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by Andy Klar

All Beth wanted was to make sure the package got to the editor of the Gateway. No publicity, no publicity at all.

The package in question was wrapped in brown paper, then white paper with pink ribbon around it, and inside that there was a beautiful silk covered box, then wrapping tissue and finally... five copies of the very first issues of the Gateway.

Beth lives in Vermilion, a town 120 miles east of Edmonton, managing her own apartment house. A red brick building, well made. In 1918, it was one of the best in Vermilion but now it isn't as popular anymore.

A lot of kids from Alberta College went to the University to form the core of its first class. They were mostly the theologues.

Although she does not go out very much, Beth still cleans the building, conducts business with carpenters, plumbers and tenants and talks animatedly with visitors. That's pretty good for someone past eighty.

Her exact age is known only to a few people because, as Beth puts it, "what I am allergic to, besides interviews and being photographed, is telling my age". And to eliminate all possibilities of misunderstanding she adds: "I think asking about one's age smacks of rudeness".

One would think she'd be proud of it but then she explains: "I don't live in the Past too much. People come here and say, 'oh, you were one of the first students of such and such a school; what was it like then?' But I don't want to bothered with that and I just send them flying. Yessir, just send them flying. Why would they be interested in that ancient history?"

Beth can be firm, alright, but she is one of the kindest and most lovable persons one could ever meet. She probably does



Beth Witherbe

not send anybody flying and, as you can see, she did give an interview.

No photographs, though... not now. From her dresser the pictures of a lovely eighteen-year-old emerge. On some she is acting in an Alberta College production. In others she is flaunting huge floppy hats or faces the camera with a little smirk on her face. Out with the pictures come letters:

"I hereby take very much pleasure in recommending Miss Elizabeth Witherbe as an elocutionist of high merit. She is a graduate of the Alberta College of Expression and has appeared on a number

of occasions before large audiences in the town and ... she has afforded the greatest pleasure to her hearers."

But, the Gateways, the Gateways! Why were they cherished for sixty-three years when Beth was not even a student of the University of Alberta?

These first issues, she explains, were sent to her by the paper's cartoonist and a schoolmate of hers from Alberta College. He died two years later "and that certainly changed my life" Beth says with a quiver in her voice. She apologizes for this sentimentality but she doesn't have to.

She remembers the days when they watched together the construction of the Parliament Buildings or wandered over to the platform that hoisted the buses from the river level as it brought train passengers from Strathcona to the hotels in Edmonton.

When we first came to Edmonton, it was a real dump. Just a real dump.

"Oh, we were so enthused about the progress in the West. Alberta just became a province and Edmonton its capital. There was quite a celebration; quite a coming out party for the young ladies."

"When we first came to Edmonton, it was just a dump. Just a real dump. My mother said, 'you'll see, it will be another Chicago. There is oil in there and a lot more things below than on top.' We laughed then, but a few years later new buildings were springing up right and left.

"Some of the kids from Alberta College went to the opening of the King Edward Hotel and they were called on the carpet for it. Were they ever. That must have been in 1906. It's hard to place it now.

"The MacDonald Hotel wasn't built then. The dumpy place on its site was out of bounds for us, just like so many other places. And right across from Alberta College there was a livery stable, and I

could tell a few stories about that." But she didn't.

Rather, she talked about the occasion when she and other students from Alberta College were invited to the King Edward school to hear about the plans of establishing a university in Edmonton.

"I think it was about 1908 and Strathcona has built up so much, I don't think I would even find the school now. A lot of kids from Alberta College went to the University to form the core of its first class. They were mostly the theologues."

One of Beth's great regrets was that she did not go to university. "My parents really wanted me to go, but I had my own mind and when I graduated from Alberta College I just came home to Vermilion. When the School of Agriculture opened in 1913, (now the Vermilion Regional College), I enrolled in the first home economics class. Our principal, Dr. Howse, was invited to be the first Dean of Agriculture in 1915 and did his best to persuade me to come to Edmonton with him and help form the first home economics class."

"I missed out on a good lot of stuff. I passed up two good chances to be a graduate of the University of Alberta. You see how foolish kids can be? But things don't just go the way you want them. You get slapped down quite a few times. But, I cannot really complain. I

I passed up two good chances to be a graduate of the University of Alberta. You see how foolish kids can be?

had a good life. And although I am old now and have difficulty moving around, I have no aches and pains and have all my teeth. And people are kind to me. You just can't imagine how kind are people to me. The trouble is we don't count our blessings enough."

"That's right. We don't count our blessings enough."

& nostalgia

WHAT WE THINK,

editorial from issue no. 1, Nov. 1910

To the number of troubles under which a long-suffering student body labors is to be added yet another with the publication of this, the first issue of "The Gateway." As the name suggests, there is something unique about our position in this institution, but university farthest north in America and farthest West in Canada, standing at the portal of a great undeveloped and practically unknown region, rich in potentialities of future greatness. The University of Alberta may justly be considered as the entrance to a great opportunity. Here too is afforded the sons and daughters of Alberta, many of whom would otherwise be unable to realize it, of securing a training which shall qualify them for worthy citizenship in this splendid new country.

The launching of this enterprise marks a step in advance. Two years ago we began with an enrolment of about forty and today well over one hundred are in attendance. Then the production of such a journal as the one now being published was regarded as a remote contingency but the time has come when a medium of some sort which will act as a register of student public opinion has become a necessity. The aim of the management shall be to promote the most cordial relation between faculty and students and in every legitimate way to advance the interests of the University. We believe that this journal will fill a real need and that it will more and more make its influence felt as a factor in student life. That it will at once be all that could be wished is hardly to be expected, but an honest effort will be made toward constant improvement.

During the term in addition to the usual items of purely local interest several contributions on topics of wider significance will be published. The editor wishes it distinctly understood that the "Gateway" assumes no responsibility for personal opinions expressed in contributions of this sort, as of necessity in the treatment of any question the writer must be allowed enough scope to

impress upon it the stamp of his own individuality.

To those who have co-operated with us in making this venture a possible reality we take this opportunity at the outset of expressing our appreciation. We heartily commend them to our readers who may be intending purchasers as worthy of their confidence and patronage. We bespeak the continued support of those interested and particularly of the students in the attempt to produce a publication worthy of the institution, the gateway of the Last West and of opportunity.

Letters from a son at college to his Dad
Feb. 1911

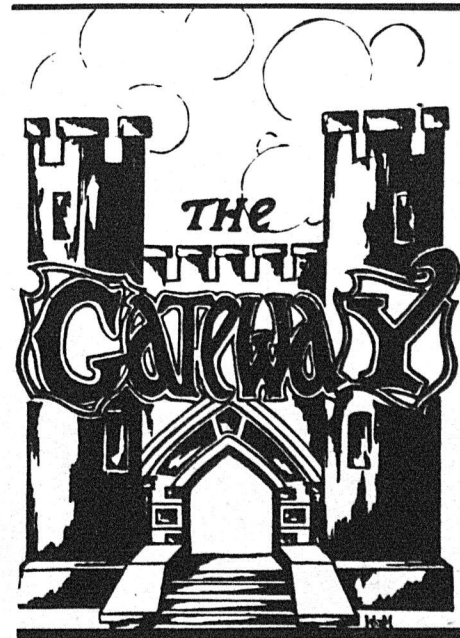
Whyte Ave., Strathcona,
February 20, 1911.

Dear Dad:

Since my last letter the exams have come and gone. Most of them were quite easy. In the chemistry paper one of the questions was "How would you tell the difference between a stick of phosphorous and a stick of dynamite? I said, "swallow it and kick yourself" which I have no doubt was right. Immediately after the exams came the "Conversat" which is an annual way of spending a dollar. Down in the refreshment room where I passed most of the evening, two of the students were clicking their glasses together and saying, "Here's to Luck" and similar phrases. One of them turned to me and said, "Do they ever drink toasts where you come from?" I responded, "No, Miss, we usually eat it," which crushed her. The idea of drinking toast! The weather has been lovely and I often go for long walks. I like to hear the birds twittering. Yesterday I saw a lovely yellow one trimmed with black which I am told is a wild canary. It was sitting on a fence and making a noise like a sewing machine. I attended my first hockey game last week. It was between the Varsity and the Y. M. C. A. The game is played by fourteen men and two detectives in plain clothes.

Every few minutes one of the detectives would ring a bell and the players, thinking it was dinner time, would stop playing, whereupon the detective would seize the puck and keep it for a minute. Each player has a certain name. One is called goal-keeper, another right wing, etc. One was called the rover, as far as I could see, because he always arrove at the wrong time. There were a lot of students watching the game and they made a great deal of noise. Some had loud voices and some only loud clothes, but all managed to make a fearful row.

I'm afraid I made an awful breach of etiquette at the Conversat. The programs said "Refreshments served from 10 to 12." I tried my best but I could only stick it out for an hour and a half. If I had taken another bite I think I'd have died. Perhaps no one noticed that I left before time was up. I've had my pictures taken as you told me to. I only got a head-and-shoulder picture, however, as



The "masthead" from the first Gateways

the camera was not large enough to take my feet. Still they will be enough to let people see how I look. I must now close this letter. I remain,

Yours ever,

Bob.

P. S. - Please send me the money to pay my fees. My fees for the second term will amount to \$150.00, not counting books.

And yet P. S. - Send me the money quick as the registrar is in a hurry.
Bob.

WHAT WE THINK Dec. 1910

That the recent epidemic of typhoid reached such proportions is a fact much to be deplored and it would appear that somewhere negligence bordering very close on criminal is chargeable; but now when at last measures have been adopted to check further developments it would be idle to discuss that phase of the question. However present conditions point to the need of some protection for students who may be stricken down by such epidemics in the future. It is a very real hardship for the man who must not only lose his year but also be put to the expense of a long illness in doctor and hospital bills. The time seems most opportune for the introduction of a scheme of insurance by which for a moderate fee the student could be assured that in the event of illness his expenses would be met by a draft upon a common fund established for the purpose. Whether any relief can be afforded the victims of the epidemic during the present term might well be considered first, and afterward some scheme for a permanent provision for the future. There is no doubt that the student body would co-operate heartily with the authorities to make some such plan a practical reality, and we would respectfully urge the powers that be to give them their immediate attention.