

*May-June, 1942.*

*Vol. 3. No. 2.*

# *The Abinger Chronicle*

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## *The Abinger Chronicle*

appears eight times a year. While many of the Contributors are local to the Abinger district, or frequent visitors to it, many come from far afield.

MSS. (which are voluntary) are welcomed by

THE EDITOR

CHERRY COTTAGE

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## ENGLAND

O let me love my land with my own passion  
That in past years has succoured and has nurtured me.  
Let me serve it in my own fashion  
That it may be free.

My land of dreaming spires and lovely hollows,  
Of valleyed oaks, and most enchanting hills,  
The angler's stream, the purple eyebright follows  
And fields of daffodils.

My land: my land: of the lush knee-wet pasture  
By brooks, in sudden shapes of emerald  
Where Jersey herds in their pale silken vesture  
Lift heads when they are called.

My land, my land: where the wild horse at sunset  
Runs to the hedge with fire on its side,  
Where pheasants fly at dawn just after moonset  
Loud down the forest ride.

And park-like deer lift their mild, mossy antlers  
To look at you, in frost, with gentle eyes,  
And the round rabbit, specked and glossy, scampers  
On Sunday grass, with the old-new surprise.

My land of spires, and bells, and tolling Sundays,  
My England, in my blood, my breast, my bone—  
I did not know how much I loved you, till  
I saw you one day, not my own.

This may not happen, while I live it may not happen  
Sweet land, real dream, loved wish, known path and home.

PEGGY WHITEHOUSE

## THE SYMPHONY

It is a long time ago, and you are on the other side of the world, but I shall always remember that evening.

It was early Spring. After dinner you made coffee in a little copper pot on the embers, and we sat on the hearth-rug to drink it, talking, as usual, briefly. Afterwards you got out the old gramophone and searched for the records of Schubert's C Major, one of the noblest symphonies in our heritage. The curtains were left undrawn, the lamps unlit. Through the window appeared one faint star, and the lines beyond the lawn were smudges of shadow. The first chords . . . the relaxation as one settles down to listen.

I remember how you stood at the window, moving softly to change the records; the star beside the curtain, the listening trees in the night; and in the room the flickering firelight, the comfortable warmth and peace, and the happiness of two friends at ease with one another. These were the background. And soon, at the invocation of the chords, we were as a company moving outwards. With the shadowy furniture, the books and the flowers, we were part of the rhythm in the Rhythm, flowing out beyond the confines of the garden, the dark countryside, to some indefinite radius. Participating, blending, we were in a sense dissolved, oblivious of the physical laws which made differences, dimensions, variety of design and colour and purpose, the grosser selves of you and me. Beside me on the hearth danced elemental fire, beyond the house the earth breathed more deeply in the roots of trees drawing up the life force, while their crests knew the refreshment of the airs of night. Through intangible walls those same airs flowed in, one with the music even as our blood, as our hearts were lifted high. For while conscious of those elemental forces below, and not forsaking them, we strode the starry ridges and leaned from the ramparts of the sun. We became melody, and were free to pass anywhere. Of what I knew then, felt, and was, it is of course not possible to speak.



*The Symphony*

O most noble measure to which we moved, gravely, gaily, on the vast scale of archetype, perceiving a mere glimpse of its intricacy and meaning, dimly aware that it was sublime. The deep peace of the unity of all creatures in movement, from stone to star, from moth to archangel, from the minutest cell of our flesh to the galaxies. The subtle serpentine or arrowy shapes of thought, imagination or prayer. The indestructible life pervading all things. The power, beauty and significance common to all forms, since all were expression of the eternal measure of creation. Thus, moving in this ritual dance, we knew our company after another manner—the oak that made the refectory table, the woven threads of the tapestry, the petals of flowers, the pages of books, the spinning disc that was a medium for the release of this knowledge conveyed on waves of sound; the trees out in the night; the star; and the figures of man and woman, one beside the curtain, the other by the fire. All were equal, noble. Each was in his appointed place as each is actually so, when perceived during the quiescence of the mind and the awareness of the spirit.

When the mind is quiescent . . . As from afar, I heard the front door open, voices, approaching footsteps. The door of the room was opened, and the lights switched on, and my host and hostess entered. The mind moved again, rapidly adjusting itself. As when pieces on a chessboard are swept together, or a spy-glass shaken, the pattern becomes chaos, separation and identity. For such is the result of the movement and the discrimination of the mind, and that is the world in which normally we live. We see shadows passing across a screen, and call it consciousness. Yet it is not the real world, for this world of appearance is created by the mind, but at the same time can be surmounted by the mind. There is another creation behind and within the screen, preceding and continuing, and those who have acquired the practise may step into it at any time. This finer state of consciousness is but another veil, for in the Father's House are many mansions, many spheres of experience, each more tenuous than the last, until all experi-

*The Symphony*

ences are transcended, and the King's son comes home. Through the veils and down the vistas we sometimes hear the flutes calling, like memories. For a master may invoke them in our hearts.

Yet, when the gramophone is put away, the book closed, or some personal revelation withdrawn, there is nothing we can say, but sigh a little as we resume the life we know.

CLARE CAMERON

## AFTER SHEARING

(Kensington Gardens)

From afar the flock comes slowly,  
Moving from the upland pasture  
In the ivory light of evening.

Lingering shafts of paling sunlight  
Fall between the trees upon them.  
Here is myth, again awakened.

So, long since, from Grecian hillside  
The silver furry sheep descended  
In their new and tender fleeces.

And some poet, dead an aeon,  
Stirred before the self-same beauty,  
Raised his pipe to sing his pleasure.

CLARE CAMERON

## TO MY SISTER

Dark silent cave  
Whose depth I cannot see,  
I am content to be  
The returning wave  
Which fondly laps your shore  
And hears your unseen bound  
Murmuring fondly back its store  
Of new-learnt sound.

R. D. BOSANQUET



## THE WOOD

From sight of dead, bereaved and hurt  
In houses murdered as they stood,  
From taste and touch and smell of dirt,  
I fled to this green wood.

Reluctant spring has come at last  
To the small copse I know so well,  
Here I will dream of springs long past,  
In heaven forget our hell.

The cuckoo calls. Quiet, forget.  
'Tis madness still to think of war.  
Bud breaking, tender leaf . . . and yet  
Not as it was before.

The path is broader now and gashed  
Deep through the grass with heavy wheels,  
Bushes torn back and branches slashed,  
Moss mashed by iron heels.

The cowslips from these earliest beds  
Tempted too much I stole each year,  
They lie there now with broken heads.  
The war is here.

ELISABETH SPRIGGE

## TURNING TO

We who now must turn with equal ease from holding a pen to pushing a scrubbing brush have certain problems which complicate the matter. Now take the sink. There it is with its running-board and plate-rack and vim and dishcloth and brush. A thing in itself, complete for all the purposes for which it was made.

If you are the kind of person who has spent a long time in writing sentences which only satisfy if they mean what you want to say, and only delight if they say it well, then, the business of facing the sink is complicated. It is dangerously apt to engross, nay, to engulf you. The desire

to be spic and span, this sink-like quality, unfamiliar at a desk, can rise to a mad ambition when you face the pots and plates. No use now to marshal excuses such as Time, Boredom, the things of the Mind. What's done's, done. But what isn't done cries out to be cleaned, washed, dried and put away until the very running-board is empty, and itself scrubbed to a god-like cleanliness.

That is the first stage. In the course of it the Awful thoroughness that filled you in the kitchen is apt to peter out by the time you reach the bathroom. Only a slave could go on mustering sufficient energy to satisfy the super-human standards that ruled the recent performance at the sink. A slave, or (O memory of bygone days) a band of fine women in mauve cotton prints, white overalls and caps like those who used to clean the whole house before breakfast in childhood days.

As I was saying, our contemporary ex-Mistresses have by now (it is 10 a.m.) fairly exhausted their energies. But women are apt to fib about this first stage in their new autarchy. "My house has never been so clean as now, when I clean it myself." Dangerous and unpromising attitude. It forebodes either a permanent downsliding to the limbo of the great but unrecorded housewives of history, the women who "do" for one, or else it is the final exaggeration before the Fall; the light breeze before the thunderstorm; the last straw in a brittle enthusiasm which cannot, by its very nature, be durable.

Very few wives are of the house variety, except in Germany. England is notorious for its unhousewifely wives and women. Within limits, this is rather nice. In an emergency like the present (and the future) the thing will right itself in a slow way, but never altogether, for though cooking be a fine art and clean windows are good to look through, a little way beyond that lies a great Waste, as any child knows, whose Mother is for ever scrubbing.

Here, in Abinger, the village women confer a curious honour upon the women they like. "She keeps herself to herself" is their verdict, and that, gentle reader, takes time.



## TREAD SLOWLY, SOFTLY

Tread slowly, softly, for the light-winged thought  
 Flies at a touch, is vanished. O, be still  
 If ye would hear her voice; no poet's skill  
 No lore well-learned of men availeth ought  
 To stay the gleam. The vision who hath wrought  
 In picture as it lived or at his will  
 Cast to the mould of words, but he did spill  
 The golden drops, half foiled of that he sought?  
 We mourn with thee Cassandra that didst plead  
 Seeing clear-eyed the approaching doom, in vain  
 With burning words declaiming woes to come  
 To ears that would not hear or hearing heed.  
 Ah, helpless, hapless maid—yet more the pain  
 To see, to know, to love—and to be dumb.

G. C. BOSANQUET

## DANCING STAR

Out of the pregnant chaos of a heart  
 The doubt and turmoil, sorrow and distress.  
 Some dancing star may yet from there depart  
 To give cohesion to our eagerness.  
 Every celestial twinkle—however small  
 Brightens the midnight sky in some small part  
 There visible eternally to all:  
 So may my star from its conflicting start.

JOHN GRIFFIN

## ON SEEING MANY FOREIGNERS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY CONCERTS

They come as to a shrine,  
Eager expectant,  
Wave upon wave of pilgrims seeking rest,  
Exiles and persecuted,  
Not hungering for bread,  
But seeking their soul's food.  
And as the music floats from lofty dome,  
The listening crowd is one,  
One soul enrapt.  
Pity and love flow through them like a force,  
Wisdom, forbearance, hope  
Surge through each heart.  
And courage triumphs over all dismay !

THEODORA ROSCOE





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