

EL PORTAL



SAN JOSE STATE COLLEGE
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❧ The Phelan Literary Awards ❧

EL PORTAL

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1861

SENATOR JAMES D. PHELAN

1920

During his lifetime Senator James D. Phelan was internationally known as a statesman, patron of the arts, and perfect host. Distinguished guests were entertained with a lavish hand at his magnificent estate, Villa Montalvo. Through his friendship with Dr. Henry Meade Bland, poet laureate of California and professor of English in the San Jose State College, Senator Phelan became interested in creative writing by the students of the College. Each year he welcomed the members of the English Club to Villa Montalvo, where the guests had luncheon and were entertained with a program of music and poetry.

The encouragement shown to young writers by Senator Phelan did not cease with his death. In his will a bequest of \$10,000 was left to the San Jose State College, the annual income of which was to be given in awards to students for excellence in poetry and for the continuation of the Montalvo Contest as sponsored by him. A great deal of interest in creative writing has already been stimulated by the bequest. This issue of *El Portal* containing the awards in the contest is dedicated in grateful remembrance to its generous sponsor, Senator James D. Phelan.

RESPITE

JEAN SEWELL SMITH

A sere and crumpled leaf, a stream near dry,
A wind that's blown too warmly and too long,
A phrase too oft repeated of a song—
We weary of things overworn, and I
Am overworn by you. Our spring has fled;
You find me cloying, tumid, like a rose
Too red, too heavy scented. You suppose
What you loved yesterday today is dead.

But winter cannot kill a blossom — quite —
It blooms again upon another bough.
And I shall seem again as fresh and bright
To someone else, though when or where
I care not. Since your love has taken flight,
I rest obscure in quiet winter now.



WOUNDED

JEAN SEWELL SMITH

Ah, once my life was like a quiet glen
Where velvet grass and baby-blue-eyes grew,
And wide white blossoms. There the west wind blew,
And wild birds whistled carols. Ah, 'twas then
Love laid his warm young heart upon my own
And clasped me fondly in his firm embrace
And rained his fragrant kisses on my face—
I was my love's, and he was mine alone.

But suddenly I saw my love arise,
And I, whom he had ardently caressed,
Beheld his satyr horns and hairy thighs
And how his heedless hooves the blossoms pressed,
Pale petals drenched in darkling garnet dyes
That ran from out his hoof print in my breast.

SONG FROM A CAST

JEAN SEWELL SMITH



Tomorrow, tomorrow brings life back to me—
Tomorrow I'll look on a green living tree!

A tree, after looking at nothing but high
Plastered walls and a ceiling, a window of sky—
For eleven still years in a white empty room,
Like a mummy embalmed in a clean vaulted tomb,
I have lain on my back — while the world clattered by—
Without power to live or courage to die.

Have you lain in an orchard with trees all around,
With your body pressed close to the leaf-covered ground?
I have lain so, and joyed that my soft flesh was hurt
By the sharp clods, and warmed by the sun-heated dirt.
Then I knew I was only an intricate clod,
Just a slight hillock moved by the whisper of God,
And my blood was creek water, my body the ground—
Have you lain in an orchard with trees all around?

Now I lie on my back, while the women below
In the streets and the houses—they live! oh, I know
That they take their sweet share of man-love, and give birth
To silky dolls fashioned of exquisite earth;
That they move and they work and they love and they bear;
That they've all of the sunlight and tree-shade and air —
God! I know. I'm a woman and young! But I lie
With just ceiling and walls and a window of sky
And relentless dull pain for eleven long years.
Once I wept, but I've emptied the well of my tears;
Once I sang, but no more, for the last lovely note
Died strangled long since in the depths of my throat;
Once I laughed; once I dreamed; once, even as you,
You women below me, once I was loved too.
That's over. And with it—both pleasure and sorrow
Have gone, yet I still have a hope for tomorrow.

Tomorrow, tomorrow—Oh, God, portion me
The whole of my birthright in one living tree.

THUNDER IN THE MOUNTAINS

A TRAGEDY IN ONE ACT



MICHEL LIPMAN

CHARACTERS

The Leech Kawameddin.
The Leech Moscallom.
The Leech Malamandu.
Vakil, a black servitor.
Princess Laill of Ujjarjini.
Kalae, the Princess' attendant.
Prince Dushyanta, of Ujjarjini.
Tabir, black servant of the Prince.
Kalisada, a temple adept.
The Vizier Suanvar.
The Vizier Ummyyahoml.

(The curtain opens on a room in the castle of the Atabak of Ujjarjini. The room is severely furnished. A small table of heavy carved wood stands toward one side.

The time is aeons ago, when the world was very young.

From somewhere below the sound of wild, barbaric music, punctuated by drunken shouts and snatches of song, comes with a muffled faintness. The Three Leeches are talking)

First Leech. I have given him a potion brewed from the dried fruit of the batya tree and brought at great expense from the now lost island of Trogalomia. So great is its power that I have seen it raise a man who had already been thrown into the pits and make him whole again. Yet the great Atabak's soul still dwells in the palace of the Black Goddess.

Second Leech. From my hands he received the magic powder that is made from a kraken's heart added to a pulp ground from all the pages that are left from the forbidden Book of the Second Life. The Great Atabak still breathes, but the Black Goddess will soon claim him for her own.

Third Leech. My friends, your draughts and simples no doubt are very effective, but I gave him an elixir such as the world has never before known. It was an elixir that I made from a single scarlet flower that grew high in the mountains where not another living thing could exist, close to the boiling lake where the terrible Fire God dwells, he who spews forth burning pitch and deadly vapors and sulphurous gases. Three crystal drops I made, and I gave them all to the mighty ruler who will never rise again from his bed.

First Leech. It is all of no use. Our drugs and our blood-lettings are powerless to help the Atabak because of the sinful life he has led. The land has fallen into ruin while he made a pretense of ruling. Nowhere will you find such luxury as in the houses of the great ones in Ujjarjini, nor at the same time such misery as in the hovels of the poor people. He is a wicked man. The demons of the Dark Palace are calling him, and he has no choice but to be carried off by them.

Second Leech. It is no less sinful for them who carouse and swill like pigs in the great hall below. I am sure that one day the Fire God will come down from his mountain and destroy them all as he did in the almost forgotten days of our no less wicked ancestors. I have heard old legends which tell us how the God awoke one day and walked in the valley, destroying everything in his path.

First Leech. I have heard that he punished only those who had not led virtuous lives.

Third Leech. They are old wives' tales and mean nothing, but I have heard that the Fire God rewarded those who went about in the land doing good and punished those who lived in pretense and deceit.

Second Leech. I know nothing of that. I only heard that he walked in the valley and destroyed everything. There is a prophecy which says that he will some day walk again.

First Leech. That day may come sooner than we expect. This very evening I spoke with an adept from the temple of the high priest Chiakal, the temple in the hills which is nearest the Fire God's caves and farthest from any other habitation. He has come to warn the court that the Fire God is indeed grumbling and his thunder is gradually growing louder. I believe that if we were very still, we could hear it very faintly even at this distance.

(They are quiet for a moment, listening. There is just the faintest rumble, as yet so indistinguishable that it cannot be heard above the sound of conversation. This rumble continues intermittently throughout the play, very gradually growing louder until it is quite prominent at the end.)

Third Leech. So Chiakal has sent a messenger with a message. Eh, well. Was he the young fool who stood apart with the soldiers and watched with calf-like eyes the Princess Laïli make herself desirable in the sight of every drunken lord and noble in the hall?

First Leech. He was with the soldiers when I spoke with him. Kalisada, he said, was his name. And certainly while he talked he watched the Princess' every move. He was waiting for someone to whom he could deliver his message.

Third Leech. Then let this Kalisada beware. It has not been seven days since the princess had of me a powerful and secret potion, nor has it been seven days since Arhad, Captain of the First Escort, sickened and died.

Second Leech. He will want replacing.

Third Leech. He will be replaced by Prince Dushyanta.

First Leech. He will not be replaced by Prince Dushyanta. The Princess hates her cousin because he alone stands between her and the Atabak's empty throne.

Third Leech. And I say that is all the more reason. The Prince will be the next Atabak, and after him the Princess will be the ruler.

Second Leech. Many men have loved the Princess, and their lives have all been short. I do not think that the Prince will live to see his grandchildren if he has aught to do with the Princess.

Third Leech. I have heard, that for all his dallying with poetry, the Prince is not easily trapped. He is young, but he has outwitted some of the cleverest men in the kingdom who have set themselves against him.

Second Leech. The Prince is clever, but the Princess has subtle poisons and for all her beauty, she has a heart as cold and as devious as an Omagan seer. I am sure that she will become Atabaka on the death of her uncle.

First Leech. She is strange. She is strange and very beautiful. She will be ruler of this land and all the subjects must bow to her will.

Third Leech. She shall indeed be ruler. She shall be an empress because of her will, and she shall be a slave because of her will.

Second Leech. That is that? An empress and a slave? You are mad, Maïamandu. You are always saying things that no one else understands.

Third Leech. You will see. An empress and a slave. It is you who are mad, and it will not be long before everyone knows it.

First Leech. Do not talk so. I think it must be wicked to speak of the Princess in this manner. It is getting very late. I wish we were gone from here.

Third Leech. Our friend has suddenly turned very moral. He is growing uneasy. It is the growing thunder of the Fire God that urges him to hasten his steps.

First Leech. It is not I that need fear God's wrath—

(As these words are spoken, Vakil, a gigantic black, comes into the room. He is nearly nude, and his ebony skin gleams in the light. His presence inspires a gloomy silence on the part of the Three Leeches)

Vakil. The Princess Laili will see your excellencies now, to be informed of the Atabak's health.

(Vakil stands to one side, the Leeches strike a circumspect attitude, and the Princess enters. She is slender and very pale with great dark eyes and black hair. Like all wicked princesses, she is very beautiful)

Princess. How empty the palace feels tonight! There is a strange cold wind stealing thru it and a feel of death in the air. My uncle is going to die, is he not?

First Leech. Princess, for many weeks the people of the land will mourn this day of sorrow.

Second Leech. Princess, before the sun rises on a new day, the Black Goddess will come to wring the hearts of all mankind.

Third Leech. Princess, before the fourth hour passes, the Great Atabak, whose mercy is praised by all the people, whose charities exceed all belief, whose justice and mercy are sung in every throat, this good and generous man, oh Princess, will be no more.

Princess. It is a day that comes at last for the greatest king or the basest peasant. The palace is even now plunged into the deepest sorrow. It is a loss that will weigh heavily upon all who loved him.

Three Leeches. (*Echoing piously*) All who loved him indeed.

Princess. And our gratitude goes with you for your skilful services. (*The Leeches go out, but the Third Leech turns at the door and comes back to the Princess. Vakil also leaves*)

Third Leech. Princess, this is a very sad occasion, this death of the Atabak. (*The Princess looks at him, but does not speak*) I am sure that everyone is very sad. (*He pauses, greeted with more silence*) It would be most painful if another death were to take place. (*Another pause*) The Prince Dushyanta is a young man. And the Princess has a powerful poison. (*Pause*) It would be very sad if the Prince were to die also. (*Pause*) I am a poor man, Princess, and the Prince is still a young man. (*The Princess goes to the table and strikes twice upon a small gong. Vakil enters*)

Third Leech. Thank you, Princess, thank you. I am a very poor man, and my children have scarce enough to eat. (*The Princess simply points to the Leech, and Vakil advances upon him, sinister and menacing. The Leech watches him with terror-filled eyes, powerless to move.*)

Third Leech. Princess! I did not mean the words I spoke. I uttered them in jest. It was but a jest. Princess, spare me! Spare my life! (*Vakil seizes and drags him him out, still pleading and imploring*)

Kalae. (*Entering*) He will squeal when Vakil runs his skewer thru him. But we have only a short time left. The Atabak will soon be gone. Then Dushyanta will take his place, and when he has drunk the sacred wine even you dare not touch him.

Princess. I would dare anything for the throne.

Kalae. Anything but this.

Princess. (*Smiling bitterly*) Yes, that is true. As long as he is not Atabak, I may do anything I wish, but the people would tear me to bits if . . . ah, but everything is wrong. I wish . . . I know not what—I wish I had been born a commoner, without this yearning for power, this desire for the right to command. I must be Atabaka, Kalae. I must have the throne or I will go mad. Nothing shall prevent me from having it. O, Kalae, what is the matter? What has come over me? I was not always like this. . . . a few years ago I was happy.

Kalae. The Princess has changed even in the last few days. I think it is the shadows—I can feel it, too. There is something creeping down upon us—something dead, yet something moving with a kind of half-life. Perhaps the souls of dead loves have come back from the embers, come back for something forgotten.

Princess. Have you noticed how queerly the animals in the courtyard acted this evening? They were silent and seemed strangely uneasy. And the shouting, too, is strange. The voices sound like the beating of a drum in a great empty hall. It is cold, too. It is damp and murky outside, and yet my hands are like ice. That is odd on a summer night.

Kalae. Perhaps it is but a wind stirred by the wings of the Black God-

deas as she goes about the palace waiting—waiting for the man who lies in the chamber above us.

Princess. There must be two souls to carry into the Dark Castle. Kalae, go to where the Prince is feasting in the banquet hall and ask if he has finished the poem. I should like to hear a poem. (*Kalae goes out. The Princess strikes twice upon the gong, and the black Vakil appears*)

You have taken care of the Leech? (*The black nods*) That is well. Prince Dushyanta will be here soon. Do not be hasty; do not be clumsy. Strike deep, and only once. (*Vakil conceals himself behind the door. The Princess stands at the window for a moment in silence. The shouting and revelry downstairs has quieted down somewhat but for an occasional shout, and the music continues, but spasmodically. The Fire God's rumble is spasmodic, too, but it is a little louder.*

Prince Dushyanta. (*Entering. He has drunk a great deal of wine, but it appears not to have affected him to any extent*) My dearest Laali, the muses will rejoice to hear that the gracious Princess of Ujjarjini now adds the love of poetry to her many accomplishments.

Princess. The revelers are repulsive, Dushyanta. The Atabak is dying. I wish to be amused.

Dushyanta. And so you send for Dushyanta. That was wise. May I read you these lines that I have just composed?

Princess. Yes, read me the lines. And when you have finished, I would like to talk.

Dushyanta. The Princess has changed of late. (*He takes a manuscript of Hafiz's poetry from his belt and reads*)

What is wrought in the forge of living and life—
All things are naught! Ho! Fill me the bowl,
For naught is the gear of the world and the strife!
One passion has quickened the heart and the soul,
The Beloved's presence alone they have sought—
Love at least exists; yet if Love were not,
Heart and soul would sink to the common lot—All things are naught!
The span of life is as of five little days,
Brief hours and swift in this halting-place;
Rest softly, ah rest! while the Shadow delays,
For Time's self is naught and the dial's face.
On the lip of Oblivion we linger, and short
Is the way from the Lip to the Mouth where we pass—
While the moment is thine, fill, oh Saki, the glass Ere all is naught!

(*As the poem progresses, Vakil creeps slowly toward him with a dagger in his hand. The Princess stands immobile. When Vakil is about half way to the Prince, another black, Tabir, appears at the doorway and creeps on silent feet after Vakil. As Vakil is about to stab the Prince, Tabir falls upon him—one hand grasping the dagger arm, the other at his throat, and drags him without a sound to the doorway, where they struggle for a moment and then pass beyond. A moment later Tabir comes in carrying the dagger, now stained with blood, that a second before had been in the hands of Vakil. Tabir*

takes his place at the side of the Prince, who is still reading, seemingly unconscious of the struggle that has taken place,

Dushyanta. (Finishing) Did you like it?

Princess. It displeased me for the most part. You are stupid today, Dushyanta.

Dushyanta. (Laughing) It is the wine I have drunk. If you would drink more you would be merrier. When you are merry, you are not so dangerous. Now you are solemn. You are thinking—need I say of what?

Princess. Do not trouble. Your guard has already shown you my intentions. Do with me what you will.

Dushyanta. You are beautiful tonight, Laili. I can think only of your good. It is that which is uppermost in my mind.

I know that you wish to rule, that the position of Atabaka is one for which you would sell your soul. But there is more than one way for you to attain your desire. Laili, I would have you consider once more the offer which I have so often made you. Wait until after my father passes to his ancestors. We will wait a month or so, and then hold a great ceremonial in the city, and you will reign in Ujjarjini with me.

Princess. No.

Dushyanta. The wife of the new Atabak would have great honors—great power would be hers — even greater than those now enjoyed by the Princess Laili. *(The Princess slowly turns her back)* Laili, I have offered to share my power with you. Everything that you might desire would be at your command. Even I, the Atabak, would serve your slightest whim. *(The Princess remains silent.)* Laili, hear me — *(Dushyanta takes her arm)*

Princess. (Unmoving, without emotion) You are cold, Dushyanta. Your touch is like the moist belly of a serpent upon my flesh.

Dushyanta. (Drops his hand) That is clearly said, Laili. Now I too shall speak clearly. In a few hours the drunken sot upstairs will be dead, and I shall be Atabak. Then I am a living God, and no one in this land would dare face the vengeance that falls upon one who harms me. Then, Laili, absolute power will be mine, and you will be but a meek and obedient subject. My wish will be your command. You will have no course but to obey. You will have none to appeal to, for I am supreme. You refused to share my throne honorably; you will live to regret it.

Princess. The Atabak is not yet dead. Dushyanta is still but a mortal prince.

Dushyanta. The Atabak has scarcely an hour before him. *(He goes to the door)* I am sorry to have been so dull. I have read you all the poetry that I had. I think now I shall write some lines to the moon. Did you notice that it had a strange look tonight? This evening there was a scarlet mist about it, and now it glows like a great lantern reflected in a quiet pool. *(He pauses)* Perhaps an hour; perhaps not even that. *(He goes)*

Princess. (She rings once upon the gong) Kalae! Come quickly. *(Kalae enters)* You heard him? What is to be done?

Kalae. Kalisada is still waiting. He has grown tall and brown in the years he has been away.

Princess. Kalisada! He has come? And you spoke to him tonight. Kalae? You were close to him? What did he say — did he speak of me?

Kalae. He said that he had a message from Chiakal for you.

Princess. I am afraid to see him. I will only remember that we were young together, and forget that the Atabak is dying.

Kalae. When he spoke his voice was low and vibrant, and grew deeper when he mentioned your name.

Princess. Tell him to come.

Kalae. I have told him. He is here. (*Kalisada enters. Kalae goes out*)

Princess. Why did they send you? I am sorry you came.

Kalisada. I was the best horseman they had. Chiakal has sent a message.

The Fire God is awakening in his mountain. Since early this morning his rumblings have grown louder, and high up on the cliff that overlooks the temple, we could see steam issuing from between the rocks. The vapors were thick and choked us who are used to them. There is danger, Princess, that the God will burst from his caves and again walk in the land as he did once long ago in the days of our ancestors.

Princess. That is not important. Tell me about yourself. How do you like the temple?

Kalisada. It is very strange. When the Atabak made me enter, I thought that it was very wonderful, but today, as I rode down from the hills, I saw a single blossom growing in a pool. It was the first flower that I had seen in the three years of my solitude. I would have given all three years for that single plant.

Princess. Are there no things growing in the mountains?

Kalisada. There is nothing. The vapor from the Fire God's cavern in the Great Mountain kills every tree and shrub and living thing except men. Even the animals shun the hill country. The men do not live long, but quickly die.

Princess. Let us not talk about death.

Kalisada. (*He laughs — not humorously*) How tragic it is that so many of the Princess' friends have died, and all so unexpectedly since I went — since — in the last three years. It must make you very sad to be reminded of them.

Princess. They died — but they felt no pain. It was just like going to sleep. When I begin to grow old I should like to die that way.

Kalisada. That makes it easier to understand. Tell me, since I am — since I was the only one ever to love you and still live, why do all the others dwell in the palace of the Black Goddess?

Princess. Before you, there were no other — and when you left, you took part of me away. I hated you, I think. For days I brooded, hating you, and then Vadunamu made me forget you — for awhile. He loved me too much. I told him not to love me so much. When I tired of him, he was so very unhappy. And when Tanu came, Vadunamu suffered very much. I could not bear to see him suffer that much. It made me unhappy also — I thought of you. I — and so he

died. Ever after that, whenever I tired of a man — he died. I am not sorry. I have saved many from suffering as I did.

Kalisada. Laili, when your eyes are like that, I can remember a long time ago, when we were very little and played among the flowers in the garden. One day a black hairy spider dropped onto your hand. You screamed. I laughed at you. Then you let the spider climb over your arm and face and you never moved a muscle.

Princess. I remember. My vitals seemed to crawl within me, but I would not have your laughter.

Kalisada. It seems such a long time ago. Tonight while I watched you in the hall with that — while I watched you at the feast, I remembered the first time I kissed you. We were on the tower nearest the moat, and you teased me because I was so long and thin and awkward. I became angry and said that your jade green eyes were like a cat's, and that your hair was so black because you were really the blacksmith's daughter and not a princess at all.

Princess. And I slapped you and tore at your face with my finger-nails.

Kalisada. They were sharp, and brought tears to my eyes, but I would not let you know it. Then I grabbed and kissed you. Laili — —
(*She is very near him. He shows her just how it was done.*)

Princess. You should not have done that. I have work to do tonight. Tomorrow, perhaps, things might be different.

Kalisada. Yes, it was wrong. Seeing you made me forget that you are a Princess and I am but the messenger. I must return to Chiakal tomorrow with your reply.

Princess. There is no reply. The high priest would have us once more make sacrifices and bring handsome presents to the shrine as our fathers did, so that the God will not punish us for the wickedness in which we live. That much is true; the pigs that live in a peasant's sty are more virtuous than we. Tonight you saw men and women put animals to shame. But we fear no goblin that hides in a fire cave and stamps down to do destruction. Our walls are thick and tall; our palace is impregnable. We defy the God. Our songs will drown his roar with their clamor; our feasts are wilder than his rage, and our wine is redder than his flames. Let us speak no more of him.

Kalisada. Laili, what you say is only too true. Can you not put an end to all this evil life? It can only result in grief and pain for you. And what of the people of the land? Already their burdens are greater than they can bear. All this lavishness and luxury is fast draining the treasure houses, and the people can pay no heavier tributes, yet here you squander riches with a liberal hand. Perhaps Dushyanta could be persuaded—

Princess. (*Interrupting*) Dushyanta will do nothing. When the Atabak dies, I will gain the throne.

Kalisada. But you are not — ah, I see. Another death?

Princess. If there is no other way.

Kalisada. You must not do it, Laili. It is very wrong.

Princess. Kalisada, in the years that you have been mulling over ancient books and papers you have grown soft and spineless; you have lost your manhood. There is no wrong in stamping out a venomous

beast. Dushyanta has proven himself less.

Kalisada. Laïli, in another year my training will be at end. I have not yet taken the final vows; I will withdraw from the temple, and we will go to estates in Mnopia and live there in happiness.

Princess. We used to spend the spring of the year in Mnopia. I loved to wander in the thick dark forests that grew on the lower hills. Do you remember that pool, the one we called the silver pool because the moonlight seeping through the trees made it look like polished metal?

Kalisada. That was not the reason. We called it the silver pool because of the fish that lived in it. When we watched them in the water they were of pure silver, but when I would catch one of them, they seemed as ordinary fish.

Princess. I should like to go back there. I should like once more to bind red poppies in my hair and walk on the fresh plowed earth just as the sun is coming up in the morning.

Kalisada. I should like to eat the peasant food again; the black bread and the goats' milk and the meat they roast over an open fire.

Princess. We can be happy in Mnopia. *(As though to contradict her, a sudden loud rumble from the Fire God pushes into consciousness. For a moment the Princess stands irresolute — then something seems to take possession of her. She brushes a hand across her forehead as though to clear her vision. Then . . .)*

I cannot do as you wish. I must remain here. I am to be empress. No matter what would turn me aside, that aim must be accomplished.

(Almost apologetically she adds) It is not I that speaks, Kalisada; it is not my heart. But to gain the throne I would sacrifice all that a human holds dear.

Kalisada. Those are strange words, Laïli. *(Oddly rigid, the Princess walks away. There is silence for a moment. Dushyanta enters)*

Dushyanta. Did I hear my name mentioned?

Princess. It could only have been the demons calling to you, Dushyanta.

Dushyanta. Ever gracious Princess! And Kalisada! Welcome to this tomb dripping with tears, this sorrow-gilded sepulchre. I am sure you have come to weep with us upon this sad occasion.

Kalisada. I am sorry for the Atabak. Is there no hope for him?

Dushyanta. *(Wiping a tear)* My father and our beloved ruler is fast approaching dissolution. He has worn himself out with working for the good of the people.

Princess. I pray you, Dushyanta, do not tread the same path. A second sorrow of this kind would be more than we could bear.

Dushyanta. Princess, I am deeply touched by your anxiety for my welfare. But do not be uneasy. I promise that my loyal subjects will not berate themselves because of my constant labors in their behalf.

Princess. Our relief is immeasurable. *(Dushyanta looks at her keenly)*

Dushyanta. Good! Kalisada, it has been a long time since we last met. I have heard that you bring us disturbing news.

Kalisada. It is true that the Fire God is growing restless and no one knows what he will do.

Princess. I think it is a story made up by the Chiakal to frighten us so that we will again make sacrifices to the priests of the temple.

Kalisada. It is not a story. I heard the God quite plainly in the mountains today, and even at this distance I can sometimes hear him.
(*The music is rather loud at this point*)

Dushyanta. I can hear nothing.

Princess. Or I. You must have been mistaken, *Kalisada*. The Gods no longer take interest in what we do. It is only the peasants that still fear them and make foolish sacrifices.

Dushyanta. Let us turn to a more pleasant topic. *Kalisada*, did you know that the *Atabak* has been asking for you in his last illness? He did not wish to send for you, because, in his generosity and kindness, he did not wish to disturb your studies. But as long as you have come, it would be a charity to bring some happiness into his last moments.

Kalisada. I will see him at once. Will you go with me? And, *Laili*, will you excuse us? (*The Princess nods assent*)

Dushyanta. (*As they go off*) The best leeches in the country could do nothing for him. And yet he is not a very old man. . . . (*off*)

Kalae. (*Entering from other side of stage*) We will have to act quickly, *Princess*. Here is the vial that you had from *Miamandu*. If only *Dushyanta* is drunk enough not to suspect, we can slip it into his wine, and there is an end to him.

Princess. He is too clever for that, but I have a better scheme. *Kalae*, you must prepare three goblets of wine, and when I call, bring them in—having placed the potion in *Kalisada's* glass.

Kalae. *Kalisada!*

Princess. Yes. *Dushyanta's* cleverness shall be his own undoing. I will take *Kalisada* aside for a moment, and leave *Dushyanta* alone with the glasses. He will be sure to grasp the opportunity—

Kalae. And switch glasses!

Princess. That is it exactly.

Kalae. But suppose he changes glasses with you instead of *Kalisada*?

Princess. (*Smiling faintly*) No woman need fear death from *Dushyanta* as long as she is beautiful.

Kalae. There is only one flaw—if *Dushyanta* should refuse to drink.

Princess. Have you ever known *Dushyanta* to refuse a drink?

Kalae. That is true. And even if he knew the wine he held in his hand was poisoned, I think his pride would force him to sip a little of it.

Princess. After seeing the *Atabak*, the strongest man would find added strength in a drink. They are coming. Go now, and be ready.
(*Exit Kalae unperceived by Kalisada and Dushyanta, who enter a moment later from the other direction*)

Kalisada. (*He is pale and trembles*) It was a cruel jest, *Dushyanta*.

Dushyanta. When the Black Goddess is hovering near, her handiwork takes on many quaint forms.

Kalisada. Is there no one to stand by, to nurse him?

Dushyanta. Do you think that lashes and red-hot irons could make anyone stay with him longer than you did?

Kalisada. (*Shakes his head. After a moment he looks up at Dushyanta*)
You seemed calm enough, *Dushyanta*.

Princess. He has taken a great deal of fortitude unto himself tonight, *Kalisada*.

Duskyanta. Men are greedy creatures, Laili; they are never satisfied with what they have, but are always eager for more.

Princess. You shall not perish for want of a few drops of wine. (*She strikes the gong, and Kalae appears*) Bring us some of the Palernian. (*Kalae goes out again*)

Kalisada. (*Still trembling*) I have never seen such a frightful sight. He was bloated to an enormous size, and as he cackled, mad with his disease, the slime dripped down from his slaving mouth.

Duskyanta. It was always the good Atabak's pious wish to be known as Tanar the Virtuous.

Princess. He gave that name to the scribes to be written down into the histories. (*Kalae enters with a flagon and three heavy goblets which she places on the table. The Princess moves over, and as Kalae puts down the last glass, the attendant's hand lingers over it for just a fraction of a second. The Princess nods almost imperceptibly*) Let us drink to the new kingdom.

Duskyanta. Princess, you grow in generosity. (*The Princess hands him a glass. He takes it and stands looking at her for a moment. She turns aside, places a glass for Kalisada, takes a sip from the remaining glass, and turning toward the window suddenly stands as tho galvanized*)

Princess. (*Putting down her glass and taking Kalisada's arm, she draws him toward the window*) There! Did you see that great star that fell flaming to the earth?

Kalisada. No, I saw nothing. I was looking at you. Laili, won't you forget this mad desire?

Princess. Falling stars are said to presage great disasters.

Kalisada. Laili, listen to me. . . .

Princess. I wonder if a flying comet has ever hit the moon. (*She turns back to the table where Duskyanta stands contemplating the glasses. He has not made a move. The Princess smiles faintly as she studies him. Her back was toward him as she spoke to Kalisada. She takes her own glass and lifts it to her lips. Duskyanta lifts his glass also*)

Duskyanta. Let the gods be summoned on this auspicious moment. I call upon them to confer blessings upon the head of her who stands here, the beautiful and talented Princess Laili of Ujjarjini.

Kalisada. (*Also lifting his glass, rather bitterly*) May they bestow happiness upon her. (*There is that fractional moment of preparation that always precedes a group about to drink in unison. Duskyanta breaks it by suddenly emptying his wine upon the floor*)

Duskyanta. Let us observe the custom of the Tamenites when they drink to the most beautiful. (*He seizes Kalisada's glass, pours half of it into his own, and swallows it down at a gulp. Kalisada does likewise. The Princess watches fascinated*) Laili, your wine has spoiled. It is somewhat bitter.

Princess. Oh no. You just poured out bitter wine.

Duskyanta. (*With his hand at his throat*) My throat is going dry. They were both poisoned. I did not think they were both poisoned.

Princess. No, no. Kalisada! He did not change the cups! You did not drink it all?

Kalisada. Yes—I—drank. . . *(He sinks into a chair)* I know—you did not want me to suffer too much. I am glad. I also loved you too much. It is not painful—but—hold my hands, Laili, as you used to do—they are growing cold. . . .

Princess. Dushyanta!

Dushyanta. *(He, too, has sunk into a chair)* I thought you loved him. I thought his wine was safe. You are too strong Laili; it has cost you dear. You will rule. . . . *(He looks at her with a half-smile on his lips and shakes his head slowly)*

Princess. Kalisada. . . *(she takes his hand)* It was not meant for you. I was sure he would change the goblets. I wanted to have you live.

Kalisada. It does not matter. I would not have you unhappy. The room is growing lighter, is it not? I—hold me tightly, Laili. It is the morning?

Princess. *(She bows her head lower over him)* Yes, it is the morning. You are going back to Mnopia, but I must remain here for awhile. You are going to Mnopia, where the red poppies grow, and you will catch silver fish in our moonlit pool, and steal once more over the plowed fields at dawn. Kalisada . . . *(She realizes that he is dead. She looks over at Dushyanta. He, too, has just died as he sat there. She stands up straight, her eyes very bright, and her face very pale. There is a loud roar from the Fire God, which the Princess does not seem to hear. From below, the music falters, the hilarious song turns to frightened cries. The palace seems to shiver before a blast. Two Viziers enter, who kneel before the rigid Dushyanta)*

Both Viziers. Atabak!

First Vizier. Atabak, the Great One, is dead, and you are our ruler. *(They perceive that he is dead, rise slowly, and full of wonderment face the Princess who stands gazing at them almost unconprehendingly)*

Both Viziers. Atabaka!

First Vizier. Atabaka, the guests are terrified at the Fire God's roaring.

Second Vizier. We implore you to make sacrifices in order that we be spared the God's wrath. *(The roar has diminished somewhat, but the rumbling is still louder than it has been up to this time)*

First Vizier. The soldiers on the towers report that the great mountain in the Northern range is aflame with a weird red light.

Second Vizier. The moon and the stars have gone dim behind a strange dark cloud that is spreading across the skies.

First Vizier. We beseech you, oh Atabaka, to call the priests and make sacrifices lest the God should again walk in the valley and destroy us all.

Princess. *(She stands for a moment lost in reverie)* What do you say?

Second Vizier. Hear our entreaty, oh mighty ruler, let us offer the blood of a black ram to the Fire God, who is even now marching down from his mountains to lay waste the land as he did in the days of our ancestors.

Princess. I make no sacrifice to the Fire God.

Both Viziers. Atabaka!

Princess. Our walls are high and solid. Our gates are strong. The God shall not smash them down. Double the number of soldiers on the

towers. We shall defy the God, and he shall not come near to us. Go now, and obey my commands. *(They go. The music, with its wild rhythm, starts again, slowly, then rapidly increasing in tempo, and then drunken laughter and shouts—then a brief snatch of song in chorus. The rumbling continues, somewhat abated. The Atabaka crosses her arms on her breast and faces Kalisada)* See, Kalisada, I am empress. You did not wish me to be empress. You wanted me to be happy. I am happy. Kalisada—see, I am very happy. *(With her arms still crossed, she bows her head and does not move as the music grows gayer and wilder and several moments go by and the*
(Curtain Slowly Falls)



RETROSPECT

RICHARD HIATT

Heart darkened
 and mind shouting . . .
 there is no answer . . .

The days pass
 like hurried heartbeats,
 the days gather like leaves
 on distant hills,
 the days cluster
 in the grey silence of obscurity . . .

Then I shall walk dispassionately
 Down the deserted avenue of desire
 Leaning my hot cheek to a dream;
 I shall remember the pale fingers
 That trace patterns in the twilight,
 Tracing in the smoky dusk of memory
 The dim whiteness of a serene face;
 And all the slim laughing girls, whose
 Cool shoulders are soft with cobwebs
 And whose mouths are cruel —
 I shall not remember them at all.
 But oh! what if I should not recognize you
 Standing in the blue corridors of death,
 Your white hands playing furtively
 With each other — and we should pass?

OLD ENGLISH APRIL

ERMA FAXON



When Spring is born, and grasses grow,
And buds push forth a fuzz-capped head,
And folk march forth with sprightly tread,
I see nine old men in a row—
Nine old men that a-walking go
To see that Spring before they're dead.

God knows how many Springs they've seen,
Some storied number, e'en four score,
And yet they ever wish for more,
For men die hard when woods are green,
And waters sing since they have been
Released from hush of winter's hoar.

They have a covenant with God,
Those nine old men who welcome sing
In quavering tones to each young thing.
Those old men who once tilled the sod
Are waiting for the turf and clod
To give them an eternal Spring.

THE CALL OF THE ROON ★

ERMA FAXON



Lay down your fagots and be coming to the sea,
For the call of the roon is lowing,
And the tide is up, and the rocks lie wet
With spray of the wind's free sowing.

The sea runs deep with a sun-flecked light,
And the call of the roon is nearer;
Now it rises high with a sobbing cry,
And the way to the sea is clearer.

Lay down your fagots and be coming to the sea,
For the call of the roon is dying,
And in the wail of its last fey breath
Is the sound of Cuchulain's sighing.

*"Roon" is Gaelic for "seal".

WHITHER JAZZ ?



DELOS WOLFE

SOLO MARCATO

Jasbo Brown was drunk. He was usually drunk. In fact, sobriety would have been an unpleasant innovation in the life of this negro orchestra leader. A pint of Gordon Water, a half hour of music, and Jasbo spent the rest of the evening in gin-soaked heaven.

His orchestra was playing a minor strain. Jasbo lolled in his chair, a half smile on his face. A plaintive chord wrung the tune dry. The shuffling negroes on the dance-floor reluctantly released their partners.

Jasbo was a good orchestra leader. He knew negro psychology. Contrast! Jasbo stumbled to his feet. "Carve dat 'possum!" he shouted. One! two! The band crashed into a jig-time negro favorite.

Jasbo stood in front of the orchestra, swaying slightly as he chuckled at the suddenly frenzied dancers. "Come on, Jas!" they called, "play that ole trombone. Make it talk, Jasbo." Jasbo grinned. He threw out his chest, took a deep breath, and raised the trombone to his lips.

The trombone is a sensitive instrument. In spite of its clumsy appearance, it ranks with the violin and the human voice as a medium of expression. And Jasbo Brown could play. He breathed into the trombone, and it awoke. Its birth-cries were the wails of the jungle and the laughter of a savage race. Jasbo squeezed all his emotions, all his primitive ecstasies, all his knowledge of life and love, through the bell of his horn. And the patrons had learned to love Jasbo's music. It took them back to the green shadows of the jungle.

Jasbo was "hot" that night; "hot" like the sun that had painted his race a chocolate brown; "hot" like the red blood that flowed in his veins. The sweating dancers clustered before the stand. They swayed in delight, shouting encouragement to the black maestro.

The dance ended. Jasbo grinned and blotted his brow with his coat-sleeve. The crowd was under the spell of his blustering trombone. "More, Jasbo, more," they entreated, "more! J—as! More!"

More! Jas! From such a beginning came our modern jazz orchestra. The clamor of the first dance band has modulated into the rhythmical melody of the orchestra of today. Jazz has reversed the plot of Robert Louis Stevenson's story. Mr. Hyde has become Dr. Jekyll. He seldom assumes his old form now. More and more, jazz is accepted as the handsome young Dr. Jekyll.

But for all its present refinement, jazz is a savage creation, sprung from the primal urges of mankind, based on the rhythms of starkest emotion. Once in a while it tosses aside its mask of harmony and allows us to see its sweating, contorted visage.

And today, beneath its veneer, under its sentimental surface, dance music remains strangely elemental. The four-four time of the fox-trot is the rhythm of the jungle, voicing the same crude appeal to the senses, beating the same sensuous challenge to the emotions.

Modern dance music! Paradox supreme! Cro-magnon man in a dress suit. We, the civilized, accept you, Modern dance music! Dark laughter in a tinselled megaphone! Saxophonic symphony of half-realized pleasures.

Jazz ten years ago was pseudo stuff, not truly rhythmical, not truly melodious. It was less effective than the unexciting concert music it superseded. Unsatisfied with the music of his day, sensing a lack of melodious rhythm throughout the span of the dance instrumentation then in use, Art Hickman, orchestra leader at the St. Francis hotel, did a startling thing. He astonished dance circles by putting two saxophones into his orchestra. How little he and his contemporaries realized the significance of that gesture! He was adding warmth, color, emotion. He was creating the soul of modern jazz—the saxophone trio, adding to music the saxophone's versatile voice, and that voice, sometimes shrill with sentiment, sometimes husky with suppressed perversions, always warm, soft, and pleasing, has changed jazz from racket to rhapsody.

The blaring cornet, the adenoidal clarinet, and banging piano are gone. They were neither musical nor modern. In their place a trio of saxophones croon against the muted obbligato of a golden-throated trumpet. We dress our negro doll in gay, lovely organdie. We say, "Look, she is sophisticated. She is strangely beautiful." And we accept her.

Strangest of all, jazz is educating the public in the fundamentals of music. This pseudodox, jazz, sweet-faced moron that she is, seems to be giving the people a new and broader appreciation of rhythm, harmony, counterpoint, and instrumental timbre.

Captivated by the rhythm of jazz, the dancer is interested in music at first only as a background to his kinesthetic senses. Sooner or later the realization of the melody must come, then a growing interest in the technical side of music. Technical advancement provides the elements upon which good musical taste is builded.

Jazz offers no pitfalls to the already musically-minded. There is no danger of really good taste descending to the popular level. The lover of symphony, for all his enjoyment of jazz, is not likely to desert the classics for the "jazzies." The jazz lover, on the other hand, either remains still or moves upward.

Technically, jazz is understandable. Emotionally, it is not. Its pagan voice warns, as Whitman's once did:

"Go lull yourself with what you can understand,

For I lull no one; and you will never understand me."

And yet, as mysterious as life itself, jazz sings on its way. Each year brings changes, technical, sentimental. Jazz is evolving; musically, upward; emotionally, with the masses.

Modern dance music is first of all a style of instrumental coloration. Jazz must confine itself to the tunes composed by those who know

modern music and its needs. The orchestral arranger can lend this primal material the color-tone and variation necessary to fulfill the requirements of the new school.

Most of this tone-color is supplied by the saxaphones, whose throbbing throats are capable of an almost inconceivable musical range. What the violin is to the symphony, the saxaphone is to jazz. But with jazz becoming sweeter the violin has become a threat to the saxaphone. It, too, is capable of producing a variety of tone-color, more subtle, of course, but most effective.

These tone-colors are the pigments the arranger uses in mixing harmonious counterpoint. Each arrangement is a miniature prize-fight. In one corner we have "Cyclone" Saxaphone; in the other, "Knockout" Brass. The referee is rhythm. "Cyclone" is a smooth, fast boxer. He is calm and cool, but once aroused he throws notes with reckless abandon. "Knockout" has a terrific sock and plenty of science, but he lacks endurance.

They usually start in by sparring softly. Saxaphone has a habit of leading first, but Brass invariably counters with short, staccato punches to the mid-section. Rhythm is a splendid referee, keeping the boys stepping lively at all times. The first round is usually even. The advantage, if any, goes to "Cyclone" Saxaphone. He also wins the next round; this time by a wide margin. The only time "Brass" gets in a lick is when "Saxaphone" pauses for breath. But when the cymbal sounds for the third round, "Knockout" Brass comes crashing out in an attempt to land his justly famous sock. Saxaphone skilfully avoids the onslaught, side-stepping or ducking each smashing blow. From then on the battle is all in favor of "Cyclone" Saxaphone. As Brass tires, Saxaphone seems to gain in strength. The cymbal sounds the final warning. "Cyclone" Saxaphone wins the decision!

Since the string instruments were usurped by the saxaphone a decade ago, the violin has become a weak, colorless instrument. In the modern orchestra the fiddle either doubles the melody with some other prominent instrument or provides a sweet, if somewhat ineffective, obbligato on the E string. In the meanwhile the saxaphonist has developed a remarkable technique. The trumpet player is equally versatile. He climbs dangerous heights until his notes are like spun glass; he trills, slides, and cavorts during the breaks. He would make a listening symphony-player green with envy of the delicate shadings and subtle tone. The trombone player, once merely a blower of bass notes, plays rapid passages with remarkable ease. He achieves the tone of a 'cello, with all the power of a brass instrument behind it.

But modern music is "diminuendo," gradually becoming softer. Orchestration contains more and more of those little marks, *pp*, which mean "take it easy." Under these conditions the violin is more effective in many ways than either the saxaphone or trumpet. Orchestras that included but one violin a year ago have added two more in most cases. Take warning, Brass! Watch out, Wood-winds!

Jazz has many by-products, — composers, crooners, and singing trios. These are essentially of the jazz world. The composer of jazz needs only a bare musical training. Other things are more important — imagination, sense of melody (or shall I say memory). Irving Berlin sits at the piano and picks out his tunes with one finger. Many of his fellow workers in "Tin Pan Alley" use the same methods. The writing of music is the least of their worries. An idea, a title, and good lyrics are the real requisites. One can steal a tune from any hymn-book.

Crosby, Columbo and Vallee! Crooners! Names to thrill feminine hearts. Rudy Vallee is the lad who made crooning famous. Women just could not resist the appeal of his soft voice and the curl of his dark-brown hair. Overnight he became a sensation. Women loved him, and threw flowers at him. Men hated him, and threw grapefruit. Rudy didn't mind. He became an expert at dodging breach-of-promise suits and grapefruit. He also acquired an amazing knack of cashing checks that ran into four figures.

It took Bing Crosby eight years to become a household necessity. Everyone bought his records, and there was a nightly battle between Ma and Dad to see whether the family would enjoy Amos 'n Andy or Bing Crosby. But that was after Paul Whiteman discovered him on the Orpheum Circuit and featured him with the Rhythm Boys. Were it not for his occasional sulkiness Bing would be leading them all.

Russ Columbo took Bing Crosby's style and his own sex appeal, and traded them in on the hearts of feminine America. What he lacks in vocal personality he makes up in looks and showmanship.

A crooner differs from an ordinary vocalist in that he imitates some musical instrument. Rudy Vallee uses the glissandos of the E flat saxophone effectively. Bing Crosby utilizes the tone and technique of the trombone. Louis Armstrong is a human trumpet. Russ Columbo, while he attempts to copy Crosby, sounds more like a violin *sul G*.

Jazz has given us this peculiar type of vocalization just as surely as it has given us the saxophone. It has done this quite unintentionally as it has given musical fundamentals to the common people.

The picture of hilarious Jasbo Brown has faded. Ted Lewis is an empty shell. They represented "hot" music, loud discordant jazz, smelling of earth and sweating bodies. We have civilized jazz. Black fades to white, heat to cold. Paul Whiteman waves a magic baton. Ben Bernie thinks up new wise-cracks to spring on his radio audiences. Anson Weeks devises means for lovelier harmony. A hundred others like them are producing "sweet" music.

Jazz is the musical symbol of the melting pot. Its original elements, products of the African jungle, have been molded and formed by the people of the United States, — Negro, Jew, and Gentile. Only in America did jazz arise. Good or bad, it is our contribution to the music of the world.

A QUEST FOR GALAHAD

JEAN SEWELL SMITH



So long I looked for Galahad,
And oh, the way was steep—
I had a sacred vow to keep,
So long I looked for Galahad.

I wonder if he heard me call,
When bruised and wet and torn,
I'd cry, my voice to wailing worn—
I wonder if he heard me call.

I groped through black and tramped through sun:
I stained my soft white gown;
My pale smooth locks came tumbling down—
I groped through black and tramped through sun.

The men I met upon the road
I'd query, "Art thou he?"
They'd shake their strange dark heads at me,
The men I met upon the road.

"I seek the knight whose heart is pure,"
I said; my thin brown hand
Would hold them till they'd understand;
"I seek the knight whose heart is pure."

Ah, oftentimes I thought 'twas he,
For one was gentle; one was sweet;
And one was brave; these did I meet.
Ah, oftentimes I thought 'twas he.

Alas, not one was pure of heart;
They clipped my yellow hair
And stole my shoon; my feet left bare—
Alas, not one was pure of heart.

They left me on the salt-washed sand,
Too sorrowful to weep,
Too weary to find rest in sleep,
They left me on the salt-washed sand.

And I forsook my futile quest,
And there I prayed to die.
"My Galahad is dead," said I
And I forsook my futile quest.

The tide was going out at eve;
A shadow came to lie
Across the sand. I prayed to die;
The tide was going out at eve.

"I'll seek no more, beloved knight;
The tide will carry me
Perhaps unto the Grail and thee—
I'll seek no more, beloved knight."

His shadow fell across the sand;
His voice was soothing fair.
I wonder that he knew me, where
His shadow fell across the sand.

Dear Galahad, thou'rt come so late;
My shoon are gone; my locks
Lie dank upon the mossy rocks,
Dear Galahad, thou'rt come so late.

No longer am I gowned in white.
Ah, didst thou hear me call
And see me creep and climb and fall?
No longer am I gowned in white.

So long I sought thee, Galahad—
The way was steep and rough—
But thou art here: It is enough—
So long I sought thee, Galahad.



CRUCIFIXIONS

GLEN ALLEN CARRICO

The bloody scenes of death recur,
And martyrs die on ever-changing stages
While multitudes of tribes refer
To hosts of Calvaries of the ages.

That self-styled "Chosen Son of God", —
Low, fallen Adam never knows his loss;
His clumsy feet still sunken in the sod,
He nails a thousandth Christ upon the cross.

DELILAH LAUGHED



ERMA FAXON

Delilah was hunting for a safety pin with which to fasten her kimono when Ma Donegan knocked at the door of her room.

"Mrs. Meller, honey," called Ma. "Mr. Hewett told me to tell you that he'd come over to supper."

"That's fine. Got a safety pin?"

Ma opened the door, which squeaked upon its loose hinges, and waddled into Delilah's room.

"I wish you'd let me have that door fixed, Mrs. Meller. It's squawked like that now for seven years."

"Yeah, but I like it that way for old times' sake. It reminds me of the nights when I could tell when my third came in because the door made such a racket. How about that pin?"

Ma detached a bent safety pin from her apron and presented it to Delilah.

"I like that lavender kimono on you, honey. It sets off your hair so nice."

Delilah surveyed her hair critically. Permanently waved by the West Avenue Artiste de Coiffeurs, it fell loosely to her shoulders.

"I need another henna pack. The last one I had was a queer shade."

"Sort of a magenta," suggested Ma helpfully.

"Sort of." Delilah ran a comb cautiously through her permanent curls. "I have to be careful about how I comb it until I get a new pack, because unless I fix it just right, it shows the gray around the part where it's grown out."

Ma was sympathetic.

"Well, honey, at your age—"

"There's the telephone," interrupted Delilah brusquely.

Ma waddled out of the room and down the three flights as fast as her bulky but unstable legs could move.

Delilah shut the door after the pudgy landlady and turned to examine her own reflection in the wall mirror. Was she beginning to show her age? She pinned another hennaed curl over a gray streak, added more rouge to her already blooming cheeks, brushed an extra dash of mascara upon her eyelashes and surveyed the results.

"The old gray mare, she ain't what she used to be," she murmured dismally.

Abandoning the make-up box, she wandered to the window and gazed down upon West Avenue. The street wasn't what it used to be either, she reflected. Some seven years ago when she had first rented her room and kitchenette on the third floor of Ma Donegan's Elite Rooming House for Ladies and Gents, West Avenue had been a good clean neighborhood. Now there were push carts along the sidewalks, dirty

olive-skinned children playing in the gutters, and the stifling pall of coal smoke over all. If she could find a job, she would shake the dust of Ma Donegan's Rooming House off her feet forever. Her discontented gaze perceived Mr. Hewett, whose leisurely progress up West Avenue was attended by a group of lately fed urchins awaiting that gentleman's Saturday-night distribution of pennies. Delilah's mouth softened.

"That man's too good-natured for this world," she told herself. "I'd better grab him before he flits to fairer fields and pastures new."

She pulled down the window shade and discarded the lavender kimono in favor of an eleven fifty-nine dinner dress which was seeing its third season. Hastily putting her make-up box out of sight, she rearranged the photographs upon the table and plumped up the faded silk pillows upon the studio couch.

The studio couch was the only new piece of furniture which Ma Donegan had supplied during Delilah's seven years as a roomer. There had been a brass bed in the room, but Ma's Catholic soul had revolted at the idea of receiving guests in what was obviously one's bedroom. Delilah's kitchenette was too small to hold an average gentleman; so Ma had provided the studio couch in order to save her roomer's reputation.

When Mr. Hewett arrived at the top of the third flight, Delilah was ready for him. She opened the door and smiled with studied sweetness.

Mr. Hewett mopped his brow and his bald spot.

"Those stairs are killing me, Delilah. You really must get away from this place."

"We can talk about that again after supper," Delilah soothed.

Mr. Hewett deposited his hat among the photographs and lowered himself gingerly into the wicker rocker. He noticed that the table in the corner was already set for two, and he felt comforted.

Delilah brought in the salad and the ravioli and invited him to partake, but although he attacked the viands with evident pleasure, Delilah could see that he was not in his usual calm and tranquil spirit. He required three cups of coffee and accepted a second helping of delicatessen pie, but still he seemed dissatisfied.

Delilah was discouraged.

"Don't you want more coffee, Larry?" she urged.

"Not a thing," refused Mr. Hewett. "My body, Delilah, is well sustained, but my soul is troubled."

Delilah's laughter filled the room. Mr. Hewett always felt acutely uncomfortable at Delilah's mirth. Her laughter was quick and gay, but curiously harsh as if a metallic gong lay behind the husky tones of her deep voice. At this juncture, moreover, her merriment was inexplicable.

"What, my dear, do you find so amusing?"

Delilah stopped laughing. "I don't know," she replied with genuine contrition. "It was just that something about the idea of having a soul always strikes me as being funny."

Mr. Hewett was distressed.

"Surely, Delilah, you don't mean that!"

Delilah hastened to recover her lost ground. "No, darling, of course not," she assured him. "Why, our souls are the most important

part of us. If it weren't for our souls—," She paused in consternation. She was getting into deep water.

Mr. Hewett, thus re-encouraged, leaned nearer. "I know, Delilah, that you have a great soul."

"Oh, Larry," simpered the lady.

"Yes, I have recognized in you a depth of spirit, a capacity for emotion, and a tender sympathy which places you in a sphere far above all other women."

"Well, well, well!" said Delilah.

Mr. Hewett was nonplussed.

Mentally deploring the fact that she could no longer produce a blush, Delilah gazed soulfully into the gentleman's eyes and murmured, "Do tell me some more, Larry."

But Mr. Hewett, being a strong man, refused to yield to her entreaty.

"No, we must return to the essentials. I think it best that we be married at once, for I find myself becoming less able to ascend those atrocious stairs. Once united—," He extended his hand with a vague gesture calculated to express departure into distant climes.

Delilah enjoyed a brief moment of triumph. He had asked her to marry him — this odd man whose veneer of culture made him seem so out of place on West Avenue. She had intended to marry him ever since the night of the Hansen's party when Nell Hansen had pointed him out as a card who had slipped by the wayside, but sat on a checkbook. She had taken her cue when Mr. Hewett, obviously disgusted by the lack of refinement exhibited by their inebriated host, had departed in high dudgeon. She had implored his protection, and since he could not know that she had no need of it, he had escorted her to Ma Donegan's house. Once there, Delilah had asked him to come to her apartment for coffee, and he had not known how to refuse. Afterward he came often, and now Delilah was going to marry him.

Or was she? Somehow her victory was not so sweet as she had anticipated. She realized that she ought to accept him before he changed his mind; still she hesitated. He was so stupidly honest that he was defenseless. He was good. Delilah had never before encountered a good man. She had only heard of them. Suddenly she leaned across the little table covered with empty dishes and regarded him with a level gaze.

"Larry, why do you want to marry me?"

A fiery blush arose from beneath Mr. Hewett's collar and seeped over his countenance to the roots of his sparse gray hair.

"I — I think that it's because I — I feel great affection for you," he gulped.

For the first time in her life, Delilah Meller was sorry for a man. Then her strange harsh laughter came again.

"But you aren't sure."

Mr. Hewett gained confidence.

"Delilah, I'm positive of it."

Delilah considered him with speculative eyes. If she were to marry him, she would be on Easy Street; yet she was growing too old to play a crooked game with him as she had with the others. Suddenly she

made her decision.

"Larry, before I answer yes or no, I have something to tell you. Don't you remember the evening when you asked me to tell you how and why I came to live here?"

Mr. Hewett recalled that evening. He had been quite disappointed at her refusal to discuss her affairs, because he admired frankness in a woman almost as much as he esteemed a capacity for emotion and a tender sympathy.

"Delilah, my dear," said he, "you are proving yourself to be as I had hoped to find you — candid and generous—"

"Let's do the dishes first," she interrupted, beginning to clear the table in order to forestall a pedantic eulogy. She washed the dishes, and he wiped them. They spoke little, but when the last plate was placed in the cupboard, Mr. Hewett sighed with relief.

"One of my greatest joys, Delilah, will be to take you away from this kitchenette."

"It's so small that you have to back in to turn around, but I'm so used to it that I don't notice how bad it is," she apologized.

"Poor little woman," breathed Mr. Hewett.

They replaced the faded Chinese screen before the door of the kitchenette and then went to sit upon the studio couch as was their habit.

Mr. Hewett drew a worn book from his coat pocket. It was a diminutive edition of Gayley's *Classic Myths*. Mr. Hewett often read to Delilah, and although he had read the myths to her before, he felt that the love of Venus and Adonis would be most appropriate to this occasion.

But Delilah forestalled his elocutionary efforts. "Don't read to me to-night, Larry; I'd rather talk."

Mr. Hewett's frustrated gaze searched her face.

"I had planned, my dear, to select a myth appropriate for the evening of our betrothal."

"The only classic myth that I could ever see any sense to is the one in which Jupiter visits Danae in a shower of gold. That tale has its possibilities," she responded sharply.

Mr. Hewett's shocked retreat into himself was sufficient reproof, and she fell silent.

Then, deciding that Venus and Adonis probably had no place in Delilah's past, the man returned Gayley's *Classic Myths* to his pocket and spoke gently.

"I am waiting to hear whatever you wish to say, my dear."

Having previously decided that to admit a waterfront origin would be to lose the field, Delilah substituted a richer, fuller background.

"My life has been very dreary," she began. "I lost my heritage because of a girlish mistake and —"

"Your heritage —"

"My heritage. I spring," announced Delilah grandly, "from one of the first families of the South."

Mr. Hewett was speechless, and Delilah's tongue gained momentum.

"When I was seventeen, I eloped with an unworthy lout, and papa commanded me never to darken his door again." Delilah paused to appreciate her own fabrication. This was easier than she had expected.

"I had been given every advantage," she pursued, "and after Papa thrust me from his bosom, I went in for art."

Mr. Hewett was impressed.

"The following year, I had a child — a daughter. She is twenty-four years old now and lives with her husband in Peoria."

"Does she go in for art, too?" inquired Mr. Hewett hopefully.

"No, she takes after her father. Nick didn't have much — well, as much soul as some people."

Finding herself floundering, Delilah came to the conclusion that her far-fetched introductory phrases were only leading her away from the reality which she desired most to explain; so she plunged abruptly into the truth.

"The fact is, Larry, that Nick and I couldn't get along. I left him and — and the plain truth is that there were five of them."

"Five what?"

"Five men. Nick was the first. Then there was Pete, who owned a garage, the best garage in Philadelphia. Then came Lommy. He was a sailor. Ran away with a telephone operator, poor girl. After him was —."

Mr. Hewett was in anguish. "Stop, Delilah, please stop!"

Delilah was genuinely surprised. "Well, you asked me —"

"I know," he apologized, "but I really didn't expect such degrading. Ah, I'm sure that you understand."

He laid his hand over one of hers, and she glanced downward.

"What nice fingernails you have," she cooed. Her naivete was touching.

Mr. Hewett blushed and began to take less room upon the studio couch.

"Delilah, I revere you for the courage which you have shown in enduring your trials. We need never speak of them again, for your narrative has made no difference in my sentiments for you."

Delilah mentally congratulated herself, deploring only the fact that she would never know whether the false or the true portion of her account had been the more efficacious.

Mr. Hewett rose and buttoned his coat securely.

"Tomorrow morning we shall apply for the license. In the afternoon we can select a suitable apartment."

Delilah let him have his way and fairly oozed tenderness as she bade him good night. When the creaking door had closed behind him, she sank into the rocker and stared at the wall before her, lax with a strange exhaustion. She could not think. She simply sat. At last the blank page of her mind became meaningful, and having reached her decision, Delilah Meller went to bed and to sleep as calmly as a nun.

At half-past five when the push of wagons clattered down West Avenue, and the hucksters began their noisy day, Delilah rose, arrayed herself in a seven eighty-nine plaid suit, drank three cups of black coffee, and went down the street. Five hours later she returned to find Mr. Hewett waiting in Ma Donegan's parlor.

He rose with alacrity at her entrance.

"My dear girl, let me take those parcels," he urged. "Also without

undue curiosity, may I inquire what errands called you away so early?"

Delilah gave no answer but allowed him to carry the cumbersome boxes up Ma's three flights.

Having deposited his load upon the studio couch, Mr. Hewett fanned his brow, recovered his breath, and then announced, "I myself have had the good fortune to discover an excellent apartment. Not only are the rooms well arranged, but the location is good, and above all, the proprietress is a fine little woman who has undergone many grievous vicissitudes. She has recently been granted a divorce from a brute who was subject to habitual intoxication. Do you remember Mrs. Hansen, at whose home we first met?"

"Her?" Delilah sniffed with supreme contempt for the Hansen species.

"She, my dear, despite her misfortune, is a most worthy woman."

Delilah raised a neatly plucked eyebrow. "You don't need to tell me that Nell's a good girl," she retorted. "She looks like the devil in all her hats."

Mr. Hewett was pained.

"Speaking of hats," continued Delilah. "Look at the one that I'm going to wear to my sixth wedding."

"Please, my dear, let us not be flippant."

She ripped open the round box under which Mr. Hewett had so labored and presented to his startled gaze a creation of feminine head-gear which shrieked a price far beyond Delilah's means. From the other boxes she drew forth various articles equally chic and equally costly.

"My trousseau," she announced with unforced cheerfulness.

"Where did you get these things, Delilah?"

"Paid a visit to my fifth. Karl Meller got big-hearted. Not every woman can make her ex-husband provide her trousseau for the next plunge."

Mr. Hewett was roused.

"Delilah, how could you?"

Delilah was still gay over her victory. "Well, I've always found ways and means. You needn't worry; Karl was so glad to know that his alimony paying days were almost over that he'd have given me a dowry in cash if I'd have had sense enough to suggest it." Chagrin arose in her eyes. "Why didn't I think of that when I had him cinched?"

"Any woman who, under any circumstances, will permit her—er—ex-husband to purchase wearing apparel for a subsequent matrimonial venture on her part, is an—er—is an—ah—."

"Don't say it," advised Delilah, "because I've probably heard it before anyway. Did I ever tell you that my third was a sailor?"

Mr. Hewett rose. Upon his over-gentle countenance was a look of wrathful self-righteousness.

"Delilah," said he, "you were rightly named. You have deluded me. Your art, your lost beauty—I thought that you had a great soul. I really did."

He passed through the squeaky door in solitary grandeur.

Delilah uttered her curious harsh laughter. "God never made any man so good that I couldn't find another one just as good."

She could no longer hear his footsteps on the stairs.

CAIN--A LYRICAL TALE

ALBERT JOHANSSON



16. And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden.

17. * * * * ; and he builded a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch. — Genesis.

My limbs are scorched with crawling fire
And red and raw and shriveled are,
And on my brow is graved the Sign
That makes the pale and lovely star
Blush redly that on earth should be
A devil marked, but going free.

2

My brain is torn by love that has
No object, for its idol's dead:
And graved there is the image of
The altar where his temple bled.
One love I killed; the others flew,
Mother and father, at his red dew.

3

A fratricidal lunacy
Holds to my heart and sleeps upon
My heaving chest from early eve
Until the breaking of the dawn:
And, then, by me strides, wide and free,
Despond in ghostly revery.

4

O Abel dead! O pitiful!
And God stooped from a stormy cloud
And marked my brow with fiery hands
And wrapped me in an icy shroud
And put a torment and a fear
Within to drive me to the bier.

5

But did not bind me—let me go
To wander in forsaken ways,
Cursed and abused and beaten by
The men I meet within my days
And woefully forlorn and sore:
What mortal ever suffered more?

6

Not to my grave! The power of fear
 Grows less by custom, and by strength,
 That I am building day by day
 'Til I hope to know joy at length:
 Oh, in the very fact I'm free,
 I find a startling hope for me.

7

Ah, I am loose! I am unbound
 And still can grapple destiny!
 I still can carve my future days
 And make them gold on ebony;
 So, pale, pale star, blush not so red—
 You'll drop a tear yet, when I'm dead.

8

This torment cannot fail to pass
 And I will rise from it ere long,
 As ore that smelted leaves the flame
 More pure, more bright, and far more strong—
 Then with my hands I raise a sign
 That will make famous me and mine.

9

Just wait, O God, I will arise,
 I will be great! I will be clean!
 And this is not defiance but
 A purpose and a thing I mean.
 I'll cleanse my soul and wash my brain
 Of every bloody murder stain.

10

The phoenix smokes up from its ash;
 The rose buds where its parents fell;
 The tree shoots from the ragged stump;
 Why cannot angels rise from Hell?
 And I propose to cleanse and be
 A man born out of misery!



THE MASSACRE OF MANDARINS



JEAN SEWELL SMITH

Rousseau first asked the question, Jean Jacques who trusted in the human bond of sympathy. Balzac reiterated the query, Balzac who denied altruism and declared love egoistic.

Suppose—runs the question—that that which you most desire were granted you—on the one condition that you assent to the death of a Chinese mandarin. Suppose the mandarin very old, sans all human relations; suppose his death bloodless and painless; suppose that no one in all the world could implicate you in his demise. Suppose, too, that your gain were most valuable to you—nay, even essential to your welfare. Wouldn't it be easy to nod your head and let an ancient Chinaman enter a better world? Wouldn't it be even righteous to bring some happiness into your own world simply by causing an incident of very little import in any world?

But—perhaps you feel that playing God in such a manner is a violation of moral law. Tell me, Brother, if your mother lay in need of medical aid, and you were without resources; if her life absolutely depended upon an operation costing money that you could not borrow or earn, and a genie offered the mandarin solution; tell me, Brother, would you nod your head? Your mother— or, if you will, your wife, your father, anyone you love— that life for the life of a wrinkled yellow heathen several thousands of miles away, in an over-populated country—his life for that of one so dear to you — take your choice. Nod your head or lose what you hold most precious. Brother, are you nodding?

I am inclined to think that Get-Rich-Quick Wallingfords sweep numbers of yellow pawns off the chess board. China shook with death rattles while certain fortunes were being amassed. Nations slay whole continents of mandarins, and little children tell pale pink lies that glaze oriental eyes — Every day it is being done, and the supply of mythical mandarins seems never to diminish.

It is hard to realize that penitentiaries are filled with people who have murdered and stolen and strayed in scores of directions. But when one's eyes are opened to the fact that *his friend* is a sneak thief, the shock is painful. Crime isn't perpetrated only in the slums; very ordinary seeming people make scandal sheet copy every day. Every murderer is someone's friend, someone's son — and I suppose that almost every ordinary person at some time in his life discovers a criminal among those he cares for. And that is a terrible moment.

Not that he feels duped, necessarily, that he sees his own upright character calumniated by such a relation. It is in revelations of this sort that he sees how narrow is the line separating himself from crime. If

he is not smug and self-righteous, and if he knows his friend thoroughly, he will be less likely to condemn the friend, more likely to turn to just introspection.

I saw poor Catherine, white as a ghost, when they proved her a thief — I knew myself safely remote from even desire to steal — but my reaction to the incident was one of sympathy, almost of understanding. Other times I have been made aware that people I loved were busily pushing mandarins over abysses, splitting their leathery old throats without compunction, and I have felt less sympathy and greater disgust. But I comprehend the scene: the world is like that, and am I better than the world?

It takes so little to make any of us assent to a small vice. When *Life* — or *Love* — or *Wealth* hang on a slight nod, who is there among us who will not shake his head?

Perhaps there is little variance in one man's intrinsic criminality — or virtue — with that of any other. Perhaps any life might be saintly if its exterior elements fitted accurately to the inherent traits of the individual; perhaps that same life with an element or two distorted might be despicably vicious.

But we cannot take vice and virtue for granted. If they exist, and as separate qualities, what are they? No definition is universally acceptable. Kant is assured that the Moral Law is an *a priori* appurtenance of the soul. The conscience would justify to Kant such a deduction. But he has not proved that conscience cannot have risen from experience. Does the child know that he does wrong when first he takes fruit from his neighbor's tree? Or is it only after he has been reprimanded that his conscience functions in regard to the fruit?

I am not alone in my conclusion that morals are *a posteriori* acquisitions; indeed, that they took their rudimentary form not with the creation of man but with the creation of society. When men lived as animals, they needed no commandments. But with the beginning of a social order, when men lived together and so saw and coveted one another's game and one another's wife, then a moral code was needed to make possible society. Men cannot forever trespass against each other uncurbed, and their union continue.

And so was born the question, "Am I my brother's keeper? Have I a right to rape the property, the life, the happiness of my brother?"

The question was expanded into more explicit commandments, that people might know the duties they were required to perform in order to enjoy the privileges of society. When the world had almost forgotten the spirit of the law — sympathy — it was thus re-worded: "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you."

Morals sprang from the institution of society; nothing is wrong save that which harms the social order. It follows that a wrong committed against one's self is injurious to society, for every self is a part of that institution. There is no escaping either of society or of moral law, though that law may vary greatly with the individual.

The law was prompted not by sympathy alone, nor alone by ego. It might have been by either; it must have been by both. It may be obeyed by either spirit; for the sympathetic it implies altruism and bene-

fit for one's fellows; for the egoistic it promises the greatest gain. Whether or not the moral law is pragmatic, society flourishes most when it obeys the dictates of the law, and it is called corrupt when the law is disregarded.

Our recognition of the law we term conscience; our obedience we term virtue; our violation we term vice.

The variance in right and wrong is based on individual differences in relation to society; and such differences arising from individual characteristics, the personal law hinges upon personality.

A nearly isolated person might indulge unduly in alcohol. He harms himself, true; but the chances are that no one else is injured by his imbibition. A person of great influence might drink the same amount and be a factor in the corruption of other lives. His family may be hurt; his example may be followed; the welfare of a portion of society pends upon his conduct. The latter harms not only himself but others; his sin is greater than that of the recluse. Responsibility is measured in terms of relationships.

The intelligent man, the man who most nearly understands life, cannot but be related strongly to society, for we study life through society. Therefore, the intelligent man has a stronger duty, a finer sense of right and wrong than his bewildered fellow.

Even the intelligent man cannot free himself entirely of ego, that disunion from other minds, that instinct by which we prolong our lives and our race. Were all the world divested of ego, only sympathy would remain. Mind would cleave unto mind, and we would be absolute — and there would be no place for matter.

It is by ego that we live; it is by ego that we kill. It is a slight step from the slaying of a mandarin to the martalling of armies to do terrible bloodshed. Doubtless the slaughter is not over, for our ego tells us that we are better than mandarins, that it is the mandarin or we—. We do not kill our blood brothers — why can we not realize that the mandarin is as closely related to us in soul as is our mother's son?

How is your mandarin's health, my friend? And what have you to say to Rousseau, to Balzac? Is love egoistic, or is there human sympathy? Or are there perhaps, two kinds of love, one egoistic and mundane, the other sympathetic and eternal?



SO MANY PASS

FRANCES AYRES

So many pass this way and never see
The fragile beauty that is cherished here —
A gentle slope, a slender, gleaming tree,
Guarding a brook which babbles crystal clear.
These are its joys, but bitter-sweet to me,
Bringing an age-old summer day too near;
I can't go blindly as the others do,
For once I passed this lovely way with you.

PRELUDES

RICHARD HIATT



Thus it was
in the beginning of things. . .
There was only darkness
and immeasurably deep, quiet folds
of silence, and an unrelieved waiting,
as with a painful inflowing of breath
the Artist put down his hand,
and it filled up everything.
Thus it was
that light came into things. . .
There was a long sighing,
confusion rushing out of chaos,
and the stars whirled crazily
beneath ardent fingers.
The Artist turned lonely eyes to earth . . .

II

The Artist turned lonely eyes to earth . . .
He found Eden perturbing with color:
hungry yellow like golden water,
soft afternoon blue pouring sleepily,
and the casual whisper of green
slipping through the grass,
adventuring in the trees.
Eden seemed lonely. . .
He waved his hand
and a quick wind came chillingly;
whereupon Adam stirred
and rose to stand shivering.
Adam stalked moodily through Eden . . .

III

Thus it was
that Adam was not contented . . .
He was rude to leopards. The Artist
thought of Eden's disrupted order;
little inaudible bubbles of melody
drifted idly from his finger-tips,
and Adam took the small hand
of Eve, and was glad.
Eve preened herself
and looked at Adam with wide eyes . . .

Adam's antics provoked quick,
delightful laughter from Eve,
but then, she was never called upon
to display intent to knowledge.
Adam sighed happily
in Eden's scented, crystal weather . . .

IV

Thus it was
that God entered into his kingdom. . .
God was busy thinking winged thoughts
that fluttered smoothly over Eden.
Eve was curious, and she was intent
with a pleasing rendezvous.
The engines of thought thundered in the clouds;
the trees made frightened, violent complaint.
God's sword-finger
descended over the flowered ways . . .
Eve pressed close for comfort.
Adam's breath was warm on her shoulder;
she looked back to see God
shivering alone in Eden.
Thus it was
in the beginning of things . . .



NOCTURNE

RICHARD LYNDEN

Nay, God, weigh not my soul tonight.
For I, who am fellow to Your greatness
Weeping over this starry sadness (even
As You, too, must weep), dare whisper
Through this fearful hush that You are
Free. Ah, Beauty is Your weapon!
Against this cool, sweet intimacy of
Equals in deep communion, what matters
The full account? What matters the
Maddening vicarage, the cruel jests
And despair of other days?
Sing, God, Your new sweet abandon!
Man has judged You, and made You free.
You are forgiven.

ASHES

RICHARD LYNDEN



You must forgive this in me —
That I bellow cold ashes, yours and mine
(Like clinkers, wrapped already in hard exterior),
That I so easily forget the ruthlessness
Of Change, of fled sweetnesses.
Yes, you must see to forgive so grand a fault.
For who dares condemn that hope and weakness
Which ascends to other Worlds,
Like monk, or dreamer, or maybe
Man with wakened heart,
To unriddle his high mystery,
Or keep his soul,
Or even live again a moment of warm,
Protected beauty.

Man was not mewed eternally to grub,
And to keep *that* thing upon his mind.
Let those millions of such conscience,
Gather dust and "goodness", let them have
Way and sway to plod in this near-now, everlasting,
But they shall not say to you, with me,
"This is your plot, your expanse."
For there is a wild soul — which is two souls
Fused in one — that heeds no wretched human confines,
That transcends this trembling, ken-less living,
That rises, rapt, to hearken to an ancient message,
Only once delivered, and once heard,
In an ancient yesterday.
And this soul will never risk that salvaged Virtue,
Will never again play sublimity
Against the Fates.

DISCHARGE

A PLAY IN ONE ACT



RAYMOND H. RHODES

CHARACTERS

Dave Hepburn, 1923, the man.
Miss Elizabeth, Dave's elderly aunt.
Captain Marshall Woods
Private John Guernsey.
Private Pat Donahue.
Corporal Floyd Herbert.
Dave Hepburn, 1918, the immortal.

Scene: The living room of the small cottage of Dave Hepburn, an injured war veteran, who lives here under the care of a spinster aunt. The room is flavored with the hominess of New England simplicity, but tonight it has a festive air since four of Dave's war comrades have gathered for a dinner to commemorate the fifth anniversary of his being decorated for bravery on the field of battle. The right wall is pierced by two windows, with shades drawn, beneath which is a comfortable couch. Upstage from the windows is a door leading to the exterior, and on the opposite side of the room is a staircase, practical, which leads to the kitchen. The door is open. A fireplace in the left wall surrounded by comfortable chairs of disharmonious design, the dining table and chairs, center, and few pieces of bric-a-brac complete the furnishings. An American flag is pinned to the wall above the mantelpiece.

An alcove in the rear wall, raised above the level of the stage and faced on all sides by windows set high in the walls, contains a well-filled book-case, and a desk and chair. In the glow of a reading lamp the figure of Dave Hepburn, the immortal, is clearly discernible. He wears a private's uniform with a touch of pride and ruddy healthiness; and, though they are similar in figure and complexion, he is a definite contrast to Dave Hepburn, the man, who is pale and limps about with a supporting cane. The immortal Dave is never recognized nor spoken to by the others; they are entirely oblivious to his presence, though he, on the other hand, seems to enjoy their antics and conversation tremendously and is alive to their every motion.

It is an evening in the fall of 1923, and Dave's dinner party is well under way. Even as the curtain draws, the men are standing, their glasses raised aloft in tribute to Miss Elizabeth, who stands on the landing before the kitchen door, primping her white hair and primly adjusting herself to the flattery of their shouts of "A toast!", "Miss Elizabeth!", "A toast to the best cook in Vermont!" etc.

Pat Donahue. (A ruddy man of thirty, secure and healthy, and the vil-

lage postman.) It was a fine dinner you cooked for us, Miss Elizabeth, and it's with a good spirit that I'm proposin' this toast to you.

Captain Woods. (A tall, commanding man, meticulously dressed in a suit so dark that it emphasizes his greying hair.) Indeed, it was splendid. If we'd had cooks like you in the army, Miss Hepburn, the war would have been over in no time.

Donahue. (Rubbing his plump belly) You bet!

(All laugh)

Herbert. (A dark and heavy-set man in a tweed suit, whose voice booms out above all the others.) To Miss Elizabeth!

(They drink, and remain standing.)

Miss Elizabeth. Oh, thank you, boys. It really wasn't anything at all, I'm sure. The chicken was so tough, and —

Herbert. (Interrupting jovially) Another toast to Miss Elizabeth — she called us boys.

(Laughter, and they drink again.)

Miss Elizabeth. Well, you are to me. *(Thoughtfully coming down the steps)* It doesn't seem possible that it's been so long. Why, it's been nearly six years!

Guernsey. (A slight, blonde man whose youngish face is lined with premature hollows and creases. He wears a khaki trench cap. His left arm hangs limp in its sleeve, and his useless hand is covered with a black glove.) You're right. It has been a long time.

(The four soldiers seat themselves, and Dave hastens to circle the table to refill their glasses with cider from a pitcher. He limps noticeably.)

Donahue. Hurrah! More toasts!

Dave. Sure, the evening's young. *(He, like the others, does not wear a uniform, but on his coat is pinned his D. S. C. medal.)*

Miss Elizabeth. (Surveying them) Yes, you've all changed. *(Pause)* It seems odd — I remember so well how you marched down to the depot the day you left. My, you were proud youngsters. Going away. Going away — to war.

Guernsey. Remember how they made us march up and down the streets drilling after we enlisted? *(Miss Elizabeth nods, smiling)* And whenever we came past your house, Marshall, here, would give us time out so we could all rush over to the cistern to get a drink of water.

Donahue. It sure don't seem like it was six years ago.

Herbert. You had six inches less waist line then, Pat. *(They laugh)*

Woods. He was just a freckled-faced kid.

Miss Elizabeth. Indeed he was. You were all youngsters—you, Pat, and John, and Dave.

Dave. There were others of us then, too.

Herbert. (Raucously) A bunch of wild kids just aching to go war.

Dave. (Quietly) Yes, to be killed and maimed and shot to pieces.

Miss Elizabeth. (Advancing to take his arm) Oh, Dave, no! To fight for victory and justice.

Dave. (Detaching himself to refill the glasses again) (Quietly) That's what the recruiting officer said.

Guernsey. (Spiritedly, as though to recall Dave to the group) Well, boys,

we've still the most important toast of the evening. (*Standing at attention*) Gentlemen, I give you the health of Dave Hepburn—the only man of the company to be decorated for bravery on the field of battle. (*They rise simultaneously to stand at attention.*)

Donahue. Here's to Dave!

All. To Dave. (*They drink*) (*Dave Hepburn, the immortal, smiles bitterly in the alcove, and flauntingly lights a cigarette.*)

Dave. (*Resting on his cane*) Thank you, fellows.

Herbert. And here's a toast to Peewee Guernsey for giving us the last one. (*They laugh and again drink.*)

Dave. It's awfully nice of you fellows to remember my being decorated.

Donahue. You think we'd forget? Why, I've got a picture home on the bureau of you bein' wheeled up in a hospital chair the day they pinned on your D. S. C.

Herbert. Sure, and Pat was the man who wheeled your chair.

Donahue. And why not? I wanted to have my picture taken with the hero.

Dave. (*Stiffly*) We all were heroes—only some of us were wounded—or killed.

Miss Elizabeth. Oh, Dave.

Woods. (*Advancing to put his arm around Dave*) But we must forget that side of it, Dave. (*Sympathetically*) I think I know how you feel, but after all we're the ones who really count now. The boys who didn't come back with us—they—well, we'll never forget them, but don't you think it's better to just accept things as they are without them?

Dave. But things aren't the same—without them.

Woods. You're thinking of George?

Dave. (*Quietly*) Yes.

Miss Elizabeth. Oh, Dave. (*Pleadingly*) Don't think of it. It's been so long.

Dave. No. No. (*Tensely*) I'll never forget! George was my best friend—he was closer to me than anyone else can ever be. (*Walking away*) Why, we had been pals ever since either of us could remember, and then when we were over there we were never separated.

Miss Elizabeth. But you must forget!

Dave. I can't, I tell you; I can't! (*Almost fiercely*) We had shared everything. My thoughts were his thoughts, his ambitions were mine. We used to talk for hours at a time planning our futures together as a partnership. (*Pause*) And then he was killed—and I was wounded. (*Pathetically*) Oh, God, you can't understand the irony of it.

Miss Elizabeth. (*Approaching Dave*) (*Sympathetically*) Oh, Dave try—try. —(*Appealing to Woods*) Please.

Woods. (*Approaching*) We do understand, Dave.

Dave. (*Turning abruptly*) Oh, no, you don't. You couldn't! (*Regaining control of himself after a strained silence*) (*Apologetically*) Oh, I'm sorry.

Donahue. That's all right, Dave.

Woods. I'm sure we understand.

Guerney. (Smoothly) Come on, fellows. *(Takes hold of Dave's elbow, and urges him back to the table.)* Let's have some more toasts, and tell stories.

Herbert. That's the ticket.

Miss Elizabeth. (Crossing to the stairs) If you'll pardon me, boys, I'll fix some fresh coffee.

Woods. (Spiritedly) Let's sit over here by the fire. I'm getting to the age now where a fire feels rather good.

Herbert. It always has to me. *(Donahue, Woods, and Herbert take the comfortable chairs near the fireplace, while Guerney sits behind them next to the dining table.)*

Dave. (Securing a cigar humidior from the mantel) Have a cigar, Marshall?

Woods. Yes, thanks.

Dave. Herbert?

Herbert. You bet.

Donahue. Me, too. *(He takes his and lights from a match held by Wood.)* Hmm. Remember the old "El Ropo's" we used to smoke in France?

Woods. Rather.

Dave. (Lighting a cigarette) (To Guerney) You know, John, I believe you're one of the few men I know who returned from France without having become a smoker.

Guerney. (Laughing) I never started — even after I lost my arm.

Donahue. Well, I've always said there's two things every soldier needs — and one of them's a smoke.

Woods. I think you're right, Pat.

Herbert. A smoke bolsters up a man's nerve.

Guerney. (Laughing) Then I certainly should have taken up smoking when we first went into the trenches.

Donahue. (Chuckling) He was white as a sheet for three days!

Guerney. (Good-naturedly) I guess I had a yellow streak down my back.

Dave. Oh, no, you didn't, John. *(Thoughtfully)* There's something terrifying about being in a trench with guns crackling beside you and men groaning at your feet—*(Pause)* or lying in a shell-hole full of stagnant water in the middle of the night wondering when you'll be blown to pieces. It does something to you!

Herbert. (Bravely) Oh, you get over that.

Woods. Sometimes yes — sometimes no.

Dave. (Strolling away from the group) (Softly) The first big raid I was in I saw a man get caught in the barbed wire. The first time I looked, I saw him with his head thrown back and his mouth wide open—screaming. *(Turning)* The next time I looked his legs had been shot off—and then a spray of bullets ripped his neck to pieces.

Woods. (Rising) Those are the things you should forget, Dave. If you must think of the war, remember your decoration. Remember that you were a hero!

Dave. (Swiftly) But I wasn't.

(The immortal again becomes strangely tensed.)

Woods. Oh, yes, you were. They didn't give Distinguished Service Crosses for—

Dave. (*Interrupting*) But you don't understand. (*Quietly*) It's worried me for years. (*Hoarsely*) I've wanted to tell you—I've tried to—. (*Pause*) You can't imagine the hell I've been through.

Woods. (*Approaching*) Come, come, Dave. You're getting all excited.

Donahue. Sure, let's talk about something else.

Dave. But I'm not excited! (*Faltering*) I want—I want to tell (*Pause*)

Miss Elizabeth. It's all ready now. (*Coming down the stairs*) There's
(*Miss Elizabeth enters, bearing a tray with coffee and cups.*)

nothing like a good cup of coffee to top off a dinner.

Woods. (*The first to rise*) Now, Miss Elizabeth, you didn't need to go to all that trouble.

Miss Elizabeth. (*Passing out the cups and saucers*) It's no trouble at all. All of you just sit down and enjoy yourselves.

(*Woods, Donahue and Herbert seat themselves.*) (*Dave remains standing by the table in deep thought.*)

Guernsey. Here, I'll pour the coffee and you take the cream and sugar.

Miss Elizabeth. That's a nice boy, John.

(*The immortal, who has been watching Dave closely, finally smiles bitterly and returns to his chair.*)

Donahue. This is sure a treat—getting together for dinner.

Herbert. Just like old times.

Miss Elizabeth. Well, you know, it's being the fifth anniversary of Dave's being decorated and all, I thought there ought to be some kind of celebration.

Woods. Of course.

Miss Elizabeth. And then I've just felt for weeks now that Dave wanted to have you all here some evening to talk and play cards.

Herbert. Good for Dave.

Miss Elizabeth. Now while you're drinking your coffee, I'll clear off the table so that you can have a big poker game. (*Pause*) You've been so frightfully quiet in here—no laughter or shouts—that I thought Dave must be making a speech. (*She laughs*)

Dave. (*Alarmed*) A speech?

(*The immortal is instantly electrified.*)

Miss Elizabeth. Yes. I saw you out in the yard this afternoon pacing up and down with your hands behind your back and your lips moving. You looked just like your father used to when he was preparing a sermon.

Dave. (*Distantly*) Oh. (*Pause*) There is something that I want to tell you all. (*Turning*) I tried to get it out a little while ago. I'm not a hero. I never was. The medal—(*Indicating*), that was a horrible mistake, but I've never had the nerve to confess.

(*The immortal rises.*)

Woods. Now, Dave, we know that's not so.

Dave. (*Vigorously*) Don't try to stop me! This thing has worried me for years. I'll tell now—I've got to. (*Passing his hand nervously across his forehead*) You all remember the night that George and I were detailed to go across No Man's Land to find out what the enemy

was up to. *(Pause)* It was black and wet, and we were scared. It seemed hours before we reached their first string of barbed wire. *(Pause)* *(Hurriedly)* Oh, I don't need to tell you what happened—you know. We got the information that we wanted and started back, and then we got caught in that damned trap and had to make a run for it with their snipers sending a hail of bullets after us. *(In a higher and tighter voice)* We ran—stumbled through the muck with our hearts pounding—afraid—waiting for the bullet that would find us, and then I heard George scream, just as we fell headlong into a gaping shell-hole. *(Pause)* *(Quietly but hurriedly)* They had got him in the back. *(Pause)* *(Faintly)* He never spoke to me. *(Pause)* I knew their shrapnel would find us—I had to go on—get back to the trenches and safety — take the chances. *(Coldly)* I crawled out of the shell-hole, pulling George's body up with me. I had to take him with me to—to—. *(He stops fearfully.)*

Miss Elizabeth. Dave, what is it?

(The immortal crouches on the steps of the alcove, poised as though about to come down into the room.)

Dave. *(In an agonized voice)* I can't—I can't. *(Pause)* Oh, God, why haven't I the power! *(Staggering across the room toward the stairs)* Wait! Wait! I'll get George's picture—I want him to hear me—to hear me tell. *(He exits up the stairs.)*

Miss Elizabeth. *(Bursting into tears)* He's so strange.

Guerney. *(Rising to comfort her)* I know.

Miss Elizabeth. He's never been the same since he came back. These things are always on his mind. *(Pause)* He cries out in the night sometimes as though he were losing his mind.

Woods. *(Heavily)* There's no discharge from the war.

Miss Elizabeth. *(Sadly)* I think—I think you'd better go. All of you.

Herbert. Yes.

Woods. I think so, *(Warningly)* but we must be natural about it. Talk as though nothing had happened.

(Dave re-enters slowly, a framed photograph in his hand.)

Woods. Well, Miss Elizabeth, it was certainly a splendid dinner. We all enjoyed it very much.

Donahue. You bet we did.

Guerney. It was fine.

Herbert. *(To Dave)* Sorry, old man, but we've simply got to go.

Dave. *(Shocked)* No—no! You've not heard—

Woods. Some other time, Dave. You know, we have wives waiting for us and work to do tomorrow.

(Each takes his coat and hat from a rack near the door.)

Dave. *(Approaching)* But you—. *(He suddenly stops, and laughs a trifle hysterically.)* You have to go—. And I was just about to—
(His head drops slowly.)

Donahue. Good-night, Dave. Had a swell time. *(He shakes Dave's limp hand.)*

Dave. *(Recovering)* Oh, of course—I'm glad you could come.

Guerney. *(Shaking hands)* And I, too, Dave.

Herbert. Hate to have to leave, but, well, I'll see you later.

Woods. We'll have another of these get-togethers at my house sometime soon. Good-night, Dave. Good-night, Miss Hepburn.

(They exit with further adieus to Dave and his aunt. Dave stands near the door, holding it open, but Miss Elizabeth hurries from the room as though afraid she would again cry.)

Dave. *(At the door)* Good-night, fellows. *(He turns from the door to face the quiet room.)* *(Sensitively)* They've gone. All of them. *(Pause)* It's queer—just when I was ready to tell them about George. *(He stops for a moment in thought, then suddenly raises his head, and calls.)* Auntie. *(Striding forward)* Aunt Elizabeth! *(Crossing vigorously to the stairs)* Aunt Elizabeth!

Miss Elizabeth. *(Answering from the kitchen)* Yes, Dave.

Dave. *(Impatiently)* Aunt Elizabeth!

Miss Elizabeth. *(Hurriedly entering)* Yes, what is it?

Dave. *(Bitterly)* They've all gone. Why?

Miss Elizabeth. But, Dave, you're not strong, and it's getting late.

Dave. No. That's not the reason they left. *(Accusingly)* You must have said something to them—something that made them go.

Miss Elizabeth. *(Desperately)* Oh, Dave.

Dave. You must have. *(Turning)* They'd never go like that—so apologetically, as though they were going over to Pat Donahue's to play poker.

Miss Elizabeth. But, Dave, you get so excited when you talk about the war. *(Approaching to grasp his sleeve.)* Can't you see? It's been such a long time—five years—you must forget!

Dave. *(Bitterly)* Then you did send them away.

Miss Elizabeth. I just—

Dave. Sent them out of this house. *(Scathingly)* I know now. You asked them to go while I was gone from the room after George's picture.

Miss Elizabeth. *(Spiritedly)* Yes, Yes, I did. I couldn't help it. *(Sympathetically)* You get so excited. It's the war this—and the war that—and George this—and George that. All day long you think of nothing, talk of nothing but you and George and the war. *(Approaching to shake his shoulder vigorously)* It's become an obsession with you. Dave! Dave! You've got to forget! You must come back and live in this world again. Forget the war; forget your scars. *(Pause)* Dave, you must! Forget that you ever knew such a person as George—forget that you carried his body across No Man's Land!

Dave. No, no! Go away, please.

Miss Elizabeth. But, Dave!

Dave Hepburn. Please go. *(Crosses to sit before the fire)* I want to be alone. *(Miss Elizabeth turns hesitatingly to exit.)*

(Dave sits with his head in his hands. The immortal slowly crosses from the alcove to the center of the room. He surveys Dave coolly, and then with deliberation lights a cigarette.)

(At the sound of the match being struck, Dave turns. His expression is one of mild surprise, but there is no trace of fear.)

Immortal. I'm still here. I didn't go.

Dave. *(Without emotion)* When did you come?

Immortal. (Smoothly) Oh, I was here all the time. I came before the others did.

Dave. You look familiar. Who are you?

Immortal. Oh, I used to live here.

Dave. You?

Immortal. Yes, before the war.

Dave. Who?—what was your name?

Immortal. Oh, people called me Dave Hepburn, but names don't really mean anything. (Pause) I've been away—been over there with George.

Dave. With George?

Immortal. Why, yes. Don't you remember the night George and you and I lay in that shell-hole until—

Dave. (Excitedly) The night George was shot?

Immortal. Of course. (Laughing) I thought you'd remember. You should.

Dave. You were there?

Immortal. (Blandly) Yes. I'm your soul, I guess.

Dave. Oh.

Immortal. I suppose I should have come home from the trenches with you after the armistice, but—oh, I don't know. (Mockingly) I got separated from you the night George—died.

Dave. And you've been over there ever since?

Immortal. Yes.

Dave. (Tensely) You'll stay with me now, though?

Immortal. No. (Pause) I don't think I'd want to.

Dave. You wouldn't want to!

Immortal. No.

Dave. (Pathetically) But I need you. Can't you see?

Immortal. We're not alike now. I'm going back over there.

Dave. No. No. For God's sake. You must help me!

Immortal. I don't admire you — I don't belong to you any longer.

Dave. But you owe it to me to stay.

Immortal. I have no debt to you. (Pause) No, I'm going back.

Dave. (Sinking back into his chair) Going back?

Immortal. Yes.

Dave. But why?

Immortal. (Flatly) You know. (He sits on the edge of the dining table.) (Coolly) I watched you tonight — I heard you tell your story.

(Pause) I've watched you for five years; waited for you to confess.

(Pause) I came tonight because I thought maybe you were going to be a man — tell them the truth about what you did with George's body. (Advancing) Tell them how you worked in that shell-hole that night, strapping it to your back to shield you from the bullets while you crawled back to the trench.

Dave. I couldn't tell them. I couldn't.

Immortal. (Walking toward the door) You're a coward. (Pause) That's why I don't belong to you any longer. You're a coward. I knew it that night when you used his body as a shield — and then you got near the lines, you unstrapped it and carried him in. So your com-

rades wouldn't see what you'd done. (*Dramatically*) "A hero! I'm a hero! I came through with the information, and brought back my buddy's body." (*Pause*) But he was shot full of holes — dead.

Dave. (*Frenziedly*) Yes, he was. What if I did use his body as a shield? I got back with the information. (*Pause*) (*Righteously*) George would have liked that.

Immortal. Talk. Just talk. You've been telling yourself for years — but you never forget! (*Pause*) Wearing a decoration — a D. S. C. — an award for bravery.

Dave. (*Fumbling at the clasp*) No. No. (*Hoarsely*) I'll never wear it again. (*He throws it on the table.*) (*Beseechingly*) But you must stay — I need you.

Immortal. (*Quietly*) No. No, you've forgotten something. (*Advancing a step*) You've kept your mind away from it. (*Pause*) When you strapped George's body on your back—(*Advancing*) When you put him there to guard you from the bullets — (*Advancing to stand directly before Dave*)

Dave. (*Fearfully*) What?

Immortal. (*Lowly*) Was George really dead? (*Pause*) Was he really dead? (*Dave sinks slowly down into a chair, his face contracted with horror.*)

Dave. (*Wildly*) No. No!

Immortal. (*Convictingly*) You never knew! (*Pause*) A hero. You. (*He lifts the D. S. C. from the table, then drops it again.*) Keep your ribbon and gold — wear it — you'll have to. (*Facing Dave*) Tonight was your last chance with me. You couldn't confess — now you never can. Keep your medal, and wear it though it makes your life a hell on earth. (*He turns to cross to the exterior exit.*) (*Pausing*) Wear it. It's all you have left — now. (*The immortal leaves.*)

(*Dave struggles to his feet, and stumbles over to the table. His eyes shift from the door to the shining medal on the table.*)

(*With hands that seem burned by the touch of the decoration, he despairingly lifts the cross to re-pin it on his breast.*)

(CURTAIN)



DAY DREAMS

LOUISE WINANS

When all the petty ridicules of life
Confront me with their leering glares
I leave the cluttered world's maelstrom
And climb to peaks yet unattained,
Where cleansing thoughts like windswept clouds
Can clear my mind as cool spring rain,
And peace and quiet cast moonlight beams
Across the gleaming fretwork of my dreams.

ARMISTICE DAY

JOSEPH EDELL ALDER

Yesterday
I heard the cannon,
Fearsome and terrible.
The white-hot rifle fire
Scorched all humanity,
And in the mud of France
Death stalked — master.

Today
I hear the bells tinkling
As the herds wander homewards;
The vineyards are red and gold
In the autumn sun;
And the scarred earth rests
In life-giving peace.

Tomorrow?
Will it bear hate and death,
And black destruction for today's children?
Or will hand clasp hand
In everlasting brotherhood,
And blood and tears
Be forgotten forever?



DEFEAT

ALBERT JOHANSSON

He mastered all things, but his wild soul lay
A captive Roman in his body's keep,
Rebellious, proud, and waiting for the day
When with dire vengeance it could sunwards leap.
All things he tried he mastered, but his hand
Was strained to cracking when he bound his soul,
And then it writhed in the flesh's band
And bore down crashing all the built-up whole.
He seemed to master, but it all was false;
He failed to conquer what first should rule,
And in the cadence of his throbbing pulse
Lay that which turned to fire what once was cool:
The things he made went down to dust when he
Fell to himself, his long-fought enemy.

DRAMATIC IRONY



HUGH PENN

The little town of St. Michel sprawled indolently in the warm Louisiana sunshine. The buildings that stood on both sides appeared entirely unashamed of their grimy white dilapidation — a state no doubt encouraged by living so close to the people who owned them. Here the hand of time moved with the slow gesture that accompanies a drawl. The sun shone, the negroes were willing to work for nearly nothing, and sleep was quiet and dreamless. Then, too, the "moonshine" that was distilled in the depths of the swamp was easy to get, and the code of morals here did not absolutely prohibit long periods of intoxication. To be sure, there was not much to be said for the country in the way of novelty. Slowly but steadily the deaths from alligators' bites were decreasing in number as incursions of hunting parties increased, and the queer, pale-faced men from the North insisted on taking negroes suspected of a crime to a court for trial instead of following the much more obvious and stirring precedent of lynching them. But life in these effete times was not without wholesome diversion. Among the clans and families that lived in the swamp there was pent up all the rancor of old hates and feuds which, as the list of violent deeds grew, was as apt at any moment to burst forth with proportionate vigor. The traveller in the swamp would sometimes see the sudden flash of rifle-fire from the shadows of the overhanging Spanish moss; or often at night the faint sound of a shot would drift to the ears of the townspeople. They would turn over in their beds and piously conclude that justice, or ingenuity — the two, of course, amount to the same thing — had triumphed. Then often a face would vanish from town, or a new one, one of some abrupt convert to the usages of civilization, would appear. Civil authority existed, but was never recognized with anything approaching reverence, for the swamp-folk were people with a strong religious sense. God chooses his own instruments of vengeance and reward; so is it not presumptuous to impose man's idea of what is right upon the divinely-planned order of events? Too, locally-supervised hanging was always swift and certain, but lawyers and judges, with their pompous cant, often allowed the guilty person to escape.

But the constant problem of the negro required some sort of official curtain behind which to intimidate the black man properly. Here the negro was not the obsequious buffoon that he is in the popular conception, but a savage disgruntled with his position in the social order; a savage with the instincts and heritages of his kind: the dim, inherited memories of moonlit forest orgies, of the surge of the chase, and of the red madness of the kill. He was a creature liable at any moment to become

suddenly perverted and commit some crime of so atrocious a nature as to make one shudder and sicken. He was endowed with the animal cunning of his race, and lived in a world of his own, somehow a grotesque, ugly world, into which the curiosity of the white man never cared to penetrate.

The office of sheriff, in St. Michel invested in the person of "Poke" Hodgins, had the partial support of the people, for the sheriff was chosen for his liberal views on impromptu executions rather than for any special ability in enforcing the law. Indeed, he was in some localities not only expected to condone lynchings, but often to take part in them, his authority as sheriff converted into the capacity of mob-leader.

To the people of St. Michel, "Poke" Hodgins was an enigma. An aura of obscurity covered his birth, nationality, past; in fact, everything about him. One day the cane-brake had parted and he, a little ragged and travel-stained, had stepped into their lives. They, with a sort of pristine tact, had asked no questions of him, and he preserved a complete silence. As soon as he entered St. Michel, he began to cultivate the favor of the underworld of the small town. Every so often, in the early days of "Poke's" career, the people of the town would hear a vague rumor of landing undesirable Chinese in some secluded bayou, or of disposing summarily of his cargo when the capture of his boat seemed certain. Some of the bolder gossips whispered that he had murdered a number of those underworld figures who had the rashness to oppose the progress of his schemes. By degrees he had planted his influence in the loosely-organized county government, until he was now virtual master of it. Who can say how far his ambition reached? Perhaps to the governorship, perhaps to congress — the careers of many southern politicians have had just as unsavory beginnings. Probably "Poke" could see that the life of a successful political leader demanded that he change his conduct to accord with public opinion wherever he was. At any rate, as he attained to greater heights in prestige, he gradually cut the ties that bound him to the underworld; so that now he was well on the road to the time when he "could point with pride to his past life."

At the present moment he had brought a chair out into the town's main street, and leaned back against the courthouse. Exposure and exercise had solidified his powerful frame into a burly angularity; now the impression of force imparted by his figure was emphasized as it contrasted with the ramshackle nondescriptness of the building. His heavy rugged features relaxed into a stolid benevolence; he basked in the afternoon sunshine and stared unseeingly at the picturesque squalor around him. Occasionally he greeted the leisurely passers-by with a slight, dignified nod, but for the most part his attitude indicated a good-will far removed from vulgar application to mortal affairs.

However, when the man in torn, muddy overalls, his long hair straggling in dark strands from beneath the ruin of a hat approached, the sheriff looked up, preparing to greet with the easy facility of a smile some casual pedestrian, but started violently, his smile replaced by a startled scowl.

"For God's Sake, Pete!" ejaculated Hodgins, "I thought I told you not to come around here. A blind person could see you'd been out in the swamp." —

"Well, I reckon there ain't no law 'gainst being in the swamp. I only came here to tell you what's happened." The man's shifty eyes darted restlessly about in his tanned face.

"What's happened! Come on inside; we can't stay out here and talk." Hodgins hastily arose and led the man into his dirty, cigar-strewn office.

"Now, now, what's happened?" he asked impatiently as his visitor sat down with great deliberation and languidly spat a brown stream of tobacco juice at the cuspidor.

"Well, I was out in the hangout where we used to keep the Chinks—I reckon you ain't forgot them days, have you?"

"No, no; go on."

"Give me time; give me time. I'll get around to it. We was getting low on grub; so I 'lowed I'd better be getting into town after some. I couldn't come in here, because you're getting so all-fired important—I can remember the day, though—"

"Never mind! Keep on with the story."

"I will, if you'll only quit butting in. I 'lowed I'd better be getting into town, as I was saying; so I hiked off to Stone Corners. When I got there, I stood talking to Lem Reynolds that owns the store.

"Seen the paper yet?" he asks me, sort of suggestive like.

"No," I says, 'the boy ain't delivered it yet. I'll put up a big holler though. I certainly do miss reading the financial page. I sort of like to see how my stocks are doing.'

"They're about due to take a big drop, I 'low,' says he, and moves away. He puzzled me with his sly grin; so I bought a paper and looked at it. Right smack on the front page I found this." Pete drew from the recesses of a back pocket a soiled clipping, and handed it to Hodgins. The sheriff took it, hastily glanced at it, and frowned.

"Negro doctor prepares articles for New York paper," he read. "Dr. Joshua Garrison, resident of St. Michel, and widely acclaimed for his psychological researches into the negro mind, has recently sold a series of essays to a New York newspaper in which he reveals the corrupt condition of local government in the southern states. They are written with a dramatic intensity, and an earnestness that is remarkable to find. Dr. Garrison said, upon being interviewed, that he disposed of them to a newspaper rather than to a magazine in order to center public attention on what he terms a lamentably critical situation.

"He is remembered as the writer of *The Case of Aaron Johnson* some years ago when Johnson was hung, upon suspicion of having murdered his employer, by a self-appointed vigilante committee."

"Well, I'll be damned," stated Hodgins reflectively. "I'll have to find some way to stop this, or else be ruined."

"Why so? He's only going to write newspaper articles, ain't he?"

"Only newspaper articles? You ignorant swamp-rat, if these articles are published, they'll influence public opinion so that the President will speak to the governor. Then the governor'll send his militia down here. Then where'll I be?"

"In a good place to abscond to Jamaica with the public funds, I'd say. Why don't you come back to the old life, Poke? You won't never

get anywhere in this here high society. You look fine in a jersey and a pair of ducks, running in a cargo of Chinks or rum, but you'd feel like a sensitive lobster on a hot skillet in one of them swallowtails, and a-talking in four-bit words."

"No, thanks just the same. The idea of me, Poke Hodgins, being run out of town by a nigger. A nigger! How I hate 'em! They were brought over here for slaves, and they got to be Pullman porters — that's high enough for them to go. And as for letting them be educated, like this — this Garrison, it oughtn't to be allowed. Might just as well educate a hog or a horse. But I'll never forget the rumpus he raised when I hung that other nigger. Took all my smartness to get out of that mess."

"Your smartness is going to fail you some day. Then where'll you be?"

"I don't think it will, but if it does, I'll be right back where I started again. But this Garrison—"

"Is too smart and well-educated for you to fool with."

"I'm damned if he is! I'll down him if it costs me everything I own." Hodgins' face contracted forcefully. "I can't hang him though, like I did that other nigger. The papers all over the country would put up a holler of 'martyr'; and I'd be in a worse fix than I am now. I'll have to find some way to discredit him with his newspaper friends. Some way I won't be connected with."

"That's right. Got anything to drink?"

"Over there in the cupboard." His companion brought out a dark decanter with two small glasses, and poured out drinks for both of them.

"Either me or Garrison will have to beat it back to the bushes," mused Hodgins, as he raised his glass to the light. "To the old life. . . how I'd hate to go back to it."

"I don't see why; you've got a lot of money out of this town, ain't you?" His companion drained his glass and replaced it on the table. "With that you could start up a snug little smuggling trade, and be a big man with us like you used to be."

"No! I'd never do that! I said once today that I'd never run away from a nigger, and I won't! Now listen; I've got something for you to do. Go find all of the old gang that you can, and bring them here—let me see: today is Monday — bring them over here late Thursday afternoon. Be sure to bring them, now. Tell them there's ten dollars apiece in it for them. And get Julie, you know the one I mean, the one in New Orleans. Don't fail."

"I won't, boss. What are you planning on?"

"Never mind; I'll let you know when the time comes. You'd better get busy, because it'll probably take you some time to find them all."

"I guess so. I 'low I'll see you Thursday." Pete rose and moped towards the door. "So long."

"So long."

From this time on there was a constrained air of activity about the sheriff's office that escaped the notice of the St. Micheleans. Mulattoes, swarthy Spaniards, Creoles — all bearing the unmistakable signs of depravity, crept through the back alley, or walked up the front steps of the courthouse, pausing to look furtively about them before they entered.

The residents of the town did notice, however, that "Poke" had suddenly become more affable in his manner towards them, and more extreme in his discourse on the negro.

"Ain't it right," he asked sonorously of a sleepy gathering at the store, "that niggers should be suppressed? What was they brought over here for? Slaves. And they ought to stay slaves. What are they good for? Nothing but to work all day in the cotton and the cane, and then shoot craps and cut each other up with razors, and maybe cut some white man too."

"But, Poke," objected an old grandfather querulously; his forehead puckered in the effort of following the convolutions of his thoughts, "the good Book says we is all equal in the eyes of the Lord."

"Grandpap Myers, with all due respect for your age, as they say in polite society, I'd just as soon admit I was equal with a cur as with a nigger. They ain't got a soul; if they had, why would God make them commit such awful crimes?" He paused and glanced about triumphantly, as if daring anyone to refute his reasoning.

"Guess Poke's right; they've done some pretty mean things."

"That's so. Remember the time old Winchell Cumbers' throat was cut by the nigger tramp he took in?"

"Poke's in a place to know, him being sheriff and all that. My pap used to say that a man's got a right to take the law into his own hands when niggers get to killing innocent people. I'll never forget the time Charlie Peters — that was in 1908 — was a-tearing down the barn over on the old Snell place—"

Hodgins surveyed the circle of men settling back to endure the telling of a time-worn anecdote, the sweeping gestures of the speaker; and he smiled a little contemptuously as he made a quiet exit into the street. As he walked briskly in the direction of the courthouse, his unwonted warmth of smile and greeting caused strollers to turn and stare queerly after him. When he reached the courthouse, he pushed the door open and tramped heavily down the oil-stained floor of the hall to his office.

"Hello, boys," he greeted the figures dimly revealed behind the drifting clouds of tobacco smoke as he entered. "Did you find Julie, Pete?"

"Here I am," announced a feminine voice. A brightly-rouged somberly-dressed woman, her clothes now daubed and smeared with mud, came forward and sat on Hodgins' desk.

"I must be awful valuable, to be dragged for miles through that—that unnameable swamp," she said bitterly.

"Now, now, Julie." Poke rescued some papers from the desk and sat down. "You look just the part I want you to play. You haven't forgot how to act, have you?"

"No, but I wish I could forget everything else. Times have changed considerable, Poke."

"That's what I heard; so I thought you might like to pick up a little spare cash. Maybe you can get back on the stage."

"No, I don't think I ever can. But what is it you want me to do? I'll bet any money that it's something underhand."

"Well, you see, it's this way: there's a nigger doctor down here who's been writing a lot of stuff about how I run the county. But he ain't said anything that ain't — that he could be arrested for, that is. He's made an awful nuisance of himself, and he's been interfering with the course of justice. These gentlemen here are all leading citizens."

"Leading citizens of the jail, I'll bet," Julie interrupted scornfully. The men muttered in a sullen undertone.

"— And they," Poke went on, giving no open notice to the discord among his followers, "will testify to that effect, won't you, boys?"

They grunted unenthusiastically.

"So we've decided to resort to a method of stopping these articles which defame our fair county, which ain't a method altogether legal, but it's necessary and proper to the best interests of the town." He paused and looked over his audience.

"Sounds like a Fourth-of-July speech to me," the woman remarked as she lit a cigarette.

"Shut up, Julie, and listen. I want you to scream a bit out in front of that nigger's house tonight, and when the people gather to give them the idea that he has attacked you. You boys be around, and start a holler of lynching. Then I'll come up and make a big speech, and everyone will quiet down and go home. The town's ripe for a lynching; I've been raising a lot of feeling against the niggers lately. Of course, I won't allow it, but that nigger will be killed forever as far as his newspaper friends go. He'll be ruined. His whole race, educated or not, will be condemned on what he's done. He'll have to go back to the bushes, not me." Hodgins' nostrils distended, a wild light gleamed in his eyes, and he crushed the roll of papers he held with short, convulsive contractions of his hand. All were quiet, with amazement at the intensity of the emotion that burned in his face.

"Ha, ha," he laughed a little nervously, as the passion faded from his features. "I guess my thoughts got the best of me for a while. You boys better go now, but remember what I told you — mix with the crowd, lead the shouting, but quiet down when I tell you to. It'd be best if you went now, and don't hang around the town. Be there at eleven-thirty, and I'll send Pete out with your pay tomorrow."

They shuffled out, muttering and growling to one another in the manner of captive beasts until the room was empty, save for Julie and the sheriff. She crushed the coal of her cigarette in a cane ash tray that reposed on the desk, and turned to Hodgins.

"Maybe I'm a little dense," she said, but I don't see how I get out of this. If there's a trial, it'll come to light sure as shooting that I came from New Orleans, and then it won't be hard for that nigger to prove that all this was fixed up beforehand."

"No, no, there ain't going to be any trial. All I want to do is to put a bad spot on that nigger's reputation. There'll be a lot of excitement around there, and after you do your part, pick up and vanish. Leave a note saying that the disgrace was too much for you, and sign a false name, see?"

"I get it. You've thought up better ideas, though. I can remember the old days in New Orleans, and you haven't changed a bit, Poke. Why

don't you quit all this underhand stuff — it won't get you anywhere; look at me — and go into some respectable business while you're still a-head?"

"Couldn't do it." Poke bit the end off of a cigar, and lighted the cheroot. "I wouldn't know how to act; and besides my friends would always be coming around and disgracing me."

"Not if you went far enough away."

"Well, I don't know. I hate all niggers, but this one especially."

"What of it? Why should your silly pride stop you from being ruined? All of this crooked stuff won't get you anywhere."

"The hell it won't," said Hodgins explosively. "Look where it's got me now. It'll take me just as far as I want. As long as I stay with it. Besides, what're you giving me all this for? You ain't got anything on me."

"I know I ain't, Poke," she said placatively, "I'm just trying to help you before it's too late."

"Thanks, but I think I'll get along. Now you quit thinkin' about my career an' think about your own a little bit. Run along and get ready for your act."

She rose, sighing in defeat, and passed out the door of the room. Through the window Hodgins saw her pass up the street toward the hotel. A slight frown on his face, he, too rose, and went out the back door.

The white frame bungalow of Dr. Joshua Garrison stood on a slight knoll on the outskirts of town, near the swamp. During the day a few patients visited him, parking their automobiles in the street on which it fronted. By nightfall the street was vacant, and only one window of the bungalow was lighted. The scene was at peace, save for half distinguished, dim shapes which began to move among the trees behind it, and the brush occasionally creaked and crackled with the pressure of moving bodies.

The village had long ago retired, and presumably its sheriff had sought his repose at the same time. His cottage, standing next to the courthouse, was quiet and dark. Not a person moved in the streets, and only the monotonous chant of the bullfrogs broke the utter silence.

But suddenly the peace of the scene was pierced by several rapid, rising screams of a woman. All over town lights flickered up; people in varying stages of dress tumbled out of doors, and stood with pale faces, questioning one another.

"What was that?"

"It came from over that a-way."

"No, it came from over there."

"Jay, Jay, is Emily safe?"

The door of Hodgins' house was abruptly jerked open. The sheriff appeared, slipping his suspenders over his shoulder with one hand and carrying his pistols and ammunition-belt with the other.

"What's the trouble, folks?" he boomed.

A babel of explanations and gestures began, and the people milled about his porch.

"Quiet! Quiet! Now will somebody please tell me what's happened?"

"Somebody screamed," ventured a man nervously. "Over by the south side of town. Near the swamp, I'd say."

"Get torches, and we'll go see what's happened," Hodgins shouted.

The men scurried into their houses and reappeared with brilliant-flaming pine-sticks that made swaying globes of light in the blackness. The sheriff shouldered his way through the people until he reached the head of the procession.

"Follow me!" He moved his torch, turned, and began to walk rapidly in the direction of Garrison's home. The crowd chattered and babbled in his wake. Suddenly in the light of the advancing torches, the black bulk of another large group of people appeared before the negro's dwelling.

"What's going on here?" demanded Hodgins loudly, so that all eyes were turned towards him. Julie was lying on the ground, his hired ruffians around her. Garrison stood on the front porch of his house with his hands in the pockets of a bathrobe, while he looked on wonderingly. His black skin shone in the glare of the torchlight.

Immediately another storm of talk and gesticulation arose. Hodgins made his way to the center of the mass of people where Julie was lying.

"My good woman, what has happened to you?" he asked tenderly, raising her head from the ground.

"Oh — Oh — I ca— can't tell you." Sobs broke her voice, making it difficult for those in the outermost ring of spectators to hear.

"Come, you must; otherwise we can't help you."

"You — you can't help me anyhow. I was walking along here a little while ago, and that black brute there—" She raised her arm, pointed dramatically in Garrison's direction, and the ring of people parted to reveal the negro looking on with much interest — "that black brute there jumped out and grabbed me—"

An angry murmur ran through the crowd. All eyes turned on the doctor. He moved his hands ineffectually and moistened his lips.

"I assure you that I know nothing of this. I have been in bed for the last two hours, as my hired man will tell you," he stated.

"Very likely the hired man will tell us, because he works for you," Hodgins spoke from the edge of the crowd.

"Oh, the sheriff," half-snarled Garrison. He fixed a gaze of such concentrated hatred on the sheriff that the people around him edged away. The two antagonists faced each other across the space of the yard, standing with tense bodies and clenched hands.

"Yes, Garrison, and I'll have to arrest you on suspicion."

"Really, Hodgins, this is too crude. I gave you credit for enough intelligence to see that if I am hanged you'd be ruined."

"What are you talking about? I forgot to tell you that anything you say will be used against you."

"Quite a magnanimous warning."

"Kindly come with me to the jail. If you resist, I'll have to deputize some of these citizens to help me take you."

"Very well." The doctor relaxed. "But how are we to get to the place of incarceration through all of your rabble? They look as though

they'd be only too glad to amuse themselves for the night by hanging me."

Before Hodgins could reply, a man leaped to the fence and waved his arms wildly.

"Listen!" he shouted, and all turned to him.

"Pete!" Hodgins cautioned the orator authoritatively, moving to a position near Garrison, "get down off that fence!"

"Did you hear what he called us?" screamed the orator. "Rabble! Rabble! That from a nigger what would of been in the jungle if it wasn't for us! Hasn't he done enough for one night? First he attacks this poor innocent woman, and now he calls us rabble! What would our fathers have done?"

The torches trembled. A sibilant move of whispers arose. The mob edged haltingly, sluggishly forward; hesitating before the final rush that would win them to their prey. Garrison stood more soberly, his features defiant though mobile. Suddenly Hodgins' voice shot out and shattered the momentarily unified will of the mass.

"Wait!" The crowd sighed, relaxed, and shifted its attention to the sheriff. "This man is a prisoner of the law! Most niggers don't deserve much, I'll admit, but the law entitles him to a trial. I warn you, that to protect that right, I must defend him with my own life. Besides, you wouldn't want to stain the fair name of our town with a hanging—before morning it'd be all over the country."

"Bravo," laughed Garrison softly. The people paused, looked at the negro, and then considered what Hodgins had said. The sheriff frowned meaningly at Pete. But there was no answering change of features in that individual's face. Instead, he did not look at Hodgins at all, but again exhorted the gathering.

"Men! Think of your own wives! Will you take a chance on letting this nigger go free—"

"No!" There was a mighty shout, and a sudden surge of men across the yard. Hodgins, unwilling to shoot, stood irresolutely in the path of the crowd. A leader, unable to alter the impetus or direction of his course, collided with him. They both fell. The man rolled harmlessly in dirt, but Hodgins' head struck a step, and he lay quietly on the ground. The mob stopped, silent for a moment, and stood staring open-mouthed at the inert body of the sheriff.

"Get a doctor!" someone yelled.

"Run and get Doc Roberts, Pete! Quick!"

"He drove over to New Orleans this afternoon!"

"What'll we do?"

"May I volunteer my services?" Garrison asked suavely, and descended the steps. He stood for a moment, looking at the astonished faces and evidently sensed what was in their minds.

"You need have no fear for the safety of the sheriff," he continued. "I hate him; but your Anglo-Saxon principles of fair play protect him. Some of you may come in, if you like, and see that no harm is done. Come, carry him into the front room."

For the instant dominated by the mastery in his voice, two men detached themselves from the crowd, lifted the sheriff by the head and

feet, and carried him into the house and out of the public gaze. Garrison ascended the steps and closed the door behind him.

"I wouldn't ever trust myself alone with that nigger," remarked one of the spectators.

"They say there's a blue light on his chimney sometimes."

"Wonder if the sheriff was bad hurt."

"Was we right in letting that nigger take him in there?"

The torches sputtered as the flames neared the ends. The people wandered uncertainly about for a time, and finally wandered away in groups or pairs. There were left only the shadows of the pines, the trampled front yard, and an occasional flicker from one of the stubs of the torches that littered the ground. From the swamp floated the heavy exotic odor of magnolia blossoms; of all the short-lived, orchidaceous vegetation that bloomed, died, and decayed there. Now and then there was a shrill cry as some sleeping bird was disturbed. The night breeze softly stirred the leaves of the trees, with little metallic rustlings.

Presently the door of the cottage opened, and Hodgins, a white bandage encircling his head, walked unsteadily out and down the steps. Coming from behind a tree, Pete approached him with something almost diffident in his manner.

"Pete!"

"Yes, boss; just stuck around in case you need help."

"You'll have to stick around a long time, I'm afraid. Why didn't you stop the second time I told you to?"

"I don't know. Sort of got into my blood — the lights and noise and all."

"If you haven't wrecked my plans, I'll be surprised."

"It'll be all right—." They moved slowly away through the trees, still talking.

To the villagers, "Poke" remained an enigma to the end. In St. Michel one could seldom arouse enough energy to wonder about anything. But on the following morning, when Dr. Garrison's article appeared in the *St. Michel Herald*, the whole town was overwhelmed by such a torrent of speculation and surmise that the event did not recede from the minds as a daily topic of conversation for at least several years.

"Our esteemed fellow-townsmen, the sheriff Hodgins," the piece read, "has been endeavoring for some years to maltreat the black race whenever possible, in ignorance of a bit of very important information. He has upon the least excuse publicly reviled the negro, and gossip says that he has participated in more than one lynching.

"But last night, after the regrettable incident in my front yard, the sheriff was brought into my home for the treatment of an injury. While treating this injury, I discovered a fact that will no doubt influence the sheriff to change his opinion of my people.

"It is a fact well-known to the science of heredity that a person may have the appearance of belonging to one race, when in reality certain anatomical heritages identify him with another. For example, the shape of the jaw and the formation of the frontal bones of the head have

a peculiar character in negroes which are used by anthropologists in classifying individuals with the race.

"In the sheriff all of these peculiarities are present."

* * *

Life in the wilderness, after a night of danger and death, was greeting like a salvation the rising of the sun. A cracker, who had been returning to town from a wedding, was passing by the fringe of the swamp vegetation about five in the morning. Unaware of the events of the night before, he was about to greet the sheriff, whom he saw in the brake, but something in the sheriff's attitude stayed his voice.

Hodgins was standing in the cane, looking back over his shoulder at the still sleeping town. His upper lip involuntarily rose, baring his teeth. Then turning his head, he plunged forward through the cane. Merging gradually with the noises of the day was the snapping of the brush. Behind him the cane stalks rattled a few times and were still. The swamp, vast, animal, primitive, had welcomed back like a fierce mother her offering to civilization.



ELEGY

JEAN SEWELL SMITH

They hanged him here
This morning in the fog —
Strung him by the neck from high, rough gallows,
Let him dangle, dankly, dead.
They hanged him here
In the cold, wet daybreak —
Like salt pork from the rafters of a smokehouse,
Left his spirit dripping from him.
They hanged him here.
He didn't struggle long —
The rope jerked tight, and fog seeped in
When life crept out, sick and defeated.
Who hanged him here
Have now almost forgot
How like a wretched, well-wrung rag he's stretched
Limp, between heaven and earth.
His flesh hangs here,
No more alive than gallows wood.
Perhaps his soul, banished from this good earth,
Finds kind relief in that other hell.

THE LOVE LYRIC

CYRIL C. WOOD

The faint humming of a love lyric pulsed
Throbbing through the stillness of the awe-binding calm.
The love of a thousand eternities was caught
And spun through the quiet
In the fashion of a softly waving web strand.
The silver glinting thread weaving through the night
Ended the pain of a present existence
And bound and enmeshed
The trials and misfortunes of a now forgotten world,
A world of clatter and brashness,
Of myriad noises echoing through its canyons
Of synthetic marble and stone,
A world of steel-railed destruction
The rails of steel, the edges of sabers
That cut through the life, the death, the eternity
Of man.
And through and o'er this all,
Through the night,
Spun the silver strand
Stilling, quieting, soothing
All turmoil.
Through the night
The strand of a lyric web;
Through the stillness of the night
A love lyric.



REVERIE OF A YOUNG GIRL

MARJORIE GENEVIEVE CAREY

Pale, dim are the tall church panes;
Through the little bordered squares
We in the choir see the bay,
With its gently rippling waters;
It, too, observes the Sabbath
In the utmost tranquility of spirit.
Under the drifting white clouds,
A slim gray feather of smoke
Trails a long red ship slowly by.
Quietly worshiping sit the people,
Never knowing that over their heads
A young girl is wistfully gazing
At the passing ship which fades
Into the dark waters of a waiting sea.

THE BENEFIT OF CLERGY

A PLAY IN ONE ACT



RICHARD GLYER

CHARACTERS

"Tex" Christian, Evangelist.

"Spats" David, Song Leader.

Edmund Burness, Blind.

(The scene is laid in the back room of an evangelist tent which has come to rest for the week in a small town in western Nebraska. The room, if one might flatter it by that name, bears a slight resemblance to the basement of an opium den; the air is that thick, and has the same dirty feeling. The dusty canvas of the tent is broken on the right by a slit which leads to the outside, and at the rear by another opening by which, up three steps, entrance and exit are made to and from the evangelistic auditorium. Several packing cases are strewn around for chairs, and a barrel, a little to the left of center stage, serves as a table. A battered wardrobe trunk, to the left of the steps which lead to the rostrum, serves as a kitchen cabinet, pan holder and wash stand. A greasy gasoline stove is in the up-right corner on which are still standing the grimy pots, still dirty, on the cold burners. Spats' bunk is shoved against the left wall. Several very moth-eaten blankets sprawl half on the dirt floor. Beside the flap which leads to the rostrum is an old-fashioned frying-pan oil lamp. On the table is a bottle of dollar-a-gallon Scotch.)

At the rise of the curtain the stage is dark and empty; only a sliver of light from up center filters through in a pure, ghostly white ray. We hear the melodic voice of Tex from beyond the back drape. She is nearing the end of her evening address on sin)

Tex. (From within) And in closing, let me tell you of a very sad incident which I recently witnessed. I had for many years known a very prominent business man by the name of Willis David — Davidson. I can tell you his name now because he has passed on to his eternal reward, and I hope that God may have Mercy on his soul. Brother Willis was a handsome man, one of the most charming people that I have ever met, but he had some fatal defects: he drank liquor, he smoked tobacco, and I am sorry to say, he did not keep his tongue clean; he took the name of the Lord in vain. Brother Davidson had a little daughter of whom he was very fond — she was stricken ill, — deathly ill. He did everything he could possibly do for the child, but when the crisis came, — before the very eyes of that weeping father that little form was stilled and that sweet, pure young soul passed on

to its Maker. I tried to comfort the father; I said, "My Brother, it was God's will that she should be taken; you have done everything in your power, everything that any mortal could do." "No", he sobbed in anguish, "there was one thing that would have saved her; I could not pray". I did my best to console him, but there was not a thing that I could do; it was too late.

My brothers and sisters, are you going to put off repentance until it is too late? That's your affair, you say. Is it? *Is It?* Do you love your sins better than you do that little son, than that bonnie daughter, that loving brother, that fine tender wife? Do you want to punish them? *Do You?* Don't you love someone else better than you do your sins? If you do, won't you come down and accept the Christ who died for you on the cross? Won't you? Oh, please come down and accept his eternal salvation, — come, come down and let me take you by the hand to lead you to Him. (*Pause*) Thank you, Brother; God bless you (*Pause*) Ah, sister — thank you — come right up here, brother — kneel here, my son; God bless you brother; and you too, sister — may the Lord rest with you, Mother. Now let us consecrate our souls with hymn number two hundred and sixty-three, two hundred and sixty-three, "Oh Lamb of God I Come, I Come" — number two hundred sixty-three. Brother David will lead us.

(A small hand organ wheezes a short introductory vamp, and the moan of the audience tells us that Brother David is successfully leading the loved ones to Him in a quiet impressive wail.)

Tex enters from the rostrum. She is a tall, handsome woman of about twenty-five. It is not difficult to understand why the penitents would worship her as much as they would the God she works for. She is attired in a flowing white gown of a very severe cut; on the front is affixed a hood. A black satin cape lined with a pearl white covers her soft white shoulders. She carries, however, an air of weariness — one gathers that life holds nothing for her.

As she enters she lights the frying pan lamp at the back of the stage. She goes to the wardrobe trunk and drags from one of the drawers an old and much wrinkled greenish kimono. She doffs her wig and ruffles up her hair in a somewhat stretching motion, replaces the dress for the kimono, and carefully replaces the wig and the gown in the trunk. She crosses to the table, picks up the whisky bottle, looks at it quizzically for a second, then quickly pours the entire contents, which proves to be only a mouthful, into a glass. She mutters, "Damn it" to herself and throws the bottle on the cot, left, drains the glass, goes to the coffee-cover ash tray, picks out a large snipe and straightens it out, lights it, and stands puffing slowly. In the meantime the audience has finished the hymn and brother "Spats" David is giving the benediction from within.)

Spats. (From within) And now may the grace, mercy and peace of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost be and abide with you now and forevermore, Amen.

(He enters from the pulpit carrying two heavily laden collection plates. He takes them to the wardrobe trunk and sets one on either side of the open top. One can imagine the saintliness that might cross

his face on demand, but one would need a pretty fair imagination. He is a born "Barker" — all he needs is a checkered suit and a paste tiepin. His emotions are obvious, changeable, and very extreme, although he is patient with Tex. He blows into the scene with the air of one who hasn't a care in the world. Occasionally we see a different Spats that shows an element of refinement and learning, but he does his best to disguise his talents and accomplishments.)

Spats. (He crosses back of her, slaps her on the back as he passes!) Sister, that was hot, beautiful. I just about wept. Honest, you almost had me converted.

Tex. (Disgustedly) Oh, yeah.

Spats. Yeah, and you sure gave them a shock with that tight-wad Christian business-man line,—how they did cough up. But say, don't you think that classical quotation stuff is a little too highbrow for this burg?

Tex. (Crosses to the cot) Just because this isn't the congregation of the first Presbyterian in New York is no reason why we should vulgarize,— we can draw a lot of the high-ups with a touch of Tennyson and a little theory, even in this size town. The smallest places in the country have some dough-waggers that we can appeal to with a little literature. They think that we're better than they are, in more ways than spiritually,—they don't mind paying for the peace of mind if you give them some gratis lessons in the "best things in life"! Simple psychology, my brother.

Spats. Sister, I'm telling you they won't fall for that kind of dope.

Tex. Well, what shall I give them?

Spats. The old-fashioned hell; you know the hymn, the hell of our fathers is good enough for me? The Billy Sunday pole-climbing-sensationalism is the stuff they go for.—And say, cut out that "God as a Spirit" theory; they want the good old bearded Jewish Jehovah with the flowing white toga.

Tex. (She points to the collection plates) Treasure island ought to indicate what they like.

Spats. (Belligerently) Yes, but they paid before and not after the sermon.

Tex. (Resigned) All right, you're the boss.

Spats. (He goes to the cot, sits and tries to drag Tex down beside him) Atta girl. — Geez, kid, I don't know what I'd do without you, kid, honest. You're great. (He tries to pull her into his lap) Give us a kiss will you?

Tex. (She loosens his grip and goes to the table) Don't maul me tonight; I don't feel like it. (She goes to the trunk and gets another bottle, but it, too, is empty) Empty, and I feel so low I could hang my feet over a sheet of tissue paper.

Spats. Here's a cigarette. (She goes to him and takes one from the package he offers her)

Tex. (She lights it) Thanks.

Spats. What's the matter with you, kid. You haven't had the hot stuff you used to have; you were allright tonight, but the last week your fire and brimstone has had all the spice of a wilted lettuce sandwich. You sick or something?

Tex. No, I don't know—yeah, yes, I don't feel so warm.

Spats. Rotten liquor?

Tex. (*She sits on the box right of the barrel*) No, I'm not sick in body —

Spats. (*Disgustedly*) Oh, it's the soul that suffers—yeah, I can see how you're pining.

Tex. (*She stamps the cigarette out violently and gets up*) I wish we could get out of this town tomorrow, Spats; what do you say?

Spats. (*He sits up on the cot, on which he has been reclining*) What the hell, are you crazy? We've got the plants paid for the rest of the week and if we left now we'd waste all that dough. This town's no worse than the rest of the dumps we've dropped into, and it's paying a lot more than most of them. What's eatin' you anyway?

Tex. (*She moves around behind the barrel with her head in her hands*) Oh, I don't know. (*Pause*) I guess that it's just that I'm disgusted with all this (*She indicates the room with a gesture*) —this filth. Sleeping on a lousy cot under moth-eaten blankets, eating spaghetti and dry bread three times a day, dodging running water in rainy weather — kidding a lot of saps that we can take them to heaven by the most direct route —

Spats. (*Humorously*) We know the road —

Tex. If there was a place like the one we tell them about, we couldn't get there if there wasn't any other place to go. (*She picked up the snipe just stamped out, then tosses it down again*)

Spats. (*Consolingly*) Oh, I don't blame you for blowing off steam now and then; this place doesn't suit me like a Park Avenue apartment, but I can stick it out for a while longer, and so can you. This is just a stepping stone. Why in another year, when we get out of this, we'll have a hundred grand.

Tex. I'm not saying I want to quit, but I want a vacation. I don't like doing this for a living, and I don't hold it against you for forcing me into it, but I wish I could get out of this hole long enough to get a breath of fresh air. God, how I hate it—

Spats. Cut! that swearing's getting to be a habit.

Tex. (*Suppressing an outburst*) You'll be censoring the way I wear my hair next.

Spats. Well you've got to behave when you're a big buck with the Lord.

Tex. (*She sits on the box right*) And that's another thing I don't like about this. I wouldn't mind it so much if this were an honest graft, but this Jekyll and Hyde game is getting me down. (*Pause*) Now listen, Spats, you can get someone else to take my place for a month. Any woman with a decent face and a melancholy voice can read my speeches. This place is driving me mad.

Spats. (*He rises and crosses to her, sits on the left side of the barrel*) Sister, you've got a line that can't be duplicated in all the states of the union,—you could make a Darwin's corpse get out of the grave and pray. I can't afford to let you go. I'd have to hire someone else to take your place and anyone with your S. A. and your gift of chatter wouldn't do this. You're a rare find.

Tex. (*Vehemently*) Spats, if I don't get out of this—this racket—

Spats. (*Rises and faces her. Violently*) You're going to stay here un-

til I get damned good and ready to let you go; so you might just as well keep your feet on the stove. If you do leave, where will you go? You've got no dough, no job, and a bad record——

Tex. Thanks to you——

Spats. If you quit you've got just one job—there's always a place for you at Janies, or you can plod the pavements, and either of those are harder on you than this.

Tex. (*Rises and crosses right*) At least it's honest. You don't represent yourself to be something you aren't.—Anyway, over-night in the jug isn't as bad as petty larceny if we're picked up in this mess.

Spats. Petty larceny? How do you get that way? This isn't a fraud; this is just as honest as any other profession that's worth the time it takes to work up a clientele. The only difference is that we don't think our goods are so hot. We peddle a lot of satisfaction to a bunch of saps who are off just enough to fall for our line of sausage. They pay of their own free will for what we sell, and our product is worth a big price. It's worth something to know you're going to live forever, and nobody can prove that we don't give them what they pay for.

Tex. We fool them into thinking that someone else falls for it by hiring a claque to come to the altar when we ask for volunteers.

Spats. You call that crooked? Hell! They do it in every line—Parking cars outside of restaurants, hanging old clothes in tailor shops—it's a principle of good business psychology. Even if we don't think our dope's the straight goods, it gives a lot of other dubs something to be silly over.

Tex. (*She crosses to the table and sits right*) I sometimes wonder if I don't believe it after all.

Spats. (*Derogatorily*) You don't mean to tell me you believe that God led a bunch of Yids around the desert for forty years and they didn't even wear out their sandals; you're too bright for that, and I know my scriptures too well to kid myself into falling for that stuff.

Tex. You couldn't tell me the name of the first chapter of Matthew.

Spats. (*Imitating a laugh*) Ha! Ha! (*He crosses to the cot, sits on the edge and lights a cigarette*) There's only one thing you never knew about me, Tex. I used to be a minister.

Tex. What!

Spats. That's how I happened to think of this when the other racket broke up. I graduated with honors from Zion Creek Seminary in Wisconsin.

Tex. Where's that?

Spats. Well, the creek dried up, and all the Zionites are in Los Angeles selling real estate. When I got out of there I went up to a little town in North Dakota. I tried to lead a model life, be a good pastor, but the crawling bunch of hypocrites that I tried to keep on the straight and narrow starved me out. I left the place six months later, quit. I gave everything I had to God, the merciful, and he let me starve. And so now I'm going to get it back, and I'm going to get it all back.

Tex. Why the confession? I don't care why you're in the game; I'm saying that there must be some good in it; you can't sell Gold Bricks

to everybody.

Spats. Are you trying to sing me a hymn?

Tex. That wouldn't be a bad idea; it might put a heart in you.

Spats. What do you mean?

Tex. It wouldn't be so bad if we could just take the candy from those who had plenty of it; it's taking it from those who can't afford it that hurts me.

Spats. Take heart from Robin Hood.—Lady, I'm robbin' anyone who wants to be hooded, and they're plentiful in our business.

Tex. And that's another reason why I think that this is a rotten racket.

Spats. If they're fools enough to fall for an Immortal who can't even turn out a decent minister, they ought to be hooked.

Tex. (*She rises disgustedly and goes right*) Pluck the beam out of your own eye before you take the speck out of everybody else's. You think that just because you had a bad break and came across a few who wouldn't support you, and because you don't go for the Lord in a big way, that the whole thing is false and that everybody is a fraud.

Spats. What do you want me to do, put up a sign that says, "We don't go for this line; it's hoocy; the game's a Gyp"?

Tex. Well if it is a gyp, I don't know—it's O. K. by me to gyp the customers who have the dough, but when it comes to chaps like that poor blind fellow who came up the other night—

Spats. Came the dawn—

Tex. What—

Spats. You needn't get moist over that blackout,—he sells more pencils than any beggar I ever knew.

Tex. (*Sentimentally*) The other night when he reached down in those ragged trousers and pulled out that lone dime, I wanted to break down and cry.

Spats. Well, you did him a lot of good. Did you notice when he came in here the other night?

Tex. Yes, (*crosses up center*) I wanted to go down and give him back the nickel he put in the collection plate.

Spats. Yes, but that same blackout came in here tonight with those ragged trousers pressed till they looked like the lacquer finish on a Buick, and that month's collection of foliage was scraped off his face. If you can give a man courage to go on like that you're doing him a favor.

Tex. (*Crossing down to left of barrel*) It still isn't worth—

Spats. It's worth his last nickel, yes. As soon as we leave he'll feel a lot better, and he won't have to pay our fee.

Tex. Poor fellow!

Spats. Now don't get weepy. He's a lot better off since you gave him the works.

Tex. Yes, I guess he's better off, all right.

Spats. Sure he is.

Tex. He had such a peaceful expression, such a wistful look on his face when he came in here tonight.—I wonder if he's always been blind?

Spats. How should I know?

Tex. (*Something of Texana, the evangelist, seems to be coming out*) It

doesn't seem to matter to him anymore. He has a certain peculiar happy expression, as if everything that he's suffered doesn't matter to him now. He's happy with things as they are; he doesn't mind being blind as long as he knows there is someone higher up who is caring for him, and who will keep him on the right road even if he can't see.

Spats. Oh, for Christ's sake, cut out the slush.

Tex. I sometimes think I'd rather be blind and happy than to live the way we're doing now.

Spats. Aw, you're nerts.

Tex. All right, I'm nerts, but I still think we aren't any better off than that blind man or any of the other people who go for God in a big way. It's a wonder we don't try it when we see how good our product is.

Spats. Try it? My God, I have tried it and what did I get. A kick in the teeth, a bloody nose, and an empty stomach. If that's what you call happiness, I'd like to see you in a mess.

Tex. But we aren't any better off than that, living in this squalor. We don't get a kick out of living. We sit around and play poker for a cigarette, or sneak out someplace and get tight. I hate all of this. I hate myself, and you and everything on earth most of the time.

Spats. Are you all there, Tex?

Tex. I don't know, and most of the time I don't give a damn.

Spats. (*Rises and crosses to her, pats her on the back and sits left*) Aw, you're just feeling low tonight. You'll snap out of it. Just think, in another year, at this rate, we'll be back on the boards, and all you have to do is to keep on raising the religious voltage of the natives. (*He takes out a package of cigarettes and offers her one; she refuses it*) It's the last one.

Tex. Smoke it yourself.

Spats. Thanks. (*He searches through his pockets for a match, but finds none; he goes to the lamp and lights it on the flame. He stands on the bottom step and puffs pensively for a moment*) Say, you know that blind man has been giving us plenty of publicity lately. It's a shame the other customers don't brush up the way he has. (*He walks slowly down left*) That fellow must be pretty sensitive.

Tex. What makes you think so.

Spats. Did you notice the way he came through the crowd the other night?

Tex. No, why?

Spats. He didn't fall over one chair, and the aisles were full. Make a good permanent plant.

Tex. That's out.

Spats. How come—

Tex. He paid our price and found the goods worth the price; now we're not going to show him otherwise—that's too much. All he has to go on now, we gave him, and you're not—

Spats. All right, all right, but it gives me a good idea. We'll get some other guy to fake a blackout. That ought to increase the sales with God and the Gideons. (*Tex rummages around in the coffee-cover ash*

tray for another snipe, but finds none)

Spats. I'll go out and get some.

(A voice in the audience is heard calling Tex)

Burness. Miss Christian—oh, Miss Christian?

Spats. *(Puzzled)* Who's that?

Tex. *(Also in a quandry)* Probably Gabriel, calling us to judgment.

Burness. Miss Christian.——

Tex. Yes—what do you want?

Burness. Are you still disposed?

Tex. *(To Spats)* What's the answer?

Spats. Find out who it is.

Tex. *(To Burness)* Who is it?

Burness. It's Mr. Burness, the blind man.

Tex. What is it that you wanted?

Burness. I wonder if I might see you for a minute.

Spats. See him. A personal interview with the virgin might help business. It's a good thing he's blind, that robe——

Burness. Would it be too much to ask——

Tex. *(To Burness)* Come right in.

Burness. Are you sure that I won't be disturbing you?

Tex. Hell——er——of course not, come in.

Burness. I wonder if it would be asking too much of you to help me; I can't see where to go.

Spats. Where's his dog?

Tex. Shut up and fix that cot.

Spats. Right.

Tex. *(To Burness)* Just a minute, Mr. Burness.

Spats. *(He gets his coat and hat and starts for the door)* I'll get that nicotine.

Tex. Don't forget to pull up your collar; remember, you're a song leader for Saint Christian.

Spats. *(As he goes out right)* O. K., Counsellor.

(Tex goes out the rear and returns immediately, guiding Edmund Burness. One could not describe his attire more accurately than did Spats when he said, "His pants were pressed till they looked like the lacquer finish on a Buick, and the month's collection of beard was scraped off his face". He wears a pair of the regulation blind man's glasses, with the blinders on the side. He is about thirty, rather nice looking, but with a trace of dissipation on his emotionless face. Tex leads him to the cot, left)

Tex. You may sit down here.

Burness. Thank you so much.

Tex. *(She goes to the box left and sits)* What brings you here?

Burness. I came in hopes that I might touch the hand of the one who has brought me so much peace from out of my misery and light to my blinded eyes.

Tex. *(Taken somewhat aback by this undue praise)* B-but-er, the—the Lord, you mean, Mr. Burness. He—he seems to have had quite a successful time with you.

Burness. *(Set on giving her the credit)* If it hadn't been for you I

should never have found the way. It was you who gave me faith to go on when I was lost in a sea of sin and despair. I was a miserable wretch on the point of death from drink and carousing when you saved me——

Tex. (Overcome) But you needn't confess this to me, my poor brother. You are forgiven when you accept the Lord as your savior.

Burness. I felt that I wanted to tell someone about it. I don't know just who said it, but it's true that confession is good for the soul. I've searched so long for a friend, and now I've found that friend in you.

Tex. (Turning around on the box) I—I want to be your friend. I want to help you if I can.

Burness. I knew that when I first heard your voice; that is why I came to you when I needed someone to give me the courage to go on, to live in spite of anything that might be a handicap to me.

Tex. (Rising and walking a few steps toward him. She is slowly becoming the Saint that for so long she has acted) But it isn't I who has helped you; it is the lesson that I gave from the word of God.

Burness. But it was you who gave it to me. I can never tell you how much this means to me to come here and talk to you, and to hear your voice talking to me, just to me. To hear one who is a hand of the Almighty.

Tex. (Repentantly) I am afraid you take me for one who is mortal, one who is above sin. I am only human, as you are, not better than to fall by the wayside. It is the part of every man, the Bible says, to help our brothers who have stumbled, to bind up their wounds and send them straight again.

Burness. And you've done that for me. You are more than good; you are an angel sent directly from the Father to give me a helping hand when I needed it so much. I want to hold that hand and thank God for his goodness to me.

Tex. (She turns from him and walks slowly toward the barrel) If I were half the person you are, I wouldn't be setting myself as an example to other Christians as I am now, and expect them to keep me for doing them a favor that the Bible says we should do as a part of our duty, and not for what there is in it for us.

Burness. (Consolingly) You shouldn't look at it that way, Miss Christian. Look what you've done for me. You've given me a new goal to strive for, a new purpose in life. Although I shall probably never amass enough money to have my sight returned, I shall always be grateful to Him and to you for having given me the power to see clearly a path to follow.

Tex. (Quickly) Do you mean you could have your sight returned if you had enough money to have an operation performed?

Burness. Only one place in the world is such a thing done, Vienna. It would be a very delicate operation. The retina of the eye must be shrunk by an electric needle.

Tex. (Determined to right her former perfidy).. I—I think—if you have faith, that—that God will see that you are given back your sight.——

Burness. I ask no more than that which I have now. I am content to spend

- the rest of my days this way, as long as I am sure that he is with me.
- Tex.* He makes provision for servants who are stricken. *(She looks toward the trunk and sees the loaded collection plates. Quickly she pours the contents of the plates into a bag and throws the plates under the cot)* Here is some, not enough for the operation, but it will keep you if the—the fund, the missionary fund is depleted. Brother David has charge of that. *(With hidden determination)* I will see—if—I'll see if I can't have Mr. David give you enough, I mean; I shall get it from him and give it to you. You must go now—
- Burness.* *(Weeping with joy)* God bless you, sister. May the Lord bless you. — Your kindness is more than I can ever repay —
- Tex.* You must go now, but return in five or ten minutes, and I shall try and have more for you, enough so that you may see again.
- Burness.* Thank you. *(He rises from the cot. She goes to him, takes his arm and leads him up the steps and out. Spats has returned and opens the flap, right, just as Tex and Burness go out the back way. He goes to the foot of the steps, opens the package of cigarettes, takes one from the package, goes up two steps, and lights the cigarette on the lamp, goes down the steps and toward the barrel as Tex enters. He offers her a cigarette)*
- Spats.* Well, how's the convert.
- Tex.* *(She refuses the cigarette. Crosses toward the cot)* He's all right.
- Spats.* How come the somber attitude?
- Tex.* *(After a pause)* Spats, how much have we taken in so far; how much money have we—
- Spats.* Huh!
- Tex.* You heard me; what's the exchequer total?
- Spats.* This sounds like a gag — what's the answer?
- Tex.* No, I mean it.
- Spats.* I don't know, why?
- Tex.* I just wondered. Where is it?
- Spats.* I've got it.
- Tex.* Here?
- Spats.* Sure, I always carry it on me.
- Tex.* I just happened to think, while you were gone, as far as I know, there isn't any of that cash left; you could dash off any time you wanted to and I'd be left right out in the cold.
- Spats.* Oh, the old double-cross game, eh?
- Tex.* Or words to that effect, yes. I wouldn't put it past you.
- Spats.* All right, so what?
- Tex.* Well, I'm not going to be left out in the wintry air, that's all; I'm leaving — now.
- Spats.* Aw, now, Tex, you don't want to do that; think what the other jobs are like.
- Tex.* Will they be any worse next year? What's the difference. If I stay with this another year and then find that you've gone off with all the dough, I'll be in just as bad a mess; so I might just as well go now. And I'm taking my sermons with me to make it harder for you. *(She goes to the trunk, and during the next speech of Spats changes her dress. She rummages around for her speeches)*

- Spats.* Hang around, sister. Now listen, I know it seems pretty phoney, the way I've been holding out the kale, but it's just because we want to have some when we decide to quit. It's probably seemed kinda shady, and it might look as if I were double crossing you, but I haven't.
- Tex.* How do I know?
- Spats.* (*Takes out a well-filled bill-fold and hands it to her*) Here's all we've taken in so far. It's in hundred dollar bills. Count them for yourself and figure it out at about one-fifty a night minus expenses.
- Tex.* (*She counts the bills*) Ninety-three hundred —
- Spats.* And ten thousand in Chi — the national bank. —
- Tex.* Seven months savings —
- Spats.* And about two hundred in tonight's collection. I think, (*He looks for the plates but cannot find them*) Where are those collection plates?
- Tex.* (*Slightly tremulous*) I don't know; where did you put them?
- Spats.* Here, I think, on the trunk. Where in Hell did they go?
- Tex.* (*She moves cautiously toward the cot*) They ought to be where you put them.
- Spats.* (*He looks at her suspiciously*) What did you do with them, Tex —
- Tex.* I — I — don't —
- Spats.* Like hell you don't; you've ditched them someplace. Now come across before I break your damned neck. (*He advances toward her menacingly*)
- Tex.* Really, Spats, I don't know where they —
- Spats.* You low little mongrel — (*He goes toward her, and she retreats to the cot, backwards as —*)
- Burness.* (*From within*) Miss Christian —
- Tex.* (*To Spats*) Wait — wait. —
- Burness.* Oh, Miss Christian (*He appears in the doorway*)
- Tex.* Don't come any farther, you'll fall down the steps — (*She goes to the steps and helps him down*)
- Burness.* I came back as you told me.
- Tex.* Yes. (*She quickly takes a handful of bills from the wallet which she still holds and gives them to him, unseen by Spats*) Here is the rest which I promised you.
- Burness.* Oh, thank you —
- Spats.* (*He suddenly understands what happened to the money*) You gave him — Oh, I — (*He suddenly becomes the Brother David who leads the songs*) I'm sorry, Sister Christian, but that money was for the Indiana home mission schools. Mr. Burness, you will — I am sorry that we can't help you, but that was for another cause; you will have to return the money.
- Burness.* Not — not for — for me? But Miss Christian —
- Spats.* She didn't understand that that was for the other fund.
- Burness.* But I'm sure —
- Spats.* (*Impatiently*) You'll have to give back the money.
- Burness.* But —

Spats. (Belligerently) Come on now.

Tex. Be careful, Spats —

Spats. Keep out of this!

Tex. Why should I? This is my scrap as well as his.

Spats. Since when, — how do you figure —

Tex. (Defiantly) Because I'm getting out of here, too, with all that's left; this half is mine and you don't get gypped. You won't give me a vacation; so I'll take one, a permanent one. I'm sick of all this filth. I want to get away from the smell of that greasy stove, not just because it's caked with dirt, but because it's a symbol of what everything else in this place is like,—low, degrading, and out of the class of ordinary decency. Your weak-kneed chiseling is out of my line, now — that blackout sold me a dose of my own medicine and I like it — I'm going into some honest game like robbing banks or picking pockets — you can pick your own victims and quit when you want to. I'm through with all this evangelistic bunk, trapping idiots into holy monkey-shines, preaching, the lying pretense and gospel mongering. I'm taking off these hypocritical rags of a saint and from now on, by God, I'm going to be honest!

Spats. I suppose I ought to grow a moustache so that I can twist the end and say, "Curses, foiled again", but me proud beauty, the hardest part for you is yet to come,—you have to get out that door. *(He goes toward her and starts to take her wrist — Burness has, at the same time sidled up to the exit, right, and is about to go out. Spats sees him, drops Tex's wrist and goes to Burness, grabs his coat collar and pulls him back)*

Spats. Wait a minute, you — you're going to give back what you've got, too.

Burness. (Very disappointedly) But it was given me by the lady. I shall give it back only when she asks for it.

Spats. Tex!

Tex. Let him have it.

Spats. The hell you say. *(He is in a frenzy)* You'll give it back to me now.

Burness. No. *(Spats rushes toward him to strike him)*

Tex. Don't, Spats, he's blind. *(She is too late. Spats swings savagely at Burness, who guards his face and ducks, and before Spats can strike again — Burness hits Spats right in the point of the chin with such power and directedness of blow, that Spats falls to the floor. Spats lies on the floor dazed, not only by the blow, but by the realization that the man can see. Had Burness struck Tex he could not have jolted her more — the man in whom she believed, the one thing on earth which was fine and clean was as phoney as a lead nickel. She puts her hands up to her face and looks dazedly through her fingers at the man standing by the exit. She murmurs in despondent, surprised half daze)*

Tex. God — he — he — can — see. *(Spats, who is on the floor, rises slowly—he is the Spats that at one time went to Zion Creek Seminary—)*

Spats. God in heaven — he — he *(His emotions run the gamut from horrible calm to insane madness)* You can — you're not — You son of a —

Burness. All right, you know now — and what are you going to do about it? It takes a crook to gyp a crook. What? What?— Well, I'll see you on the Rue de la Paix.

Spats. (*Running toward him*) Hey, wait.

Burness. Don't hold on to my collar; I don't like it.

Tex. (*Still hypnotized*) A fake — fraud.

Spats. You can't get away with that; that's grand larceny — ten years.

Burness. Well, you ought to know. I wouldn't get rough or noisy if I were you. If I told the populace what kind of a humpty dumpty bunch you were your racket wouldn't be worth a nickel; so if you want to make this work in some other place keep your trap shut. (*He goes out the side.*)

(*Tex stands for a moment upstage; then suddenly she breaks out of her trance — we see the old Tex, the Tex of the streets. She goes to the barrel, picks up a snipe, goes backstage and lights it on the lamp, grabs paper and pencil from the trunk as she goes quickly downstage again and sits at the barrel writing rapidly.*)

Spats. (*Scratching his head and muttering*) Christ! (*Then he sees Tex*) Well, why don't you go too?

Tex. (*Busily*) Shut up!

Spats. What's that you're so studious about?

Tex. Tomorrow's sermon — and brother — it's hot!

(*Spats smiles broadly and Tex writes rapidly as*
(*The curtain falls.*)



FRUSTRATION

ALBERT JOHANSSON

Which way I turn I am enclosed by walls
That have no door, no gates, where I might go
Through their circumferences: I do not know
Which way to try: My every move forestalls
Itself upon the bricks. The daylight falls
All shattered to the ground and night hours flow
A smooth, black river over it: I go
Still wildly hunting gates that pierce these walls.

I'm prisoned in myself. I find no way
To break a doorway where I might go through.
I languish in my body with the day
And pace within it all the nighttime, too:
Although I struggle and although I pray,
Each way I try to flee I'm stopped anew.

FUTILITY

LOUISE WINANS

If I could but express in words
The beauty of our daily lives —
Somehow, it seems so incomplete
To try to picture simple joys
While all around me sky and hills
Stretch into solemn magnitude,
And I, but a fragment of this earth,
Stand alone, and with futile words
Try to create another world —
A power had by none but God.



FAREWELL TO YOUTH

FRANCES R. AYRES

No joy nor sorrow can survive the years,
No happiness forever will remain;
There is no earthly love unmoved by pain,
Nor any laughter not akin to tears.
When war's cruel horror ends, sweet peace appears;
No sacrifice for man has been in vain;
And from the blackness of despair we gain
Rebirth of Hope and death of all our fears.
Time holds the scales by which our lives are weighed,
Her healing hand will soothe the wounded soul
And dull the too-keen edge of ecstasy;
We cannot by life's pettiness be swayed,
For time shall mould of us one perfect whole
And balance Fate to conquer Destiny.

LET US EXCHANGE



FLORENCE WRIGHT

At a recent economic conference in San Jose, the speakers seemed to agree on one point: the panacea for all the evils of the present social and economic conditions is "friendship among nations." Whether the individual speaker advocated complete cancellation of the war debt or only timely moratoriums; whether he advised clinging to that balky horse, the Gold Standard, or sliding off as other nations have done; or whether he deplored overproduction or maldistribution, was immaterial as far as the conclusion of the speech was concerned. Regardless of the original point of departure, every speaker terminated his lecture with the same dramatic plea for "understanding and cooperation among nations." Those sentimental grand finales reminded me of the pet trick of the magicians: pulling a white rabbit out of a top-hat. Each speaker of the conference uttered his would-be panacea in the hushed and reverent tones of one who believed that he alone had discovered the magic secret of eternal peace and who scarcely dared disclose it lest its power be dissipated. Each one dangled his brain-child triumphantly before the gullible audience, which seemed naively satisfied. One could almost read its thoughts: "Why, the solution is easy; nothing to it, really. All we need is this cure-all, 'friendship among nations', and everything will be all right again. Prunes will go up; we can sell the apricots, at last! And it really doesn't seem to matter who is president, a Democrat or a Technocrat, just as long as we get hold of that 'friendship among nations'." Their applause was long and loud, because there is nothing quite so demonstrative as the reaction of relief after fright. Amid the enthusiastic plaudits, the speakers gathered up their notes and returned to their respective professional chairs, no doubt satisfied that they had done a constructive piece of work.

At the time, I was not satisfied nor could I admit any constructiveness, and the interval between the conference and the writing of this article, has not altered my opinion. After all, just what did these men actually do? In the first place, they mulled over the past in an attempt to find the reason for our present status quo: very much like the people who comb dump-heaps in the hope of finding a valuable trinket. The variety of conflicting and controversial reasons they offered resembled a bargain counter. They failed to take into consideration the fact that a patient is less interested in the cause of his ailment than in the practical cure the doctor intends to follow. I admit that they offered us their panacea like so much sop; but what it actually amounted to, was that they stood on the shore, explained to us who were drowning, the effectiveness of a life-preserver, which they failed to throw to us, and then

walked off indifferently and left us to our fate. Not a single speaker offered a suggestion as to *how* we should obtain this coveted friendship and understanding.

Not only were these men unconstructive, but they were thoroughly unoriginal. There is nothing new in the idea they offered with so much paternal pride. It has been kicked about like a poor relation among nations for years. We used it as a smoke-screen for our illegitimate territorial aggrandizements. We sang it like a hymn during the war, and the refrain was "hatred of Germany." We prattled it again when Wilson went to Versailles, and it is the very purpose of the League of Nations. But as far as that body is concerned, there have been more nations than friendship.

Many of the speeches at the conference were enlightening, but like dozens of editorials that glut the press, they did not go far enough. This failure of the speakers to develop their themes to a practical point is characteristically middle-aged. For conservatism and complacency are the two deadly virtues of the successful middle-aged man, just as dyspepsia and cynicism are the cardinal sins of his less successful contemporary. A successful middle-aged man cannot afford to risk a secure reputation or jeopardize his position as an authority, by a prediction or plan that Time is likely to disprove. He has too much at stake to gamble on an uncertain improbable future. That is the prerogative of youth. Only a young man who has nothing to lose, can dare a hypothesis, can risk a prognostication. If he is favored by Time, we hail him as a genius; if he fails, we overlook it indulgently, in the light of his inexperience and the temerity of youth. Consequently, I have placed my hopes in my own generation as the saviors of the situation for which we are not responsible.

Friendship among nations is possible; but it will require more than economic conferences to make it a reality instead of a sentimental amen to a speech. Neither our official representatives abroad, the diplomatic corps, nor our unofficial envoys, the American tourists, are capable of effecting the desired state. The former are so involved in official technicalities that they are barred from any genuine contact with the people among whom they live; any contact they may have is superficial and with the cosmopolitans who are not representative of any particular country. The American tourist is not only ineffectual, but he is a dangerous element, as far as promoting understanding is concerned. He is guilty of the grossest misrepresentation on both sides of the Atlantic; he has left in Europe a most unfortunate impression of the American people, and he has brought back to the States impressions that are unjust and which constitute a definite influence on public opinion. These impressions are largely the reflections of the narrow prejudices with which he went abroad in the first place. When people have spent anywhere from forty to sixty years of their lives believing in the immorality of the French, the uncouthness of the Germans, and the filth of the Italians, can one wonder at their returning only more confirmed in their original opinions? Anything else would be extraordinary, especially considering that these people race across Europe in a few weeks, doggedly following the heels of an often unscrupulous guide, and their only contact with the people of the nation they judge so glibly consists of porters, cab-drivers, and store-

keepers. The same American, who, in his own country, is usually very adaptable, suddenly becomes touchily adamant and uncompromising abroad. The quality of the coffee is almost a point of national honor to him. Thus we need, as representatives abroad, not conservative middle-agers, but flexible youth.

Steps have been taken in the right direction: that is, in making it possible for American students to study abroad and European students to do so here. For a number of years \$1,000 scholarships have been available under the auspices of the Institute of International Education. The following resume of the requirements is self-explanatory: "The students must be not less than eighteen years of age, they must have been in residence two years at an American institute approved by the council; they must expect to return to an American college for the fourth year and to take a degree. They must have given evidence of sound health, high mentality, seriousness of purpose, intellectual interests and promise." The purpose is "to stimulate broader education, finer perspective and better sense of proportion on the part of the student, as well as personal acquaintance between our finest students and those abroad". Likewise the Smith-in-France plan provides for the third year in France for Smith College women. The University of Delaware Foreign Study Plan, originated by Professor Kirkbridge, includes preliminary study during the summer at the University of Nancy and later, at the University of Paris and the Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques. The subjects available are literature, history, geography, and economics. The intensive study of the language during the summer enables the students to understand the formal lectures at the universities. The lectures are supplemented by the individual instruction under the Oxford tutorial system, as well as by private lessons in composition and diction. The students live singly in private families, with whom they can speak only French. Programs of outside activities are arranged to include operas, plays, concerts, tours about the city, and vacation excursions in the country. The German Akademischer Austauschdienst (commonly called the Exchange Student Plan) is an ideal system by which German and American students change places for a year. The American institutions recognize the work their students do at the foreign universities and vice versa. The work that has been accomplished by these various plans is admirable, but it is naturally so limited that the effect is not obvious to the general public.

I propose that in the future the Exchange Student Plan become a national as well as private undertaking. I suggest sending every year several thousand of the most intelligent American college students to universities abroad. I believe it thereby possible to effect at least a partial settlement of the debts owed the States. Since the debtor nations wish either complete cancellation of the debts or the possibility of paying us in their products, which we are afraid would ruin our own markets, would it not be better to allow them to pay us by offering their educational and cultural advantages gratis to our students? Let each nation provide for the free transportation of its quota of the students from the States and return, free tuition at the universities, board with native families and student half-rates on railroads and at theatres, operas, and mu-

seums. Let us do the same for ten per cent as many foreign students as there are American students who go abroad. Each scholarship should allow for ten months' study abroad, and would be subject to renewal only in the case of a graduate student doing special work.

The academic progress the American student would achieve abroad would be the least of his acquisitions. He would become acquainted with the personality, ideals, and trends of thought of his contemporaries in at least one other country. He would live among the people whom we are inclined to identify disparagingly as "foreigners", and acquire an appreciation of their problems, a more vital understanding of their points of view than is possible by even the most intensive study from this distance. He would learn tolerance for other peoples, which is impossible in this country, where usually we see the worst a nation has to offer instead of the best. He would see the advantages of keeping a better balance between business and pleasure than is the case in our own country. Europe knows the value of leisure and how to utilize it; a fact which should appeal to American educators, who are realizing more and more the necessity of a well-rounded life, of an all-absorbing interest besides the material one by which existence is maintained.

Likewise the European student, studying at one of our universities, would learn that we are not all gangsters and that there are other cities besides New York and Hollywood. Best of all, he would become acquainted with John Smith of Main Street, who has worked hard to give his children a good "schooling", to provide comforts for his modest home, and who is so diametrically opposed to the loud, uneducated person too often considered the typical American.

My statements are not pure speculation. I have known many "exchange students" at the Universities of Munich, Berlin, and Paris. I have been greatly impressed by their increased tolerance, the breadth and depth of their vision, and the genuine feeling of comradeship which has developed between them and the native students.

I am convinced that if a large-scale student exchange plan were carried on consistently year after year, it would not only cause an amelioration of the immediate social and economic problems which confront us, but bring about the greatly needed cooperation among nations. I cannot believe that people who as students had shared together their schools, their concerts, their mountains and the beauties of their country-sides, could ever again consider war as the only solution to international affairs. I agree with the General Council of Education, which considers the opportunity to study abroad as "an experience which includes not only normal academic advancement, but such an understanding of people of other nations as may be the basis for a genuine friendship among individuals and nations."

I AM RICH



BILL D. WALTON

We have passed through a panic, suffered from a crash of the stock market, and are now more than half way through the depression, and I am still rich.

It is true that I have not so much to live *on* as I did a year ago, but it is likewise true that I have just as much to live *for*. I have been awakened to new interests in the common things about me, and found these things to hold real value. Good times or bad, the real values of life are unshaken and solid.

My welcome home each night is just as wholesome and good as ever. The depression has not lessened a single friendship. Neighbors still greet me in the same old cordial way. I am still able to lavish my affections on those I love.

My faith in the goodness of the universe is unimpaired. By that faith I am emboldened when I face defeat and despair. The prayers my mother taught me and the faith of God instilled by a devout father remain as priceless treasure that no depression can touch.

Who is there, under the circumstances that exist around us, that is not growing? Who is there of us that is not learning something day by day? Who is there of us that is not gaining experience as we pass along? It seems to me that it would be a very sad comment upon the intelligent individuals to suppose for a moment that we are at a standstill, that we have ceased to grow, ceased to improve and to advance in the scale of intelligence. We are not poor in the opportunity for advancement.

To learn the truth or to cease to be ignorant, isn't all that is necessary. Following that comes the application of the understanding and knowledge that we gain, to those works that are needed for our protection and for the protection of our children, our neighbors, our homes, our happiness. If life is valuable in comparison with the experience we obtain, every person will increase the worth of his life in proportion to the new obstacles that he is able to conquer.

But, while accomplishment and polished grace, attainments in music and art, and a knowledge of the sciences, are good and useful in their place, it is not intended that these shall replace the common labors of life. Always the ordinary is vital, the extraordinary unessential. The ordinary is enduring, dependable, wholesome. Nature is genuinely democratic; thus she has created the ordinary in abundance, while there is not enough of the extraordinary to go around.

No nation becomes great by becoming rich. Neither does a man find enduring satisfaction in life by owning something — only by becom-

ing something. The most degrading poverty is that which results from killing the spirit that the body may be saved.

The depression is a challenge, not a catastrophe. A generation that has conquered the air and sent giant planes circling the globe; which has plunged into the deeps and disported on the ocean's floor; which has climbed above the clouds and lived in the stratosphere; is now faced with a challenge to rise above its dependence on mere things and seek the emancipation of the spirit of man.

The man who lives beyond his means, who mortgages his future for his present, who is generous before he is just, who is sacrificing everything to keep up with the procession of his superiors, is really losing much of life. The man who does not dare follow his own convictions, but who lives in terror of what society will say, falling prostrate before the golden calf of public opinion, is living an empty life. The man who can rise above his dependency on unessential things of life, to the developing of his mind and toward his possibilities, will find much joy in the ordinary. Therefore the depression is not a catastrophe because it awakens us to the realization that we have been drifting. It is a challenge.

It has been said that a man cannot walk a step in any direction without faith. Obviously if we would climb we must forget our skepticism, and develop faith. Faith in business, faith in country, faith in one's self, faith in other people, — this is the faith that will move mountains. Faith is a living, inspiring confidence in God, and an acceptance of His will as our law, and of His words as our guide. Faith in God is possible only as we come to know that He exists, and moreover, that He is a Being of worthy character and attributes. For this cause was Jesus born, that he might testify of His Father.

Jesus, the Christ, stands alone, in unapproachable grandeur. Nineteen centuries roll away, and His character so lives that He inspires millions of men with impassioned love. There is not a principle which was taught by Him but seems to me to be applicable to the growth, development and happiness of mankind. Every one of His teachings seems to touch the true philosophy of living. I accept them whole-heartedly. I love to study them. I like to teach them. These principles of truth offer men eternal joy. Law is truth; truth is eternal. Nothing in all human relationships has been accorded higher veneration than this thing we call law, truth or principle. The greatest intellects of all time have paid it their noblest respect. It is of such nature that man cannot pray himself free from its inevitable consequences.

We must adhere to law and start our climbing now. The man who procrastinates, filling his ears with the lovely song of "tomorrow" is following the easiest and most restful method of shortening the possibilities of life. It is killing decision by inactivity, it is the drifting on the river of time, instead of rowing bravely toward a desired harbor. It is watching the sands in the hour-glass run down before beginning any new work, then reversing the glass and repeating the observation. The folly of man in the delay is apparent, when any second his life may stop, and the sands of that single hour may run their course — and he will not be there to see.

The last year has been for many men a thrilling spiritual adven-

ture through which they have discovered their real wealth. Bereft of dividends and profits, they are discovering the strong sustaining power of faith, and the abiding values of courage, heroism, charity, and trustworthiness.

The deepest satisfaction of life—those that come from sharing and serving—remain secure.

I am still rich because I have become independently rich—my present wealth depends not upon business conditions or market reports, but upon my faith.



REMEMBERED

EDNA BRADFIELD

I think of you at winter's eventide
When all alone before the hearth I see,
As through your eyes, the fire sprites conquering ride
To fling their spoils of heat and glow to me.
I feel you near at flush of summer dawn
While cheery songs from orioles upleap,
And morning-glories through the shades withdrawn,
Peep in my window, luring me from sleep.
The little things, the beautiful, the wise,
We found a pleasure as we gaily trod
Along life's path. I scarce can realize
Why I enjoy them now as I lone plod,—
Only, I seem to see across the space
And find an answering pleasure in your face.

WISH

JEAN SEWELL SMITH

If I could have a cottage by the sea,
With salt winds whipping through the lowly thatch,
By smooth, white sand dunes shifting ceaselessly,
And sand verbena's perfumed, purple patch,
If every night my man came home to me—
(I'd hear his whistle, hand upon the latch,)
My fisherman who sailed a whitecapped sea
And brought at eve his nets of herring catch,
If I had little ones with flaxen hair
To run on slim bare legs along the shore—
Gulls screaming, children's laughter everywhere—
If I had winsome wee ones to adore—
If I could be a humble fisher wife
And you the fisher—God, let that be life.

SPRING

VIOLA JOHNSON

Curved, swaying shadows on a smoothed pool.
White crystals round a sudden darting fin —
What have I learned while Time was keeping school
Though never stern to call her pupils in?
Have I sought truth in rooms where thought is thinned
With idle words poured into books in rows?
And all that while the free, athletic wind
Was running over tree-tops on his toes.
Down by my knees his supple younger brother
Slides through the grass, green, touched with silver grey —
What were those words that bothered one another
To prove that God had died — or moved away?
The birds wing by — one drops a shining feather;
God's soul and mine laugh quietly together.



APOLOGY

ALBERT JOHANSSON

My sonnets spell my life. My joy and woe
And empty disagreement with the earth
Are there as are the people that I know
Because, by accident, my long-gone birth
Was 'midst them: Both my plenty and my dearth
Are writ for people to amuse them with, but I
Conceal things yet and own a secret mirth,
For all's not true that meets the prying eye,
And often honesty but cloaks what's sly —
As caddis-worms make houses out of trash
And pebbles in the pool. To know a cry
The hearer must have felt the very lash.
So read and wonder (or do neither), but
The page that's open leaves the rest all shut.

THE ASHES OF HIS FATHERS



BERYL HOSKIN

"Under what conditions would you willingly go to War?" I have asked this question over and over again of the people of my generation, and invariably I have received the same reply, "Only if my country were invaded by a foreign power."

I have no way of knowing how fairly this answer represents the youth of today, but as one of them, I know that this is the attitude of a vast number.

We are the generation which was born either a few years before, or during the World War. If there were to be a war today, we would be expected to engage in it. What would be our ultimate action? Would we leave our country, and go to a foreign land with shining eyes, ready and willing to act as cannon fodder?

Back there in the years between 1916 and 1918 we were little tots running around. We saw our friends, and in some cases our closest relatives, leaving their homes to go "over there". Our earliest recollections are bound up with the endless marching of thousands of feet. Our children's imaginations were fed with pictures of torture, pictures which may not have been true, but at least had their effect. There were glamour and excitement about it all, of course, but underneath all this we sensed the tragedy. War in all its stark, hideous reality was the real impression planted in our memories.

Somehow I cannot help thinking that there is no paint bright enough, no songs gay enough, no trumpets dazzling enough to hide the horrors of war from us. We know a lot about mob psychology. We know what it can do to us, and we are afraid of it. Yet just in the mere fact that we do recognize the mob instinct, the ultimate weakening of its power for war purposes is evident.

If we of this generation ever go to war it will not be with the schoolboy's blind eyes, or with any notion of heroism or adventure, but it will be with a deadliness, a cool-headedness; with eyes wide open to its awfulness. War to us will only be a ghastly duty.

The youth of today is supposed to be reckless; is supposed to live on excitement. Perhaps we do to a certain extent. It seems strange for a generation of thrill seekers to be turning in the direction of pacifism. Yet we are not cowards in any sense of the word. There are few of us who will not endanger our lives for a moment of glory. This tendency toward pacifism must be explained in other ways. Today we are nearly all going to high school; a tremendous percentage of us is going to college. We have learned things that the youth of long ago did not know existed. We have learned of the marvels of science, of the great work-

manship of the human body; more than all this, we have delved deeper into the realms of the human mind. We may be less religious, but we are more humane. We are certainly less sentimental. And sentiment and ignorance go hand in hand with war. War belongs to an age which we have left behind.

Some of us wonder sometimes why the people of our nation do not send a group representing our generation over to Geneva or London to the peace conferences. We may be young and headstrong, but we can think pretty straight when the opportunity demands it. We are the ones who are chiefly concerned in the future. We take it so seriously that there might be drastic reforms at a peace conference directed by us. Behind all our gayety and our recklessness there is a great earnestness for the future of our land. We want our children to live in an age of peace. Let there be no more war, is our united slogan.

The other day groups of students from seven different colleges in California bound themselves to a pledge refusing to be conscripted into any war service whatever. This is really a startling resolution. For if the generation which these students represent did refuse to go to war, there could be no war.

It is not schooling alone which has imbedded these ideals into our minds. Back there in the years between 1917 and 1919 they took root. Schooling has only strengthened them. The changes wrought by a changing civilization are the real explanations.

Those of us who are women are doing things that women never thought of doing when our mothers were young. We stand on an equal footing with the men we sit next to in our classrooms. We do not desire mock heroes. We will never require our friends to go forth and win glory on the battlefield to do us honor. We do not have even a small place in our future dream world for base-relief hospitals and bandaged pain-racked men.

If ever there is another war, I cannot prophesy, nor can anyone what the outlook will be. But it is not too improbable to think that there will be a struggle to gather enough young men and women together to make it really a war. For this generation will hold back, and the children and grandchildren of this generation of Americans will have imbibed the ideals and the beliefs of their predecessors. Only in the case of the actual invasion of our country would we willingly go to war. This, I think you will grant, is true patriotism.

DAWNS WITHOUT LIGHT

EDNA BRADFIELD

Some day I shall not see the rosy dawn
Come stealing past yon rugged eastern hill
To loiter friendly on my window sill,
Though I expectant wait; for I, a pawn
Advanced but sacrificed full soon, and drawn
Aside to walk where shades will deepen till
All sight is gone, shall miss the joys that fill
The matin hours upon our dew-touched lawn.
The morning freshness of the hawthorn hedge,
The spider's web transformed by fingers cool
To jeweled veil that hides some graceless thing,
The dainty touch of rainbow hues that edge
The mirrored clouds within our lily pool,—
May each new dawn, though dark, these pictures
bring.



NOSTALGIA

ALFRED DWNN

And when I die, think then that I have come,
After a few short years, a gentle round
Of life, back to what I started from.
In the treetops on the hills the wailing sound
Of winds will be as wild. Nothing will change.
And men have seen too much of death to pause
For such as I, who rather loved to range
The open, who loved so little human laws.
Complete oblivion be mine, and yet
I can but hope that you will mourn an hour,
Whom once I loved, until you too forget,
And somewhere, too, a meadow lark is singing.
Yes, you'll forget, for Time's a lotus flower.
But somewhere in the hills an ax is ringing.

TO MARTHA

EDWIN BAILEY

Cumbered with serving, careful with many things,
Not thine to wait with Mary on the Lord,
Not thine to comprehend the mystic Word
Which to the troubled quest fulfillment brings.
Thine is the service of the world that wrings
Its stern necessities from tasks abhorred,
The homely ministry without reward
That from the daily needs of living springs.
Yet in the deep communion of thy heart
Are there not secret half-remembered dreams,
Uncharted wanderings, searching with lost art
Eternal beauty that from heaven streams
Transcending mundane duties, far apart
In vast immensities where starlight gleams?



SUPPLICATION

JEAN SEWELL SMITH

Poor beggar who dares ask for happiness,
Who hopes for wondrous things, as paupers do,
Poor wistful soul pursuing peace, can you
Invoke the blessing of the Mightiness?
For Sappho, whose least word was beauty's own,
And Socrates, whose life was purity,
And that young Nazarene — (all love was He)
They suffered, beggar. God! They bled alone—
Poor lazar, you who are not wholly clean
Of mundane mud, nor bear a sacred gift,
What claim have you to joy, you more than they,
The poetess, the sage, the Nazarene?
Ah, all you ask for Mercy is to lift
You from the mud? God, hear thy creature pray!

SCRAPBOOK GLIMPSES OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN



ALFRED T. CHANDLER

Lincoln had failed. As a country storekeeper, his store "winked out"; he was defeated in his first campaigns for legislature and congress; defeat sank its disheartening thrust deep into his fiber when he first ran for the Illinois legislature; he lost the senatorship of the United States in 1858 after his masterly orations in the Lincoln-Douglas debates. Why? He was serving his apprenticeship for the huge task of mending a split rail, the torn and splintered Union. A few glimpses into the life of the Great Emancipator enables you to understand and get better acquainted with him.

Open, to the first page, the scrapbook of his life. What strange remarks do you see there? It's nine-year-old Dennis Hanks peering into the crying face of the new-born Abraham, saying, "Aunt, take him. He'll never come to much."

Turning the pages, one by one, you see little Abe asking himself questions, trudging beside a slow wagon through muddy clay, going deeper into the wilderness. Yes, and here you see him doing his best, lopping branches from logs for the half-face cabin in Indiana. And here is Nancy Hanks washing his ears and sending him off to school. His father wanted him to be "edicated"; when Abe could "cipher" through a ciphering book he was educated, thought Thomas Lincoln. Six weeks Abe attended school, and then Thomas Lincoln endorsed a note that cost him all his few possessions. So Abe went to work, swinging an axe to help Dad pay back the debt.

Notice the loneliness among these pages of memory. There is young Lincoln perched on the trunk of a tree he has just felled, resting and reading Weem's "Life of Washington," or perhaps he is sprawled in the furrow during a sultry spring day with its back against the plow-handles while he rests his team, which sag wearily in the lathering harness and beat flies with exasperated tails.

While severe, his life isn't so unbearable. He has never known luxuriously heated bedrooms and schoolrooms, nor has he tasted fancy foods. The soft caress of fresh-turned loam on his bare feet is better by far than the pinch of civilized shoes on hot flag-stones. His health sends the vigor of rugged strength through his veins; civilization does not hamper him by indigestion from too much French pastry and lack of wood-chopping. His brain is clear, his senses are keenly alert, and while his city brother goes to man-made symphony concerts and art displays, little Abe is tuning his spirit to the many shades of wilderness silence and wildwood phantasies. The mistletoe in the trees, the deer-track near cool, sequestered spring, the rustle of autumn leaves, the babbling creek on his

father's farm, all speak a language of their own to the boy. He can listen, and he can understand. His is a lonely, nature-loving spirit.

Skip a few chapters. Abe has grown six feet four inches and is as strong as an ox. He wrestles with ease and throws all but one of his opponents. He can out run, out-lift, and out-jump all his companions and can hold an axe horizontally by the butt end, in one hand, at arm's length.

The pages show increasing melancholy and sadness as he grows older. He is twenty-three; he meets the One Girl. Later he is engaged to her, but the fragile Ann Rutledge, beautiful, saintly, bows humbly to the grim reaper and triumphantly passes out from this small, material world to the glorious valleys and mountains of Eternal Peace. Lincoln is beside himself with grief, wandering about the woods in a trance. Finally he is taken in and carefully nursed back to health by old friends of his, Bowling and Nancy Green.

But hurry along. You see him now married, happy in his melancholy way, and attaining fame in his state as a lawyer. His political ambitions are slowly being realized. The period of his political training now shapes up. His first political disappointment strikes when he runs for the State Legislature. He runs again two years later and is elected. His activities at this time tumble after each other in rapid succession. He is continuously active in the legislature and keeps track of his law business as well. You can see him living frugally and paying back the "national debt," as he dubs the eleven-hundred-dollar amount due his creditors on the store that winked out. In 1854 he is running for the Illinois State Legislature, but sacrifices himself with rare sagacity and foresight; he loses the United States senatorship to Douglas four years afterward, but is finally inaugurated President of the United States of America.

A rawboned, pioneer stripling is gradually molded, forged in adversity, and lo! The finished product is a master statesman. Lincoln's wisdom in his political moves elevates him above the politician's class and places him in the President's chair. His debating with Douglas is cleverly done by making "King Douglas" answer a question that wins Douglas local votes for the senatorship, but causes many other votes to be cast for Lincoln in the Presidential campaign.

You can see the dominant cord of honesty woven in the pattern of his life. Notice, too, the rare gentleness of the great man as he cross-examines old Peter Cartwright in connection with the Armstrong murder case. Lincoln is a sensitive, brainy man. His great concern is his fellow man.

Again the musty pages of the scrapbook scatter dust as you turn over several years of history at once. His personality reveals a generous heart, simple faith, keen mind, and a nature tempered by the richest knowledge of the People.

What do the people of the far west think of him? Turn for a moment to some of the scrapbook clippings of old California papers. Here are some from the San Jose Mercury, published during the Civil War. What interesting observations these people make! Scanning briefly the

yellowed and dusty columns, you read that the President had failed in his own ambitions; that he had a large streak of common-sense combined with shrewdness; also Lincoln could see farther than his nose.

What's this? A stained page of the March of Lincoln's second inauguration. What strange-looking make-up! It has large black lines separating the columns from top to bottom. No headlines; look closer. Yes! The story, with piercing anguish, tells of the President's assassination. The black-bordered columns mutely speak touching eulogies and high est praises for the Great Lone Man. The shroud of deep sorrow stills the voice of the triumphant North; victorious shouts give way to thoughts of the strange ways of Fate. Lincoln, like Moses, glimpses the Promised Land — a reunited country — but that work is left for his fellow men, and he takes his place with the great men of the ages.



TESTAMENT

JEAN SEWELL SMITH

As though I were to die today, tonight—
I want to say as I would have it said—
My last goodbye to life. When I am dead,
Let this be held my will which now I write
To every fellow being, not alone
To those who care, would I say Friend, good-bye—
May each, the greater and the less than I,
Receive my benediction as his own.

God bless thee, little world, and pray, forgive
That I can leave thee nothing, having passed,
The wiser nor the richer. As I die,
Let die with me the heartaches I made live,
And let no part of me but friendship last,
Goodbye, poor little world I love—goodbye—

DO YOU KNOW JONES?

RAYMOND H. RHODES



I naturally rather hate to tell this story, because—well, to be unusually honest, I have to admit that Bill Crother's yarn and life rather back up what Bill's voice suddenly boomed out in the moonlight and silence on the deck of the old *Jacksonia* one night—that all men are fools when they find the *one* woman, and double fools when they attempt to deceive that one and only.

The five of us were sitting up forward on the mate's deck, clinking against the sides of our frosted glasses the ice which floated in our whiskey and soda; when—well, by the way he bellowed out that pet theory of his concerning men, you'd have thought he was trying to let in all the East of Suez. We all thought, of course, that he shouldn't have yelled his damned theory out so loud, but Crothers was a passenger, and it was he who usually sent his Chinese room-boy up with cracked ice and liquor for us thirsty camels to gulp down in the hot evenings. We didn't say a word—just waited for him to get started on his evening's yarn.

"Yes," he finally growled into the satisfying silence which hovered around him, "Yes! For all we say, a man is more likely to play the fool than a woman. It is the man, gentlemen, who will let his conceit force him to lie, and his conscience force him to disclose his lies. That was—ah — John Jones through and through."

"Is this a first-hand story?" asked Rawes, the purser, who was young and suave, and liked to think he had a sweetheart in every port waiting—for him only.

"Well, rather!" Crothers answered flatly enough to curtail any further insinuations. "You see, I not only was on the spot when the main events took place, but also picked up some rather conclusive evidence during my last stay in Penang."

"Of course most of the incidents of this story took place a few years ago when Jones and his partner, Walker, first came to Penang," he murmured as he settled a little deeper into his rattan chair. "They were dashing young men from the States who had come to Penang with a minimum of money, a maximum of lust for adventure,—and a knowledge of oil-drilling which they were certain would afford them a fabulous wealth once they had reached the oil fields up north of Rangoon. No one knew very much about them, but they soon had a group of friends there in Penang. Jones was, of course, the secret sorrow of half the women at the hotels. Hot-headed, you know, and fickle. His boyish ways and mannerisms seemed fairly to captivate them; and then, too, his clothes and riding crop—great stickler for dress, Jones. He was, (only the women called him this, you understand) "tall, dark, and handsome,

and with intriguing eyes'. He always dressed in immaculate linen riding clothes with shining black boots; and with his shirt-collar flaring, and his white pith helmet perched rakishly over one of his heavy eyebrows, his was a pretty hot get-up both from the standpoint of the other men and of the heat—but he never seemed to wilt to either.

"Jones used to come slamming out onto the hotel veranda and exclaim, 'Where the devil's Walker?' Then he'd twitch up and down the corridor, snapping his boots with his malakka riding-crop. It was a great show for everyone until Walker came strolling in or about Jones's seventh lap.

'Been down the beach on a hike,' Walker would drawl as he came padding up the veranda steps.

'Well,' Jones would snap, 'let's get going!' And then Jones would stamp across the hotel courtyard past the native curio shops and through the massive gate to the 'rickshaws with Walker ambling along behind. (You fellows know the types, I judge.)

"To the boys it seemed that only a few hours had passed before the ship which had mothered them for the five short weeks' journey from the States had been loaded out through the straits into the blueness and the distance. (They were down to see her sail, you understand.) When she was completely out of sight, Jones and Walker turned and looked at the Hindu wharf-rats with their long black hair, their drooping mustaches, their soiled gingham shirts and sorry-looking multi-colored turbans; and Jones felt ever so far away from everything that counted, and Walker murmured, 'The last tie. We're here in God's country to stay'. Walker really felt that way, you know. He grinned at Jones's morbidness, and smiled back good-naturedly as the Hindus flashed their teeth in welcome from the shadows where they squatted in chattering circles around their noonday rice mounded on palm-leaves.

" 'We can leave for Burma on tomorrow's boat,' Walker mused that evening as they lounged with their after-dinner drinks on the hotel veranda fronting on the beach.

" 'But—but we've only seen Major Winthrod once about that lease on his land. We have to have that lease, Bud.'

" 'But Winthrod said we could have that lease any time we wanted,' Walker returned.

" 'I like it here, Bud. Let's stay a week longer.'

" 'I won't argue. The major's daughter, Pauline, rather—'

" 'Yes, I know,' Jones cut in dryly.

" 'But we should be going after this week, old fellow. I want to get up there,' and Walker looked out through the palms and to the north. The bay was but slightly ruffled, and played in all colors like a sparkling opal. In the distance the sea was as white as frothy milk, and near the jutting coasts the setting sun was shooting down through the clouds to change the spray to showering gold. Walker sighed and thought of Pauline, whom he had met that day, and thought again of the oil-fields up north, and wished he could be up there and in Penang with Pauline at the same time.

"Pauline was just a woman; but all the world to Walter, of course. Pretty, yes, but—well, dumb enough to think herself clever. She used her

large blue eyes to advantage, you understand, being a woman. Walker always said they were beautiful. I don't know exactly why Jones didn't put his hat in the ring with Walker, but he didn't. Perhaps he was looking for a different type at that time — you know.

"For Walker, though, it was enough for her to be a woman. Very reticent girl, Pauline. That helped, of course. She and Walker used to saunter down the beach in the moonlight, and she'd let him do all the talking except for a few exclamations such as 'You make me feel so wee and small' and 'You've traveled so much more and seen so much more than poor little me' and —well, you gentlemen know the type. But Walker conceded her silence as a sign of 'still waters run deep', and loved her as ravishingly as was possible for a man of his nature and experience, and marveled that she should notice him more than James, and finally popped the question to the full satisfaction of Pauline and all concerned.

"The two boys found, after they had wormed their way up to the land in Burma a few weeks later, that the country was all that Winthrode had claimed it to be. But the endless weeks dragged by. Walker's chuckle became a hollow sound, and Jones's jokes were duplicates of others. Swearing was no longer an indulgence for relief—but habit. And bossing Hindu natives became work, and pleasure was a word to be found in any dictionary—but not in Burma.

"They laughed and joked and swore in the evenings to ward off depression, but always for Jones there were those long silences while Walker re-read eternally his occasional letters from Pauline. Sometimes in the evenings the boys would wander over to the Hindu settlements and listen to the plaintive songs and the rhythmic pounding of the drums. No other white person for miles.

"I suppose it was quite trying for an impetuous man like Jones—much more so than for Walker, who was in love and could talk for hours at a time about Pauline. She was the only one of their friends who wrote. Her long, newy letters irritated Jones at first—jealous, you know—, but he soon began to identify himself with her in rather an intimate way, and, as weeks sweltered into months, Jones actually became convinced that she probably cared more for him than for her fiancé.

"And then she wrote, now forlornly, that she was happy in her father's old home in England. Between those cherished lines to Walker, Pauline seemed to have written tearfully that his diamond ring was losing its lustre—its meaning.

" 'Bud,' Jones mumbled out one evening, 'one of us must go to Rangoon soon for supplies.'

" 'This week?'

" 'It may as well be tomorrow or the next day.'

" 'Who shall go? How shall we decide that?'

" 'Shall—we cut the cards?'

" 'Yes,' Walker murmured hopefully.

"They did cut the cards. Fate's clammy fingers were there, though, undoubtedly, shuffling their greasy deck, for it was Jones who scrambled into their shack to pack his bag a moment later.

"Jones gave Rangoon hardly a passing glance from beneath his sun-helmet. It was Penang that he longed for. And believe me, boys,

it was only a few minutes after his boat had drifted alongside the dock at Penang that Jones was there on the hotel veranda again at the beach, lounging irritably content and answering questions.

"Success? Well, yes, in a way. One fair gusher in; two wells drilled only to find Lady Luck standing with her back to them. Had the fever? No. Was Walker well?"

"Walker?" And then Jones twirled his mustache to hide the irony that was twisting queer smirks into his face, and he thought of the Burma sun parching greasy natives and Walker up north there, and with the lust for pleasure and women and freedom from that hellish routine goading him on he lied—lied craftily, deliberately, and smiled at his conscience. "Walker?"—I haven't heard of him in weeks, months. He disappeared—somewhere."

"You searched?" they angled, grasping at each morsel of his prevarication. "Never found him?"

"No. I never found him. Fever got him, maybe; possibly a snake—a python."

"Have you written Pauline Winthrod the news?" they questioned.

"No—no, I shall go to England. I shall tell her myself. The oil-wells are safe—a native foreman, of course. I'll go tell her myself."

"Jones did go to England to Paula, although God knows he could have found plenty of other women. He took his time while making the trip—(Just the usual tourist side-trips, gentlemen. Kandy, Aden, Cairo, and the hustling European ports on the Mediterranean)—and it was some weeks before he finally arrived at Hove, or Eastbourne, or wherever it was on the English coast that the Winthrodes lived.

It was a whispering, shadowy garden and in the moonlight that Jones quietly and sympathetically—but not making such a hero of him that she would feel bonded to his memory, you understand—told of Walker's disappearance. She wept, of course; not for too long a time, however, snuggling her head against Jones's shoulder while he murmured quieting consolations.

"I—there's no one—. Please forgive my crying," she smiled up through watery eyes. "There's no one but yourself for me to turn to, John."

"Forgive? If I could only make you turn to me always, Pauline, turn to me with your woes. I'm devoted to you. Even there in Penang it was always you, Pauline—but Walker had spoken first. It has been only you that I have worshipped in months. Worshipped you, Pauline. In silence, but always only you—"

"Jones and Pauline were married soon after with great pomp and little ceremony.

"They lived in England for a time quite happily. And then love became colorless and drab. Jones, now that disenchantment had become a habit, often sank down to the lowest levels of despair, battling with his conscience night and day. Always it seemed there would be the memory of Walker trusting him—and his weakening; his selling Walker's faith in him to gain a mere woman. It was inevitable that Pauline should become a mere woman, and then, as time went by, a thorn in his side.

" 'John, let's go to a dance tonight,' she said one evening, rising the moment above her melancholy.

" 'No.' That was all he said, and she sank back defeated, admitting that his word was law.

" 'Woman, I suppose, was born to suffer in silence,' she mused aloud unwittingly.

" 'And if you have told me that once, you've told me that ten thousand times,' Jones answered scathingly, and then turned again to battle with his conscience.

"That Pauline would learn the truth about Walker sooner or later, Jones knew was inevitable. He knew, too, that he ought to tell her all, but sensing the hatred which she would fling at him now—now that their ideals of each other had become mere ashes and dust and jealousies of that mutual rhythm of thought which was to have made them one, and which had receded slowly but surely back into their pasts—Jones lived with his gloom and his conscience.

" 'You need a vacation,' he murmured somberly the next morning, and didn't even reward her with a glance when she said, 'Really?' and forced a placating laugh.

" 'Well?' Jones growled.

" 'Perhaps it is you who desire one,' she muttered dryly.

" 'Are you jealous of my desire if it is that?'

" 'No — not of your desire, perhaps — but of what might take place if I should go; of what may have been taking place—'

" 'Are you implicating,' he raged, 'that — but — no. It is nothing of the kind—my desire, if you will call it that. You could go back to Penang for a few weeks. You would enjoy seeing your old friends again; enjoy hearing the latest gossip — and the not—so—late, perhaps, I should miss you, of course, but—'

" 'Yes,' she interrupted icily, 'you *should* miss me.'

"Jones did secure reservations for her on a boat sailing for the East of Suez, and insisted finally that she go. And then, after the last serpentine binding them together had been severed as the ship drifted away from the dock, Jones returned to his office and wept bitter tears, knowing that she would learn all in Penang. He realized now that she was dearer to him than anything, but—in Penang, what would she do?

"To say that Pauline Jones's vacation was a success in the ordinary sense of the word would be a gross exaggeration. She sauntered down the gangplank onto the dusty wharf at Penang late one afternoon. She scurried up the same gangplank the following day, her eyes mere slits now and turned toward England. Pauline kept a calendar in her state-room. Each night she tallied the number of days remaining, before her arrival in England. She was not home-sick.

"Jones met her in fear and trembling in a heavy fog that was rolling up the Thames to hover over London like a damp blanket.

" 'You enjoyed your trip, darling; didn't you?' he asked, searching, curious as it may sound, for some hint of her justified wrath and hatred which surely must come.

" 'Yes,' she said. 'See that my baggage is brought off immediately, John.'

"And believe it or not, that was the psychological thing for Pauline to say. Had she added 'please' or 'darling', then it would not have been unconsciously branded upon John Jones's brain that his reign as head of the family had ended. Because he was a man, because he knew she had learned something in Penang, because—well, the baggage was brought off immediately. It was a servant to Pauline who saw to that; his name was Jones.

"It was that evening and not the next that Pauline said, 'John, we are going out tonight' and 'John, don't smoke in this room', and expected 'Yes, darling' for a reply—and got just that.

" 'You enjoyed your vacation; didn't you?' Jones queried again that evening, and bit his lip at her one-syllable reply. He wanted to loose his imagination and speak aloud now, as facts, all the gaudy things he might have done while she was away — but he didn't, and she didn't ask. Just sat there, you understand, and pointed neither to the left nor to the right in answer to his interrogations; told him not behind which door the tiger crouched, or whether it was already loosed and wildly slipping around waiting for the precise moment for its spring.

"Months passed, and yet Pauline did not hint at what she had learned in Penang. She just let him grope around among his fears and wonderings, and worship her for returning to such a base creature as himself.

"And then one evening Jones puffed out in his most bombastic air, 'The firm is sending me to the south seas on a selling tour next week.'

" 'Why, John — to the East of Suez, you mean?' Pauline queried.

" 'Yes, my dear. There is much work to be done down there. I ~~am~~ to make a hurried trip.'

" 'And you are going?'

" 'Of course. Why not?' Jones answered, his temper rising with his eyebrows.

" 'But — but what of me? I frankly do not like this — your going back there to those places.'

" 'You will be perfectly safe here in London, Pauline. Much safer than you were traveling alone last year,' his voice came back, again smoothly but querulously.

" 'I simply don't care for the idea.'

" 'Why?'

" 'I — I can't say.' And she didn't.

"Jones took his trip just the same, of course, and being human, he couldn't resist a temptation to visit Penang nestling on its jungle-studded island. He sat alone in the hotel ballroom at his table one evening. Perhaps it was curiosity that made him signal for one of the native dancing-girls to join him. He felt again a glimmer of his old self-assurance when she came at once, her rhinestone jewels glittering in the light. She was a mixture of English impertinence and Hindu guile, and she had been named Lucille by her English father for no reason at all. She was a Hindu in her beauty and in her guile, as I have said; and, being a woman, she wanted the world and Jones to know that she was a dancing girl only because her white-man husband (she accented the 'white-man' of course) had given her a dirty deal. She said they'd been married a year; said he'd

made money in oil and gambled it away and drunk it up in liquor as fast as he made it; reminded him again that her husband was white — a Yankee named Walker, she said.

"She was a Hindu at heart all right, boys. She laughed gleefully at Jones's surprise at her husband's name, even though she didn't understand the reason for his show of emotion. And then, cat-like and with native pride at an accomplishment, and laughingly triumphant, she told how one of her husband's old flames, an English girl, had come to Penang and to their shack to see him.

" 'We surprised her all right; she left the next day,' Lucille gurgled out, and Jones laughed and laughed.

" 'Why did she come to see your husband?' Jones queried.

" 'Oh, she said she'd heard he was dead. Said his partner who had deserted him up in Burma had told her that to get her to marry him.'

" 'She found —' Jones voice faltered.

" 'What did she care? She went back to her husband, she did.'

" And then Jones turned, and thrust the girl from him, and went crunching out of the hotel and down the beach. 'So that was why Pauline returned to me,' he growled. 'Best port in a storm; am I?'

"And then, what?" Rawes could not refrain from exclaiming as he sat there on the deck, his empty glass sparkling in the tropical moonlight.

"And then," Crothers ruminated as he left his ratan chair with a heavy movement, "Well — did I not say men are fools?" his voice cracked at us as he stood there, gripping the railing until his knuckles showed white. "Did I not say that the woman is the winner?"

"Fools," he screeched, "all men — at least when there is a woman! What did he do? Returned to his wife, gentlemen, I say, even as any fool would."

And his mask of irony faded from his face, then, and he smiled, like a fool, and added, "Well, cheerio, boys."

And we just sat there and watched his broad shoulders disappear down the stairs, and we wondered if we hadn't ever known people like Walker, and Pauline, and Jones. Ah, yes — Jones.



SONG OF THE SOLITARY

ADA LOUISE ROOT

There was a time I walked this road with you.
Hand clasped in hand, we marked the reddening leaf—
The brief, wild flight of birds against the blue.
(Little we guessed that love would prove as brief.)
Now, in the Spring, I pace this selfsame path.
I, who was once so proud to feel you near,
Am learning all the dreary aftermath
Of love, and autumn and a better year,
A year when leaves were scarlet as your lips,
And afternoons were golden, and the feel
Of wind-tossed hair between my finger-tips
Was almost too ecstatic to be real.
Better, by far, never to have known your kiss
Than to have met the agony of this.

IN THE DESERT



MARGARET JONES

One who has watched the coming of day in the desert will never forget it. At first there is no hint of dawn, but an even luminous grayness, a half light that seems to come as much from the earth as from the sky. Then at the east a glow begins, dull at first and overlaid with gray, like a sheet of iron that is beginning to cool. Minute by minute it mounts and brightens until half the sky is the color of thin flame, a smooth plane of glowing light unbroken by any cloud. For a little while the sand and thorn take on the yellow of gold in dust. Then the sun comes at a bound, the yellow glow fades and shadows leap out.

The day in the cactus country is unendurably hot, for the sun blazes down out of an unclouded sky of the darkest blue, like the intense blue of tropical waters. The desert stretches out hot under the sun's white blinding glare. For league upon league the uniformity of the prospect lies wholly unbroken. Low hills are dotted with little tufts of shriveled grass, and stretching off in the distance lies the channel of a river, almost on a level with the plain, now but one great sand-bed, about half a mile wide. Here and there the expanse is broken by thorn trees and dotted with ghostly yucca. First one and then another of the small rattlesnakes of the desert country creep out from a wind-swept rock into the sunlight. First one, then another, and another, moving slowly, sedately, unhurriedly. And yet, when aroused, the cold fire of their eyes match the fire of the blazing sun. There are no flowers except those of the ever-present cacti. A tragic glamor invades the place, for now and then one sees the skeleton of an animal, perished for want of water.

The sunset is glorious. The sky receives a mantle of gray, while in the west a ruddy haze slowly darkens to purple, yet is still tinged with gold. A pale, diffused glow marks the west when the afterglow has faded.

Blackness finally blots out the sky. Something, an infinite presence felt but not seen, hovers over all. An indescribable silence of loneliness and desolation oppresses one—dead, vast, sepulchral-like, waiting. One strains his ears for a sound, but the soft, cool desert air holds only a solemn stillness.

The traveler comes to love the beauty, the solemn stillness, the serenity of the desert. It casts on him a spell more potent than the charm of an ancient sorcerer. Once he visits it, he wants to see it again. Perhaps it is the solitude, the stillness that lures him on. It may be the gorgeous coloring or the weird beauty of the sunsets. It may be the shifting sands, the strange plants, or the never-ending undulations of the lands; but more possibly it is the grim memory of those intrepid adventurers who braved the perils of the desert in search of gold, paying with their lives for their daring. The magic of that limitless expanse of sand with its twisted Jashua trees and pipe-organ-like cacti holds him forever. He belongs to the desert, and no charm can free him.

THE FAME OF MONTAGUE

EINAR CHRISTY



Sir Montague of Weatherfane,
Proud of his line and ancient name,
Tired one day of the court so gay
And built him a castle far away.
Where the aged virgin forest stood
He raised the castle of Inglewood.
Of granite grey was each massive wall
High over the forest turrets tall;
Within were halls and gardens gay
Where pleasure whiled the hours away;
Around the whole were waters wide
Where the moat was bounded by stony sides.
"Now," said Sir Montague the Vain,
"Never shall perish my noble name.
But men shall look at this stately pile,
Saying admiringly all the while,
'Ah yes, this place of aged fame
Was built by the Knight of Weatherfane,
The noblest of the ancient name,
Sir Montague of Weatherfane.' "
A hundred summers have flowered and gone.
The castle lies ruined, ravaged, and worn.
The ivy has clambered all around
Pulling the great walls to the ground.
The moat is choked with granite gray.
The halls are gone into grim decay.
The roses bloom among vast blocks
Long ago quarried from solid rock.
Trees are growing straight and high
Where steps lead up to the open sky.
Grass and flowers grow in the court
And field mice round their holes cavort
Where once the deeply baying hounds
Greeted the hunt with leaps and bounds.
The wood-cutter passing the mossy mound
Or wading the bog with a swishing sound
Remembers a tale of long ago,
Of the builder whose name he does not know;
How he raised a monument to fame
That he might preserve his forgotten name,
And the thrush at twilight sings the thought
Which ancient wise men preached and taught;
"Our names are forgotten all and one,
'Tis only our deeds will ever live on."

WIND IN THE PALMS



GAIL BALDWIN

Young Doctor Locke leaned back in his chair. He rested his head on one hand, elbow propped on the desk top, and let his strained eyes sink through the cool velvet of the tropic night. The window beside him was wide open, and the gentle trade wind breathed against his face. It was sweet with the scent of gardenias starring the hedge, mingled with the pungence drifting up from the sheaves of white Hawaiian ginger growing beneath the sill. Now and then it freshened with a whiff of salt spray whipped from the crest of a breaker smoking against the rocks beyond the sand dunes. It was a relief to sit quietly in the stillness and listen to the muffled drone of the reef and the soft, sibilant crackling of palm fronds brushing against each other as the breeze whispered through them. Faintly he could hear fragments of falsetto singing drifting up from far down the beach.

Dr. Locke closed his eyes and listened. Only two days more of it for him . . .

They were so beautiful, these islands. Unbelievable that they could harbor such ugliness, too . . . The lepers. All day long he was among them. Testing and tabulating. Those to go to Molokai and those to be kept for observation at Kalihi until they, too, should go to that dread settlement of living death whence none returned. He thought of all the young girls and men he had to condemn. Their stricken eyes and their hopelessness. Like the beautiful youths the ancient Greeks in olden times, delivered to the minotaur in his labyrinth as yearly tribute. There was a strange parallel in this leper business. But it had to be done, and for nearly a year he had been doing it as head of the leper investigation that had assumed control of panic-stricken Honolulu when the scourge broke out and the Health Department had sent urgently to San Francisco. He had sailed post haste. It was his big chance. But it was a heart-breaking business. He was glad that Alicia had not come, for that reason. She would have hated it, and she would have been afraid for Dinny. Dinny . . . A year old now. His and hers . . .

He turned his head from the window. The moon was probing silvery fingers over the photograph on his desk. Locke's eyes caressed the two faces smiling up at him. The two beings he loved dearest of anything on earth, and nothing but this great opportunity would have induced him to leave them. But they were safe where they were, in a tile-roofed Spanish house clinging to a California hill-side where Dinny could patter about among the yellow poppies, with the sunlight on his curly head, and Alicia could plant her favorite hyacinths in the patio garden. Their existence was safe and ordered. . . He smiled wryly. Imagine hyacinths in a Hawaiian garden. Their prim sweetness would

be smothered under the sprawl of orchid tendrils and the exotic patterns of ylang-ylang and hibiscus. . . .

The sliding, minor wail of the far-off guitar hung on the breeze. The sound was primal, like the wind-swept palms that nodded their frowsy heads above the perfume of the plumaria trees, golden with bloom, or the surf lashing against the reef with its eternal murmured song. It was the song of the Islands. It was wild. It was free. He would like Alicia to see it. Some day he would bring her here. Some day, when the leper business was over—

The lepers again! He frowned and reached for a cigarette, resenting the intrusion of his thoughts. Must be getting his nerves. He frowned again. Today had been a devil of a day. Working overtime, and then, just as he'd been leaving, that girl had come to be examined, and he had had to go back, for there had been no one else in the place to take care of her.

A match flamed, a tiny spurt in the dark. He inhaled deeply.

It had been that that had somehow unnerved him. She was so different from the general run of patients, and yet so much the same. So terribly the same. Poor kid. . . .

She had come a long way, from some obscure gulch near Kaneohe. A big strapping fellow was with her, dark-faced and unruly of hair. His eyes had followed the girl with the devouring adoration of a dog's. A hapa-haoli. The girl was half-white, too. . . .

Locke closed his eyes. Linned against his lids he still saw her, truly a rare, hybrid flower of the tropics. Delicately copper-skinned, Caucasian featured, she reminded him of a white orchid he had once seen.

His examination was brief. It was one of those cases that were almost at once obvious to his trained eye. . . . Her great eyes melted like a wounded fawn's when he told her.

"I'm sorry. . . ." He added it impulsively.

The girl stared at him unseeingly. Then she put her hands gropingly up to her face. Her eyes questioned desperately between her outspread fingers.

"Then I . . . I am. . . ."

"Yes. You have leprosy."

"Auwe-e-e . . ." It was a long-drawn Hawaiian wail, evoked from the mists of the past. It brought the boy rushing from the next room to her side. She crumpled into his arms, sobbing. He glared accusingly at the doctor over the top of her bowed head.

"You are sure?"

"Very sure."

"Maybe some other doctor say not. . . ."

Dr. Locke shook his head. "The symptoms in this case are unmistakable, I'm sorry to say. . . ."

"She will have to go. . . ?"

"She will have to go."

"Aw, Lellehua. . . ."

The girl rose, her face composed. "Come, Alaiko. . . ."

What a picture they made as they stood together! Two beautiful young primitives, wild and free. . .

The moon was splotching the floor with silver. A late moon, wan and tired as Locke felt. He switched on his desk lamp and took up a pen. There was a blank sheet of paper lying on the blotter. He drew it toward him for his reporting list of the condemned. He began to write: "Leilehua"—

There was a knock on the door, a heavy knock that reverberated through the house.

Locke raised his head. What on earth—? His eyes fell on the desk clock. Twelve-thirty. . .

"Come in," he called.

It was a kanaka boy, dark-faced with a shock of unruly black hair. Without preamble he strode to where the doctor sat and stared down at him steadily.

Locke looked up at him, meeting his gaze. "Well . . . Alaiko, isn't it? You came in with the girl today. What can I do for you?"

He met the gleaming eyes with his own level glance.

"What can I do for you?" he repeated.

Alaiko ignored him. "You are going to send Leilehua to Molokai?"

There was a moment's silence. Then Locke said, "Why, yes. Isn't that what I told you today?"

The other hesitated; then his eyes fastened upon Locke's again, brighter than before. "I . . . think maybe you change your mind. . ."

Locke's face grew stern. His mouth set.

"You realize, don't you, that she's a leper? There is no place for lepers here, to give the disease to others."

"You will send her, then . . . ?"

Locke shrugged. "What else is done with lepers? I am sorry for your sake. I realize how you feel about it. You know what Molokai is, but . . ."

There was silence. The doctor was reminded of the dark savagery of the tropics personified in this boy. He was like the hills and the sea outside, knowing no restraint, only emotion. . .

"If you like, you don't have to send her away. . ."

Locke smiled wearily. "That's impossible. She's diseased; she'll have to be reported. Make up your mind to it. . ."

Alaiko was staring down at the single name on the sheet Locke had started. With a sudden fierce gesture he snatched it up and crumpled it to a pulp in his dark fist. Locke, watching him, knew pity for his simple, trapped, native mind.

"It won't do you any good because, you see, I'll only have to make out another report."

"All right! Maikai! I give you one more chance to say you not report Leilehua! Nobody else know about her but you—"

Locke said impatiently, "Don't you understand that she's got to go? Don't you understand that she's a leper, that she's a menace—"

He was talking to empty air. Alaiko was gone. There was only the sound of the trades in the palms, and the distant monotone of the reef.

Locke drew out a fresh sheet of paper. God, these natives. . . He was glad there were only two more days, damned glad. . .

He picked up his pen, poised it to write, paused a moment, his strong profile outlined sharply against the yellow lamp shade. His eyes wandered to the photograph, and he smiled at it. . . In two days more the Maui was sailing. In two days more his term of service would be up. Two days more—a week—and he'd be home! Home! In a land where he belonged, where any white man belonged. Where he could understand life as it went on about him. Where existence was — civilized. Where emotions only skimmed lightly over the surfaces, and the moon would not prompt him to forget his civilization and do mad things, to the tune of an ukulele hysterically throbbing where the crooning surf spread lacy fingers over warm sands. It went to one's head, this place, and Locke preferred to keep his head. After all, he was a malihini. He was not of the Islands. Beautiful, quickening, passionate, they called alluringly with their lavish, pagan, tropic colors and perfume and melody. But he was turning his back upon them, the scent of northern hyacinths in his nostrils and the gleam of Alicia's golden hair bright in his eyes . . . In two days more the Maui was sailing! In two days more—

The roar of a gun shattered the dark stillness. It startled the slumbering echoes, and they ran shrieking up and down the twisted gulches above the lonely house by the beach, shivering under the koa trees till the Southern Cross rose slantwise out of the sea. Its far gleam shone faintly down over the cold, huddled body crumpled onto the desk where the dark life-blood seeped in a spreading stain over the nameless report sheet.



THE FIRST MEETING

FRANCES AYRES

The earth, I have no doubt, whirled on through space
Without a pause, I do not think the sun
Stood still, or Time one second in the race
Stopped when its daily goal was not yet won.
How can I say, just then Death stayed his hand,
That suddenly all distant wars were stilled,
That waves lay motionless upon the sand,
Or growth in flowering grass and trees was killed?

These things could not be true—life must go on,
And yet, I felt a thrilling blackness rise
In ecstasy — the whole firm world was gone
When first we looked into each other's eyes.
What is, what was, and that which is to be
Were void in one minute eternity.



