

it is more likely to be the satisfaction of accomplishment. His opponents meet this with the thought, perhaps this will be the day, maybe this time he will loose and I will have beaten him. Other times they would say: "Oh if only we could see a look of satisfaction on his face when he wins; any indication of emotion would perhaps convince us that he is really human". But even when with disregard for all laws of averages he lays down a royal straight flush, there is nothing there to greet them but the motion of those long slender fingers and a quick glance at each player with his ever-shifting eyes. One might think that he is the lowest type of human being, one without emotion or feeling, but at least he is not a hypocrite as many of us who display false emotion in order to foster our material gain. There can be as little or no charity behind a smile as the so-called pokerface, and there is nothing more deceiving than the financial smile.

People are forever using P. T. Barnum's quotation "There's a sucker born every minute" to describe those of us who gamble poorly or loose through deception, but Burt is not really interested in our birthrate as long as our fatality rate does not grow to alarming proportions. It seems that every one of us is a so-called sucker in one way or another. Each time the bait goes out we reach for it and get stung. But I am writing for the Burts of this world, that small handful of men, who, right or wrong, have more determination and put forth more effort than all of the rest of us. Burt certainly was a perfectionist. What does it take and where does this ambition come from? I once asked him and received an indirect reply, which might have been the answer after all. His words were "Shut up and deal".

—DANIEL E. SHEA '59

A SYMPOSIUM ON EMILY DICKINSON

The Poetess who wished to be nobody

I'm nobody! Who are you?
Are you nobody, too?
Then there's a pair of us—don't tell!
They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!
How public, like a frog
To tell your name the livelong June
To an admiring bog!

In this poem the poetess expresses that attitude toward life with which she was imbued and which caused her to become known in her home town legend as "the white clad phantom behind the palings of the garden". Attachment to the privacy of her home

became almost an obsession with her, and even when she was as young as twenty-one she refused to visit a friend for a week. By the time she was thirty she would not leave home even for an hour. Each member of her family recognized the right of all the others to live as they pleased, and consequently the poetess met with no opposition on the part of her family in pursuing the secluded type of life which she preferred. Her family surmised that the reason for her being a recluse was that she had fallen in love with a married man, and had buried herself at home by way of refuge. "Nobody" was exactly whom she wanted to be, and nothing pleased her more than to be left alone with her garden, her books, and her few special friends.

It was in keeping with this philosophy of "nobodyness" that this talented lady refused to have any of her poems published during her lifetime, and she was extremely annoyed when a few poems, "stolen" by a literary friend, did appear in print. That she wished this lack of recognition to continue even after her death, is evidenced by the fact that before she died she left word to have her poems burned.

The question "are you nobody, too?" suggests that the poetess is looking for a kindred spirit, one who will understand her desire to remain unknown, and who will not try to persuade her to become the "somebody" that the genius of her poetry merited. It is doubtful if she ever found this "fellow nobody". She certainly did not find her in the person of her very good friend, Helen Hunt Jackson, who recognized her great talent as a poetess, and tried quite unsuccessfully to persuade her to allow her works to be published.

The "Don't tell?" of the third line expresses her desire to remain unmolested and alone in the peace and solitude of her own private little world.

Her use of the word "banish" in line 4 is indeed ironic. The type of life which this poetess chose to live seemed to many of her friends to be a self-imposed banishment. To this quiet, unassuming person, however, banishment did not have the usual implication of living apart from the world, it meant rather being forced to live in a society, which, for her, held no appeal whatsoever.

The second stanza of this poem shows how bored and unimpressed she would have been by fame and recognition. Anyone, she says, even a frog, could be in the public eye, could be recognized as "somebody". To her way of thinking it would be an extremely "dreary" situation and would not compare the least bit favorably with the pleasure which she found in being a "nobody".

But the poetess who insisted upon being a "nobody" during her lifetime became a celebrated "somebody" in 1914 with the posthumous publication of *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*.

—JACQUELINE CUMMISKEY '59