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(The following commentary by the famous woman columnist, Dorothy Thompson, attracted my eye in a newspaper, and to me seems to be such an important commentary on world conditions that I feel justified in reprinting it here. Her realism and grasp of world affairs has here produced a document of despair, a feeling of hopelessness and cynicism that is a true reflection of international politics in our Brave New (post-war) World. This column, published on December 12, 1945, was distributed through the Associated Press.)

DOROTHY THOMPSON

The fear of the atomic bomb and its potential power to disintegrate the centers of civilization is, I think, diverting attention from a more obvious and likely danger.

If civilization is condemned to disintegrate in another war, it will be because the spiritual and intellectual bases of civilization have already disintegrated. The atomic bomb will merely give the coup de grace.

All thoughts of another war must include a few fundamental theses. These are: (1) the struggle will be for the mastery of the globe and the losers will pass out of history as powers or sovereign states—since this will be the only way of assuring the permanence of victory; (2) the victor, who will inherit a wilderness of material and social destruction will be unable to master the chaos, or govern so many divergent cultures, traditions, and tongues, and will therefore be compelled either to abandon the victory to anarchy or attempt to subdue it by ruthless terror; (3) the victory and the impossibility of consolidating it except by the most brutal methods will corrupt the victor. His armies will turn into murderers, plunderers, carpet-baggers, succeeding generals setting themselves up as little Caesars, and the victor will be pulled into the general maelstrom of anarchy and collapse.

This social pattern of the results of another war is already outlined in this one. Hitler lost the war because he was unable to make peace after he had, in effect, won the war. The Allies are, so far, no more successful after total victory. The unconditional-surrender formula, as applicable not only to armies but to whole nations of men, was introduced into this war for the first time

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1. The following information was obtained from the files of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Minneapolis, Minnesota, dated May 1, 1940:

[illegible]

IN DEFENSE OF PHOOBERGER

NOW THAT the gifted poet and essayist, Algernon Aloyisus Phooberger, is dead, and his critics have sufficiently mangled the remains, it may seem out of place for one staunch friend to rise to his defense; for indeed, it has become the fashion of late to harp continually on his regrettable deficiencies, to exaggerate them mercilessly, and to generally ignore the many sterling characteristics that Phooberger possessed in great abundance.

Such prominent periodicals as The Quarterly Critic, Sophist Musechain, and Rhymesteria have led the hue and cry. Greedily probing into Phooberger's chequered past, uncovering trivial deviations from the path of Virtue and evaluating them ~~mercilessly~~ beyond endurance, heartlessly dissecting that proud and lofty soul before the scandal-loving herds, the critics have almost ruined Phooberger's reputation, his personal reputation, that is, for his repute as a maker of marvelous music can not be denied by even the most depraved.

My first meeting with Algernon Aloyisus Phooberger occurred in the early Spring of 18—, when I was visiting the picturesque New England coastline in search of odd characters to place in a novel I was engaged in producing at the time. Weary with walking, I had paused to rest, sitting by a clump of reeds growing out of a sand dune on a long white beach, set with jagged reefs falling sharply down into the foaming sea.

Above the thunder of the ocean, a shrill, wild voice seemed to reach my ears. Turning my head, I saw a diminutive figure running swiftly along, splashing in the ocean's spray, and waving his chubby little arms. Removing my glasses, I sat there watching him with increasing interest, and he did not notice me until he was almost upon me. Then he pulled up short.

"Hello," I said into his startled face. He looked at me uncertainly, panting with exertion. He was dressed in the traditional knickers and high-topped shoes, but had removed his blouse. He finally smiled into my face, a radiant, sunny smile, and returned this greeting:

"Hello; the sea is loud and wild today;
I have been plunging in the friendly foam,
And splashing through the white delicious spray."

I was struck by the child's tendency to speak in spontaneous rhymed lines, and at first entertained some doubt as to the originality of it; but as my friendship with him lengthened, he continued to recite in verse rather than mere prose conversation, and as he commented thusly on many situations that he could not have possibly foreseen, my respect for his ability grew. As he advanced in years, he employed a great variety of meters and rhyme-schemes; if he

wished to discourse at some length on a controversial subject, he frequently gave forth an impromptu sonnet. This unusual tendency to speak in rhyme has always startled and puzzled his critics; and some have ventured to call him a madman. His published verses, voluminous and superlative as they are, comprise only an incredibly small portion of the sum total of poetry which he produced daily and without thought; and throughout my association with him he constantly spoke wonderful lines, a few of which I have retained in my memory or my notebooks, the majority of which have fled with the years.

But to return to my first meeting with Algernon, I talked with him an hour on that occasion, ascertaining his place of residence and his age; his verses flowed musically on, marred only by slight immaturities that later disappeared; and he altered the rhythmical structure of his poems to fit his moods or to describe what he was talking about. Once thunder sounded in the distant sky, and he raised his arm and, with fist clinched, said in his tense treble:

"Roll, clash, ye monster!"

His features were beautiful; his skin clear; his voice wonderfully expressive, and his eyes were the light greenish-blue of the sea when it dances in pleasant mood not far from shore. From the first it was evident to me that he loved the sea; indeed, this love is reflected in all of his published volumes throughout his life.

AS IT HAPPENED, I took up residence within a few leagues of his family's house—his parents were moderately wealthy, descended from European nobility, and gave him every educational and cultural advantage—and he visited me on many a quiet afternoon, while, through a period of nearly fifteen years, I worked on my scholarly theory of the origin and development of the cockroach. During this time I got to know the young poet better, I thought, than did his rather strict and materialistic family. I can still see the figure of little Algernon, sitting in one of my huge chairs of carved oak with clawed feet and gargoyles twining up the sides, thumping through some musty tome, as the dying sunlight made a halo of his blonde hair; I can see his eyes stray toward the broad bay window of my study, and gaze pensively toward his beloved sea that glimmered faintly in the distance; and I can see him years later, a handsome and mature young man, of delicate physical structure, yet possessing a compelling sincerity and natural courtesy that immediately disarmed his acquaintances.

Up to the age of nineteen, Algernon Aloysius Phoebarger had lived a sheltered and cultured life. He had no use for what he considered "trivial, idle social functions"; he was inclined to disdain the companionship of his fellows, who could never understand his dreams and fancies, no matter how much they might respect him as a scholar; and he had been content to write poetry and madly absorb knowledge and sport with the sea, reading constantly of his beloved favourite, Nietzsche. This blissful state of affairs continued until the late Winter of 18—, when, at the close of a

dull, cold afternoon, he stamped into my study with more than his usual vigour, and addressed me directly, forgetting to speak in rhyme in the heat of his excitement:

"Professor! Professor!" he exclaimed violently. "I've met a girl! I've met a girl!"

"Now, now, calm down, young fellow," I said pedantically, removing my glasses and polishing them with a spotless linen handkerchief which I withdrew from my sleeve with a flourish. "There are many girls in the land, Algernon. Which particular maiden has affected you thusly?"

Lapsing into his habitual rhyme, he struck a dramatic pose with one hand over his heart, and declaimed:

"She is as pure and chaste as she is fair,
And light gleams sweetly on her fairy brow;
Dreams climb the languid tresses of her hair,
Slow-mounting that enchanted golden stair,
While apples tremble on the laden bow,
Above the slumbering sow."

"Come, come, Algernon," I remonstrated. "What is the maiden's name? Under what circumstances did you meet her? Is she of good parentage?"

The remainder of the evening was spent in spirited converse about the object of Algernon's affections. It seemed that he had been tripping along by the sea in a semi-nude condition, in spite of the severity of the weather, and that she had come riding by, well-muffled, in a carriage. He had spoken to her and asked her why she had come out in such vile weather, and she had replied that she ventured forth because she loved the storm and the sea.

Algernon's life seemed from then on to be predestined. He visited the maiden, Edith Foamflower, daily; he composed hundreds of love-sonnets to her (most of which were later given to the flames); and a mad light began to glow in his eyes—a light like that of the sea in an angry mood, when it is churned into spume by the chill Nor'easter.

"PROFESSOR," he raved to me one night as we sat before the fire, "I must have my darling! I must have Edith! Edith is in my blood! Come what may, I am going to have Edith Foamflower tonight!" And before I could speak, he marched tempestuously out of the room, his dark cloak swirling about him. A loud and thunderous storm shook the New England coast that night. The next morning the lovers met again, and were seen walking hand in hand along the beach at twilight (Algernon had always admired Byron's Don Juan); and as several Mrs. Grundies dwelt in miserable hovels about the beach, with no better pursuit than gossip, scandal began to grow up about the pair.

At about this time, Algernon had for some time been devoting his pen toward criticizing and satirizing the popular literary and political fallacies enthroned at the time, and had made a host of enemies, who, envious of his growing fame as a critic and lyric poet, scathed him unmercifully and never overlooked an opportunity to strike viciously at him. The fact that several of Algernon's poems contained favourable references toward atheism provided additional ammunition with which the castigated amoebe attempted to besmirch the poet's extremely moral character.

Most malicious of the critical attacks accused the poet of immoral relations with Miss Foamflower. This is a very doubtful point, doubtful to the point of absurdity in fact, ~~that~~ they still speculate upon it, even today. It is true that numerous reputable witnesses testified to seeing the couple sneaking along little-frequented boulevards at late hours of the night, and that Algernon himself was observed at dawn leaving her bedroom through a window on two dozen occasions, and that shortly after the poet's death, Miss Foamflower gave birth to a child who cried in iambic pentameter until his early death, caused when a tremendous volume of Shakespeare fell off a mantel on his head; but what proof is this? Very little relevant evidence, in my estimation. Phoeberger, being profoundly free and unconventional, enjoyed discussing poetry with his beloved at any hour of the day or night; and blushingly, I feel compelled to admit that, in my wilder speculations, I have entertained the notion that once or twice he might have kissed her faintly on the fingertips; but that the sterling poet went further with her is to my mind simply beyond the pale of possibility. I knew Algernon Phoeberger, and a more honourable and trustworthy youth never tread this planet.

AMID the fierce literary wars and scandalous personal censure that raged and eddied about him, Phoeberger remained prolific and burningly articulate to the very end. Volume upon volume poured from him, critical essays and satire intermingling with delicate lyrics of the most exquisite beauty; and ever his fame grew, while the displeasure of his pen was feared from the Grand Canyon to the Volga. In the midst of hatred and envy and the other greiviances which the bestial herd customarily feels against a superior being, he wrote and loved his platonic friend Miss Foamflower with true fidelity, so touching and pure as to move the heart. At the age of ~~twenty-one~~ twenty, Phoeberger was at the very pinnacle of his fame, writing his wonderful essays and poems in spite of a greatly weakened physical condition brought on by indigestion and pneumonia. His family, his few loyal friends, and the desperate Miss Foamflower all prevailed upon him to relax and refrain from writing, but all in vain. As he once exclaimed while scribbling at his massive desk in the basement of an abandoned Baptist church,

"It is my duty to expose the vile;
I shall not shirk these labors for awhile;
While yet I am a live and cultured youth,
I gladly serve my mistress—Truth."

At this time, Phoebberger's only recreation was his strolls by the resounding ocean, which became less and less frequent, as his hours at his writing desk became indeed arduous. Often I have lain awake at night, worriedly pondering his condition, knowing that he was walking restlessly along the seashore, disheveled and alone, chanting odes to Edith or bitterly cursing his critics. His indigestion had grown worse, and as he could not control his ravenous appetite for chocolate fudge, he sank constantly lower, and it was known that he could not live much longer.

The end came soon. On a particularly bad night, I could not bear to remain in bed any longer; and, donning slippers and robe, I lit a fagot from the fireplace, and bearing this torch, I patrolled the windy beach in search of my poor friend. I encountered Edith suddenly, bearing aloft a torch of her own, also searching for her friend; and for some time we walked up and down the beach, shouting "Algernon! Algernon!" in loud voices. A storm had come up, and rain was beginning to patter down, while the sea churned and roared hideously, and the fierce wind quickened. During the course of our walk, we were much alarmed by the violence of the sea, as huge waves were crashing on the reefs and foaming far up the beach.

Then, lightning made a white inferno of the Western sky, and, far away, we saw Phoebberger's tall, thin figure, standing on a dune, cloak and scarf whipping in the breeze. He did not see us, and our cries to him were drowned in the thunder of the sky and the sea, but his pale, ethereal face, reflected sallowly in the sickly glare of the lightning, I shall never forget.

The thunder died. He raised his right arm and clenched his fist, in much the same manner as he did when a carefree child on the beach, and I knew that he was preparing to render an impromptu address. As the sea heaved ominously, I heard his ringing words—

"Ho, now, thou Ocean! Take me to thy bosom!"

As he spoke these words, a gigantic wave rose up and towered above him. He looked upward in a petrified stance, and screamed "No! I didn't mean it!" but it crashed down upon him, washing away yards of beach and reef and overwhelming all in a mad chaos of swirling green that swiftly bore Algernon, lover of the sea, far out into the stormy waters. We never saw him again.

Muttering a prayer, I took Miss Foamflower's trembling hand in mine. I silently led her back to her home where her parents were awake and anxiously awaiting her return. With a few words, I left them, and walked home alone, more lonely than I had ever been before. The diminishing thunder of the sea seemed to murmur a name over and over again:

"Phoe-berger! Phoe-berger! Phoe-berger!"

Arriving at my home, I sat in the dim study with my head in my

hands, and the dawn arrived cold and gray and rain still dripped from the trees. A candle I had set by my side flickered and died, and something died within me, too, just as something vital and fresh and eternal had gone out of the world that night.

BUT, in hastily compiling these notes about one of my dearest friends, it has not been my intention to grow too personal, although I fear that in certain respects I have. I have merely attempted to give to the world a qualified portrayal of the truly good side of Algernon Phoeberger, the Phoeberger I knew, the fair-haired child sporting by the sea, the restless, fiery genius of a youth who died so soon. His few friends know what I say is truth; his malicious enemies may discredit it; but inevitably, if there be any justice in this world of ours, posterity will eventually grant him his place among the immortals of song.

For me, and for Miss Fearflower, there remain fragrant memories. For you, and for the world, there remain his glorious poems and his masterly essays. Read Phoeberger thoroughly—drink deep of Phoeberger—let him become a part of your life; for if you love the wonder of youth and the beauty of the sea, you should not neglect his volumes.

* * * * *

THE HAPPY ENCOUNTER

I saw sweet Poetry turn troubled eyes
 On shaggy Science nosing in the grass,
 Far down that way poor Poetry must pass
 On her long pilgrimage to Paradise.
 He snuffled, grunted, squealed; perplexed by flies,
 Parched, weatherworn, and near of sight, alas,
 From peering close where very little was
 In dens secluded from the open skies.

But Poetry in bravery went down,
 And called his name, soft, clear, and fearlessly;
 Stooped low, and stroked his muzzle overgrown;
 Refreshed his drought with dew; wiped pure and free
 His eyes; and lol laughed loud for joy to see
 In those gray deeps the azure of her own.

-- Walter de la Mare

UNDER THE WATER

(Silver Springs, Florida)

This is a realm of shadowy blue,
 Of murky ways and dim, pale light,
 A floor of reeds, a magic view
 Of vistas clothed in purple night;
 The sun in watery deeps is pale—
 A fern, uprooted, lazily floats;
 The twisting fins and gasping throats
 Of fish gleam in the watery vales.

A giant turtle paddles by,
 In this dim world of liquid haze;
 Below the water's deep blue sky
 Slide the sun's weak, uncertain rays;
 And shining bubbles float away
 Toward the top, where turtles rise;
 The round gray marbles of wide eyes
 Reflect weird wonders, night and day.

The strange, be-whiskered catfish swim
 With languid fins through ghostly weeds;
 Refracted sunlight, cool and dim,
 Streams through the maze of drowned meads.
 Far off, slow bubbles twinkle bright;
 The weeds sway in a soundless wind;
 The silent shades and shadows blend
 In distant deeps of misty light.

A swimmer, seen through frosted glass,
 Glides down, out of the world of man;
 And ever do the cold fish pass
 With gleam of eye and flash of fin;
 And there are streaks of greenish blue
 That rise up, beautiful and slow,
 From boiling springs far down below,
 To glimmer in fantastic hue.

When rain is lashing on the lake,
 The wondering eye below can see
 The myriad flashing drops that break
 Upon the surface, fast and free;
 It seems as though brief lights did blink
 On a blue ceiling, a flat rim
 Beneath which varied monsters swim,
 Tinged with the shimmer of the brink.

UNDER THE WATER

(Silver Springs, Florida)

It is a realm of shadowy blue,
Of airy waves and dim, pale light,
A world of veils, a magic night,
Of stars clustered in purple light.
The water deep is blue,
A form, a shadow, faintly blue,
The waiting time and gasping breath
Of fish in the watery vault.

Great white bubbles fly
In the world of light blue;
The water deep is blue,
A form, a shadow, faintly blue,
The waiting time and gasping breath
Of fish in the watery vault.

The water deep is blue,
A form, a shadow, faintly blue,
The waiting time and gasping breath
Of fish in the watery vault.

The water deep is blue,
A form, a shadow, faintly blue,
The waiting time and gasping breath
Of fish in the watery vault.

The water deep is blue,
A form, a shadow, faintly blue,
The waiting time and gasping breath
Of fish in the watery vault.

A deeper color slowly spreads
 In the diffusive elfin glow
 Through the late afternoon, ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ that sheds
 A softer shading down below.
 The weeds move in unearthly dance;
 Catfish and bream and turtles glide
 For ever on a gentle tide,
 In those dim realms of blue romance.

Here is a world as strange as dreams,
 Cool as the pensive evening sky,
 Filled with queer sights and grander gleams
 Than daily meet the human eye;
 A world of hovering color, where
 All motion is as smooth as glass;
 Here a flexed eel slides through the grass;
 Again the turtles rise for air.

While looking on the azure deeps
 Through windows into fairyland,
 One feels a sense of watery sleeps,
 Of swaying weed and shifting sand;
 Born with an elemental brain,
 How sweet it were to swim along,
 And never know a sadder song
 Than wash of wave or rasp of rain.

No sadder song than wash of wave,
 No sickened soul nor broken pride,
 No dream of worlds beyond the grave,
 Nor fame refused, and love denied—
 No sweeter sound than rasp of rain,
 No deeper thought nor bitter mood;
 No hope but cold blue solitude,
 Nor past regret and present pain.

This is a realm of dim, pale light,
 Of murky ways and shadowy blue;
 Wet vistas clothed in purple night,
 A floor of reeds—a magic view
 Where, gazing yet, I feel the wish
 To sink with all my lonely cares
 Into those dark and soundless lairs,
 And mingle with the staring fish.

in history—if one excepts the antique wars, which never involved the masses and the great interdependence of industrialized societies. The result is that the Allies have inherited colonies they do not want (Germany and Japan) which they fear to free lest they again become a menace, which they cannot equally divide, and which they dare not allow to be absorbed by one or the other of the victors.

This dilemma has only one implication—continued destruction, i. e., continued war. Defeat and surrender but open the gate for the continuation of the war against the disarmed. The human casualties resulting from this second phase of the post-surrender war will probably be as great as those of the war itself, and far more disintegrating to the mind and morality of conqueror and conquered.

A bombing crew dropping destruction upon enemy industries, are soldiers fighting against terrible risks of air-borne and ground-operated defenses. The brutalities of war are compensated for by the sense of comradeship and brotherly love among men facing common danger. The same men though they be in uniform "liberating" cameras, watches, and the virtue of women and blowing up industries before helpless and disarmed workers are looters and dynamiters and are likely so to consider themselves. Conquest without risk is the parent of crime.

It is doubtful whether the sight and experience of monstrous suffering breed compassion. Familiarity with suffering easily breeds contempt, and participation in causing it breeds callousness, as the anodyne for a sense of guilt. The conscience and sensibilities then either set up a condition of split personality amounting to neurosis or become progressively drugged, to the point where brutalities come naturally.

All the publicizing of the Dachau and Belsen horrors have not made mankind more tender of humanity. The demoralization of the American Army in Germany is a fact that cannot much longer remain hidden. Before a town hall meeting in New York, I recently predicted that millions of German children would die of starvation within a few months unless Allied policies changed. To drive the point home, I suggested that it would be more humane to re-open the gas chambers for German children. The response was scattered applause. The vicarious spectacle of the famished bodies and charred bones of Nazi victims had only turned the applauders into vicarious baby-killers themselves.

Saturday's papers announced that the enforced exodus of six and a half million German-speaking persons from the eastern lands, into the truncated, roofless, foodless, heatless Reich is now to begin in earnest—just at Christmas time, perhaps in commemoration of the Babe of Bethlehem?

The result will be anarchy, pillage, famine, and monstrous crime arising out of ruthless struggle for personal survival, plus moral disillusionment. There will thus be an acceleration of spiritual nihilism among conquered and conqueror, in which both will lose faith in any conceivable moral order.

The atomization and destruction of mankind, his civilizations, and his societies, is well advanced, and requires no further aid of the physical scientists. The dynamism of the Hitlerian evil is not expended. The rotting corpse of Nazism still exudes its bacteria to infect its sworn enemies. Communism has become national bolshevism, torn by the incompatibilities of the two concepts; democracy

has signed a pact with satanic forces; hatred breeds hatred, persecution—to the point where mankind may welcome the atomic bomb to put an end to terrible guilts, fears, and despairs of his own soul.

(Jack Speer has, in the past, published long extracts from Alfred, Lord Tennyson, for the FAPA. Tennyson was commendable in so many ways, for his artistic mastery of forms and technical versatility as well as his high moral character. It is good to know that his prediction of air transport and air war, as set forth in Locksley Hall, has achieved some renown in this century. The following verses are, I think, remarkable in that they so clearly anticipate the plots of many time-traveling stories. Here we have, in Tennyson's flawless clarity, the statement of a theme almost identical with that contained in the inferior Song of the Time-Travelers, published in Spaceways some years ago. The poet, having concluded his version of the sleeping princess legend, is addressing Lady Flora, to whom the poem was dedicated.)

L'ENVOI

(From The Day Dream)

You shake your head. A random string
 Your finer female sense offends;
 Well—were it not a pleasant thing
 To fall asleep with all one's friends;
 To pass with all our social ties
 To silence from the paths of men;
 And every hundred years to rise
 And learn the world, and sleep again;
 To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,
 And wake on science grown to more,
 On secrets of the brain, the stars,
 As wild as aught of fairy lore;
 And all else that the years will show,
 The Post-forms of stronger hours,
 The vast Republics that may grow,
 The Federations and the Powers;
 Titanic forces taking birth
 In divers seasons, divers climes;
 For we are ancients of the earth,
 And in the morning of the times.

