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STATE  
NORMAL  
SCHOOL  
FARMVILLE, VA.


M.E. Granger

MARCH, 1918

THE  
FOCUS



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## Table of Contents

### LITERARY DEPARTMENT:

Harmony ( <i>Poem</i> ).....	<i>A. O. M.</i> .....	1
A Profitable Mishap.....	<i>Harriette C. Purdy</i> ....	2
Joan of Arc.....	<i>Grace Stevens</i> ....	12
"Holy Night, Peaceful Night".....	<i>Anna Penny</i> ....	15
Her Dream ( <i>Poem</i> ).....	<i>Mary Reynolds</i> ....	19
The Soliloquy of a Clock.....	<i>Flossie Nairne</i> ....	20
EDITORIAL:		
A New Year.....	<i>S. M.</i> .....	22
"Think on These Things".....	<i>N. L.</i> .....	23
HERE AND THERE.....		25
HIT OR MISS.....		27
EXCHANGES.....		28

# THE FOCUS

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VOL. VIII      FARMVILLE, VA., MARCH, 1918      NO. 1

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## Harmony

WHEN the glowing sun sinks low in the west,  
And the evening shadows begin to fall,  
I love to sit apart, alone,  
And listen in stillness to Nature's call—  
The cricket's chirp, the spider's song,  
The tall dark mountains all along;  
The brilliant, flitting fire-fly,  
The golden clouds in the western sky;—  
And up from the meadow, deep and still,  
The cry of the lonesome whipporwill;  
The brooklet's tinkle and bubbly rill,  
The hoot of the owl on yonder hill;  
The whispering motion of the trees  
Caressed by the gentle evening breeze;—  
I feel the dew begin to fall,  
And breathe the sweetness of it all.  
I, too, of Nature am a part,  
Close to the throbbing of her heart—  
While all around from tree and vine  
Is held a Presence all divine.

—A. O. M.



## A Profitable Mishap

ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS IN GOLD!  
Do You Want It?

For the best article on  
"The Most Unusual Experience of  
My Life"

we will give the generous sum stated above.

Articles must be genuine accounts of experiences which have taken place in your *own* life.

For further rules, see page 17 of this magazine.

All contributions must be in by February 1, 1918.

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL  
456 N. Sixty-third Street  
New York City

With a sigh, Jerry laid aside the magazine that he had been reading. He could not, however, so easily put aside the thought of the startling announcement which he had just seen. A thousand dollars! Did he *want* it? What a silly question! In all the twenty-five years of his life, he had never wanted anything as much as he now wanted money—and plenty of it. The question which was of more importance to him was, how could he *get* it? He could recall no especially unusual experiences connected with his life. In fact it seemed to him that he had spent a very prosaic, humdrum existence. The possession of a sum as large as the one offered by the *Journal*, however, would mean the realization of his dream of taking a course in journalism, and Jerry could imagine no greater joy than this. But how could he write a prize-winning account of an experience that he had never had?

Suddenly, he had an inspiration. He would *make*

the experience to order, if necessary, and then he would make the story!

. . . . .

It was a cold, dark night, and the swiftly falling rain changed the snow that covered the ground to ice.

A large automobile spun into view around the corner of Main street, skidded, and turned turtle. A few minutes later, an ambulance surgeon and his assistant were gently lifting from the pavement the unconscious figure of a young man whose clothing was covered with blood.

When they had safely deposited their burden in the ambulance and the machine had glided off as rapidly as the slippery streets permitted, the doctor's assistant drew from his pocket a flat leather wallet and handed it to the doctor. "I found this on the ground by him," he explained. "Perhaps it bears some mark of identification."

. . . . .

Jerry Hunt's first sensations on regaining consciousness were far from pleasant.

His head felt as if it were spinning around loose in the air, one eye throbbed painfully under a tight bandage which encircled his head, and his whole body ached miserably. More than that, he found, to his surprise, that he could lift neither hand nor foot, and that they seemed weighted down as if with lead. In fact, the only part of his body which seemed to be in its normal condition was his left eye, which was fortunately not included in the bandage which completely covered the rest of his head. Even this faithful member, however, was not of much use to him now, on account of the darkness of the room.

As he blinked in an effort to get his eye accustomed to the dimness, he saw for the first time a white-clothed, white-capped figure which gradually became recognizable as a trained nurse. She had been bending over the bed to arrange the cover, and now she moved softly nearer to him and asked him how he

felt. Jerry wasn't in a mood for conversation, so he merely grunted out, "Bum!" (the shortest word he could think of to express his feelings), and groaned. The nurse seemed to be much relieved by this sign of life on his part, and said quite cheerfully, "Oh, you'll soon be feeling all right, Mr. Featherwaite; you're *ever* so much better already."

"*Much* better *now*, am I?" thought Jerry disgustedly. "Well, then, I must have been *dead* up to this time!" But what was it she had called him? "Featherwaite!" He could not resist a smile at the thought of the physique which had won for him the admiration of all the boys at college, several years before, and had helped to make him the champion football star of the team. No doubt, she was calling him by this absurd name as a joke, thinking to cheer him up. At this point in his reflections, he once more succumbed to the influence of the medicine that had been given him to deaden the pain, and settled into a sort of stupor.

Several hours later, Jerry awoke with sharp twinges of pain shooting through his head, and the same general feeling of being murdered by slow torture—only, this time it was worse than ever.

On the table at the right of the bed were roses. On the table at the left of the bed were roses. The bureau bloomed with them, the window ledge blossomed with them. They seemed to fill the whole room, and Jerry felt quite suffocated by their faint perfume.

"What in the mischief—" he began dazedly.

"I'm glad to see you're feeling so much better, Mr. Featherwaite," interrupted the nurse brightly, without even looking at him, and crossed over to the table by his bedside. Jerry decided that she was totally heartless, and wondered if she would continue to be cheerful if he were to keel over and die on the spot. This idea gave him a feeling of such self-com-miserating satisfaction that he almost wished he could carry it out.

"These flowers," said the cheerful one, pointing to the largest cluster by the bed, "were sent to you by Mrs. Featherwaite: 'For Algernon, dear, with a heart full of love from his little wife'—that's what the card says."

"*Those*"—pointing to the bunch on the other table—"are from your Aunt Cora. She sends her love and sympathy."

"My *wife!* My *aunt!*" thought Jerry weakly. "Suffering cats! this is the first I've heard of 'em! Wonder what she'll be springing on me next?"

The nurse did not leave him long in suspense.

"The big red roses in the window," she continued placidly, "are from your sister Hortense, and the others were sent by your Cousin Matilda."

By this time, Jerry was feeling quite dizzy.

"Pardon an idle curiosity," he murmured ironically, "but who under the shining sun, pray, may I be?"

"Surely, Mr. Featherwaite, you're joking!" exclaimed the nurse, in surprise. "But don't worry about that now, if you can't remember clearly yet. You'll be feeling better soon."

"Featherwaite!" snorted Jerry indignantly. "I'm blest if I'm a featherweight!"

Visions of the flowers and of his unheard-of family followed Jerry into his sleep that night. He had been wondering drowsily, as he began to doze off, if, when the number of flowers multiplied to such an extent that some would have to be put on the bed, the nurse would remember to leave his nose uncovered sufficiently for him to breathe. Later, he dreamed that he had been buried alive and that the flowers had been sent to his funeral. He fancied he could see "Aunt Cora," wearing a crepe veil which hung to the hem of her skirt, going around among the other relatives of this strange family and bestowing her sympathy on each one, though she winked wickedly through a little hole in her veil as she did so. Then, he thought, "Sister Hortense" came over to where

he lay camouflaged in pink roses and said, "Oh, Aunt Cora, doesn't it look just *exactly* like Cousin Matilda's greenhouse?"

This was *too* much. The limit of his endurance had been reached. Hence the nurse was startled at this point by a shrill cry of protest:

"I don't *want* to be planted in a greenhouse; I want to be *cremated!*"

The sound of his own voice roused Jerry just in time to feel something cool and smooth slipped into his mouth. He bit it savagely, because, quite naturally, he was in a bad humor just then. The victim of his wrath cracked in two and cut his mouth in several places. The nurse, her serenity unruffled even by this pathetic accident, calmly extracted the fragments of glass from the roof of his mouth, and proceeded to bathe his self-inflicted wounds with the air of one who is accustomed to seeing her patients munch thermometers for the lack of anything better to do.

About noon the next day, the nurse smilingly entered and asked Jerry if he felt well enough to see visitors. His head was still bandaged in such a way that only a very small portion of his face (including one eye, however!) was visible. Despite this, he was feeling much better now, and was anxious to have some diversion. Accordingly, he gladly assented to the nurse's suggestion, though he couldn't for the life of him think of any one who might have learned of his whereabouts.

"I know you'll be happy when you hear who's calling, Mr. Featherwaite. She's been here three times already, but the doctor thought you'd better not see visitors before today. It's Mrs. Featherwaite!" she added over her shoulder, as the door closed behind her.

Now, indeed, Jerry was smitten with consternation. The idea of being visited by a perfectly strange woman, who, he had reason to fear, would insist that she was his wife, appalled him.



He had been suffering too greatly, ever since the accident had occurred, to make any attempt to unravel the mystery of the Featherwaites. In fact, he didn't care a hang *who* they were, just so he wasn't troubled by them. Since he had suffered no inconvenience as a result of the peculiar situation in which he found himself placed, and since he had been too weak to do much talking, he had not corrected the false impression which the doctor had received concerning his identity. It seemed now, however, that as a result of this delay on his part, he was to be placed in a very embarrassing position. Receiving roses from the unknown Mrs. Featherwaite—"his little wife!"—was quite a different proposition from receiving a *call* from her in person.

He was just reaching out to push the bell summoning the nurse, when an interne stuck his head in the door and announced to some one outside,

"Oh, yes, this is the right room, I'm sure. You said number 123, did you not?" With a nod of assent, the young lady, who had been standing in the hall, walked into the room.

"Oh, my dear, what has happened to you?" she exclaimed in horror, as she caught sight of Jerry's bandaged head. Then, "Why—Oh! I beg your pardon—I'm afraid I've made a mistake!"

But Jerry had recognized her, and before she had reached the door, he called her back to him. "Nancy McLain," he said reproachfully, "I know it's hard to see who I am, with all this upholstery smothering the most handsome portion of my countenance, but I *should* have thought that *you* would know me!"

At the sound of his voice, the young lady turned at once, "Why, Jerry!" she exclaimed in surprise; "What in the world are *you* doing here?"

"Well, now, I wonder!" grinned Jerry. "But what *I* want to know is, how on earth did you happen to come here?"

"This is certainly the number the nurse gave me,"

replied Nancy. "But," she added teasingly, "you are not the person whom I came to see."

Then the terrible truth dawned upon Jerry—or, he thought it did. She had evidently come to his room expecting to find Featherwaite—so Nancy, his one-time sweetheart, was *Mrs. Featherwaite!*

"I'm very sorry indeed to have disappointed you, Mrs. Featherwaite," said Jerry stiffly.

Before the bewildered Nancy could reply, the door opened again, and in came a rather stout, very much over-dressed young woman, whose arms were completely filled with roses.

"My *darling boy!*" she shrilled ecstatically. "At last, I may see you!" As she stretched out her arms in her eagerness, the roses fell helter-skelter to the floor. Treading heedlessly upon them, she made her way to the bedside.

"My poor boy!" she blubbered. "And have you missed your Clementine?" Jerry cast a desperate, appealing glance toward Nan, whom he now saw in a new light; but that young lady, not understanding, merely turned and fled.

Mrs. Featherwaite, who had not yet caught a good glimpse of Jerry, was now lifting her veil with the obvious intention of bestowing a kiss upon him. Jerry saw the motion in time, however, and hastily ducked his head under the cover.

"I *am not* your husband," he yelled in muffled, but frantic tones, "and what's more, you can't *make* me be!"

Mrs. Featherwaite was thoroughly perplexed.

"Oh, Algernon, Algernon," she wailed, "to *think* that you don't even know me! You're not yourself at all! What has come over you?"

"An evil spell, it seems!" retorted the exasperated Jerry, from the depths of a mound of blankets. "Also the cover—until you leave the room!"

To his infinite relief, this remark seemed to penetrate the woman's obtuseness. She arose in great

haste from her seat, and marched indignantly from the room.

"Ye gods and little fishes!" groaned Jerry limply, emerging from his bulwark of covers. "I hope that's the last of Clementine!"

. . . . .

Three weeks later, strolling casually into the post-office, Jerry Hunt's eye fell on the calendar hanging on the opposite wall. "January the thirtieth," he said to himself slowly. "Now, I wonder in what way that date is connected with my young life? I have a strong feeling that it's important, but—"

The next minute, the crowd assembled in front of the post-office was astonished to behold a radiantly excited young man, hat in hand, dashing madly up the street.

"By jiminy!" exclaimed Jerry to himself as he sprinted up the steps leading to the office in which he worked. "I couldn't have *invented* a more unusual experience, if I had spent the rest of my days in the attempt!"

. . . . .

A few days after this, Jerry found himself in the attractively furnished living-room of a certain fashionable residence on Monument Avenue. Seated opposite him was an old friend, a girl whom he had seen only once during the past three years—and that time it had been under rather unfavorable circumstances.

Nan had explained to Jerry that her object in coming to the hospital on that memorable day had been to see her ill brother. She had not had a chance to tell him this at the time, however, on account of the sudden arrival of the woman whom she had naturally taken to be his wife. "But," she added, "you have not yet told me who she was."

"That takes us back to the night of the accident," replied Jerry. "There was another man in the car with me that night, besides the driver—who, poor



chap, is still in a hospital downtown—and this man had been living in the city for some years under an assumed name, though this fact and its causes were unknown to his wife, whom you saw at the hospital. When the accident occurred, 'Featherwaite' miraculously escaped serious injury, and was out of sight before any one could reach the scene. His wallet, however, which bore his name, had fallen from his pocket when he was thrown from the automobile. Hence, it was natural that the mistake concerning my identity should occur, since the wallet was found beside me. You wonder how I learned all this?" he added. "Well, the authorities have just located him, and he tells this story himself."

"But why did he wish to escape?" queried Nancy. "And why had he lived under an assumed name? And why have the authorities traced him?"

"Oh, *that's* the most important part of it all," replied Jerry. I was saving this as my climax: Featherwaite was an escaped convict from Michigan, and on the night of the automobile accident he had just returned to his old habits by robbing a bank!"

It was the night of the first of February. It was cold and dark, and the swiftly falling rain changed the snow on the ground to ice. Inside the office of the editor of the "American Journal," however, it was warm and comfortable. Around the large table in the center of the room were seated six very important-looking personages. Perhaps they had a right to feel important. Did not the selection of the story which was to win a thousand dollars rest in their hands?

The reading of the manuscripts had not yet commenced; more contributions were expected to come in on the late train. Idly, as they talked and smoked, one of the judges of the *Journal's* "Unusual Experience Contest" picked up a sheaf of copy that lay among the immense pile covering the table, and glanced through the opening sentences. Interestedly, he read to the

bottom of the page. Absorbedly, he continued to the end of the story. Then, he drew a long breath and lit another cigar.

"Gentlemen," said he, "here's my choice, regardless of all other contributions. If *unusualness* is the standard by which we are to judge these experiences, you won't find anything to beat this!"

And sure enough, when the one thousand dollar award was made a month later it went to a young man who had, as the result of a confusing automobile accident, temporarily lost his identity in that of an escaped convict!

—*Harriett C. Purdy.*

## Joan of Arc

**T**HE biography of Joan of Arc is unique among the biographies of the world, because it is the only story of a human life which comes to us under oath, the only one which comes from the witness stand. This maiden was born at Domremy, one of the humble villages in northeast France where the plain peasants lived out their lives, scarcely hearing more than a rumor of the wars and strife that raged around them on every side. Within their humble homes was guarded all of truth, honor, integrity and religion that lived in all of France. Joan was trained in the plain ways of her time and country; she never learned to read or write, but was taught to spin, and became skillful with her needle. She is a memorable specimen of the simple religion of the ages before the Reformation. It is said of her that "she was endowed with great physical vigor, a vivid imagination, a sweet and powerful voice, a beautiful form, a graceful dignity of manner, and extraordinary force of character."

While this humble but divinely gifted girl was growing up, her native country, by dishonor and turbulence at home and foreign invasion, had been reduced to a desperate state of poverty, misery and bloodshed. The people were divided into two factions by their lordly masters; one fighting on the side of the English invaders, and the other for their own king, Charles VII. We may faintly imagine how this war-ridden land was torn asunder.

In 1428 there was only one important city in all of France still left to the French king, and that was Orleans, and the English began a siege of this, the last bulwark of the nation.

Joan, living in the borders of the deep forest, heard the echoes of these things. The great powers within

her rendered her restless, and a vague longing which she could not name or place took possession of her. All her life she had cherished the thought that one day her beloved native land might be free from foreign oppression.

When the fierce conflict finally reached even to her native village, in answer to her fervent prayers mysterious voices began to speak to her and to guide her, and she believed that she had received a message from Heaven to go and liberate France. She hearkened to the voices and in spite of the prayers, entreaties, and commands of her parents and friends she began her preparations to go to Chinon, several hundred miles from her home, where the king was holding court. She said that Heaven had directed her to wear a man's suit of armor. This she did, and protected by five or six men who believed in her mission, she set out for the king's headquarters. Even though there were many obstacles, her interview with him was successful, and the Maid of Orleans rode forth at the head of an army, and led her France to victory. Then she crowned Charles king at Rheims, and her work of saving France was completely accomplished.

It is said that Joan of Arc is the only entirely unselfish person whose name has a place in profane history. No vestige or suggestion of self-seeking can be found in any word or deed of hers. She was truthful when lying was the common speech of men; she was honest when honesty was a lost virtue; she was full of pity when merciless cruelty was the rule; she was honorable in an age which had forgotten what honor was. She was true in an age which was false to the core; she was dignified and of dauntless courage when these things had perished in the hearts and minds of her countrymen; and spotlessly pure in mind and body when society in the highest places was foul in both. To arrive at a just estimate of any man's

life one must judge by the standards of his time, not by our own. But the character of Joan of Arc is unique. It can be measured by the standards of all times. Judged by any of them, judged by all of them, it still is faultless and ideally perfect; it still occupies the loftiest place possible to human attainment.

—*Grace Stevens.*

## Holy Night, Peaceful Night

**S**NOW and whiteness and a feeling of hushed silence lay everywhere. Day before yesterday the battlefields of France lay dull and brown, now trenches and all the scarred surface of the battle grounds seemed as innocent under their cover of whiteness as the fields of some far away farmstead back in God's country.

It was Christmas Eve. What cared the Generals and the Rulers of Destiny for that?

Through the trenches the word ran that the enemy were "expecting us to lay off tonight, and would try to get us. We'd show 'em!"

The boys were having their "grub," now—dinner, supper, call it what you will. Most of the men discussed the possibility of the "Freddies" attacking tonight.

"Germany is the land of Christmas," suggested one nervous young chap. "I'm betting on their being up to some high jinks of their own."

"Bob thinks old Kaiser Bill is hanging up his sock," laughed one of the others.

"I'd like to chuck a bomb in it," said another young fellow savagely. The others chuckled and the one called Bob laid a hand on his sleeve.

"You got the 'danger hole' tonight, didn't you, West?"

West nodded, and for a time there was silence. The "danger hole" was the worst place in this trench in case the Freddies came over. There was not a man in that company who consciously, or unconsciously, had not breathed a deep sigh of relief when the Captain, running a coolly calculating eye over his men, had called West to take observations at the "danger hole."

Grub was over. Silently, almost indifferently, the boys filed into their places in the trench. The



man at West's right touched him with fingers that trembled.

"It's Christmas, West. What are your folks doing, d'you 'spose? My kids are hanging up their stockings now. And the old woman—you ain't married, are you? You ought to thank God for that now."

He paused abruptly, and West turned from him impatiently and stared up at the sky. He was shaking with a fear that shamed him. He settled his back against a side of the trench and looked up at the stars. If he was up there, he reflected, he could see what those "Freddies" were up to.

The man on the left was whistling under his breath, "Holy night, peaceful night, all is—" West stopped him roughly. "Shut up," he said huskily.

The man glanced at the set, white young face beside him and stopped whistling.

"Get your nerve back, kid," he advised. "Being all keyed up three days is what ails you."

"If they'd only strike and get through with it," muttered West.

His thoughts came back in a circle to the fact that it was Christmas Eve. "Holy Night—" On such a night as this his mother had first told him of the shepherds guarding their flocks, of the shining hosts of angels, and the Mary—mother and her tiny Son in the dim stable. He was nearer now than he had ever been before to the country whence that holy night came.

West was remembering last Christmas—there had been a dance, and he, tall and boyishly shy in his new uniform, had discovered that Eleanor was the only girl. That dance had stood out from all others. Going home from the dance he and Eleanor had planned to go to a little near-by church for the Vesper service on Christmas Eve.

One year ago tonight—; he straightened up and took a keen searching look over the dark expanse that was "No Man's Land," then sank back again to his thoughts of last year.

There was snow on the ground, he remembered, and he and Eleanor walked through it, and into the dim church. The candles on the altars threw flickering lights on the Christmas greens, they made stars in Eleanor's radiant eyes, and danced on the diamond on her finger.

"And there were in the same country—" read the rector. Then the choir was chanting softly, "O, Holy Night." Now he and Eleanor were kneeling for prayer, and he was watching the sweep of dark lashes on her cheek. Now the prayer was ended, and the fragrant softness of her heavy furs brushed his face as they arose.

Up in the front he could see his father, his mother's slim figure beside him. It came over him suddenly that he and Eleanor would always be coming to church together like that. He whispered it to her, and her eyes filled with tears. He knew she was thinking, "If he comes back."

He came back to the present with a start. He was going back! Of course he was. He looked around. It was snowing now, snowing hard.

Through West's mind flashed something he had heard the General say, "They think if it snows we'll not watch 'em." He leaned forward his eyes searching the thick darkness. He felt, rather than saw, something that made him believe something was wrong. The snow stung his eyes as he looked.

There was a movement over in "No Man's Land," and swiftly West gave the signal. It passed along the trench, and the enemy, bent on surprising a trench full of drowsy men, were met by soldiers who seemed to have been lurking there only to draw them away from their trenches.

The night was silent no longer. The snow was lighted with vivid flashes of crimson. West seemed to be fighting in a dream. The whole world seemed one bright red glare and out of it there was a soldier advancing whom he must kill. Then suddenly the



figure was upon him. West was conscious of being face downward in the snow. Then blackness . . .

After a long while there was a candle casting flickering shadows over a dim, warm church, and out of the shadows shone a sweet, patient face, the Virgin Mother. As he looked it turned into his own mother's face, and beside her, Eleanor. And her eyes, shining like stars with the candle light in them, looked directly into his.

Somewhere near, the choir boys were singing softly, "All is calm, all is light." The light went out swiftly, and West lay quiet in the snow.

—*Anna Penny.*

## Her Dream

"Where to and how many?" the ticket man said,  
As through the station window he spied  
A smiling youth with down-bowed head—  
"Just two to Fairyland"—the youth replied!

So arm in arm they boarded the train  
To Fairyland so far away,  
Where she as Lady and Queen would reign  
In the land of a timeless day.

Away they sped o'er mountains and plains,  
Across the lakes and rivers and streams,  
To a world without sorrow, or woe, or pains,  
To the world of their day-time dreams.

To a world of flowers, and mirth and song,  
To a land of love and bright sunshine;  
Where birds in the trees sing all the day long,  
Where beautiful thoughts entwine.

Ah! 'twas the home where fairies dwell—  
The garden of flowers and streams,  
Of roses, humming birds, love and—ah, well,  
For her Fate! It was only a dream.

—*Mary Reynolds, '19.*

## The Soliloquy of a Clock

“**D**ONG, dong, dong,” sounded the old grandfather clock eleven times in slow succession. Then it stopped.

All was silent through the halls and chambers of the great house for the next sixty minutes, except the regular “tick-tock-tick-tock” of the deeply thinking clock!

Exactly one hour later, the same deep, sonorous tones rang out—t-w-e-l-v-e! Midnight,—and up the broad stairway, through the twenty-four chambers, and even into the silence of the cellar, the chimes resounded!

“At last,” said the clock, lazily stretching both hands on the dot, “it has been long in coming! Fifty years old this hour tonight!”

(In fright, a lonesome little spider forsook its cobweb at the top of the clock and swinging to the floor, it scuttled off into the corner!)

“Please be sociable,” said this ancient time-piece, perhaps a trifle irritated at the spider’s manner. “I’ve been watching you many days, thinking what a pleasant chat we’d have on this, my anniversary, and here you hurt my feelings by running off in that hasty way!”

“Hasty! Hasty *indeed!* Do clocks speak every day? I’ve been living peacefully in this hall for some time, and never before has anything happened like this! Hasty! who wouldn’t be hasty?”

“I beg your pardon,” said the clock. “And now let us be friends, for I have much to say and only one hour in which to say it. One hour in fifty years!” the clock repeated rather plaintively. (In sympathy, the spider drew nearer and settling itself, prepared to listen.)

There was no light in the great hall, except the moon as it shone in the window. Through a broken pane,

every now and then, a gust of icy wind entered, stirring the heavy curtains. To one not used to these surroundings, it seemed weird and ghostly. The clock talked on at an even pace, the only interruption being the crack and creak of the floor as the atmosphere grew more chilly—this at wide intervals through the stillness of it all!

“Just such a night that it happened. The mystery remains, though, how the man entered. The window, which was carelessly left open, could not have been reached on account of the *moat below*. T’was a miracle! And then—ah, my little mistress! How well I can remember her as she stood at the top of those stairs, her white flowing robes about her and with arms outstretched! That vacant stare of a somnambulist; I shudder as I think! Then suddenly and swiftly she came down the stairs. Quietly, too, so quietly, that the man did not hear her steps. Straight to the open window she walked and put forth her hand as if beckoning some one. “Come, dear Jack,” she cried. It was then that the man heard! Stealthily, he reached the hall—the steps—the window—then stopped paralyzed with fear at the sight before him. The moon’s ray cast a halo about the head of my mistress; the wind had tossed her hair; little wonder that he thought her a spirit!

“Come, dear,” she called again, leaning from the window. Then the crash, as the silver pieces dropped from the man’s hands! A scream from her, as her startled eyes beheld the burglar before her, and she disappeared in—into—the—!”

Whirr-r-r-r! Dong!

One o’clock—and up the broad stairway, through the twenty-four chambers and even into the silence of the cellar the chime resounded!

Again, all was still and asleep through the great house—except the little spider, who scurried back to his home!

(He knew!)

—*Flossie Nairne.*

# THE FOCUS

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Published monthly during the school year by the Students' Association of the State Female Normal School, Farmville, Virginia. Subscription price, \$1.00 per year.

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*The Focus* is published nine times a year at Farmville, Va., by the Students' Association of the State Normal School. There are no stockholders, no bondholders, mortgages, nor other security holders.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 2nd day of October, 1912.  
J. L. BUGG, Notary Public.

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## Editorial

### A NEW YEAR

"The old order changeth, giving place to the new."

Every day, nay every moment, in our great universe changes are taking place—some that are of great importance; some that affect us but slightly. The old *Focus* staff has marched out after a year of faithful service, of hard work, and achievements. The new staff has come in ready for service and work. The new year of our magazine has begun. We realize that nothing can exist in a static state: it must either go forward or lag behind. We are living in a progressive age. Shall we not come up to the standards of that age? Let this be the best year we have ever had!

Girls of the Normal School, do you realize that this is *your* magazine, to make or to mar—to do as you wish with? The staff is powerless without your

co-operation. We beg you to work with us, to give us your suggestions, to contribute to its columns, and in every way to show evidence of your interest and willingness to co-operate with us in making *The Focus* a true index to the spirit of S. N. S. Our new girls, who came to us in September, and who for a time felt that they were not quite a part of us, have now become firmly established, and we are expecting great things of them. Come to the front and join our old contributors. Our magazine should be much larger and we are counting on you to make up this deficiency.

To our friends, our sister colleges, we extend anew the hand of friendship. We invite you to read our magazine and in turn send us your publications that we may have the privilege of reading them. We want your honest criticisms and feel sure that from your viewpoint you can present to us truths which we otherwise could not see.

Let us hope for a successful year, let us work for it, and let us have it!

—S. M.

### THINK ON THESE THINGS

How quickly time passes when all is well. Before we have realized it the time is close upon us for the election of officers for our Student Association, and what a responsibility that is for each of us! To see that the right girls are chosen for the places and are those who will do the best for our school, is a duty of every individual girl, and though we may not realize it, each vote means much towards accomplishing this.

It seems a twist of human nature that we are so apt to vote for the girl herself rather than for her ability to fill the position. However, we cannot do our school a greater injury than to be unfair in the choice of our leaders. Because a girl is pretty, attractive or popular does not mean that she is the right girl for president of the Student Association.

Let us think carefully before we cast our vote and be careful that outside things do not affect our decision.

In the short time left before the elections, let us choose carefully the girls whom we think are the best ones for the places and do all we can to get them elected.

— N. L.



\* \* \* Here and There \* \* \*

The following *Focus* officers have been elected:

Editor-in-Chief.....	Shannon Morton
Assistant Editor-in-Chief.....	Nellie Layne
Literary Editor.....	Marion Moomaw
Assistant Literary Editor....	Katharine Timberlake
Business Manager.....	Myrtle Reveley
1st Assistant Business Manager.....	Emma Hunt
2nd Assistant Business Manager....	Mary Ferguson
Exchange Editor.....	Ava Marshall
Assistant Exchange Editor.....	Elizabeth Campbell
News Editor.....	Louise Thacker
Assistant News Editor.....	Grace Stevens

The following Literary Societies have elected officers for the spring term:

ARGUS

President.....	Edna Putney
1st Vice-President.....	Catherine Riddle
2nd Vice-President.....	Ernestine McClung
Recording Secretary.....	Martha Fitzgerald
Corresponding Secretary.....	Lucille Read
Treasurer.....	Katherine Field
Censor.....	Anne Gregory
Critic.....	Frances Robertson
Reporter.....	Rille Harris

ATHENIAN

President.....	Virginia Bain
Vice-President.....	Ida Wessells
Recording Secretary.....	Sue Bryant
Corresponding Secretary.....	Nora Edmunds
Treasurer.....	Clara Green



Censor.....	Patty Buford
Critic.....	Helen Brent
Reporter.....	Elizabeth Baird

## CUNNINGHAM

President.....	Virginia Howison
Vice-President.....	Florence Williamson
Recording Secretary.....	Katherine Ellis
Corresponding Secretary.....	Isabel Chandler
Treasurer.....	Ethel Gildersleeve
Censor.....	Anne Cary Geddy
Critic.....	Douglas Arthur
Reporter.....	Gladys Tuck

## PIERIAN

President.....	Mildred Lee
1st Vice-President.....	Anna Belle Lockard
2nd Vice-President.....	Munrovia Bunkley
Recording Secretary.....	Nola Johnson
Corresponding Secretary.....	Elizabeth Shumate
Treasurer.....	Isabel Hosier
Censor.....	Della Wicker
Critic.....	Ruth Gregory
Reporter.....	Ruth Coleman

On February 7, 8, 9, Miss Hayslett gave a series of talks in behalf of the Student Volunteer Movement.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ **Hit or Miss** ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Student—Mr. Grainger, did you give any E's in the last papers we handed in?

Mr. Grainger (smiling)—Wait and see, but if I did you won't get any Ease.

Mr. S. (discussing inmates of Williamsburg Asylum) Do you remember an inmate there who thought he was a grain of corn?

Martha S.—No; evidently you have been there since I have.

Miss M. (calling the roll)—Miss Ammond.

Miss Almond—My name is Almond.

Miss N.—Oh, you don't pronounce your name like the nut.

A new name for the Training School—"Over There."

"Ever hear the story of the two men?"

"No, what is it?"

"He—he."

### EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY

She—Pshaw, the world is just as superstitious as ever.

He—Why, you don't see one auto tire over the door where you used to see a dozen horse shoes.

### DOUBLE CROSS WORK

"You, sir," thundered the judge to the pickpocket, "are a parasite, a human leech, living off the honest endeavor of a nation that is heroically sacrificing itself to win this war. Answer me, you slacker, what have you done for your country?"

"Your honor, I'm engaged in relief work."

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ Exchanges ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

*The Blue and Gold*, Johnson City, Tennessee.—We like your new cover. It is quite an improvement on the old one. Your Literary Department is very interesting, and contains some splendid material, but we should offer adverse criticisms in several instances. First of all, then, let us question the spelling of “shown” in the first stanza of “A Dream.” “The moon hung poised in the sky and *shown* on the drops of dew.” Our minds are naturally prepared for *shone*, but when we get “shown” it gives us a slight jar, and we feel rather “up in the air” as to how it should be interpreted. The poem itself is very good, for the theme, though not exactly a new one, is treated in a manner somewhat unusual, and we “get the pictures” as we read. “Our Own Soldier Boys” is something which all of us are thinking every day, though not often expressing. Therefore it makes a strong appeal to our hearts, and we pronounce it good. We do not know what to say about “The Normal God.” It smacks decidedly of the irreverent, though this element would not be so pronounced if “God” were not capitalized all the way through. The spirit of the poem is not the kind of a spirit we would like to see encouraged—and it makes us wonder if you of the Tennessee Normal have Student Government. Usually, in this day and generation, rules are not arbitrarily imposed, or we might find ourselves more in sympathy with the spirit of disobedience to them. We, as a student body, make our own rules, therefore we feel that it is a duty and a privilege to “adhere” to them. Your essays are all good, but there is a decided dearth of short stories which we lament very greatly. “What the Normal School Has Done for

Me" is a splendid article, well-stated. I think most of us Normal School students, if they sat down and thought hard, would say things like that about our Alma Mater. "Longfellow, the Poet of the Common Human Heart," is also a good production, but it contains one statement which we should like to see qualified: "While Emerson, Thoreau, and Bryant preached didactic sermons to thoughtful and educated readers, . . . Longfellow stepped forth and spoke to the hearts of the people." We do not like the unqualified phrase, "preached didactic sermons" as applied to the three writers first mentioned. Everyone cannot write alike, and personally we are very glad, for there are times when nothing but a bit of Thoreau will satisfy us, or of Emerson, or Bryant, or Holmes, just as there are times when we feel more inclined to read Longfellow and Whittier in preference to everyone else. We quarrel violently with the insinuation that "the people," the uneducated masses, are non-thinkers. When it comes to that, many of them could outstrip us. We have searched the dictionary for "exault," but fail to find it, and in looking up the quotation from Longfellow we find that the Village Blacksmith is not said to earn "what before (e'er) he can," but "whate'er he can." We are not trying to pick the author to pieces, for, in the main, we agree with what she has said in praise of Longfellow; but we cannot help taking up for our other favorites. "Locals and Jokes" is a good department because the material seems to be in almost every instance original.

Our final criticism is our worst—your magazine is not well bound, for it came to pieces in the hands of the Exchange Editor before ever having reached the Exchange Table.

On the whole the January issue of *The Richmond College Messenger* is excellent, and should it prove as interesting to all of its readers as it has to us, the staff should feel well repaid for its work. The poem,

"To Washington," is excellent, but in the present time of war and strife when history is being made every hour, why not use more modern heroes? In the poem entitled "The Silent Martyrs," an excellent point is brought out and treated in a very thoughtful manner. The essay on "Why the United States has Entered the War," is to our minds good. It portrays a great nobleness and patriotic feeling on the part of the author, and should certainly cause us all to take heed before we proceed to live our old, easy lives. The spirit displayed in "The Slacker" is not good. This is not the time for slackers; hence let us turn our attention to more patriotic themes, such as "A Mother's Prayer." The author of "A War Dream" has painted us a vivid picture and one which is sure to touch the hearts of all true Americans. "The History of the Red Cross" is a very timely article and one which we enjoyed reading very much. We were also glad to see the article on "Camouflage." The editorials were also good and showed a great deal of enthusiasm. Your war department was very interesting and we are expecting next month's to measure up to it.

The stories in the January issue of the *Hollins Magazine* are excellent, but don't you think it would be better to have a "balance of power?" We should like to see more poetry and more essays. However, clear thinking is displayed in "Woman in the Industrial World," which must cause the thinkers on the subject to be firmly established on one side or the other of the question, and surely with such strong reasoning presented, the doubters must be convinced that they no longer have butterflies to deal with, but women. Again, your magazine could show more patriotism. Why not try some patriotic stories?

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