

1931

## Youth

Van Deusen Clark

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the mind of the Northerner. Perhaps something of the romance, the fire, the enthusiasm, the wander lust, the fiery courage of the Spanish American found a place in O. Henry's heart. Perhaps that restless spirit, a willingness to risk all on a turn of pitch and toss—mixed with a generous sprinkling of fatalism—perhaps all these found kindred elements in the author's own make-up. When this happens genuine literature is likely to be produced entirely independent of formulas and creeds.

As for O. Henry's knowledge of the Spanish language itself, he gives us a strong hint in "The Phonograph and the Graft," from *Cabbages and Kings*, when he has a character describe an evening's entertainment with certain Central Americans: "Their color was a diversity running from a three-days smoked meerschaum to a patent leather polish. They were as polite as wax, being devastated with enjoyments to give Señor Mellinger the good evenings. I understood their Spanish talk—I ran a pumping engine two years in a Mexican silver mine, and had it pat—but I never let on." Applied to O. Henry himself, however, the little verb "ran" should be replaced by the more leisurely, more expressive, and undoubtedly more accurate "knocked about," which so fittingly describes the restless spirit of the inimitable author of *Cabbages and Kings*.

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## Youth

By VAN DEUSEN CLARK

Youth—a blinding flame  
 Forgetting when  
 Withered fingers shall come  
 Seeking again  
 For some spark of warmth;  
 Holding night  
 Beyond the circle of  
 Fading light.