

## My Light of Friendship

Judy Winslow

THIS summer there came into my possession a most curious *objet d'art*. Straight and proud it stands as sentinel of my desk, protecting the various articles scattered thereupon. It maintains an aloof, black watch over my books, pencils, pens, letters, and radio; yet never would it condescend to mix with this heterogeneous group. It is a work of art, and art would not consider associating with such trivial, everyday items. Perhaps it feels out of place in the cluttered room of a college student and longs for the faraway land where it took form, the land of the Navajo and the pueblo. It is an alien in a world of rush and clamor, and it tells its legend in a language I cannot comprehend. This work of art which I call my own is, in reality, a candlestick of Nubian blackness supported by three stocky legs and shaped by the hands of some Indian warrior who found the pursuit of the white man's money less hazardous than that of the white man's scalp.

This candlestick is not to be taken lightly. It is much more than a holder of candles, for it possesses a strength of character with which I have become acquainted during my hours of studying. Like the Indian, it has a culture and a meaning of its own. Beneath its expressionless countenance are hidden the legends and secrets of its past, which it refuses to disclose. I shall never discover the reason why it stands on three legs instead of having the more conservative base of ordinary candlesticks; nor shall I know what slip of the potter's wheel brought about its lopsided stature, which makes it look as if it has partaken of too much "fire-water." So my candlestick will always remain enveloped in its shining black shroud of mystery, to arouse my curiosity.

The sheer obstinacy of my sturdy friend is another source of wonder to me. Unyielding to the changes wrought by modern conveniences such as the incandescent lamp, my candlestick stubbornly clings to its heritage as a giver of light and refuses to be replaced by more up-to-date means of illumination. Because of its determination to perform the duty for which it was designed in spite of overwhelming odds, I feel a sort of respect for my tallow and wick container. Some will say that my candlestick is foolish for setting such high goals for itself in the face of so much competition; but, still, there is something remarkable about such dogged determination.

Even though my candlestick has long outlived its usefulness to mankind, I could not bear to break its defiant spirit by packing it away to be forgotten, misshapen and unattractive though it may be. Instead, I shall permit it to maintain the place of honor on my desk for all to see. I shall let my light of learning dominate my utensils of knowledge completely, for only then will it be satisfied with its existence.