

THE DIAL OF THE HEART

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The Dial of the Heart by Philip Green Wright

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PHILIP GREEN WRIGHT

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OF THE HEART**

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By
Philip Green Wright

The heart hath chambers twain
There slumber
Our happiness and pain.
Waken happiness in one,
In the other
Pain slumbers on,
O happiness, take care!
Speak softly!
Lest pain awaken there.

— From the German of Neumann.

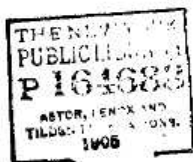


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*There sits an old lady, somber and gray,
A book on her knees upholding,
Slowly, patiently, day by day,
The leaves of the book unfolding.*

*And children are clustered about her knee:
"Oh, show us the pages faster!
The pretty pictures I'm eager to see."
"Each page has its day, little master."*

FOREWORD

I am told that Balmat was the first man to ascend Mt. Blanc. Time and again had he tried to reach the summit, but the steeps balked him. One day, though, he did find his way to the very pinnacle, and recounting it afterwards, he said: "I was king of Mt. Blanc; I was the statue of that immense pedestal." Since then many a man has climbed that alp, footing it up the precipitous heights, daring the untrod, changing crusts of snow and ice, leaping rifts where a misstep meant a dash to eternity, till at last he stood, a king, looking down on the lowlands lost in mists. But no weakling, no dependent, no one with much less strength than Balmat, has made the ascent. Only those who have previously tramped miles and miles to harden their legs, only those who have looked over sheer escarpments and assured themselves of steady heads, only those who have had experience, have gone up the heights.

Perhaps, comrade, there is an analogy in the foregoing to books and reading. After you have lived about so much, and seen and read and thought about so much, you arrive at the point where you see nothing new. You climb heights you never climbed before, but they are merely other phases of other alps you have climbed. We enjoy the fellowship of those who have gone the way we have, and our favorite writer is he who writes that which at bottom most reflects our own experience. He tells of the morning start all fresh and gay; of the advance up and on; of the crevasses where men go down to die clutched in the walls of ice; of the

light of the sun dazzling from peak on peak; of the glacier, the snowdrift, and the gasping for breath where the atmosphere is rare; of the groping through clouds; then, tired but grateful, of the stand on the summit and the look over the valley. We too are sad and glad and grim and tender.

Of the making of verses, doggerel, yawps, and blats, there is no end. Rare is the one who has approached his task saying: "I want to make something fine, something that will show the best and truest of myself, something that will be a gratification to the highest and strongest in me." Yet that is the spirit in which I believe Philip Green Wright has written out these pieces of poetry. Are they to be classic? Not all of them. But there are passages that so accurately, so sincerely, and with such heart-stir reflect what every thinking, feeling man and woman knows, that they will live a long time. Cut these words and they will bleed. There is a man back of them.

There are outlooks here across marshes where miasma lurks and reptiles creep and crawl, but here and there for your eyes are marsh lilies and scarlet sage. (You have seen marsh lilies and scarlet sage?) Beyond the marshes is the sea, and as you gaze, the wayfaring boats pass on to their ports. Farther beyond, the sea meets the sky. That is where the sun rises, that is where the dawn dares!

CHARLES A. SANDBURG.

Smayrna, Del., April 28, 1904.

Dedication

TO HER

WHO FOR MANY YEARS HAS WATCHED WITH
ANXIOUS BROW AND SYMPATHETIC
UNDERSTANDING THE HOURS
AND MINUTES TOLD OFF
BY THE MOVING
SHADOW,

*To My Dear Wife I Dedicate
these Verses,*

THE DIAL OF THE HEART.