

Baltimore Writers Describe Thrills Of Literary Debuts

It Was Exciting Moment When Their Names First Appeared
In Print Under The Titles Of Their Maiden
Literary Efforts.

By EMILY EMERSON LANTZ.

[The first installment of Miss Lantz's study of maiden literary efforts of Baltimore writers was printed in The Sunday Sun of December 18.]

Mr. Edward Lucas White, instructor in Greek and Latin at the University School for Boys and author of national reputation, undoubtedly knows more intimately the daily lives of ancient Romans than the average citizen of this country knows of current life in Baltimore today. His novels, "El Supremo" and "The Unwilling Vestal," are both unusual books—widely read and widely discussed. From an old account book, Mr. White kindly unearthed, for the benefit of this heart-to-heart authors' conference, the following facts concerning his first literary work.

"The first money I ever earned in my life," said Mr. White, came in the form of a check from the Atlantic Monthly, which reached me in April of 1891 in payment for a poem called "The Last Bowstrings," which was printed in the issue of the Atlantic for May, 1891. The poem was reprinted in my volume of poems, "Narrative Lyrics," and also in Stedman's American Anthology. The check from the Atlantic was for \$30. "The Last Bowstrings" was an attempt to convey to modern readers the furious and terrific emotions of ancient wars, based on lines 122-124 of Book XVIII of the Iliad, where Achilles, frantic with the agony of his own grief at the loss of Patroclus, says in his fury of vengeance: "I'll set some deep-bosomed daughter of the women of Troy tearing the tears off her tender cheeks with both hands, because of her bitter sobbing."

"The first cash I ever received for any prose fiction came in the form of a check for \$34 from my agent, Mr. Paul R. Reynolds, as the net proceeds of the sale for \$40, to Smith's Magazine, of a ghost-story entitled "The House of the Nightmare," which I had dreamed entire, words and all, some time during the night of May 22, 1905, and which I had written while in the country for the summer in 1905, probably in August. The tale was printed in Smith's Magazine for September, 1906.

"This was not my first printed fiction, for another tale, written about the same time and sold later, was printed sooner. This was a comic tale called "A Transparent Nuisance," which I dreamed entire, but without any remembered words, on the night of February 1, 1898, and wrote during the summer of 1905 while in the country in Carroll county, Maryland, probably in August. I had from my agent a check for \$50.25, on June 28, 1906, in payment of the net proceeds of the sale for \$60 of this tale to the New York Herald, which printed

it in its issue for Sunday, June 17, 1906."

An Easter Bride.

Lucy Meachem Thruston introduced both herself and Mistress Margaret Brent to American readers when she wrote her first most delightful historical novel, the heroine of which was that fascinating and courageous woman of Colonial days, "Mistress Brent." That novel was begun as a series of historical essays, but transposed at the suggestion of Mrs. Thruston's publisher into fiction of compelling interest. It has been followed by constant and most valuable literary work.

"The first story I sold?" said Mrs. Thruston. "What a wonderful day in which to be recalling it, the dark end of a winter day and the first hour I have had to think, according to the dictates of fancy and joy, for two months. The very first hour for memories! And the first story was a memory also. I have an idea most first stories are. This was called 'An April Bride.' It crystallized my earliest recollections. It told of an old spring, a ravine in the pine woods and a blossoming plum tree. And that is the very earliest picture my imagination, fancy, recollection, call it what you will, holds.

"The spring was of especially fine water. I used to beg for the adventure of accompanying the servant who went for it. If I tagged along, Venie, black as the ace of spades, my nurse's grandchild and my distinct pal, tagged also.

The story—pure fabrication—is of an Easter Sunday, when we 'borrowed' a lace curtain and made off for this particular spot in the pine woods above the spring. On the hillside blossomed a plum tree.

"Furbished with plum blooms and the lace curtain, the bride—myself—is entranced with her own loveliness—or dilemma—when she becomes frightened by a dog. Stories of a bear are abroad. The bride tears down the hill slope, loses footing on the slippery needles and has adventure after adventure. They are funny ones, too. I do not wonder that the story sold. At any rate, The Golden Days bought it and sent me a check for \$7.

"I was going out of the door in that little house on John street where brides and grooms and young writers and artists lived up and down the way when the postman passed me and shook his head. The story had been so long on its venture that I had given it up. I had consigned it to the Sargossa of lost tales. But our square was the last on the postman's route. He went on down to the corner, gave his United States grip another shake, looked inside, back at me and grinned. He came back to the step: 'Here, I didn't know I had this.' And 'this' was that magical acceptance and check.

"I have not the slightest idea what I did with the money. I have still a rough copy of the story. I wish I had the \$7, too. That is, I wish one could spend money and have the joy of spending it, and then find that in some Aladdin-open sesame-joyous way one still had the money again."

Sage Reflections Of A Cat.

Mrs. Harriet Lummis Smith is one of the most popular and progressive presidents the Woman's Literary Club of Baltimore ever elected to office and, despite her removal to Philadelphia as a place of residence, she is still one of the local group of writers. Her novels and short stories are cheerful and successful examples of the best type of modern story—intimate character studies of delightful flavor.

Mrs. Smith said: "Thank you for including me in the list of Baltimore writers. In spite of a three-year resi-

dence in Philadelphia I am still a thoroughgoing Baltimorean.

"My first literary work was done when I was still a schoolgirl and wrote some humorous verses entitled 'Two Mothers.' They expressed the complacent reflections of an old mother cat as she compares her precious offspring with the backward human baby in the household. The Youth's Companion accepted it for their children's page, paying me \$5 for it, and published it with a very pretty illustration. About the same time I wrote another child's poem, for which the St. Nicholas paid me the same amount. The verses I have written since have cost me a tremendous amount of nervous energy, 16 or 20 lines taking more 'out of me' than 10,000 words of prose. But those early verses rippled off through the end of my pen without conscious effort.

(To Be Continued.)