On Such a Night in Spring

By RUPERT ROLLAND

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NORTON, dining alone at the little restaurant on his first night in New York after five years of wandering, remembered how often Joe Stickney and he had sat at that very table on spring evenings and talked of romance. And now Norton had had his five years of strange countries and Joe Stickney had married a brunette with long-lashed violet eyes.

He would like to know what had happened to Joe and his Helen, so, finishing dinner, Norton sought out a telephone booth. He found the name and the number, and a woman's voice answered his call. "This is Roger Norton," he said, "Mrs. Stickney. Joe and I used to be Damon and Pythias five years ago. I'm lonely in this big city. May I come up tonight?"

"Please do, Mr. Norton," came the answer. "I've often heard Joe speak of you."

A maid let him in at the apartment and showed him into a drawing room, pleasantly illuminated by a single rose-shaded lamp. A slim, dark-haired woman with long-lashed eyes held out her hand. "Joe isn't at home," she said, "but I'm expecting him soon. He went back to his law office right after we'd finished dinner."

"I hope he doesn't often do that," said Norton.

"He works pretty hard, poor boy. But I know he'd want to see you. Shall we sit by this open window? The air's so fresh tonight. You've been away five years? What have you been doing?"

"Nothing so interesting as what Joe has," Norton answered, taking the chair she drew forward. "We both vowed five years ago that we'd capture romance. Joe found it, but I—well, it's always just over the next hill for me. Joe was the sensible fellow—a happy marriage."

"Yes?" The long lashes hid the violet eyes that were looking out at the night sky.

Norton caught the question in the low voice, and wondered. Was Joe like so many other men? Had he won this exquisite creature, only to give her bodily comforts and spend all his hours working at his career? On such a night in spring! To be slaving at his office. Quickly he appraised the situation. Money—yes, it was evident in the room, in that simple gown. But romance—fled out of the window.

"You're an idealist, aren't you?" It was the woman who was speaking.

"Yes, I am," he answered defiantly. "We both were five years ago."

"And is the reason that you are still to be found in the fact that your romance is always just over the next hill?"

He flushed. She was looking at him, and her eyes held his fascinated.

"I don't believe it," he said. "I believe I'd still keep my ideals, keep them more than ever after I'd found—what Joe has."

"I wasn't talking of Joe," she reminded him with a little half-laugh. "I knew Joe very well—even better, perhaps, than you do."

Again he caught that little note that made him wonder, that piqued and stirred his senses. He looked down at the slim hand that lay upon the chair-arm. "Good old Joe," he said. "I suppose a man does change. And life in New York is such a struggle."

"But you have everything before you. You're still free and unfettered."

"Yes, that's what the bachelor says. And yet when I come back from my wanderings, like Ulysses, having avoided the pitfalls, I find myself dreadfully lonely. I thought at dinner tonight that was a high price to pay."

"Poor Roger Norton," she murmured. "His best friend caught by the sirens."

There was mockery in her voice, but something also that set his pulses beating. He looked at the lovely profile, now turned again to the stars of the spring night. And suddenly he forgot himself. "I wish I'd been caught instead," he said. "I'd never have struggled loose."

She faced him for a second, her eyes startled, then misty.

"Forgive me," he muttered. "You—the night—something has turned my head."

"Mine too, I'm afraid," she said. "However—" And she brushed her hand across her gown as if to wipe something away.

"What do you mean?" he demanded. "You're—you're not lonely, too?"

In the silence that followed his question there came the sound of a key in a distant lock, then steps in the hall. Norton got to his feet. Still, fascinated, he gazed at the lovely dark head turned away from him.

Someone came into the room. "Well, by Jove!" cried the cheery voice of Joe Stickney, "I declare if it isn't Roger Norton, as large as life!"

Norton wheeled, his face aflame. Mechanically he took the hand that Stickney held out to him.

"My word, but I'm glad to see you," declared Stickney. "Sorry that Helen is away on a visit; but I guess my little sister-in-law has made you pretty comfortable."

"Sister-in-law!" echoed Norton, glancing at the girl by the window.

The young woman stood up. "I'm afraid I haven't made Mr. Norton so very comfortable," she said, avoiding that man's eyes. "Something got into me tonight. I suppose it's that old spring fever."

Roger Norton smiled. "I'm glad I happened along when I did," he said. "Spring fever's so much jollier when it's shared with somebody."

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Sound Reflection Helps Blind to Comprehend

Whenever a sound impinges on a flat vertical surface of any appreciable area it is reflected much the same as light—not echoed. An echo is also a reflection, but of a pronounced type; but the sort of reflection to which I refer takes place at distances shorter than necessary for an echo, and results in merely the addition to the original sound of a characteristic quality that could probably be classified as an overtone. Poles, trees, walls, buildings, cars, any fairly flat, fairly vertical, good-sized surface, will produce this effect.

The seeing rarely, if ever, are aware of it, of course. They do not need to be. But the blind not only are aware of it but make thoroughly practical use of it for such everyday purposes as locating objects or finding, for example, the gaps in a long line of parked cars. When a blind man taps his walking stick on the pavement or shuffles his feet he is more often causing sounds which can be reflected than trying to determine his location by touch.

This utilization of one of hearing's possibilities generally wasted is also one responsible for the sixth sense myth, and only one of the several ways in which this sense when developed serves the blind.—Charles MaGee Adams in the Atlantic Monthly.

Pretty Legend About Island in South Seas

One of the most picturesque spots in beautiful Hawaii is Cocoanut island, in Hilo harbor. This little bit of earthly paradise possesses a mythical origin. The story runs that the demi-god Maui with his magic hook fished the island of Maui up from the sea and planned to join it to the island of Hawaii. The plan failed because one of his brothers, who was in the canoe with him, disobeyed a command that he must not look behind, and the island of Maui slipped back to its present position on the map, and only a small piece thereof, Cocoanut island, remained on the hook. In this district is Konolale, the site of a famous temple, Manini, built many centuries ago and reconstructed in about 1460 by King Lilioa. On that occasion 24 human sacrifices were offered. When Lilioa died, Umi and his half-brother Hagau both wanted to succeed him. The high priest had the family war god at his temple, and both raced there from nearby points to secure it. Umi got there first and won the title.

In Self-Defense

An eminent Vermont judge was fond of telling the following story:

At a session of the criminal court over which he presided a man was being tried for stealing a sheep; he had been discovered taking the dead animal home, and when he was arrested there was evidence that the sheep had already furnished several meals for the family. He was asked if he had anything to say before sentence was passed upon him. "I killed the sheep, your honor, but I did it in self-defense."

"Self-defense," said the indignant judge. "What do you mean by such a statement?" To which the man replied: "No d—d sheep bites me and lives."—Boston Globe.

Beasts as Baggage

R. L. Ditmars tells an amusing story of shepherding wild animals from San Francisco to New York. Among them were pythons, pygmy water buffalo and two orang-outangs. Mr. Ditmars was kept busy protecting the apes from changes in temperature. The larger orang had a sunny warehouse room, but shivered at night; being given an army blanket, he soon learned to wrap up in it. The smaller orang lived in his master's room at the hotel, "upon reluctant permission from the management." By the kind co-operation of the railroad all these specimens were transported on the Overland Limited as baggage; four days' travel brought them safely to their new home.

Good-By, Romance

All through his long spell of illness his wife had been his devoted nurse. Often he had wakened in the night to find her sitting by his bedside, with soothing draughts and words of sympathy.

Now he had turned the corner, and was well on the road to recovery. So one day he tried to thank her.

"Mary, I shall never forget it," he told her. "Your sweetness to me through this trying time shall always be like a golden corner in my memory. Why did you do it?"

He paused dramatically, hoping to hear a whispered confession of her love being the great motive. Instead, she replied, calmly: "Well, Henry, who wants a widow with three children?"

Fear

"The modern tendency in education is to do away with fear, but I doubt if the disciplinary substitutions are as effective in character building," says Sonya Levien, granddaughter of a rabbi, describing Judaism in Hearst's International.

"I do not mean that quality of fear that is cringing and cowardly, but the fear that makes for self-control so that co-operation between human beings becomes a possible thing. The quality of fear that limits the ego and imbues one with a sense of respect and modesty as against the 'know it all' quality of the modern adolescent youth. Fear lasts longer than faith."

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Poultry Notes

Supply Of Hens Cut Down To Make Way For Layers

Hens are going to be called upon to attend more strictly to business the coming year, and even then its probable that the ham and eggs on the American breakfast table will cost more than in 1924. Egg production did not live up to its reputation in the last year, although there were more chickens on the farms than ever before.

On the first of last January, the chicken population numbered 474,000,000, an increase of 32 per cent. since 1920. This trend toward enlargement of flocks was furthered by the desire of farmers to diversify their products. Owners and dealers not only counted their chickens before they were hatched, but the eggs before they were laid. A record production was forcast and prices held very low since storage men were reluctant to buy, having lost money for the two previous years on ir holdings.

The eversupply never arrived, however. The cold, unfavorable spring cut down production and receipts at storage warehouses totaled only 14,173,546 cases. Moreover, holdings dropped a million and a quarter cases in the early winter as compared with 1923. Prices ran about the same as in that year, averaging 25.6 cents at the farm, compared with 25.8. Premium prices, however, were paid for eggs of superior quality, and this new quality basis tended to stabilize the industry to a greater extent than ever before.

A good many farmers became disgusted with the efforts of their hens and disposed of them, but there was no flood of fowls coming to market. Receipts of dressed poultry were very light during the summer, but increased rapidly during the fall and early winter and when the new year approached there were about 16,000,000 pounds more dressed poultry on hand than at the corresponding time last year.

The spread of disease among the flocks in some sections, which was followed by embargoes from many markets, checked shipments to a considerable degree and resulted in some severe losses. Prices in many of the leading markets maintained a level as high as that of 1923 and there is evidence that good figures will be obtained in the early months of this year.

The increase in the prices of poultry feed is expected to effect the market and while chickens are responding well to their feeds and putting on relatively more flesh for their rations than other live stock, dealers will have to pay more attention to egg production per hen to keep the chickens on the right side of the road to profits.

In relation to prices of poultry, eggs and hogs, corn prices are extremely high. Not only do farmers prefer to sell their corn for cash at present levels rather than feed poultry and hogs with a ration costing well over $1.10 a bushel, but more corn is required to produce the same nutriment value than when the quality was better and included less moisture.

It is even more difficult to see how the poultrymen can afford to buy wheat near the $2 mark to feed chickens to sell at present prices. If demand does not keep prices up, it is probable that a large number of hens will be sold before mid-year. This will tend to keep down egg production and sustain egg prices, although it will have an opposite effect on prices for dressed poultry.

FOREST FIRES IN STATE

Decord Shows That Much Devastation Has Been Wrought

Forest fires in the State during the fall season have resulted in a loss of $74,706.20. This figure was reached recently at the Maryland Department of Forestry by the addition of reports from all the counties of the state. The total number of acres devastated was 21,232 and the cost to the State for fighting the fires was $2,356.36.

On the basis of figures collected in the last 10 years, it has been concluded that an average of 55 fires is normal for the fall season. Although the last season was not a normal period, it was below the previous season in devastation, the acerage denuded in the fall of 1923 being 34,257.

Apart from the immediate loss in the value of the timber destroyed, however, it was explained at the department that the Catoctin Mountains in some portions, were ruined as watersheds, and in the vicinity of Frederick Countless water meters have been put out of commission as a consequence of forest fires. Trouble also is expected in the region of Cumberland as a result of denudation by forest fires when spring comes.

The acres devastated, it was shown, go to increase the waste lands of the State, which in the latest report of the department were numbered at 350,000 acres. An effort is being made to reforest these lands and to plant with trees portions of this expanse which have not grown forests before.

These waste lands, department officials said, are for the most part owned by private persons or organizations, but the State Department of Forestry is ready to cooperate in solving the problem of forestation wherever the owner it willing to bear the cost. From the forest nursery at College Park, trees are furnished for planting at the cost of growing and shipping, the purchaser agreeing that none of the stock is to be sold or used for other than forest or roadside planting.

In previous years the experience of the nursery has been that the normal demand for forest seedlings could not be met. Addition has been made to the acreage for planting these seedlings, however, so that facilities have been increased approximately 6,600 young trees annually.

Is Money Hoarded?

The idea that a vast amount of money is hoarded in ont-of-the-way places by the people of the United States is held to be a delusion by a large majority of banks replying to a questionnaire recently sent out by the Finance Department of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States. It would keep a hosiery mill busy for some time to supply socks to hold the hidden currency if some of the estimates——from $1,000,000,000 to $2,500,000,000—are anywhere near correct. The latter sum is approximately half the entire amount of money of all kinds in circulation.

Champion Frog State

Louisiana's whistling frog, which sings like a bird, is one of seven species of tree frogs living in St. Tammany parish. Its notes cannot be distinguished from one of the calls of the red-bellied woodpecker. Considering the frog family as a whole, it is doubtful if any area its size in the world has a greater frog population than Honey Island, near Bogalusa. Already there have been recorded 20 distinct species of frogs and toads, the voices of nearly all of which are sometime audible during a single summer night, according to Sim Weis in American Forests and Forest Life. These notes range in tone from the pleasant cricket-like song of the tiny cricket frogs, through intermediate sounds, such as the cowlike caw of the spade-foot toads to the deep hass bull-like bellow of the giant Louisiana bullfrog—bandmaster "par excellence." There is a mood of one of these frogs that brings forth a note which trills for nearly a minute, yet entrances the listener with the sweetness and volumn of its tones. The commercial frogs of Louisiana are quite important. In fact, there is a statute on its books that begins thus: "The ownership and title to all frogs found in the state of Louisiana is hereby declared to be in the state." This distinction is not due to their voices, but to their hind legs, so celebrated as a delicacy that Japan has imported Louisiana bullfrogs to stock frog farms in that faraway country.

Litigation Over Island

Litigation involving the ownership of Shipping Creek Island, a little tract of land lying in Shipping Creek, neaer Eastern Bay, off the shores of Kent Island, has carried the unsual case to the office of the Maryland Land Commissioner. For many years the little island, nearly a half mile from the Kent Island shore, has been uninhabited, and many regarded it as without a legal owner. Several months ago S. Earle Long and James E. Cockrey, Jr., made application to the land office for a deed to the properety. They published legal notices to the effect that they had made application, and this brought forth a caveat, filed by Harry Breeding, that Shipping Creek Island was a part of his farm.

Farmers, List Your Repair Needs

It would be hard to find a farmer who at some time or another had not lost valuable time waiting for necessary repair parts. Take this territory and total up the time lost in this way and it will astonish you. And all because repairs are not odered as early as they should be.

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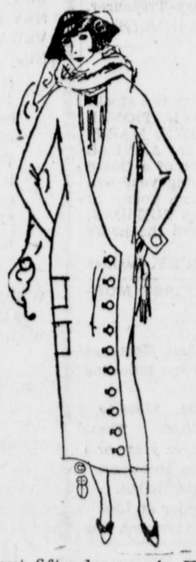
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