

The Hidden Light

MARMEE *The Mother of Little Women*, by Sandford Salyer. University of Oklahoma Press, \$3.00.

Abba May Alcott was the youngest of twelve children born to the aristocratic May family. Her childhood was strict but pleasant. She was an intelligent child, and became a brilliant woman.

Following her marriage to Bronson Alcott and the subsequent birth of their four daughters, she struggled through many years of poverty. Bronson Alcott was a philosopher and a teacher. He was a man born before his time. His ideals and beliefs were called blasphemous and absurd, and rather than give up his beliefs he gave up teaching.

For several years after this Bronson Alcott earned his living by chopping wood and doing other menial tasks for neighbors and friends, and by holding "conversations" as they were called, with the intelligentsia. Abba May Alcott took in sewing to help ease the burden of poverty.

At one time the Alcotts participated in a community life. After this failed they moved to Concord. The Alcotts moved innumerable times, but in each house, Mrs. Alcott made of it a home. Poverty overtook them again in Concord and they moved to Boston. There Mrs. Alcott became a social worker. In some instances the people she helped were hardly worse off than were her own family. After a time she set up her own employment service, but after two years gave that up. By this time Louisa and Anna, the two oldest daughters, were teaching, and helped with the family finances.

Although poor in worldly goods, the Alcotts were rich in love, understanding, and friends. Among their many good friends were the Emer-

sons, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Lydia Maria Child.

Mrs. Alcott encouraged Louisa in her writing. She encouraged May in her painting. In later years both Louisa and May were able to go abroad to study. Louisa began selling her stories. Gradually the family finances became more comfortable. Mr. Alcott became widely known and acclaimed for the brilliant person he was. Louisa gained fame and fortune from her many books, the most famous of course being *Little Women*. *Little Women* is actually the story of the Alcott family. Mrs. Alcott encouraged Louisa to write this book. She related many incidents of their family life which were faithfully incorporated into the novel.

During Marmee's last years she had every comfort she could wish for. Her husband and daughters were famous, old friends visited her, and she was very happy. She lived to be 77 years old.

The author, Sandford Salyer, has had a lifelong interest in the Alcotts. This book was written because he felt that Mrs. Alcott deserved greater recognition. Mr. Salyer has been a professor of English at the University of Oklahoma for the past twenty years. *Thelley Hess, '47 bus.*

Construction Work Begins

Although the weatherman has not been kind, construction is proceeding on the University's new football stadium expansion and individual track and field layout.

The \$970,000 football project calls for a new north wing of the stadium, raising the football seating capacity from slightly over 30,000 to 55,000. The field, which must be lowered six feet for the new seating arrangement, has been scalped of its grass, which has been cut in strips, rolled up and stored for return to the field. It is expected that

the sod will be back in place by April 15, in time to take advantage of the full growing season.

The present cinder running track will be taken up so that seats on all four sides may be built down almost to the sidelines. However, the destruction of the track is to be delayed as long as possible to allow Coach John Jacobs' track team use of it for training purposes. Elimination of the track will bring the spectators in the new north wing directly behind the north goal posts. The new wing will be built straight across from the east and west wings instead of around the track in the form of a horseshoe.

The new Sooner press box is a three-decker, forty yard structure containing one television and seven radio booths besides a booth for scouts on the roof.

The new stadium wing and the press box are scheduled to be finished by October 1, in time for the first Norman game this fall against the Texas Aggies.

Removal of the cinder running track has turned out to be a fine break for Coach Jacobs and Sooner trackmen. The old track will be moved two blocks east onto the edge of the university golf course. It will be on an east-west, rather than its present north-south alignment.

It is planned to locate the new 20,000-capacity Sooner Fieldhouse south of the track so it will break the rampant southwest breezes. The new track will be nine lanes wide and will have a 100-yard straightaway.

A new concrete track stadium seating 3,500 will be constructed on the south side of the track. The project is being pushed with all haste so that the annual state high school meet can be held there May 6-7.

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