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# DISTAFF

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## Treasure Room

# DISTAFF

VOLUME I MARCH, 1931 NUMBER ONE

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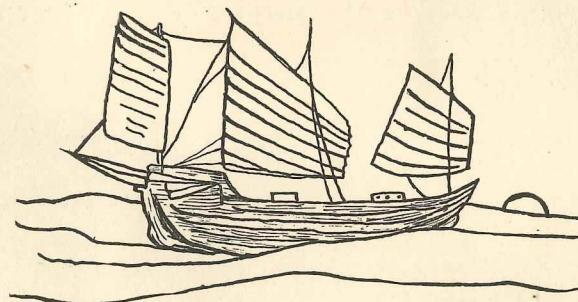
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## A Junk At Twilight

By JEANNE MANGET

The hour of vespers comes,  
The temple bell calls  
Lonely monks to evening prayer.  
On a distant hill  
A deserted pagoda stands,  
A sentinel to the tired world.  
On the canal, silence  
Except for the quiet flapping  
Of a tall brown sail  
As a drab old junk  
Slips contentedly away into the night.



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## Etching

By ELIZABETH MANGET

Clear-cut  
Except for the  
Lacy smoke that curls over  
The grey tiles of a house and on  
Through the gaunt arms of a  
Tall tree.

Wild geese  
Fly across the  
Low setting sun and sail  
Across the water of a canal  
To a clump of shivering bamboos.

Purple  
Hills, stencilled  
Clearly on the winter sky  
In every line and curve, cut  
The frozen fields from the  
Skyline.

Canals  
Twisting lazily  
Reflect the fire of the sun  
On their surfaces. Hooded boats rowed  
By men in winter-old clothes  
Pass by.

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## There's Still A Chance For Me

By AMY DUKE

I DO NOT agree with Shakespeare's adage that hanging and wiving go by destiny. Perhaps hanging is so controlled, but our own hands guide our marriage barks, and the person who gets aboard chooses his own partner. Had I been a seventeenth or eighteenth century lass, the chances are even that I might have chosen Shakespeare, Voltaire, Franklin, or Washington. At any rate these fancies are harmless, and it amuses me to wonder what would have been the outcome of one of these unions.

A wife either holds a man back or helps him along on the road to success. That being true, Franklin would never have become famous if I had been standing in his doorway on that day when he strolled down the street with a loaf of bread under his arm. I can imagine my reaction when at the breakfast table one morning dear husband Benjamin said:

"Now, my dear, you have exceeded your allowance three times successively within the past month. Frugality is the necessary requisite of a well-balanced life. I should like you to budget your expenditures henceforth."

And this would probably have been the answer to a plea for a new dress:

"Now, my dear, personal adornment does not enhance one's standing in life, nor the regard of one's fellow man. A clean body and mind are of far greater value."

No, it would not have worked. Think of the avalanche of maxims that would have descended on my head, had I burned the eggs or let the coffee boil over. I do not think that I should have been suited to Mr. Franklin.

I wonder if in Anne Boleyn's place I would have been more successful as the wife of Henry the Eighth. I doubt that I should have tolerated his infidelity, and, since it would not have been a question of my tolerance but

of His Majesty's, there would have been a clash. I will wager however that I should have had one good kick or bite at him before being packed off to the guillotine. That would have compensated for the pangs of death. After all, a woman is happy when she has the last word.

There are points for and against Napoleon as the suitable mate for me. Travel has its appeal, and I could have satiated my wanderlust during his frequent exiles. Since I am very fond of islands, I might have been content to remain on Elba. Who knows? I might have persuaded Napoleon not to escape and thereby have robbed history of its Waterloo. But why consider Napoleon? I should never have married him. I have a particular aversion for short men.

Still, I could not have lived happily with Washington. If I were listing the types of desirable husbands, the dissimulator would head the list. A wife who is kept in ignorance is never a troubled wife. I can picture the frequent recurrence of such a conversation as the following between George and his wife:

"George, where were you last night?"

"Dear, I cannot tell a lie. I was at the tavern drinking beer and playing chess."

"But, George, I especially requested you to hurry home."

"Yes, dear, but I must confess that I didn't want to."

George could never have sacrificed truth to tact, and I am far too sensitive to endure for long the continuance of his disturbing frankness.

But most of all I am wondering what would have happened had I been Eve. Would I have led Adam to sin? Would I have been beguiled by the serpent? Yes, the serpent would have persuaded me to pluck the apple. Along with my hearty appetite for apples I possess my full quota of feminine curiosity. But, if I had been Eve, I would not be writing this bit of nonsense; if I had been Eve, the world would be different today. The punishment would have taken a different form, for I am positive, yes, *quite* positive, that had I been Eve, I should selfishly have run off behind a tree and eaten all of the apple myself.

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### Philosophy

By LEAH BENTLEY

My ink-stained fingers form a greedy fist,  
But through the cracks my hoarded pennies gleam;  
And shall the copper slip from out my grasp  
To purchase love, a mere domestic dream?  
Well, love, you can't drive such a trade with me,  
Who long to barter with eternity.  
  
For they shall all be scattered for a whim,  
Instead of buying something old and true;  
A long contentment cannot tempt me from  
My one-way passage down to Xanadu.  
  
I call a cozy cottage poor exchange  
For one rose petal falling in Cathay.  
And do you offer me a rocking-chair  
For my flotilla down in Mandalay?  
Your love is yours; the pennies still are mine  
To buy a life of things not as they are;  
And all I ask is unrest and adventure  
In my journey to a doubtful star.

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### Exit Christian

By ELAINE TENNEY

CRASH!—bang! bang! bang! The average man would have been startled at the sudden and terrible commotion, but I merely dotted an “i” with the utmost precision and continued my writing. I had heard that clever imitation of thunder almost every day out of nine consecutive months of each year for three years. It was only my roommate coming in from his last class, kicking the door open with his famous drop kick, slamming it shut with his equally famous straight arm, throwing his books on the floor, and making a flying tackle for my bed, which unluckily was the more accessible.

For a few moments there was an unusual silence, but it was suddenly brought to an end by a tragic groan from Ronnie. I pushed back his theme that I had been working on and turned around. He was lying in his favorite position, with the toes of his shoes—size elevens—dug comfortably into my pillow, and his six feet one of football hero stretched out as comfortably as a six foot bed will allow. He was leaning on one elbow, chin in hand, staring off into space.

“Well,” I said after a pause, “What’s eating you! Can’t you see I’m busy on your theme?”

He ran his fingers dramatically through his blond curly hair, though he could not have made it more disorderly than it was.

“Buddie,” he began, “I’m in a hell of a fix.”

“Shoot,” I said. “You know I’d go through anything for you.”

“Well,” he continued. “It’s about Helen—”

“Yes?” I said trying not to show any concern in my voice.

Helen was the dearest, sweetest, blondest, little co-ed on the campus. All year she had been my “phantom of delight”, but I scarcely knew her, and she was only aware of my existence as Ronnie’s roommate. It was I who had first discovered her, but I had unwisely praised her charms to

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Ronnie, upon which he immediately took it upon himself to annex her to his ever growing band of fair admirers. And what chance has brain against brawn? What chance has a Phi Beta prospect against a football hero? O tempora! O mores!

"I might as well tell you all about it," he went on, "cause there's lots of stuff she said that I didn't get at all. Well, it was this way. I walked home with her this afternoon, and when we got as far as her gate, she looked so pretty and everything that I said, 'I love you,' and she said, 'Yes? And then?' I thought she'd gotten it wrong—hadn't heard or something—so I said it again. She smiled and said, 'You have your theme—now improvise! Rhap—rhapsodize!' I couldn't make out what she was driving at. Then she smiled and said, 'That's Cyrano de Bergerac. Do you know him?' I looked all around but couldn't see anyone, so I decided that all that stuff that she'd been saying was written by a bird by that name. No one but a writer could stand a name like that! Say, you ought to know! Who is this Cyrano anyway?"

"I'll tell you all about him later," I said soothingly. "You finish up first."

"Well, then she started in saying that she wanted me to prove to her that I wasn't just a Christian. 'Good Lord!' I said, 'I've told you I'm not! I'm an atheist!' She didn't even hear me 'cause she was so busy talking on and on about a Christian and this Cyrano guy. Finally she said that her father—he's one of my profs—had said that we were both down in his course and would have to work pretty hard to pull through. He said that I could only see her one night a week—Saturday night. Then she said that she knew I was beautiful—yeah, she said 'beautiful'—but she wanted me to prove that I could be eloquent too. She said 'You just told me that you love me. Let that be your theme. Please write me beautiful, long letters full of similes and metaphors and classical references. You will, won't you?' she said. She looked so hopeful and pretty that I couldn't help saying yes. With that she threw her arms around my neck, kissed me on the cheek and ran into the house. So now you see what I'm in for! And you know I hate writing like sin!"

"I'm not so sure about sin," I said doubtfully, "But from the way I have to slave over your themes, I wouldn't say that writing was your favorite pastime."

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He didn't say anything to that, but after a moment of deep consideration he looked up with a malicious gleam in his eyes.

"And say," he said, "Who is this louse, Cyrano, that started all this?"

As an answer I jumped up and took from his chiffonier a grotesque-looking cardboard nose that he had brought back from somewhere a week or two before. Putting this on I seized a ruler and after leaping and thrusting around with an attempt at skill and grace, I bellowed with what dramatic ability I possess,

"Struck down by the sword of a hero let me fall,  
Steel in my heart and laughter on my lips!"

All during my performance he sat on the edge of the bed and looked on disinterestedly, and when I'd made my bow, he said,

"Very funny, but it doesn't prove anything. Sorry, though, that I haven't a sword."

I saw that he was really quite concerned by the turn his affairs had taken, so I sat down beside him and threw my arm over his shoulder.

"Cheer up," I said, "I was just giving you an impersonation of this Cyrano you've got such a grudge against. Now Cyrano was a Frenchman who looked just like me."

"Poor fella," Ronnie said feelingly.

"I mean the way I look with this disguise," I said, indicating the false nose to him with the tip of my thumb.

"All right," he said. "I deserve it. Now won't you please give it to me straight."

"I will," I said, "*Sine joco!* Cyrano had a very beautiful cousin called Roxane. He was wild about her, but he was so handicapped by his nose that he kept it, that is, his overpowering and consuming love for Roxane, to himself. Well, Roxane fell in love with Christian who was a beautiful fashion plate with curls and whatnot, but he couldn't write worth beans, and she insisted on letters."

"History repeats itself," said Ronnie philosophically.

"Well," I continued, "Cyrano agreed to do all the writing and to let Christian get all the credit. After Christian and Roxane were married—"

"That's enough," interrupted Ronnie jumping up; "I guess there's no other way out of it. I gotta play the 'beautiful nut'!"

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"What do you mean?" I asked, trying to register surprise.

"Cyrano de Bergerac!" he said stepping back and giving me a very courtly and sweeping bow.

So that was how it all began. I could hardly believe it!—I playing Cyrano de Bergerac to Helen! Writing her things I had always longed to write to her! I had never dared to imagine myself *saying* any of them, because I had always felt so completely and hopelessly tongue-tied whenever I was near her. I had never been introduced to her, and since we had no classes together, she had never had any reason to know even my name until Ronnie had casually mentioned me as his roommate. Also, having been brought up in Boston and sent to "the most conservative of prep schools," although I was neither a Cabot nor a Lowell, still I never could feel that stepping up to a Co-ed on the campus and saying, "Well, cutie, where have *you* been all my life?" quite took the place of a formal introduction. Yet Ronnie had told me that that was the precise manner in which he had introduced himself to Helen. Ronnie could get away with things like that, Ronnie with his shock of curly yellow hair, his mischievous blue eyes and his boyish grin. Everybody liked him; even I, his roommate who of all the people in the world probably had the most cause to dislike him, overlooked everything and had to admit that he was one of the most likeable men on the campus.

I remember the first day I ever saw Ronnie. I had arrived about an hour before him and was fixing up our room and wondering what sort of a roommate I had drawn, when suddenly I heard the bang that was Ronnie drop kicking the door open for the first time. I turned around quickly, and there he stood in the doorway with that amiable grin on his face which made me like him immediately. His voice was friendly.

"I'd be surer if you wore horn-rimmed glasses—but you *can* write themes, can't you?"

"Rest assured! I *do* wear them when I'm writing themes," I said producing a pair and putting them on.

From that moment we were inseparable. I wrote Ronnie's themes, broke dates for him, woke him up every morning (this as no mean accomplishment in itself!) and cheerfully lent him anything I had from a safety pin to hold up his Joe Collegiate blue and white suspenders to my spotless tux.

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## EDITORIALS

### THE INITIAL ISSUE

ABOVE THE DEPRESSION of the transition, the Woman's College has begun to raise its head. Duke University has grown more in the past year than ever before in its history. The students find it difficult to meet a new and unstable environment with the necessary social adjustments, with the result that there is a tendency to look back to the days when campus life, at least during parts of the year, resembled a large country club, rather than to look forward to the problems of the new life which confront everyone.

One of these problems is to be met by the DISTAFF. Trinity College was not always co-ed. An opening wedge for co-education was made by the Giles sisters. Since they were here, women have come in increasing numbers, and with the increase both social and educational organizations have been gradually established to fill the need for them as it arose among the women.

It has been customary in all organizations in which both the men and women have a part for the men to hold the responsible positions. A woman might have all of the qualities which go to make a good executive, she might be better trained for the position than the man, yet, because she is a woman, she can never fill the highest position in these organizations. This has been especially true in the line of publications where the positions which women have been allowed to hold have been designated. These positions have always been minor and lacking in responsibility. It is the purpose of this magazine not only to create a medium through which the women students of the University may express themselves more freely than in a publication edited by the men, but also that they may learn something of the responsibility of editing. To the women students we wish to say that this is your magazine. You can make it what you will through your contributions and your support.

The present may seem an unwise time to some to begin such an undertaking as the bringing out of a magazine; yet, it seems to us that the best

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