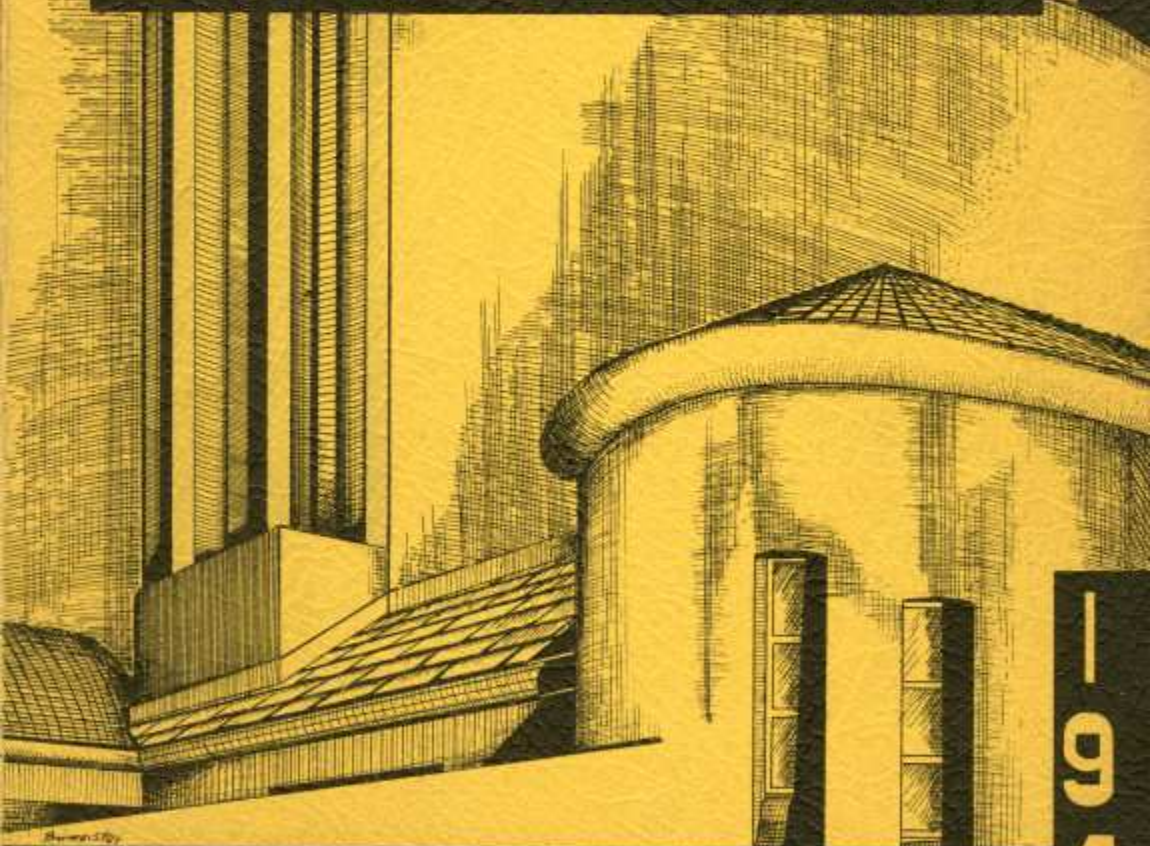


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EL PORTAL



SAN JOSE STATE COLLEGE
PHELAN LITERARY AWARDS

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EL PORTAL

Volume IX

June, 1940

El Portal, a literary annual edited
by the English Department of the
San Jose State College, San Jose,
California, from the best material
submitted in the Phelan contest.



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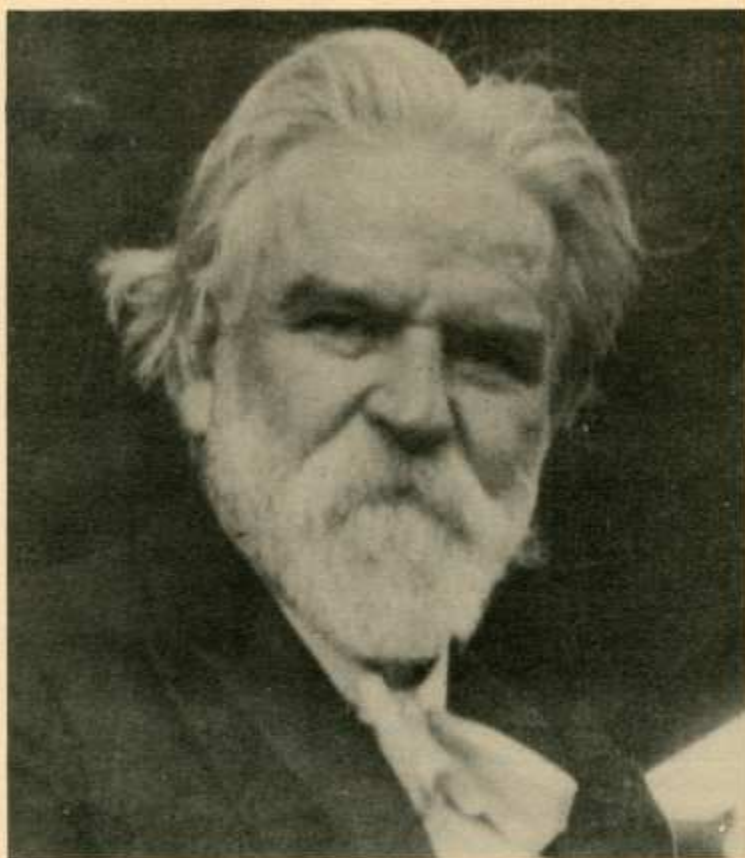
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PLAYS

The editors of *El Portal* regret that lack of space prevented the publication of the plays winning second and third prizes in this magazine:

A THING APART, <i>Second Prize</i>	Kenneth Wallace
THE SCULPIN, <i>Third Prize</i>	Christopher Soares

In Memoriam



EDWIN MARKHAM

1852-1940

San Jose State College pays tribute to
its internationally famous alumnus Edwin
Markham — poet, humanitarian, friend.



SENATOR JAMES D. PHELAN
1861-1930

Senator James D. Phelan bequeathed to the San Jose State College the sum of \$10,000, the annual income of which was to be awarded to students for excellence in poetry and for the Montalvo Contest as sponsored by him. The cash prizes made possible by the generosity of Senator Phelan have stimulated a keen interest in creative writing throughout the college. The speaker of the day at the Phelan literary program was Professor Hubert Heffner, Head of the Department of Drama at Stanford University. In this issue are found the contributions meriting awards and honorable mention. This issue of *El Portal*, containing the eighth annual literary awards, is dedicated to the memory of the sponsor of the contest,
Senator James D. Phelan.

Sacrament Before Dawn

By DOLORES STEPHENS

I

THE ARTIST

Why did you come to me, priest? I asked
Only to die alone under the sky, washed
By the cutting of the sea-wind across my face;
I am too drunk with the flowing of Sacramental
Wine, this brief intoxication of life pressed too
Closely, too feverishly: there were swift,
Halcyon days in my early youth that cast
A soft glow of color at my heels, like the
Shadow of wings across the earth;
Then I found the city and walked alone
Through the dirty streets, eyeing unkempt
Human forms with revolt. Once there was
A cry, and I saw a hollow face upturned
Under the street lights, mouth twisted
Like a wild torrential wind, and eyes filled
With chasms of darkness. I fled back to
The green earth . . . but Youth was gone.
And so I painted, and the great mad world
laughed . . .

. . . But now we shall watch the dawn
As the colors burn and spin in delirium-like
Bright shadows, too darkly across the
brain . . .

No! I shall not think of this beauty!

II

THE SOLDIER

It will soon be over, you say, Father?
All but the green, rolling slope with
Dandelions scattered in the grasses,
A bit of medallion and silk cockade;
Then shall I forget the feel of cold,
Spitting steel and the impact of warm
Bodies thrown against the earth? . . .
The silence pierces my ears with unutterable
Pain,—or is this black serenity another
Grotesque monster, pawing my soul with
twitching
Claws while I writhe in resignation?
You sent me striding into the trench-mud
With your blessing and my head held high;
You, who say "There is Peace for the fallen,"

And finger your rosary as you avoid meeting
My shattered form with your calm, grey eyes,
And still I do not hate you. I, too, am racked
With insanity, or the stupor of the beaten . . .
. . . But now we shall watch the dawn
Streaked with the pallor of the dead and
Drawn with clots of blood against the sky . . .
God! I cannot hear the guns!

III

THE CIGARETTE GIRL

What is this—this coolness like the odor of
Violets?—this breath like the floating of
Lilac over a summer stream? You know nothing
Of me, priest, or you would not say "My child,"
With this tripping of music in your voice;
Others would laugh sardonically enough and tell
you

I am only the bastard of despair and discordants:
Once when the shrill jangle of notes paused
For an instant, I emerged into the clear air
And wandered among the flowers, looking at my
Bright face and soft hair in a small jade pool
That laughed back at me . . . Once I dreamed of
Music and strong lovers . . . Then the Band-
wagon came
With a blaring crash of cymbals, and I danced.
"We are the great God Public," they shouted
with
Mocking eyes, and I was too hungry to reply.
Now I have nothing left to give, and the great
God Public crouches in waiting, for revenge . . .

. . . But now we shall watch the dawn
Like the bursting of flood lights over the
squalor
And the grasping. The music is sweeter;
we dream . . .
God! Then something snaps!

IV

THE FARMER'S SON

I must not die yet, Father—I have not
Given sons to the soil. I cannot die while
My blood is pounding with the rich loam of the

Fields. And Jeanie—the clods will bruise
Her white hands and parch them from amber
to rust . . .

When the fields were green and sweet smelling,
I arose from the deep fertility of the land,
And the fibers of my body were soft as a ripe
melon;

The earth is kind to the young—the unknowing,
And laughs in vagrant undercurrents.
Then there were sparks of rebellion,
And the soil coughed up its ripeness with
The grim face of a scavenger. I choke with the
Dust, the heat, and cringe with the barren chill.
Then I cry out in hatred to the embittered earth,
But she will not disown me, and I cannot forget.
Then there is no more struggle. I have absorbed
The blood of the soil for myself and my sons . . .

But now we shall watch the dawn
Smoldering like the red earth in March
Dipped into blossoming . . .
Jeanie! The earth is hard to its own!

V

THE CAPITALIST

Priest! Why do you stare at me with such
Odd directness?—as though there were
A smoldering coal within my breast, and
It burns your eyes to look at it . . .
Draw aside the blinds and look out over
The city: You see the gaunt etching of
Massive buildings touching earth like
Infinity. These are mine. My veins are
Flowing with steel, and my muscles are the
White heat of all the forges beneath the
Earth. I speak, and ten billion voices
Are silenced. I have but to cry out, and
These gargantuan steel frames will topple
Against the sky like paper, into crushed
Toy houses. Still I am a mild god: the
Man-machines are operated with precision;
And I am generous: fifty universities will
Honor my death with memorial chapels. If I
Am forgotten, the world will shudder in
poverty . . .

But now we shall watch the dawn
As it drenches the cold steel with molten
gold;
Why does not someone erase those ugly
tenements to the West? . . .
Lord! I cannot attend to everything!

Litany for the Farm Woman

By DOLORES STEPHENS

Here in the darkness lie the thin fragments
Of our brief, scattered youth, like brittle leaves
We fling forever on the ground when scents
Of pungency are gone, dissolved by thieves
Of dust—when it no longer matters how
We once loved them or clutched them to our
breasts;

Here in the blue, November gloom your brow
Is cool and still as my own hand which rests
Against your cheek. But we who dredge the green
Fertility of earth and find our breath
In the throbbing of life and soil have seen
Too much of fulfillment . . . This is not Death
That follows pain of birth and marrying,
Not Death, my dear,—this quiet burying.

Shadows

By HOWARD MELTON

Could I but see grey shadows once again,
A sombre gloom beneath a lilac green,
Not deep, but dark enough; it could be seen
By those who look to see it through the rain.
See flickering shadows of a candle bright,
Thrown strong and clear upon a wall of brown
Dark boards, unable to reflect the light,
Fight battles with it, but be beaten down.
Stark shadows, as though soldiers neatly lined,
Cast by a picket fence all straight and clean;
It seems these narrow shadows only mean
Their life is just to guard what lay behind.
But darkness will forever fill my mind;
I see eternal shadows—I am blind.

Dark Doorways

By BEN SWEENEY

Dark doorways—there were people on the street
Who cast a casual glance with no surprise,
Who neither smiled, nor spoke, nor slowed their
feet,
But passed along; I venture to surmise
That other nights, they'd seen, in passing by
Dark doorways, other lovers say goodbye.

Chogan

By ROBERT STEPHENS

I WISH now I had never met Charlie Frisbie. I would be a lot easier in my mind if I hadn't. Charlie is, I guess I should say was, a small unhappy-looking chap with thin gray hair and an apologetic moustache. He had a furtive air about him, and if he hadn't seemed so completely harmless, you might have thought he was running from the police. I met him one night at Kelley's, and since we were both interested in gardening, we became friends immediately. After a while he began to come regularly to the club-meetings at Kelley's, and though he didn't talk much, he seemed to fit very nicely into the club.

The club is composed mostly of insomniacs, but there are a few like myself who go just for the conversation. We meet at Kelley's Restaurant at two A. M. to drink coffee and talk. Although Kelley owns the restaurant, he works from two to six simply because he likes the club. He is an extremely well-read man, and he can talk brilliantly on any subject from batting averages to the European Novel. He and Charlie got along very well together from the first night Charlie turned up at the restaurant.

Charlie wasn't an ordinary insomniac of the chronic variety. You got the impression that he came every night because he couldn't stand being alone. Something was on his mind, obviously, and I'll admit I was curious about him. Finally, one rainy winter night, my curiosity was satisfied.

It was two o'clock, and besides Kelley himself Charlie and I were the only ones there. It had been raining all evening, and nobody else in the club had shown up. A late customer was just leaving when Kelley poured himself a cup of coffee and came over to where Charlie and I sat. He took out his dudder and lit it carefully, then leaned back in his chair. Charlie took out a Maria-Mancini cigar, and before he lit it he looked nervously all around. It was a peculiar habit that I had noticed before. We sat for awhile without saying anything, but finally Charlie spoke. I had sort of a premonition that he was going to talk about himself. Something was bothering him, and it would do him good to get it off his mind.

He started out very cautiously. "You know," he said, "The mind has remarkable creative powers." He looked at me, and I nodded as though I knew what he was getting at.

"It's not exactly the mind, though. It's imagination, sort of; you'll know what I mean after I tell you . . ."

* * *

I don't like children. I have a profound respect for them, but I don't like them. There is a myth current in the family that I am immensely fond of children, and that I am, in fact, disconsolate unless I have three or four of them always around. I am known as "Good old Charlie, understands kids, you know." I do not understand them. Nobody does. Children get along with me because I let them strictly alone, not because I sympathize with them. Unfortunately my ranch is an ideal place for children; there are horses to ride, dogs and cats to torture, and chickens to throw rocks at. All this, combined with the fact that I am easily imposed upon, makes a beautiful setup for the family.

One day about noon, when I was out in the potting shed transplanting a flat of pansies, a letter came. I know what it would be, and I was rather relieved that it had finally come. It was, of course, a relative wanting me to take one of my small nephews for a few weeks. Cousin Emily wanted her little Freddie to come up to my ranch to get a few lungfuls of mountain air, and so on. She had apparently written the note in a hurry, and the writing was so bad I couldn't tell if the child's name was Freddie or Frankie, but it looked more like Freddie. Whatever his name was, he would be in on the two-fifteen, in exactly an hour.

When I came in from the mail-box, Mrs. Flaherty, the housekeeper, was waiting for me in the porch.

"You got a letter," she accused me. I did not deny it. "I know what's in it," she went on. "Somebody is sending a nephew down for the holidays, and you are going to look after him this time. I wash my hands of him." She dried her hands on her apron and went in. I had been expecting this; so I was not too disappointed.

I had never seen little Freddie, but I went on the assumption that he was like the rest of them. I went in to put away some of the more valuable breakable objects and a few portraits I didn't want moustached. I rather hoped Freddie would be a boisterous youngster, because in the long run they are easier to control than the other types.

I am even pretty good at handling the cynical, sarcastic children, but with quiet, imaginative little chaps I am helpless. You can predict just how an energetic child will react to a given situation; it is the more subtle child that gives trouble.

Soon I heard the train whistle at the crossing, and a little later I heard the station-wagon drive up. I went out to face it. I watched Freddie carefully as he came toward me. He was slightly built, small and quiet-looking; just what I was afraid of. He carried a suitcase in one hand, and a bag of books in the other. He wore a blue wash-suit with short trousers.

"Well, Freddie," I said with that false heartiness that has never yet fooled a child, "How old are you?"

He automatically extended his hand to meet mine. "I am three hundred," he said in a soft absent tone.

I was somewhat at a loss. "You mean three, of course," I murmured with a sinking feeling. Freddie turned his gray, blank eyes toward me. I can't say that he looked at me, because his eyes seemed not to be focused at all. They had a remote appearance that was a little disquieting, and I thought that I might have some sort of a moron on my hands. I repeated my remark. He finally brought his eyes to bear on me. He scrutinized me as if I were a strange new animal that had just been brought to his attention.

"No," he said abstractedly. "Three hundred." Then his eyes wandered back to the fifth dimension. I felt that the conversation was dragging.

"Freddie, have you had your lunch yet?" I inquired.

"Lunch? Lunch; no I don't believe so."

"Come on then, we'll get something," I cried gaily.

"Very well," he murmured in his soft, distant voice. "Come along, Chogan." This gave me something of a turn, since Freddie and I were the only ones there. He turned his head and spoke more sharply, "Chogan, come here." I still didn't see anybody.

Then I happened to remember. You would think that after so many years of taking care of children I would get used to the way they imagine things. Almost all of them have these imaginary playmates that they talk to all the time. You have probably heard young children holding long conversations with nobody, laughing and talking, and even pausing to listen occasionally. But a child's imagination is a dangerous thing; people don't realize the power of it.

I had a great-uncle once who disliked children intensely, actually feared them. One day a little nephew of his came up to spend a few days with him, and demanded that Uncle George play horsey. Uncle George got down on his knees and tried to imagine himself a horsey, but he got too much into the spirit of the thing, for a few days later he got out of bed one morning to find that he was sprouting hooves. Naturally he was terrified, but it was nothing to the horror he felt when he went down to breakfast. He had started to take some bacon and eggs, when he suddenly realized that he would like nothing so well as a nice binful of hay. Of course Uncle George was something of a drinking man, but you see what I mean.

I tried not to pay any attention to Freddie's conversation with his playmate as we walked up to the house, but it made me a trifle uncomfortable.

Mrs. Flaherty had gone into town, but she had left some liverwurst sandwiches and milk on the kitchen table for us. We sat down and began, but I didn't enjoy the food. I am used to children who talk continuously through their meals, and Freddie said nothing.

Finally, though, about halfway through lunch, Freddie turned and looked over his shoulder into space. "Yes, I suppose so," he said in an annoyed voice. He had an attentive look on his face, as if he were listening. Every so often he would not, and by and by things began to wear on me. Even though it is nothing but a child's imagination, that sort of thing can get weird after a while.

As I watched him, Freddie sighed, "Oh very well, Chogan." He picked up a sandwich and threw it on the floor. "There you are."

I let this sort of thing go only so far. "Freddie," I said in my deepest bass voice, which is always more ridiculous than impressive, "Pick up that sandwich!"

"Eh? Pick up what?" asked Freddie in a pre-occupied manner.

"The sandwich," I replied patiently. "The liverwurst sandwich, pick it up."

"Can't, Chogan ate it," he answered. I got up and walked around the table, keeping my eyes fixed on Freddie in a severe manner. I pointed to the floor. "You have one more chance to pick it up," I warned him.

He looked down at the floor. "I really don't see how I can," he murmured. I looked down at the floor too, and there was no sandwich there.

I went out into the dining room and poured me a drink . . .

After lunch I took a book and went out on the porch to read awhile. I found I couldn't concentrate, however; so I put down my book and looked out across the garden. It was an idyllic scene. Freddie was sitting on a garden seat, reading; my delphiniums were in bloom, and the blossoms in the orchard were just beginning to show white.

I was very proud of my delphiniums. I had been crossing strains for years, and I had finally developed a seven-foot stalk, with four feet of it flowers. The blooms were perfectly formed, and their color was a hard, bright blue that I had never seen anywhere else. I had got a three-page writeup in the magazine of *The American Delphinium Society*.

Suddenly my mood was shattered. As I looked toward the bed, one of my largest delphiniums began to jerk violently. I keep rifles in strategic spots all over the ground so when I want one for a gopher or some other pest I don't have far to go. I grabbed the nearest one and started for the scene of action, but before I got there, Freddie saw the waving delphinium.

"Chogan, stop it!" he shouted. The delphinium stopped waving and fell over limply. I ran over to it. It was broken off fully an inch above the ground; a gopher couldn't possibly have done it. The incident disturbed me considerably. I don't mind losing an occasional delphinium, but I resent supernatural interference with my plant-growing. This, along with the liverwurst affair, was a little too thick.

Before dinner that evening I suggested to Mrs. Flaherty that this Chogan idea of Freddie's was getting out of hand.

She merely laughed. "I'm thinking you don't know much about kids. All of them has little men that they plays with. Why once me uncle in Coolaney . . ."

"Damn your uncle in Coolaney," I shouted. Well, I suppose I didn't really shout it, but I thought something like that.

Mrs. Flaherty is a remarkable woman. She is Irish, as you may have guessed. Her boiled cabbage is simple and unpretentious, but it is a sort of mystical experience in eating. Mrs. Flaherty is a sort of Yeats, representing the Celtic revival in cooking, and her boiled cabbage is *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*.

After dinner I settled myself in a chair with the latest seed catalogs. It was spring, but I hadn't yet finished my Christmas cigars. I was on

the last box, however; so I decided to permit myself the luxury of a Maria-Mancini. Do not imagine that I am ungrateful. Christmas gift-cigars have their place as a rigorous discipline for the character, but for smoking . . . I am sure I could never have got through them without a Maria every so often. Well, I was going through my pockets for a match when suddenly a blue flame appeared about an inch from the end of my cigar. I must admit that I screamed. The flame flickered and danced back. I was starting to climb over the back of the chair when Freddie appeared in the doorway, smiling slightly.

"What the hell," I said, somewhat shrilly.

"I taught Chogan a trick," said Freddie affably. "Miggletwits are dreadfully hard to train, but I managed to teach Chogan this one. Let him light your cigar for you."

I looked at the flame. It slowly approached the end of the cigar. I puffed several times, and it went out when I had a good light. I took it rather nicely; I hadn't reached the snapping point yet.

Freddie selected one of my Marias, and the blue flame appeared to light it for him. "Well, I must say goodbye," Freddie yawned.

"What do you mean, 'Goodbye'?" I croaked.

Freddie paused at the door. "Chogan and I will go to the utmost bounds of space tonight." His voice became remote. "We will turn into quanta and ride on mathematical symbols; we will go out past the farthest island universe, to infinity. Chogan lives there, on a mathematical point."

I didn't sleep particularly well that night. I had a dream, that is, I thought it was a dream. I woke up in the middle of the night to see a troop of elves standing at the foot of my bed.

They weren't ordinary elves like everybody sees. It was their eyes. Have you ever looked through a telescope at a star several light-years away? The star seems to throb and boil; it is white, with a touch of blue. That is how their eyes looked.

I sat up in bed. The moonlight was streaming in the window.

"Let's play hop-scotch," said one elf. One of the others dipped his finger in a pool of moonlight and drew a hop-scotch court on the floor. Then they all began to hop around over the room, except two of them, that is. These two came over and lifted me out of bed.

"You must play hop-scotch too," they said. "There is no game like hop-scotch. Chogan and Freddie told us you needed practice in hop-scotch." All the other elves stopped hopping then.

They gathered around me and clapped their hands. I was shoved into the court. I began to hop on one foot.

"You can't play hop-scotch," said one. "It's just like Chogan and Freddie told us. Come with us to the end of time, beyond the utmost bounds of space."

The rest began to chant hollowly, "Beyond the bounds of space and time . . ."

" . . . where we have," continued the elf, "a hop-scotch court outlined by a thousand blazing suns. Come with us and learn to play hop-scotch on the Second Law of Thermodynamics."

I remembered pointing out to them that I didn't particularly want to improve my hop-scotch game. They caught me as I started to climb back into bed and began to carry me toward the window, but suddenly a cloud passed over the moon, and they all slipped out the window chanting, and their voices melted into nothing, like violins ending a Beethoven concerto.

I got up and went outside. There was no moon now. There was only the black emptiness of space, with a few chunks of flaming matter several billion miles away. I looked up at the sky; then I threw myself on the earth and clutched at it with my fingers. It is a ghastly experience to become really conscious that you are on a globe that is spinning along through nothingness. You might fall off into interstellar space and turn up at the end of time. I even heard the wind whistling as the earth thundered along through space. That is the worst experience that you can ever have. You won't have it though, if you watch out for your nerves.

Strangely enough I slept rather well when I went back to bed, and when I woke the next morning, I was rested, though a little shaky. As I dressed, I looked out the window. The acacia tree was in full bloom, a huge mass of bright yellow. I could smell the bacon that Mrs. Flaherty was cooking for breakfast. I went downstairs, and Mrs. Flaherty gave me an omelette, bacon and coffee. After I had smoked a cigar and read the paper, I went outdoors. It was one of those mornings when a gardener is repaid for all his hoeing and pottering around. The Chinese lilies were out, and their odor lay heavy on the air; a row of flame-colored Freesias was in full bloom, and the apricot blossoms were almost completely out.

Freddie was out on the lawn playing with Raghbagh, one of my Persian cats. I had a friendly feeling toward everybody that morning, but my mood was ruined when little Freddie for no

apparent reason picked up a hoe and knocked Raghbagh six feet.

"Hey," I shouted, springing toward them. I tripped and fell full length in a bed of narcissus, but I got up quickly and grabbed at Freddie. Raghbagh was tottering away, talking to himself. I had Freddie by the collar when Raghbagh began to scream and roll on the grass. I was angry. The market for insane cats is slow. I had no sentimental feelings about Raghbagh, but he was a fifty-dollar cat, and it pained me to see him in such a state. As I was about to turn Freddie over my knee he shouted, "Chogan, let go of the kitty!" Raghbagh got to his feet and looked around, but he didn't stay long. I raised my hand to smack Freddie, but I didn't. Instead I felt the unmistakable sensation of a swift kick in the pants. I turned, but there was nobody there; Chogan, of course. I let go of Freddie. "I was only fooling," I said.

"Of course," said Freddie, with a tinge of irony. I wasn't beaten though. My mind was still working fast; anyone who could kick as realistically as Chogan must be physically vulnerable, I decided.

I went inside. In the hall near the butler's pantry is an old ice-box as big as a closet, where Grandfather used to keep the meat in the days before electrical refrigeration. It was perfectly insulated, and I had made it airtight so I could store my cigars there. I stepped into the box, took out a cigar and called Freddie. When he came there, I stood with the cigar in my mouth, but it didn't seem odd to Freddie, apparently.

"That is a marvelous trick you taught Chogan," I said cunningly. "Have him light this cigar for me." Freddie fell for it.

The blue flame appeared at the end of my cigar. Quickly I popped out of the ice-box and slammed the door. I snapped the big padlock on it. "Now, Freddie," I said triumphantly. I turned, but Freddie wasn't there. I ran out to get a stiff drink and bumped into Mrs. Flaherty. There was a strange look on her face.

"What do you want?" I snapped.

"There's a little boy here." She handed me a note. It was from Cousin Emily. It read, "Here is little Frankie to visit you. He is very quiet and will be no trouble at all. Don't be annoyed if he talks to a little imaginary playmate he calls Freddie."

I began to go to pieces about that time. I screamed and ran out into the garden. I had forgotten that the Doville Flower Club was driving up to look at my garden that morning. I

came bursting out the door, meeting the club at my delphinium bed, and I daresay they were a little nonplussed when they saw me.

"Good morning, Mr. Frisbie," said Mrs. Wallingspitz, the president. "We have been looking at your lovely delphiniums. Tell us, how did that one get broken off?"

"Chogan did it," I said simply.

"Pray tell, who is Chogan?" she asked, raising her eyebrows.

"Chogan," I began calmly, "is a Migglewit. He lives at the utmost bounds of space, near the end of time, on a mathematical point. He plays hop-scotch on a court outlined by a thousand blazing suns; but you can't see him as you can the others." Here my voice rose to a scream; the whole club started loping down the driveway, with Mrs. Wallingspitz a good four lengths in front. Old Mr. Burdock looked back over his shoulder and took a short-cut through the sunken garden. Unfortunately he was still looking back when he came to the pond . . .

I suppose that incident started the rumor that I was crazy. I decided I needed a change of scenery; so I told Mrs. Flaherty I was going on a little trip to San Francisco. I got a letter from Mrs. Flaherty just after I got here.

* * *

Charlie paused in his narrative and began to search through his pockets. Soon he produced a letter which he gave to me and Kelley. As near as I can remember it went something like this:

"Dear Mr. Frisbie,

Just after you left a funny looking little guy came to the door. He said you sent him, and

that you wanted him to open the old ice-box in the hall. I never see such eyes as the little guy had. They looked like they was afire.

I let him open the ice-box but he didn't find nothing. He didn't seem to mind, though. I asked the little duffer his address, and he said "The utmost bounds of space," or something like that. I had a notion to smack him one. I'm sending you some clothes.

Yrs. Truly,

Mrs. Michael A. Flaherty"

Charlie looked first at me and then at Kelley. "Do you believe me?" he asked. I nodded. "Yes, but I wish I didn't."

"Frankly, I don't believe you," said Kelley, with a big grin.

"Well . . ." Charlie sighed and cut the end off another cigar. I got out a match, but before I could strike it, a blue flame leaped up at the end of the cigar. Charlie didn't move a muscle for a moment; then he puffed, and the flame went out.

My nerves are none too good, and I am a credulous person; so I left. Kelley could sit and argue about whether Charlie's story was true or not if he wanted to. I left.

That was the last I saw of Charlie Frisbie. Kelley told me he left about four-thirty and never reached his hotel. That was two weeks ago, and nobody has seen a trace of him since that night. Every night when I walk home now, I try to keep from looking up at the stars. I see what Charlie meant now about falling into space. And I have been having queer dreams, too . . . that is, I hope they are dreams.

The Personality of Hamlet

BY JOHN WEYBREW

IN THE beginning there was a playwright of no mean ability. His name was Shakspeare, and it is recorded that he was a most human fellow. That he was no wastrel wag is apparent in the fact that he could show a scholar of Jonson's scholastic attainment a great deal about his fellowmen.

Shakspeare's best known play is Hamlet. The peculiar thing is that Hamlet strode the boards back in 1589, which is just thirty-four years before the First Folio. We know, too, that it was

probably a play by Kyd. But the thing which concerns us most is that this play came under the hand of Shakspeare. Under his intellectual handling it became great.

One of the most interesting characters in all Shakspeare is Hamlet. This Danish prince has come in for more remarks, official and unofficial, and more misunderstanding than any other character in Shakspeare. And I feel safe in saying so. From a character in a play by a genius of little

culture, as it is measured in universities, Hamlet has become a puzzle, a mystery, a work of genius so overshadowing, that men like Goethe, Schlegel, Coleridge, and hundreds of publicly acclaimed great minds have completely lost themselves in obscurities in their attempts to find a "solution."

This tends to make us think of Hamlet as a psychological enigma, rather than as a character in a play, which is not at all the situation. Rather, he is acting in a very human manner. That he is the Prince of Denmark and the son of a king merely heightens the interest of the play for an Elizabethan audience; but if he should be a character in a play by O'Neill, he would be a rather common man, elevated somewhat by introversion and an innate sense of justice. As a man he is a strong character mentally. He fires his imagination upon broken ideals. But he is a reasoning man, and no hot-head under normal situations.

Now, consider what he has become—in the eyes of his critics and scholars. I quote from Schlegel:

"This enigmatical work resembles those irrational equations in which a fraction of unknown magnitude remains, that will in no way admit solution. He acts the part of a madman with unrivalled powers. . . . In the resolutions he so often embraces and always leaves unexecuted, his weakness is too apparent He is a hypocrite to himself; his far-fetched scruples are often mere pretexts to cover his want of determination."

For that matter, Hamlet himself says more than once that he is subject to thoughts which have "but one part wisdom, and ever three parts coward." But it is also true that Hamlet is, to every one who has seen or read of him, interpreted differently by every one. Emerson once said, "All that Shakspeare says of the king, yonder slip of a boy that reads in a corner feels to be true of himself." This applies equally as well to critics.

But Hamlet was not written for critics. It was written for an Elizabethan audience. Schlegel, in his erudite philosophizings, loses sight of this factor. Shakspeare was quite sure of himself as long as he knew what he was doing; occasionally, however, he became rather muddled through his own lack of knowledge, but that is a later point. Wilson tells us that the best known text-book upon psychology at the time of Hamlet's writing was *A Treatise of Melancholie*, by Timothy Bright.

Mr. Wilson quotes the following excerpts from Bright's idea of a melancholy man:

"(He is) sometimes merry, sometimes furious in appearance, through a kind of Sardonian, and false laughter (He is) exact and curious in pondering the very moment of things given to fearefull and terrible dreames."

While these and similar points might be true of Hamlet, the following and similar passages give us to understand that Shakspeare's Hamlet is of his own conception generally:

"Of memory reasonably good, if fancies de-face it not; firm in opinion, and hardly removed wher it is resolved; doubtful before, and long in deliberation: suspicious, painefull in studie, and circumspect."

Wilson, unfortunately, tries to establish a connection between the "mystery" of Hamlet and the mystery surrounding Essex, his patron's hero. Although I admit that there are mysteries connected with Hamlet, this is not one of them.

Schlegel is one of the school that cannot see the sense in Hamlet's delay in killing his step-father. Schlegel would go after his step-father with a mace, doubtless, if he discovered any such breach of morality in his own family. I'm sure he would. And the same for Coleridge, as Quiller-Couch points out: ". . . . first of all he (Coleridge) would have searched his pockets for his tablets, which were not there; next, to advance his fell purpose, he would have borrowed five pounds at least off Horatio; and thereupon he would have wandered off to live with somebody else at Highgate and talked about what he was going to do, until—at the end of twenty years or so—he discussed it with equal prolixity as an accomplished fact."

Schlegel and Coleridge are not very good psychologists. The "weakness" which Schlegel condemns is the reasoning of a reasonable man, tortured by circumstances, at the mercy of an unkind Fate. The reason for this may be that Schlegel, as every other critic before and after him, has made his study of Hamlet a self-analysis, thinking only in terms of what he imagines he himself would do under similar conditions.

Schlegel might have profited more from a study of Goethe's study of Hamlet in *Wilhelm Meister*, although he becomes involved with the idea that Hamlet is too spiritual for the task set before him by the apparition.

Consider for yourself an intelligent young man of some thirty years, almost in his prime as a

man. Let him be morally straight, over-sensitive for the atmosphere in which he lives, one of intrigue and excitement. He is a man of strong affections. And almost at once, he receives the great shock of his beloved father's death and his mother's re-marriage. This, according to Kellogg (*Delineations of Insanity, Etc. in Shakespeare*) is more than enough to bring on insanity. Whereupon Mr. Kellogg goes into a spasm of archaic psycho-analysis, misinterpreting lines and scrambling meanings into his own psychologically apt symptoms. He reminds me of what is known today as a syndrome; one who is so taken with the idea of being diseased, or wanting to be, that all the symptoms are beautifully reproduced in him. Kellogg tries, foolishly, to make us believe that the Ghost was a figment of Hamlet's disordered brain. In reality, the Ghost is an excellent piece of work, fulfilling much the same office as Geronimo. The thing which makes Kellogg look so silly is that Shakspeare lets us see the reactions of different sorts of people to the Ghost. The reason Gertrude does not see the Ghost when Hamlet is with her in her bedroom is because it would make the scene less effective, and the idea is in accordance with traditional ghostlore.

Of course his mind is likely to lose its balance. But it is the same with any sensitive man, especially one like Hamlet, who (Bradley has shown us) looks for good rather than evil in persons. He is filled with loathing by the suspicion of lust in the marriage; note that he and the Ghost insist that the marriage is incestuous. He is thinking upon that, even before the appearance of the apparition.

But Hamlet is not "mad," in the sense of being partially or wholly insane. Robert Bridges suggests that Shakspeare wanted to make Hamlet a doubtful character. There is no "problem," merely a dramatic artifice by means of which S. could obtain the "understanding and indulgence which madness claims when the afflicted person is very dear without alienation, disgust or horror," which Bridges seems to think an Elizabethan audience would manifest. Now, in the first place, when a man can introspect so clearly as to seem in full possession of his faculties there is no madness in him, other than the swing of his passions away from his normal self.

Too, H. can distinguish between "himself" and his "madness," a thing which poor Ophelia cannot do. Hamlet fancies that his mind will break; he fully anticipates insanity; but God is not to be

so merciful; he is clinging inwardly so fast to his sense that he could never let go. His disgust for those who do not understand him is expressed in his scenes with Polonius. He is seeking merely to poke fun at the pedantic old fellow, because he wants to be amused and there is so little in which he can find amusement. This is no indication of insanity. It is, if anything, a plea upon Hamlet's part for reasoning instead of old saws. He seeks understanding; that is what makes this scene with Polonius so close to tragedy.

When he goes to his tablets, it is as though he were trying to find something to steady himself, for he fears that his mind will not withstand the shock of what has gone before. Schücking, in his peculiar way (*Meaning of Hamlet*), busies himself with chipping up little words which indicate certain morbid tendencies (perversions, if you please) in Hamlet's hesitancy to follow the Ghost, and in his writing upon his tablets. Alas! Has not Herr Schücking not found himself at a loss during some time in his apparently quiet and well-ordered life in Germany, at a loss? Has he never clutched at some little thing, when his world seemed shattering? See, for instance, in the letting down of his first wild hysteria, how Hamlet scoffs at the voice of the Ghost under the cellar floor. As Quiller-Couch says, the critics who object to this are the very ones who object to the knocking on the gate in *Macbeth*.

To bring a very simple fact to bear upon the question of madness, I question the favorable reception of insanity by a rude Elizabethan audience. To them, queer folk and idiots were an object of the most cruel kinds of humor.

Gertrude seems to know what is wrong with her boy. She should, since she reared him. She realizes that he must be affected by her marriage and the death of his father. Consequently his words have more vicious cut to them, since she realizes he is expounding morality and justice. And this in spite of the murder of miserable old Polonius and her son's speaking with the Ghost, which she cannot see. In her womanly way, Gertrude seems to be recognizing the disgust intelligent men often manifest over the lecherousness of women. This has been seen before, on other of Shakspeare's works, i. e. *Troilus*, *Othello*, etc.

This roaring indictment of womankind continues later with Ophelia. The poor girl, through obedience to her father, has taken away the last vestige of understanding which Hamlet might

have found. His loathing perverts his mind against all womankind, and more especially against the woman he most desires as a mate. In his repulsion he fires himself to destroy all that remains that was once beautiful to him. His language in the scene with Ophelia is violent. Too violent for the gentle Ophelia; Quiller-Couch wonders if this is not due to Shakspeare's lifting of the original dialogue without changing it, because he liked the impact of it. This is possible, since we have indications of this same thing in other plays (*Macbeth*, etc.); and the original language was addressed to a woman with the character of a courtesan, not to an Ophelia. It is also possible that he (Shakspeare) couldn't think of anything else to say.

Horatio knows what is troubling Hamlet. Hamlet never addresses him as he does the treacherous Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, for he realizes their shallowness.

The most misunderstood speech in Hamlet is that to Laertes before the fencing match, in which he excuses himself for the killing of Polonius, because he is troubled by "a sore distraction." At this moment in the play I do not believe that Hamlet would be false to his audience. The author intended this speech to show how superior the Dane is as a man, in contrast to Laertes. The speech is a simple plea for forgiveness, and there is nothing controversial about it, dozens of better equipped commentators to the contrary. Stoll would have us believe (*Art and Artifice in S.*) that this is another effort on Shakspeare's part to maintain the "balance between almost unendurable mental torture and madness," which is supposed to keep the audience guessing. Nonsense.

Critics seem to lose sight of the fact, too, that Hamlet is an heroic figure in tragedy. He is not to be analyzed too closely from the standpoint of modern psychology. He wasn't meant to be analyzed; he was meant to be admired, to inspire sympathy. Schücking doesn't seem to understand this at all. We know nothing of his life other than that which we see upon the stage; therefore we cannot apply with much success any theory of infantile disturbance of mind. Neither has he any mental infirmity, as Wilson states; this should be evident from a humanized study of the play. If anything, he is a man of more sensitive makeup than the men in his audience. But he would have to be to inspire poetic tragedy.

Many actors have played Hamlet; but the honest fellows among them admit, as does Maurice Evans today, that "it is the play" more than

the actors which make it great. Quiller-Couch remarks that most "Hamlets" are a success, just because "the play's the thing."

As Shakspeare has written him down, Hamlet is a lovable character. We admire him for his kindness toward others, his good treatment of his inferiors in rank, and his innate boyishness. His affection for Horatio is an expression of nobility. Why do critics try to distort the beautiful effect of his request of Laertes' pardon, especially since his later conduct is in keeping with this? Hamlet admires Laertes in all honesty. And even Laertes seems to realize this, for in death he repents, crying, "The King, the King's to blame." And Hamlet, feeling the poison working, turns upon Claudius, in all the strength of realization, forgetting reason, skewers the wretch upon his sword. Now all that remains is his vindication. He seizes the poison from Horatio, and in the clarity of his vision enjoins him:

"If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity for awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story."

With Horatio's words let us leave him:

"Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest—"

Dust

BY BEN SWEENEY

A million acres—dull and gray and dead—
Small heaps of dust where living souls should tread;

A lifeless air where pulsing life had beat
Until starvation spelled its dumb retreat
And furnished feeble play for some small mind
Within the masked unstable force behind
This pale of dust—a force that heard the pleas
For life and turned the pleaders into these
Small silent heaps of dust.

A few took flight,
Sought refuge from the great unbalanced might
Of Him who had betrayed His trust again.
But even they, though humbled, are still men
And will not always grovel for a love
Long promised by an Unseen Force above
And long withheld; they've found a deeper trust,
A nearer hope, in these small heaps of dust.

The Failure of Versailles

By KENNETH BAILEY

THE scene is the Trianon Palace Hotel, Versailles, France. The date is May 7, 1919. The event is the presenting of the Treaty of Peace to the German delegation. Slowly, apprehensively, the members of the German delegation file into the great hall to take their places in the center. Involuntarily there is a stiffening in the ranks of the Allied assemblage. Furtive glances are passed among the conference leaders as if indicating mutual support in what is about to be done. Underlying this mutuality among the Allied leaders is a spirit of gloating that is eager to give vent to itself upon the common enemy. "Who are these men," you ask, "prisoners to be tried?" Why no, these are simply fellow delegates to the Conference, sent to establish a just and lasting peace. "Oh, I see; I was just wondering," you reply. Well, you had ample reason to wonder.

The Treaty of Versailles has been more discussed and condemned than any other treaty in history. However, most of this discussion has been characterized by heat rather than light; so let us endeavor today to analyze carefully and scientifically just why the Treaty failed and what may be learned from it.

The Treaty of Versailles has been condemned chiefly on the basis of injustice found in its military, territorial, and reparations clauses. However, upon close scrutiny, these clauses were really not as unjust as we have been led to believe. Take the military clause for instance. It was severe, to be sure. Germany lost the right of conscription, had her army and navy depleted to a very meagre home police force, and in addition, was forced to contend with an Allied army of occupation. But was it unjust? Germany had after the war an army of five million trained veterans, still a real power. The military clause seems somewhat necessary rather than unjust.

Territorially, the Treaty was again very severe. Germany lost territory amounting to one-tenth of her metropolitan area and a population amounting to one-seventh of her total population. However, all that Germany had taken from her were territories she had won before the war by acts of aggression on weaker nations. Actually, the Treaty of Versailles created freedom in the world that was far greater than that which existed before the war. No, the failure of the treaty did not lie essentially with the territorial clauses.

Well, what about the terrible reparations clause, most condemned of all? Surely this was the source of all the trouble, you opine. No, the reparations clause was really more stupid than unjust. It provided that Germany pay for all the damage done to the Allies in the war. Thirty billion dollars was the price Germany was expected to pay. Obviously, this was a preposterous, impossible sum, which no nation, even when wealthy, could ever attempt to pay. (England was able to persuade her not too indulgent creditor, America, that the British debt of five million dollars was too heavy to pay.) Later on, when the Allies became sane, they revised the reparations clause under the Dawes Plan, and the trouble disappeared. No, this clause was not the real cause of the Treaty's failure to become a lasting peace.

The failure was due to something of which these other factors were distant, concrete manifestations: a spirit of hate and revenge unthinkable in a civilized society. Lloyd George and Clemenceau, English and French representatives, won their position because of promises to "hang the Kaiser" and to "make Germany pay for the war cent by cent." This spirit, suggested at the beginning of this paper, was exemplified by the guilt clause of the Treaty. It read thus:

"The Allied Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her Allies."

Herein lay the essential injustice of the Treaty of Versailles. Count von Brockdorff-Rantzau, chairman of the German delegation, made a memorable reply to the Treaty in general and to this moral responsibility clause in particular. He said in part:

"... It is demanded of us that we shall confess ourselves to be the only ones guilty of the war. Such a confession in my mouth would be a lie.... The attitude of the former German Government has certainly contributed to the disaster. But we deny that Germany and its people, who were convinced that they were fighting a war of defense, were alone guilty.... In the past fifty years the imperialism of

all the European states has chronically poisoned the international situation. The policy of expansion and retaliation, disregard of rights of peoples to determine their destinies have contributed to the illness of Europe, which saw its crisis in the war."

Historians are now well agreed that the responsibility of the war was as the Count pictured it, there in that hostile room of the hotel in Versailles.

This spirit of hate can be seen further in the Allies' refusing Germany representation in the League of Nations (admittance to which was not denied African and South American nations). This could be interpreted as saying, "Not only are you entirely responsible for the war, but you are, by your very nature, irretrievably cruel and immoral. You will never be anything but a Hun." This estimation of the German moral character was reflected in the treatment of the German delegation. They were not allowed to participate in any way in the framing of the Treaty. Instead, they were kept confined behind wooden fences through which Sunday pleasure-seekers would peer as they would at caged animals. They were treated worse than criminals on trial—more like criminals already condemned, without hope of being pardoned. One might sum up Germany's whole treatment after the war like this: the Allies knocked Germany down, trampled on her while she was down, then spat contempt at her, and finally bound her so she could never, never rise again. But she did.

In those last three words we see a summary of Germany's reaction to the Treaty. She did rise again. She had to. You can't slap a great people in the face and expect them to stay slapped. German resistance to the Treaty was instinctive, instantaneous, and unanimous. Interpreted in the spirit of Versailles, it seemed a vast and coherent program aimed to destroy and plunder. The moral condemnation the German people rejected in their hearts, and the policy that expressed it they fought and determined to overthrow.

However, coupled with and primary to this militant determination was disillusionment, a heavy defeatist attitude, the usual deep wound of war. Picture, if you will, Germany after the war, and see how a dictatorship was made inevitable. Until the last two months of the war, the German press had made the people believe Germany was winning. Then—the onslaught of fresh American troops, one staggering defeat after another coming too fast to be realized, until finally the whole world fell out from under German

folk. The impossible had happened. Two million of their finest manhood lying dead! The best army in the world broken to bits! The most powerful government in the world now facing revolution! And a Treaty of "Peace" that did not bind up their wounds but rubbed salt in them. They expected lighter treatment. They had read Wilson's "fourteen points." They thought the sheer valor of their fight would bring respect and admiration. Disillusionment does not aptly describe their reaction to the situation. Despair comes closer to it. But out of the depths came the voice of a saviour, and they rose again! Oh, Treaty of Versailles, where now is your victory?

There must be a better way. But the cynic and skeptic would sneer and call it idealism, not practical. What then does the word *practical* mean? Does it not imply that which works, that which can be put to use? If it does, then a transition must take place. Throw into discard cruelty and selfishness masquerading under the veil of practicality. Take on that which will prove a solution to the world's problems, even if it once bore the stigma of idealism. Let us avoid sentimentality, and in hard-headedness find a method that will work. We can, and we must.

The Song of the Grasshopper

BY ROBERT BRAVO

Some cherish a life that is turmoil and strife,
And fight to insure its extension.

They war and they bore
And they always want more,
But still, give me Hollow Pretension.

Some squander their youth in search of a truth,
The value of which I'll not mention.
Their theses, if read, would knock one quite dead,
But still, give me Hollow Pretension.

Some toil all their lives to maintain faithful wives
Who respond to the slightest attention.
Their meals I agree,
Are quite wholesome, and three,
But still, give me Hollow Pretension.

Some gaze at the stars, at Venus and Mars,
With premeditated intention
To see all they can and then tell it to Man,
But still, give me Hollow Pretension.

Fair Hollow Pretension,
Sweet Nectar of Life;
No end and no Purpose in Thee.
Why fluffy angora? Why brown angostura?
Why dew drops distilled from the sea?

The Cult of Realism

By PAUL ROBERTS

A VERY wise man once remarked: "Je serais surpris de trouver un livre intéressant et réaliste à la fois."

The utterly amazing part about that statement is that the man was a Spaniard and did not know a word of French. He must either have copied it out of a book or got a friend to think it up for him. But however it was, the statement created a good deal of excitement in the particular part of Spain in which this Spaniard happened to reside. It caught on quickly, partly because it had rhythm and partly because no one knew exactly what it meant, and for a time the only way a young Spaniard with romantic inclinations could hope to impress the ladies was by sitting carelessly on the railing of a veranda and saying, in easy, offhand French, that he, too, would be surprised to find a book which was interesting and realistic at the same time.

Shortly after this there was a colossal bull fight in this section of Spain, which monopolized the conversation, and the book statement was swiftly forgotten. I would not have brought it up at all if it did not illustrate a point I wish to make.

In fact, I may go so far as to say that it is the point I wish to make.

To understand my feelings on this subject (and I have very strong feelings on it, and worry considerably) it is necessary to go back to the time when I first began to read books. The first book I read, if I remember correctly, was a small, cloth-bound volume entitled *Peter Rabbit Among the Eskimos*. It had to do, as I recall, with a rabbit named Peter, who in some rather inexplicable manner got aboard a steamer bound for Alaska. Disembarking, Peter experienced a number of adventures involving dogs, other rabbits, snow, birds who sang "tweet-tweet" all the day, and the native population.

I was so pleased with this fascinating literature that I hurried with it to a friend of mine, named George, who lived on a farm. George kept rabbits in pens near the barn and would therefore, I thought, be quite enthralled to learn that one of his furry friends had been made the hero of a book.

I was mistaken. George read the book, and the next time I went to see him, he pinned me to the side of the barn and delivered a short, critical address on *Peter Rabbit Among the Eskimos*.

How, he wished to know, was a rabbit of the sort described by the author to exist in a land of ice and snow, entirely cut off from his carrot-tops supply. This kind of rabbit, George told me, poking his forefinger into my chest to emphasize the point, lived almost entirely on a diet of carrot-tops, and here was Peter scampering about for months and months in a country where carrot-tops were not to be had for love or money. George desired me to point to the passage in which the author resolved this difficulty. Furthermore, George said, he had made a pretty careful study of birds, and he had yet to hear a bird which sang "tweet-tweet." There were, indeed, birds which sang "tuh-whit, tuh-whit;" but "tweet-tweet"—never.

The only part of the book George liked was that in which Eskimo John went over the falls in his canoe to save his faithful dog, Yukon, from being killed by falling blocks of ice.

I have one more little anecdote I wish to tell, and then I shall draw parallels and conclusions all over the place.

A short time ago a man named John Steinbeck wrote a book called *The Grapes of Wrath*. About two-thirds of the critics wrote reams about the powerful realism in the book, and the remaining third were much more helpful and generous. They consigned the novel to perdition and spoke about dropping it into the fireplace with the tongs. Consequently, Mr. Steinbeck's royalty checks grew larger weekly, and he was no doubt shortly in a position to order as many Cadillac automobiles as he could use.

Now, among the readers of Mr. Steinbeck's novel, was, strangely enough, a man from Oklahoma. He read the book carefully and critically, and his comment went something like this:

"It's true enough, I guess, though I ain't never seen no washtrubs like that in the camps I been in, but it just ain't interestin'. All it talks about is ordinary people doin' the things people do every day. There ain't no life in it."

That is just what he said and just what he believed, so help me God. He could find no interest in the Joads because he knew them too well. They were familiar to him, and therefore ordinary, and their speech and actions were familiar to him too, and consequently devoid of thrill and power and incapable of arousing emotion.

Now how about the readers who like *Grapes of Wrath*? Who are they? They are farmers in Connecticut, advertising men in New York, G-men in Washington, cowboys in Wyoming and English teachers in San Jose. And in every case their admiration of the novel derives from the fact that they are reading about something utterly strange to them, comprehensible but new, thrilling and forceful for the same reason that the adventures of Anthony Adverse are thrilling and forceful.

So we sum up: The Oklahoman dislikes *Grapes of Wrath* because it shows ordinary people doing ordinary things. The English teacher likes *Grapes of Wrath* because it shows extraordinary people doing extraordinary things. In other words, the one dislikes it because it is realistic; the other likes it because it is romantic.

It does no good to pile up examples, but it does no harm, either; so let us pile up a few. Let us ask ourselves what would be the reaction of a Chinese peasant reading *The Good Earth*, of a West Indian smuggler reading *To Have and Have Not*, of a grain manipulator reading *The Pit*, of a Nineteenth Century municipal gambler reading *The Financier*.

Or let us take the other side. Let us analyze our emotions as we read, for instance, *The Modern Comedy*. Are we enthralled by this picture of post-war England because we can say to ourselves, "This is real. Such things really happen. These people are taken from life." We are not. We are intrigued by new vistas, strange doings, extraordinary people. We are intrigued by romance.

The difficulty is that people confuse realism with verisimilitude. The reader does not derive his pleasure from a book because he can say: "This is real; this happened; this is life;" but he must be able to say these things, or he will not derive pleasure from those elements capable of pleasing him. He wishes to be able to believe the story as he reads it, whether the plot be laid in Chicago slums or central Australia. And this necessity of self-deception is just as great for the English teacher as it is for the shop-girl. The difference is that the English teacher has rather greater powers of deception than has the shop-girl, and is therefore sometimes able to fool himself on Beowulf and Gawayne and Rosalind, as well as on Scarlett O'Hara.

In a way, progressive education is to blame for these waves of what is called realism. Each generation is better educated than the one before and thus is better equipped to pick flaws in the veri-

similitude of the books it reads. Meanwhile nothing much is done to stimulate imagination, and as a consequence modern authors, good and bad, must clutter up their works with accuracy for the sake of readers who lack the tool by which knowledge may be overcome.

Thus, as we have seen, the author of *Peter Rabbit Among the Eskimos* would have been well-advised to have looked to the carrot-tops supply of his travelling bunny, meanwhile causing the birds to go "tuh-whit, tuh-whit" rather than "tweet-tweet."

This is called maintaining the illusion of reality, and it has nothing to do with realism.

It is about time we tried to define realism, and the only way I can define it and apply it to literature is by saying that it is material which comes within the limits of the experience of the reader. For how can we set up an objective standard for realism? We cannot do it by including everything which is real, because, if we bar the supernatural, we can say that practically anything has happened or is happening or might happen. We know that most knights were not parfait and gentil, but we cannot say that all knights were not parfait and gentil. So what do we do? Can we set a degree and say that those attributes and aspects are realistic which belong to the greatest number?

Let us try it. We wish, let us say, to describe a knight realistically. We choose fifty knights at random and look them over and find that twenty-six are gentil but only twenty-two are parfait. So we make our knight gentil but not parfait, deck him out with other attributes similarly arrived at, and the result is a realistic knight.

This is ridiculous, but it is a logical conclusion toward which we are moving as soon as we begin to use words like "many" or "most" or "probable" or the "great majority" in connection with realism.

Now let us glance a moment at the explanation of realism and romanticism which concerns itself with the "purpose" of the author. This says, in effect, that authors who tell stories merely to amuse, to entertain or to escape from everyday life—whatever that is—are romantics; those who offer their books as an interpretation of experience are realists. That is rather pretty, but its prettiness is much exceeded by its stupidity. For we must recognize instantly that no piece of romantic literature which did not interpret experience has ever survived. *Troilus and Cressida* is an interpretation quite as much as is *Adam Bede*; and, with all necessary apologies to Mr. Steinbeck, *Grapes of Wrath* is not nearly so happy and mov-

ing an interpretation as is *The Tempest*.

As for the escape motive—that must be ascribed to every author who ever found success. The author whose books are read must be forever escaping—not from reality to fantasy, but from that which is familiar to that which is new. He must be always a romanticist; for romanticism is the very life-blood of the creative artist; and if he does not have it, he will find himself without an audience—in colleges or out of colleges—and he will soon settle on the level of mediocrity occupied by the genuine realists, like William Dean Howells and Henry James.

And I think it obvious that when readers get fed up on romance and parafait, gentile knights, the only thing the author can do is turn to realism and give them cruel, rapacious knights, who will be well received because they are not familiar, and therefore much more romantic.

"Thine Is the Glory"

BY BEN SWEENEY

The shapeless shell-torn mass of flesh
From which I thought life flown, awoke and stirred,
And turning painfully my way,
Moved blackened lips and spoke—one lonely word,
One haunting sound that cut like lead
The quiet there—a sound no other heard:
The name of God.

I leaned close to the pulpy thing,
And looking into eyes that could not see,
I thought, "You ask for God! Why, God
Is busy with the birds—each lovely tree
Demands his care—the gentle streams,
The budding fields! What time has He for me
Or you, dumb clod?"

The figure stared me in the face—
"Do you believe that heaven-hued array
Would find convenience here with you
Where men are torn, and night despises day?
Why should He leave the Golden Streets
To plunge His royal robes in mud—this way
We two have trod?"

Alive in mind, in speech unborn,
These thoughts had rent my inmost soul in vain
And left for me one bitter truth:
For well I knew that here where I had lain,
One day the land would bloom, and then
All gracious God would count the posies gain,
And bless the sod!

City Square

BY DOLORES STEPHENS

Let us return to the avenue of dull, green
benches worn hideously smooth, and cast aside
our hot remonstrances one by one in silence,
dropping them effortlessly as the brittle crumbs
we throw the sparrows on the lawn—
And wait with hot, parched eyes for the dusk
seeping through the crags of buildings
to touch our shoulders with cool, velvet fingers.
Here in the scattered wind let us wait
another hour, plucking the lean, cropped grass
blade by blade in silence—until the glare of
flickering lights throws ominous shapes into our
eyes, and the dull, green benches are pallid
in the half-light.

Then we shall rise, stumbling as puppets
in a world of tinsel, with strange, twisted
jargon spilled from our mouths;
Now we shall speak of hunger contemptuously,
and finger coins of copper with heated
loathing, filling the air with acrid bitterness
and the stupor of muffled voices . . .
Ghost-waifs leaping from muted brains, tapping
the sidewalks in their hollow *Danse Macabre*;
The Proletariat speaks and then shakes
at the sound of its voice as the tightening
of winds about the throat; the dark earth surges
with chill, and the dull, green benches loom
hideously under the street lights;
The whirr of hoarse voices dies without struggle,
and the serene, black waters brim with stars.

Beside the Path

BY DOLORES STEPHENS

Beside the path the weeds are growing tall,
Having forgotten the long, buried years,
And scarlet buds strewn down the lane in small,
Blown patches, gone as childhood's long-dried
tears;
And how we chased small, golden butterflies
Beyond the crooked willow on the hills,
Bare legs half-dancing through the brook with
cries
Of mirth, hands clenching broken daffodils.

And then the long, hushed years passed over free
As brushing of the wind across the face—
And I return, half-knowing there will be
No butterflies, nor willows in their place;
And what of you—of tousled hair and small
Flushed cheeks, and face I cannot quite recall?

The Beet-Doll

By CHARLOTTE RIDEOUT

PA HAD been gone for over a week, now, and the beet sack was getting pretty low. Ma didn't say much, but you could tell the way she was looking at baby, that she was a little-bit worried. Baby was feeling all right, though. She kept playing with her beet-doll and never saying a word; never making a noise like she used to, a few days ago. I guess baby's growing up.

I am too. I chop all the wood for the stove now that pa's away. But there's only a few sticks left. I guess pa'll have to cut down a few more trees for Mr. Layton, so we can get our pay in wood. I don't think I'm quite old enough to chop a tree. But I will be in two years. I was ten two weeks ago. Pa was here then. I wonder where he is now?

We had a birthday party for me. We had some yams, and some meat, and for dessert we had some apples. We all felt awful full.

Ma says when pa gets back, maybe we'll get some more apples. He's gone to earn some money in the city. He used to work on Mr. Layton's farm, here. But this year Mr. Layton hired some negroes. My father was sore. He said he wouldn't live like the negroes do. He couldn't; and he didn't want to work in the fields with 'em. So he's gone to the city now. And he said he'd be back in four days. But now it's almost eight.

Ma keeps looking in the beet sack. There's two there now. I know because I looked this morning. There's no potatoes left though. We ate those five days ago. I like the potatoes; but I don't like beets anymore. That's all we've had since day before yesterday.

Ma let me make the beet soup this noon because she got sick and had to go outside. I asked her if she wanted some; but she didn't. I guess she's tired of beets too. They almost make me sick. My stomach hurts all the time. I don't think baby's does; because now she never cries anymore. When we first gave her some beet soup, she cried all the time. That was right after there was no more canned milk. Now I guess she likes it all right. She doesn't make any fuss.

Tomorrow Ma says we've got to go over to the squash patch down the road, and get a squash. I tell her there's only one little one growing out there, and it isn't ripe yet. I looked yesterday and the day before. But she says we have to get it anyway; those two beets'll only last us for today, and then baby's beet-doll will be the only

thing left. I'm going to bed now so I can get up early in the morning. The squash-patch is pretty far away, and I get so tired now. It's hard to sleep when your stomach hurts, but it hurts more when you don't.

This morning when I got up, Ma was sick. I was going to get breakfast, but there wasn't anything.

"You'll have to get the squash before—so we can eat," she said.

So I went as fast as I could. I took the gun with me. Pa used to when he had enough money for shells. But that was a long time ago. Ma made me take it this time, because she was afraid somebody might take that squash from me and if I had a gun, they wouldn't.

I finally got to where the squash-patch was. I guess I was tired from carrying the gun, because I'm a boy, and don't ever cry; but I did this time. Maybe it was because I looked so hard, and when I did find that squash, it was so small and green. I'm glad I was alone. I stayed there for awhile, but then my stomach began to hurt so much, all I could think of was something to eat. So I went back.

It took longer to get back because it was hard carrying the squash and the gun too. I felt bad when I got back; the stock was so scratched from dragging it on the ground. There wasn't much use in taking it anyway. I didn't see anybody; except once a shiny car went by, and I had to stop and cough because of the dust.

When I got back, Ma told me to cut the squash in half and then boil it like we did the beets. So I did. And after awhile we had our breakfast. It was awful bitter; but it was warm, and we didn't mind much because we were so hungry.

The only one that didn't like it was baby. She didn't cry though. She just lay there and wouldn't swallow. I told Ma, and she got up and tried to get baby to eat. But it wasn't any use. She wouldn't even sit up and only held on to her beet-doll and didn't make a sound.

Ma began to cry then. I had heard her cry before, but never this way.

"What are we going to do, Johnnie?" she said, but it didn't seem as if she was really asking me. "What are we going to do?"

I felt like crying too, but I couldn't, because I wasn't alone this time. And I was the man in our house. I hope Pa gets back soon.

We finished the squash this afternoon, and there just isn't anything left in the house. Ma and I looked hard, even when we knew there wasn't anything. I didn't tell Ma, but I even looked under the bed.

Ma isn't crying anymore, but she doesn't look like she feels very good. She keeps walking around and around the room. She always ends up looking at baby, just lying there, sucking her beet-doll even though it's sort of dried up now. Sometimes Ma looks at me, but not as if she really sees me.

I guess I'm not really a man, because I can't do anything. But I will when I'm big. Right now, I wish she'd put her arms around me, like when I wasn't the man in our house. Maybe she could help my stomach-ache. It's getting worse now. I got real dizzy when I looked under the bed to find something to eat.

When it was almost time for supper, Ma began to walk around the room; back and forth, back and forth. Then she called me.

"Get the gun, Johnnie. We've got to get something to eat!"

I said there weren't any shells; so we couldn't shoot anything; but she didn't say anything and just walked outside. I looked at baby and asked if we should take her with us; but she didn't answer, and I looked, and she was 'way, 'way down the road already. So I took the gun and ran as fast as I could to catch up with her.

It was getting dark, and I took her hand; but she didn't say anything, and her hand was cold. I was tired, but I was afraid to ask her to go slow.

After we walked for about a mile, I asked her where we were going. She didn't say anything and just walked faster. Pretty soon I knew where. Pa and I had gone there lots of times. It was the road to Mr. Layton's store-house.

I could see the lights. They seemed far away, but I guess they weren't, because pretty soon we were almost in that kind of circle lights make sometimes.

When we were almost at the store-house, I asked my mother if that was where we were going, but she didn't answer me again. Then I looked at her face, and in the light I could see she was crying, only she wasn't making any noise. Then I felt real bad, and wished I was a man so she wouldn't have to cry like that.

We got to the store-house and Ma asked me for the gun, real quiet. And she took it. And we walked up on the porch. There was a light inside, and Ma told me to knock.

When the old man there saw who we were, he laughed and said,

"Well, I haven't seen you for almost three weeks."

He was a kind old man; but Ma didn't smile like he did. She poked our gun at him and told him to hurry and let us in, and her voice didn't sound like I'd ever heard before. It sounded like Pa's does when he talks about Mr. Layton, real ugly.

"Johnnie, go in!" she said, and she pushed me inside hard. And I almost fell down, I was so dizzy. The old man didn't say anything. He just looked sad, first at me, and then at Ma. Ma just stood there white and straight, pointing the gun at him. Her hands were shaking. I think she was afraid he knew there weren't any bullets in the gun. And he must of, because Pa asked him for a loan of some once, but Mr. Layton doesn't allow any loans.

So while I was filling a store basket with all the things Ma kept telling me to take, I wondered if he was going to take them away again. Then I began to shiver, and my teeth clicked together, and I couldn't stop it. I guess I was so hungry when I saw all those things, it made me feel that way. Finally I got all the things I could, in the basket, and the old man still didn't say anything. He just kept looking at Ma, and then at me.

Then Ma told me to go outside with the basket. So I did. Then she came out too. Then she took one handle, and I took the other, and we ran. And even when I was so tired and dizzy, I ran home faster than I've ever run before.

The house looked dark when we got home. And baby was there, just as quiet, and chewing on the beet-doll. As soon as we got there, Ma right away fixed some milk and after baby was fed, she threw herself on the bed. And didn't say anything. I crawled beside her, and I could feel her shaking, shaking even more than I was. Then she put her arm around me, and I began to cry.

Later we ate and went to bed. I wasn't hungry anymore, and I slept fine, even when I was sort of waiting for Mr. Layton's police to come and take us to the jail-house. But they didn't.

The next day Pa came home, and when Ma saw him, she began to cry again, and just then baby threw her beet-doll on the floor and cried too, just like she used to.

Now I didn't have to be the man, and I could play again; but when I tried, it seemed like I just didn't know how to play, any more.

Round Yonder Bend

By ROBERT FESSENGER

THERE are two distinct types of travelers: one who patiently saves his money and scientifically calculates his expenses over a considerable period of time, and one who is suddenly seized with the wanderlust and simply starts out with whatever money he may have, trusting Fate to see him through. The first type travels with a definite purpose in mind; the latter type travels aimlessly, to satisfy a strange thirst of the soul, an incurable restlessness of the spirit.

When I was born, I was just like all other babies. I cried, I gurgled, I kicked, and I played with my toes, which were usually roving aimlessly around in the air. At a remarkably early age, however, I learned to utilize those seemingly superfluous appendages attached to the posterior section of my body. From that time on, a busy little mother had to keep a tense vigilance lest her tiny son should roam too far away, into a well or among a herd of cattle. And when I was truant, she knew to look behind some object, a haystack, a barn, or a hill, any place that might afford new fields of exploration and adventure.

I can vaguely remember one harrowing experience which I had as an infant of three. My mother took me to a strange house, a huge place with acres of fascinating hills and trees around it. The first time my mother turned her back to me, I greedily grasped the opportunity to investigate these new surroundings. I passed over the first hill and stood looking with awe upon the multitude of breath-taking phenomena that greeted my eyes—a great canyon with a stream at the bottom, huge boulders piled together, and trees unlimited! Suddenly my attention was drawn by something closer to me, something immediately fascinating. It was a small, black, sprawling object, with legs running in all directions. I approached it but was momentarily frightened away when it suddenly rose up and became ominously still. I continued to observe it several paces away. I could hear a voice calling my name in the distance, but I was too deeply absorbed to take notice. After a few moments the creature relaxed, and I again mustered up the courage to draw near it. Again it bowed up, but this time I refused to retreat. The voice was louder and nearer, but it failed to impress me. I hesitated a moment, and in that moment, my mother burst over the hill and took in the situation at a glance.

She screamed, "Tarantula!" and swept me to safety before the tarantula or I could move. She spanked me first, then cried, and then crushed me to her and laughed. And I was vaguely bewildered by it all.

Years passed, and the wanderlust burned stronger. I began to travel on a larger scale, going anywhere, any place I had never been before. At the age of ten I crossed the border of my native state of Texas for the first time. It was on a business trip with my uncle into Louisiana. The following year I went with elderly friends into Oklahoma and learned to love this dusty wasteland. And every little place I visited I treasured in my memory; every little town, every mountain, every stream went down in my mental scrapbook. I prided myself immensely on my travels. But then I studied a map of the world and discovered how tiny was my range of travel. How big the world! What vast opportunities for travel! I sighed with childishly gleeful anticipation to think of the millions of places I had never seen but would see some day. And to think that I had sometimes wondered what I would do when I had seen everything! I didn't pause to wonder how I would travel, or how I would earn enough money; I would just go—somehow.

After years spent in monotonous and boring classrooms, I was finally graduated from high school. I was free! But I was so confused by this long-awaited freedom that I didn't know how to start to utilize it. There were millions of things to do and places to go, but I couldn't decide which one to start with. This dilemma terminated in my getting a job. But in accepting this job I harbored no intentions of attaching myself to it permanently. I knew full well that I would abandon it before long and succumb to an impulse to go somewhere.

In the meantime my parents were urging me to go to college. I almost shuddered at the idea, but I decided to use this as a pretext for my traveling. So, after ridding myself of the job, I left home, supposedly to investigate a few of the universities and decide which of them to attend. Indeed, I went to the university cities, viewed the various campi curiously from a distance, and passed serenely on. The money I had for train-fare went for food instead, as I hitch-hiked or rode in freight cars, and slept in whatever place

looked most comfortable. This way my money lasted longer, and I could travel farther. And the farther I went, the farther I wanted to go. Fortunately, I had a lad of my own philosophy as a traveling mate. When we would reach a town and reluctantly decide to turn for home, one of us would say:

"You know, I wonder what this next town is like. I wonder how much we're missing by not going on."

And we always went on, ever seeking some nameless treasure over yonder hill or round yonder bend. When we finally returned home, it was with the sole idea of getting money to keep roving. The few days I spent at home were restless ones; I was irritated by the puzzled looks of my parents. Then one day, without warning, I left again, almost penniless this time. I couldn't bear to ask my father for money to "gallivant about" on. This journey was filled with troubles and hardships; my companion and I were getting a bitter taste of the world. After three weeks of trying experiences we went to lean, weak and hungry, on the doorbell of a far-away relative of mine. We "visited" two days here, and then moved on, weary but undaunted. However, our footsteps began to turn toward home again. And one night, after an absence of five weeks, I sneaked into my bed while my parents slept.

But even yet my traveling days were not over. I wanted to atone for the deep hurt I had given my mother and the angry disappointment I had caused my father, but it was not in my heart to regret sincerely what I had done. My heart ached at seeing my mother's drawn, deeply concerned face, but I longed to be out in the world again. My soul was bursting under the bonds of home and motherly love. One night I started wide awake in my bed—for no apparent reason. Something heavy seemed to be pressing upon me, and the air was tight and still. God! Those unfeeling walls hemming me in, holding me prisoner, and bearing down upon me! I parted the curtains to my window and gazed out at the stars, which twinkled merrily and mocked at me from their celestial heights. Slipping out of bed, I feverishly donned my clothes and went out into the night and simply walked about until dawn.

The following day I decided to go again to a university town, this time with the serious intention of applying for admittance into college. I knew the trip would assuage my thirst for travel, and I vaguely thought I might become reconciled to the idea of going to college. Indeed, I went

through the usual procedure honestly enough, although as rapidly as possible, and arranged to start to school with the fall. But when the time arrived for me to return home, something in the opposite direction from home seemed inevitably to lure me like a powerful magnet. And once more did I yield to the wanderlust.

When I came home ten days later, I found my parents preparing to leave for California. I hungrily sanctioned this venture, and within a few days my dear native state—the Lone Star State—was behind me. No college, no future—but I would get a fresh start in California. I would get a job, and I would go to college. I would conquer this unreasonable restlessness in my nature. I would please my parents by making something of myself.

Oddly enough, I settled down to a great extent in California. And some of the plans I had made began to materialize. I got a job, and I started to college. Only once did I answer the wild impulse to "hit the road." But even now I feel cramped and ill-fitted in my environment. I fret and fume in my bonds, and my heart cries out for more room. But I am striving to become a scientific traveler with a purpose, saving my money and biding my time until I can profit or accomplish something by traveling. In spite of everything, I think that always when I travel thus, a little imp will rise up from my soul and crow triumphantly, like a prisoner who secretly leaves his cell at will.

My Heart

By JACQUELINE MARGETT

My heart will never, never be yours alone—
Too many things I love, to speak this lie;
Red tides of sunset breaking on the sky,
Slow twilights and the first rose blown
To fiery splendor on a day in spring.
Cold mountain water passionate and strong
And wild with music, and the sharp sweet song
Of birds when day has folded like a wing.
My head will lie on your shoulder, and deep
Into the night I shall find you fair
And swing the gates to heaven in my sleep
Beside you, breathing the fragrance of your hair,
And tho' my lips shall always seek your own,
My heart will never, never be yours alone.

The Grecian Urn

By ROBERT STEPHENS

IT ALL started when I was filling out the questionnaire for an insurance policy. You see, there was the question, "Has there ever been any insanity in your family?" I remembered an old chap back somewhere in the family who used to see elves skipping around on the lawn whenever the moon was full. He would tell people about it, and for a long time they thought he was crazy, until one night he slipped out and caught one. He put it in a cage and showed it to them the next morning, and that quashed any more talk about his being crazy. Of course they wanted to put the elf in a jar and display him in the window of the *Times Weekly* or send him to Ripley, but the old chap turned him loose the next night. I was about to write "No" after the question when I happened to think of Grandfather Peabody. I couldn't be sure about him, because the family had hushed the matter up pretty well, but I had heard rumors that he went mad just before he disappeared completely.

Grandfather Peabody taught Greek and Mythology at the college just as his father had done before him, and there wasn't anything he didn't know about all the gods and goddesses. In fact he seemed to know a lot of little details about them that nobody else knew, and if you laughed when he said, for example, that Zeus took horse-radish on his ambrosia, he would become quite angry.

One time there was a great commotion over some character in mythology that Grandfather had mentioned in one of his books. A professor came up from Harvard and claimed that there was no such individual. They wrangled for a while, and finally Grandfather went into his study and brought out some sort of an old urn, a curious looking thing with intricate carvings and inscriptions going clear around it. The Harvard professor put on his glasses and peered closely at it. Then suddenly he jumped up and demanded that Grandfather tell where he got it. Grandfather said he'd be damned if he would. One thing led to another until Grandfather picked up a bust of Socrates and chased the professor four blocks.

After this incident Grandfather got worse and worse, and the family began to worry about him. One day the president of the college came to the house and told the family it would be best to try

to persuade Grandfather to resign. It seemed that he had passed out a syllabus to one of his classes on which the names of the Greek gods and goddesses were listed alphabetically. When they read down to the P's, there was Grandfather's name. The class got a laugh out of it, but Grandfather Peabody was incensed. They finally got him to resign, and I knew nothing about what happened to him after that, as the family, that is, Uncle Rupert and Aunt Mattie, had always discouraged speculation about the affair.

Since I was driving down to the old house for the holidays, I decided to ask them about it, in a roundabout way, of course. Uncle Rupert and Aunt Mattie lived in the old family house, a large ivy-covered place which stood at the end of one of the very proper residential streets. Just over the hill from the house was the college, and there was a path over the hill that had been worn by generations of Peabodys. Uncle Rupert carried on the family tradition of teaching in the college, and like most of the family he taught Greek. I rather enjoyed going up to Uncle Rupert's, and I think they rather enjoyed having me, since it was a sort of break in the monotony.

I arrived about seven-thirty, in time for dinner. We were having spaghetti for dinner, they told me. Uncle Rupert liked Titian and Veronese, but he had no feeling for the subtleties of Italian food. I suppose professors of Greek in small eastern colleges are not much given to adventurous eating, but if they drink good sherry, much can be forgiven them. Uncle Rupert had so pedestrian a taste in food that only the surpassing excellence of his sherry and cigars saved him from Philistinism. He once employed a chap who was a sort of Post-Impressionist among cooks. Unfortunately this cook had a sensitive soul, and after serving forty-seven consecutive meals of beef and mutton, something snapped in the man's mind. One night when the president of the college was over for dinner, he threw the beef roast out the back door and cooked up a *tour de force* that was his idea of what a dinner should be.

It must have been a remarkable evening, with the Italian cook appearing with a cleaver at the beginning of each course to assure them that he would be offended if they did not eat it. At the end of the dinner he appeared in the doorway, a Byronic smile on his white, strained face, and

announced that he would personally kill the first person who asked for cream in his *café noir*. The next day he took a boat for Europe, and we never heard of him again, but the incident left a profound psychological scar on Uncle Rupert, and he has always distrusted exotic foods since. So you see it was not easy to serve Italian food for dinner, but they knew my preference for it. I appreciated the gesture.

In spite of his little phobia Uncle Rupert managed to put away two platefuls, although he grumbled quite a bit. Finally he tasted the Chianti, and sputtered something about the Borgias as he reached for a glass of port to kill the taste of it. He had finished two glasses of port and was lighting one of his Mendozas when I decided that it was time to broach the matter of Grandfather Peabody. I lit my cigar and said casually, "Tell me, Uncle Rupert, was Grandfather Peabody really crazy?"

The effect was not entirely what I had anticipated. The ash fell off Uncle Rupert's Mendoza, and Aunt Mattie, feeling faint, apparently, drank a glass of Chianti before she realized what she was doing. Even old Fender, the servant, was so affected that he moved his eyebrow. Obviously I had given everybody a rather bad turn.

Uncle Rupert silently brushed the ash off his vest and looked grimly at his Mendoza. A cigar is never so good after the ash is gone. "No," he said shortly. "Grandfather Peabody was quite sane."

I dragged the subject of Italian food into the gap in the conversation. "Did it ever occur to you," I asked, "that spaghetti has remarkable properties? For example, if you cut it into short pieces, you have more spaghetti."

"Precisely," said Uncle Rupert mirthlessly. "Spaghetti is the diminutive of the Italian *spago*, meaning cord. The form *spaghetti* is obviously a plural, therefore the more you cut it up, the more spaghetti you have."

"Quod erat demonstrandum," I murmured to my plate. It pains me greatly when someone deliberately and viciously spoils a bon mot, even if the mot is not particularly bon to begin with. Since the family was shaken and piqued, and I was wounded and frustrated, the rest of the table conversation tended to drag a little.

"I suppose I never would have found out about Grandfather Peabody if the Woman's Relief Corps had not been holding a bazaar over in Boston that night. Shortly after dinner Aunt Mattie came in with her hat on and told us good-night. She was going to stay over in Boston with Cousin

Nancy until the next day. As soon as she had got under way, I went up to my room to read awhile, and Uncle Rupert went into his study.

The room I always had was above the study. It was a high room, Louis Quinze, and it looked out over the broad east lawn. It was a rather dreary place, paneled in dark wood, and the books on the table by the bed made it still drearier. There was a Bullfinch's Mythology, a Bible in Greek, and a set of The Greek Drama, in Greek too, of course. Finally I found a volume of George Meredith that belonged to Aunt Mattie. Aunt Mattie liked to be known as a voracious reader and something of a scholar. She annotated her books very carefully, writing "very beautiful" in the margin every so often for the first two or three chapters. As she never in her life read a volume clear through, the latter part of the book had the pages uncut; so I amused myself cutting them. There was a fine edition of Proust in four volumes, and Aunt Mattie had varied the marginal comments here, writing "C'est vrai" once or twice in the first thirty pages of Volume I. I read idly for an hour or so, but I was disturbed after a while by noises from downstairs. First there was a low muttering and stirring; then came a slow, rhythmic, pounding noise, followed by a rending crash, and I could detect matches of a ribald song. When the noises began to resemble the sound effects from a DeMille battle scene, I slipped on a dressing gown and went down. When I reached the foot of the stairs, I paused a moment to listen. The noises were apparently coming from the study, and they were getting louder. I went to the door and rapped sharply, and they ceased abruptly. There was an interval of silence, and then I heard Uncle Rupert's voice. He seemed to be reading something in a foreign language which by its inflection I recognized to be Greek, and he read with a great deal of vigor. I opened the door; there were books strewn all over the floor, a desk had been pushed over, and there were parts of broken chairs lying about.

Since Uncle Rupert was a very orderly individual, I sensed that something was wrong. My impression was strengthened when I saw Uncle Rupert himself. He was teetering precariously on the back of a Morris chair, and his face wore an expression of good fellowship which was entirely foreign to it. He greeted me heartily in Greek, but since my Greek is extremely limited, I was forced to ask him to translate.

Uncle Rupert sprang lightly down from the Morris chair. "Ah, my good nephew," he beamed.

"To translate it roughly it means 'Welcome to these fair Thesalian shores'." I had not seen Uncle Rupert so amiable since the time the New York Philological Society had a party at the St. Regis.

I looked over the situation. Fortunately Aunt Mattie would not be home until the next day; so I would have time enough to get the place straightened up.

"Uncle Rupert," I asked sternly, "What have you been drinking?" He pointed his finger in the general direction of the corner. One of the shelves that lined the room had swung out revealing a narrow compartment behind it. In the compartment was a vase, obviously of classical design, made of a blue iridescent stone that seemed to glow and throb in the shadows. There were figures carved all around it. Uncle Rupert reached in and took out the urn. He put it to his lips and drank deeply. I held the Morris chair still for him while he sat down.

"Now," I said, "What is all this about? Where did you get this stuff?"

Uncle Rupert was quite voluble and only slightly incoherent; so I had little trouble getting the story out of him. It seemed that he had been hunting for a book when he arrived at the shelf where Grandfather Peabody's books on Mythology were kept. He had absently pulled out the volume on Bacchus and was leafing through it when he heard a strange grinding noise in the wall. He looked up to see a section of shelf swing out into the room, revealing the urn.

"You see," he explained, "These carved figures here tell the story." He took another pull at the urn. "This wine to Aeson by Jason during the quest for the golden fleece. It was originally owned by Neptune."

"Indeed," I remarked ironically. "It must be rather well aged."

"Not a drop sold till it's six aeons old," he chanted, and the blue stone urn glowed as he flourished it. Suddenly a thought occurred to me. Now was the time to ask about Grandfather Peabody, but I must do it cunningly.

"The vase belonged to Grandfather Peabody, I suppose?" I remarked casually. Uncle Rupert thoughtfully poured a libation out on the carpet. "Yes," he said, taking a quick snort from the urn. "I'll tell you how it happened . . ."

Shortly after Grandfather Peabody had tried to hang the bust of Socrates on the Harvard professor, the family had persuaded him to resign. He became rapidly worse; he would pace up and

down in his study shouting in Greek and sometimes in Latin. When he occasionally lapsed into English, it was to curse the college, the world in general, and particularly the professor. Aunt Mattie and Uncle Rupert would often see him striding back and forth across the lawn, his white hair and beard blowing in the wind. On the afternoon of the day he was to be taken to the state hospital, Aunt Mattie and Uncle Rupert were sitting in the dining room looking out over the lawn. It was one of those humid August days when the heat wrings the last erg of energy out of your body, and it is only through sheer will power that you can manage even to lift a long, cool one. Very often on this sort of afternoon, just when you think you can't stand it any longer, a thunder-storm blows up. Gray-green clouds began to mass on the horizon, and at intervals the sheet lightning flared. A fresh breeze sprang up, and the poplars swayed, turning the white undersides of their leaves. Grandfather Peabody was moving restlessly around in his study as the first big drops began to fall. Aunt Mattie had gone to close the windows over the house, while Uncle Rupert sat by the open French windows watching the storm. It was closer now. Lightning forked across the sky, and the thunder cracked and rolled heavily. Suddenly the outside door of the study opened, and Grandfather Peabody burst out across the lawn. He had several books under his arm, and he carried a black traveling bag from which a long white pajama sleeve streamed in the wind. He went tearing across the lawn toward the poplars at the east border, "as if he were late for an appointment," as Uncle Rupert put it. Uncle Rupert was so startled that he didn't start after him immediately, and by the time he did get started, Grandfather had a good start.

Aunt Mattie had come back to the dining room, and she could see Uncle Rupert loping through the rain down toward Grandfather. Grandfather was standing on a knoll at the end of the row of poplars. A silver shaft of light shone down on him through a rift in the cloud, and his beard and hair glowed bright. The way the sunlight fell on him he looked like a picture of a prophet in an old family Bible. He raised his arm slowly; the wind was stronger now, and the sleeve flapped wildly. That was the last they saw of him; there was a blinding flash, and Uncle Rupert was knocked to the earth. After that the rain came down in sort of a gray curtain . . .

When Uncle Rupert finished, I sat for a moment, saying nothing. I looked over at the urn.

"Have a drink," said Uncle Rupert affably. I picked up the vessel and put it to my lips. I drank cautiously. The liquid was tasteless, colorless, and odorless. The room swayed gently, and I clung to the table for support. Then the dizziness passed, and I was conscious only of a feeling of unlimited power. I knew all. I could solve any problem with no effort at all. I had a feeling difficult to describe, a sort of intense clarity, pellucidity, which was almost painful. Uncle Rupert had a phrase from Arnold to describe it, "The liquid clearness of an Ionian sea." He misquoted him I believe.

After that I have only a hazy recollection of what happened. We wandered out into the street and marched uptown. It was Saturday night, and the town was full of students. We went into a door marked "Frankie's Place," where Uncle Rupert created quite a sensation, since the faculty is rarely represented there. I began to talk to a chap, but I don't recall exactly what I said. All I remember is that he was standing there, and suddenly he was stretched out cold on the floor.

Several people grabbed my arms, but I brushed them off onto the floor and stepped over them.

I heard Uncle Rupert say in a loud voice, "I don't like football players, fullbacks particularly."

The fullback swung, and Uncle Rupert swung, and then the fullback went down as if a wall had fallen on him. Uncle Rupert took him by one leg and started for the door to drag him thrice around the walls of Frankie's Place. Two bouncers and the proprietor converged on Uncle Rupert. With a look of annoyance Uncle Rupert swung the urn, and they went down like a row of dominoes. Then there were hundreds of people in blue suits who came streaming in the door. Uncle Rupert was tossing them across the bar two at a time when somebody turned the lights off.

We woke up in jail next morning with Homeric hangovers. I learned later that the students regarded Uncle Rupert with awe for months after, and that night became a legend in college history. The president came down and bailed us out, and we went back to look for the urn, but we couldn't find it.

Seasons

BY EMERSON KUMM

IT BEGAN late one bleak January afternoon. Dad and I had just finished throwing the rest of the wood in the shed when suddenly a few light flakes whirled down past my muffled ears. I looked at a weird, many spoked crystal that had fallen on my outstretched glove, touched it to my lips—a sudden sharp sensation was all. I glanced up briefly at the white-reefed sky and then hurried inside. Looking out again a half-hour later, anticipating and yet knowing what would be there, I found that the wind already had smoothed with a deft hand the sharp nooks of the quadrangle of out-buildings.

Next morning a magical transformed world of white met my sleepy-eyed gaze. The window all wreathed in fantastic designs gave a vista of snow-incrusted fields and snow-capped pines. It was a magical fairy-land even as I had read in books. The snow was unmoving, silent—still as though having come to a perpetual rest. The wind had left this place. My breath frosted the window, and I rubbed it with my finger. The quiet, white landscape again materialized. I gazed

hunting some chance motion—there was none. I stayed transfixed, breathless—almost as quiet, almost as much at peace as the snow.

Suddenly an automobile crunched around the corner. I expelled the breath I had held so long, once again silvering the window. I rubbed off the white frost to find the exhaust gases of the car hanging in the air—a long, thin, white string of puffy sausages. The level sweep of whiteness was broken by two straight lines and somehow . . . it was just snow after all. Snow to glide over, snow to play with, snow that made one's hands cold . . . just snow after all.

* * *

We had an immense snowfall that winter, and still here and there, clotted with mud, dowdy patches of snow remained. The ground, only partially thawed out, was swashy with moisture. Willows—truly weeping—lined the now impassable lane which in the torrid summer sun would be a hot, dust-choking dirt road. On what would later be a springy green turf, I sloshed along, my heels sucking in the sludge. Glancing back, I

noticed how quickly the muck-like water filled my trucks. It had been raining intermittently for the last few weeks, and even now the sodden, dull-gray clouds might start dripping again. Everything was drab and sloven as though suffocated by the inevitable water.

* * *

There was once a time when I truly believed that some day I would be President of the United States. It was in those sun-filtered days of my childhood when all the world seemed made for my individual enjoyment. The beautiful springtime after the dull, cold winter, the refreshing greenness of forested hills, the almost-pulsating, vibrant life in the green shoots that had shot up so suddenly from the drab brown of the fields—everything was good, and I appreciated it with a whole-hearted enthusiasm that asked not how or why. Then there were days in which fleecy, billowing clouds and cheerful sunshine enticed over the hills into small, sun-impaled glades where the first crocuses and the violets grew and on to shady corridors where under a great oak the dew-pearled lily-of-the-valley might be found.

On other afternoons when the sun, a lone, bright orb in the soft blue sky gave an inkling of the summer heat to come, I journeyed to the mossy caves in the high bluffs about our little town. There, lying in the refreshing coolness of the shade, listening to a light wind whisper gently through the quivering birches, and gazing deep, deep into the warm azure heavens, I dreamed of heroic deeds that I would do. Here I was leading a victorious army, here I was a bold and gallant rogue, and here again, I was the knight-errant. The days I was not sorry to see pass on, and neither did I anticipate the next. I lived in the present and for the present. My heart throbbed as though repeating as my mother often said,

"God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world."

* ** *

The heat of the night was an oppressive, humid heat that left one clammy with perspiration—left one too damp and warm to sleep comfortably—to sleep at all. The glass of water on the dresser top was tepid and insipid to the taste. The house was baked the day before in the cruel, merciless, suffocating, white stare of the sun and now seemed to give off all the concentrated heat in almost definite waves. The air seemed muggy—nearly heavy and murky enough to drink like a glass of animal-warm milk. Breathing was a hot, wet gurgle. There was quiet—a dense, dark quiet

as though everyone and everything held its breath

A sudden, small bolt of light darted jaggedly from pitch-black clouds that had risen suddenly from the dark rim of the horizon. A dull rumble of the impending storm jarred the still night. As though in expectancy of the forthcoming burst of wind and rain, the leaves of the maples and cottonwoods twittered slightly. "It is coming; it is coming," was the warning in the hush. The billowing dark clouds gathered star by star in their deep folds as they rushed forward, cannonading the absorbing landscape below with bolts.

Suddenly a blast shook the trees and filled the house with fresh, vibrant air that was almost tingling with electricity. The squall was upon us. Between the roars of thunder and the crashing stabs of lightning the rain arrived. A drop—two drops—a "pitter-patter"—then the downpour hissed, blending in the storm to become nearly unnoticeable a minute later. The thunder after a brief period of dominance rolled on, leaving us to the welcome coolness of sky-blessed torrents. All again seemed alive, potent with new energy. The leaves gently shook off the clinging raindrops; the house seemed to "breathe" once more; and a blanket was now needed for warmth. Softly, softly, the rain died away, leaving the world to a moist coolness. The wind also marshalled its troops and swept the heavens clear of wisps of remaining clouds. Again, one by one, the twinkling points of fire appeared—brighter than ever after their thorough scrubbing. Again the night was quiet—damp—but stimulatingly cool.

* * *

The leaves come drifting down—a lilting refrain. They are glowing so brightly, it would seem that in dying the most exquisite colors are born. The stubborn old oak bids them a hardy farewell and shakes them off on their way. Their duty is done and now they're leaving—the gayest, most cheerful ghosts in Christendom.

Infinity

By MINNIE RYLEY

What little distance rise
Our tallest trees
In that blue void
between the sky and sod!
Our highest thoughts reach
up no more than these,
Into the depth of goodness
Which is God.

Steinbeck's Powerful Vintage

BY BEN SWEENEY

NOW that the "morning after" has arrived, we can pick up John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* and analyze it with a more calm and rational eye. When Mr. Steinbeck uncorked this vintage, he released powerful stuff, and the results for a period were not unlike the brawling characteristics of a super-binge. Thirsty readers had waited none too patiently for the promised Steinbeck startler, and when it arrived (in the spring of 1939) it was quaffed long and deeply. The aftermath was somewhat amusing, at times pitiful, and very often downright ridiculous.

Take Alexander Woolcott for instance. Evidently in his cup up to his neck from the heady effect of the potion, he pounded an emphatic fat fist and gurgled that it was "as great a book as has yet come out of America!" That, mind you, before the ink had fully dried on the first edition! In his more sober moments, he must realize that the primary test of the greatness of any literary work is its lasting quality, and not even A. Woolcott can predict the excellence of a brain-child before it has reached adolescence. I don't condemn the man for his outburst; but he must look back with some shame, wondering exactly how such a statement ever got by his lips. Or perhaps he has gone off on another talking jag in some other author's backyard. In either case, his comment on *Grapes of Wrath* stands as a printed record of one extreme of criticism.

On the other hand there was Burton Rascoe, critic of *Time*, who didn't get very drunk. Indeed, he just reached the mean stage, peevishly declared that this was Steinbeck's first flop (preceded by two great books: *Of Mice and Men* and *Tortilla Flat*) and weakly pointed out a few technical errors to substantiate his theory.

There were a multitude of in-between degrees of inebriation. There were the inevitable club-women, most of whom ranted long and loud protesting the publication of "such filth" and rushed home to their own copies to check "choice" quotations for their giggling guests of the tea-table. There was a Catholic priest who vented his particular kind of wrath in a Hearst newspaper, his half-page commentary simmering down to the fact that he didn't like the idea of the Deity's name being slung around so carelessly by people who really would never say such things. And we

must not overlook Ruth Comfort Mitchell, who is doing a little banner-waving all her own by way of a purported "answer" to the Steinbeck work. Oh, yes; there was the Oklahoma lady who told me in no uncertain terms that she had never known any people like the Joads and that she knew a lot of Californians who were no better, etc.

The season on Steinbeck is temporarily over now, and what headaches remain are slight (unless Miss Mitchell is really worried over her output, which, I regret to relate, few people are awaiting with bated breath).

On the face of things, it would appear that John Steinbeck himself imbibed a trifle too deeply in the production which brought on so many varied comments. As to technical points, in many cases he lost the path. He was so intent upon the creation of live people and, we must admit, upon the thesis so near his heart, that he neglected to discover exactly where dust storms occur and precisely how many acres constitute a California ranch. But to this I say, "So what!"

Take most of these criticisms together and start stripping them down. First of all, any of those statements based on the prejudice of a particular faction in the matter must be eliminated. Literary criticism does not admit this sort of comment unless it can be shown that the author's efforts have produced nothing but propaganda. Furthermore, literary critics cannot afford to forget that the book is fiction and that the attack must not be made on any thesis therein. When the thesis overbalances the literary quality, the critic has the right to place the work apart from great novels. But this novel has not violated the great unwritten law. There is no improper balance in it! Those who went off on this kind of critical tangent must be disregarded.

The few who felt that the book was "nasty" were unconsciously assuming a part in the eternal battle between the naturalists and the romantics. The former prefer life served as life. The latter like it gilt-sprayed and honey-flavored and should have known better than to read Steinbeck in the first place.

Keep breaking down these criticisms and what do you find? Obviously, in most instances, these people have misfired. But among those who scored

bull's-eyes was George Stevens, who reviewed the book for the *Saturday Review of Literature*. He said, "He (Steinbeck) knows what the country is doing to the Joads and what goes on in their minds and emotions." And there you have it! Masterful character moulding and the familiarity with the way people think and act is the golden trait sought by all who want to write lasting novels. John Steinbeck has achieved this—to a marked degree! And in that lies the genius of the *Grapes of Wrath*.

Aside from character, there were those side-view chapters where the author let himself go creatively and turned out panorama of the scenes he wanted most indelibly impressed upon the readers' imaginations. I can still see the weary tundra laboring up the dusty road and hear, contrastingly, the nasal twang of the second-hand car hucksters. If I say that Steinbeck is a master of simple description—a word artist of the common life, I too will be accused of lingering too long with the potent grapes, but I feel that this is substantiated by the descriptive parts in all of his better-known stories.

I am still unable to understand why that same Mr. Stevens sniffed at these excellent chapters and called them "at best superfluous." He and I part company at that point; for although I do believe that the members of the Joad family and the philosophical Casey were a work of art in their own right, I cannot help feeling that the entire effect was enhanced by the additional chapters. With or without them, however, Maw, Paw, and the preacher were real enough to stand out in even a greater quantity of propaganda than is included in this book.

My *Grapes of Wrath* is dog-eared and worn, bearing mute testimony to the fact that this copy is being read. And publishers' figures indicate that the same may be said of many thousands of other copies. It is to be regretted that it is not read more honestly, more completely for its own sake with a clear eye for the gems to be found in it. Certainly anyone who thinks of writing "anewers" to such a story should retire into the North Woods, get over his "mad," and return to civilization only when he has developed a sensitivity to good writing and is unhampered by personal prejudice.

It has been a great jag; confess it, won't you? And when Steinbeck blows the cobwebs off another rare one, I'll be clinking glasses with the rest. But remember—moderation! Moderation in judgment—even in literary criticism—yes, even with Steinbeck!

San Francisco

By HELEN BARDMESS

Night falls softly dark satin over cream shoulders
In Chinatown Loo Min locks his store
Potbelled gods blink in the window
Carved boxes hide in dusk
A silk kimono sleeps against the wall
Gray ghost of a thwarted bargain

Down the street
Blatant nasality fills the pungent atmosphere
Gentlemen with the black hat
"girls just going on
girls just going on"
Connie shakes her red hair
Smiles with her mouth
Body sways awkwardly in blue light
Offstage the stooge with the baggy pants
Makes conversation
"hot stuff
new babes in the show
we got the real McCoy"

Going up
Elevator going up to the Skyroom
Catch your breath coming down
The Mark Hopkins' taller than The Empire
It's on a hill
People come and go with gentle patter
They sip their drinks graciously
Lazy efficiency drifts through
The soft dusk of warm bodies and cigarette scent
The world outside is a rich woman's jewel box
God but it's great to be alive

Coney Island redhots
You can have everything on it
Red sauce oozing
Spread your mouth gingerly over one end
Notice the waiter
Such talking black eyes
And he has a tattoo on one arm
Wonder what he does with his spare time

Cable cars rattling down apartment rows
Lovers dreaming in window displays
"let's have a cream bedroom set
and a wooly rug"

San Francisco.
Dark satin slipping down over cream shoulders
Sleep gently
Sleep and dream away the night
Sleep until earth turns in her sleep
Rocking the universe and your slim arms to
destruction

The Goal

By PAUL ROBERTS

SHE couldn't sleep that night, what with the rumors and the doubts in her mind and Carl not home; so she dressed and went down to the building on Thirteenth Street. Jimmy, the elevator boy, was still working.

"Lots of excitement tonight, Mis' Kenny," he observed, as she stepped into the elevator.

"Anything new, Jimmy?" she asked.

He nodded vigorously. "Lots new every minute. Sure looks like we're gonna move right into that there country. Sure looks like it, Mis' Kenny."

He let her off at the sixth floor. She passed an office filled with smoke and people and brilliant light, and walked down the drab and dusty corridor to a door marked: "Carl Kenny—private." She opened it and went in.

There were three men in the room, grouped around the radio placed on the desk. The men looked tense and strained, and their eyes were feverishly bright, like the eyes of gamblers watching cards that carried wealth or ruin, and when they spoke, their words came out dry and crackly, like quick rifle fire on the smoky air.

The radio was playing swing music.

None of the men rose as the girl came in. The tall man behind the desk said, "I thought you were home in bed, Helen."

"I couldn't sleep." The girl crossed the room to the desk. "I had to know what's happening. Oh, Carl, what is happening?"

Carl shook his big, blond head. "Nothing. Probably nothing will happen tonight. We won't hear—"

"We've got to hear," broke in the man on his right, with a touch of hysteria in his voice. "We've got to hear pretty damn quick, or I'm going nuts."

The third man spoke, heavily and with an indeterminate accent, "John, my advice to you is to shut up and take it easy."

"That's right, Boris," Carl agreed. "We've all got to take it easy until—"

He stopped abruptly. The swing music had broken off, and the four people turned in a single movement and stared into the silent radio. The girl had a feeling of emptiness, of timelessness, as if the world hung suspended in a void.

She felt a communion with every woman who had ever waited for a war to begin.

The announcer's voice came in, loud and shattering, on the silence: "Ladies and gentlemen, we interrupt this program of dance music to bring you the latest news bulletin from Europe. Helsinki reports large scale Russian troop movements across the northern frontier, near Petsamo. There is also a report that shots have been exchanged on the Karelian Isthmus, and that Russian troops have crossed the border. This report is unconfirmed. Keep tuned to this station for news of further developments. We now return you to—"

"Unconfirmed!" John shouted. "Why don't they confirm it, for God's sake? Why don't they either go in or stay out?"

"They'll confirm it," Boris said, staring intently at his fingernails, which he was cleaning with a knife. "They'll go in."

"I wish they'd do something," John mumbled. He was a boy—twenty-two, twenty-four—with deep, dark eyes and a mat of curly hair tumbling over his forehead and a crooked, blue scar slitting his right cheek. "I wish they'd confirm something," he said. "Then I'd know."

There was a sudden heavy silence, and Helen's pulse quickened as she waited for one of the men to ask John what he would know. She glanced at her husband. She knew Carl suspected John of lack of firmness, but surely he wouldn't make an issue of it. Not tonight. Everything was being turned upside down again tonight.

Carl just said, "Take it easy. Remember, we don't know what's really going on over there. All we're getting is a bunch of wild rumors strained through capitalist propaganda machines. Wait till we hear from Moscow; then we'll know what to do."

"Sure," echoed Boris, "take it easy." He held his knife by the blade and waved the handle at John. "My advice to you is to go sit down and think about things like women and getting drunk."

The boy held his large eyes on Boris and stared a moment. Then he turned like an automaton and walked across the room and sank into a chair.

"I don't like that," Carl said, watching him. "Not a bit. Go talk to him, Helen."

Obediently, the girl left the radio and crossed the room. John was tilting back in his chair, looking at the picture of Stalin which hung above the desk. Helen glanced back to the others. Carl and

Boris were talking in low tones against the background of swing music. She looked up, following John's line of vision to the picture.

"He knows what's best," Helen said.

"Does he?"

"You have to have faith," Helen told him. "You can't let your mind be poisoned by capitalist propaganda and bourgeois sentiment."

He took his gaze from the picture, and looked at her, and she saw a depth and power in the pools of his eyes she had never seen there before.

"I fought in Spain," he said.

She sat down beside him. Carl had sent her to talk to him, and she had to try; but she had a feeling that things were going on in his mind which made her words ridiculous.

"You know," she said, "Carl thinks you're one of the most valuable men in the Party. There's no one except Boris that he trusts to do things the way he trusts you."

He looked into her eyes, and suddenly he appeared to her very young and boyish. There was a tenderness about him, too, a gentleness, which she remembered long afterwards, which she never quite forgot.

He said, "Helen, what is a Cause?"

"A Cause?"

"Yes. What does it mean to you—a Cause? This one, for instance? Our cause?"

"Why it means—it means something big—something bigger than we are—something worth living for and dying for—a goal! Yes, that's it, a goal! A goal that must be reached, no matter how."

"No matter how?"

She hesitated. "Yes—I guess the goal is more important than the way you get there."

"Helen," he said abruptly, "did you ever pity anything?"

"What—what do you mean?"

"Yes, I guess you have. I guess you must have—before you met Carl."

She glanced automatically at the desk.

"Carl never pities anything," John said. "He just hates things."

She wanted to contradict him, but she couldn't find the words. She wanted to say that Carl hated things because his pity was so great, but she didn't know how to put it together. She thought irrelevantly how much more restful John was than Carl, how much more soft and gentle.

"I can't think the way Carl does," John said.

"John," Helen began, "you're upset tonight. You—"

"I thought I could once. I thought I did. When I was eighteen, I thought I did. I saw that most things in the world were wrong and had to be changed. It seemed to me it wasn't any use to live unless those things were changed. It didn't matter how, then, because it seemed to me there was only one way to change them. That's why I went to Spain."

She could not keep her mind on what he was saying. She thought only that he was a lovely boy and tenderly young. She thought she would like to stroke his hair.

"I guess it doesn't matter," John said.

He got up and walked back across the room to the desk. Helen followed him.

"You feel better now, eh?" Boris asked.

"Sure he feels better," Carl said. "We all get that way. We get tired and confused and discouraged, and we wonder whether it's worth fighting for. But we get over it. We know damn well it's worth fighting for." Carl's blue eyes fired up, and his great blond head seemed a thing of furious power. "We know it's the only thing on God's earth worth fighting for."

"The goal," Helen whispered.

Carl looked at her almost gently. "Sure, that's it. The goal."

"Listen!" Boris commanded sharply.

The music had stopped again, and the four people in the room lived through a moment of bottomless silence, broken finally by the voice of the announcer:

"Ladies and gentlemen, we have another news bulletin from Europe. It has been officially confirmed by the Soviet Government in Moscow that Russian troops have crossed the border and are fighting on Finnish soil. The communique contained the statement that the Soviets had taken this step to protect themselves against a threatened Finnish invasion. We now return you to the program in progress at the Hotel Pennsylvania."

No one spoke. Helen did not dare look at John. She kept her eyes fixed on Carl, across the desk from her, and she saw reflected in his face a succession of emotions that seemed to be rocking his whole being. He was white with pallor when the announcer finished, and his blue eyes were shallow and clouded. His large, bony hands were gripping the desk tightly, as if they meant to crush it beneath them, while his lean frame combined rigidity with the appearance of violent motion pressing for outlet, like the corpse of a soldier shot dead in the very height of battle.

Then he changed. His hands relaxed, and his face reddened, and a ripple of smooth, flowing

power seemed to pass through his body. His eyes became clear again, with the brilliant clearness of blue sky at noon, and they took on depth and fire, and burned bright and steadily. And he lifted his head, great and golden, and turned it from one to another, slowly and defiantly, as if forbidding them to penetrate the depths of emotion from which he had just come.

He seemed to Helen like the apostle of a living god, and she knew in that moment that, however she might feel with such as John, whatever Carl did must always be truth and life to her.

He got up slowly, reached out a hand to turn off the radio and spoke in a voice from which all intimacy had vanished, a voice carrying words not from friend to friend, but from soldier to soldier.

"You have heard, comrades. Our course has been decided. We await official orders from Moscow. Meanwhile, we carry on in the light of what we know. That is all."

A moment of silence; then, from John, "Yes, comrade, that is all."

Carl turned to him, smiling coldly. "I don't quite understand the tone in your voice."

"Don't you? Then I'll explain it." The boy's voice was strained and cracking with excitement. "It means that I'm finished—through! I've swallowed a lot. I can't swallow this. You can wait for orders from Moscow if you want. I'm through!"

Boris said, "My advice to you—"

"Keep it," John snapped. "I don't need it. I know what to do now. I wish to God I'd known four years ago. But I was young then; I had ideals. I thought some of the wrong things in the world could be changed. I thought I'd found some people who were changing them. But I'm not young any more. I know better now. I know you can't get rid of meanness and viciousness and oppression by being mean and vicious and oppressive. I wish to God I'd known it before."

"John," the girl whispered, "think of the goal."

He whirled on her. "What's the goal? You don't know. Carl doesn't know. What goal are we getting at by the domination of a harmless people by force? What goal? Tell me!"

"John," Boris said, "my advice to you—"

"No," John said, "I won't swallow this. I stayed with you when we signed up with Nazism. I went along when we took Poland. But I can't swallow this tonight. I'm getting out."

"All right, John," Carl said quietly. "Get out."

"Sure I'll—"

"Get out now, John," Carl said.

He left then, and Helen felt her throat thicken as she watched him stride defiantly, boyishly out of the office and into the corridor.

"That's too bad," Boris said.

"Yes," Carl agreed. "He didn't have faith enough. And he didn't have guts enough."

"Well, it's too bad," Boris said.

"You know what to do."

"Sure." Boris opened his knife and scratched at his fingernails. "I thought he was going to be a good boy. I thought all along he was going to be a good boy."

"You'd better do it."

"Sure," Boris said. He snapped the knife closed. "Sure, I'll do it."

He left the office.

Helen felt a quick grip of panic as she watched him go. She turned to her husband. She put a hand on his arm.

"Carl, what's he going to do?"

"What must be done."

"He's going to—to kill John!"

"The only ones who can really hurt us," Carl said, "are the ones who get out after they've been in. We can't let them hurt us. You remember Krivitsky."

She thought she was going blind. "But—John! John!"

"This is too big—what we're in. We're playing for the world. We can't let one man or one nation stand against the world. We've got to go on, no matter what gets in the way. It's taken us, and we have to go with it; we can't go against it. We've got to go on until we reach the goal."

She was crying bitterly and violently. He held her by the shoulders and shook her, and he took her head and tilted it, and looked into it with his burning eyes.

"You understand that, don't you?"

She looked up at him. The force and power of him seemed to pour into her and stamp out everything good and bad within her soul. She felt the greatness in him, and she hated the greatness in him, but futilely, lifelessly, as a helpless ship might hate a storm. And she knew that his greatness had become the life-force of her body and soul.

"You understand, don't you?" he repeated.

She nodded. She understood; she accepted her understanding. But she wished she had not been born.

A College Senior Looks At American Education

BY WILLIAM NITSCHKE

DOES a college student, senior or otherwise, have any right to criticize the education to which he and others have been exposed and are being exposed? Obviously, I believe he has. But before I proceed further, let me hasten to say that I am far from the opinion that the entire American educational plan is bad. Imperfect though the system may be at present, I believe in it just as intensely as I do the American democratic system of government of which it is a part. Thus I hope I have relieved the mind of any reader who may have feared that perhaps another college student was leaning too far toward the pink horizon.

* * *

I have gone out of my way more than once the past few years to review, for my own possible pleasure and profit, various criticisms of educational systems. In the light of those articles and of my own short experience, it seems apparent that too many efforts follow the general direction of horizontal criticism. That is to say, too many educators seize upon one particular section of the educational ladder, very often and very naturally the section which directly concerns them vocationally, and proceed to settle much or even all of the entire situation from this comparatively narrow viewpoint. I do not propose to solve each and every problem in even one step of the educational ladder but perhaps I, as one of the guinea pigs, may be condoned for discussing a few items concerning American education in general, especially since I am about to be graduated from the system. Four criticisms seem to me to be particularly worthy of consideration at this time. One will note that they are all of what I like to term a "vertical nature;" that is, each one may be traced with more or less ease from kindergarten through college to the B. A. or other degree. They are as follows:

- 1) An attempt in many quarters to force too much useless knowledge upon the student.
- 2) Lack of a widespread attempt to instill a courteous attitude into the minds of students.
- 3) Too little regard for sensible discovery, encouragement and development of students' talents.

- 4) Lack of an environment suited to the proper development of a sense of responsibility.

Other items might easily be named, but the facts listed above have impressed themselves upon me again and again. Let us briefly examine the first one. That present-day students are made to learn, or educators attempt to make them learn, a great body of mostly useless facts, is neither a new nor a very surprising statement. The rather recent investigation of Pennsylvania colleges and high schools by the Carnegie Foundation is fair proof that such is the case. But though it may not be a very new problem, still it can be, and is, a very serious one. Last year in a typical state college controlled by a likewise typical as well as progressive western state, my schedule included a freshman course in European History. I very soon found that the chief objective of the professor was to lecture as fast as he thought the class could possibly take notes on an almost endless list of names, dates, and incidents, a great many of which were comparatively unimportant. He placed far too little emphasis upon the more progressive movements and figures of history, which is certainly the stuff one should store away as knowledge in a freshman course of this nature. Quizzes as well as lectures were masses of detail. This walking encyclopedia closed the year's work with the assertion—a kind of final threat—that no student had as yet been able to enroll in three of his courses in the same term without flunking at least one of them. It was all a bit too much, even for some of the history majors—and this was only a freshman course. I am convinced that this illustration has many, many duplicates in the high schools and colleges of the entire nation. These duplicates will be discovered not only in the history courses of the land but also in many required and so-called "basic" literature, mathematics, and science courses. Mathematics is no longer a subject for the millions, as Wiggam and others have shown; it is a subject for specialists, and at least in the high school and college curricula should be treated accordingly. Science courses, too, are either over emphasized or wrongly emphasized. Able educators are now advocating in both secondary and college work, a separation of science courses into two groups: one planned for those students fulfilling "require-

ments" or gaining an appreciation of the scientific method; the other should be for science majors, pre-medics, and the like. Thus a great deal of time is saved by all parties concerned. It should hardly be necessary to mention the time-worn foreign language department. Naturally, languages have their place, and that place is among the more specialized subjects. It becomes more obvious each day that a real command of the English language, spoken as well as written, is for most high school and college graduates a greater asset by far than "sixteen hours" (often more) of foreign language, be it ancient or modern. True, a fair sum of knowledge should be instantly available at our fingertips. Gladstone may be eternally quoted in his statement that "knowledge is power." Nevertheless, certain other classes of knowledge will forever remain practically useless in certain walks of life. Surely, we ought not expect students to become animated encyclopedias, as my friend, the European History professor, thought they should be.

Let us now progress to my second point regarding education in the American scene: namely, courtesy, or the lack of it. Courtesy, it seems to me, involves much more than most people suspect. Broadly, it might include the two items yet remaining to be dealt with in this discussion. A lack of courteous behavior seems to be at the bottom of a great many of the difficulties which confront our mechanistic civilization. For example, if each and every motorist in this country were to use as his daily slogan "Courtesy pays," imagine what a dramatic nose-dive the appalling accident curve would suddenly take. Science steadily develops more and better machines, whether we think we want them or not, and our next door neighbor moves relentlessly a little closer. Yet, how much emphasis do modern schools, private or public, place on courteous speech and action, whose importance increases almost as the square of our proximity to our neighbor? Among students on every side rudeness and sarcasm run rampant. If we modernists insist upon so much wit to salt our everyday lives, perhaps we should study the life and works of one such as Oliver Wendell Holmes, before giving free reign to tongue or pen. Dr. Holmes, we know, was not only a man of letters, but gained distinction in education and medicine as well. Most of his writings were compiled after nearly a lifetime of experience and observation. Those writings have not only given him a place in literature but in philosophy as well. And Holmes' philosophy was both an optimistic and a realistic one. After a lifetime of observing

both the physical and the spiritual man, Oliver Wendell Holmes remained to the end capable of keen satire but not of cynicism. He loved wit and valued it highly; but unkind sarcasm was not in his repertoire. Perhaps one of the chief reasons why Holmes avoided sarcasm lay in the fact that he persistently attempted to be true to his own nature and true to his fellow men. Thus teacher and pupil alike might well carry in their minds the thought contained in a certain Holmes couplet:

Leave what you've done for what you have
to do

Don't be "consistent" but be simply true.

It is apparent that the blighting, asinine sarcasm such as one often hears from adolescent lips is too often carried over into influential adult groups, and indiscriminate abuses of one group by another may result. Free speech and action must not become the very tools with which democracy is undermined. Thus education errs when it talks vaguely of achieving "personality" and "social contacts," neither citing or emphasizing methods of building courteous, objective personalities, nor impressing youth with the values which accrue from choosing for himself a goodly number of his social contacts. If education corrects these matters, it will not only increase individual and group courtesy and cooperation, it will be well on its way toward performing its proper function in a democratic society.

My last two items of criticism, as I see them, are based almost entirely upon a very simple but nevertheless a very widespread error in the educational set-up. That error is the building of enormous "plants." The larger and finer the campus and its buildings, it seems, the finer will be the results for all concerned. Industry is just beginning to take notice of the advantages to be found in decentralization. I wonder whether education would not also find it profitable to look toward some such action not only in the large metropolis but in the small city. Last year in the same metropolitan area where dwelt my aforesaid history professor was an enormous "Union High School and Junior College," with a total enrollment of well over 5000 pupils. I talked with a good many young people of varying ages who had attended or were then attending the institution. Nearly all referred to it as "the mess," or gave it a somewhat similar designation. All were vehemently alike in their condemnation of the great size of the school. It seems to be the custom in most of the large cities of the United States to plan larger and larger educational units. This

comparatively simple fact, as I have stated above, I believe to be the chief basis for the outgrowth of the third and fourth of my items of criticism. Review with me for a minute those items. Number three, you will recall, read, "Too little regard for sensible discovery, encouragement, and development of students' talents." Number four read, "Lack of any environment suited to the proper development of a sense of responsibility." Little explanation should be necessary for us to perceive wherein the large and unwieldy educational unit must fail, at least in many departments, in furnishing media for the discovery and development of individual student talent. Aside from athletics, perhaps, opportunities for all but the comparatively few students with especially obvious talents are practically nil. In dramatics, in debate, and in music, though the possibilities in that field have been increased appreciably during the last decade or two, there is time and space for but a limited number of participants. Hidden talents must often remain hidden, a loss to both individual and society. Even in the junior high school home room, where ample opportunity for leadership development is usually one of the goals of the administration, we find perfectly good material shoved aside again and again, simply because too many pupils have been crowded into one classroom. No one will contradict the fact that class as well as classroom officers are among our best training grounds where youngsters may almost unconsciously absorb the democratic way of living. It has been and will be argued that large educational units furnish greater opportunities in equipment and in teaching staff. This is becoming less and less true as rural educational facilities gradually improve. Again, it will be argued that large schools cut supervision costs. True, but what a cut they make in the personalities of literally *hundreds of thousands of American youth*. Fortunate indeed is the boy or girl living in the small city, the town, and in many rural areas. Equipment and supervision savings be hanged! Those students, often with the assistance of the 4-H Clubs, the Future Farmers of America, and similar organizations, are engaged in a type of activity which is far more sound than hanging around the corner drug store or the shady night club. They learn at first hand the art of leadership, because they are not in direct competition with several thousand students who are also in search of opportunity to lead. More than likely their school enrollment is in the low hundreds. And so they are given jobs to do, and they learn to do by doing. There is room not only to prac-

tice leadership, but to take part in dramatics, debate, party or picnic activities, and in musical activities. Talents are not only uncovered; they are encouraged and trained. These facts should be perfectly obvious. They have been expressed, for instance, by the advocates of small colleges probably thousands of times and have likewise been ignored exactly that many times. Is it possible to plan smaller secondary as well as college units for our larger cities? We evidently need not worry too much about the grade school level; classes in that age group are already growing smaller. But surely the situations in most large cities will bear looking into, especially at the junior and senior high school levels. It is at these ages particularly that too many young people are learning the art of loafing when they should be spending their time in constructive work or projects and in healthful recreation, either individually or with groups. Education can and must do something about these things, if it is to remain true to its purpose.

It would seem that I have already set aside my fourth and last item of criticism in the preceding discussion. However, though the subject of the development of students' talents and that of the growth of a sense of responsibility are in this case inseparable, there is still much to be clarified. As I previously stated, most of us rather early in our careers "learn to do by doing." We may gradually assume responsibility as we learn to perform more acts, or as we perfect the acts with which we are already familiar. Aside from the problem of encouraging their talents, how can young people be expected to appreciate the true meaning and significance of responsibility if they are deprived of the opportunity of doing? Parents as well as educators are at fault in this matter. At least in many urban areas the factory system has rather thoroughly stripped the modern home of means whereby children can be given regular activities which will cause them to assume responsibility. It is a waste of time to speak of getting rid of the Machine, as a few naive souls suggest. What is the answer? Perhaps industry should revive the apprenticeship system on a larger scale, as Henry Ford and a few others have done. But it would appear for the present and immediate future that education must carry most of the load. Should not parents and educators alike more thoroughly examine ends as well as means before advocating educational plants, deemed great in all respects because of their great size? Fathers and mothers pack their children off to huge institutions often with enrollments of

from five to ten thousand or more, expecting them to be sent back finished products, just as are raw materials finished on leaving the great factories of the nation. Great size and hence efficiency, standardization, quantity production, and other machine age terms are for the most part industrial terms, not educational ones. Such phenomena do not readily transfer to the field of the education of young minds. For each young mind is a whole new set of perplexing problems as well as interesting possibilities, and therefore, in many respects each must be treated as an individual case—not as just another piece of raw material. The keynote of any democracy is not alone independence of thought and action; as we have suggested several times, every citizen of a self-governing nation must at an early age be impressed with the importance of sharing responsibility. In exchange for freedom of speech and action, he must be willing to accept a portion of the job of governing that nation, even though his share be only that of keeping well informed with regard to candidates for office and to questions of the day, and then voting on the basis of his investigations—not of his emotions—whenever an election occurs. If a sufficient number of citizens cannot be taught to take an interest in such matters, to see to it as far as possible that their friends and families are alive to the problems of the day; to cooperate with one another in the solution of those problems; then the prophecies of the Cynics may after all be fulfilled. The importance of these facts would warrant, it seems to me, the coining of a new word—a word which simply means the process of absorbing responsibility. Such a word might be "responsibilization," which we might keep in mind as a kind of antonym of Regimentation. But word or no word, the shouldering of responsibility must occur continuously and universally among a people who love and desire to maintain "one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

* * *

Does the preceding discussion lead us anywhere, educationally or otherwise? It seems apparent that education in America can be reduced to a few significant conclusions, some of which I trust are among those which follow. First, education has the opportunity to develop either a host of walking encyclopedias (or possibly empty-headed rebels), or a citizenry of well-informed, thinking human beings. Secondly, it can turn out a bunch of cads, or it can go a long way toward molding generation after generation of thought-

ful, courteous people. Thirdly, it can easily manufacture a hundred thousand creatures who have done little about really finding themselves and their potentialities; or it can help immeasurably in the building of live, useful and extremely interesting personalities. Finally, and perhaps most important of all for a good many decades, American Education can teach each new generation to assume responsibility gradually, gracefully, and efficiently, and without fear or tremor. H. G. Wells had something there when he announced that "Civilization is a race between education and catastrophe." Of course he meant in addition that the race is not alone between education and catastrophe but between *right* education and catastrophe. The modern species of dictator educates his people from the ground up, and "makes no bones" about it. But as Dewey explains in his enlightening little book, *Experience and Education*, "Education is based upon a series of *desirable* experiences." Let us all see to it immediately and henceforth that as many as possible of the "experiences" of America's sons and daughters shall be "desirable" ones.

Deliver Us From Evil

BY BEN SWEENEY

Life is a groping for balms
To soothe the aches and pains
That plague us;
And blindly clutching for a salve,
Our bleeding fist is pricked
By nettles;
Yet, bruised and patched,
We kneel, and cry aloud:
"Oh Lord,
Great Fountainhead of Mercy,
Life is sweet . . .
Spare me . . ."
Jehovah spares
And laughs
And plants more nettles;
For without nettles
There'd be no need for kneelers;
And without kneelers,
There'd be no need for God;
And God knows this.

The Battle of the Sexes

By SYLVIA LUDECKE

" . . . But to Adam, in what sort
Shall I appear? Shall I to him make known
As yet my change, and give him to partake
Full happiness with me, or rather not,
But keep the odds of knowledge in my power
Without co-partner so to add what wants
In female sex, the more to draw his love,
And render me more equal, and perhaps—
A thing not undesirable—sometime
Superior; for, inferior, who is free?"

—Milton

ACCORDING to the eternal poet, thus argued the woman with herself after she had eaten of the apple.

Man has held a diversity of concepts of woman's position in relation to himself in each succeeding cultural development. But, as civilization has generally been conceived to be a male-run, male-dominated civilization, one can safely assume that the variety of concepts in regard to woman's functions and her nature has been developed from the male point of view; so also can the ethics and conventions that have arisen be attributed to the male desire to safeguard and maintain these concepts—though, of course, there have, of necessity, been compromises.

I'm not prepared to say how large a part of the Biblical story of the creation and fall of man has played in the evolution of the ethical systems relating to the man-woman relationships in the various cultural units. Whether we look upon the story as myth or as fact, it is safe to conjecture that it has been at least an influence, and perhaps a very powerful influence, in forming the attitude of men toward women and women toward men.

It is not necessary to repeat the story for my purpose—for everyone knows it—but only to point out the factors in it that apply to this theme. I will take the liberty to draw from Milton's interpretation of the story, partly because it has its delightfully human aspects and partly because his interpretation seems to illustrate more consistently the universal Christian concept.

The story of the origin and the actions of Eve has been seized upon by both the male and female population of the world to illustrate that woman is inferior to man. The fact that she was formed from his rib seems to give rise to the idea that

she was originally designed to be dependent on man and to remain by his side. Eve's wandering from the side of Adam out of the sphere of his protection and yielding to temptation have been conclusive proof of her inferiority and dependence. Even Milton spoke of her as "the weaker vessel." This has been such a powerful influence and has been taken so seriously that women even now are considered inferior. We do not openly express that opinion, but our practice implies it. The yielding of Adam to temptation has been winked at and been made only a subject of many an amusing quip instead of a subject of universal ethical condemnation. Even the penetrating eye of Milton does not seize upon it as having much to do with moral problems, but adheres to the Puritan point of view. Why this is so is quite understandable, especially to a woman, for when Eve offered the apple to Adam, he said, gazing upon her form, "How can I live without thee? How forgo thy sweet converse, love so dearly joined, to live again in these wild woods forlorn?" and so he ate "against his better judgment, not deceived, but fondly overcome with female charm."

And so the world smiles on Adam's fall, for the "world loves a lover," and upon woman has fallen the blame, if not a larger share of the burden of the consequences; and perhaps—all things considered—she bears it gladly, yes, too gladly.

I distinctly dislike turning my thoughts away from such pleasant contemplations to discuss less pleasant possibilities in regard to the story, but the necessity for it also arises from instincts as imperative as the desire to dwell upon it.

The modern phrase "battle of the sexes," though outwardly a subject of many a joke and quip, may have its roots and its origin in far deeper human drives, forces and necessities. Indeed, present day psychologists deem this to be true, and to make it more specific, they say that it arises from an inborn desire in man or woman to be superior over the other, and the "battle of the sexes" is really a universal and vital struggle between men and women for superiority.

Now, whether the story of creation is a literal fact, from which certain aspects have been seized upon by the male half of humanity to assert and

corroborate his superiority, or whether it is a myth created by the male for the same ends—is not for me to say. However, we are dealing with only the purposes of the results of its influence as it relates to man and woman relationships. In any case the male has been—outwardly at least—successful in maintaining and safeguarding his superior position.

As I have already suggested, I wish to discuss some of the concepts that man has had of woman (and still does, for that matter), keeping in view the fact that these concepts have been developed from the male desire for superiority.

The most primitive concept is the "slave concept," which is probably due to a very liberal interpretation of the Biblical story. Since Eve was the first to eat the apple, this has been regarded as an attested proof of her inferiority and of the justice of Jehovah's punishment.

"Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply
By thy conception; children thou shalt bear
In sorrow forth, and to thy husband's will
Thine shall submit; he over thee shall rule."

These are the chief factors that have been seized upon to place woman in various degrees of slavery or servitude, depending on the enlightenment and culture of civilizations. And again, whether the misinterpretation of a fact, resulting since all the writers of the Bible were men—or whether the misinterpretation of a fact, resulting in superstitious traditions, have been due to men, the result is all the same; they both yield to the idea of woman's inferiority and therefore her subjugation to the will of man. Since it is so difficult for man in his fallen sinful state—the result of Eve's temptation—consistently to live up to Jehovah's injunction to "be good" to his "helpmeet," woman's yoke of subjugation has been most galling where the story has been given the most literal interpretation, and Eve's presentment, "inferior, who can be free," has borne its bitterest fruits. This is but a matter of history of the most primitive cultures. The defenders of Christianity would insist that the position of women has improved with the coming of Christianity, and they are right. However, Christianity was designed to improve the nature of man himself, and with it came the improvement in the position of women. Whenever Christianity has penetrated the dark tribal cultures, the lot of women has improved, but her position as an inferior to the male improved only relatively, for she was still in subjugation, but this time in subjugation to an improved man.

The concept of courtly love, which places the woman upon a pedestal can also be attributed to man's desire for superiority. As man realized his own dignity and powers in the higher cultural developments, it became harmful to his natural egoism to love a "slave." It became necessary for man, in order to maintain his own superiority, to make sure that his children as well as himself be given a more dignified birthright and heritage than a "slave" could offer. It became necessary for him to cast about for a better place to put woman in relation to himself and since she was still a mystery to him, being so different from him, he elevated her high upon a pedestal. This pedestal had a variety of heights ranging from the one that reached all the way to heaven from which poor wistful Laura gazed longingly down at Petrarch, to lower pedestals, where woman was more nearly within man's reach—but not too near. Too bad about Petrarch too, because he could have had Laura in his arms all the time if only he had understood and not placed her up so far. However, Petrarch's actions had some wisdom in them. Since he seemed to lack confidence in his own powers to keep the woman he loved on the pedestal at all, he had to put her so far up that she could not possibly reach him if she did fall; thus he saved himself responsibility for her bruises as well as the pain of disillusionment. Yes, he was wise, from the standpoint of his own inadequacy, though certainly not admirable; I dare say Laura was better off, all things considered.

Since Petrarch, the pedestal has been modified in height with more or less significant results. The story of Troilus and Cressida is a classic example of a modified pedestal. This time the woman was placed within the reach of man, though still precariously high according to the demands of the conventions of "courtly love." There Cressida squirmed until it became unbearable, and she left Troilus, who "would rather die than cause her shame"—commendable under some circumstances—for Diomedes. Chaucer should be very dear to a woman's heart, because he represents a man who does not need a psycho-analyst to interpret human nature and least of all a woman's; his perceptions are keen and honest, perhaps keen because they are honest. Chaucer leaves Cressida unjudged as a human being, and, with the world, feels sorry for handsome, romantic but weepy Troilus. Thus Troilus gets only pity, while Cressida gets Diomedes.

This pedestal upon which idealistic man insists on putting woman is a precarious and an un-

comfortable position for anyone. There one who is only a human being is expected to maintain a role of perfection, to play the part of an ideal for another human being. This creates tension and superficiality of responses to one's partner, and, instead of seeing the difficulty, each hopes for miracles to happen, expecting from the other what no human being has a right to demand from another. Goethe has said, "Nothing is more difficult to bear than a series of perfect days," and women do not like the tumble off the pedestal any more than do men.

The "pedestal" is also a barrier of aloofness between the universal yearning of the sexes for one another. How can a man expect satisfaction, understanding and cooperation from his partner when there is such a barrier between them? How many are constantly reaching out toward each other in a longing and a yearning for a richer and fuller life that only the other can give, only to be rebuffed by a vague, intangible barrier of misunderstanding, superstition and worn-out fetishes. It is like putting food before a hungry person and forbidding him to eat because he does not understand its chemical composition.

"The queen of my heart" concept of a woman's position is another idealistic and romantic concept, but warmer and a bit more friendly and flattering. However, it is also an artificial role to sustain, and it is as difficult as the "pedestal" ideal. It is unsatisfactory because it assumes that one individual will rule the other. When the angel reproved Adam after he had laid the blame on Eve, he said:

" Adorned

She was indeed, and lovely to attract

Thy love, not thy subjection."

It is just as bad to deny freedom to the male sex as the female, for the freedom of both is needed to build a well balanced and rich culture based on love.

The world has made great strides in scientific development. There have been great technological developments as well as psychological changes in human beings. Old concepts regarding man-woman relationships are no longer conceived to be adequate, and we realize that there must evolve new forms of cooperation with new changes. The old ethical standards and traditions that still exist are being challenged by women.

While they look with open-eyed admiration and wonder upon the world that men have cre-

ated, they are questioning its honest value. The instinct for self-preservation and the preservation of her offspring is forcing her to value this world in terms of what she holds most dear: love and the continuance of life. Heretofore women have depended on men to give them the richest possibilities for development and self expression, and have hoped to be valued more dearly. Her unhappy experiences and disappointments are forcing her to question the adequacy of a male-dominated civilization, and she is, in her new, hard-fought-for freedom, arising to the occasion by helping herself. When she sees that "science has become cruel and malignant," that "knowledge acquired to protect normal living, is used to kill men in war," she realizes that life is not adequately valued. This wanton waste of human life is the most revolting violation of the woman's instinct for "life continuance" and love. May we hope, as Jane Adams has put it, that "as women long ago demanded that man cease vagrancy, and refused to share his wanderings so that her children may be cared for and protected," so she may yet demand the cessation of war and help to lay the foundation for an ordered society.

War is only one of the imbecilities of man that illustrates his disregard of woman and of the life she brings. The traditional attitude of inferiority of women has shown its worse fruits in the modern wage economy where women and children are still exploited. Against this the most enlightened have fought, for over a century.

It is amazing to some of us that even now in 1940 that a woman still exists who is against woman suffrage—saying that "we have come to a pretty pass when we can't depend on our men to run our government." I only replied—"Yes, that is just it."

The institution of marriage which has been one of the most satisfactory compromises, so far, resulting from the traditional "battle of the sexes" is an approach toward an ideal of equality and co-partnership, so dear to the heart of Eve, as she began to realize her own potentialities independent from Adam. However, now, the rules and the unequal laws in many states that govern marriage are being questioned and challenged. On the surface it appears that woman has become iconoclastic, contrary to her traditional role of preserving and guarding customs built up by accumulated wisdom of the centuries. But if one tries to look more deeply into this iconoclastic tendency, one may find that it is in reality a desire to free the shackles of superstition, only in order

to build again on more solid foundations based on equality of the sexes. Even the tradition of the "double standard" between sexes has been looked at with askance by feminine eyes. Woman is questioning not only the authenticity of it, but just whom it is designed to benefit. These are but simple and logical questions, in view of the fact that woman is also a human being as well as a man. It does not mean, however, as many may suppose, that women wish to bring down their standards to that of man's, but it does mean that she desires a right to set standards for herself in order to express herself more honestly and allow herself freedom toward the development of her highest good.

I repeat that the man's world is a brilliant, and romantic world. Men have accomplished great things; they have conquered nations, built empires, constructed bridges (though many have fallen down). If all these accomplishments have failed to give richness of life and satisfaction to half of humanity, it cannot be blamed entirely on the male half. What can one expect of him in the face of the impotency and inferiority of women, which burden he has carried along with the burden of building empires. Though men have wanted it that way in the past, it is becoming apparent even to them that their own accomplishments have not brought to them complete happiness and satisfaction. Jung says that the sexes are so interrelated and so interdependent that one cannot expect complete development and happiness without taking the other into consideration.

Paul Jordan Smith in his book on the *Philosophy of Feminism* says that ancient barriers "have withheld from the race some of its most life-quickenings forces." I shall call this the "odds of knowledge" which Eve considered withholding from Adam. While women have been forced by old barriers to withhold this knowledge in the past, hoping thus to gain co-partnership and equality, many enlightened Eves of today are, with courage and confidence in themselves as well as in men, giving the odds "to partake of full happiness," with her in co-partnership. The ideal of equality will not only tear down the barriers of aloofness in this great universal yearning between the sexes, but it will build more honest foundation for friendships, giving both better chances for marital happiness. No longer will there be a need to act a role or to pretend. When the eternal feminine question comes up as to "How shall I appear to Adam," the answer will not be so nebulous or equivocal. Indeed, men ad-

mire this feminine desire to please. Leslie Howard expressed this in the charming way so characteristic of him, in a late issue of the *You* magazine. Other men have expressed their admiration for this very feminine trait. But would not an honest appreciation of one sex by the other offer the best solution as to how one may please the other? No one likes the feeling of inferiority and inadequacy. Equal recognition and evaluation of equal potentialities in each other would do away with this striving for superiority.

An old song that I used to like illustrates a rapidly fading philosophy. "I'm looking for an angel to sing my love song to." It is no wonder that this song has not lived, for it no longer expresses the philosophy of the more advanced of modern men.

The childish ditty:

What are little boys made of, made of?

Boys are made of rags and snails and puppy dog tails.

What are little girls made of, made of?

Girls are made of sugar and spice and everything nice.

will cease to be sung by little girls, except in fun, and from childhood on up they will learn that they also have a responsibility to bear in the onward march of human civilization to more adequate goals, fulfilling more richly the needs of all humanity, and with their brothers share in the burden of creation.

Perhaps the day will soon come when some men will cease puffing out their broad chests in a characteristically egoistic manner, demanding, "Name me one great woman," in his eagerness to compare himself with her. Instead he will in his heart try to value the woman's contribution and potentialities, not in terms of fame and technological accomplishments, but in terms of things of real significance to all normal human happiness. When both sexes realize that one without the other cannot even exist to assert or prove his or her superiority over the other, the "battle of the sexes" will be replaced by "cooperation of the sexes."

I cannot help closing with a statement I heard one outstandingly charming woman say: "It is rather nice to think it was Eve who ate the apple first."

Danton

BY PAUL ROBERTS

CHARACTERS

ANDRE MORDEAUX, a royalist.
 JULES CORTUFFE, a Man of the People.
 JEAN DE BATZ, a spy.
 ADELE BARENTIERE, a pretty royalist.
 GEORGES DANTON, a republican.
 MARIE CORTUFFE, a wife.
 CHARLOTTE DARCELLE, a pretty patriot.
 MADAME BARENTIERE, an aristocrat.
 LUCILLE DESMOULINS, another wife.
 CAMILLE DESMOULINS, a journalist.
 JACQUES, a servant.
 A CAPTAIN OF POLICE.
 A LIEUTENANT OF POLICE.
 JOSEPH HERMAN, a presiding justice.
 FOUQUIER-TINVILLE, a public prosecutor.
 PIERRE PHILIPPEAUX, a jackal of kings.
 JEAN-FRANÇOIS DELACROIX, a traitor to the Republic.
 HIRAUT DE SECHELLES, a protector of emigres.
 A CLERK OF THE REVOLUTIONARY TRIBUNAL.
 Also two messengers, four associate justices, seven jurors and sundry guards and gendarmes.

The action takes place in Paris in the second year of the first French Republic in the month of Germinal.

ACT ONE

The curtain rises on a room in the Tuilleries, one time used by Louis the Sixteenth and his court and embellished accordingly, but now simply an office in the pious service of Liberty and the Committee of Public Safety, with such of its adornments as have escaped destruction sadly mutilated. Upstage center is a closed door. Downstage right stands a desk facing the rear. A young man is standing by the desk as the curtain rises. His clothes are plain as befits the era, yet they are well-tailored and faultless.

The young man opens a drawer in the desk and removes a bottle of brandy and a glass. He sets the glass on the desk and holds the bottle toward the light, examining the contents. Turning toward the door he calls, in an only slightly

raised voice, "Cortuffe!" The young man pours a drink into the glass and replaces the bottle. He calls again, "Cortuffe!" this time roaring it out with all his lung power.

Enter Cortuffe, a patriot, a Man of the People, apparently of the very dirty People. He wears a ludicrous outfit of fine stolen raiment and rags, all unwashed. On his head is a red cap.

CORTUFFE: I heard you call, Mordeaux. I heard you. I can't appear in an instant. There were some people outside who wanted to see you. A man and a wo—

MORDEAUX: Cortuffe, you've been stealing my brandy.

CORTUFFE: Stealing? Stealing, Citizen? That's a hard word, stealing! That's a very hard word in these days of freedom. Perhaps you forget, Mordeaux, that we no longer live in the days of despots when the Sovereign People had no rights. Perhaps—

MORDEAUX: My excellent Cortuffe: I recognize that you are a sublime representative of the Sovereign People and as such have a perfect right to steal my brandy. (moves toward him) But the next time I catch you exercising your rights, I shall cut off your ears . . . Who are these people to see me?

CORTUFFE: (falling back a little and speaking more bravely in words than in voice) I warn you, Mordeaux, the People won't tolerate—

MORDEAUX: Silence, wretch! Who are these people?

CORTUFFE: The man calls himself Citizen Grandin.

MORDEAUX: (sharply) Grandin! Very well! Have him come in.

CORTUFFE: The woman, too?

MORDEAUX: Of course, the woman, imbecile! Get them!

(Exit Cortuffe, muttering. Mordeaux moves to the left and stands near the wings a moment in a listening attitude. As the door opens, he moves back to center. Enter a

man and a woman. The man is middle-aged, mustached and smiling. His dress, considering the times, is almost foppish. The woman is beautiful, etc. As the two come in, Mordeaux motions to them to be silent. He tips to the door, grasps the handle and pulls it open. Cortuffe falls into the room.)

MORDEAUX: (kicking him) Get out, sovereign dog!

(Exit Cortuffe.)

MORDEAUX: De Batz, you choose a very dangerous way to be a fool . . . How are you, Adele?

DE BATZ: How, dangerous? And why a fool? I found it necessary to see you, my friend, and you have such a charming insouciance in the matter of making reports. How is the Citizen Danton? Well, I trust.

MORDEAUX: Well. And in the next room. And having Paris combed for you by fifty police.

DE BATZ: Surely more than fifty. I am paying sixty-three of them not to find me.

ADELE: Andre is right, Jean. You shouldn't be here. Danton considers you the most dangerous royalist in Paris.

DE BATZ: Danton flatters me. In truth, you see the most dangerous royalist before you (indicates Andre) busily employed as Danton's confidential secretary. How do things progress, Andre? When will you have the papers?

MORDEAUX: Shortly, no doubt.

DE BATZ: "Shortly, no doubt." You don't sound enthusiastic.

MORDEAUX: I'm not enthusiastic.

DE BATZ: Not weakening, Andre? Not afraid?

ADELE: (haughtily) Perhaps there's another cause, Jean. One hears things of Monsieur Mordeaux and a—a patriot. A pretty patriot, some think. A Citoyenne Darcelle.

MORDEAUX: (angrily) Citoyenne Darcelle has nothing to do with it. If I have any interest in pretty patriots, you can be sure it's not political.

DE BATZ: Then what is it, Andre? This weakness?

MORDEAUX: It's Danton, (takes a step or two away and wheels and faces de Batz, hands in pockets) Have you ever known Danton? Have you ever thought of knowing him, and being with him, and eating food and drinking wine with him—and then betraying him?

DE BATZ: Think of the Cause, Andre. And the thousand gold Louis I'll pay you when you deliver those papers.

MORDEAUX: I'll just think of the thousand Louis, if you don't mind. You think of the Cause. The Cause is a fat slug of a Comte de Provence, safe across the Rhine, while men stay in Paris to fight his battle right to the steps of the guillotine.

ADELE: The Cause is more than the Comte de Provence, Andre. It is your own class, and you must be true to it. No matter how this Citoyenne Darcelle may poison your mind, the Cause—

MORDEAUX: We'll say no more of Citoyenne Darcelle. As for the Cause—the Cause may bury itself in hell, and I'll pile fire on it . . . I'll just think of the thousand gold Louis . . . Danton should be proud. Christ was only worth thirty—and that in silver!

DE BATZ: I think you really mean little of this, Andre. You will do it, of course? Get the papers?

MORDEAUX: Of course. I'm as good a man as Judas. I'll get the papers.

DE BATZ: Excellent! It will seem different to you when it is done. When can you get them?

MORDEAUX: They are in Danton's house. I'm invited there to dinner day after tomorrow. I—

(from offstage left comes a call, "Andre!")

MORDEAUX: Danton!

ADELE: Will he come in here?

MORDEAUX: You'll have to get out. We'll go to the next room.

DE BATZ: He's never seen me. I'm not afraid.

MORDEAUX: I don't care a damn about you, Jean. When the knife falls on your neck, I'll sit with the fishwives and cheer. I don't want him to find you with me. Come on.

(exeunt, right)

(from the left the call, "Andre!" is repeated. Then enter Danton. He walks to the center of the room, frowning. He calls, "Cortuffe!")
(enter Cortuffe through the door he was kicked out of.)

DANTON: Where is Mordeaux?

CORTUFFE: I don't know, Citizen-Representative. The last time I saw Citizen Mordeaux he was standing in this room, cursing and swearing and abusing the People horribly. (rubs the seat of his pants) No doubt the Citizen-Representative has noticed the way Citizen Mordeaux gives himself the airs of an aristocrat, and how—

DANTON: Cortuffe, you're a fool. I frequently wonder why Andre does not cut your throat When he comes back, tell him I want him.

(exit Danton)

CORTUFFE: He's worse than Mordeaux! I swear one might as well be living still under the tyrant! (walks back and forth, talking to himself) It's more than a man of the People can bear. By God, it is! I don't know how men like him get elected to office, while solid, virtuous men of the People go begging. If those fools at the Section ever put me in a worthy position, I'll teach that Mordeaux a few things about Liberty. I will, by God! I will!

(there is a rather timid knock at the door.)

CORTUFFE: Well? Who is it? Come on, come on. Who is it?

(the door is pushed open timidly. Enter Cortuffe's wife, Marie, carrying a cloth-covered dish.)

MARIE: Hello, Jules.

CORTUFFE: Well, what is it? Why do you come annoying me? You know I'm busy.

MARIE: I know, Jules. It's so fine of you to give so much of your time to France! I brought you some dinner.

CORTUFFE: Eh? Oh, dinner! Very well. Set it there on the desk.

MARIE: (crossing to desk) Is this your office, Jules, where you and Citizen Danton direct the war?

CORTUFFE: What? Oh. Oh, yes, this is one of my offices. Sometimes I let Danton work here too. Just now I have him in another room.

MARIE: (admirably) To think you're helping to win the war for France!

CORTUFFE: (frowning as he spreads plates out on the desk and begins to eat) I wouldn't call it "helping," Marie. I don't like you to say "helping." Any fool of a general can win battles if there's a man of brains behind him to tell him how. It's like I was telling Robespierre this morning—

MARIE: Were you really talking to Citizen Robespierre this morning?

CORTUFFE: Of course! I have him in every day to give him his instructions. I said to him, "Maximilien, I want you to tell all the generals to—to—" well, of course I can't explain my plan to you, Marie, because that would be giving out war secrets, but anyway I thought up a very fine plan and told Maximilien to tell it to the generals, and I said to him, "Maximilien, if any of those generals fail to win battles with that plan, I'll have them brought to Paris to be guillotined." And I will, too.

MARIE: Oh, Jules! Guillotine the generals!

CORTUFFE: (speaking with food in his mouth) Have to do it, Marie. Have to be stern. It hurts me, but I must see that my subordinates give satisfaction. This is good cake.

MARIE: I'm so glad you like it!

CORTUFFE: You should have brought some wine, though. You'd better go get some. No, wait, I forgot. I have some brandy here. (gets out the bottle of brandy and the glass) Pretty good brandy. I got it from the stock of the tyrant, Louis Capet. (pours a drink and lifts the glass to his lips)

(from the right comes the sound of voices, approaching. Cortuffe chokes on the drink.)

CORTUFFE: Get out, Run!

MARIE: (startled) What—

CORTUFFE: Never mind! Get out! Go on! Run!

(Marie hurries across the room and out the door. Cortuffe puts back the brandy, snatches up the dishes and starts to follow. Two steps from the desk, he remembers that he has left the glass out. He returns and puts it away. By this time the people approaching are almost at hand. Cortuffe crawls under the desk and hides.)

(Enter Mordeaux, de Batz and Adele)

MORDEAUX: And now, Jean, since everything is arranged, and you have proved yourself a dare-devil by coming here, I trust you will let me enjoy your absence.

DE BATZ: You will have the papers?

MORDEAUX: Day after tomorrow.

DE BATZ: Splendid! I am sadly mistaken if they do not prove our admirable patriot to have received generous bribes when he was with the army in Belgium.

MORDEAUX: You will send the papers to Robespierre?

DE BATZ: Naturally. And he will swoon with joy at getting such a splendid chance to deliver Citizen Danton to Madame Guillotine.

MORDEAUX: And then?

DE BATZ: Why, and then I will find some way of destroying Robespierre, and then the Revolution will be over.

ADELE: And then the Comte de Provence and Reason will return to France.

DE BATZ: And Monsieur will perhaps perceive that the boastful de Batz and his gasconades are worth something after all.

MORDEAUX: And I shall have a thousand gold louis! Get out of here, de Batz, and back to hell. I must go in to Danton.

DE BATZ: You will feel better when it is over. Goodby, then. Will you come with me, Adele?

ADELE: I'll wait for Andre. I want to talk with him.

DE BATZ (bows): Very well. Au revoir. (exit)

MORDEAUX: There's nothing to talk about, Adele.

ADELE: I'm sure there's a great deal. I'll wait.

MORDEAUX: As you wish. (exit left)

(Throughout the last scene Cortuffe has been squatting under the desk, indicating emotions—surprise, triumph, etc.—by pantomime. Now Adele, alone in the room, walks in his direction, but before she reaches the desk the opening of the door causes her to turn around.)

(enter Charlotte Darcelle.)

CHARLOTTE: Oh! I thought Andre—Citizen Mordeaux—

ADELE: (frostily) He isn't here.

CHARLOTTE: (hesitates, then closes the door, leans against it, surveying Adele with manifest disapproval) Who are you?

ADELE: I could repeat the question, but I shan't. You must be Andre's pretty patriot.

CHARLOTTE: Certainly a patriot. Perhaps not pretty, and perhaps not Andre's. (crosses the room slowly, staring steadily at Adele) But why do you sneer, Citoyenne? Has it become a disgrace to be a patriot in Paris? "Andre's pretty patriot!" On my word, you sound like Andre's pretty royalist!

ADELE: Certainly not a royalist. Perhaps pretty, and perhaps Andre's.

CHARLOTTE: (smiling nastily) Surely, my dear, you don't pretend to be Andre's mistress?

ADELE: Pretend?

CHARLOTTE: My dear, idle boasting doesn't become you.

ADELE: (angrily) Idle boasting! Why don't you ask Andre?

CHARLOTTE: Oh, I don't doubt you. You may very likely be Andre's mistress.

ADELE: Ha! (turns her back disdainfully)

CHARLOTTE: But you must have been terribly lonely these last few months.

ADELE: (turning quickly) Why, you—you—

CHARLOTTE: Patriot? You called me that before.

ADELE: (almost screaming) Do you think Andre would have anything to do with a woman of your kind?

CHARLOTTE: (losing her composure) My kind? My kind, Citoyenne? And just what is a woman of my kind? A patriot, a republican, a woman of the People. Do you sneer at that, Citoyenne? Then what kind of a woman are you?

ADELE: (turns her back again) I have nothing more to say to you.

CHARLOTTE: You've said too much already. But don't be afraid, my lovely aristocrat. I shan't

drag you to the guillotine. Of course, I don't know what Andre will do when I tell him what kind of vermin infests his office.

ADELE: (*facing Charlotte again*) Are you so certain Andre considers aristocrats vermin?

CHARLOTTE: No. I think Andre would feel it beneath him to consider aristocrats at all.

ADELE: What would you think if you found him to be an aristocrat himself?

CHARLOTTE: (*laughs*) My dear, your passion is affecting your brain . . . Where is Andre?

(*Adele turns away again in silence.*)

CHARLOTTE: Never mind, I'll look for him. (*walks to the right, turns just before she leaves the stage*) I'll tell Andre what you said. It will amuse him. (*exit*)

ADELE: (*looking after her*) Fishwife! If Andre really has such a taste for garbage, he may have you. But he'll take the guillotine, too!

(*Adele walks downstage right, approaching the desk. Coming in front of it, she sees Cortuffe, screams*)

CORTUFFE: (*crawls out and stands up*) Well?

ADELE: (*backing a little away from him*) How long have you been there?

CORTUFFE: Long enough.

ADELE: What did you hear?

CORTUFFE: Everything!

ADELE: What? Tell me what.

CORTUFFE: (*ticking off the points on his fingers*) That you are an aristocrat, that Mordeaux is an aristocrat, that you are an enemy of the People, that Mordeaux is an enemy of the People, that Danton has committed some crime against the People, that Mordeaux is going to betray Danton.

ADELE: What are you going to do?

CORTUFFE: Do you wonder, lover of tyranny? What does a good patriot always do when he discovers *ci-devants*? He does what any man of virtue would do—delivers them to the butcher and listens to them squeal!

ADELE: No!

CORTUFFE: Yes, by God! I never dreamed of such fortune! The two of them in my hands! Abuse a virtuous man of the People, will they? Ha! I'll destroy them both. First I'll betray Mordeaux to Danton, and Danton will guillotine Mordeaux. Then I'll betray Danton to Robespierre, and Robespierre will guillotine Danton. Ha! They'll call Jules Cortuffe the Savior of France yet! By God, they will!

(*enter Mordeaux, left, as Cortuffe concludes*)

MORDEAUX: (*not understanding situation and speaking with frivolity*) What's this, Cortuffe? Did I hear you say "by God"? I suppose you'll tell me you didn't know the Convention had abolished God. This is counter-revolutionary, Cortuffe!

CORTUFFE: You'll discover what's counter-revolutionary, by heaven!

MORDEAUX: Again! Certainly I must report you to your Section! Swearing by old-fashioned institutions condemned by the Sovereign People! Surely you must die for it!

CORTUFFE: I won't be the one to—

MORDEAUX: (*dropping frivolity*) Get out, swine. You weary me.

CORTUFFE: Swine! You'll discover—

MORDEAUX: Get out!

CORTUFFE: You can't order me any more!

MORDEAUX: Perhaps not. (*steps up to him, seizing him by the collar, propels him to the door and throws him out. Mordeaux closes the door, turns back to Adele, wiping his hands carefully on his handkerchief.*)

ADELE: You shouldn't have done that, Andre. He's dangerous.

MORDEAUX: So are open cesspools.

ADELE: But he knows—everything about you—about de Batz and Danton.

MORDEAUX: What!

ADELE: He was hiding—under the desk. He heard all you said to de Batz. He's going to betray you to Danton.

MORDEAUX: Maybe that's the best finish to it.

ADELE: Andre! You're not yourself. Surely you can do something.

MORDEAUX: What? Kill Cortuffe? An admirable project, but dangerous. Madame Guillotine disapproves the extermination of such sterling men of the People.

ADELE: Any risk for the Cause is worthwhile.

MORDEAUX: Damn the Cause! Will you ever understand, Adele, that I am doing this thing out of pure baseness? Because I'll be paid a thousand louis for it? And because I hate this People of Cortuffe more than I hate the Comte de Provence. But not much more.

ADELE: But you must do something! If Danton learns of the plot, you'll be killed.

MORDEAUX: And if I remove Cortuffe, I'll be killed.

ADELE: Then escape. Leave Paris. You can get papers for us both and—

MORDEAUX: And what about your pious Cause? You're not very consistent, Adele.

ADELE: Can one be consistent when one is in love?

MORDEAUX: Let's not discuss love.

ADELE: Why do you torture me?

MORDEAUX: You torture yourself.

ADELE: *(puts her arms around his neck)* Why don't you love me, Andre?

MORDEAUX: *(grasps her wrists and releases himself)* I'm sure I don't know. *(walks to the desk and leans against it)* I simply don't; I never have; I never shall. I'm sure I never gave any indication that I did.

ADELE: *(bitterly)* It's that shrewish patriot.

MORDEAUX: *(wearily)* Very well. It's that shrewish patriot.

ADELE: Why should you prefer her to me?

MORDEAUX: Are you asking me to insult you?

ADELE: I insist you answer me.

MORDEAUX: *(sharply)* Very well, I'll answer you. I prefer her because she's intelligent and you're stupid, because she's lovely while you're only pretty, and because—because And because she's an orphan while you have that horrible mother.

ADELE: What's the matter with my mother?

MORDEAUX: God knows.

ADELE: You needn't sneer at my mother. Anyone may have little oddities.

MORDEAUX: Perhaps. But few old aristocrats feel called upon to make speeches in defense of the Sovereignty of the Unwashed People on the steps of the Guillotine.

ADELE: Did Mother do that?

MORDEAUX: She did. Wearing a red cap.

ADELE: Goodness! Well, Mother always was a reformer. Anyway, it keeps her from being guillotined for being an aristocrat.

MORDEAUX: Bah! The guillotine wouldn't be bothered with her.

ADELE: How did we get to talk about Mother? *(wraps her arms around his neck again)* Andre, don't be so cruel to me.

MORDEAUX: Oh, for God's sake—

(Enter Charlotte, left, unheard. Adele sees her over Mordeaux's shoulder. She, Adele, leans forward suddenly and kisses Mordeaux on the mouth.)

CHARLOTTE: Apparently I interrupt.

MORDEAUX: *(turning)* Charlotte!

CHARLOTTE: I'm sorry. I'll go.

MORDEAUX: Charlotte! Wait!

(Charlotte turns to go. Mordeaux steps to her side, seizes her wrist and pulls her back into the room.)

MORDEAUX: There's no need for you to be a fool too.

(She struggles, not too strenuously, and he holds her. Adele stands by, looking defiant and triumphant.)

CHARLOTTE: Let me go.

MORDEAUX: I'll let you go when you understand what happened.

CHARLOTTE: I understand well enough. I saw you kiss her.

MORDEAUX: You saw her kiss me. *(to Adele)* Tell her what happened.

ADELE: I presume she saw what happened.

MORDEAUX: Tell her you kissed me against my will.

ADELE: *(smiling)* I don't think she'd believe it. She can see that I'm not big enough and strong enough.

MORDEAUX: Damn you, Adele. *(to Charlotte)* You mustn't believe her.

CHARLOTTE: I believe what I see.

MORDEAUX: And you saw me kiss her?

CHARLOTTE: Yes.

MORDEAUX: Very well. *(Pulls her forcefully into his arms and kisses her, holding it quite a long time. She relaxes conventionally after a few seconds. Adele, standing by the desk, watches in mounting rage, digging her fingernails into the desk.)*

MORDEAUX: Now she's seen me kiss you.

CHARLOTTE: *(whispers)* Yes.

ADELE: I hate you!

MORDEAUX: *(looking at Charlotte)* Yes.

ADELE: I hate you, I tell you!

CHARLOTTE: *(looking at Andre)* Yes.

ADELE: Oh! *(moves across to the door, turning as she opens it) I'll destroy you before I'm done! (exit)*

CHARLOTTE: Who is that woman?

MORDEAUX: One Citoyenne Barentiere.

CHARLOTTE: She's an aristocrat.

MORDEAUX: *(startled)* What!

CHARLOTTE: I know it would shock you. But it's true. She practically admitted it.

MORDEAUX: She did?

CHARLOTTE: She hinted at something else — you'll laugh at this, Andre—she as much as said that you were an aristocrat too!

MORDEAUX: *(silence)*

CHARLOTTE: Well? Aren't you going to deny it—or explain why she would say such a thing about you, or—

MORDEAUX: No.

CHARLOTTE: No? Andre! What do you mean?

MORDEAUX: *(paces nervously before facing her)* I mean that I don't think there is anything I

should have to deny to you or admit to you or explain to you. I take you for what you are, unconditionally. I expect you to take me the same way—without questions, without explanations, without conditions.

CHARLOTTE: I understand. I think I do. Anyway, I know you wouldn't do anything dishonorable.

MORDEAUX: You know nothing about me. I might very well do something dishonorable. For all you know I may be a thief, or a criminal, or a traitor. I may have just come from putting a knife in the back of my best friend. I may be just going to. You must still love me. Do you understand?

CHARLOTTE: Andre, you frighten me! I've never known you like this. It's so confusing!

(Mordeaux takes her in his arms again and kisses her, rather longer this time.)

MORDEAUX: It should be less confusing.

CHARLOTTE: It is.

(There is a knock at the door to which the two in the room pay no attention. Then a woman's voice calls: "Andre! Oh, Andre!")

MORDEAUX: Good Lord!

CHARLOTTE: Who is it?

MORDEAUX: Citoyenne Barentiere's foul mother.

VOICE: Yoo-hoo! Andre!

MORDEAUX: Let's get out of here. I want to see Danton, anyway. Come on.

CHARLOTTE: But I scarcely know Danton. He wouldn't want me coming in his office.

MORDEAUX: Nonsense! You're a pretty woman; Danton will be delighted.

(exit Mordeaux and Charlotte)

(more calling and banging on the door outside. Then enter Madame de Barentiere. She is short, fat, middle-aged. Her apparel is that of a wealthy aristocratic matron, but a revolutionary cap is set jauntily on her head.)

BARNTIERE: Andre! Andre! *(looks around)* No Andre! Oh, well. *(walks bouncily across to the desk, sits down, stretches and sighs as with exhaustion. Suddenly she sniffs as if catching a scent and sits up straight.)* Brandy!

(searches through the desk, sniffing thoughtfully, unearths the bottle of brandy, looks at it approvingly) Brandy, brandy, brandy! (drinks from the bottle) Ah, brandy!

(enter Cortuffe)

BARENTIERE: *(smiling pleasantly)* Hello. *(takes another drink from the bottle)* Looking for somebody?

CORTUFFE: *(ominously)* I'm looking for somebody, all right.

BARENTIERE: Oh, looking for somebody! Good! So am I looking for somebody. Who are you looking for?

CORTUFFE: Danton.

BARENTIERE: Danton? Great man of the People! Fine man of the People! I'm looking for Andre Mordeaux. Seen him?

CORTUFFE: I have no time to see filthy aristocrats.

BARENTIERE: Who, Andre? A filthy aristocrat?

CORTUFFE: The filthiest!

BARENTIERE: *(clicks her tongue)* Imagine! And my daughter wants to marry him. I'll have to tell her he's a filthy aristocrat . . . But then, my daughter's a filthy aristocrat, too. Goodness, so am I! Imagine! A filthy aristocrat!

CORTUFFE: All aristocrats should be tortured to death.

BARENTIERE: Just what I say! My very words! Damn my eyes, if it's not! *(pounds the desk)* Damn my eyes! *(looks up, pleased)* That's an English expression; it means *zut alors*. Damn my eyes, if I don't think all aristocrats should be boiled in oil. Except me, of course. And my daughter. Oh, and Andre, too, if he's really a filthy aristocrat. Couldn't boil Andre in oil. No, no. Wouldn't do, wouldn't do.

(Cortuffe starts toward the entrance to Danton's office)

CORTUFFE: *(over his shoulder)* I'm going to catch an aristocrat for Madame Guillotine. *(exit)*

BARENTIERE: Good hunting.

(Barentiere leans back in the chair, drinking brandy. Presently loud voices are heard from the left, then screams from Cortuffe.)

BARENTIERE: *(shaking her head)* Too bad, too bad. Shouldn't try to catch aristocrats bigger than he is. Foolish, foolish.

(There is the sound of a door opening, and Cortuffe lands on his face on the stage, Danton's voice following him—"And stay out, pig!")

BARENTIERE: *(brightly)* Hullo! You back? . . .

CORTUFFE: *(picking himself up)* Fool!

BARENTIERE: Well, yes you are, as a matter of fact. Trying to catch a big aristocrat all by yourself! When setting out to catch a big aristocrat, always take help. My prime rule of life.

CORTUFFE: Apparently the idiot wants to be betrayed. Maybe I should let him.

BARENTIERE: Certainly! Good idea!

CORTUFFE: No, by God, I won't! If I let Mordeaux betray him, Danton dies, and Mordeaux goes free. But if I inform Danton, Mordeaux dies, and Danton dies too—when I tell Robespierre what I know.

BARENTIERE: Oh, do you know Robespierre? Do you really? Isn't he the dearest little man! I could just love him!

CORTUFFE: I'll tell—

BARENTIERE: Oh, no, don't tell him. I'll tell him myself when I get a chance. Only, I never seem to get a chance.

CORTUFFE: I'll tell Danton about Mordeaux if I have to tie him to make him listen to me. *(Walks to the desk, takes the bottle of brandy and drinks. Smacks his lips and drinks again, longer.)*

BARENTIERE: Tell me about Robespierre. Is he a good friend of yours?

CORTUFFE: Oh, good enough. *(drinks)*

BARENTIERE: *(admiringly)* Damn my eyes!

CORTUFFE: Yes, Maximilien's a good fellow. I've never regretted putting him on the Committee of Public Safety.

BARENTIERE: Did you really put him on the Committee?

CORTUFFE: Certainly I did. He came begging around—"Jules, please let me be on the Com-

mittee, Jules, please let me be on." So I let him. *(drinks)* Do you blame me for it? Do you? Well? Do you dare blame me?

BARENTIERE: Damn my eyes if I do!

CORTUFFE: I'll let him stay on just so long as he behaves himself and does what I tell him. Not a minute longer. The minute he starts disobeying me, off he goes! Just like that! *(tries to snap his fingers and fails; drinks)* I won't stand for disobedience, and that goes for Maximilien just as much as any of the rest of them. Danton, Saint-Just, Cambon, Carnot, Tallien—all of them! Disobeying me, are they? I'll kick 'em back to the gutter. Maximilien first. Maximilien on his face in the gutter!

BARENTIERE: Oh, no! Wouldn't do, wouldn't do. Get him all dirty!

CORTUFFE: Can't help that. He should have thought of that before he started disobeying me. I'll kick him right into the gutter.

BARENTIERE: But he's such a sweet little man. Please don't do it.

CORTUFFE: By God, I will.

BARENTIERE: *(resignedly)* Well, if you must, you must; but I think it's mean. *(takes out a watch and looks at it)* Oh, my goodness! I'll have to hurry, or I'll be late for the executions. Want to come with me? The executions have been pretty good lately. Yesterday we had a marquis. Today they say there's going to be a count.

CORTUFFE: Good! I despise counts. Down with all aristocrats!

BARENTIERE: Vive la République!

CORTUFFE: Down with tyrants!

BARENTIERE: Vive la Liberté!

CORTUFFE: Down with the rich!

BARENTIERE: Vive le Peuple!

CORTUFFE: Down with practically everything!

BARENTIERE: Vive—vive—well, vive l'eau-de-vie. Come on. We'll be late for the count.

(exit Barentiere and Cortuffe, arm in arm, singing the Marseillaise.)

(enter Danton, left)

DANTON: What's this horrible shouting? Who is it? Who dares disturb Danton?

(enter Camille and Lucille Desmoulins)

DANTON: Apparently the zoo has gone elsewhere.

(enter Mordeaux and Charlotte)

LUCILLE: We must go, Camille.

DANTON: Not yet; I want to talk to you. You have the seventh number ready?

CHARLOTTE: *(to Mordeaux)* Seventh number of what?

MORDEAUX: Le Vieux Cordelier—Camille's paper.

CAMILLE: It's ready. Whether my publisher will dare print it, I don't know.

LUCILLE: It's so dangerous! I wish he'd burn it.

DANTON: Nonsense! Who can talk of danger when the destiny of France is concerned? What did you say in it, Camille?

CAMILLE: Enough. That the Convention is a mass of spineless slaves, led by whatever strings the Committee of Public Safety wishes to pull. It is dangerous, Danton.

DANTON: Weakness, Camille?

CAMILLE: For yourself as well as me, my friend. Robespierre will rage when he reads it.

DANTON: Bah! Robespierre can go mad over it for all of me!

CAMILLE: Robespierre is powerful.

DANTON: Is Danton a weakling?

CAMILLE: He means to bring you to the Tribunal.

DANTON: Bring me to the Tribunal? Me? It would be necessary first to arrest me. Who would dare to arrest Danton?

LUCILLE: I'm so afraid.

DANTON: Who can afford to be afraid? France is at stake! France—betrayed by knaves, trodden and beaten and bled! What has Paris become but a huge slaughterhouse, hacked and ripped by butchers who wade through blood in the name of Liberty! Men hide in cellars like rats, shops are closed and people starve, sons stab their mothers lest they betray them! This carnage must stop! I, Danton, say it must stop, and it shall stop! They say Danton started the

Terror, and now he wants to end it. So! Danton started the Terror to save France; now Danton will stop the Terror—to save France.

LUCILLE: They'll kill you—both of you.

DANTON: So? All right, let them kill me, if France is saved. More. Let everything I have done be forgotten—let my name wither and dry up and be utterly and forever forgotten, let posterity know nothing at all of a man named Danton who loved his country—let this happen, and I shall be glad, if France is saved.

CAMILLE: You give me courage.

DANTON: Surely you don't need it. Who requires courage to stamp on vermin?

LUCILLE: We must go, Camille.

DANTON: I'll go with you. (*turns to Andre and Charlotte*) Andre, you and Citoyenne Darcelle will dine with me Wednesday?

CHARLOTTE: So good of you.

MORDEAUX: We'll be there.

DANTON: Au revoir. (*exit with Lucille and Camille*)

CHARLOTTE: Isn't he wonderful?

MORDEAUX: He's very nearly a god . . . That makes the Judas parallel so much closer.

CHARLOTTE: What?

MORDEAUX: Nothing, nothing. I was thinking of a man—a man who sold his soul to the devil.

CHARLOTTE: Andre! What an awful thing to say.

MORDEAUX: No. Not awful, really. Only for the devil. The man's soul was worthless.

(curtain)

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

Two days later. The library, in Danton's home. Evening.

The room is quite richly furnished. Bookshelves stand against the rear wall for much of its length. At left, upstage, there is a small secretary with a Louis Quinze chair before it. Two similar chairs are to be seen downstage left; and

at right, facing them is a red sofa, with a small stand or taboret at one end of it.

As the curtain rises, enter Danton, Camille Desmoulins and Mordeux. Danton holds a journal in his hands and is reading from it, smiling.

DANTON: (*looking up*) Ah, Camille! My excellent Camille! This will make the madmen pause. Have you read this, Andre?

MORDEAUX: (*nervously*) All Paris has read it. I imagine that is why Camille is worried.

DANTON: What! Worried? Why should he be worried?

MORDEAUX: He has as much as called Robespierre a butcher.

DANTON: Ha! So! He has called Robespierre a butcher. And who has told you, Andre, that it is criminal to call butchers butchers?

CAMILLE: (*forcing his courage*) And can a man who has Danton on his side be afraid of Robespierre?

DANTON: Ah, more than Danton, my friend. You have France on your side. You are purging France of filth, and France will praise you for it; France will adore you for it. (*Glances at paper; folds it carefully*) I shall preserve this jewel. (*Goes upstage to the bookshelves, pulls out a section of a shelf and drops Camille's journal into a concealed box.*) There. Someday, when a great writer is writing the biography of Camille Desmoulins, I shall take this out and show it to him. "Here!" I shall say, "read for yourself how a noble patriot saved his country."

CAMILLE: You praise too generously . . . Shall we rejoin the ladies?

DANTON: By all means. Coming, Andre?

MORDEAUX: I—if you don't mind, I think I shall lie down here on the sofa for a few minutes. I—(*glances nervously at the book shelf*)—I seem to have developed a rather severe headache.

DANTON: (*concerned*) My dear friend, how annoying! Let me get you something.

MORDEAUX: No, no! Nothing, thank you. It will go away presently. Just let me take a moment's rest. (*sits down on the sofa*)

DANTON: To be sure. Join us as soon as you feel better. Come, Camille. (*moves toward*

door with Camille) If you want anything, Andre, call Jacques. (exit with Camille)

(As the door closes Mordeaux rises. He stands before the sofa for a moment in hesitation. Then he moves across the room to the book shelf. Quickly he pulls back the section of shelf as Danton had done, reaches behind it and takes out an oblong box. He puts the box on the secretary and begins to go through the papers it contains. He pauses once or twice to look carefully at a paper, removes a couple and puts them beside the box. As he moves to replace the box, the door opens. Enter Jacques, a servant, carrying a glass.)

JACQUES: Citizen Mordeaux! (sees Andre at the book shelves) Oh!

MORDEAUX: (sharply) What do you want?

JACQUES: (looking suspiciously at Mordeaux) Citizen Danton sent you something for your headache.

MORDEAUX: (hiding box with his body) Very well. Put it on the table.

(Jacques places the glass on the stand by the sofa. Mordeaux, motionless, watches him as he very deliberately takes his leave. As the door closes, Mordeaux thrusts the papers he has taken out of the box into a coat pocket, replaces the box and swings the shelf into place. He is walking downstage as Charlotte enters.)

CHARLOTTE: There you are, Andre!

MORDEAUX: (startled) Charlotte!

CHARLOTTE: (crosses to meet him) Danton told me you were ill. Do you feel better now?

MORDEAUX: Yes—that is—no, not much.

CHARLOTTE: Andre, you look so strange! Is something wrong?

MORDEAUX: Nothing, nothing.

CHARLOTTE: (puts her hand to his forehead) You're warm. Perhaps a little air would do you good. Shall we walk in the garden?

MORDEAUX: Yes—good! Yes, the garden by all means.

(Exeunt left. Enter, right, Jacques, backing into the room in front of Jean de Batz.)

JACQUES: (humbly) Yes, Citizen.

DE BATZ: And next time be less quick to speak disrespectfully to your betters.

JACQUES: Yes, Citizen.

DE BATZ: (moving a hand to a pocket) I think even yet I shall report you to the Committee.

JACQUES: (terrified) Citizen, I beg you.

DE BATZ: (pretends to hesitate) Well—this time I pardon you. Strive to be worthy of my generosity.

JACQUES: Oh, I promise it, Citizen. I go now to inform Citizen Danton that you—

DE BATZ: Not Danton, blockhead. It's Andre Mordeaux I wish to see. Find him and send him here. Be quick!

JACQUES: Certainly, Citizen! Right away, Citizen. (exit)

DE BATZ: (walks downstage) Liberty, Fraternity and Equality! And the greatest of these is Equality! Ha!

(enter Mordeaux, left)

MORDEAUX: (looking back and speaking to someone offstage) I'll bring it right away, my dear. (turns and sees de Batz) Jean!

DE BATZ: (smiling) Precisely. How are you, Andre?

MORDEAUX: (crossing) Madman! What are you doing here?

DE BATZ: I came for the papers.

MORDEAUX: In Danton's own house!

DE BATZ: Have you the papers?

MORDEAUX: How did you get in?

DE BATZ: I knocked on the door and was admitted. There was a little difficulty with the servant, but I told him I was an agent of the Committee of Public Safety, and he became quite amiable. You know, Andre, sometimes I think the creation of the Committee was a fine thing. One has only to call oneself its agent to receive the most excellent service anywhere in Paris. Only yesterday—

MORDEAUX: You must get out of here immediately! If Danton sees you—

DE BATZ: My dear Andre! You are developing a bad case of nerves. If Danton sees me, I shall

merely have to invent some very clever lie, that's all. However, I'll go if it will ease your mind. Give me the papers.

MORDEAUX: Give you my soul, you mean.

DE BATZ: Shall we be poetic some other time, dear boy, when we have more leisure?

MORDEAUX: Are you entirely without feelings, Jean?

DE BATZ: On the contrary. I have very beautiful feelings. But I keep them well regulated. And I do not allow them to conflict, as you do.

MORDEAUX: Conflict?

DE BATZ: Use your reason, my friend. There are many very powerful feelings which are urging you to give me those papers: your desire to see this mad Revolution ended, your loathing for this unclean mob that is ruling Paris, your sympathy for your many friends who have been driven from their country or who remain here hiding in terror, your love for Adele—

MORDEAUX: Damn Adele!

DE BATZ: Very well, damn Adele. But there still remain hundreds of your friends, hundreds of people who have received you into their homes, thousands of men and women of the class from which you come, whom you can help now to save from ruin by taking some papers from your pocket and giving them to me. And against all these powerful urgings stands one single feeling in opposition—your admiration for Danton. Reflect, Andre! A schoolboy hero-worship of one man against a debt of loyalty to a class and a duty to a nation. Compare, Andre!

MORDEAUX: You think I have not? You think I haven't said to myself a thousand times what you said to me just now? Would I be coming in here to kill my best friend in his own house if I were not sure that he must die if the France he loves so much is to be saved? I know it; I shall do it. But there is nothing to stop me from cursing the fate that drives me to it. Nothing stops me from cursing you, de Batz. I think I shall always curse you.

DE BATZ: My Andre! Curse me if you must. But remember the fate drives me too Give me the papers.

MORDEAUX: (*sighs*) Jean, I sometimes think I

should like to understand you. (*reaches toward a pocket*) Here are your papers.

(*While Andre's hand is in his pocket, enter Charlotte, left.*)

CHARLOTTE: Andre, I—oh, you're busy!

MORDEAUX: (*turning, hiding his confusion, with drawing his hand*) No, no. Come in, Charlotte. Let me introduce you to a friend of mine. (*Charlotte crosses to join them.*) Citoyenne Darcelle, Citoyen Grandin.

CHARLOTTE: A pleasure.

DE BATZ: Charmed, Citoyenne.

MORDEAUX: I have been neglecting Citoyenne Darcelle, Jean. I was on my way to get her coat when I met you. (*to her*) I shall get it immediately, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE: No, I think I have had enough of the garden. I shall join the others. You gentlemen will accompany me, perhaps?

MORDEAUX: Of course.

DE BATZ: If you will excuse me, perhaps I shall take a turn in the garden myself.

CHARLOTTE: Andre, if you and Citoyen Grandin have affairs to discuss—

DE BATZ: Not at all, Citoyenne. We were talking of little things. Pray do not desolate our good Andre by depriving him of your company.

MORDEAUX: I'll see you some other time, then, Jean. (*exit, right, with Charlotte*)

DE BATZ: (*looking after them*) The pretty patriot! Perhaps another feeling supplements the hero-worship, eh, Andre? (*Strolls to the door at the left, turns with his hand on the knob to look once more after Mordeaux and Charlotte, then exit.*)

(*Enter, right, Cortuffe, pushing Jacques into the room.*)

CORTUFFE: When I say I want something done, my man, I want it done; I don't want to be argued with.

JACQUES: But I—

CORTUFFE: A fine state the country's coming to when rabble like you dare to argue with men of the People like me.

JACQUES: But I have to—

CORTUFFE: What! More argument! Know you that when the People speak, they will be obeyed!

JACQUES: Hang the People! What have I to do with the People when I'm on an errand for an agent of the Committee of Public Safety?

CORTUFFE: Committee of Public Safety! *(pauses a little; then, blustering as before)* Bah, what would a Committee agent want with you?

JACQUES: He wants me to find Andre Mordeaux for him, that's what.

CORTUFFE: How? Andre Mordeaux? A Committee agent wants Andre Mordeaux? In what way does he want him?

JACQUES: What do you mean, in what way?

CORTUFFE: I'm speaking French, am I not? I simply mean in what way. Did he seem anxious, stern, friendly—what?

JACQUES: He seemed rather friendly—in a stern way.

CORTUFFE: Did he say anything? What did he say?

JACQUES: He just said I was to tell Citoyen Mordeaux that Citoyen Grandin wished to see him.

CORTUFFE: Grandin!

JACQUES: Yes, Grandin. He was to wait for Mordeaux here in this room, but I guess he went to look for him himself.

CORTUFFE: This Grandin, is he tall, with fancy counter-revolutionary clothes and a way of despising the People?

JACQUES: Well, yes, in a general way.

CORTUFFE: It's the same man! I know it is! In Danton's house—the two of them! Go and tell Danton I want to see him at once.

JACQUES: He'll come running at your command, I suppose. Anyway, Citoyen Grandin told me to find Mordeaux.

CORTUFFE: Never mind what Citoyen Grandin told you. Citoyen Grandin is a royalist spy.

JACQUES: You simpleton, I just told you he's an agent of the Committee of Public Safety.

CORTUFFE: Ha! Observe who is calling me a simpleton. Understand that I'm a man of experience. As a man of general experience I know that not all who call themselves agents of

the Committee are really agents of the Committee. As a man of particular experience I know that this Citizen Grandin is a royalist spy.

JACQUES: *(doubtfully)* How do you know it?

CORTUFFE: I have my methods. Now don't stand arguing. Go fetch Danton.

JACQUES: "Go fetch Danton!" Who do you think Danton is?

CORTUFFE: A representative of the Sovereign People whose life I have decided to save.

JACQUES: Well—he may come and look at you. I'll tell him. *(exit)*

CORTUFFE: Impudent rascal! These lackeys need to be taught respect for men of the People. Their tongues won't be so quick when their heads are in the basket! *(walks downstage)* So Citoyen Grandin has come to Danton's house to see Andre Mordeaux! *(The door at the left opens silently, and de Batz enters, watching Cortuffe unseen.)* Two royalists and a moderate at the mercy of Jules Cortuffe! I'll deliver all three of them to the guillotine. I'll see their heads chopped off—one, two, three. Grandin and Mordeaux first, then Danton!

DE BATZ: Isn't this a bit bloody?

CORTUFFE: *(whirls)* You!

DE BATZ: Citoyen Grandin, at your service. You were speaking of having my head chopped off.

CORTUFFE: Royalist spy! You're in the hands of Jules Cortuffe now; and Jules Cortuffe means to deliver you to the Revolutionary Tribunal!

DE BATZ: *(walking toward Cortuffe, looking him over critically)* You are a man of the People, Jules Cortuffe?

CORTUFFE: You'll know I'm a man of the People when I deliver you to—

DE BATZ: Tell me, Jules Cortuffe, have you ever bathed?

CORTUFFE: Impudent dog, damned—

DE BATZ: I speak purely out of curiosity, and with no intention of trying to insult you.

CORTUFFE: Despicable traitor, foul-mouthed royalist, cursed—

DE BATZ: No doubt you get caught out in the rain occasionally, and that must wash off some of the dirt. Still—

CORTUFFE: You'll wish you'd been respectful to Jules Cortuffe, you royalist pig, when the Tribunal has finished with you.

DE BATZ: You have used the term "royalist" several times, Jules Cortuffe. May I ask why you apply it to me?

CORTUFFE: Because I know what you are.

DE BATZ: Ah, but a fellow-laborer in the public cause you must know that rumor is very misleading.

CORTUFFE: I don't speak of rumor. I speak of fact.

DE BATZ: Yes? And how did you acquire this fact?

CORTUFFE: I have my methods. I know all about your conversation with Mordeaux in Danton's office two days ago, when Mordeaux promised to get you papers proving that Danton took bribes when he was with the army in Belgium. And I know you want them because you're in the pay of the *ci-devant* Comte de Provence.

DE BATZ: Ah! Really! You know a great deal, my excellent Jules Cortuffe. And surely this prodigious information is worth something. *(takes a billfold from his pocket, opens it, fingers a layer of assignats)* What shall we say—a thousand francs?

CORTUFFE: You can't bribe a man of my character.

DE BATZ: No, not with a thousand, surely. Suppose we go to two?

CORTUFFE: You pile up insults.

DE BATZ: Well, we'll go the limit at once. Five thousand francs in your hand.

CORTUFFE: Keep your dirty, worthless assignats.

DE BATZ: *(smiling)* Oh, not dirty. I made the money myself, and I vouch for its being spotlessly clean. But worthless, I grant you. I perceive that you, like myself, are something of an amateur economist. Sometime we must get together and discuss the evils of inflation. Perhaps we might prepare a paper for the government. But now to business. What do you say to fifty gold louis?

CORTUFFE: Fifty gold—no, curse you, you can't bribe me.

DE BATZ: Oh, my admirable Jules Cortuffe, I wouldn't think of bribing you. I simply wish

to be allowed to deposit with you a hundred louis to insure your priceless friendship.

CORTUFFE: A hundred—you said a hundred louis?

DE BATZ: You hear very well.

CORTUFFE: In gold?

DE BATZ: Beautiful, shining yellow gold.

CORTUFFE: Give them to me.

DE BATZ: Oh, dear Jules Cortuffe! I haven't them with me.

CORTUFFE: You said you'd give me a hundred louis.

DE BATZ: Certainly. And I shall, if you will come to my lodging. Really, I don't go about with my pockets stuffed with gold louis.

CORTUFFE: It's a trick!

DE BATZ: A trick! Oh, my most estimable—

CORTUFFE: It's a dirty, despicable, royalist trick!

DE BATZ: My dear Jules Cortuffe! I assure you I shall put the money in your hand. You may go with me to my lodging directly from here if you like.

CORTUFFE: You think you can fool a man of the People with your foul royalist lies. Deceiver, blackguard, foul pig, detestable—

(enter Danton and Charlotte, right.)

DANTON: What's this? Here! What's this?

DE BATZ: *(turning)* My dear sir, I am utterly confused. Your servant appears to have gone mad.

CORTUFFE: Mad! Servant! Why, you—

DANTON: *(to Cortuffe)* Silence! Explain this. What are you doing in my house? What do you mean by abusing this gentleman?

CORTUFFE: Gentleman! Royalist renegade, you mean. Filthy traitor!

DE BATZ: *(to Danton)* My dear sir—

DANTON: *(to de Batz)* I apologize for the disturbance this villain has caused. I don't know who let him in the house. *(to Cortuffe)* Get out immediately, ruffian!

CORTUFFE: Ruffian! Yes, certainly a ruffian! A ruffian who came here to save your life from a royalist plot!

DANTON: *(exasperated)* What in God's name—

CORTUFFE: A ruffian who came to tell you how this royalist in front of you that calls himself Grandin is conspiring with Andre Mordeaux to send you to the guillotine!

CHARLOTTE: It's a lie!

DANTON: (*grabs Cortuffe by the shirt*) Finish. I'll give you one minute to prove how great a liar you can be. (*lets go of him*) And begin by explaining how you got in here.

CORTUFFE: Your servant let me in.

DANTON: He shall be informed of his error at once. (*Goes to the door, opens it, calls: "Jacques! Come here!" Turns back to Cortuffe*) Now! Let me hear how big a lie this is so I may know how hard to beat you for it.

CORTUFFE: (*with less assurance*) It's the truth, Citizen. I swear it. This man—(*points to de Batz*)—is a royalist agent. (*de Batz laughs as if amused at the absurdity. At this point Jacques enters and stands near the door in silence. Cortuffe continues.*) He is! He's an agent of the Comte de Provence—I heard him admit it. He came to the Tuileries to see Mordeaux. I was hiding under the desk, and I heard everything they said. He promised to pay Mordeaux a thousand gold louis for some papers which this man would use to send you to the guillotine.

DE BATZ: This comedy is rather wearisome.

CHARLOTTE: The man's gone utterly mad!

DANTON: Go on, fellow.

CORTUFFE: Go on! Go on to what? I tell you they're planning to finish you—he and Mordeaux. That's why he came here tonight—to get the papers from Mordeaux that Mordeaux was to have stolen from you. And then, when he found out I had discovered the plot, he tried to bribe me. Me. A virtuous man of the People! I told him to keep his foul royalist gold. I told him I meant to save the great Citizen Danton and no amount of money could—

DANTON: He tried to bribe you and failed, did he? This romance begins to be fantastic.

CORTUFFE: Romance, is it? Blind dreamer, stubborn fool—

DANTON: (*slaps him*) Hold your rotten tongue.

CORTUFFE: (*falls back, hand to his cheek*) Die then, Danton.

CHARLOTTE: (*to Danton*) Plainly he's out of his mind. Please be merciful.

DANTON: Merciful? The swine is past mercy or vengeance either. If he were human I'd beat him. You heard him slander my friend, Andre Mordeaux plotting my death! Andre Mordeaux would die for me! (*turns to Cortuffe*) Raise an animal like that to the dignity of mercy? No, my dear Charlotte. Mercy is for men. Garbage can only be swept away. (*turns to Jacques*) Throw him into the street.

JACQUES: (*hesitates; takes a step toward Cortuffe, who is staring at Danton in silent rage, then faces Danton*) Master.

DANTON: Well?

JACQUES: There is something I'd like to tell you.

DANTON: Very well.

JACQUES: I beg you not to be offended. I just mean to tell what I saw; I don't mean to accuse anybody of anything. But there's something I think you ought to know, and I want to tell—

DANTON: (*impatiently*) Well? Well? Say it, man, say it. Don't gibber like an idiot.

JACQUES: It's about Citizen Mordeaux.

DANTON: What about him?

JACQUES: (*nervously*) I don't accuse him of anything, remember. I only tell what I saw. I saw him going through your papers.

CHARLOTTE: to- No, no!

DANTON: ge- You lie in your throat!

DE BATZ: ther He's in with the other!

JACQUES: It's the truth. Why would I lie? I brought him the medicine you sent for his headache. He was over there by the desk. (*pointing*) He had a part of the bookshelf swung out, and there was a box on the desk about this big — (*indicates with his hands*) — and papers on the desk beside it; and when I came in, he looked guilty and tried to hide the—

DANTON: (*seizing Jacques by the collar*) You're lying.

JACQUES: No!

DANTON: It's an abominable lie! Andre Mordeaux a traitor to me! Andre Mordeaux is my friend!

(As Danton begins his speech, the door at the right opens, and Mordeaux appears, unnoticed by the people in the room in the moment of excitement. As Danton says the words "Mordeaux a traitor" Andre steps back out of sight and pulls the door partly closed.)

JACQUES: (gasping) Why would I lie? Tell me that. Why?

DE BATZ: Very plainly he and the other fellow made the story up between them.

JACQUES: Why? Tell me why. I don't even know him. I never saw him until tonight.

DANTON: (with less force than before) Andre Mordeaux is my friend.

JACQUES: You suppose there's no one else who loves you?

DANTON: (lets go of Jacques; sits down on the sofa, bewildered) Andre!

CORTUFFE: Now maybe you won't call me garbage!

CHARLOTTE: It's utterly impossible. Not Andre. It's a fool's lie.

JACQUES: I only tell what I saw.

DE BATZ: A very pretty collaboration on a rather far-fetched fiction. Surely no one believes it?

DANTON: Silence, all of you. (rises, takes a step or two) What must I think, Andre?

CHARLOTTE: Think? Why think nothing at all. Call Andre and let him give these scoundrels the lie.

DANTON: (shaking his head) That would destroy everything.

CHARLOTTE: You mustn't believe it. Not of Andre. There's an explanation; there has to be. Look in your box and prove for yourself that nothing is missing. Good God, you can't believe it!

DANTON: (standing quite still before her and seeming to gather strength and conviction) No! You suppose I haven't thought of looking in the box? You think I don't know I can prove this thing one way or another in three seconds? Of course, I could. But I won't do it! By God, I won't do it! This isn't a thing to be proven! This isn't a case at law, a squabble between a farmer and a pig-thief. This is friendship, and

friendship has nothing to do with proof. Friendship rests on faith, and stands or falls on faith, and conquers or dies by faith. And a lesser man would look in the box. He would have to prove his friendship, and so he would destroy it, no matter what he proved. But I am Danton, and Andre Mordeaux is my friend, and no stupid proofs shall come between us.

(The door at the right is suddenly drawn closed. Cortuffe and Jacques glance up at the sound, but Danton, Charlotte and de Batz are too absorbed to notice.)

DE BATZ: Admirable, my friend! Admirable! Certainly Mordeaux is favored to possess such a friendship. I'm sure when you see him next, he will be able to explain this little misunderstanding to the complete satis—

DANTON: Bah, you have no more conception of true friendship than Charlotte has. I say I trust Andre. I mean I trust him. There shall be no explanations—none. Do you think I intend to go up to Andre and say to him, "See here, my friend, you have been accused of being faithless to me. A knave and a fool accuse you of plotting against me. Explain this; defend yourself. I, your friend, Danton, wish you to answer the charge of this knave and this fool." Do you think I shall say that? No! I am Danton. I shall forget it.

CHARLOTTE: It is sublime friendship. Andre will be proud.

DANTON: Andre shall not know of it. I forbid the future mention of the subject. (turns to Cortuffe and Jacques) Get out, you two. Jacques, you have work to do. (to Cortuffe) as for you—back to the sewer.

CORTUFFE: (whining) You'll be sorry when—

DANTON: Oh, God give me patience! (Seizes Cortuffe, pushes him through the door and out of the room. Charlotte and Jacques follow them.)

(Alone, de Batz leans somewhat limply against the desk. He takes out a handkerchief and mops his forehead. He runs a forefinger between his collar and his neck, straightens his cravat and then stands erect once more, relapsing into perfect composure after this brief enjoyment of the sensation of relief. He walks downstage as the door on the right opens slowly. Andre looks in and enters.)

DE BATZ: (*seeing him*) Ah, the object of my thoughts!

MORDEAUX: You're alone?

DE BATZ: Exquisitely so.

MORDEAUX: Where is Danton?

DE BATZ: When last seen he was about to throw one Jules Cortuffe into the street. A noble work which he was pursuing vigorously. Ah, my Andre, that Jules Cortuffe gave me a touchy few minutes. I have been dancing on eggs.

MORDEAUX: I know; I heard it.

DE BATZ: You? How?

MORDEAUX: I was listening at the door.

DE BATZ: Were you, really? Then you can appreciate, to some small extent my feelings. I wish the Comte de Provence had been listening at the door; then he might have some conception of the dangers the boastful de Batz goes through for his royal self. I shall describe the scene in detail in my next report, of course, but he will discount half of it and make some slighting reference to de Batz and his gasconades, never realizing that—

MORDEAUX: Jean, shut up.

DE BATZ: (*startled*) Eh?

MORDEAUX: We have something to talk over.

DE BATZ: To be sure. The papers. By the way, my boy, I begin to appreciate your feelings—about Danton, I mean to say. It must have been a bit rough on you, listening to that tribute, with the papers resting in your pocket. Yes, extremely rough. But, then, peace is peace, and war is war, and espionage is the devil's own amusement. Give me the papers.

MORDEAUX: There aren't any papers.

DE BATZ: What's that? I'm afraid I misheard you.

MORDEAUX: There aren't any papers. I burned them.

DE BATZ: This joke is not very amusing.

MORDEAUX: This is no joke. I burned the papers. I heard Danton at the door and—I burned the papers. My God, Jean, I'm no more than a man.

DE BATZ: (*very quietly, very tensely*) You're telling the truth.

MORDEAUX: Only a beast or a god could have betrayed him after that.

DE BATZ: (*speaking very slowly, quietly and distinctly*) For months I've worked up to tonight—for months I've thought and planned and worked and struggled—for months I've hid and dodged from a thousand deaths, clinging to the very rim of the abyss, giving everything in me, good and bad, for the Cause—hoping, striving, praying, and then tonight—tonight—you burned the papers.

MORDEAUX: I couldn't do anything else, Jean. God help me, I—

DE BATZ: (*shouting in a sudden frenzy of rage*) God help you! Traitor! God damn you, I say. God damn your black, faithless, worthless soul! All my life I'll pray for that. I'll do more. I'll ruin you. I'll see you in the street with your face in the mud. And I'll laugh and push you deeper!

MORDEAUX: (*shaking his head*) You can't hurt me, Jean. Nobody can hurt me. I've been in hell.

(curtain)

SCENE TWO

The same. Two hours later. Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Mordeaux, Lucille and Charlotte are in the room. As the curtain rises a pounding, as of someone beating on a door with a stick, is heard offstage. Jacques rushes in, falls at Danton's feet, cries "Master! Master!"

DANTON: What is it? Up, man, up! (*pulls Jacques to his feet*) What's that horrible commotion?

JACQUES: They've come! They've come!

DANTON: Who's come? What on earth are you gibbering about?

JACQUES: The police!

(*cries of surprise from all*)

DANTON: Come, come, what are you talking about?

JACQUES: It's the police! A patrol stopped outside. The captain came to the door and demanded to see you. I barred the door.

CAMILLE: The Seventh Cordelier! Robespierre!

LUCILLE: Oh, no — no! (*faints — Mordeaux catches her, pulls her to the sofa. He and Camille and Charlotte attend her.*)

DANTON: (*to Jacques*) Well, and why are you quaking. Is Danton afraid of a wretched patrol? Have the captain come in.

(*There is a crash offstage and a moment later a captain of the National Guard enters with three soldiers behind him. The soldiers are armed with muskets. The officer wears a sword. The officer goes up to Danton, with the soldiers a few paces behind him.*)

OFFICER: (*in the tone of a formal announcement*) Georges Danton and Camille Desmoulins, traitors to our glorious Republic, I arrest you in the name of the Committee of Public Safety.

CAMILLE: Oh, my God! Oh, my poor little Lucille!

DANTON: You arrest me! I am Danton!

OFFICER: You will accompany me to prison, there to await trial for treason.

DANTON: Trial for treason! Oh, how the gods must laugh! Danton tried for treason. Danton a traitor to the Republic! (*Strides up to the officer, who steps back involuntarily.*) Why, Danton made the Republic! I was a republican and a revolutionist when you and the jackals who sent you were groveling before tyranny. Danton a traitor to the Republic! (*laughs wildly*) What comedians there are in the Tuileries! What droll farce. And Danton a traitor to the Republic! There is the cream of the jest!

OFFICER: (*shaking a little, but striving for a bold front, turns to his men, points to Danton and Camille*) Take them.

(*The men approach Danton and Camille. One puts his hand on the latter's arm; two go up to Danton.*)

DANTON: (*instinctively and very forcefully*) knocks their hands away) Keep your filthy hands off me. (*Then becomes more calm, shakes himself, straightens his coat*) Very well. I go. It isn't that one is afraid to die; one merely dislikes being gnawed to death by rats.

(*Danton leaves the room, yanked by the gendarmes. As Camille follows, Lucille, re-*

covering, flings herself at him, crying. He embraces her without words. Then he goes out between the remaining man and the officer. Lucille follows, sobbing wildly. Charlotte and Mordeaux are left alone.)

MORDEAUX: (*looking after them, grasping the arm of the sofa to brace himself*) Danton! (*Charlotte has backed away from him and is staring at him with cold steadiness, but he does not notice.*) They arrested Danton! They took him away—I saw it! Oh, I can't think of it; I mustn't think of it. (*moves toward Charlotte, as if looking for comfort*) Charlotte—

CHARLOTTE: Don't touch me!

MORDEAUX: (*pauses in uncomprehending surprise*) Eh?

CHARLOTTE: Don't dare to touch me!

MORDEAUX: Charlotte!

CHARLOTTE: I didn't believe them. I trusted you, as Danton did. Oh, how could you be such a devil? What could they have given you in trade for Danton?

MORDEAUX: Charlotte, I swear —

CHARLOTTE: Oh, don't lie about it. Laugh about it, if you like. Joke and boast about betraying your friend. Danton might understand that. But, for God's sake, don't lie about it! (*her voice breaks on the last sentence, she rushes from the room, sobbing.*)

MORDEAUX: (*takes a step or two after her*) Charlotte! Hear me! (*stops*) Charlotte, I didn't do it! I swear I didn't! My hands are clean. (*holds them up, looking after her*) Clean, Charlotte! (*pulls his hands down slowly, staring at them*) Clean. (*stares*) Clean of the act—bloody with the thought! Oh, Danton! (*suddenly collapses onto the sofa; sobs*)

VOICE: (*offstage right*) In there, I guess. They must have got Danton already.

(*Enter a lieutenant and two gendarmes, accompanied by Jules Cortuffe.*)

CORTUFFE: (*seeing Mordeaux on the sofa, pointing at him*) That's him! Take him! Take the royalist bastard!

LIEUTENANT: (*approaching the sofa*) Are you Andre Mordeaux?

MORDEAUX: Yes.

LIEUTENANT: I arrest you as a traitor to the Republic, in the name of the Committee of General Security.

MORDEAUX: Arrest? (sees Cortuffe; a shadow of spirit enters his voice) On the charge of a sewer-rat?

LIEUTENANT: (smiling) The sewer-rat was only second. We had a report against you two days ago from one Citoyenne Barentiere, but we left you alone. (his smile broadens as he looks around the empty room) You used to have friends.

(curtain)

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE

Five days later—the Sixteenth Germinal, Year Two of the Republic; or, by the *ci-devant* calendar, April 5, 1794.

The curtain rises on the Salle de la Liberté, Palais de Justice, seat of the patriotic and very zealous Revolutionary Tribunal. At the back of the stage, a little off-center to the right, is the judges' bench. To the right of this, and farther downstage, is the dock. As one stands in the dock, facing the bench, the jurors' chairs, half-circling a table, are beyond and a little to the right. A few steps nearer is the clerk's table, and nearer still are the table and chair of the Public Prosecutor. The witness stand is between this latter table and the dock.

The Public Prosecutor, Fourquier-Tinville, is seated now, a quiet, mild-mannered, bespectacled little man, busy among the piles of paper that clutter his table and appearing to pay little attention to the prisoners in the dock. These prisoners are five in number—Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Herault de Sechelles, Jean-Francois Delacroix, Pierre Philippeaux. They are gaunt and unshaven, and their faces show the ravages of five days of prison and three of trial. Looking down on them with an air of scholarly calm and unruffled detachment is Joseph Herman, the presiding justice, a young man of thirty-four who looks as if he would be more at home in a drawing-room or a laboratory than in the pursuance of this rather bloody business so necessary to every nation seeking Liberty. He is flanked by two colleagues on each side. On Herman's left

are the Jurors, numbering seven today, looking tense, relaxed, amused, serious, bored, frightened.

As the curtain rises, Danton, Delacroix, Herault de Sechelles are on their feet, hurling venom at the bench: "Tyranny! Murder! Where is justice? Mock trial! Kill us! Kill us now! etc." The President's bell rings violently for several seconds. Presently the hubbub in the dock dies down. Herault and Delacroix sit down again on the benches, and Danton alone remains standing.

HERMAN: It is necessary again, Danton, to say what you, who are an advocate by profession, should know. A court of justice is a court of justice—not a street cafe. Please cease this vulgar shouting.

DANTON: (with his voice restrained, yet vibrating with repressed fury) That I have been shouting, I admit. That this is a court of justice, I flatly deny.

HERMAN: (rings bell) Silence!

DANTON: I shall give you silence when you give me justice. Where are those who accuse me? Bring them before me, and I'll tear the mask of hypocrisy from their faces. Bring Robespierre, Saint-Just, Couthon! Bring them to face Danton, and Danton will fling them back into the oblivion from which they ought never to have been allowed to emerge!

HERMAN: (rings bell) Silence! There shall be no attack in this court on patriots who enjoy the public trust.

DANTON: I attack no one. I call swine swine, and I ask for justice. Where are my accusers? I have a right to see them. Where are my witnesses? I gave this court a list of witnesses who can prove to the satisfaction of every honest Frenchman that the charges made against me are foul lies and slander. Where are my witnesses?

FOUQUIER: (rising with deliberation) The witnesses the accused requests are unfortunately not available. They will not be brought into court.

DANTON: (slowly sitting down) Oh, glorious justice!

FOUQUIER: It will be evident to the court that the request for witnesses was a trick of the accused to bring into this court prominent representatives of the People, so that the accused traitors might heap on them lies and calumny.

It will not be permitted. The court has heard the charges against the accused substantiated by written evidence. It has been shown that they have been in word and action traitors to the Republic. These words and actions are known and proven in every case: Camille Desmoulins, counter-revolutionist—

CAMILLE: (*jumping to his feet*) Counter-revolutionist! Camille Desmoulins! Who was it that got up on a table in the Palais Royale in '89 and sent the People to the Bastille? Who was it? A counter-revolutionist?

HERMAN: (*rings bell*) Silence!

FOQUIER: Desmoulin's treachery has been shown in this court. So with Jean-Francois Delacroix; so with Philippeaux, jackal of kings—

PHILIPPEAUX: (*jumping up*) It is your privilege to destroy me; I forbid you to insult me!
(*bell*)

FOQUIER: So with Herault de Sechelles, known to have harbored an emigre. As for Georges Danton—

DANTON: Yes, how for Georges Danton?

FOQUIER: The crimes of Danton are apparent to all. He has taken bribes as Minister of Justice; he plotted with Mirabeau; he retired to his rich estate at times of crisis with criminal indifference to the fortunes of the Republic. He—

DANTON: Every word is a lie, and the last is the greatest lie of all!

HERMAN: (*bell*) Danton, violence is not an indication of innocence.

DANTON: You expect me to listen to such monstrous lies and be calm? Give me my witnesses, and I shall hurl this slander back into the teeth of those who made it!

FOQUIER: The Prosecution could produce numerous witnesses if it wished. But we do not need witnesses. We have adequate written proof. I believe the jury is sufficiently instructed.

(*All the accused on their feet at once. Cries: Judicial murder! Perfidy! Base treachery!*)
The bell. Cries: "Kill us now! Why prolong this mockery? Shoot us as we stand!"
The bell. Cries: "Is this freedom? Justice! Justice! Filthy vultures! Kill us! Kill us! Every word is a lie!" Herman and Fouquier

exchanging worried glances; the bell, frantically. The five voices in the dock mingling in a confusion of rage and agony. The bell going furiously. Then a subsiding, gradual; Camille Desmoulins sitting down, covering his face with his hands. Herault de Sechelles sitting down. The bell continuing, rising over the voices. Herman repeating, "Silence! Silence!" Delacroix and Philippeaux sinking to the benches, speechless with rage. Danton alone on his feet now, trying to drown out the bell: "I will be heard! Once more this court shall know Danton's voice. You can't stop me! Your bell can't stop me! I am invincible! I am Danton!")

HERMAN: (*bell stops*) This is a court of law where—

DANTON: This is a butcher shop!

HERMAN: Danton, I insist—

DANTON: I will be heard!

HERMAN: This disorder—

DANTON: Will continue until I am heard.

HERMAN: This disorder must stop.

DANTON: Stop it, then. Hear me.

HERMAN: (*confusedly*) Danton, you—

DANTON: Hear me! Hear me! Tomorrow Danton will be dead; today France shall hear him speak.

(*Herman looks at Fouquier; Fouquier looks offstage to the right as if expecting something. Herman leans back in his chair helplessly.*)

DANTON: (*triumphant, standing in erect, defiant pride, looks from Herman to the jury, lets his eye linger there a moment in disdain; then he swings around, leans toward Fouquier, who is sitting nervously at his table. Danton begins to speak in a low, vibrant voice.*) Look at Danton. Here is the wretch before you; here is the counter-revolutionist, the friend of kings, the corrupt minister. Here he is; look at him. (*Fouquier glances at Danton, then looks offstage with an air of expectancy.*) Yes, look away, Fouquier; look away for help. God knows you need it, because today, speck of nothingness, you are facing a man—a man whom you can kill but never destroy—a man whose memory, in the very moment his head lies in the executioner's basket, will be more of a force in Paris than fifty years of the life of

such a one as you. Look at me, Fouquier; look at the corrupt Minister of Justice. Ah, the very accusation shows your littleness of mind. Know you, small man, that, even if such services as mine could be bought, there is not enough money in Europe to pay for them. You tell me I plotted with Mirabeau, and I laugh. I laugh because all Paris knows how I treated Mirabeau when he swung away from the Revolution; and so all Paris will look on you and know you for a liar. And then you tell the greatest lie of all. Danton, you say, is indifferent to the fortunes of the Republic. On days of crisis he retires to Arcis and leaves others to fight for freedom. Tell me, man of little memory, do you recollect a certain Tenth of August? Was that a day of crisis? Was it? And where was Danton on that day? Where are the ones who had to push Danton into the thick of battle? Where are the privileged persons from whom Danton borrowed the energy to bring France freedom? Bring these titans. Show them to me. Show them to France. *(voice dropping back to normal, Danton swings around in the dock and faces the audience, speaking as if to the people in the galleries of the court.)* And so they kill me! For three days this court has known Danton. Tomorrow he will be dead in glory. He does not whine for mercy. He walks to the scaffold with the serenity of mind of a patriot who has given all his force to the greatness of his country—who loves her for that greatness and pities her for suffering despicable swine to sully it . . . So let it be. Tomorrow I die. Today I congratulate my murderers for having saved their names for posterity. These will be preserved indelibly in Danton's blood; his will be found in the Pantheon of History!

(A messenger enters while Danton is speaking and hands a paper to Fouquier. Fouquier signals to Herman with the paper, while Danton speaks his last line.)

HERMAN: *(ringing bell)* One moment, Danton.

FOUQUIER: *(rising)* I have here a decree passed today by the legislative body of this nation, empowering the President of this court to remove from its presence anyone resisting or affronting the justice of this nation. *(lays paper before Herman)* I submit that the accused have so resisted and so affronted justice throughout this trial. I ask, therefore, that they be removed from this court, and that the jury be instructed to bring in a verdict.

(Pandemonium in the dock. All five of the prisoners on their feet, yelling: "Treachery! Perfidy! Give us justice! Murder! Tyranny! Give us death, not torture! Take us to the scaffold!" The bell going violently, finally subduing the clamor. The prisoners remaining on their feet as Herman speaks.)

HERMAN: *(to the clerk)* Have the prisoners removed.

(The clerk faces the wings and motions. Gendarmes come on and approach the dock. Herault de Sechelles is taken out first. Philippeaux and Delacroix follow, in the grasp of the guards. Camille Desmoulins fights as the gendarmes seize him; he is dragged out, screaming. Danton walks out defiantly, staring straight ahead. Herman and Fouquier look at each other. Fouquier takes out a handkerchief and mops his forehead.)

FOUQUIER: *(to no one in particular)* It is done.
(curtain)

SCENE TWO

The same. A day later. Nothing is changed from the arrangement at the end of the preceding scene except that Fouquier is seated at his table and there is a single prisoner in the dock—Andre Mordeaux. As the curtain rises, Herman is leaning forward, talking to him in an almost paternal tone. Andre's attitude has a coloring of sullen defiance.

HERMAN: Let me repeat, Mordeaux, let me point out to you once more that you are here to be tried for your life, not to interrogate the court on irrelevant matters.

MORDEAUX: It is not a great thing that I ask.

HERMAN: I refer to its relevancy, not its size.

MORDEAUX: For six days I have been held in close confinement. No one would tell me anything. Today I am on trial. Perhaps tomorrow I die. Surely one might—

HERMAN: If you die, Mordeaux, I make you a promise to have the executioner give you the information on the scaffold.

MORDEAUX: It might have an influence on my defense. I was, after all, associated with Danton. His fate—

HERMAN: His fate, whatever it may be, cannot affect yours.

MORDEAUX: Whatever it may be! Then he is not yet—

HERMAN: I say no more. I forbid you to say more. *(to Fouquier)* You may proceed.

FOUQUIER: *(rising)* I shall call but two witnesses. They will prove speedily, conclusively and to the satisfaction of all, that the accused traitor is a royalist, an aristocrat, a plotter against the Republic, and an enemy of the People. *(to the clerk)* Call Jules Cortuffe.

CLERK: Jules Cortuffe! Come forward.

(Enter Cortuffe, right. He steps into the witness box and regards Mordeaux with a pious leer. Fouquier addresses him from the table.)

FOUQUIER: Your name is Jules Cortuffe?

CORTUFFE: It is.

FOUQUIER: What is your employment?

CORTUFFE: I am a representative of the Sovereign People, with my office in the Tuileries.

FOUQUIER: Yes. And in the course of your work, you contacted the accused, Andre Mordeaux?

CORTUFFE: I never contacted him. I never touched the swine.

FOUQUIER: I mean, you met him and knew him.

CORTUFFE: I knew him, all right—for the royalist dog that he is.

FOUQUIER: Ah, he is a royalist! And how did you find out that he is a royalist?

CORTUFFE: I have my methods.

FOUQUIER: No doubt. But please explain them.

CORTUFFE: I overheard a conversation. This royalist dog was talking to another royalist dog—one named Grandin. Between them they were planning to overthrow the Republic and put the *ci-devant* Comte de Provence on the throne and begin despising and tyrannizing the People.

FOUQUIER: How did they plan to overthrow the Republic?

CORTUFFE: They were going to betray Danton. Then they were going to betray Robespierre.

Then they were going to start despising and tyrannizing the—

FOUQUIER: Yes, yes. And you heard them call themselves royalists?

CORTUFFE: In so many words.

FOUQUIER: That is all.

HERMAN: *(to Mordeaux)* You may question the witness.

MORDEAUX: Did I understand you to say, Cortuffe, that you are employed as a representative of the Sovereign People.

CORTUFFE: You did.

MORDEAUX: With your office in the Tuileries?

CORTUFFE: Yes.

MORDEAUX: What is the nature of these public duties, Representative Cortuffe?

CORTUFFE: I refuse to give out state secrets.

MORDEAUX: Are you not one of those representatives of the People stationed in the Tuileries to scrub the floors and carry out garbage?

CORTUFFE: I don't have to answer to you, foul-minded royalist pig!

FOUQUIER: I insist that the accused confine himself to relevant questions, without casting slurs on the witness.

MORDEAUX: *(to Herman)* I only wish to show the true stature and authority of this person who accuses me.

HERMAN: *(to Cortuffe)* What is your exact position in the Tuileries?

CORTUFFE: Well, I'm a porter, but I have a great deal of influence on—

HERMAN: That's enough. *(to Mordeaux)* Proceed.

MORDEAUX: Now, Cortuffe, among your fantastic lies, there is one which—

CORTUFFE: Lies! Filthy traitor! Infamous—

HERMAN: *(rings bell)* Silence! We shall have no name calling. You, Mordeaux, confine yourself to questions without embellishments.

MORDEAUX: Very well. Cortuffe, you say that after I and this Grandin, whoever he may be, betrayed Danton, we were going to betray Robespierre. Did you not say that?

CORTUFFE: You were. I swear you were. On my honor—

MORDEAUX: Very well, then. Perhaps you will tell the court just what Citizen-Representative Robespierre has done for which he may be betrayed.

CORTUFFE: I—I—I said—(gulps) This is a trick—a foul royalist trick!

MORDEAUX: It is the effort of an honest Republican to vindicate a representative of the People. You have intimated that Robespierre has done something for which he may be betrayed. Either prove this or admit yourself a liar.

CORTUFFE: (in confusion) I—I—

HERMAN: Well?

CORTUFFE: I—it may be I was mistaken about Robespierre. But they surely were going to betray Danton. And they called themselves royalists. I swear it.

FOUQUIER: That will do. You may go.

MORDEAUX: Wait. I have more questions.

FOUQUIER: (to Herman) I suggest that the court not waste its time listening to superfluous questions. I have another witness who will substantiate the charge just made. If it pleases—

HERMAN: Very well. Let us hear the other witness.

FOUQUIER: (to clerk) Call Citoyenne Barentiere.

CLERK: Citoyenne Barentiere! Come forward. (no response—a pause) Citoyenne Barentiere!

(Enter Madame de Barentiere, dressed as in Act One.)

BARENTIERE: My daughter isn't here. Will I do?

FOUQUIER: (disconcerted) Who are you?

BARENTIERE: I'm her mother.

FOUQUIER: Whose mother?

BARENTIERE: My daughter's. (waves to Andre) Hello, dear boy.

FOUQUIER: You know the witness?

BARENTIERE: Oh, yes, indeed. My daughter's going to marry him. That is, she was before she had to leave France.

FOUQUIER: Your daughter left France. Why?

BARENTIERE: She had to. She's a royalist.

FOUQUIER: A royalist! My witness! . . . Ah, Citoyenne, you confess yourself a royalist too?

BARENTIERE: Oh, no, no, no, no, no! I'm just a filthy aristocrat, like Andre.

FOUQUIER: An aristocrat! (considers a moment) Step into the witness box. (Barentiere enters box) Now, Citoyenne, you tell us that Andre Mordeaux is an aristocrat?

BARENTIERE: A filthy aristocrat.

FOUQUIER: Ah! You knew him in the days of tyranny, before the Revolution?

BARENTIERE: Oh, dear me, no. I only met him a few months ago. My daughter brought him home one day and said, "Mama—"

FOUQUIER: Yes, yes. But you know positively that he's an aristocrat?

BARENTIERE: Oh, yes. Damn my eyes, yes. Jules Cortuffe told me.

FOUQUIER: Jules—

BARENTIERE: Cortuffe. Surely you must know him. Small, red-eyed fellow—man of the People—rather bad breath—friend of Robespierre. Oh, you must know him. He goes everywhere.

FOUQUIER: (hastily) That will do. You may step down.

MORDEAUX: I want to examine the witness.

FOUQUIER: (to Herman) I protest against the waste of the court's time. We have heard testimony showing the accused guilty of—

MORDEAUX: So far, the court has heard against me the single word of a sewer-rat. I propose, by questioning this witness, to prove the sewer-rat a liar.

FOUQUIER: I protest—

HERMAN: I think we shall hear the questions. (to Mordeaux) You may proceed.

MORDEAUX: I ask that Jules Cortuffe be called back to face this witness.

FOUQUIER: May it please—

HERMAN: I think we shall allow it. (to clerk) Call Jules Cortuffe.

CLERK: Jules Cortuffe! Come forward. (Enter Cortuffe, somewhat reluctantly but forcing his confidence.)

MORDEAUX: (to Barentiere) Now, then. I understood you to say that this Cortuffe you see before you is a friend of Robespierre.

BARENTIERE: It all depends.

MORDEAUX: On what?

BARENTIERE: On Robespierre. If Robespierre behaves himself, and does what Jules tells him, Jules won't kick him on his face into the gutter. Otherwise—

MORDEAUX: Otherwise?

BARENTIERE: Why otherwise Jules will fix him just like he fixes all enemies of the People—boils 'em in oil and kicks 'em into the gutter, Jules does. Damn my eyes, if he doesn't. And that's just what will happen to Robespierre if he starts disobeying Jules. And that goes for Saint-Just, too. And Cambon, Carnot, Tallien, Merlin—all of 'em. Damn my eyes! Into the gutter with them when they start disobeying Jules!

CORTUFFE: (to Herman) If your Grace will permit me—

MORDEAUX: (to Barentiere) Under such circumstances, no doubt people like Saint-Just and Robespierre are very careful about not displeasing Jules.

BARENTIERE: Oh, yes, indeed. Jules won't stand for any nonsense.

CORTUFFE: (to Herman) I swear, your Excellency—

BARENTIERE: I've begged and pleaded with him. "Jules," I've said, "please don't kick Robespierre into the gutter. He's such a nice little man. Please don't, Jules." But he's so hard and stern. He won't listen to me. (sobs a little) Damn my eyes.

HERMAN: (to Fouquier) You produce very interesting witnesses. (to Jules) Well, Jules Cortuffe!

CORTUFFE: Your Grace—

HERMAN: Let me add my pleas to those of Citoyenne Barentiere.

CORTUFFE: Your honor—

HERMAN: It would pain me to see Robespierre kicked into the gutter.

CORTUFFE: Your excellency—

HERMAN: On his face, especially.

CORTUFFE: (abjectly) Mercy, most gracious excellency.

HERMAN: (suddenly harsh) That's enough of these high-sounding titles! "Your grace, your honor, your excellency!" Have you not heard, wretched slanderer, that all men are equal?

CORTUFFE: (terrified) Oh, most honorable—

HERMAN: Again. The dog defies me! Take him away!

CORTUFFE: (falling to his knees) Mercy! Mercy!

HERMAN: Take him away instantly, I say. Lock him up. (guards come forward and seize Cortuffe) We shall find time to dispose of him in the near future.

(exit Cortuffe between the guards, screaming)

BARENTIERE: Well, damn my eyes! (steps out of box and follows) They can't do this to you, can they Jules? Tell them who you are, Jules. Jules, you better tell them who you are. (exit)

HERMAN: To you, Citizen Mordeaux, the court apologizes for making you play a role in a stupid comedy. I dismiss this case for lack of evidence. The session is closed.

(A messenger enters as Herman says the last line. He goes to the bench and hands a paper to Herman. The President opens it and reads it.)

HERMAN: Citizen Mordeaux.

MORDEAUX: Yes?

HERMAN: A little while ago you asked a question.

MORDEAUX: Yes.

HERMAN: About Danton.

MORDEAUX: Is he—

HERMAN: I can now answer that question, Mordeaux . . . Danton is dead.

MORDEAUX: (falling backward, grasping the railing for support) No!

HERMAN: (looks at his watch) The executions were successfully completed fifty-five minutes ago. Danton is dead.

MORDEAUX: No, no! Not dead—Danton! Not dead, but murdered. Not dead, but crucified!

HERMAN: (*hits bell*) Mordeaux, I warn you—

MORDEAUX: No, no, I can't be silent! You told me Danton is dead! But you lied to me! You lied!

HERMAN: (*bell*) Reflect, Mordeaux—

MORDEAUX: Danton is not dead! Danton will never die! You can't kill a god. You can find knaves to betray him, and hypocrites to denounce him, and butchers to hack at him—

HERMAN: (*bell*) Mor—

MORDEAUX: But you can't kill him, ever! It is yourselves you destroy! Never shall you live as men after this deed! You have cut off the greatest head in France. Let that be your title to infamy; let that be your curse!

HERMAN: (*bell, weakly*)

MORDEAUX: Let that be the thought, the great red thought that plucks your brain to bits. Let that haunt you through your nights and days. You cut off Danton's head! Forget it if you can! Forget that head, those eyes! Drive it from you when you writhe in bed at night! Banish it from your mind! Tear it from your memory! Or go and dig it up and see it rotten and tell yourself: "Danton is dead; I took what was Danton and made it earth and water; he exists no more." And know you lie! Know it has risen up again, that head, whole and fierce and glorious, to follow you down your years, to leave you never! And when you die—and when you gasp and choke on Danton's blood and die, look up once more and see his head, triumphant, great—destroying you. Oh, pitiful, pitiful men! (*slumps onto bench, covers his face with his hands, sobs*) Oh, Danton, Danton!

FOQUIER: This traitor must be—

HERMAN: (*staring at Mordeaux*) Never mind.

FOQUIER: But he—

HERMAN: (*sharply*) Never mind, I say. The session is closed.

(*Herman rises and walks off, right, followed by the other justices. The jury gets up and goes out, left. The clerk gathers some papers and goes out. Fouquier remains, looking after Herman; then he turns and regards Mor-*

deaux, slumped on the bench, his head buried in his arms. Fouquier picks up some papers, puts them under his arm and leaves, right. As he goes out, enter Jean de Batz, left. He comes in a step or two and looks around. Then he walks up to Andre. He touches him gently on the shoulder.)

DE BATZ: Andre.

MORDEAUX: Leave me.

DE BATZ: (*gently*) Come, Andre.

MORDEAUX: (*looks up*) You, Jean?

DE BATZ: I come to beg forgiveness.

MORDEAUX: Forgiveness? You?

DE BATZ: I. What I said to you at Danton's home I shouldn't have said. I didn't understand you.

MORDEAUX: It doesn't matter.

DE BATZ: No, I suppose not. Still, I shouldn't have said it. I should like your forgiveness.

MORDEAUX: If you wish it.

DE BATZ: Yes, I wish it.

MORDEAUX: The Cause is dead in me, Jean.

DE BATZ: Yes, I know. I should have known before. But I didn't understand. You are a man of feeling. I understand that now; I accept it. I don't approve of it, you know, but I accept it. I don't admire you, but perhaps I envy you.

MORDEAUX: Envy me? Me?

DE BATZ: Yes, yes, I understand.

MORDEAUX: No, you don't! No, indeed, you don't! Envy me? Envy a wretch on the rack? Good God, Jean, what am I?

DE BATZ: A man of feeling.

MORDEAUX: A Cassius! A Judas! A Cain!

DE BATZ: No, Andre—

MORDEAUX: I killed him! I killed him! My Caesar, my Christ. I killed him as much as Herman and Fouquier killed him, as much as Robespierre and Saint-Just killed him.

DE BATZ: Yes, I understand.

MORDEAUX: I had them in my hands—the papers. I had his life, and I sold it. I didn't deliver it, but I sold it. The thought is the deed, and repentance is hell.

DE BATZ: Yes.

MORDEAUX: Oh, Jean, what am I to do?

DE BATZ: Do? You can do nothing, Andre. As you say, repentance is hell—before the deed or after. I guess you will have to live in your hell. After a time it will not burn so hotly.

MORDEAUX: But it will always be hell.

DE BATZ: Yes, it will always be hell.

(Enter Charlotte Darcelle, right)

CHARLOTTE: Andre! *(runs up to him)* Oh, Andre, my dear! *(puts her arms around his neck; he doesn't move)* Andre, it's all over. I heard of everything—what you said to Herman. Andre, what can I say to you? I didn't know. I thought you betrayed him.

MORDEAUX: I did betray him.

CHARLOTTE: Andre, what are you saying? I tell you, they told me what you said to Herman. It was splendid, Andre! Glorious! But, oh, my dear, you must be careful. You're in terrible danger. All Danton's friends are in danger now. Even I. And after what you said to Herman! You must hide, Andre. They say you frightened Herman, but nothing can frighten Robespierre. You must hide with me, Andre. Oh, if we could only get out of France!

MORDEAUX: Charlotte, go away.

CHARLOTTE: Andre!

MORDEAUX: Go away, please.

CHARLOTTE: What are you saying?

MORDEAUX: I want you to let me alone.

CHARLOTTE: Andre! Can't you forgive me? Don't you love me?

MORDEAUX: Love you? I don't know. Perhaps I love you. It doesn't matter.

CHARLOTTE: But—I don't understand.

MORDEAUX: I know. *(Steps past her and walks out, right. Charlotte starts to follow him.)*

DE BATZ: Wait, Citoyenne.

CHARLOTTE: But—Andre—I don't understand.

DE BATZ: Perhaps in time you will—to some degree.

CHARLOTTE: But—he must be—he must need me.

DE BATZ: No. He needs to be alone. If you want him later, let him be alone now.

CHARLOTTE: But, he's in danger. Robespierre—

DE BATZ: I shall do what I can as soon as it is possible. Perhaps I can get him across the Rhine. Perhaps not. I shall do what I can to save him as soon as he is willing to let me. At present he would find a certain relief in martyrdom.

CHARLOTTE: What has happened to him? What has he done?

DE BATZ: Nothing, actually. But in his mind, a great deal. He planned to betray Danton.

CHARLOTTE: But he didn't!

DE BATZ: Exactly. That's the trouble. You see, he repented, and that ruined him. Even if Danton had not died, Andre's repentance would have ruined him. The repentance, you understand, broke down the wall he had been building up around his feelings. He has been struggling very hard to keep the wall firm, but he wasn't great enough. Sometimes the feelings would overflow, and he would blame them on me, and curse me for them. Sometimes he would say he was betraying Danton out of pure baseness, for the money I would pay him. It was not so. He was doing it because he was a loyal monarchist and hated this filthy democracy, but—

CHARLOTTE: A monarchist!

DE BATZ: But it was part of the wall. Calling himself vile and base put him nearer to greatness and hardened the wall. But he wasn't great enough, and he repented. It was just as well. Such things happen when great men play on little men. It would have come after the act if it hadn't come before, and that would have been as bad. You see, when he repented, the wall crumbled, and his feelings flooded in on him.

CHARLOTTE: A monarchist!

DE BATZ: Yes, Andre is a man of feeling. That is to say, a common man. Great men have

feelings too, but they are behind the wall, and the wall is strong, built of wrongs and cemented with cruelty.

CHARLOTTE: I don't care if he is a monarchist! I don't care what he is! I love him!

DE BATZ: A man of feeling, and therefore bound by decency. So many men are bound by decency; that's why they call it common decency. Even Jules Cortuffe is tied to the ground by decency of a sort. Only great men can transcend decency. Danton was seldom decent, and Danton was often great. I am scarcely ever decent. Perhaps, in my way, I am greater than Danton.

CHARLOTTE: I must go to him! I know he needs me! I'll go to his house. Do you suppose he's there?

DE BATZ: Eh? Oh, perhaps. At any rate, I dare say we can find him.

CHARLOTTE: We must find him! And we must save him! We can save him? Say we can save him!

DE BATZ: Perhaps. We shall try. We may save him from something. We may save him for something. Who knows?

(Curtain)

Sonnet: from Ettarre

By DOLORES STEPHENS

Then when the chill of loneliness cuts through
The sheltered crevices I touched within
Your mind, remember this again unto
The end of all remembering and din
Of futile words: We are not yet betrayed
By the stars—cool splintered stars that blazed
In benediction once when parting made
Us speak such brave and quiet words: And dazed
By this immensity, we stared at last
Into the darkness wrapped in stars, yet of
Unshaken, spinning orbits—"Hung as fast
As we in ours," we proudly said, above
The hot insolence of the sun at noon,
And the white malice of the Winter moon.

Missa Pro Defunctis

By ROBERT STEPHENS

Regard us; we are on the last far steps
In this long afternoon of our forced laughter.
We are moss clinging in the leeward shadows,
We are dead leaves in the marble basins,
We are not the voices singing,
But ours the crucifixion.

Here beyond the seven rivers of the Morning,
Here on such moons one does not sing . . .
There is no singing.

In the fluidity of the moon
Snails are crushed by Mrs. Hamshire in the garden.
Birds in the apple trees in spring,
Shot by children.
We rest the rifle on St. Francis, for a steady aim.

You have never seen this garden
Where the shattered sunlight falls,
Where this, the dissonance of our existence,
This music falls. We cannot escape it.

Fear not.
This is the Revelation of Jesus Christ.
I went to the angel and said unto him,
"Give me the little book."

Fear not.
Our death is the light uncertain touch of strings,
The knife touch.

Our death will be like a morning,
Our death will be like music . . .
They will throw stars at us,
And, dropping our golden spears,
We shall walk three steps uncertainly,
And die.

