, Remainders and reversions, and mortmain, Tale special and tale general, tale female, Fees absolute, conditional, copyholds; And used to stand and argue with the courts The difference ’twixt a purchase, limitation, The rule in Shelley’s case. And so it was In my good days I won these acres here For old man Kingston’s daughter, who in turn Bound it with limitation for the life Of selfish sons, who keep a caretaker, Who keeps a cow upon it. There’s the cow! The land has had no use for thirty years. The children are kept off it. Elenor Murray, This girl whose death makes such a stir, one time Was playing there—but that’s another story. I only say for the present, these five acres Made

Elenor Murray's life a thing of waste As much as anything, and a damn sight more. For think a minute! Kingston had a daughter Married to Colonel Burton in Kentucky. And Kingston's son was in the Civil War. But just before the war, the Burtons deeded These acres here, which she inherited From old man Kingston, to this Captain Kingston, The son aforesaid of Old Kingston. Well, The deed upon its face was absolute, But really was a deed in trust. The Captain Held title for a year or two, and then An hour before he fought at Shiloh, made A will, and willed acres to his wife, Fee simple and forever. Now you'd think That contemplating death, he'd make a deed Giving these acres back to Mrs. Burton, The sister who had trusted him. I don't know What comes in people's heads, but I believe The want of money is the root of evil, As well as love of money; for this Captain Perhaps would make provision for his wife And infant son, thought that the chiefest thing No matter how he did it, being poor, Willed this land as he did. But anyway He willed it so, went into Shiloh's battle, And fell dead on the field. What happened then? They took this will to probate. As I said I was a lawyer then, you may believe it, Was hired by the Burtons to reclaim These acres from the Widow Kingston's clutch, Under this wicked will. And so I argued The will had not been witnessed according to law. Got beat upon that point in the lower court, But won upon it in the upper courts. Then next I filed a bill to set aside This deed the Burtons made to Captain Kingston— Oh, I was full of schemes, expedients, In those days, I can tell you. Widow Kingston Came back and filed a cross bill, asked the court To confirm the title in her son and her As heirs of Captain Kingston, let the will Go out of thought and reckoning. Here's the issue; You understand the case, no doubt. We fought Through all the courts. I lost in the lower court, As I lost on the will. There was the deed: For love and affection and one dollar we Convey and warrant lots from one to ten In the city of LeRoy, to Captain Kingston To be his own forever. How to go Behind such words and show the actual trust Inhering in the deed, that was the job. But here I was resourceful as before, Found witnesses to testify they heard This Captain

Kingston say he held the acres In trust for Mrs. Burton—but I lost Before the chancellor, had to appeal, But won on the appeal, and thus restored These acres to the Burtons. And for this What did I get? Three hundred lousy dollars. That's why I smoke a pipe; that's also why I quit the business when I saw the business Was making ready to quit me. By God, My life is waste so far as it was used By this law business, and no coroner Need hold an inquest on me to find out What waste was in my life—God damn the law! Well, then I go my way, and take my fee, And pay my bills. The Burtons have the land, And turn a cow upon it. See how nice A playground it would be. I've seen ten sets Of children try to play there—hey! you hear, The caretaker come out, get off of there! And then the children scamper, climb the fence. Well, after while the Burtons die. The will Leaves these five acres to their sons for life, Remainder to the children of the sons. The sons are living yet at middle life, These acres have been tied up twenty years, They may be tied up thirty years beside: The sons can't sell it, and their children can't, Only the cow can use it, as it stands. It grows more valuable as the people come here, And bring in being Elenor Murrays, children, And make the land around it populous. That's what makes poverty, this holding land, It makes the taxes harder on the poor, It makes work scarcer, and it takes your girls And boys and throws them into life half made, Half ready for the battle. Is a country Free where the laws permit such things? Your priests, Your addle-headed preachers mouthing Christ And morals, prohibition, laws to force People to be good, to save the girls, When every half-wit knows environment Takes natures, made unstable in these homes Of poverty and does the trick. That baronet Who mocked our freedom, sailing back for England And said: Your Liberty Statue in the harbor Is just a joke, that baronet is right, While such conditions thrive. Well, look at me Who for three hundred dollars take a part In making a cow pasture for a cow For fifty years or so. I hate myself. And were the Burtons better than this Kingston? Kingston would will away what was not his. The Burtons took what is the gift of God, As much as air, and fenced it out of use— Save

for the cow aforesaid—for the lives Of sons in being. Oh, I know you think I have a grudge. I have. This Elenor Murray Was ten years old I think, this law suit ended Twelve years or so, and I was running down, Was tippling just a little every day; And I came by this lot one afternoon When school was out, a sunny afternoon. The children had no place except the street To play in; they were standing by the fence, The cow was way across the lot, and Elenor Was looking through the fence, some boys and girls Standing around her, and I said to them: "Why don't you climb the fence and play in there?" And Elenor—she always was a leader, And not afraid of anything, said: "Come on," And in a jiffy climbed the fence, the children, Some quicker and some slower, followed her. Some said "They don't allow it." Elenor Stood on the fence, flung up her arms and crowed, And said "What can they do? He says to do it," Pointing at me. And in a moment all of them Were playing and were shouting in the lot. And I stood there and watched them half malicious, And half in pleasure watching them at play. Then I heard "hey!" the care-taker ran out. And said "Get out of there, I will arrest you." He drove them out and as they jumped the fence Some said, "He told us to," pointing at me. And Elenor Murray said "Why, what a lie!" And then the care-taker grabbed Elenor Murray And said, "You are the wildest of them all." I spoke up, saying, "Leave that child alone. I won this God damn land for those you serve, They use it for a cow and nothing else, And let these children run about the streets, When there are grass and dandelions there In plenty for these children, and the cow, And space enough to play in without bothering That solitary cow." I took his hands Away from Elenor Murray; he and I Came face to face with clenched fists—but at last He walked away; the children scampered off. Next day, however, they arrested me For aiding in a trespass clausam fregit, And fined me twenty dollars and the costs. Since then the cow has all her way in there. And Elenor Murray left this rotten place, Went to the war, came home and died, and proved She had the sense to leave so vile a world. ———— George Joslin ending up his days with dreams Of youth in Europe, travels, and with talk, Stirred to a recollection of a

face He saw in Paris fifty years before, Because the face resembled Elenor Murray's, Explored his drawers and boxes, where he kept Mementos, treasures of the olden days. And found a pamphlet, came to Merival, With certain recollections, and with theories Of Elenor Murray:—

GEORGE JOSLIN ON LA MENKEN

Here, Coroner Merival, look at this picture! Whom does it look like? Eyes too crystalline, A head like Byron's, tender mouth, and neck, Slender and white, a pathos as of smiles And tears kept back by courage. Yes, you know It looks like Elenor Murray. Well, you see I read each day about the inquest—good! Dig out the truth, begin a system here Of making family records, let us see If we can do for people when we know How best to do it, what is done for stock. So build up Illinois, the nation too. I read about you daily. And last night When Elenor Murray's picture in the Times Looked at me, I began to think, Good Lord, Where have I seen that face before? I thought Through more than fifty years departed, sent My mind through Europe and America In all my travels, meetings, episodes. I could not think. At last I opened up A box of pamphlets, photographs, mementos, Picked up since 1860, and behold I find this pamphlet of La Belle Menken. Here is your Elenor Murray born again, As here might be your blackbird of this year With spots of red upon his wings, the same As last year's blackbird, like a pansy springing Out of the April of this year, repeating The color, form of one you saw last year. Repeating and the same, but not the same; No two alike, you know. I'll come to that. Well, then, La Menken—as a boy in Paris I saw La Menken, I'll return to this. But just as Elenor Murray has her life Shadowed and symbolized by our Starved Rock— And everyone has something in his life Which takes him, makes him, is the image too Of fate prefigured—La Menken has Mazeppa, Her notable first part as actress, emblem Of spirit, character, and of omen too Of years to come, the thrill of life, the end.

Who is La Menken? Symbol of America, One phase of spirit! She was venturesome, Resourceful, daring, hopeful, confident, And as she wrote of self, a vagabond, A dweller in tents, a reveler, and a flame Aspiring but disreputable, coming up With leaves that shamed her stalk, could not be shed, But stuck out heavy veined and muddy hued In time of blossom. There are souls, you know, Who have shed shapeless immaturities, Betrayals of the seed before the blossom Comes to proclaim a beauty, a perfection; Or risen with their stalk, until such leaves Were hidden in the grass or soil—not she, Nor even your Elenor Murray, as I read her. But being America and American, Brings good and bad together, blossom and leaves With prodigal recklessness, in vital health And unselective taste and vision mixed Of beauty and of truth. Who was La Menken? She's born in Louisiana in thirty-five, Left fatherless at seven—mother takes her And puts her in the ballet at New Orleans. She dances then from Texas clear to Cuba; Then gives up dancing, studies tragedy, And plays Bianca! Fourteen years of age Weds Menken, who's a Jew, divorced from him; Then falls in love with Heenan, pugilist. They quarrel and separate—it's in this pamphlet Just as I tell you; you can take it, Coroner. Now something happens, nothing in her birth Or place of birth to prophesy her life Like Starved Rock to this Elenor—being grown, A hand instead is darted from the curtain That hangs between to-day, to-morrow, sticks A symbol on her heart and whispers to her: You're this, my woman. Well, the thing was this: She played Mazeppa: take your dummy off, And lash me to the horse. They were afraid, But she prevailed, was nearly killed the first night, And after that succeeded, was the rage And for her years remaining found herself Lashed to the wild horse of ungoverned will, Which ran and wandered, till she knew herself With stronger will than vision, passion stronger Than spirit to judge; the richness of the world, Love, beauty, living, greater than her power. And all the time she had the appetite To eat, devour it all. Grown sick at last, She diagnosed her case, wrote to a friend: The soul and body do not fit each other— A human spirit in a horse's flesh. This is your Elenor Murray, in a way. But to return

to pansies, run your hand Over a bed of pansies; here's a pansy With petals stunted, here's another one All perfect but one petal, here's another Too streaked or mottled—all are pansies though. And here is one full petaled, strikes the eye With perfect color, markings. Elenor Murray Has something of the color and the form Of this La Menken, but is less a pansy, And Sappho, Rachel, Bernhardt are the flowers La Menken strove to be, and could not be, Ended with being only of their kind. And now there's pity for this Elenor Murray, And people wept when poor La Menken died. Both lived and had their way. I hate this pity, It makes you overlook there are two hours: The hour of joy, the hour of finding out Your joy was all mistake, or led to pain. We who inspect these lives behold the pain, And see the error, do not keep in mind The hour of rapture, and the pride, indeed With which your Elenor Murrays and La Menkens Have lived that hour, elation, pride and scorn For any other way—"this is the life" I hear them say. Well, now I go along. La Menken fills her purse with gold—she sends Her pugilist away, tries once again And weds a humorist, an Orpheus Kerr— And plays before the miners out in 'Frisco, And Sacramento, gathers in the eagles. She goes to Europe then—with husband? No! James Barkley is her fellow on the voyage. She lands in London, takes a gorgeous suite In London's grandest hostlery, entertains Charles Dickens, Prince Baerto and Charles Read, The Duke of Wellington and Swinburne, Sand And Jenny Lind; and has a liveried coachman; And for a crest a horse's head surmounting Four aces, if you please. And plays Mazeppa, And piles the money up. Then next is Paris. And there I saw her, 1866, When Louis Napoleon and the King of Greece, The Prince Imperial were in a box. She wandered to Vienna, there was ill, Came back to Paris, died, a stranger's grave In Pere la Chaise was given, afterwards Exhumed in Mont Parnasse was buried, got A little stone with these words carved upon it: "Thou Knowest" meaning God knew, while herself Knew nothing of herself. But when in Paris They sold her picture taken with her arms Around Dumas, and photographs made up Of postures ludicrous, obscene as well, Of her and great Dumas, I have

them home. Can show you sometime. Well she loved Dumas, Inscribed a book of poems to Charles Dickens, By his permission, mark you—don't you see Your Elenor Murray here? This Elenor Murray A miniature imperfect of La Menken? She loved sensation, all her senses thrilled her; A delicate soul too weighted by the flesh; A coquette, quick of wit, intuitive, Kind, generous, unaffected, mystical, Teased by the divine in life, and melancholy, Of deep emotion sometimes. One has said She had a nature spiritual, religious Which warred upon the flesh and fell in battle; Just as your Elenor Murray joined the church, And did not keep the faith, if truth be told. Now look, here is a letter in this pamphlet La Menken writes a poet—for she hunts For seers and for poets, lofty souls. And who does that? A woman wholly bad? Why no, a woman to be given life Fit for her spirit in another realm By God who will take notice, I believe. Now listen if you will! "I know your soul. It has met mine somewhere in starry space. And you must often meet me, vagabond Of fancy without aim, a dweller in tents Disreputable before the just. Just think I am a linguist, write some poems too, Can paint a little, model clay as well. And yet for all these gropings of my soul I am a vagabond, of little use. My body and my soul are in a scramble And do not fit each other—let them carve Those words upon my stone, but also these Thou Knowest, for God knows me, knows I love Whatever is good and beautiful in life; And that my soul has sought them without rest. Farewell, my friend, my spirit is with you, Vienna is too horrible, but know Paris Then die content." Now, Coroner Merival, You're not the only man who wants to see, Will work to make America a republic Of splendors, freedoms, happiness, success. Though I am seventy-six, cannot do much, Save talk, as I am talking now, bring forth Proofs, revelations from the years I've lived. I care not how you view the lives of people, As pansy beds or what not, lift your faith So high above the pansy bed it sees The streaked and stunted pansies filling in The pattern that the perfect pansies outline, Therefore are smiling, even indifferent To this poor conscious pansy, dying at last Because it could not be the flower it wished. My heart to Elenor Murray and

La Menken Goes out in sorrow, even while I know They shook their leaves in April, laughed and thrilled, And either did not know, or did not care The growing time was precious, and if wasted Could never be regained. Look at La Menken At seven years put in the ballet corps; And look at Elenor Murray getting smut Out of experience that made her wise. What shall we do about it?—let it go? And say there is no help, or say a republic, Set up a hundred years ago, raised to the helm Of rulership as president a list Of men more able than the emperors, Kings, rulers of the world, and statesmen too The equal of the greatest, money makers, And domineers of finance and economies Phenomenal in time—say, I repeat A country like this one must let its children Waste as they wasted in the darker years Of Europe. Shall we let these trivial minds Who see salvation, progress in restraint, Pre-empt the field of moulding human life? Or shall we take a hand, and put our minds Upon the task, as recently we built An army for the war, equipped and fed it, An army better than all other armies, More powerful, more apt of hand and brain, Of thin tall youths, who did stop but said Like poor La Menken, strap me to the horse I'll do it if I die—so giving to peace The skill and genius which we use in war, Though it cost twenty billion, and why not? Why every dollar, every drop of blood For war like this to guard democracy, And not so much or more to build the land, Improve our blood, make individual America and her race? And first to rout Poverty and disease, give youth its chance, And therapeutic guidance. Soldier boys Have huts for recreation, clergymen, And is it more, less worth to furnish hands Intimate, hearts intimate for the use Of your La Menkens, Elenor Murrays, youths Who feel such vigor in their restless wings They tumble out of crowded nests and fly To fall in thickets, dash themselves against Walls, trees? I have a vision, Coroner, Of a new Republic, brighter than the sun, A new race, loftier faith, this land of ours Made over as to people, boys and girls, Conserved like forests, water power or mines; Watched, tested, put to best use, keen economies Practiced in spirits, waste of human life, Hope, aspiration, talent, virtues, powers, Avoided by a science, science of life, Of

spirit, what you will. Enough of war, And billions for the flag—all well enough! Some billions now to make democracy Democracy in truth with us, and life Not helter-skelter, hitting as it may, And missing much, as this La Menken did. I'm not convinced we must have stunted pansies, That have no use but just to piece the pattern. Let's try, and if we try and fail, why then Our human duty ends, the God in us Will have it just this way, no other way. And then we may accept so poor a world, A republic so unfinished. ———— Will Paget is another writer of letters To Coroner Merival. The coroner Spends evenings reading letters, keeps a file Where he preserves them. And the blasphemy Of Paget makes him laugh. He has an evening And reads this letter to the jurymen:

WILL PAGET ON DEMOS AND HOGOS

To Coroner Merival, greetings, but a voice Dissentient from much that goes the rounds, Concerning Elenor Murray. Here's my word: Give men and women freedom, save the land From dull theocracy—the theo, what? A blend of Demos and Jehovah! Say, Bring back your despots, bring your Louis Fourteenths, And give them thrones of gold and ivory From where with leaded sceptres they may whack King Demos driven forth. You know the face? The temples are like sea shells, hollows out, Which narrow close the space for cortex cells. There would be little brow if hair remained; But hair is gone, because the dandruff came. The eyes are close together like a weasel's; The jaws are heavy, that is character; The mouth is thin and wide to gobble chicken; The paunch is heavy for the chickens eaten. Throned high upon a soap box Demos rules, And mumbles decalogues: Thou shalt not read, Save what I tell you, never books that tell Of men and women as they live and are. Thou shalt not see the dramas which portray The evil passions and satiric moods Which mock this Christian nation and its hope. Thou shalt not drink, not even wine or beer. Thou shalt not play at cards, or see the races. Thou shalt not be

divorced! Thou shalt not play. Thou shalt not bow to graven images Of beauty cut in marble, fused in bronze. Behold my name is Demos, King of Kings, My name is legion, I am many, come Out of the sea where many hogs were drowned, And now the ruler of hogocracy, Where in the name of freedom hungry snouts Root up the truffles in your great republic, And crunch with heavy jaws the legs and arms Of people who fall over in the pen. Hierarchies in my name are planted under Your states political to sprout and take The new world's soil,—religious freedom this!— Thought must be free—unless your thought objects To such dominion, and to literal faith In an old book that never had a place Except beside the Koran, Zarathustra. So here is your theocracy and here The land of Boredom. Do you wonder now That people cry for war? You see that God Frowns on all games but war. You shall not play Or kindle spirit with a rapture save A moral end's in view. All joy is sin, Where joy stands for itself alone, nor asks Consent to be, save for itself. But war Waged to put down the wrong, it's always that; To vindicate God's truths, all wars are such, Is game that lets the spirit play, is backed By God and moral reasons, therefore war, A game disguised as business, cosmic work For great millenniums, no less relieves The boredom of theocracies. But if Your men and women had the chance to play, Be free and spend superfluous energies, In what I call the greatest game, that's Life, Have life more freely, deeply, and you say How would you like a war and lose a leg, Or come from battle sick for all your years? You would say no, unless you saw an issue, Stripped clean of Christian twaddle, as we'll say The Greeks beheld the Persians. Well, behold All honest paganism in such things discarded For God who comes in glory, trampling presses Filled up with grapes of wrath. Now hear me out: I knew we'd have a war, it wasn't only That your hogocracy was grunting war We'd fight Japan, take Mexico—remember How dancing flourished madly in the land; Then think of savages who dance the Ghost Dance, And cattle lowing, rushing in a panic, There's psychic secrets here. But then at last What can you do with life? You're well and strong, Flushed with desire, mad with appetites, You turn this way

and find a sign forbidden, You turn that way and find the door is closed. Hogocracy, King Demos say, go back, Find work, develop character, restrain, Draw up your belt a little tighter, hunger And thirst diminish with a tighter belt. And none to say, take off the belt and eat, Here's water for you. Well, you have a war. We used to say in foot ball kick their shins, And gouge their eyes out—when our shins were kicked We hollered foul and ouch. There was the south Who called us mud-sills in this freer north, And mouthed democracy; and as for that Their churches made of God a battle leader, An idea come from Palestine; oh, yes, They soon would wipe us up, they were the people. But when we slaughtered them they hollered ouch. And why not? For a gun and uniform, And bands that play are rapturous enough. But when you get a bullet through the heart, The game is not so funny as it was. That's why I hated Germany and hate her, And feel we could not let this German culture Spread over earth. That culture was but this: Life must have an expression and a game, And war's the game, besides the prize is great In land and treasure, commerce, let us play, It lets the people's passions have a vent When fires of life burn hot and hotter under The kettle and the lid is clamped by work, Dull duty, daily routine, inhibitions. Before this Elenor Murray woke to life LeRoy was stirring, but the stir was play. It was a Gretna Green, and pleasure boats Ran up and down the river—on the streets You heard the cry of barkers, in the park The band was playing, and you heard the ring Of registers at fountains and buffets. All this was shabby maybe, but observe There are those souls who see the wrath of God As blackest background to the light of soul: And when the thunder rumbles and the storm Comes up with lightning then they say to men Who laugh in bar-rooms, "Have a care, blasphemers, You may be struck by lightning"—here's the root From which this mood ascetic comes to leaf In all theocracies, and throws a shadow Upon all freedom. Look at us to-day. They say to me, see what a town we have: The men at work, smoke coming from the chimneys, The banks full up of money, business good, The workmen sober, going home at night, No rowdy barkers and no bands a-playing, No drinking and no

gaming and no vice. No marriages contracted to be broken. Look how LeRoy is quiet, sane and clean! And I reply, you like the stir of work, But not the stir of play; your chimneys smoke, Your banks have money. Let me look behind The door that closes on your man at home, The wife and children there, what shall I find? A sick man looks to health as it were all, But when the fever leaves him and he feels The store of strength in muscles slumbering And waiting to be used, then something else Than health is needful, he must have a way To voice the life within him, and he wonders Why health seemed so desirable before, And all sufficient to him. Take this girl: Why do you marvel that she rode at night With any man who came along? Good God, If I were born a woman and they put me In a theocracy, hogocracy, I'd do the first thing that came in my mind To give my soul expression. Don't you think You're something of a bully and a coward To ask such model living from this girl When you, my grunting hogos, run the land And bring us scandals like the times of Grant, And poisoned beef sold to the soldier boys, When we were warring Spain, and all this stuff Concerning loot and plunder, malversation, That riots in your cities, printed daily? I roll the panoramic story out To Washington the great—what do I see? It's tangle foot, the sticky smear is dry; But I can find wings, legs and heads, remember How little flies and big were buzzing once Of God and duty, country, virtue, faith; And beating wings, already gummed with sweet, Until their little bellies touched the glue, They sought to fill their bellies with—at last Long silence, which is history, scroll rolled up And spoken of in sacred whispers. Well, I'm glad that Elenor Murray had her fling, If that be really true. I understand What drove her to the war. I think she knew Too much to marry, settle down and live Under the rule of Demos or of Hogos. I wish we had a dozen Elenor Murrays In every village in this land of Demos To down Theocracy, which is just as bad As Prussianism, is no different From Prussianism. And I fear but this As fruitage of the war: that men and women Will have burnt on their souls the words ceramic That war's the thing, and this theocracy, Where generous outlets for the soul are stopped Will keep the words

in mind. When boredom comes, And grows intolerable, you'll see the land Go forth to war to get a thrill and live— Unless we work for freedom, for delight And self-expression. ———— Dwight Henry is another writer of letters, Stirred by the Murray inquest; writes a screed "The House that Jack Built," read by Merival To entertain his jury, in these words:

THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

JANE FISHER

Jane Fisher says to Susan Hamilton, That Coroner has no excuse to bring You, me before him. There are many too Who could throw light on Elenor Murray's life Besides the witnesses he calls to tell The cause of death: could he call us and hear About the traits we know, he should have us. What do we know of Elenor Murray's death? Why, not a thing, unless her death began With Simeon Strong and Gregory Wenner—then I could say something, for she told me much About her plan to marry Simeon Strong, And could have done so but for Gregory Wenner, Whose fault of life combined with fault of hers To break the faith of Simeon Strong in her. And so what have we? Gregory Wenner's love Poisons the love of Simeon Strong, from that Poor Elenor Murray falls into decline; From that, re-acts to nursing and religion, Which leads her to the war; and from the war Some other causes come, I know not what; I wish I knew. And Elenor Murray dies, Is killed or has a normal end of life. But, Susan, Elenor Murray feasted richly While life was with her, spite of all the pain. If you could choose, be Elenor Murray or Our schoolmate, Mary Marsh, which would you be? Elenor Murray had imagination, And courage to sustain it; Mary Marsh Had no imagination, was afraid, Could not envision life in Europe, married And living there in England, threw her chance Away to live in England, was content, And otherwise not happy but to lift Her habitation from the west of town

And settle on the south side, wed a man Whose steadiness and business sense made sure A prosperous uniformity of life. Life does not enter at your door and seek you, And pour her gifts into your lap. She drops The chances and the riches here and there. They find them who fly forth, as faring birds Know northern marshes, rice fields in the south; While the dull turtle waddles in his mud. The bird is slain perhaps, the turtle lives, But which has known the thrills? Well, on a time Elenor Murray, Janet Stearns, myself Thought we would see Seattle and Vancouver, We had saved money teaching school that year— The plan was Elenor Murray's. So we sailed To 'Frisco from Los Angeles, saw 'Frisco By daylight, but to see the town by night Was Elenor Murray's wish, and up to now We had no men, had found none. Elenor said, "Let's go to Palo Alto, find some men." We landed in a blinding sun, and walked About the desolate campus, but no men. And Janet and myself were tired and hot; But Elenor, who never knew fatigue, Went searching here and there, and left us sitting Under a palm tree waiting. Hours went by, Two hours, I think, when she came down the walk A man on either side. She brought them up And introduced them. They were gay and young, Students with money. Then the fun began: We wished to see the place, must hurry back To keep engagements in the city—whew! How Elenor Murray baited hooks for us With words about the city and our plans; What fun we three had had already there! Until at last these fellows begged to come, Return with us to 'Frisco, be allowed To join our party. "Could we manage it?" Asked Elenor Murray, "do you think we can?" We fell into the play and talked it over, Considered this and that, resolved the thing, And said at last to come, and come they did.... Well, such a time in 'Frisco. For you see Our money had been figured down to cents For what we planned to do. These fellows helped, We scarcely had seen 'Frisco but for them. They bought our dinners, paid our way about Through China Town and so forth, but we kept Our staterooms on the boat, slept on the boat. And after three days' feasting sailed away With bouquets for each one of us. But this girl Could never get enough, must on and on See more, have more

sensations, never tired. And when we saw Vancouver then the dream Of going to Alaska entered her. I had no money, Janet had no money To help her out, and Elenor was short. We begged her not to try it—what a will! She set her jaw and said she meant to go. And when we missed her for a day, behold We find her, she's a cashier in a store, And earning money there to take the trip. Our boat was going back, we left her there. I see her next when school commences, ruling Her room of pupils at Los Angeles. The summer after this she wandered east, Was now engaged to Simeon Strong, but writing To Gregory Wenner, saw him in Chicago. She traveled to New York, he followed her. She was a girl who had to live her life, Could not live through another, found no man Whose life sufficed for hers, must live herself, Be individual. And en route for France She wrote me from New York, was seeing much Of Margery, an aunt—I never knew her, But sensed an evil in her, and a mind That used the will of Elenor Murray—how Or why, I knew not. But she wrote to me This Margery had brought her lawyer in, There in New York to draw a document, And put some letters in a safety box. Whose letters? Gregory Wenner's? I don't know. She told me much of secrets, but of letters That needed for their preciousness a box, A lawyer to arrange the matter, nothing. For if there was another man, she felt Too shamed, no doubt, to tell me:—"This is he, The love I sought, the great reality," When she had said as much of Gregory Wenner. But now a deeper matter: with this letter She sent a formal writing giving me Charge of these letters, if she died to give The letters to the writer. I'm to know The identity of the writer, so she planned When I obtain them. How about this lawyer, And Margery the aunt? What shall I do? Write to this lawyer what my duty is Appointed me of her, go to New York? I must do something, for this lawyer has, As I believe, no knowledge of my place In this affair. Who has the box's key? This lawyer, or the aunt—I have no key— And if they have the key, or one of them, And enter, take the letters, look! our friend Gets stains upon her memory; or the man Who wrote the letters finds embarrassment. Somehow, I think, these letters hold a secret, The deepest of her life and cruelest,

And figured in her death. My dearest friend, What if they brought me to the coroner, If I should get these letters, and they learned I had them, this relation to our Elenor! Yet how can I neglect to write this lawyer And tell him Elenor Murray gave to me This power of disposition? Come what may I must write to this lawyer. Here I write To get the letters, and obey the wish Of our dear friend. Our friend who never could Carry her ventures to success, but always Just at the prosperous moment wrecked her hope. She really wished to marry Simeon Strong. Then why imperil such a wish by keeping This Gregory Wenner friendship living, go About with Gregory Wenner, fill the heart Of Simeon Strong with doubt? Oh well, my friend, We wonder at each other, I at you, And you at me, for doing this or that. And yet I think no man or woman acts Without a certain logic in the act Of nature or of circumstance. Look here, This letter to the lawyer. Will it do? I think so. If it brings the letters—well! If not, I'll get them somehow, it must be, I loved her, faults and all, and so did you.... So while Jane Fisher pondered on her duty, But didn't write the letter to the lawyer, Who had the charge of Elenor Murray's letters, The lawyer, Henry Baker, in New York Finds great perplexity. Sometimes a case Walks in a lawyer's office, makes his future, Or wrecks his health, or brings him face to face With some one rising from the mass of things, Faces and circumstance, that ends his life. So Henry Baker took such chances, taking The custody of these letters. James Rex Hunter Is partner of this Baker, sees at last Merival and tells him how it was With Baker at the last; he died because Of Elenor Murray's letters, Hunter told The coroner at the Waldorf. Dramatized His talk with Lawyer Baker in these words:—

HENRY BAKER, AT NEW YORK

One partner may consult another—James, Here is a matter you must help me with, It's coming to a head. Well, to be plain, And to begin at the beginning first, I knew a woman up on Sixty-third, Have known her since I got her a divorce, Married,

divorced, before—last night we quarreled, I must do something, hear me and advise. She is a woman notable for eyes Bright for their oblong lights in them; they seem Like crockery vases, rookwood, where the light Shows spectrally almost in squares and circles. Her skin is fair, nose hooked, of amorous flesh, A feaster and a liver, thinks and plans Of money, how to get it. And this husband Whom she divorced last summer went away, And left her to get on as best she could. All legal matters settled, we went driving— This story can be skipped. Last night we dined, Afterward went to her apartment. First She told me at the dinner that her niece Named Elenor Murray died some days ago. I sensed what she was after—here's the point:— She followed up the theme when we returned To her apartment, where we quarreled. You see I would not do her bidding, left her mad, In silent wrath after some bitter words. I managed her divorce as I have said, Then I stepped in as lover, months had passed. When Elenor Murray came here to New York, I met her at the apartment of the aunt Whose name is Margery Camp. Before, she said Her niece was here, was happy and in love But sorrowful for leaving, just the talk That has no meaning till you see the subject Or afterwards, perhaps; it passes in One ear and out the other. Then at last One afternoon I met this Elenor Murray When I go up to call on Margery Camp. The staging of the matter is like this: The niece looks fagged, is sitting on the couch, Has loosed her collar for her throat to feel The air about it, for the day is hot. And Margery Camp goes out, brings in a pitcher Of absinthe cocktails, so we drink. I sit, Begin to study what is done, and look This Elenor Murray over, get the thought That somehow Margery Camp has taken Elenor In her control for something, has begun To use her, manage her, is coiling her With dominant will or cunning. Then I look, See Margery Camp observing Elenor Murray, Who drinks the absinthe, and in Margery's eyes I see these parallelograms of light Just like a vase of crockery, there she stands, Her face like ivory, and laughs and shows Her marvelous teeth, smooths with her shapely hands The skirt upon her hips. Somehow I feel She is a soul who watches passion work. Then Elenor Murray

rouses, gets her spirits Out of the absinthe, rises and exclaims: “I’m better now;” and Margery Camp speaks up, Poor child, in intonation like a doll That speaks from reeds of steel, no sympathy Or meaning in the words. The interview Seems spooky to me, cold and sinister. We drink again and then we drink again. And what with her fatigue and lowered spirits, This Elenor Murray drifts in talk and mood With so much drink. At last this Margery Camp Says suddenly: “You’ll have to help my niece, There is a matter you must manage for her, We’ve talked it over; in a day or two Before she goes away, we’ll come to you.” I took them out to dinner, after dinner Drove Margery Camp to her apartment, then Went down with Elenor Murray to her place. Then in a day or two, one afternoon Margery Camp and Elenor Murray came Here to my office with a bundle, which This Margery Camp was carrying, rather large. And Margery Camp was bright and keen as winter. But Elenor Murray seemed a little dull, Abstracted as of drink, or thought perhaps. After the greeting and preliminaries, Margery said to Elenor: “Better tell What we have come for, get it done and go.” Then Elenor Murray said: “Here are some letters, I’ve tied them in this package, and I wish To put them in a safety box, give you One key and keep the other, leave with you A sealed instruction, which, in case I die, While over-seas, you may break open, read And follow, if you will.” She handed me A writing signed by her which merely read What I have told you—here it is—you see: “When legal proof is furnished I am dead, Break open the sealed letter which will give Instruction for you.” So I took the trust, Went with these women to a vault and placed The letters in the box, gave her a key, Kept one myself. They left. At dinner time I joined them, saw more evidence of the will Of Margery Camp controlling Elenor’s. Which seemed in part an older woman’s power Against a younger woman’s, and in part Something less innocent. We ate and drank, I took them to their places as before, And didn’t see this Elenor again. But now last night when I see Margery She says at once, “My niece is dead;” goes on To say, no other than herself has care Or interest in her, was estranged from father, And mother too, herself the closest heart In all the

world, and therefore she must look After the memory of the niece, and adds: “She came to you through me, I picked you out To do this business.” So she went along With this and that, advancing and retreating To catch me, bind me. Well, I saw her game, Sat non-committal, sipping wine, but keeping The wits she hoped I’d lose, as I could see. After the dinner we went to her place And there she said these letters might contain Something to smudge the memory of her niece, She wished she had insisted on the plan Of having one of the keys, the sealed instruction Made out and left with her; being her aunt, The closest heart in the world to Elenor Murray, That would have been the right way. But she said Her niece was willful and secretive, too, Not over wise, but now that she was dead It was her duty to reform the plan, Do what was best, and take control herself. So working to the point by devious ways She said at last: “You must give me the key, The sealed instruction: I’ll go to the box, And get the letters, do with them as Elenor Directed in the letter; for I think, Cannot believe it different, that my niece Has left these letters with me, so directs In that sealed letter.” “Then if that be true, Why give the key to me, the letter?—no This is a trust, a lawyer would betray, A sacred trust to do what you request.” I saw her growing angry. Then I added: “I have no proof your niece is dead:” “My word Is good enough,” she answered, “we are friends, You are my lover, as I thought; my word Should be sufficient.” And she kept at me Until I said: “I can’t give you the key, And if I did they would not let you in, You are not registered as a deputy To use the key.” She did not understand, Did not believe me, but she tacked about, And said: “You can do this, take me along When you go to the vault and open the box, And break the letter open which she gave.” I only answered: “If I find your niece Has given these letters to you, you shall have The letters, but I think the letters go Back to the writer, and if that’s the case, I’ll send them to the writer.” Here at last She lost control, took off her mask and stormed: “We’ll see about it. You will scarcely care To have the matter aired in court. I’ll see A lawyer, bring a suit and try it out, And see if I, the aunt, am not entitled To have my niece’s letters and effects,

Whatever's in the package. I am tired And cannot see you longer. Take five days To think the matter over. If you come And do what I request, no suit, but if You still refuse, the courts can settle it." And so I left her. In a day or two I read of Elenor Murray's death. It seems The coroner investigates her death. She died mysteriously. Well, then I break The sealed instruction, look! I am to send The package to Jane Fisher, in Chicago. We know, of course, Jane Fisher did not write The letters, that the letters are a man's. What is the inference? Why, that Elenor Murray Pretended to comply, obey her aunt, Yet slipped between her fingers, did not wish The aunt or me to know who wrote the letters. Feigned full submission, frankness with the aunt, Yet hid her secret, hid it from the aunt Beyond her finding out, if I observe The trust imposed, keep hands of Margery Camp From getting at the letters. Now two things: Suppose the writer of the letters killed This Elenor Murray, is somehow involved In Elenor Murray's death? If that's the case, Should not these letters reach the coroner? To help enforce the law is higher trust Than doing what a client has commanded. And secondly, if Margery Camp should sue, My wife will learn the secret, bring divorce. Three days remain before the woman's threat Is ripe to execute. Think over this. We'll talk again—I really need advice.... ———— So Hunter told the coroner. Then resumed The matter was a simple thing: I said To telegraph the coroner. You are right: Those letters give a clue perhaps, your trust Is first to see the law enforced. And yet I saw he was confused and drinking too, For fear his wife would learn of Margery Camp. I added, for that matter open the box, Take out the letters, find who wrote them, send A telegram to the coroner giving the name Of the writer of the letters. Well, he nodded, Seemed to consent to anything I said. And Hunter left me, leaving me in doubt What he would do. And what is next? Next day He's in the hospital and has pneumonia. I take a cab to see him, but I find He is too sick to see, is out of mind. In three days he is dead. His wife comes in And tells me worry killed him—knows the truth About this Margery Camp, oh, so she said. Had sent a lawyer to her husband asking For certain letters of an Elenor Murray. And that her husband

stood between the fire Of some exposure by this Margery Camp, Or suffering these letters to be used By Margery Camp against the writer for A bit of money. This was Mrs. Hunter's Interpretation. Well, the fact is clear That Hunter feared this Margery Camp—was scared About his wife who in some way had learned just at this time of Margery Camp—I think Was called up, written to. Between it all Poor Hunter's worry, far too fast a life, He broke and died. And now you know it all. I've learned no client enters at your door And nothing casual happens in the day That may not change your life, or bring you death. And Hunter in a liaison with Margery Is brought within the scope of Elenor's Life and takes his mortal hurt and dies. ———— So much for riffles in New York. We turn Back to LeRoy and see the riffles there, See all of them together. Loveridge Chase Receives a letter from a New York friend, A secret service man who trails and spies On Henry Baker, knows about the letters, And writes to Loveridge Chase and says to him: "That Elenor Murray dying near LeRoy Left letters in New York. I trailed the aunt Of Elenor Murray, Margery Camp. Also A lawyer, Henry Baker, who controls A box with letters left by Elenor Murray— So for the story. Why not join with me And get these letters? There is money in it, Perhaps, who knows? I work for Mrs. Hunter— She wants the letters placed where they belong, And wants the man who killed this Elenor Murray Punished as he should be. Go see the coroner And get the work of bringing back the letters." And Chase came to the coroner and spoke:

LOVERIDGE CHASE

Here is the secret of the death of Elenor, From what I learn of her, from what I know In living, knowing women, I am clear About this Elenor Murray. Give me power To get the letters, power to give a bond To indemnify the company, for you know Letters belong to him who writes the letters; And if the company is given bond It will surrender them, and then you'll know What man she loved, this Gregory

Wenner or Some other man, and if some other man, Whether he caused her death. The coroner And Loveridge Chase sat in the coroner's office And talked the matter over. And the coroner, Who knew this Loveridge Chase, was wondering Why Loveridge Chase had taken up the work Of secret service, followed it, and asked, "How did you come to give your brains to this, Who could do other things?" And Loveridge said: "A woman made me, I went round the world As jackie once, was brought into this world By a mother good and wise, but took from her, My father, someone, sense of chivalry Too noble for this world, a pity too, Abused too much by women. I came back, Was hired in a bank; had I gone on By this time had been up in banking circles, But something happened. You can guess, I think It was a woman, was my wife Leone. It matters nothing here, except I knew This Elenor Murray through my wife. These two Were schoolmates, even chums. I'll get these letters If you commission me. The fact is this: I think this Elenor Murray and Leone Were kindred spirits, and it does me good Now that I'm living thus without a wife To ferret out this matter of Elenor Murray, Perhaps this way, or somewhere on the way, Find news of my Leone; what life she lives, And where she is. I'm curious still, you see." Then Coroner Merival, who had not heard Of Elenor Murray's letters in New York Before this talk of Loveridge Chase, who heard This story and analysis of Leone Mixed in with other talk, and got a light On Elenor Murray, said: "I know your work, Know you as well, have confidence in you, Make ready to go, and bring the letters back." And on the day that Loveridge Chase departs To get the letters in New York, Bernard, A veteran of Belleau, married that day To Amy Whidden, on a lofty dune At Millers, Indiana, with his bride— Long quiet, tells her something of the war. These soldiers cannot speak what they have lived. But Elenor Murray helps him; for the talk Of Elenor Murray runs the rounds, so many Stations whence the talk is sent:—the men Or women who had known her, came in touch Somehow with her. These newly wedded two Go out to see blue water, yellow sand, And watch the white caps pat the sky, and hear The intermittent whispers of the waves. And here

Bernard, the soldier, tells his bride Of Elenor Murray and their days at Nice:

AT NICE

Dear, let me tell you, safe beside you now, Your hand in mine, here from this peak of sand, Under this pine tree, where the wild grapes spill Their fragrance on the lake breeze, from that oak Half buried in the sand, devoured by sand— The water of the lake is just as blue As the sea is there at Nice, the caps as white As foam around Mont Boron, Cap Ferrat. Here let me tell you things you do not know, I could not write, repeat what well you know, How love of you sustained me, never changed, But through a love was brighter, flame of the torch I bore for you in battle, as an incense Cast in a flame awakes the deeper essence Of fire and makes it mount. And I am here— Here now with you at last—the war is over— I have this aching side, these languid mornings, And pray for that old strength which never knew Fatigue or pain—but I am here with you, You are my bride now, I have earned you, dear. I fought the fight, endured the endless days When rain fell, days of absence, and the days Of danger when my only prayer was this: Give me, O God, to see you once again. This is the deepest rapture, tragedy Of this our life, beyond our minds to fathom, A thing to stand in awe of, touch in reverence, That we—we mortals, find in one another Such source of ecstasy, of pain. My love, I lay there in the hospital so weak, Flopping my hands upon the coverlet, And praying God to live. In such an hour To be away from you! There are no words To speak the weary hours of fear and thought, In such an absence, facing death, perhaps, A burial in France, with thoughts of you, Mourning some years, perhaps, healed partly then And wedded to another; then at last Myself forgot, or nearly so, and life Taking you on with duties, house and children; And my poor self forgotten, gone to dust, Wasted along the soil of France. Thank God, I’m here with you—it’s real, all this is true: The roar of the water, sand-hills, infinite sky, The gulls, the distant smoke, the smell of grapes, The

haze of amethyst behind us there, In those ravines of stunted oak and pine. All this is real. This is America. The very air we find from coast to coast, The sensible air for lungs seems freer here. I had no sooner landed in New York Than my arms said stretch out, there's room to stretch. I walked along the streets so happy, light Of heart and heard the newsboys, shop-girls talk: "O, what a cheese he is," or "beat it now"— I can't describe the thrill I had to hear This loose abandoned slang spilled all around, Like coppers soiled from handling, but so real, And having power to purchase memories Of what I loved and lost awhile, my land! Well, then I wanted roast-beef, corn on cob, And had them in an hour at early lunch. I telegraphed you, gave New York a day, And came to you. We are together now, We do not dream, do we? We are together After the war, to live our lives and grow And make of love, experience, life more rich. That's what you say to me—it shall be so. Now I will tell you what I promised to tell About my illness and the battle—well, I wrote you of my illness, only hinted About the care I had, that is the point; 'Twas care alone that saved me, I was ill Beyond all words to tell. And all the while I suffered, fearing I would die; but then I could not bear to think I should not rise To join my fellows, battle once again, And charge across the trenches, take no part In crushing down the Prussian. For I knew He would be crushed at last. I could not bear To think I should not take a hand in that, Be there when he lay fallen, victory From voice to voice should pass along the lines. Well, for some weeks I lay there, and at last Words dropped around me that the time was near For blows to count—would I be there to strike? Could I get well in time? And every day A sweet voice said: "You're better, oh it's great How you are growing stronger; yesterday Your fever was but one degree, to-day It is a little higher. You must rest, Not think so much! It may be normal perhaps To-morrow or the next day. In a week You will be up and gaining, and the battle Will not be fought before then, I am sure, And not until you're well and strong again." And thus it went from day to day. Such hands Washed my hot face and bathed me, tucked me in, And fed me too. And once I said to her: "I love a

girl, I must get well to fight, I must get well to go to her." And she, It was the nurse I spoke to, took my hand, And turned away with tears. You see it's there We see the big things, nothing else, the things That stand out like the mountains, lesser things Are lost like little hillocks under the shadows Of great emotions, hopes, realities. Well, so it went. And on a day she leaned Above my face to smooth the pillow out. And from her heart a golden locket fell, And dangled by the silver chain. The locket Flew open and I saw a face within it, That is I saw there was a face, but saw No eyes or hair, saw nothing to limn out The face so I would know it. Then I said: "You have a lover, nurse." She straightened up And questioned me: "Have you been ill before? Do you know of the care a nurse can give, And what she can withhold?" I answered "Yes." And then she asked: "Have you felt in my hands Great tenderness, solicitude, even prayer?"— Here, sweetheart, do not let your eyes get moist, I'll tell you everything, for you must see How spirits work together, love to love Passes and does its work. Well, it was true, I felt her tenderness, which was like prayer, And so I answered her: "If I get well, You will have cured me with your human love." And then she said: "Our unit reached this place When there was neither stoves nor lights. At night We went to bed by candles. Stumbled around Amid the trunks and beds by candle light. Well, one of us would light a candle, then Each, one by one, the others lighted theirs From this one down the room. And so we passed The light along. And as a candle died, The others burned, to which the light was passed. Well, now," she said, "that is a figure of love: We get the flame from someone, light another, Make brighter light by holding flame to flame— Sometimes we searched for something, held two candles Together for a greater light. And so, My soldier, I have given you the care That comes from love—of country and the cause, But brightened, warmed by one from whom the flame Was passed to me, a love that took my hand And warmed it, made it tender for that love, Which said pour out and serve, take love for him And use it in the cause, by using hands To bathe, to soothe, to smooth a pillow down, To heal, sustain." The truth is, dearest heart, I had not lived, I think, except

for her. And there we were: I filled with love for you, And therefore praying to get well and fight, Be worthy of your love, and there she was With love for someone, striving with that love To nurse me through and give me well and strong To battle in the cause. Then I got well And joined my company. She took my hand As I departed, closed her eyes and said: “May God be with you.” Well, it was Belleau, That jungle of machine guns, like a thicket Of rattle snakes. And there was just one thing To clean that thicket out—we had to charge, And so we yelled and charged. No soldier knows How one survives in such a charge as that. You simply yell and charge; the bullets fall Like drops of rain around you pitter-pat; And on you go and think: where will it get me, The stomach or the heart or through the head? What will it be like, sudden blackness, pain, No pain at all? And so you charge the nests. The fellows fell around us like tenpins, Dropped guns, or flung them up, fell on their faces, Or toppled backward, pitched ahead and flung Their helmets off in pitching. And at last I found myself half-dazed, as in a dream, Right in a nest, two Boches facing me, And then I saw this locket, as I saw it Fall from her breast, it might have been a glint Of metal, flash of firing, I don’t know. I only know I ran my bayonet Through one of them; he fell, I stuck the other, Then something stung my side. When I awoke I lay upon a cot, and heard the nurses Discuss the peace, the armistice was signed, The war was over. Well, and in a way We won the war, I won the war, as one Who did his part, at least. Then I got up, But I was weak and dazed. They said to me I should not cross the ocean in the winter, My lungs might get infected; anyway, The flu was raging. So they sent me down To Nice upon a furlough, as I wrote. I could not write you all I saw and heard, It was all lovely and all memorable. But first before I picture Nice to you, My days at Nice, lest you have doubts and fears When I reveal to you I saw this nurse First on the Promenade des Anglais there, Saw much of her in Nice, I saw at once She was that Elenor Murray whom they found Along the river dead; and for the rest To make all clear, I’ll tell you everything. You see I didn’t write you of this girl And what we did there, lest you

might suspect Some vagrant mood in me concealed or glossed, Which ended in betrayal of our love. Eyes should look into eyes to supplement The words of truth with light of truth, where nothing Of thoughts that hide have chance to slip and crawl Through eyes averted, twinklings, change of light, Or if they do, reveal themselves, as snakes Are seen when winding into coverts of grass. Well, then we met upon the promenade. She ran toward me, kissed me—oh so glad. I told her of the battle, of my wound. And for herself it seemed she had been ill, Off duty for a month before she came To Nice for health; she said as much to me. I think she had been ill, yet I could sense, Or seemed to sense a mystery, I don't know, Behind her illness. Yet you understand How it was natural we should be happy To meet again, in Nice, too. For you see The army life develops comradeship. And when we meet the old life rises up And wakes its thrills and memories. It seemed She had been there some days when I arrived And knew the place, and said, "I'll show you Nice." There was a major she was waiting for, As it turned out. He came there in a week, We had some walks together, all the three, And then I lost them. But before he came We did the bright cafés and Monte Carlo, And here my little nurse showed something else Besides the tender hands, the prayerful soul. She had been taking egg-nogs, so she said, But now she took to wine, and drink she could Beyond all men I know. I had to stop Or fall beneath the table, leaving her To order more. And she would sit and weave From right to left hip in a rhythmic way, And cast her eyes obliquely right and left. It was this way: The music set her thrilling, And keeping time this way. She loved to go Where we could see cocotes, adventurers; Where red vitality was feasting, drinking, And dropping gold upon the gaming table. We sunned ourselves within the Jardin Public, And walked the beach between the bathing places Where they dry orange peel to make perfumes. And in that golden sunshine by the sea Caught whiffs of lemon blossoms, and each day I bought her at the stands acacia, Or red anemones—I tell you all— There was no moment that my thought betrayed Your heart, dear one. She had been good to me. I saw that she was

hungry for these things, For rapture, so I gave them—you don't mind, It came to nothing, dearest. But at last A different Elenor Murray than I knew There in the hospital took shape before me. That serving soul, that maid of humble tasks, And sacrifice for others, and that face Of waitress or of ingenue, day by day Assumed sophistication, looks and lines Of knowledge in the world, experience in places of patrician ways. She knew New York as well as I, cafés and shops; Dropped pregnant hints at times that made me think What more she knew, what she was holding back. Until at last all she had done for me Seemed just what mortals do to earn their bread In any calling, made more generous, maybe, By something in a moment's mood. In truth The ideal showed the clogged pores in the skin Under the light she stood in. For you know When we see people happy we can say Those tears were not all tears—we pitied more Than we were wise to pity—that's the feeling: Most men are Puritans in this, I think. A woman dancing, drinking, makes you laugh, And half despise yourself for great emotion When seeing her in prayer or reverent thought. But now I come to something more concrete: The day before the major came we lunched Where we could see the Mediterranean, The clubs, hotels and villas. There she sat All dressed in white, a knitted jacket of silk Matching the leaves upon the trees, and looked As fashionable as the rest. The waiter came. She did not take the card nor order from it, Was nonchalant, familiar, said at last: "We want some Epernay. You have it doubtless." The waiter bowed. I looked at Elenor, That was the character of revealing things I saw from day to day. For truth to tell This Epernay might well have been charged water For all I knew. I asked her, and she said: "Delicious wine, not strong." And so we lunched, And the music stormed, and lunchers gabbled, smoked, And dandies ogled. And this Epernay Worked in our blood and Elenor rattled on. And she was flinging eyes from right to left And moving rhythmically from hip to hip, And with a finger beating out the time. Somehow our hands touched, then she closed her eyes, Her body shook a little and grew limp. "What is the matter?" Then she raised her eyes And looked me through

an instant. What, my dear, You won't hear any more? Oh, very well, That's all, there is no more. But after while When things got quieter, the lunchers thinned, The music ended, and the wine grown tame Within our veins, she told me on a time Some years before she was confirmed, and thought She'd take the veil, and for two years or more Was all absorbed in pious thoughts and works. "But how we learn and change," she added then, "In training we see bodies, learn to know How thirst and hunger, needs of body cry For daily care, become materialists, Unmoralists a little in the sense That any book, or theories of the soul Should tie the body from its natural needs. Though I accept the faith, no less than ever, That God is and the Savior is and spirit Is no less real than body, has its needs, Separate or through the body." Oh, that girl! She made me guess and wonder. But next day I had a fresh surprise, the major came And she was changed completely. I forgot, I must tell you what happened after lunch. We rose and she grew impish, stood and laughed As if the secret of the laugh was hers Beyond the concrete matter of the laugh. She said, "I'll show you something beautiful." We started out to see it, walked the road Around the foot of Castle Hill. You know The wind blows gustily at Nice; and so All of a sudden went my hat, way up, Far off, and instantly such laughter rose, And boisterous shouts that made me think at once I had been tricked, somehow. It is this way: The gamins loiter there to watch the victims Who lose their hats. And Elenor sat down, And laughed until she cried. I do not know, Perhaps I was not amorous enough At luncheon and she pranked me for revenge. Well, then the major came, he took my place. I was the third one in the party now, But saw them every day. What did we do? No Monte Carlo now, nor ordering Without the card, she was completely changed, Demure again, all words of lovely things: The war had changed the world, had lifted up The spirit of man to visions, and the major Adored her, drank it in. And we explored Limpia and the Old Town, looked aloft At Mont Cau d'Aspremont, picked hellebore, And orchids in the gorges, saw St. Pons, The Valley of Hepaticas, sunned ourselves Within the Jardin Public, where the children Play riotously; and

Elenor would draw A straying child to her and say: “You darling.” I saw her do this once and dry her eyes And to the major say: “They are so lovely, I had to give up teaching school, the children Stirred my emotions till I could not bear To be among them.” And to make an end, I spent the parts of three days with these two. And on the last day we went to the summit Of the Corinche Road, and saw the sea and Europe Spread out before us—oh, you cannot know The beauty of it, dear, until you see it. And Elenor sat down as in a trance, And looked and did not speak for minutes. Then She said: “How pure a place this is—it’s nature, And I can worship here, this makes you hate The cafés and the pleasures of the town.” What was this woman, dear, what was her soul? Or was she half and half? Oh, after all, I am a hostile mixture, so are you. And so I drifted out, and only stayed A day or two beyond that afternoon. I took a last walk on the Promenade; At last saw just ahead of me these two, His arm was fast in hers, they sauntered on As if in serious talk. As I came up, I greeted them and said good-bye again. Where is the major? Did the major steal The heart of Elenor Murray, speed her death? They could have married. Why did she return? Or did the major follow her? Well, dear, Here is the story, truthful to a fault. My soul is yours, I kept it true to you. Hear how the waters roar upon the sand! I close my eyes and almost can believe We are together on the Corniche Road. ———— Well, it may never be that Merival Heard from Bernard of Elenor at Nice, Although he knew it sometime, knew as well Her service in the war had nerved the men And by that much had put the Germans down. America at the fateful moment lent Her strength to bring the war’s end. Elenor Was one of many to cross seas and bring Life strength against the emperor, once secure, And throned in power against such phagocytes As Elenor Murray, Bernard, even kings. And sawing wood at Amerongen all He thought of was of brains and monstrous hearts Which sent the phagocytes from America, England and France to eat him up at last. One day an American soldier, so ’tis said Someone told Merival, was walking near The house at Amerongen, saw a man With drooped mustache and

whitened beard approach, Two mastiffs walked beside him. As he passed Unrecognized, the soldier to a mate Spoke up and said: “What hellish dogs are those?— Like Bismarck used to have; I saw a picture Of Bismarck with his dogs.” The drooped mustache Turned nervously and took the soldiers in, Then strode ahead. The emperor was stunned To hear an American soldier use a knife As sharp as that. But Elenor at Nice Walked with the major as Bernard has told. And this is wrinkled water, dark and far From Merival, unknown to him. He hears, And this alone, she went from Nice to Florence, Was ill there in a convent, we shall see. This is the tale that Irma Leese related To Coroner Merival in a leisure hour:

THE MAJOR AND ELENOR MURRAY AT NICE

Elenor Murray and Petain, the major, The Promenade des Anglais walked at Nice. A cloud was over him, and in her heart A growing grief. He knew her at the hospital, First saw her face among a little group Of faces at a grave when rain was falling, The burial of a nurse, when Elenor’s face Was bathed in tears and strained with agony. And after that he saw her in the wards; Heard soldiers, whom she nursed, say as she passed, Dear little soul, sweet soul, or take her hand In gratitude and kiss it. But as a stream Flows with clear water even with the filth Of scum, debris that drifts beside the current Of crystal water, nor corrupts it, keeps Its poisoned, heavier medium apart, So at the hospital where the nurses’ hands Poured sacrifice, heroic love, the filth Of envy, anger, malice, plots, intrigue Kept pace with pure devotion, noble work For suffering and the cause. The major helped To free the rules for Elenor Murray so She might recuperate at Nice, and said: “Go and await me, I shall join you there. For in my trouble I must have a friend, A woman to assuage me, give me light, And ever since I saw you by that grave, And saw you cross yourself, and bow your head And watched your services along the wards Among the sick and dying, I have felt The soul of you, its human tenderness, Its prodigal power of

giving, pouring forth Itself for others. And you seem a soul Where nothing of our human frailty Has come to dim the flame that burns in you, You are all light, I think." And Elenor Murray Looked down and said: "There is no soul like that. This hospital, the war itself, reflects The good and bad together of our souls. You are a boy—oh such a boy to see All good in me." And Major Petain said: "At least you have not found dishonor here As I have found it, for a lust of flesh A weakness and a trespass." This was after The hospital was noisy with the talk Of Major Petain and his shame, the hand Of discipline lay on him. Elenor Murray Looked steadily in his eyes, but only said: "We mortals know each other but a little, Nor guess each other's secrets." And she glanced A moment at the tragedy that had come To her at Paris on her furlough there, And of its train of sorrows, even now Her broken health and failure in the work As consequence to that, and how it brought The breaking of her passionate will and dream To serve and not to fail—she glanced at this A moment as she faced him, looked at him. Then as she turned away: "There is one thing That I must tell you, it is fitting now, I love and am beloved. But if you come To Nice and I can help you, come, if talk And any poor advice of mine can help." So Major Petain, Elenor Murray walked The Promenade at Nice, arm fast in arm. And Major Petain to relieve his heart Told all the tragedy that had come to him: "Duty to France was first with me where love Was paramount with you, if I divine Your heart, America's, at least a love Unmixed of other feelings as may be. What could you find here, if you seek no husband, Even in seeing France so partially? What in adventure, lures to bring you here, Where peril, labor are? You either came To expiate your soul, or as you say, To make more worthy of this man beloved Back in America your love for him. Dear idealist, I give my faith to you, And all your words. But as I said 'twas duty, Then dreams of freedom, Europe's chains struck off, The menace of the German crushed to earth That fired me as a soldier, trained to go When France should need me. So it is you saw France go about this business calm and stern, And patient for the prize, or if 'twere lost Then brave to meet the future as France met

The arduous years that followed Metz, Sedan." "But had I been American to the core, Would I have put the sweet temptation by? However flamed with zeal had I said no When lips like hers were offered? Oh, you see Whatever sun-light gilds the mountain tops Rich grass grows in the valleys, herds will feed, Though rising suns put glories on the heights. And herds will run and stumble over rocks, Break fences and encounter beasts of prey To get the grass that's sweetest." "To begin I met her there in Paris. In a trice We loved each other, wrote, made vows, she pledged The consummation. There was danger here, Great danger, as you know, for her and me. And yet it never stopped us, gave us fear. And then I schemed and got her through the lines, Took all the chances." "Danger was not all: There was my knowledge of her husband's love, His life immaculate, his daily letters. He put by woman chances that arose With saying, I am married, am beloved, I love my wife, all said so earnestly We could not joke him, though behind his back Some said: He trusts her, but he'd better watch; At least no sense of passing good things by. I sat with him at mess, I saw him read The letters that she wrote him, face of light Devouring eyes. The others rallied him; But I was like a man who knows a plot To take another's life, but keeps the secret, Eats with the victim, does not warn him, makes Himself thereby a party to the plot. Or like a man who knows a fellow man Has some insidious disease beginning, And hears him speak with unconcern of it, And does not tell him what to do, you know, And let him go to death. And just for her, The rapture of a secret love I choked All risings of an honest manhood, mercy, Honor with self and him. Oh, well you know The isolation, hunger of us soldiers, I only need to hint of these. But now I see these well endured for sake of peace And quiet memory." "For here we stood Just 'round the corner in that long arcade That runs between our building, next to yours. And this is what I hear—the husband's voice, Which well I knew, the officer's in command: 'Why have you brought your wife here?' asked the officer. 'Pardon, I have not done so,' said the husband. 'You're adding falsehood to the offense; you know The rules forbid your wife to pass the

lines.’ ‘Pardon, I have not brought her,’ he exclaimed In passionate earnestness. “Well, there we stood. My sweetheart, but his wife, was turned to snow, As white and cold. I got in readiness To kill the husband. How could we escape? I thought the husband had been sent away; Her coming had been timed with his departure, Arriving afterward, and we had failed. But as for that, before our feet could stir, The officer said, ‘Come now, I’ll prove your lie,’ And in a twinkling, taking a dozen steps They turned into the arcade, there they were, The officer was shaking him and saying, ‘You lie! You lie!’ “All happened in a moment, The humbled, ruined fellow saw the truth, And blew his brains out on the very spot! And made a wonder, gossip for you girls— And here I am.” So Major Petain finished. Then Elenor Murray said: “Let’s watch the sea.” And as they sat in silence, as he turned To look upon her face, he saw the tears, Hanging like dew drops on her lashes, drip And course her cheeks. “My friend, you weep for me,” The major said at last, “my gratitude For tears like these.” “I weep,” said Elenor Murray, “For you, but for myself. What can I say? Nothing, my friend, your soul must find its way. Only this word: I’ll go to mass with you, I’ll sit beside you, pray with you, for you, And do you pray for me.” And then she paused. The long wash of the sea filled in the silence. And then she said again, “I’ll go with you, Where we may pray, each for the other pray. I have a sorrow, too, as deep as yours.”

THE CONVENT

Elenor Murray stole away from Nice Before her furlough ended, tense to see Something of Italy, and planned to go To Genoa, explore the ancient town Of Christopher Columbus, if she might Elude the regulation, as she did, In leaving Nice for Italy. But for her Always the dream, and always the defeat Of what she dreamed. She found herself in Florence And saw the city. But the weariness Of labor and her illness came again At intervals, and on such days she lay And heard the hours toll,

wished for death and wept, Being alone and sorrowful. On a morning She rose and looked for galleries, came at last Into the Via Gino Capponi And saw a little church and entered in, And saw amid the darkness of the church A woman kneeling, knelt beside the woman, And put her hand upon the woman's forehead To find that it was wrinkled, strange to say A scar upon the forehead, like a cross.... Elenor Murray rose and walked away, Sobs gathering in her throat, her body weak, And reeled against the wall, for so it seemed, Against which hung thick curtains, velvet, red, A little grimed and worn. And as she leaned Against the curtains, clung to them, she felt A giving, parted them, and found a door, Pushed on the door which yielded, opened it And saw a yard before her. It was walled. A garden of old urns and ancient growths, Some flowering plants around the wall. Before her And in the garden's center stood a statue, With outstretched arms, the Virgin without the child. And suddenly on Elenor Murray came Great sorrow like a madness, seeing there The pitying Virgin, stretching arms to her. And so she ran along the pebbly walk, Fell fainting at the Virgin's feet and lay Unconscious in the garden. When she woke Two nuns were standing by, and one was dressed In purest white, and held within her hands A tray of gold, and on the tray of gold There was a glass of wine, and in a cup Some broth of beef, and on a plate of gold A wafer. And the other nun was dressed In purest white, but over her shoulders lay A cape of blue, blue as the sky of Florence Above the garden wall. Then as she saw The nuns before her, in the interval Of gathering thought, re-limning life again From wonder if she had not died, and these Were guides or ministrants of another world, The nun with cape of blue to Elenor Said: "Drink this wine, this broth;" and Elenor Drank and arose, being lifted up by them, And taken through the convent door and given A little room as white and clean as light, And a bed of snowy linen. Then they said: "This is the Convent where we send up prayers, Prayers for the souls who do not pray for self— Rest, child, and be at peace; and if there be Friends you would tell that you are here, then we Will send the word for you, sleep now and rest." And listening to their voices Elenor slept. And

when she woke a nurse was at her side, And food was served her, broths and fruit. Each day A doctor came to tell her all was well, And health would soon return. So for a month Elenor Murray lay and heard the bells, And breathed the fragrance of the flowering city That floated through her window, in the stillness Of the convent dreamed, and said to self: This place Is good to die in, who is there to tell That I am here? There was no one. To them She gave her name, but said: “Till I am well Let me remain, and if I die, some place Must be for me for burial, put me there. And if I live to go again to France And join my unit, let me have a writing That I did not desert, was stricken here And could not leave. For while I stole away From Nice to get a glimpse of Italy, I might have done so in my furlough time, And not stayed over it.” And to Elenor The nuns said: “We will help you, but for now Rest and put by anxieties.” On a day Elenor Murray made confessional. And to the nuns told bit by bit her life, Her childhood, schooling, travels, work in the war, What fate had followed her, what sufferings. And Sister Mary, she who saw her first, And held the tray of gold with wine and broth, Sat often with her, read to her, and said: “Letters will go ahead of you to clear Your absence over time—be not afraid, All will be well.” And so when Elenor Murray Arose to leave she found all things prepared: A cab to take her to the train, compartments Reserved for her from place to place, her fare And tickets paid for, till at last she came To Brest and joined her unit, in three days Looked at the rolling waters as the ship Drove to America—such a coming home! To what and whom? ———— Loveridge Chase returned and brought the letters To Coroner Merival from New York. That day The chemical analysis was finished, showed No ricin and no poison. Elenor Murray Died how? What were the circumstances? Then When Coroner Merival broke the seals of wax, And cut the twine that bound the package, found The man was Barrett Bays who wrote the letters— There were a hundred—then he cast about To lay his hands on Barrett Bays, and found That Barrett Bays lived in Chicago, taught, Was a professor, aged some forty years. Why did this Barrett Bays emerge not, speak, Come forward? Was

it simply to conceal A passion written in these letters here For his sake or his wife's? Or was it guilt For some complicity in Elenor's death? And on this day the coroner had a letter From Margery Camp which said: "Where's Barrett Bays? Why have you not arrested him? He knows Something, perhaps about the death of Elenor." So Coroner Merival sent process forth To bring in Barrett Bays, non est inventus. He had not visited his place of teaching, Been seen in haunts accustomed for some days— Not since the death of Elenor Murray, none Knew where to find him, and none seemed to know What lay between this man and Elenor Murray. This was the more suspicious. Then the Times Made headlines of the letters, published some Wherein this Barrett Bays had written Elenor: "You are my hope in life, my morning star, My love at last, my all." From coast to coast The word was flashed about this Barrett Bays; And Mrs. Bays at Martha's Vineyard read, Turned up her nose, continued on the round Of gaieties, but to a chum relieved Her loathing with these words: "Another woman, He's soiled himself at last." And Barrett Bays, Who roughed it in the Adirondacks, hoped The inquest's end would leave him undisclosed In Elenor Murray's life, though wracked with fear About the letters in the vault, some day To be unearthed, or taken, it might be, By Margery Camp for uses sinister— He reading that the letters had been given To Coroner Merival, and seeing his name Printed in every sheet, saw no escape In any nook of earth, returned and walked In Merival's office: trembling, white as snow. So Barrett Bays was sworn, before the jury Sat and replied to questions, said he knew Elenor Murray in the fall before She went to France, saw much of her for weeks; Had written her these letters before she left. Had followed her in the war, and gone to France, Had seen her for some days in Paris when She had a furlough. Had come back and parted With Elenor Murray, broken with her, found A cause for crushing out his love for her. Came back to win forgetfulness, had written No word to her since leaving Paris—let Her letters lie unanswered; brought her letters, And gave them to the coroner. Then he told Of the day before her death, and how she came By motor to

Chicago with her aunt, Named Irma Leese, and telephoned him, begged An hour for talk. “Come meet me by the river,” She had said. And so went to meet her. Then he told Why he relented, after he had left her In Paris with no word beside this one: “This is the end.” Now he was curious To know what she would say, what could be said Beyond what she had written—so he went Out of a curious but hardened heart.

BARRETT BAYS

“I was walking by the river,” Barrett said, “When she arrived. I took her hand, no kiss, A silence for some minutes as we walked. Then we began to take up point by point, For she was concentrated on the hope Of clearing up all doubtful things that we Might start anew, clear visioned, perfect friends, More perfect for mistakes and clouds. Her will Was passionate beyond all other wills, And when she set her mind upon a course She could not be diverted, or if so, Her failure kept her brooding. What with me She wanted after what had stunned my faith I knew not, save she loved me. For in truth I have no money, and no prospects either To tempt cupidity.” “Well; first we talked— You must be patient with me, gentlemen, You see my nerves—they’re weakened—but I’ll try To tell you all—well then—a glass of water— At first we talked but trifles. Silences Came on us like great calms between the stir Of ineffectual breezes, like this day In August growing sultry as the sun Rose upward. She was striving to break down The hard corrosion of my thought, and I Could not surrender. Till at last, I said: ‘That day in Paris when you stood revealed Can never be forgotten. Once I killed A love with hatred for a woman who Betrayed me, as you did. And you can kill A love with hatred but you kill your soul While killing love. And so with you I kept All hatred from my heart, but cannot keep A poisonous doubt of you from blood and brain.’... I learned in Paris, (to be clear on this), That after she had given herself to me She fell back in the arms of Gregory Wenner. And here as we were walking I revealed My agony, my anger, emptied out

My heart of all its bitterness. At last When she protested it was natural For her to do what she had done, the act As natural as breathing, taking food, Not signifying faithlessness nor love— Though she admitted had she loved me then She had not done so—I grew tense with rage, A serpent which grows stiff and rears its head To strike its enemy was what I seemed To myself then, and so I said to her In voice controlled and low, but deadly clear, 'What are you but a whore—you are a whore!' Murderous words no doubt, but do you hear She justified herself with Gregory Wenner; Yes, justified herself when she had written And asked forgiveness—yes, brought me out To meet her by the river. And for what? I said you whore, she shook from head to heels, And toppled, but I caught her in my arms, And held her up, she paled, head rolled around, Her eyes set, mouth fell open, all at once I saw that she was dead, or syncope Profound had come upon her. Elenor, What is the matter? Love came back to me, Love there with Death. I laid her on the ground. I found her dead. "If I had any thought There in that awful moment, it was this: To run away, escape, could I maintain An innocent presence there, be clear of fault? And if I had that thought, as I believe, I had no other; all my mind's a blank Until I find myself at one o'clock Disrobing in my room, too full of drink, And trying to remember. "With the morning I lay in bed and thought: Did Irma Leese Know anything of me, or did she know That Elenor went out to meet a man? And if she did not know, who could disclose That I was with her? No one saw us there. Could I not wait from day to day and see What turn the news would take? For at the last I did not kill her. If the inquest showed Her death was natural, as it was, for all Of me, why then my secret might be hidden In Elenor Murray's grave. And if they found That I was with her, brought me in the court, I could make clear my innocence. And thus I watched the papers, gambled with the chance Of never being known in this affair. Does this sound like a coward? Put yourself In my place in that horror. Think of me With all these psychic shell shocks—first the war, Its great emotions, then this Elenor." And thus he spoke and twisted hands, and twitched, And ended suddenly. Then David

Borrow, And Winthrop Marion with the coroner Shot questions at him till he woke, regained A memory, concentration: Who are you? What was your youth? Your love life? What your wife? Where did you meet this Elenor at the first? Why did you go to France? In Paris what Happened to break your balance? Tell us all. For as they eyed him, he looked down, away, Stirred restless in the chair. And was it truth He told of meeting Elenor, her death? Guilt like a guise was on his face. And one— This Isaac Newfeldt, juryman, whispered, “Look, That man is guilty, let us fly the questions Like arrows at him till we bring him down.” And as they flew the arrows he came to And spoke as follows:— “First, I am a heart That from my youth has sought for love and hungered. And Elenor Murray’s heart had hungered too, Which drew our hearts together, made our love As it were mystical, more real. I was A boy who sought for beauty, hope and faith In woman’s love; at fourteen met a girl Who carried me to ecstasy till I walked In dreamland, stepping clouds. She loved me too. I could not cure my heart, have always felt A dull pain for that girl. She died, you know. I found another, rather made myself Discover my ideal in her, until My heart was sure she was the one. And then I woke up from this trance, went to another Still searching; always searching, reaching now An early cynicism, how to play with hearts, Extract their beauty, pass to someone else. I was a little tired now, seemed to know There is no wonder woman, just a woman Somewhere to be a wife. And then I met The woman whom I married, thought to solve My problem with the average things of life; The satisfaction of insistent sex, A home, a regular program, turn to work, Forget the dream, the quest. What did I find? A woman who exhausted me and bored me, Stirred never a thought, a fancy, brought no friends, No pleasures or diversions, took from me All that I had to give of mind and heart, Purse, or what not. And she was barren too, And restless; by that restlessness relieved The boredom of our life; it took her off In travels here and there. And I was glad To have her absent, but it still is true There is a hell in marriage, when it keeps Delights of freedom off, all other women Not willing to intrigue, pass distantly Your married man; but on the

other hand What was my marriage with a wife away Six months or more of every year? And when I said to her, divorce me, she would say, You want your freedom to get married—well, The other woman shall not have you, if There is another woman, as I think. And so the years went by. I'm thirty-five And meet a woman, play light heartedly, She is past thirty, understands nor asks A serious love. It's summer and we jaunt About the country, for my wife's away. As usual, in the fall returns, and then My woman says, the holiday is over, Go back to work, and I'll go back to work. I cannot give her up, would still go on For this delight so sweet to me. By will I hold her, stir the fire up to inflame Her hands for me, make love to her in short And find myself in love, beholding in her All beauties and all virtues. Well, at first What did I care what she had been before, Whose mistress, sweetheart? Now I cared and asked Fidelity from her, and this she pledged. And so a settled life seemed come to us, We had found happiness. But on a day I caught her in unfaithfulness. A man She knew before she knew me crossed her path. Why do they do this, even while their lips Are wet with kisses given you? I think A woman may be true in marriage, never In any free relationship. And then I left her, killed the love I had with hate. Hate is an energy with which to save A heart knocked over by a blow like this. To forgive this wrong is never to forget, But always to remember, with increasing Sorrow and dreams invest the ruined love. And so I turned to hate, came from the flames As hard and glittering as crockery ware, And went my way with gallant gestures, winning An hour of rapture where it came to me. And all the time my wife was much away, Yet left me in this state where I was kept From serious love if I had found the woman. A pterodactyl in my life and soul: Had wings, could fly, but slumbered in the mud. Was neither bird nor beast; as social being Was neither bachelor nor married man. The years went on with work, day after day Arising to the task, night after night Returning for the rest with which to rise, Forever following the mad illusion, The dream, the expected friend, the great event Which should change life, and never finding it. And all the while I see myself consumed,

Sapped somehow by this wife and hating her; Then fearful for myself for hating her, Then melting into generosities For hating her. And so tossed back and forth Between such passions, also never at peace From the dream of love, the woman and the mate I stagger, amble, hurtle through the years, And reach that summer of two years ago When life began to change. It was this way: My wife is home, for a wonder, and my friend, Most sympathetic, nearest, comes to dine. He casts his comprehending eyes about, Takes all things in. As we go down to town, And afterward at luncheon, when alone He says to me: she is a worthy woman, Beautiful, too, there is no other woman To make you happier, the fault is yours, At least in part, remove your part of the fault, To woo her, give yourself, find good in her. Go take a trip. For neither man nor woman Yields everything till wooed, tried out, beloved. Bring all your energies to the trial of her. She will respond, unfold, repay your work. He won me with his words. I said to her, Let's summer at Lake Placid—so we went. I tried his plan, did all I could, no use. The woman is not mine, was never mine, Was meant for someone else. And in despair, In wrath as well, I left her and came back And telephoned a woman that I knew To dine with me. She came, was glad and gay, But as she drew her gloves off let me see A solitaire. What, you? I said to her, You leave me too? She smiled and answered me; Marriage may be the horror that you think, And yet we all must try it once, and Charles Is nearest my ideal of any man. I have been very ill since last we met, Had not survived except for skillful hands, And Charles was good to me, with heart and purse. My illness took my savings. I repay His goodness with my hand. I love him too. You do not care to lose me. As for that I know one who will more than take my place; She is the nurse who nursed me back to health, I'll have you meet her, I can get her now. She rose and telephoned. In half an hour Elenor Murray joined us, dined with us. I watched her as she entered, did not see A single wonder in her, cannot now Remember how she looked, what dress she wore, What hat in point of color, anything. After the dinner I rode home with them, Saw Elenor at luncheon next day. So The intimacy began." "She was alone,

Unsettled and unhappy, pressed for funds. She had, it seemed, nursed Janet without pay Till Charles made good at last the weekly wage; Since Janet's illness had no work to do. I was alone and bored, she came to me Almost at first as woman never came To me before, so radiant, sympathetic, Admiring, so devoted with a heart That soothed and strove to help me. Strange to say These manifests of spirit, ministrations Bespoke the woman who has found a man, And never knew a man before. She seemed An old maid jubilant for a man at last, And truth to tell I took her rapturous ways With just a little reticence, and shrinking Of spirit lest her hands would touch too close My spirit which misvalued hers, withdraw Itself from hers with hidden smiles that she Could find so much in me. She did not change, Retreat, draw in; advanced, poured out, gave more And wooed me, till I feared if I should take Her body she would follow me, grow mad And shameless for her love." "But as for that That next day while at luncheon, frank and bold, I spoke right out to her and then she shook From head to foot, and made her knife in hand Rattle the plate for trembling, turned as pale As the table linen. Afterward as we met, Having begun so, I renewed the word, Half smiling to behold her so perturbed, And serious, and gradually toning down Pursuit of her this way, as I perceived Her interest growing and her clinging ways, Her ardor, huddling to me, great devotion; Rapt words of friendship, offers of herself For me or mine for nothing were we ill And needed her." "These currents flowed along. Hers plunged and sparkled, mine was slow for thought. A doubt of her, or fear, till on a night When nothing had been said of this before, Quite suddenly when nearing home she shrank, Involved herself in shrinking in the corner Of the cab's seat, and spoke up: 'Take me now, I'm yours to-night, will do what you desire, Whatever you desire.' I acted then, Seemed overjoyed, was puzzled just the same, And almost feared her. As I said before, I feared she might pursue me, trouble me After a hold like this,—and yet I said: 'Go get your satchel, meet me in an hour.' I let her out, drove to the club, and thought; Then telephoned her, business had come up, I could not meet her, but would telephone To-morrow."

“And to-morrow when it came Brought ridicule and taunting from myself: To have pursued this woman, for two months, And if half-heartedly, you’ve made her think Your heart was wholly in it, now she yields, Bestows herself. You fly, you are a fool; A village pastor playing Don Juan, A booby costumed as a gallant—pooh! Go take your chance. I telephoned her then, That night she met me.” “Here was my surprise: All semblance of the old maid fell away, Like robes as she disrobed. She brought with her Accoutrements of slippers, caps of lace, And oriental perfumes languorous. The hour had been all heaven had I sensed, Sensed without thinking consciously a play, Dramatics, acting, like an old maid who Resorts to tricks of dress she fancies wins A gallant of experience, fancies only And knows not, being fancied so appears Half ludicrous.” “But so our woe began. That morning we had breakfast in our room, And I was thinking, in an absent way Responded to her laughter, joyous ways. For I was thinking of my life again, Of love that still eluded me, was bored Because I sat there, did not have the spirit To share her buoyancy—or was it such? Did she not ripple merriment to hide Her disappointment, wake me if she could? And spite of what I thought of her before That she had known another man or men, I thought now I was first. And to let down, Slope off the event, our parting for the day Have no abruptness, I invited her To luncheon, when I left her ’twas to meet Again at noon. We met and parted then. So now it seemed a thing achieved. Two weeks Elapsed before I telephoned her. Then The story we repeated as before, Same room and all. But meantime we had sat Some moments over tea, the orchestra Played Chopin for her.” “Then she handed me A little box, I opened it and found A locket too ornate, her picture in it, A little flag.” “So in that moment there Love came to me for Elenor Murray. Music, That poor pathetic locket, and her way So humble, so devoted, and the thought Of those months past, wherein she never swerved From ways of love, in spite of all my moods, Half-hearted, distant—these combined at once, And with a flame that rose up silently Consumed my heart with love.” “She went away, And left me hungering,

lonely. She returned, And saw at last dubieties no more, The answering light for her within my eyes." "I must recur a little here to say That at the first, first meeting it may be, With Janet, there at tea, she said to me She had signed for the war, would go to France, To nurse the soldiers. You cannot remember What people say at first, before you know, Have interest in them. Also at that time I had no interest in the war, believed The war would end before we took a hand. The war lay out of me, objectified Like news of earthquakes in Japan. And then As time went on she said: 'I do not know What day I shall be called, the time's at hand.' I loathed the Germans then; but loathed the war, The hatred, lying, which it bred, the filth Spewed over Europe, from the war, on us At last. I loathed it all, and saw The spirit of the world debauched and fouled With blood and falsehood." "Elenor found in me Cold water for her zeal, and even asked: 'Are you pro-German?—no!' I tried to say What stirred in me, she did not comprehend, And went her way with saying: 'I shall serve, O, glorious privilege to serve, to give, And since this love of ours is tragedy, Cannot be blessed with children, or with home, It will be better if I die, am swept Under the tide of war with work.' This girl Exhausted me with ardors, spoken faiths, And zeal which never tired, until at last I longed for her to go and make an end. What better way to end it?" "April came, One day she telephoned me that to-morrow She left for France. We met that night and walked A wind swept boulevard by the lake, and she Was luminous, a spirit; tucked herself Under my coat, adored me, said to me: 'If I survive I shall return to you, To serve you, help you, be your friend for life, And sacrifice my womanhood for you. You cannot marry me, in spite of that If I can be your comfort, give you peace, That will be marriage, all that God intends As marriage for me. You have blessed me, dear, With hope and happiness. And oh at last You did behold the war as good, you give me, You send me to the war. I serve for you, I serve the country in your name, your love, So blessed for you, your love.'" "That night at two I woke somehow as if an angel stood Beside the bed in light, beneficence, And found her head close to my heart—she woke At once with me,

spoke dreamily ‘Dear heart,’ Then turned to sleep again. I loved her then.” “She left next day. An olden mood came back Which said, the end has come, and it is best. I left the city too, breathed freer then, Sought new companionships. But in three days My heart was sinking, sickness of the heart, Nostalgia took me. How to fight it off Became the daily problem; work, diversions Seemed best for cures. The malady progressed Beyond the remedies. My wife came back, Divined my trouble, laughed. And every day The papers pounded nerves with battle news; The bands were playing, soldiers marched the streets. And taggers on the corner every day Reminded you of suffering and of want. And orators were talking where you ate: Bonds must be bought—war—war was everywhere. There was no place remote to hide from it, And rest from its insistence. Then began Elenor Murray’s letters sent from France, Which told of what she did, and always said: ‘Would you were with me, serving in the war. If you could come and serve; they need you, dear; You could do much.’ Until at last the war Which had lain out of me, objectified, Became a part of me, I saw the war, And felt the war through her, and every tune And every marching soldier, every word Spoken by orators said Elenor Murray. At dining places, theatres, pursued By this one thought of war and Elenor Murray; In every drawing room pursued, pursued In quiet places by the memories. I had no rest. The war and love of her Had taken body of me, soul of me, With madness, ecstasy, and nameless longing, Hunger and hope, fear and despair—but love For Elenor Murray with intenser flame Ran round it all.” “At last all other things: Place in the world, my business, and my home, My wife if she be counted, sunk away To nothingness. I stood stripped of the past, Saw nothing but the war and Elenor, Saw nothing but the day of finding her In France, and serving there to be with her, Or near where I could see her, go to her, Perhaps if she was ill or needed me. And so I went to France, began to serve, Went in the ordnance. In that ecstasy Of war, religion, love, found happiness; Became a part of the event, and cured My languors, boredom, longing, in the work; And saw the war as greatest good, the hand Of God through all of it to

bring the world Beauty and Freedom, a millennium Of Peace and Justice." "So the days went by With work and waiting, waiting for the hour When Elenor should have a furlough, come To Paris, see me. And she came at last." "Before she came she wrote me, told me where To meet her first. 'At two o'clock,' she wrote, 'Be on the landing back of the piano' Of a hotel she named. An ominous thought Passed through my brain, as through a room a bat Flits in and out. I read the letter over: How could this letter pass the censor? Escape The censor's eye? But eagerness of passion, And longing, love, submerged such thoughts as these. I walked the streets and waited, loitered through The Garden of the Tuilleries, watched the clocks, The lagging minutes, counted with their strokes. And then at last the longed for hour arrived. I reached the landing—what a meeting place! With pillars, curtains hiding us, a nook No one could see us in, unless he spied. And she was here, was standing by the corner Of the piano, very pale and worn, Looked down, not at me, pathos over her Like autumn light. I took her in my arms, She could not speak, it seemed. I could not speak. Dumb sobs filled heart and throat of us. And then I held her from me, looked at her, re-clasped Her head against my breast, with choking breath That was half whisper, half a cry, I said, 'I love you, love you, now at last we're here Together, oh, my love!' She put her lips Against my throat and kissed it: 'Oh, my love, You really love me, now I know and see, My soul, my dear one,' Elenor breathed up The words against my throat." "We took a suite: Soft rugs upon the floor, a bed built up, And canopied with satin, on the wall Some battle pictures, one of Bonaparte, A bottle of crystal water on a stand And roses in a bowl—the room was sweet With odors, and so comfortable. Here we stood. 'It's Paris, dear,' she said, 'we are together; You're serving in the war, how glorious! We love each other, life is good—so good!' That afternoon we saw the city a little, So many things occurred to prophesy, Interpret." "And that night we saw the moon, One star above the Arc de Triomphe, over The chariot of bronze and leaping horses. Dined merrily and slept and woke together Beneath that satin canopy." "In brief, The days went by

with laughter and with love. We watched the Seine from bridges, in a spell There at Versailles in the Temple of Love Sat in the fading day." "Upon the lawn She took her diary from her bag and read What she had done in France; years past as well. Began to tell me of a Simeon Strong Whom she was pledged to marry years before. How jealousy of Simeon Strong destroyed His love, and all because in innocence She had received some roses from a friend. That led to other men that she had known Who wished to marry her, as she said. But most She talked of Simeon Strong; then of a man Who had absorbed her life until she went In training as a nurse, a married man, Whom she had put away, himself forgetting A hopeless love he crushed. Until at last I said, no more, my dear—The past is dead, What is the past to me? It could not be That you could live and never meet a man To love you, whom you loved. And then at last She put the diary in her bag, we walked And scanned the village from the heights; the train Took back for Paris, went to dine, be gay. This afternoon was the last, this night the last. To-morrow she was going back to work, And I was to resume my duties too, Both hopeful for another meeting soon, The war's end, a re-union, some solution Of what was now a problem hard to bear." "We left our dinner early, she was tired, There in our room again we clung together, Grieved for the morrow. Sadness fell upon us, Her eyes were veiled, her voice was low, her speech Was brief and nebulous. She soon disrobed, Lay with her hair spread out upon the pillow, One hand above the coverlet." "And soon Was lying with head turned from me. I sat And read to man my grief. You see the war Blew to intenser flame all moods, all love, All grief at parting, fear, or doubt. At last As I looked up to see her I could see Her breast with sleep arise and fall. The silence Of night was on the city, even her breath I heard as she was sleeping—for myself I wondered what I was and why I was, What world is this and why, and if there be God who creates us to this life, then why This agony of living, peace or war; This agony which grows greater, never less, And multiplies its sources with the days, Increases its perplexities with time, And gives the soul no rest. And why this love,

This woman in my life. The mystery Of my own torture asked to be explained. And why I married whom I married, why She was content to stand far off and watch My crucifixion. Why?" "And with these thoughts Came thought of changing them. A wonder slipped About her diary in my brain. I paused, Said to myself, you have no right to spy Upon such secret records, yet indeed A devilish sense of curiosity Came as relaxment to my graver mood, As one will fetch up laughter to dispel Thoughts that cannot be quelled or made to take The form of action, clarity. I arose Took from her bag the diary, turned to see What entry she had made when first she came And gave herself to me. And look! The page Just opposite from this had words to show She gave herself to Gregory Wenner just The week that followed on the week in which She gave herself to me." "A glass of water, Before I can proceed!"... "I reeled and struck The bed post. She awoke. I thought that death Had come with apoplexy, could not see, And in a spell vertiginous, with hands That shook and could not find the post, stood there Palsied from head to foot. Quick, she divined The event, the horror anyway, sprang out, And saw the diary lying at my feet. Before I gained control of self, could catch Or hold her hands, she seized it, threw it out The window on the street, and flung herself Face down upon the bed." "Oh awful hell! What other entries did I miss, what shames Recorded since she left me, here in France? What was she then? A woman of one sin, Or many sins, her life filled up with treason, Since I had left her?" "And now think of me: This monstrous war had entered me through her, Its passion, beauty, promise came through her Into my blood and spirit, swept me forth From country, life I knew, all settled things. I had gone mad through her, and from her lips Had caught the poison of the war, its hate, Its yellow sentiment, its sickly dreams, Its lying ideals, and its gilded filth. And here she lay before me, like a snake That having struck, by instinct now is limp; By instinct knows its fangs have done their work, And merely lies and rests." "I went to her, Pulled down her hands from eyes and shook her hard: What is this? Tell me all?" "She only said: 'You have seen all, know all.'" "'You do not mean That was

the first and last with him?' She said, 'That is the truth.' 'You lie,' I answered her. 'You lie and all your course has been a lie: Your words that asked me to be true to you, That I could break your heart. The breasts you showed Flowering because of me, as you declared; Our intimacy of bodies in the dance Now first permitted you because of love; Your plaints for truth and for fidelity, Your fears, a practiced veteran in the game, All simulated. And your prayer to God For me, our love, your protests for the war, For service, sacrifice, your mother hunger, Are all elaborate lies, hypocrisies, Studied in coolest cruelty, and mockery Of every lovely thing, if there can be A holy thing in life, as there cannot, As you have proven it. The diary's gone— And let it go—you kept it from my eyes Which shows that there was more. What are you then, A whore, that's all, a masquerading whore, Not worthy of the hand that plies her trade In openness, without deceit. For if This was the first and only time with him Here is dissimulation month by month By word of mouth, in letters by the score; And here your willingness to take my soul And feed upon it. Knowing that my soul Through what I thought was love was caught and whirled To faith in the war, and faith in you as one Who symbolized the war as good, as means Of goodness for the world—and this deceit, Insane, remorseless, conscienceless, is worse Than what you did with him. I could forgive Disloyalty like that, but this deceit Is unforgivable. I go,' I said. I turned to leave. She rose up from the bed, 'Forgive! Forgive!' she pleaded, 'I was mad, Be fair! Be fair! You took me, turned from me, Seemed not to want me, so I went to him. I cried the whole day long when first I gave Myself to you, for thinking you had found All that you wanted, left me, did not care To see me any more. I swear to you I have been faithful to you since that day When we heard Chopin played, and I could see You loved me, and I loved you. O be fair!'"... Then Barrett Bays shook like an animal That starves and freezes. And the jury looked And waited till he got control of self And spoke again his horror and his grief:— "I left her, went upon the silent streets, And walked the night through half insane, I think. Cannot remember what I saw that night, Have only

blurs of buildings, arches, towers, Remember dawn at last, returning strength, And taking rolls and coffee, all my spirit Grown clear and hard as crystal, with a will As sharp as steel to find reality: To see life as it is and face its terrors, And never feel a tremor, bat an eye. Drink any cup to find the truth, and be A pioneer in a world made new again, Stripped of the husks, bring new faith to the world, Of souls devoted to themselves to make Souls truer, more developed, wise and fair! Write down the creed of service, and write in Self-culture, self-dependence, throw away The testaments of Jesus, old and new, Save as they speak and help the river life To mould our truer beings; the rest discard Which teaches compensation, to forgive That you may be forgiven, mercy show That mercy may be yours, and love your neighbor, Love so to gain—all balances like this Of doctrine for the spirit false and vile, Corrupted with such calculating filth; And if you'd be the greatest, be the servant— When one to be the greatest must be great In self, a light, a harmony in self, Perfected by the inner law, the works Done for the sake of beauty, for the self Without the hope of gain except the soul, Your one possession, grows a perfect thing If tended, studied, disciplined. While all This ethic of the war, the sickly creed Which Elenor Murray mouthed, but hides the will Which struggles still, would live, lies to itself, Lies to its neighbor and the world, and leaves Our life upon a wall of rotting rock Of village mortals, patriotism, lies!" "And as for that, what did I see in Paris But human nature working in the war As everywhere it works in peace? Cabals, And jealousies and hatreds, greed alert; Ambition, cruelty, strife piled on strife; No peace in labor that was done for peace; Hypocrisy elaborate and rampant. Saw at first hand what coiled about the breast Of Florence Nightingale when she suffered, strove In the Crimean War, struck down by envy, Or nearly so. Oh, is it human nature, That fights like maggots in the rotting carcass? Or is it human nature tortured, bound By artificial doctrines, creeds which all Pretend belief in, really doubt, resist And cannot live by?" "If I had a thought Of charity toward this woman then It was that she, a little mind, had tried To live the faith against her nature, used

A woman’s cunning to get on in life. For as I said it was her lies that hurt. And had she lied, had she been living free, Unshackled of our system, faith and cult, American or Christian, what you will? “She was a woman free or bound, but women Enslave and rule by sex. The female tigers Howl in the jungle when their dugs are dry For meat to suckle cubs. And Germany Of bullet heads and bristling pompadours, And wives made humble, cowed by basso brutes, Had women to enslave the brutes with sex, And make them seek possessions, land and food For breeding women and for broods.” “And now If women make the wars, yet nurse the sick, The wounded in the wars, when peace results, What peace will be, except a peace that fools The gaping idealist, all souls in truth But souls like mine? A peace that leaves the world Just where it was with women in command Who, weak but cunning, clinging to the faith Of Christ, therefore as organized and made A part, if not the whole of western culture. Away with all of this! Blow down the mists, The rainbows, give us air and cloudless skies. Give water to our fevered eyes, give strength To see what is and live it, tear away These clumsy scaffoldings, by which the mystics, Ascetics, mad-men all St. Stylites Would rise above the world of body, brain, Thirst, hunger, living, nature! Let us free The soul of man from sophists, logic spinners, The mad-magicians who would conjure death, Yet fear him most themselves, the coward hearts Who mouth eternal bliss, yet cling to earth And keep away from heaven.” “For it’s true Nature, or God, gives birth and also death. And power has never come to draw the sting Of death or make it pleasant, creed nor faith Prevents disease, old age and death at last. This truth is here and we must face it, or Lie to ourselves and cloud our brains with lies, Postponements and illusions, childish hopes! But lie most childish is the Christian myth Of Adam’s fall, by which disease and death Entered the world, until the Savior came And conquered death. He did? But people die, Some millions slaughtered in the war! They live In heaven, say your Elenor Murrays, well, Who knows this? If you know it, why drop tears For people better off? How ludicrous The patch-work is! I leave it, turn again To what

man in this world can do with life Made free of superstition, rules and faiths, That make him lie to self and to his fellows.”... And Barrett Bays, now warmed up to his work, Grown calmer, stronger, mind returned, that found Full courage for the thought, the word to say it Recurred to Elenor Murray, analyzed:— And now a final word: “This Elenor Murray, What was she, just a woman, a little life Swept in the war and broken? If no more, She is not worth these words: She is the symbol Of our America, perhaps this world This side of India, of America At least she is the symbol. What was she? A restlessness, a hunger, and a zeal; A hope for goodness, and a tenderness; A love, a sorrow, and a venturing will; A dreamer fooled but dreaming still, a vision That followed lures that fled her, generous, loving, But also avid and insatiable; An egoism chained and starved too long That breaks away and runs; a cruelty, A wilfulness, a dealer in false weights, And measures of herself, her duty, others, A lust, a slick hypocrisy and a faith Faithless and hollow. But at last I say She taught me, saved me for myself, and turned My steps upon the path of making self As much as I can make myself—my thanks To Elenor Murray!” “For that day I saw The war for what it was, and saw myself An artificial factor, working there Because of Elenor Murray—what a fool! I was not really needed, like too many Was just pretending, though I did not know That I was just pretending, saw myself Swept in this mad procession by a woman; And through myself I saw the howling mob Back in America that shouted hate, In God’s name, all the carriers of flags, The superheated patriots who did nothing, Gave nothing but the clapping of their hands, And shouts for freedom of the seas. The souls Who hated freedom on the sea or earth, Had, as the vile majority, set up Intolerable tyrannies in America, America that launched herself without A God or faith, but in the name of man And for humanity, so long accursed By Gods and priests—the vile majority! Which in the war, and through the war went on With other tyrannies as to meat and drink, Thought, speech, the mind in living—here was I One of the vile majority through a woman— And serving in the war because of her, And meretricious sentiments of

her. You see I had the madness of the world, Was just as crazy as America. And like America must wake from madness And suffer, and regret, and build again. My soul was soiled, you see. And now I saw How she had pressed her lips against my soul And sapped my spirit in the name of beauty She simulated; for a loyalty Her lips averred; how as a courtesan She had made soft my tissues, like an apple Handled too much; how vision of me went Into her life sucked forth; how never a word Which ever came from her interpreted In terms of worth the war; how she had coiled Her serpent loins about me; how she draped Herself in ardors borrowed; how my arms Were mottled from the needle's scar where she Had shot the opiates of her lying soul; How asking truth, she was herself untrue; How she, adventuress in the war, had sought From lust grown stale, renewal of herself. And then at last I saw her scullery brows Fail out and fade beside the Republic's face, And leave me free upon the hills, who saw, Strong, seeking cleanliness in truth, her hand Which sought the cup worn smooth by leper lips Dipped in the fountain where the thirst of many Passionate pilgrims had been quenched, Not lifted up by me, nor yet befriended By the cleaner cup I offered. Now you think That I am hard. Philosophy is hard, And I philosophize, admit as well That I have failed, am full of faults myself, All faults, we'll say, but one, I trust and pray The fault of falsehood and hypocrisy."... "I gave my work in Paris up—that day Made ready to return, but with this thought To use my wisdom for the war, do work For America that had no touch of her, No flavor of her nature, far removed From the symphony of sex, be masculine, Alone, and self-sufficient, needing nothing, No hand, no kiss, no mate, pure thought alone Directed to this work. I found the work And gave it all my energy." "From then I wrote her nothing, though she wrote to me These more than hundred letters—here they are! Since you have mine brought to you from New York All written before she went to France, I think You should have hers to make the woman out And read her as she wrote herself to me. The rest is brief. She cabled when she sailed, And wrote me from New York. While at LeRoy With Irma Leese she wrote me. Then that day

She telephoned me when she motored here With Irma Leese, and said: ‘Forgive, forgive, O see me, come to me, or let me come To you, you cannot crush me out. These months Of silence, what are they? Eternity Makes nothing of these months. I love you, never In all eternity shall cease to love you, Love makes you mine, and you must come to me Now or hereafter.’” “And you see at last My soul was clear again, as clean and cold As our March days, as clear too, and the war Stood off envisioned for the thing it was. Peace now had come, which helped our eyes to see What dread event the war was. So to see This woman with these eyes of mine, made true And unpersuadable of her plaints and ways I gave consent and went.” “Arriving first, I walked along the river till she came. And as I saw her, I looked through the tricks Of dress she played to win me, I could see How she arrayed herself before the mirror, Adjusting this or that to make herself Victorious in the meeting. But my eyes Were wizard eyes for her, and this she knew, Began at first to writhe, change color, flap Her nervous hands in gestures half controlled. I only said, ‘Good morning,’ took her hand, She tried to kiss me, but I drew away. ‘I have been true,’ she said, ‘I love you, dear, If I was false and did not love you, why Would I pursue you, write you, all against Your coldness and your silence? O believe me, The war and you have changed me. I have served, Served hard among the sufferers in the war, Sustained by love for you. I come to you And give my life to you, take it and use, Keep me your secret joy. I do not dream Of winning you in marriage. Here and now I humble self to you, ask nothing of you, Except your kindness, love again, if love Can come again to you—O this must be! It is my due who love you, with my soul, My body.’” “‘No,’ I said, ‘I can forgive All things but lying and hypocrisy.’... How could I trust her? She had kept from me The diary, threw it from the window, what Was life of her in France? Should I expunge This Gregory Wenner, what was life of her In France, I ask. And so I said to her: ‘I have no confidence in you’—O well I told the jury all. But quick at once She showed to me, that if I could forgive Her course of lying, she was changed to me, The war had changed her, she was hard and wild,

Schooled in the ways of soldiers, and in war. That beauty of her womanhood was gone, Transmuted into waywardness, distaste For simple ways, for quiet, loveliness. The adventuress in her was magnified, Cleared up and set, she had become a shrike, A spar hawk, and I loathed her for these ways Which she revealed, dropping her gentleness When it had failed her. Yes, I saw in her The war at last; its lying and its hate, Its special pleading, and its double dealing, Its lust, its greed, its covert purposes, Its passion out of hell which obelised Such noble things in man. Its crooked uses Of lofty spirits, flaming fires of youth, Young dreamers, lovers. And at last she said, As I have told the jury, what she did Was natural, and I cursed her. Then she shook, Turned pale, and reeled, I caught her, held her up, She died right in my arms! And this is all; Except that had I killed her and should spend My days in prison for it, I am free, My spirit being free." "Who was this woman? This Elenor Murray was America; Corrupt, deceived, deceiving, self-deceived, Half-disciplined, half-lettered, crude and smart, Enslaved yet wanting freedom, brave and coarse, Cowardly, shabby, hypocritical, Generous, loving, noble, full of prayer, Scorning, embracing rituals, recreant To Christ so much professed; adventuresome; Curious, mediocre, venal, hungry For money, place, experience, restless, no Repose, restraint; before the world made up To act and sport ideals, go abroad To bring the world its freedom, having choked Freedom at home—the girl was this because These things were bred in her, she breathed them in Here where she lived and grew." Then Barrett Bays stepped down And said, "If this is all, I'd like to go." Then David Borrow whispered in the ear Of Merival, and Merival conferred With Ritter and Llewellyn George and said: "We may need you again, a deputy Will take you to my house, and for the time Keep you in custody." The deputy Came in and led him from the jury room.

ELENOR MURRAY

THE JURY DELIBERATES

The jurymen are seated here and there In Merival's great library. They smoke, And drink a little beer or Scotch. Arise At times to read the evidence taken down, And typed for reference. Before them lie Elenor Murray's letters, all the letters Written to Merival—there's Alma Bell's, And Miriam Fay's, letters anonymous. The article of Roberts in the Dawn, That one of Demos, Hogos; a daily file Of Lowell's Times—Lowell has festered now Some weeks, a felon-finger in a stall. And where is Barrett Bays? In Kankakee Where Elenor Murray's ancestor was kept. The strain and shame had broken him; a fear Fell on him of a consequence when the coroner Still kept him with a deputy. He grew wild, Attacked the deputy, began to wander And show some several selves. A multiple Spirit of devils had him. Dr. Burke Went over him and found him mad. And now The jury meet amid a rapid shift Of changes, mist and cloud. The man is sick Who administers the country. Has come back To laud the pact of peace; his auditors Turn silently away, whole states assemble To hear and turn away, sometimes to heckle. And if a mattoid emperor caused the war, And Elenor Murrays put the emperor down, The emperor, could he laugh at all, can laugh To see a country, bent to spend its last Dollar, its blood to the last drop, having spent Enough of these, go mad as Barrett Bays. And like a headless man, seen in a dream, Go capering in an ecstasy of doubt, Regret and disillusion. He can laugh To see the pact, which took the great estate, Once his and God's, and wrapt it as with snakes That stung and sucked, rejected in the land That sent these Elenor Murrays to make free The world from despotism. See that very land Crop despotisms—so the jury sees Convened to end the case of Elenor Murray.... And Rev. Maiworm, juryman, gives his thought To conquest of the world for Christ, and says The churches must unite to free the world From war and sin. Result? Why less and less Homes like the Murray home, where husband, wife, Live in dissension. More and more of schools For Elenor Murrays. Happy marriages Will be the rule, our Elenors

will find Good husbands, quiet hearths, a competence. And Isaac Newfeldt said: “You talk pish-posh. You go about at snipping withered leaves, And picking blasted petals—take the root, Get at the soil—you cannot end these wars Until you solve the feeding problem. Quit Relying on your magic to make bread With five loaves broken, raise a bigger crop Of wheat, and get it to the mouths of men. And as for sin—what is it?—All of sin Lies in the customs, comes from how you view The bread and butter matter; all your gods And sons of God are guardians of the status Of business and of money; sin a thing Which contradicts, or threatens banks and wharves. And as for that your churches now control As much as human nature can digest A dominance like that. And what’s the state Of things in Christendom? Why, wars, and want And many Elenor Murrays. Tyrannies Are like as pea and pea; you shall not drink, Or read, or talk, or trade, are from one pod. What would I do? Why, socialize the world, Then leave men free to live or die, let nature Go decimating as she will, and weed The worthless with disease or alcohol— You won’t see much of that, however, if You socialize the world.” And David Barrow Spoke up and said: “No ism is enough. The question is, Is life worth living, good Or bad? If bad, I think that Elenor Murray had As good a life as any. Here we’ve sat These weeks and heard these stories—nothing new; And as to waste, our time is wasted here, If there were better things to do; and yet Perhaps there is no better. I’ve enjoyed This work, association. Well, you’re told To judge not, and that means to judge not man; You are not told to judge not God. And so I judge Him. And again your Elenor Murrays, Your human being cannot will his way, But God’s omnipotent, and where He fails He should be censured. Why does He allow A world like this, and suffer earthquakes, storms, The sinking of Titanics, cancers? Why Suffer these wars, this war?—Talk of the riffles That flowed from Elenor Murray—here’s a wave Of tidal power, stirred by a greedy coot Who called himself an emperor! And look Our land, America, is ruined, slopped For good, or for our lives with filth and stench; So that to live here takes what strength you have, None left for living, as a man should live.

And this America once free and fair Is now the hatefulest, commonest group of men, Women and children in the Occident. What's life here now? Why, boredom, nothing else.... Why pity Elenor Murray? Gottlieb Gerald Told of her home life; it was good enough, Average American, or better. Schools She had in plenty, what would she have done With courses to the end in music, art? She was not happy. Elenor had a brain, And brains and happiness are at enmity. And if the world goes on some thousand years, The race as much advanced beyond us now In feeling, thought, as we are now beyond Pinthecanthropus, say, why, all will see What I see now;—'twere better if the race Had never risen. All analogies Of nature show that death of man is death. He plants his seed and dies, the resurrection Is not the man, but is the child that grows From sperm he sows. The grain of wheat that sprouts Is not the stalk that bore it. Now suppose We get the secret in a thousand years, Can prove that death's the end, analogies Put by with amber, frogs' legs—tell me then What opiate will still the shrieks of men? But some of us know now, and I am one. There is no heaven for me; and as for those Who make a heaven to get out of this— You gentlemen who call life good, the world The work of God's perfection; yet invent A heaven to rest in from this world of woe— You do not wish to go there; and resort To cures and Christian Science to stay here! Which shows you are not sure. And thus we have Your Christian saying at heart that life is bad, And heaven is good, but not so good and sure That you will hurry to it. Why, I'll prove The Christian pessimist, as well as I. He says life is so bad it has no meaning, Unless there be a future; and I say Life's bad, and if no future, then is worse. And as it has no future, is a hell. This girl was soaked in opiates to the last. Religion, love for Barrett Bays, believed That God is love. Love is a word to me That has no meaning but in terms of man. And if a man cause war, or suffer war, When he could stop it, do we say he loves? Why call God love who can prevent a war? To chasten us, to better, purge our sins? Well, if it be then we are bettered, purged When William Hohenzollern goes to war And makes the whole world crazy." "Understand I do not

mock, I pity man and life. No man has sat here who has suffered more, Seeing the life of Elenor Murray, through Her life beholding life, our country's life. I pity man and life. I curse the scheme Which wakes the senseless clay to lips that bleed, And eyes that weep, and hearts that agonize, Then in an instant make them clay again! And for it all no reason, that the reason Can bring to light to stand the light." "And yet I'd make life better, food and shelter better And wider happiness, and fuller love. We're travelers on a ship that has no bourne But rocks, for us. On such a ship 'twere wise To have the daily comforts, foolish course To neither eat, nor sleep, keep warm, nor sing. But only walk the rainy deck and wait. The little opiates of happiness Would make the sailing better, though we know The trip is nowhere and the rocks will sink The portless steamer." "Is it portless?" asked Llewellyn George, "you're leaping to a thought, And overlook a world of intimations, And hints of truth. I grant you take this race That lives to-day, and make the world a boat There is no port for us as human lives In this our life. But look, you see the race Has climbed, a mountain trail, and looks below From certain heights to-day at man the beast. We scan a half a million years of man From caves to temples, gestures, beacon fires To wireless. Call that mechanical, And power developed over tools. But here Is mystery beyond these.—What of powers, Devotions, aspirations, sacred flame Which masters nature, worships life, defies Death to obstruct it, hungers for the right, The truth, hates wrong, and by that passion wills All art, all beauty, goodness, and creates Those living waters of increasing life By which man lives, and has to-day the means Of fuller living. Here's a realm of richness, Beyond and separate from material things, Your aeroplanes or conquests. Now I put This question to you, David Barrow, what But God who is and has some end for life, And gives it meaning, though we see it not— What is it in the heart of man which lifts, Sustains him to the truth, the harmony, The beauty say of loyalty, or truth Or art, or science? lighting lamps for men To walk by, men who hate the lamps, the hand That lights? What is this spirit, but the spirit Of Something which moves through us, to an end,

And by its constancy in man made constant Proclaims an end? There's Bruno, Socrates, There's Washington who might have lost his life, Why do these men cling to the vision, hope? When neither poverty, nor jeers, nor flames, Nor cups of poison stay? Who say thereby That death is nothing, but this life of ours, Which can be shaped to truth and harmony, And rising flame of spirit, giving light, Is everything worth while, must be lived so And if not lived so, then there's death indeed, By turning from the voice that says that man Must still aspire. And why aspire if death Ends us, the scheme? And all this realm of spirit, Of love for truth and beauty, is the play Of shadows on the tomb?" "Now take this girl: She knew before she sailed to France, this man, This Barrett Bays was mad about her—knew She could stay here and have him, live with him, And thus achieve a happiness. And she knew To leave him was to make a chance to lose him. But then you say she knew he'd tire of her, And left for France. And still that happiness Before he tired would be hers. You see This spirit I'd delineate working here: To sacrifice and by the sacrifice Rise to a bigger spirit, make it truer; Then bring that truer spirit to her love For Barrett Bays, and not just loll and slop In love to-day. Why does she wish to give A finer spirit to this Barrett Bays? And to that end take life in hand? It's this: My Something, God at work. You say it's woman In sublimate of passion—call it that. Why sublimate a passion? All her life This girl aspires—you think to win a man? But win a man with what? With finest self Make this her contribution to these riches, Which Bruno and the others filled so full. You see this Something going on, but races Come up, express themselves and pass away; But yet this Something manifests itself Through souls like Elenor Murray's—fills her life With fuller meanings, maybe at the last This Something will reveal itself so clear That men like David Barrow can perceive. And Love, this spirit, twin of Death, you see Love slays this girl, but Love remains to slay, Lift up, drive on and slay. I call Death twin Of Love, and why? Because two things alone Make what we are and live, first Love the flame, And Death the cap that snuffs it. Is it bread That keeps us dancing, skating like these bugs That play

criss-cross on evening waters?—no! It's bread to get more life to give more love, Bring to some heart a fuller life, receive A fuller life for having given life. This force of love may look demonical. It tears, destroys, and crushes, chokes and kills, Is always stretching hands to Death its twin. And yet it is creation and creates, Feeds roses, jonquils, columbines, gardenias, As well as thistles, cockle burrs and thorns. This is the force to which the girl's alert, And sensitive, is shaken by its power, Driven, uplifted, purified; a doll Of paper dancing on magnetic plates; And by that passion lusts for Death himself, For union with another, sacrifice, Beauty, and she aspires and toils, and turns To God, the symptom always of this nature. My fellow-jurymen, you'll never see, Or learn so well about another soul That had this Love force deeper in her flesh, Her spirit, suffered more. Why do we suffer? What is this love force? 'Tis the child of blood Of madness, as this Elenor is the seed Of that old grandma, who was mad, and cousin Of Taylor who did murder. What is this But human spirit flamed and subtleized Until it is a poison and a food; A madness but a clearest sanity; A vision and a blindness, all as if When nature goes so far, refines so much Her balance has been broken, if the Something Makes not a genius or a giant soul. And so we suffer. But why do we suffer? Well, not as Barrow said, that life is bad; A failure and a fraud. Not suffering That points to dust, defeat, is painfulest; But suffering that points to skies and realms Above us, whence we came, or where we go, That suffering is most poignant, as it is Significant as well, and rapturous too. The pain that thrills us for the singing Flame Of Love, the force creative, that's the pain! And those must suffer most to whom the sounds Of music or of words, or scents, or scenes Recall lost realms. No soul can understand Music or words in whom there is not stirred A recollection—that is genius too: A memory, and reliving hours we lived Before we looked upon this world of man."... Then Winthrop Marion said: "I like your talk, Llewellyn George, but still what killed the girl? What was the cause of death of Elenor Murray? She died from syncope, that's clear enough. The doctors tell us that in syncope The victim should be laid down, not held up. And

Barrett Bays, the bungler, held her up When she was stricken—like the man, I think! Well, Coroner, suppose we make a verdict, And say we find that had this Barrett Bays Sustained this Elenor Murray in the war, And in her life, with friendship, and with faith She had not died. Suppose we further find That when he took her, held her in his arms When she had syncope, he was dull or crazed, And missed a chance to save her. We could find That had he laid her down when she was stricken She might have lived—I knew that much myself. And we could find that had he never driven This woman from his arms, but kept her there, Before said day of August 7th, no doubt She had not died on August 7th. In short, He held her up, and should have laid her down, And drove her from him when she needed arms To hold her up. And so we find her death Was due to Barrett Bays—we censure him, Would hold him to the courts—that cannot be— And so we hold him up for memory Contemptuous, and say his bitter words Brought on the syncope, so long prepared By what he did. We write his course unfeeling, Weak, selfish, petty, flowing from the craze Of sexual jealousy, made worse by war, And universal madness, erethism Of hellish war. And, gentlemen, one thing: Paul Robert's article in the Dawn suggests Some things I credit, knowing them. We get Our notions of uncleanness from the Jews, The Pentateuch. There are no women here, And I can talk;—you know the ancient Jews Deemed sex unclean, and only to be touched At sufferance of Jehovah; birth unclean, A mother needing purification after Her hour of giving birth. You know their laws Concerning adultery. Well, they've tainted us In spite of Greece. Now look at Elenor Murray: What if she went with Gregory Wenner. Hell! Did that contaminate her, change her flesh, Or change her spirit? All this evidence Shows that it did not. But it changed this man, Because his mind was slime where snakes could breed. But now what do we see? That woman is Essential genius, man just mechanism Of conscious thought and strength. This Elenor Is wiser, being nature, than this man, And lives a life that puts this Barrett Bays To shame and laughter. Look at her: She's brave, Devoted, loyal, true and dutiful, She's will to life, and

through it senses God, And seeks to serve the cosmic soul. I think This jury should start now to raise a fund To erect a statue of her in the park To keep her name and labors fresh in mind To those who shall come after." "And I'll sign A verdict in these words, but understand Such things are Coram non judice; still We can chip in our money, start the fund To build this monument." Ritter interrupted. The banker said: "I'll start it with a hundred," And so the fund was started. Marion Resumed to speak of riffles: "In Chicago There's less than half the people speaking English, The rest is Babel: Germans, Russians, Poles And all the tongues, much rippling going on, And if we couldn't trace the riffles out From Elenor Murray, We must give this up. One thing is sure: Look out for England, if America shall grow a separate soul. You may have congresses, and presidents, These states, but if America is a realm. Of tribute as to thought, America Is just a province. And it's past the time When we should be ourselves, we've wasted time, And grafted alien things upon our bole. A Domesday of the minds that think and know In our America would give us hope, We have them in abundance. What I hate Is that crude Demos which shouts down the minds, Outvotes them, takes these silly lies that move The populace and makes them into laws, And makes a village of a great republic." And Merival listened as the jurymen Philosophied the case of Elenor Murray, And life at large. And having listened spoke: "I like the words Llewellyn George has said. Love is a sea which wrecks and sinks our craft, But re-creates the hands that build again; And like a tidal wave which sponges out An island or a city, lifts and leaves Fresh seeds and forms of beauty on the peaks. The whinchat in the mud upon its claws, Storm driven from its course to sea, brings life Of animal and plant to virgin shores, And islands strange and new. These happenings Of Elenor Murray carry beauty forth, Unhurt amid the storm-cloud, darkness, fire, To lives and eras. And our country too, So ruined and so weltering, like a ball Of mud made in a missile by a god May bear, no less, a pearl at core, a truth, A liberty, a genius, beauty,—thrown In mischief by the god, and staining walls Of this our temple; in a day to be Dried up, cracks open, and

the pearl appears To be set in a precious time beyond Our time and vision. This is what I mean: Call Elenor egoist, and make her work, And life the means of rich return to her In exaltation, pride;—a missile of mud, It carries still the pearl of her, the seed Of finer spirits. We must open eyes To see inside the mud-ball. If it be We conquered slavery of the negro through, Because of economic forces, yet We conquered it. Trade, cotton, were the mud Upon the whinchat's claws containing seeds Of liberties to be, and carried forth In mid seas of the future to sunny isles, More blest than ours. And as for this, you know The English blotted slavery from their books And left their books unbalanced in point of cash, But balanced richly in a manhood gain. I warn you, David Barrow, pessimist, Against a general slur on life and man. Deride the Christian ethic, if you choose, You must retain its word of benevolence; Or better, you must honor man, whose heart Leaps up to its benevolence, from whose heart The Christian doctrine of benevolence Did issue to this world. If Christian doctrine Be man-made, not a miracle, as it is All man-made, still it's out of generous fire Of human spirit; that's the thing divine.... Now how is Elenor Murray wonderful To me viewed through this mass of evidence? Why, as the soul maternal, out of which All goodness, beauty, and benevolence, All aspiration, sacrifice, all death For truth and liberty blesses life of us. This soul maternal, passion to create New life and guide it into happiness, Is Mother Mary of all tenderness, All charity, all vision, rises up From its obscurity and primal force Of romance, passion and the child, to realms, Democracies, republics; never flags To make them brighter, freer, so to spread Its ecstasy to all, and take in turn Redoubled ecstasy! The tragedy Is that this Elenor for her mother gift Is cursed and tortured, sent a wanderer; And in her death must find much clinging mud Around the pearl of her. If that be mud, Which we have heard, around her, is it mud That weights the soul of America, the pure Dream of our founders? Larger Athens, where All things should be heard gladly and considered, And men should grow, be forced to grow, because Not driven or restrained by usages, Or laws of mad majorities, but left At their own peril to

work out their lives.... Well, gentlemen, I'll tell you what I've learned. What is a man or woman but a sperm Accreted into largeness? Still a sperm In likeness, being brain and spinal cord, Fed by the glands, the thyroid and the rest, Whose secrets we are ignorant of. We know That when they fail our minds fail. But the glands Are visible and clear: but in us whirl Emotions; fear, disgust, murder or wrath, Traced back to animals as moods of flight Repulsion, curiosity, all the rest. Now what are these but levers of our machine? Elenor Murray teaches this to me: Build up a science of these levers, learn To handle fear, disgust, anger, wonder. They teach us physiology; who teaches The use of instincts and emotions, powers? All learning may be that, but what is that? Why just a spread of food, where after nibbling You learn what you can eat, and what is good For you to eat. You'll see a different world When this philosophy of levers rules."... Then Merival tacked round and said: "I'll show The riffles in my life from Elenor Murray: The politicians give me notice now I cannot be the coroner again. I didn't want to be, but I had planned To go to Congress, and they say to that We do not want you. So my circle turns, And riffles back to breeding better hogs, And finer cattle. Here's the verdict, sign Your names, and I'll return it to the clerk.

THE VERDICT

"An inquisition taken for the people Of the State of Illinois here at LeRoy, County aforesaid, on the 7th of August, Anna Domini, nineteen hundred nineteen, Before me, William Merival, coroner For the said County, viewing here the body Of Elenor Murray lying dead, upon The oath of six good lawful men, the same Of the said County, being duly sworn To inquire for the said people into all The circumstances of her death, the said Elenor Murray, and by whom the same Was brought about, and in what manner, when, And where she came to death, do say upon Their oaths, that Elenor Murray lying dead In the office of the coroner at LeRoy Came to her

death on August 7th aforesaid Upon the east shore of the Illinois River A mile above Starved Rock, from syncope, While in the company of Barrett Bays, Who held her in his arms when she was seized, And should have laid her down when she was seized To give her heart a chance to resume its beat.” ———— The jury signed the verdict and arose And said good-night to Merival, went their way. Next day the coroner went to Madison To look on Arielle, who had written him.

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