

The fire in the drawing-room still smoldered, like the heart of a hospitality which I was outraging. Over the barricade of the backlog, as I poked it, the spurt of fat pine-knots aimed at the glasses of the bookcases and hit them. The books looked surprised to see me. The whole thing made me cringe inside.

The passion for truth, however, is a devastating power which has no patience with any obstacle, pious or otherwise. I found the book. I turned to the title-page. Again it was just as I had expected.

The so-called memoirs of de Roquelaure were published in Cologne in sev-

enteen twenty-seven. Uncle Sebastian may, of course, have seen them. But this particular volume which bore his signature—a translation, I regret to say—was not given to the world until long after the middle of the last century.

Great-granduncle Sebastian, as I but too plainly remembered, died in eighteen thirty-three.

The thoroughness of the artist stops at nothing. Peter must have loved to write that autograph, not with any wish to deceive, but simply and solely to bring his story nearer to the heart's desire.

## ON SILENT WINGS

BY MARION COUTHOUY SMITH

**T**HERE is a flock of weary birds, that go  
 Not south, but westward, with the dying days;  
 They fly in silence through the twilight ways,  
 Sounding no call of joy, no cry of woe.  
 One after one, like some thin river's flow,  
 The line goes on, athwart the morning rays,  
 Through the clear noonday, or the stormy haze,  
 Still winging toward oblivion, mute and slow.

No eyes shall follow them with kindling sight,  
 And none shall know the seas where they are tost,  
 When their spent pinions shall at last be furled  
 From the long striving of their hopeless flight;  
 For these are loves denied, and friendships lost,  
 And all the unwanted treasures of the world.

## THE WOODS OF MAINE

BY DALLAS LORE SHARP

I LAY listening to the rain spattering against the fly of the tent and dripping through the roof of birch leaves upon the sputtering fire and soaking down into the deep, spongy bottom of the forest—softly, as soft as something breathing and asleep. The guide and the boy beside me were asleep, but I had been awakened by the rain. The rain always wakens me. And in my grave, I think, if I lie sleeping under a roof of forest leaves, I shall wake and listen when it rains. Before the stars sang together the primordial waters made music to the rising land; before the winds came murmuring through the trees the waves were fingering the sweet-tuned sands strung down the sounding shores; and before the birds found their tongues, or the crickets their little fiddles, or even the toad had blown his quavering conch, it had rained! And when it rained—and not until it rained—the whole earth woke into song. Mother of music is the water, and, for me, the sweetest of her daughters is the rain, and never sweeter, not even on the shingles, nor down the rolled, fevered blades of the standing corn, than in the deep woods at night upon the low roof of your tent.

But suddenly the singing stopped, and the myriad rain-notes were turned to feet, tiny, stirring feet, creeping down the tent, skipping across the leaves, galloping over the forest floor, and jumping in and out of the fire. Then a twig snapped. Was that what had awakened me? I rose up on my elbow slowly. The tent flap was open; the woods were very dark, the dim light from above the roof of leaves and rain showing only shadows, and an ashen spot where the camp-fire still spluttered, and beyond

the ashen spot a shadow—different from the other shadows; a shape—a doe with big ears forward toward the fire! A bit of birch bark flared in the darkness, and the shape was gone. I could hear her moving through the ferns; hear her jump a fallen log and step out among the grating pebbles on the shore. Then all was still, except for the scampering rain, and the little red-backed wood-mouse among the camp tins, and the teeth of a porcupine chilled and chattering in the darkness at the big wood-mouse among the tins, and the rain running everywhere.

I dropped back upon my pillow and left off listening. How good the duffle-bag felt beneath my head! And the thick, springy bows of the fir beneath the bag, how good they felt—springs and mattress in one, laid underside up, evenly, and a foot deep, all over the tent floor! And how good they smelled! A bed of fir-balsam boughs is more than a bed; it is an oblation to Sleep, and not a vain oblation—after miles of paddling in live water or a day of trailing through the spruce and fir.

There's a long, long trail a-winding  
runs the song—

Into the land of my dreams.

But, speaking of sleep, there is no trail, except a forest trail, that winds away to a land of such deep dreamlessness as that of a woodsman's sleep; and no sleep from which a man will waken half so fragrant and refreshing as his. I do not wish to be carried to the skies "on flowery beds of ease," but I should like