

Galahad-Oregon's Own Poet

WHOSE ASHES ARE ON BOSOM OF COLUMBIA RIVER

Legacy of Heroic Verse Left by Soldier-Dreamer Stamped as Immortal by World Authorities



Joseph Andrew Galahad, the cavalryman-poet.

APRIL 13, 1922

Nay—write for me no weird obituaries
With weary, mournful tune and dirgelike time;
For of such, though limned with grief, none real grief
carries;

Grief's not a thing of will! Grief is sublime—
Of tragedy and bitterness born, slow,
Like vultures—feeding on the heart. I know!

Grieve not for me—grieve not! I am not dead.
The body is a transient, useless thing
Which I have laid away. But far ahead
My spirit leaps—still left alive to sing
You many songs you've heard not from me yet.
I'll sing them high and clear—lest you forget.

And singing, as I go, among you here,
Sometimes you'll catch an echo from my voice—
And know with subtle heart that I am near.
Then you will lay your requiems, from choice, ...
Aside upon an old and unused shelf.
My epitaph? . . . I've written it myself.



His sister Betty, who has charge of his works.



—Photo by Pink.

BY DEWITT HARRY.

OREGON has lost one of her most talented sons. Joseph Andrew Galahad, poet, philosopher, soldier, died in Portland April 13 this year. His body was cremated and his sister scattered his ashes on the bosom of the Columbia, the stream he loved so well. These were his last instructions. Though by 34 years of age, Galahad had already achieved an enviable place in the writer's world. The marvel of it all was that this man, knowing that his days were numbered, worked for three years at fever heat to leave a heritage of verse to posterity. Born in Portland in 1888, Galahad loved Oregon with an intense fervor. This feeling for his home breathes throughout many of his poems.

Galahad, though he had achieved a prominent place in the foreground of world poets at the time of his death, left a number of posthumous poems in charge of his sister, his only surviving relative, with minute instructions for giving them to the public. He did not write with the idea of commercialism, but because he was imbued with a fire that could not be quenched. His works are pregnant with this consuming element and vital with meaning and life. Knowing that he was to die, he labored to the last to tell as much as he could of what he knew must be told, and almost the last thing he did was to write his own epitaph, leaving the original in care of his sister with instructions that it be published after his death and the date of his passing be the title.

Every Moment Was Precious.

Strange though it may seem to many that Portland did not know more of this man, the reason was that he was forced to keep to himself and conserve every bit of his energy during those last pre-

scious days so that he could carry on his work. Prolific days they were, and his facile pen was never still. He left, in charge of his sister, a vast store of poetry. She is now placing the first collection of these posthumous poems. There are six large filing cases of this work and she has not yet exhausted the first of them. Galahad worked methodically and in his last letter to her stated that the first case would contain his earlier and cruder efforts and that the work would get better as she went along. If this is the case the world will undoubtedly wait with bated breath for the immortal works of this poet, for already the world has gone forth that some of the earlier ones he has written are deathless.

Galahad was well and favorably known to some of the most noted critics and publishers in the world. His poems have attracted universal attention. The first volume of them is now on the press and will soon be released. Already they have appeared in some of the leading magazines of the country. Life was the first publication to take him up seriously and this weekly has given scores of his verses to the public. Others have appeared in the North American Review, Poetry, the Delineator, the Bookman, the Lyric West, the Writer, Country Magazine, the Midwest Bookman, the American Legion Weekly and Contemporary Verse. The last named publication dedicated its July number to Galahad. Contemporary Verse says:

A Man Who Lived His Poetry.

The record of Joe Galahad's life can be summed up very briefly. He was born September 26, 1888. His mother died of consumption when he was born, and seven years later his father. The boy was thus left with only one near relative, a half-



House near Gresham where he wrote epic-verse.

sister. He had to leave school before graduating on account of weak eyes. Finally he got into the army, where he served several years. In some way or other, "by grubbing" as he put it, he picked up an education. After leaving the army, apparently in good health, he was suddenly smitten with pneumonia, which developed into consumption. For a time he played the piano and pipe organ in theaters and orchestras along the Pacific coast. He went south in a vain attempt to save his life, and finally, after several operations, came to his sister at Portland, Or., in 1919. Here, finding that the normal life of a man was denied him, he built up for himself a life of the spirit. Lying on his death-bed in almost continuous agony for three years, he recorded his conviction that every moment of life was good, that friendship was a miracle, and that God's dispensation was true and righteous altogether. For with the increased suffering came an increased exaltation of the spirit. Thus when he died on the 13th of last April, his character seemed only more permanent than before to



The Tent Maker's Pupil.

Old Khayyam teaches, tho' long dead,
And I have gone to join his class.
Soon they will lay my weary head
Among the guest stars, scattered on the grass.

And you, who must remain behind—
Let no regrets make your heart sore.
I now depart—keep this in mind—
And, once departed, may return no more.

Remember me—'tis all I ask,
And never fail, for I will know!
I am but one who's done with task—
I came like water, and like wind I go.

I shall go out beyond the stars,
Where all the bells of heaven ring.
For, like a bird, soul bursts its bars,
And lo—the bird is on the wing.

I charge you, while you walk the earth,
The wine of life to never spurn.
The road is short to death from birth—
Drink! For, once dead, you never shall return!

Drink—the wine of life is sweet;
And I shall watch just how you fare
From my high tomb. And, I repeat—
Drink!—for you know not why you go,
nor where!

And say—"He would not have me weep,
Since for us all, when task is done,
We see the eager shadows creep—
Whether the cup with sweet or bitter run.

"Nor may I hold to heart the pain
That lives in every yesterday.
Since he, who now in dust is laid,
Aboide his destined hour, and went his way."

I beg you—do not grieve for me—
I shall not wake to hear you pass.
But in your heart, in memory,
Turn down an empty glass!

—Joseph Andrew Galahad.

those of us who knew him by the written word. It was the immortal Joe whom we had come to love, whom we still love.

His important poems are nearly all autobiographies, the heroic interpretation of his sufferings and his triumph. "The Knife," describing an operation, appeared in the North American Review for May, 1920, and at once brought a letter from John Masefield, which Joe called his V. C. From then on he never doubted his mission. He came to us in the fall of that year and we had the privilege of publishing "Vanguard" in March, and "Argosy" in August, 1921. The latter won the greatest and deepest response of any poem we have ever brought out, the issue being exhausted at once. Everybody wanted to know the man, to write and tell him that he had given a new largeness, a new glow to their lives. Hundreds of people were waiting for his first volume.

What was it in this man's poetry that swept us along with him as we had not been swept by any poet of America in this generation? Simply, we are sure, that he wrote what he lived, physically and spiritually. He wrote with fervor and color, with a virile rhythm, yet with simple modesty and a suggestion of humor as to the triviality of all his bodily ills. His story was one that

Saddened our lives yet made it great to live. Who of us had suffered as he did, and who of us could as indomitably affirm his belief in the glory of human destiny?

The letter from Masefield alluded to

that Galahad liked to refer to as his V. C. was as follows:

Boar's Hill, Oxford, England, June 11, 1921.

Dear Sir—I don't quite know how much of your fame is real, nor whether this address will find you, but I am sending this on the chance that it may some day reach the author of "The Knife."

I expect that a good many people have written to congratulate you on the completeness and rightness of that poem, but I should like to join their number, and to say that it is the one poem of the kind, and as true as it is feeling. Well done! Well done!

The best of good luck to you!
Yours sincerely,
JOHN MASEFIELD.

In his recollections Galahad tells of the urge to write even when a boy. As far as known his first real poem was written at the age of 12 during a competition staged by The Oregonian and Galahad won the first prize. Regarding one of his earliest poems he says:

"When I was a very little shaver I used to love poetry passionately. I had a sort of an inherent something that told me when it was real and fine—and when it was only cheap imitation. I never had the education I would have liked to have had, since my health necessitated removing me from school when I was in the eighth grammar grade. I can remember poems coming my way when I was only 10 years old.

Inspiration Comes When Youngster.

"I wrote a little two verse thing concerning an old bridge that had been taken down and replaced by a modern steel structure. I had never seen such a bridge nor known of such an instance—but there was in my young mind a clear picture of the whole thing and the feeling of regret at seeing the beauty replaced by unromantic steel. The verse began—
"They have taken the old bridge down—
They have blasted the arch of stone;
They have carried the steel from the town, etc.

"My feelings were not the feelings of a child—nor were the words of the verses the words of a 10-year-old child. But the picture came to me—and the words came out of the air like a voice speaking clearly."

Always close to the fountain of inspiration during his entire life, in his last days Galahad must have come near the head of our being. He speaks of this again:

"I mentioned, I believe, the fact that my schooling was limited, all the education I have I secured by my own effort after I became a man. But I have suffered from limited opportunities, even so, and there is so much that is unknown to me. There are many words that are perhaps common to the more fortunate people who are educated to a high degree—but these words are unknown to me. Now here—often in speaking to me those men 'over there' use words I have never even heard of. The first time it

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