

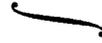
TWO SONNETS OF DISCONTENT

BY VIRGINIA MOORE

The Scourge

LOVE is not velvet of a courteous shade
To put a garment on my nakedness
And fool me into thinking I was made
For the assurance of a solar dress.
The love I know is not a silken thing
Spun out of little hungers and a lie;
It does not compliment my soul, nor cling
As velvet clings to arm and breast and thigh.

Love can be harsh as any hairy mesh
That monks endure beneath their cassock coats
To draw the blood from their too-earthly flesh—
The hair of horses and the hair of goats.
Tonight against my ribs I feel the curt
And pre-Elizabethan horse-hair shirt!



Let Me Be Stolid

SAPPHO is in me like a burning rod.
I think her backbone was reset in me
Who fiercely importune a heathen god
Whose ears are stopped, as she knew, even she;
I think she grew too restless in her grave
And longed for little bones like those she wore
When Lesbian cliff and cold Ægean cave
Could not put out the face she rankled for.

O Sappho, why must you return tonight
To course implacable blood through all my veins?
Let me be stolid here, and recondite,
And not the heir to unsolicited pains.
Phaön is dead these centuries in Greece. . . .
Lie quiet, Sappho: I have need of peace.

THE PARALYSIS OF THE PRESS

BY GAYLORD M. FULLER

ONE night twenty-five or thirty years ago the business manager of a New York morning newspaper wandered out of the proper area of his activities into the city room. In those ancient days the editorial staff still had a wholesome and fitting contempt for all those engaged below-stairs in the more sordid parts of newspaper-making, and so his presence was treated with the resentful indifference which it deserved. The man from the business office, in spite of the obtuseness characteristic of his kind, was not unaware of this attitude, and he went about cautiously, stopping to chat for a moment here and there at the desk of an editor or copy-reader whom he knew. At the desk of the telegraph editor his attention was caught by a spike on which was impaled sheet after sheet of special telegrams. His curiosity was aroused and he ventured to ask a few questions. When he learned that that was the "dead spike,"—that hundreds, even thousands of words of telegraph matter for which the *Morning Clarion* had paid good money were being thrown away nightly, either because the stories had not come up to expectations, or because something more lively and important had come in later,—when the business manager heard this his soul was wounded and shocked, and he resolved then and there that something should be done about it.

Something *was* done about it, or rather, it was attempted and blocked. It was attempted again and opposed again, but as the years went on the opposition became fainter and fainter, perhaps through sheer weakness and weariness. To-day the business manager walks into the editorial

rooms, not with a fearful hesitating step, but with the assurance and boldness of one in command. That first, faint challenge in the matter of telegraph tolls made a breach in the editorial defenses, and in the course of time the whole position was lost. Slowly but certainly, as the fumes of commercialism penetrated to the remotest crevices, every lingering spark of vibrant life which had dwelt there was extinguished, and the inequalities and idiosyncrasies which had formerly adorned and enlivened the journalistic scene were reduced to a smooth surface of monotonous mediocrity. The newspapers have followed the trend of the times toward mass production, consolidation, coöperative marketing, lower costs, high profits, mechanical progress and mental stupefaction. They used to spread ideas; they now only make profits.

No newspaper man with a memory can avoid making comparisons between the New York newspapers of twenty-five years ago and those of the present. But who can point out any improvement that is not wholly material? There are now daily papers of 56 pages, and there are rotogravures, improved color-processes, pictures by telegraph, head-setting machines, autoplates, automobile and airplane deliveries, and a score of other mechanical advances, but who can name a single improvement on the human side, that is, in journalistic craftsmanship? Has anything worth while succeeded the sparkling deviltry of the old *Sun*, or the virile crankiness of the old *Evening Post*? Where are we to look for vehement, militant political independence and disinterested champion-