EL PORTAL

SAN JOSE STATE COLLEGE

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EL PORTAL, A MONTHLY LITERARY MAGAZINE EDITED BY THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF THE SAN JOSE STATE COLLEGE, SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, FROM MATERIAL WRITTEN EXCLUSIVELY BY STUDENTS OF THE COLLEGE.

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YOUTH

My love is like a shooting star,
However brief its flight,
For as it goes, one moment shows
More brilliant in the night.

My gold is at the rainbow's end,
Regardless of the odds.
Let wisdom wait, I'll play with Fate,
And gamble with the Gods.

I gallop with the setting sun,
Sail on the Milky Way,
No limits face my time and space,
Tomorrow is today.

I climb the mountains of the moon,
And from its silver roof,
Send forth my cry—let none defy!
I am the Voice of Youth!

FRANCES R. AYRES

THIS IS MY WORLD

This is my world—
Each tree, each fruit, and blossom curled;
Each day that passes is for me,
I have the earth, the sky, the sea;
Strange Gods are mine, thoughts newly shared,
I love where no one else has cared;
I'm rich in loyal and sturdy friends,
Companionship that never ends—
The gallant oak, the loving pine.
These are my friends—this world is mine.

FRANCES R. AYRES

THE DEVIL'S SEARCHLIGHT

CHARLES B. BRADFORD

Professor Langford made a final adjustment to the strange glass and metal mechanism over which he stooped. Reaching out with a long, well-shaped hand, he grasped the ebonite handle of an electric switch on the compact switchboard beside him. A hum arose from the machine, and dim lights appeared in the depths of two large glass bulbs that topped the contrivance. The Professor straightened up until his eyes came level with the window opposite. Instantly his hand darted to another switch, a switch with a red handle. The movement was like the spring of a deadly snake.

The man whose evil head and hulking shoulders were framed in the open window was no fool. He leisurely raised his hands above his head and favored the Professor with a twisted grin, half smile, half grimace.

"Be so kind as to step inside, and keep your hands up," ordered the Professor. The intruder threw his stocky leg over the sill and came forward into the lighted room. The man's sartorial display jarred with his coarse features. His tie struck a jangling discord with his suit; his overcoat was too loud and fitted too closely. From spats to derby, he was expensively clad in the worst possible taste.

The overcoat sagged suspiciously at the pockets. Taking a neat little automatic from a handy drawer, the Professor approached the splendidly attired creature and removed two villainous revolvers from the overcoat pockets, an automatic and a Maxim silencer from the brilliantly-hued suit, and a long knife from beneath the silken shirt. These the Professor transferred to his own pockets.

"Now that I have your arsenal, perhaps we can talk. Have a chair."

"T'anks," said the one-man army. "I always like a see a guy use his bean. A fly bird would call cops, or try a roughhouse and maybe get hurt. Now all I want to do is make you a little proposition. I want to buy that little doo-dad over there with the pretty lights on it."

"Not for sale!" snapped the Professor.

"Now listen Professor, maybe I oughta introduce myself. The moniker is Tony Splitalvo, an' I always get the big side of the split. I got plenty sugar, and if you don't wanta talk business, I got a mob that will make you wish you had." Spiltalvo got to his feed and dragged an enormous roll of bills from his breast-pocket. He began peeling off thousand-dollar notes. In spite of himself Professor Langford was fascinated. The cool green of the currency held his gaze, the crisp

crackle of new bank notes filled his ears like sweet music. He was not tempted, but the sight of so much wealth held him breathless, spellbound. His whole attention was for the moment concentrated on the greenbacks, flicking over one by one in the coarse bejeweled fingers. For the moment his back was to the window, and his mind was held by the money, and that was just exactly what Mr. Splitalvo wanted.

A voice, quiet and laden with deadly purpose, came from the still open window. "Drop that gat, fella! Hoist yer dukes. Now turn round, slow." The Professor came out of his trance as though he had been jabbed with a needle, but it was too late for action. He obeyed, and found himself gazing into the coldest eye he had ever seen. It glared at him over the wicked barrel of a sub machine gun.

"Say the word, Split, and I'll make this dude so lousy with holes the cops will think the moths got him," said the owner of the eye.

"Easy with the roscoe, Squirt. You bumped too many stiffs already to be good for yer health. This guy is gonna show us how to work that electric cannon he doped out. Don't blast unless he tries to pull a fast one. If he does, make hamburger outa th' rat." He turned to the Professor. "Keep them lily-white mitts elevated while I get back me artillery." He gave his victim a mock smile. "Professor, I wantcha ta meet my best gun, Mr. Bump-off Spilletti."

"Charmed," said the Professor.

"Dee-lighted," replied Spilletti, not to be outdone in courtesy. "You'd look swell - - - on a slab in the morgue."

"Cut the bouquets, Bump," said Splitalvo. "Come on in so we can get down to business. Go ahead, Professor, and show us how the doo-dad works, or Bump will show ya how his little outfit can talk."

The Professor shrugged his shoulders and assumed a classroom manner. "This apparatus is the direct result of a recent accidental discovery of mine. While using two of the latest and most powerful X-ray tubes at the same time, I found that a heavy ionization of the air took place wherever the rays from both tubes occupied the same space. The effect was only present when one tube was near the transformer supplying power to the outfit. I first guessed, and later verified by experiment, that the frequency of the waves from the one tube was changed ever so slightly from the frequency waves of the other, with the result that where the beams intersected, heat notes of low frequency were set up, these new notes being in the region of short waves, bordering on the frequency of radiant heat. The result is that if the apparatus is focused on the brain or spinal column, temporary paralysis, or else total destruction of the nerve ganglia takes place, resulting in immediate death, and leaving absolutely no marks on the body. In this machine I have placed the power supply in the base,

and mounted the two X-ray tubes, of a type shooting a narrow, intense beam of rays, on a swivel, together with sights, horizontal scale, elevation scale, and focusing control. The beams from the tubes may be focused to cross at anywhere from one yard to one hundred yards, which is the extreme killing range of this particular instrument. The beams, being X-rays, can kill through walls or other solid bodies."

Splitalvo's eyes closed to narrow slits. "Christ! What a weapon!" he whispered hoarsely. "Our mob will have the world by the tail, and by God! we'll twist it just as hard as we damn please!" He whirled on the Professor. "Let's see it work."

"Certainly," said Professor Langford calmly, as though the gangster had asked for a glass of water. "Observe that white rabbit in the cage over there. The heater switch is already on. I turn the focusing screw until both halves of the rabbit's image in the telescope sight up perfectly. I swing the tubes on the pivot until the cross rails in the sight lie directly over the brain of the rabbit. Finally, I close the high-tension switch, this one with the red handle."

Strange things were happening to the unlucky rabbit. For two or three seconds it went into convulsions, and then fell, dead but still twitching.

The two gangsters rushed over to examine the late martyr to Science. Spilletti set down his precious machine gun and knelt before the cage. Splitalvo dropped his revolvers into his pockets and watched, standing with his feet in line with the barrel of the gun. The scientist saw his chance. Deftly he swung his weird weapon to focus on the action of the machine gun. His beautiful, tapered hand reached out and flicked the tumbler of the red switch. The sudden, intense heat developed inside the cartridge cases fired every cartridge in the gun at once. The one bullet in the chamber made a wreck of Splitalvo's feet; the others in the cartridge clip exploded and jammed the firing mechanism. Splitalvo fell to the floor, shrieking in agony, completely out of the picture. Like all bullies, he crumpled before pain. He could have shot Langford a dozen times from where he lay, but all he could do was to bellow, "My feet! My feet! Santo Christo, my feet!" together with choice cursing in several languages.

The instant the machine gun exploded, the Professor swung the tubes on Spilletti. It was well that he did so, for the gunman was quick as a cat. His automatic was half-raised when the intersecting rays caught him in the chest. His shot went wild, smashing a thousand dollars or so in chemical apparatus, while the burning pain seemed to scorch his lungs. When the Professor relented and turned off his machine, Spilletti slumped to the floor, not dead, but temporarily paralyzed. Also, his lungs were badly burned, since the focus was just short enough to reach them instead of the spinal column.

Taken together, the two gangsters were a pair for the ambulance, however well they may have deserved seats in a patrol wagon. The Professor would have saved public expenditure by making a good job of it and finishing them off, for after spending several thousand dollars in bringing them back to health and prosecuting them for their many crimes, the State caused a powerful current of electricity to pass through their miserable bodies.

As for Professor Langford, the Government paid him several millions of dollars for a weapon worth as many billions in any war, and at some future time it may be employed to add to the suffering and misery of humanity.

THE HAUNTED HEIAU

GAIL BALDWIN

Grey-black swirled before my eyes. The touch as of muted wet needles stung against my face. The night tore wildly under the Kona storm that had swept in as soon as we had got started on the long-proposed trip to the haunted heiau.

Behind us, five miles, lay the last little village with the peaked red wooden steeple of the Hawaiian church appearing high above. Before us, through the wind and rain, the City of Refuge of their ancient native faith waited, cloaked in the lush jungle growth that shrouded it in its forgotten seclusion.

Our donkeys huddled against the wind as it bellied in across a sudden open sweep from the sea. Down there, far under the grey darkness, the voice of the reef muttered in forboding undertones. We heard it for a moment; then the jungle reared an abrupt shoulder and we were shut away again in the ravines. The wind racked and soared against the bamboos and the koa trees, and the wet guava bushes brushed us soddenly as we filed by. . .

Hours of it, and the slow clip-clop of hooves against the wet stony gulches. . .

Finally Dick called a halt and showed us his watch in the brief flare of a match under his slicker. "Almost twelve, and we're nearly there," said his lips while the gale snatched the words and flung them far into the restless night. They echoed back at us in a tinkling patter from somewhere in the murk above us. We stood frozen at the eerie sounds. . . The night rose up around us like the unformed, twisting chaos of a world lost, or in the throes of birth. . .

For only a moment. Then we got our bearings and knew that we were somewhere along the Keanae coast, winding toward the haunted

heiau we had been determined the day before to view in its appropriate night setting so that perhaps we too might discover some reason for the native's superstition and dread of the place. We remembered the tales of human sacrifices offered up on the altars of the ghastly Kukailimoku, and other stories of the dead as they filed through the ruined walls. But there was no turning back with Dick at the head of our caravan of five. . .

The wind lost itself in a faint whisper somewhere among the trees behind us as we emerged into the open. It was a lone place. The donkeys rested, shifting legs.

We peered ahead at the dim walls of rain, slanting down softly here in the presence of ancient things. . . The heiau stood before us, vague, misty. There were low mounds of rocks where once had been protecting walls, sheltering all who had gained its safety. . . The tumbled old walls showed dully in angular rows in the flat, bare clearing. The rain made soft little sounds and the Kona sighed behind us through the trees. . .

We waited, astride our donkeys. . . They twitched their ears, now forward, now back. "Midnight," whispered Dick, and still we waited, watching the shadows that were still and unmoving. The oblong sacrificial altar enlarged and grew dim and small by turns as things seen indistinctly in the dark have a habit of doing. That was where the offerings had been placed for Kukailimoku, most terrible of the native gods, and he had glared in a hideous fixed smile upon the slain, whose spirits would surely waver, presently, over the walls, to the weird lilt of their own dying screams. How many of them had died here. . .

Our eyes probed suddenly ahead, fixing on the vagueness. The trees dripped loudly in the silence. Was that something. . . something faintly white in the gloom. . ?

We waited again, staring. The night was hushed about us. The dim glow of a late moon sifted wanly down. Against the heiau a long white row of figures stood out in the pale, uncertain light. Motionless, they seemed to be waiting, as we were. If they would only move —— Minutes slipped by slowly as the moon struggled with the turgid clouds. Then it broke clear, glaring full upon the ruins—

In the moment that was to have brought the ghostly forms into the first sway of their awful dance, not screams rang out but the sudden bray of the foremost donkey. His raucous tone echoed cheerfully against the old stone heap, and died away among the whitened trunks of the shriveled eucalyptus trees that stood revealed in a line, the mute, withered old ghosts of the haunted heiau—

Dick laughed as he turned toward us, groping in the depths of his slicker — "Great, wasn't it!" he cried. "Storm's over too! And now how about a little drink—"?

ESCAPE

KENNARD T. CHANDLER

Lights were already twinkling across San Francisco bay as number 7 slid down the dome-shaped landing-ramp and settled into the dark water beside the pier, waiting for the incoming ferry to make its final landing for the day. It had appeared only a minute before, a small black dot, flying low, almost indiscernible against the dark hills south of the narrow Golden Gate, but now it suddenly loomed larger, resembling a great black gull as it settled lower and lower to the water. A moment later it had taxied the length of the ship and climbed up on to the ramp, where already it was disgorging its passengers, most of whom seemed to be hurrying toward their suppers.

The idling motor of Number 7 gradually advanced into a deafening roar as Lieutenant Judson pulled back the throttle preparatory to taxi-ing down to its take-off for the last hop of the day across the bay. Turning in his back seat at the controls to wave a good night greeting to his fellow-pilot, "Jud" caught a momentary glimpse of the faces of his passengers. Noting that he had a load of only five people—no doubt last minute stragglers who had hurried to catch the last plane for San Francisco—he was settling mechanically into his seat when one of them toward the rear of the cabin lowered his newspaper to turn a page, revealing a weather-tanned, hardened face, made distinctily Teutonic by a small black moustache, carefully trimmed and curled slightly at each end. Already the propellor was moving the plane away from the dock, but that fleeting glimpse brought back all the memories of that terrible day in August, back in 1918, when he had first seen that face. Grimly, Judson closed his eyes as the old haunting memories again swept over him. Once again he was in his little combat plane high above the clouds over the German lines; now he could see another plane approaching—a plane marked with black crosses. Again he found himself going through the battle that had followed; two master airmen, each desperately trying to get his gun mounted in the nose of his ship in a position to force the other down. For ages they had flipped and rolled their little fighters around and around, motors screaming, just above the sedate sea of cumulus clouds, but suddenly he had found himself flying level, alongside his lone German opponent, each calculating how to out-maneuver the other. And then had come that impulsive and cowardly moment when he had jerked out his pistol and had fired directly into that handsome, determined face. The other pilot seemed to turn a cool sneering glance full on him for a moment before he slumped forward on the controls, send-

ing his plane with the black crosses into a steep, fatal dive toward the earth. A moment later, it had disappeared, dropping like a plummet into the clouds.

It would have been different if he had bested the German in open battle, but he had been guilty of the cold-blooded murder of another man. Why did that face keep following? After the war, he had seen it in Berlin. Later he had seen it in New York for a dread moment as a cab flashed by; yet he knew that his point-blank shot could not have missed its mark.

Everywhere he had gone, the shadow eventually caught up with him; in Canada, Honolulu, even in the Philippines that mocking face inevitably had risen before him.

Then, in desperation, he had gone back into the air. As a lonely airmail pilot, he had forgotten the war and the picture of the man he had slain. When the haunting face disappeared, he gradually fell back into his old cheerful ways, and when the air ferry company had offered him this job on the bay, he had welcomed the chance to get back to gay old San Francisco.

The war seemed to be a part of another life now. The teeming crowds crossing the bay brought no recollections of those days back in 1918, and especially that terrible day when realization had come to him that he had been slaughtering real MEN, not automatons sent out by the Kaiser to destroy Uncle Sam. And now—

But Judson finally realized that he was taxi-ing at furious speed down the estuary and that he should have got off long before this, especially in the dusk. Half stunned by the dull realization that he could never escape from his own self-condemnation, "Jud" eased the controls back, lifting the seaplane from the water. It was only when the weight of the delicately-balanced craft in his hands finally cleared his confused mind, that he realized that he was driving forward at terrific speed straight toward an unlighted tug-boat with a string of low barges which had appeared from behind the long railroad pier on his left. With the skilled precision of a man trained for any emergency, Judson pulled hard back on the "Stick", attempting a desperate turning zoom, but the sheer forward speed of the craft bore it onward a fraction of a second before it responded to the controls. In that infinitesimal lapse of time, the tug had suddenly loomed dead ahead like a great liner, and then as the meteoric craft began its zoom the pilot house of the tug seemed for a split second to be directly in the path of the slashing propellor of the seaplane as it fought upward to clear the boat. For a fleeting second, Judson saw the terrified face of the man at the helm, then, with a rending crash as one pontoon smashed the pilot house, the plane lurched, veered sharply, and bounced, spinning crazily to a load of gravel on the nearest barge. Like a great bird mor-

tally wounded, it paused, then slowly nosed over into the water, submerging itself until only the top wings were on the surface.

Kicking out the glass and fabric sides of the water-filled cabin, Judson struggled to the surface, where already the passengers were bobbing up as they freed themselves from the under-water trap.

It was as if the cold water had awakened him from a terrible nightmare, and dazedly the events of the last few seconds came back to him. And then he remembered the face of the German pilot. Why, the five passengers were there in the water with him, but the face of the enemy flier was not there! All of the pent-up emotion of the hell that he had been living in suddenly changed his brain to that of a madman. With a great wild cry, Judson lunged back into the dark water. Fighting his way to the cabin, he pulled himself back into the interior. At last had come his chance to redeem himself! In the blackness of the water he exultantly groped his way toward the spot where his man must be. The blackness of the wrecked, water-filled cabin seemed to be changing to an even darker hue. Feebly, he gained the spot where he had seen the vision of the German. As an ever greater blackness overpowered him, he laughed. At last he was free.

A SHAFT OF SUNLIGHT

JEAN SEWELL SMITH

A creature watched a shaft of sunlight sliding diagonally across the room from a high window. It made a shining square on the dusty floor; it swirled motes about in the dead chamber air. The creature bowed a low good morning to the beam, and then straightening his rounded shoulders a little, he emitted a dry, barking laugh. It was an ashamed laugh that changed to a piteous half-grin as the creature shambled hesitatingly toward the light and then with caught breath, into it. He let it pour into his skinny upturned face; he tangled it in his fingers; he breathed it—

For seven years this one shaft of light had been the creature's allotment of sun. Seven years it had been his sole visitor from the living world. Other companionship he found in books, works of the masters, gay books, fantastic lore, religious books—all of them slung aside in despair now and then, for though they spoke, their voices had no sound, and though they adventured, they had not flesh and blood.

Seven years ago the creature, straight backed and firm muscled

and twenty-three, adopted the philosophy of the college intelligentsia. With narrow eyes, through hard lips, with bitter tongue, the cynic expressed himself:

"Money is my god. There is no other. There is no other love than self love. Government, religion, society—they are unnatural and unnecessary.' '

"But," countered his classmate, Rheinstein, "you cannot endure without human society. Man's feeling for his fellows—"

"Bah! Man's love and its associations are founded on purely selfish reasons. I should find it easy to do without friends, to accustom myself even to solitude."

"Listen", said Rheinstein, "you say money is your God.'

"Figuratively, yes, I do."

"You would do anything safe for money?"

"Anything that would not offend too deeply against your asinine conventions."

"And you would like to prove your theory that men do not need each other except for economic purposes?"

"Of course. What are you driving at?"

"This: Ten years from now I shall have two of the Rhienstein millions in my own right. Are you willing to stake ten years of your life against my two millions to prove your point? Do you honestly believe that you could bear confinement to one room, without any companionship whatsoever? There is a large, comfortable room in our old ranch house and I would supply you with material necessities for as long as you could endure it.—"

For seven years the creature had endured. For a time he laughed in expectation of his award. The millions were as good as his, for the transaction was legal. Money, money—weeks slipped by as he planned its expenditure. But the glamour wore off, and he fell to reading. Philosophy particularly interested him. Strange, though, how often the pages of Plato and Pascal turned while the reader saw not the print, but the faces of Ma and Sid and old Deal Allison and Hyman Rheinstein and Elaine—and a hundred others.

He endured the first year. His firmness fled; his hair and beard grew; he became pale and stooped. He endured the second year, the third—

Marooned on Treasure Island, Ben Gunn missed none of civilization's benefits so much as cheese and the Holy Bible. You, in his place, might have languished for tobacco or soap—you, for music or love—you, for horses or a soft bed. But the chambered creature missed most the abundance of sunlight to which he had been accustomed. All the windows of his wide cell save one very high one had been

boarded up so that even the sight of other beings would be impossible. Through the nights and the cloudy days he waited with great discomfort for the shaft of sunlight which must eventually strike through that high window and pierce the gloom within. He made a game that he played with that light, a game that was like worship.

He remembered Ma in the sunlight of her garden, remembered tramping with Sid in the warm, bright glare, remembered Elaine on the sunny campus—yes, sunlight is the dynamo that makes life move. Sometimes he thought he could not exist longer without the fullness of the sunlight, and then he would sneer at his weakness and reiterate:

"Money is my God. It may as well be, for there is no other. And I am nearing paradise."

In the fourth year he ceased to mention his divinity as such. Slowly he admitted the realization that two millions alone would not bring him happiness. He began again to plan ways of spending it: a beautiful home for Ma (if she were still alive) and everything grand for Sid (who might be married now and maybe have a youngster or two) and the lovely things Elaine had wanted—and he would endow colleges and found an orphanage that would be a nice place to live in. He wondered what he had once wanted so badly for himself. Strengthened by the need of these people, to whom, he still told himself, he was attached because of childhood fixations, he yet endured confinement.

In the sixth year he owned the conclusion that for purely selfish reasons he would be happiest seeing Ma just as she used to be—a brownstone mansion wouldn't fit Ma. Nor did he desire to rob Sid and Elaine of their simplicity. Perhaps his reason had grown watery in this hellish solitude—at any rate, toward the seventh year, the creature watched his belief in money waver and laughed his dry, barking laugh as it fell. Yet still he endured, for there were only four years of loneliness, and money, if not omnipotent, can do wondrous things.

So in the seventh year the creature stood drinking sunlight into his wasted body, letting it pour into his skinny upturned face, tangling it in his fingers, breathing it—

He was a wise man, if study can make one so; he was a man of great endurance, if suffering long voluntary confinement can prove one so; he was a brave man, as he acknowledged his defeat and owned himself a fool. With only three years between him and enormous wealth he made known his desire to his captor and quitted the room.

"Seven wasted years—wasted years," sighed a world weary of the futility it meets. But the creature, in the fullness of the sun, knew those seven years a small price for the shaft of light that warmed his soul.

SOME RAILROAD TIES AND A FLOWER GARDEN

OWEN ULPH

Two little parallel lines of shining steel lay burning on the flat open land. They did not seem parallel, but rather seemed to converge at a point where Joe thought he saw shade and a place to rest. "One-two-three-four-five-six-seven," said Joe as he walked along. Actually Joe didn't say anything. It only seemed to Joe that he was saying one-two - three - four - five-six-seven. He was counting railroad ties as he walked along. When he walked fast he had to count fast and when he stopped walking fast he would mechanically stop counting fast. It was fun, he thought, to try to walk fast and count slow. He would count away up into the double figures and then for moments at regular intervals something would divert his attention and he would have to begin all over again.

But always at these times when a break would occur in his counting, Joe would send his gaze between these two little parallel steel lines and there as usual, at the point of convergence, he would see shade and a place to rest. This point would move one tie farther away from him as he would come one tie closer. Always, ever since he could remember, that shade and that place to rest had been hopping away at his approach, leaving only their shadows on the distant horizon. It had got so that Joe didn't care whether he got shade to rest in or not. In fact he was pretty sure that he was destined never to get any of his share of shade.

Joe didn't know anything about the law of averages which sooner or later would give him a break. But Joe wasn't a philosopher. He didn't know anything. He was just a tramp. A fast train flickered by making a lot of noise as it went.

Then Joe fell to counting ties again, only this time he sort of sang the numbers in time to some jingly tune. Joe didn't know where he had learned the tune. He just figured that he must have picked it up somewhere when he was a kid, so he went on his way, humming and counting to that crazy tune.

The river ran alongside the railroad tracks. High in the mountains, the river cut its way through granite and tumbled over great boulders, banked on either side by massive white and purple quartz-embedded cliffs; but down here on the flat lands it moved sluggishly through dried mud fields. The clay banks were soft and brittle and the river, incessantly carving concave angles in the sides, caused them to fall away in a jagged line for several miles.

Joe continued to meander along, seemingly unconscious of the river's presence in spite of the fact that he had not had a bath for sev-

eral months. In time he came to a neat appearing little farmhouse. A lady was standing by the gate watering some flowers.

"Hello," said Joe, coming up and leaning on the fence.

"Hello," said the lady.

"You got some pretty flowers growin' here," remarked Joe.

"Yes, they lend a certain touch of color to the surroundings," answered the lady without looking up from her watering.

Joe fidgeted. The lady did not address him. Joe fidgeted some more. "Well," he finally said, "well."

"Did you want something?" the lady asked.

"Well," repeated Joe, not seeming to know what to do with his hands. "I was jes' wond'ring ef you had any hunks of dry bread layin' around that I could take wid me."

"Wait a minute and I'll see", said the lady, trying to find a place for the hose so that it would not wash a big hole in her garden.

"I'll holt it fer you," offered Joe.

"Thanks," said the lady going into the house. Joe looked all about. A sort of mongrel Airdale was sprawled out by the corner of the house. It kept trying to flick the flies away from its nose with its ears. When the lady came out of the house, Joe was still holding the hose in the same spot. She had a plate of food in her hand.

"Thanks," said Joe, taking the plate and handing her back the hose. He began to eat. "I sure like flowers a lot", he said with a mouthful of potatoes. "I guess I allus have liked flowers — ever since I been a kid." He seemed to be seized with a desire to talk about his life. "My old man was a hogwash man down in Little Rock, Arkansas, and we never had much flowers about there. My old man, he never cairt much fur stuff like that. All he ever done was to go out and get himself logged. He'd rather see beer bottles and whiskey kegs around the place than flowers and anything pretty like that. My old woman though, she used ter like flowers like you got here. She grew cabbages and turnips in the backyard all the time; but the old man, he'd go out there when he was drunk and pull 'em all up and the old woman would throw a fit and tell him she wished that he'd hafta spend alla his afterlife burnin' in Hell and eat all them cabbages that he done tore outa the ground." Joe paused a moment just long enough to wipe his mouth with his coat sleeve, and as the lady said nothing he went on, "Me and the old man had a fight one night." With a sudden jerk he pulled open his shirt, showing a long jagged scar on the breast. "He was drunk and ran me thru with a tent-peg. That got me sore, so I threw a stool at him which knocked him down. I was plenty mad and took the horse reins from the peg by the stove and whaled the tar outen him. Then I had to run away because the old man would have kilt me ef he'd ever got up off the floor.—That didn't bother me

none at the time though, 'cause I'd allus wanted to get away from that lousy school. They used to whip me ever day jes' because I didn't have me shoes clean. I could never figure that out 'cause there weren't enough of my shoes to keep clean. Ever time I got it at school, the old man would make it an excuse to give me another at home. The old man hit the old woman with a beer bottle once when he was drunk and split open her right eye. No, 'twas the left one. I member 'cause I can still see that red scar it left from her forehead down to the cheek. After a time the one eye done somethin' to the other and she went blind as a swamp bat. It used ter be funny to see her goin' around bumping into everythin'!

"I been tramping around here a long time now. Bet I could tell some good old stories though; but I guess I couldn't get no one to listen to 'em. They'd jes' say as I was lyin'. "

Joe watched the Airdale which was still flicking the flies away with its ears. The dog rolled over, but the flies still buzzed around; so it got up and sauntered to the other side of the house, where it flopped down, shuffled a few feet on its belly and sprawled out again. It lay there a while and then repeated the process, moving to a spot beneath a clump of hollyhocks.

"Well, thanks fer the grub", said Joe, "I guess I better be mosyin' on down the line a bit."

"Glad to have given you something," said the lady, taking the plate.

Joe moved on down the tracks once more. He hadn't gone far when he began to count railroad ties again. "Gee," he suddenly said out loud, "it must be swell to be a dog and have nuttin' to do."

A shrill whistle sounded and another express flashed by, clicking and snarling over the steel rails.

WINNER OR LOSER?

EVELYN MAE GILLESPIE

White caps bobbed over choppy green water. Salty brown kelp rode the seething breakers. Splinters of wood crashed as they were caught up by the angry sea and swept into the deep swirling channels between the rocks, only to be further shattered as a triumphant wave breaking against the jagged rocks made a merciful screen of salty spray hiding the hideous scene of disaster from the eyes of the lone horseman waiting on the bank above.

Behind the man, the field of trampled grass, broken-off sage bushes, and the jumble of automobile tracks bore mute testimony to

the bewilderment of the crowd which had come to view the wreckage and had gone away with spirits tempered by the experience. Here in the field where only yesterday happiness and joy had reigned, this morning tragedy and despair held court beneath the sullen sky beside the threatening sea.

A small dog darted out from under a clump of matted grass and came whining up to the horse. The man was leaning miserably forward in his saddle, staring dejectedly out to sea.

"God! And yesterday morning! O Lord!" muttered the man to himself.

Then the dog sat back on his haunches and sent forth into the heavens a piercing, moanful howl which stirred the cowboy from his thoughts.

"Well, Tricks — I guess it's up to us to look out for them that's left. He was mighty good to us. You miss him too, don't you? Come over here, darn your old hide. You may be only a mangy, half breed dog, but you understood Jim better than I did. If Jim hadn't been so excited yesterday, he would have seen how it hurt you to be left behind when he said, 'No, Tricks, you can't go along with me today. You may ride on my saddle, but you can't ride in an airplane. You stay and watch the ranch'.

"I suppose, Tricks, we'll just have to wait for the ocean to give up her dead. Not much use in us waiting around here. No, we've got work to do. Yes, sirree, we've got to see that Jim's fence gets built. We're responsible for the hay getting cut. We've got to carry on just like Jim would have done for me if I'd taken that ride yesterday.

"The only race Jim ever beat me in was that one yesterday morning. All through our school days we run races, — and I always won. Me, who was never any good but to run, and Jim, straightforward, hard-working Jim, fair and square in everything. God, how excited he was when Jack stopped and told us a fellow was taking up passengers over here. You remember, Tricks, how we left the fence building and came on to town with Jack. Lordy, when we got to the lane over yonder we both jumped off and Jim yelled, 'Beat you to the plane, Will. Winner gets first ride.'

"Oh, my low-down, selfish soul. All my life I've wanted to ride in one of them flying machines. The times Jack and me has talked of them. I knew Jim wanted to ride in one, and when we was running across that new stubble, I said to myself, 'Well, Jim treated you mighty fair and square last month. He deserves to win'. I slowed down, and he got to the plane a few feet ahead of me.

"He was so happy and smiling. Tricks, you recall how he grinned at me and said, 'See you later.' O, no, you wasn't there, but anyhow that is just what he did. Even slapped me on the shoulder and said,

'Will, old boy, I won a race at last.'

"And then he climbed into that plane, and that pilot fellow got in. The crowd of fellows moved back and up they went.

"Tricks, old pal, all of a sudden we could tell something had gone wrong the way the plane was acting; then as it turned back to the land we all held our breath and then — Zoom! —

"Oh, God, that crash was terrible! Poor Jim. Yep, he won a race. He was the winner, and he took the ride I should have taken.

"We've got to carry on, little doggie. We've got to run Jim's ranch. We've got to keep faith with him and send that little boy of his to college just like he talked of doing.

"Come on, old fellow! You can ride on my saddle now, and we'll make the grade which brother Jim would have rode over if I'd run across that stubble like I should."

Silently, the man bent over and lifted the dog to the saddle; then together as they passed over the trampled grass, they looked back and gazed sadly at the waves striking and lashing against the rocks beneath a sullen sky.

HOME SWEET HOME

MARIAN PASH

It was a small, dirty, messy room. The wall paper was discolored and cracked. The ceiling was covered with water stains where the roof had often leaked. On the table in the middle of the room were the remains of breakfast and of dinner and supper of the day before. A cup of coffee had been overturned and a small yellow stream fell to the floor with a slow monotonous drip. The table cover was stained with grease and chocolate. Flies buzzed about the table, crawling importantly over bits of dried meat or stale vegetables. The sink was full of greasy dishes that had soaked for days in cold water. In one corner was a pile of dusty magazines — "Love Stories," "True Confessions" and Telling Tales." The only arm chair of the room was piled high with dirty clothes on top of which a cat played with her kitten. The sunlight coming in through a streaked window-pane made a cheerless patch of light on the bare floor.

An open door led into a bedroom from which came sounds of heavy breathing and an occasional snore. Through its opening one could see that the room was littered and dirty. The figure of a man lay on the bed fully dressed. His face was unshaven, and one huge paw hung over the bedside.

A boy entered from the outside and stood watching the sleeping man with loathing and disgust on his face. Then he walked eagerly to the window and stopped. His eyes opened wide in terror. A choking, jerking cry came from his lips. Then before him was an overturned stand, a broken bowl, and a goldfish that lay quiet. Like a child with a broken toy, he reached for his pet and held it for a moment in his hand. He stroked it gently and choked back a sob. He went slowly outside and buried the tiny golden form in the wet ground.

He then sat down at the table and poured himself a cup of lukewarm coffee. The cat, hearing the clatter of dishes, jumped up on the table beside him. He pushed her down angrily, and she began to walk about with switching tail and melancholy, hungry "meows." The boy silently munched his stale bread and drank his tepid coffee. When his meal was over, he pushed back the dishes and pillowing his arms on his head, fell asleep.

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 he 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.

ALBERT JOHANNSEN

ON FEAR

BERNARD GALLAGHER

Fear is a terrible thing. It has the devastating power to split happy homes asunder. It can, and often does, crush out the life of seemingly invulnerable men. It has brought about the downfall of empires and has made conquerors appear as weaklings.

To be unafraid in time of uncertainty, or to carry on in the very face of impending disaster is said to be bravery. He who flinches not is a hero. But, is he? Fear knows no bounds and penetrates to the very souls of its victims. Men may appear calm, stalwart, and as unshakable as an oak. But, inwardly, they may be suffering the tortures and agonies of a thousand hells. Their minds may be oblivious to immediate objects and activity, but filled with the nightmares of the damned. The brain becomes paralyzed, the senses are dulled or, on the contrary, become hyper-sensitive. The real disappears. The eyes of the mind visualize the unreal, the terrible, the horrible. Life seems at a standstill. The law of the universe has control no longer. Fear alone is master. In its stark, wild grasp the victim writhes and groans and curses that which has made him a craven coward. But why is it that man, most high and mighty of all the animals, self-asserted "Lord of all He surveys," why is it that he must fall down and grovel before the monster, Fear? Because man is a coward before his own determination. He has failed before he has begun. The man has never lived who truthfully has said, "I fear not."

We live in an age of Fear. We are afraid of the night which cloaks the murderer and the gangster. We guard our families and protect them with insurance. We are afraid that the few paltry hoardings we may have saved will be taken from us by the robber. We dope our bodies with medicine and place our lives in bondage to the physician and dietitian because we are afraid that we will die. We amass great armies and navies because we fear the encroachment of foreign nations. From the cradle to the grave we live in fear of one thing or another, and the pathetic part about it is that we fear life and living, in general, most of the time, for no real reason at all.

Therefore, I must say that I believe that Fear is one of the greatest enemies of man. Its conquest will never be effected until the race achieves superhuman intelligence and self-control.

BACK STAGE

ANONYMOUS

The curtain rose on a stage set in accordance with certain directions; the players moved mechanically across it, speaking automatically; the orchestra filled the intermission with music; and the play moved unmarred to a close. From the audience, after a final burst of applause had died, came various remarks. "Splendid." "Perfect." "Wonderful."

As a small child I sat enthralled in the front row, until the last note of the orchestra died away, and thought how glorious it must be to be up there acting in a high school play with all one's friends and relatives watching from the audience. Or even to play in the orchestra would be thrilling. But my dreams stopped at the back-drop, and it was not until several years later that I learned that the real thrill comes from behind scenes — not as I had imagined, under the fond but critical gaze of the audience.

While I was never in any of the plays, I played a violin in the orchestra, and it was during my freshman year that I was introduced to the glamour of the grease paint, glaring lights, excited voices, instruments being tuned, and the general confusion of back-stage, just before a class play.

The fascination begins when you first enter the building, leaving your parents at the entrance, when you hurry importantly along the back stairs with your instrument case and your music rack poking you in the ribs. Then, as you turn from the dimly lighted corridor into the glaring brightness of the make-up room, you get your first taste of enchantment. Someone is sure to be tuning up an instrument, usually a violin, tapping with one finger on **A** or **D** or perhaps **E**, as the instrument being toned gradually responds harmoniously to the tone of the piano. Someone plays a few bars of a popular tune of a saxaphone, and a teacher hurries in, glancing at her watch. We peek through a crack in the door at the rapidly filling auditorium, and then turn back to help somebody apply lipstick and a few stage wrinkles.

In one corner the drummer flirts with the heroine of the play, while the director scurries about, demanding that anyone having instruments to be tuned bring them to him. A costume is flung across the corner of the table. Some girl wails that she has forgotten her lines, and she knows that she will make a mess of things. The confusion increases, the cast, the orchestra, and the teachers rushing around

getting in each other's way — babbling incoherently: "My lines—". "This darned pin!" Where's my sax—?" "Helen, for heaven's sake don't—" "She isn't here yet—" "Five of, and the curtain rises at—" Above it all, "Orchestra out front!" "Places please! Lights." We file out with backward glances at our classmates of the cast, struggling frantically into costumes and places, and, as the director lifts his violin, the Overture begins, and from this time on the evening is merely another high school play.

I REMEMBER

ANONYMOUS

I remember a day in late September with the haze of a distant forest fire settling down over the valley, and the sun setting in a glow of fire beyond the oak trees. We cantered eastward, my horse and I, toward the distant Sierras — and the cows.

We sang; that is, I did! Flicker expressed his appreciation in soft snorts as the clods crumpled beneath his feet. The breeze tumbled Flicker's mane and tossed my hair, and it carried the song back to the receding ranch buildings blurring in the soft twilight. Then over in the east appeared a thin strip of crimson that rose higher and higher and became successively a semi-disc and then — the moon. We rode on, stumbling now and then over a clod, skirting a particularly rough spot, startling at the swift whir of wings as some birds glided from our path — until the black shapes of the cows loomed in the dusk, and we heard them moving in the dry stubble. As we approached, they started off at a slow pace towards home. We swung in behind them dropping our pace to a slow jog. Flicker's head nodded up and down, and he snorted now and then at the dust. The cows swished their tails and went on deliberately. A frisky heifer kicked her heels and galloped clumsily on ahead only to drop back with her more sedate elders. A bat squeaked; an owl shrieked and slid overhead. The dust rose halfway to Flicker's flanks and sank back to the ground. A few stars ventured forth and twinkled timidly at first until they were joined by others.

Suddenly a light gleamed ahead of us. The cattle quickened their pace, and their hoofs clicked against each other in their awkward gait. One by one they filed through the narrow gateway and turned to the water trough. In the dark we heard them drinking noisily. After the cattle left, Flicker plunged his nose into the cool water. I held my hand on his neck to feel the water run up. His ears jerked back and

forth with every gulp. Finally with a long shiver he drew back. I locked the cows in the pen and turned towards the house leading Flicker. At the gate I pulled off his bridle and gave him a friendly pat of farewell. He turned and trotted off into the darkness and I started up the path.

Today, as I came home, the maples were turning. I scuffed through the leaves on the lawn, but on either side of me buildings hemmed in the streets. Nice buildings they were, but unrelenting. They seemed to say, "We'll make it as pleasant as we can, but you can't get away."

I jumped my way mechanically through the traffic and reached the curb in safety. Tonight, when I come home from the library, the tallest building in town bathed in the white glow of electric lights will look down from its eleven stories and grin tauntingly from every one of its many office windows seeming to say:

"You can't get away! You can't get away!"

And some day back on the ranch I shall smile reminiscently and say, "I remember when I was in college—"

BEING A MODEL

ANONYMOUS

Fortunately I have no friend so close to me that I feel obliged to act as a model for him; but, friend or no friend, I must perform this duty for my sister and offer what seem to my masculine mind very logical arguments, but in the end I close and perform the task.

I can always tell beforehand when an attack of dressmaking is coming on. My sister comes home with large bundles of materials; my mother comes home with a varied assortment of needles, thread, and trimmings; my father oils the sewing machine. As for me, I do not come home at all when it is possible to stay away. Still, one must eat sometimes, and it is then that I am pressed into service.

As a model, I am what every other model is not, for I cannot stand in one position for more than five minutes. Furthermore, I have a lot of trouble getting into and out of the garments. I can truthfully say that my form, whatever it is, was not made to fit into a dress. The only thing about these dresses that fits is the hem, and even with that I am always afraid to take one natural step for fear of breaking it. However, trouble or no trouble, my sister seems to know of no other way in which to make a hem straight, except by bullying her younger brother into trying the dress on. And so I stand sweating in agony, lest I be stabbed by one of the infinite number of pins, and for fear

someone will come in and find me in my undignified position. If such a thing were to happen, I am afraid that I might not survive the jeers.

Even the most disagreeable experience must come to an end, however, and in due time the dress hangs to the satisfaction of its future wearer. But before I can gain my freedom I must get out of it. To see me struggle out of the dress would interest a Houdini. If you have never engaged in such a struggle, let me inform you that there is a decided trick to the process. You raise your hands above your head and stretch upward until every bone creaks in its socket; you draw in your chin until it seems to you that you have pushed your Adam's apple to the back of your neck; finally you draw yourself in generally, to make yourself as small and as flat as possible. At this critical moment, when you feel as if you must breathe or burst, someone relieves your suffering and restores your breath by pulling the dress up over your ears, taking no heed whatever as to whether your ears are pulled off or not.

Since my sister has learned to make her own clothes, I can fully appreciate the suffering endured by people during the Middle Ages. But what are the rack and the screws in comparison with the torture of getting into a half-made dress? And what is being roasted alive in comparison with the agony of getting out of a finished one?

BARGAIN HUNTING

GERALDINE STACKPOLE

The hectic bargain hunters! How often we see them with hat awry, shiny nose, mussed hair, innumerable small and large bumpy bundles which are fast losing their string! We see them in every bargain basement on dollar day, one-cent day, two-for-the-price-of-one day, pre-inventory day, post-inventory day, and post and pre-everything-else day. We find them in every Woolworth's, Piggly Wiggly, Kress' and Dollar Store, in all department stores, and even sometimes in exclusive shops—always bent on the search of the eternal bargain. They are always recognizable, even though they disregard the garb of the ordinary bargain hunter. How? By the glow in their eyes! They have the same intent, purposeful look as a poet, world reformer, or great statesman.

Bargain hunting has a very special technique, as do all other fine arts. The bag of tricks includes subtle jabs with sharp elbows (this is for the sylph-like person only,) exceedingly dagger-like looks, quick jumps on toes, sly kicks, cautious pushes and nudges, imperious threatenings to call your good friend the manager if that insolent little snip

of a clerk doesn't wait on you at once, sharp peering eyes, a long clutching reach, and the slippery wriggliness of an eel. These tricks are very helpful when you are running down an especially desirable bargain. Perhaps you have noticed that most of the suggestions I have made are useful in a crowd. This is because you seldom see a single bargain hunter. They hunt in a pack. Really, I don't think a bargain is possible without a mob. It isn't a bargain unless everyone else wants it too.

You may gain the impression from what I have said that I don't approve of bargain hunting and bargain hunters. If you do, you are wrong, for I am one of the most deadly of the species. I will walk ten blocks to save two cents on a pound of butter. I will buy two pairs of shoes when I want only one, just because I can get another pair for a dollar more. I always read all the advertisements in the newspapers and calculate how much I could save by buying from the advertisers. About the only things I don't get caught on are spark plugs and combined harvesters. If I knew how to use these, I probably should no longer be able to resist their lure either. If you haven't got it, I warn you never to get the bargain hunting germ. Have yourself vaccinated if necessary, for once the disease is caught, it is incurable.

A RELIC OF IMPORTANCE

URSULA MACHENRY

The hat stood on the table, black, shiny, and elegant, smelling heavily of moth balls. Two elderly hands had just taken it from a deep old-fashioned "band-box." Until that moment I had never seen the hat and possibly would not have seen it now, had it not been "spring cleaning" season, that season when all things, especially old family relics, are brought into the open and given a thorough dusting and sunning before being tucked reverently away for another lapse of time and memory.

This was certainly true of the gentleman's hat reposing before me. I felt instinctively that it must have belonged to my grandfather, whom I never knew. I could almost visualize it sitting majestically upon his proud dark curly head, now sternly surveying a rather tumbled room from a huge frame hanging on the wall. I could imagine the affairs of a gentry, balls, and other occasions on which such an elegant chapeau would be worn: dazzling ball-rooms, silk-bustled ladies, beaux of the swallow-tail and cravat period, or perhaps a never-to-be-forgotten wedding, resplendent with lilies, soft music, and lace. This hat was one which—but why speculate? Why not ask why it was so carefully

moth-balled, and brushed? Grandmother, now vigorously dusting could undoubtedly answer my questions, although I was a little loath to ask, fearing that fond memories aroused might bring sadness if not a tear to her eyes. As gently as I could I expressed my curiosity. She stopped dusting and moved to a large pile of tintypes, unframed pictures, and more recent snapshots. From the group she finally took one and handed it to me. Wearing the hat, unmistakably, was a long corn-whiskered man in "Prince Albert" coat, striped trousers, and spats, the rotundity of whose mid-section was beyond all conception of naturalness. The flashy, speckled-white vest, bone handled cane, and silver loving-cup cradled in the man's left arm further exaggerated the ludicrous character.

"That," explained Grandma, "is your father at the first masquerade he attended. Little wonder he won the prize with that twenty-dollar hat on his head. No less would do."

And as the "magnificent reminder" was again packed away among its moth balls and tissue, I knew that it was not for the memories that it might have created but for the sum which it represented that such painstaking care had preserved it from year to year.

BRUCE

AUSTIN D. ROBERTS

Nature meant Bruce to be a lap dog; Fate and his own inclination have decreed otherwise. Nature made him a blue-blooded French poodle, small and fuzzy; his ever active curiosity has made him a hunter and an explorer. Nature intended him to be white; daily journeys of exploration have made him a dirty gray which nothing short of prolonged boiling would whiten.

Automobile grease, mud, coal dust, dead leaves, and all other forms of dirt hold an irresistible attraction for him. He comes in from a few hours of play and brings with him a sample of every form of dirt in the surrounding countryside. He is incrusted with cockle burs, small two-hooked burs, large many-hooked burs, strange spike-like burs, and all the other kinds of burs in the vicinity; he exhibits many varieties of dry leaves which he immediately sheds on the rugs; he trails behind him along the floor lengths of dead vines, which have become entangled in his curly hair. When these have been patiently pulled out or cut off, he hurries away to collect more.

Bruce likes to chase rabbits. The fact that he has never but once

caught one, and on that big occasion didn't know what to do with it, does not discourage him in the least. His legs are so short that when he is in full pursuit through the high grass, he is forced to jump every few minutes in order to raise his head above the grass to see where he is. Consequently his pursuit is almost as bouncing as his prey's flight. Nevertheless, he is always hopeful. Many times a day we hear his shrill, sharp bark as he pursues real or imaginary rabbits over the countryside.

Despite innumerable scars and bruises, he has an undying faith in his ability to attack the largest dog he can find and emerge victorious. Many times we have dragged him from the midst of a fight, bitten and battered, but with unshaken faith in his own powers.

Bruce's fighting is surpassed only by his curiousity. He will follow a member of the family from room to room untiringly rather than be left alone; but if the slighest unusual noise is heard, if a door slams, or if a strange step sounds on the porch, Bruce goes to the spot at a run, barking at the top of his voice.

A paper or magazine on the floor fulfills his highest desire in the matter of beds. He would rather lie down on a scrap of newspaper than on the softest rug. On Sundays, when the papers are scattered here and there in the greatest confusion, he is virtually in heaven. To the great annoyance of the family he sprawls blissfully over as many sheets as possible, leaving bits of dead leaves in the radio section and muddy footprints on the comics.

Bruce is growing old now — he was twelve last August. But he is as hopeful, as energetic, and as reckless as ever. His pursuit of rabbits is not as agile as formerly; his attacks on large dogs are not so spry, but Bruce is still cheerful. Neither age nor repeated failures can take the curl from his tail nor the shrillness from his bark.

A ROAD-RUNNER FIGHTS A RATTLESNAKE

1. Tales Told to Tenderfeet

EDWIN LIGHTNER

The base of the grotesque prickly-pear threw a meager shadow across the sand. A blotch of grey, barely distinguishable from the mottled stones nearby, lay in the streak of comparative obscurity. Mr. Rattlesnake, fanged terror of the waste-lands, was enjoying his siesta. The eyes of the reptile were wide open, for he had no way of closing

them. He slept as soundly as any denizen of the wilds is allowed to sleep.

No living thing, except the black buzzard hovering above in the copper sky, was visible. The terrible white silence threw a pall of subdued oppression over the landscape. Yet a slight movement in the foliage of a mesquite bush proved that one dweller of the desert was inclined to brave the noon-day heat. A moment later a chaparral-cock stepped into the sunlight and gravely inspected the surrounding terrain. The grey blotch in the shadow of the cactus caught its eye. With quick mincing steps, quite different from the road-runner's mile-a-minute gait, the long-legged bird danced nearer. Recognizing the age old enemy of the feathered tribe, the bird made a quick turn and darted into the brush. It was not retreat, for the bird immediately returned, carrying a small piece of the dreaded cholla, the most feared flora of the desert. Carefully depositing the needle-encrusted burr near the serpent, the bird repeated the performance. Half an hour passed, while the bird worked feverishly gathering the cactus spurs.

The strategy of the bird soon became apparant. A wall of cactus surrounded the sleeping reptile. The bird had cautiously built up this corral until the "diamond back" was entirely encompassed with spine-covered burrs. The bird gave a final inspection to its handiwork, nodded with satisfaction, then deliberatedly scratched a spray of sand over the snake.

The reptile awoke, his castanets vibrating in a rising crescendo. The neck of the snake arched, ready to deliver a venom-tipped blow that would end the antics of the presumptuous bird. The road-runner struck hard and fast, and a tiny drop of blood oozed from the neck of Mr. Rattlesnake. A wilderness duel was in progress.

Hampered by the wall of cactus, the snake could strike only a few inches. The chaparral-cock scored time and time again. The triangular head of the serpent was spotted in a dozen places where the sharp beak of the bird had left its mark. The sun dropped towards the horizon, but the combat continued. Fang against beak, speed matched with greater speed, a scaly horror fought for life against a feathered demon. The snake grew visibly weaker. Ashamed that he could be defeated by such a small antagonist, the "rattler" tied a knot in its throat and choked itself to death.

GOLDFISH

JAMES LAWRENCE BILLWILLER

Americans in general have a morbid passion for the lower animals. Not satisfied with viewing them in zoos and other suitable places, the public must keep them as pets. No creature is too unlikely. Baby elephants, kangaroos, giraffes, yaks, marmosets, and Siberian field mice—stand for an hour on a street corner in any large city, and you may see all of these animals parading by for their evening exercise.

But the most popular of the captive fauna is still the unfortunate goldfish. No home is complete without a bowl containing two or three of these beasts swimming about in the usual circles. They require little or no attention beyond an occasional feeding with their rather real paper food, and, sometimes, a little fresh water. Their manners make them equally suitable for the apartment or the country place, for the goldfish is a gentleman at all times. There is, to my knowledge, no case on record of a goldfish barking shrilly at two-thirty A. M., or gnawing ravenously at the leg of the piano, or scaring the landlord.

The goldfish has a sad and solemn eye. He is an aristocrat and believes firmly in noblesse oblige, but sometimes he becomes depressed and refuses to eat. Clever observers have seen him while in this mood trying to imitate the contortions of Rodin's pensive statue, but he always stops when he realizes that he is being spied upon. One gentleman of my acquaintance, who often arrives home at odd hours in the very early morning, swears that he once distanctly heard his largest goldfish reciting Hamlet's soliloquy with great emotion. Although we find this statement difficult to credit, it is supported by much similar testimony.

The goldfish is always popular in a family with children. He is never to be found in one of those difficult situations which may awaken a question in the mind of the observant child. No expert, without the aid of dissection, can tell the sex of the home goldfish, and the fish himself seldom knows. Bertrand Russell, I am told, refuses to allow so ignorant a creature in his home.

If one is to find a flaw in the demeanor of the goldfish, it lies in his aloofness. He has no interest in the welfare of his master, and any mention of a romp in the garden after supper is treated with silent disdain. The average goldfish will not bring you your slippers as you sit by the fire, and very few can be trained to sleep at the foot of one's bed. It is the ambition of every goldfish's life to raise eyebrows, so

that he may lift them at the more ungrammatical remarks of the family that feeds him.

As a philosopher, the goldfish strongly favors pessimism. His natural disposition leads him often to thoughts of death. I have never seen a goldfish that believed in a future life, and most of them are complete athiests.

They are inclined to carry out their theories in real life. Few insurance companies like to take a risk on a goldfish because of his tendency toward suicide. Most goldfish prefer to kill themselves in one of two ways. The more impulsive type will leap from his glass container and flop to the nearest doorway, hoping that someone may step on him in the dark. The more philosophical type would rather just turn over on his back and die in the passive fashion of the Hindu yogi. When his mind is made up, one cannot stop him. Millions of goldfish die every year in this manner. It has been calculated that if all the suicides among the goldfish every year were placed end to end, it would be a lesson to them.

WHAT PRICE INTELLECT

WILLIAM A. WILKES

Numerous are the times that I have been questioned by blatant advertisements. All inclusive have been the subjects of interrogation. "Have you a little ant-eater in your home?" "Do girls avoid you?" "Did you have a pink toothbrush this morning?" Are you pale, sickly, prone to palpitation"? Simple are the answers to these questions. Long have I answered them with no great mental effort. Astonished, dismayed was I, therefore, when my professor in English asked of me the question: "How do you think?" and slyly suggested that a written composition on the subject might materially prolong one's stay in college.

My think mechanism consists of two, separate items. A hereditary machine prejudices every other thought. A scientific mechanism strives to reach conclusions solely from the facts at hand. Close is the resemblance to the upper and lower houses of Congress or Parliament. Proud and haughty is the hereditary upper house. Democratic and efficient is the scientific lower house. Sometimes great battles ensue between the two, but usually bills of one type are reserved to one house; those of another type are given to the other. Let us mount the broad stairs to the Capitol Brain and slyly peek into the legislative chambers in session.

A resolution to cut my class in English has just been introduced. The Speaker of the House calls on the Committee of Ways and Means. This committee reports that the only practical way to cut the class is to telephone the professor that I am very ill, and cannot even rise from my bed.

Shocked is the upper house. A musty old fellow in frock coat gets up, proclaims, "But you cannot do such a dishonorable thing! You are the first-born of the first-born of a thousand-year-old English family. You must preserve the family honor. Disgrace not a proud and ancient name. Your great-great-great-great grandfather—"

"Lotta hooey!" yells a scientist-representative. "You're just a group of protons and electrons, like anyone else. There is no reason to believe that one group of atoms is superior to another group, or that one set of molecules must attend class while another does as it pleases. Besides, that show at the California will be gone tomorrow."

"Honor comes first. Spoil not an old and honorable record".

"More hooey! Honor is just a comfortable complex, a convenient device for patting oneself on the back, for feeling smugly superior."

"An impractical fellow", mutters a silk-hatted lord.

"You are a silly fellow if you permit a vain prejudice to spoil your day. What will honor mean millions of years from now, when all life has disappeared from a frozen planet? An observer would laugh heartily if he knew that in ages agone odd creatures had refused a good time simply because they were descended from other, equally odd creatures."

"Odd! shrieks an outraged upper house.

We leave the bickering houses, and go off for a bite to eat. When we return, we find that the bill has been defeated by a narrow vote. Sad we are when we think of missing the show at the California.

Another bill is introduced. It concerns the magnitude of the angles of a certain triangle. Bills of this type are reserved to the lower house. Uninterested are the lords. After a brilliant session of sines, cosines, degrees, and angles, the bill is passed by a large majority. It is now law.

A bill on the question of whether or not it is correct to remove one's hat when having one's hair cut is introduced. On the matters of this sort the upper, hereditary house has full sway, the scientific, lower house refusing to be bothered with such problems, which they consider trivial. This bill is first sent to the Committee on Superstition. After finding that Napolean almost met death by refusing to remove his hat when having his hair cut, the committee recommends a decision in the negative. The lords, after slight debate, follow this advice. Relieved are barbers.

Long and tedious are the debates that follow. Numerous are the

matters to be solved. Convinced are we that my thinking process is nothing more than a prolonged struggle between pure reason and prejudiced heritage. Happy are we (as are most visitors) when we descend the broad steps of the Capitol Brain, breathe once again cool, fresh air and see once again peace and tranquillity.

A CASE FOR CLOTHES

MARGARET ROBERTS

There are a few sturdy souls who can rise above the clothes they wear—people who are so flaming and magnetic that their very personalities carry them along. They may dress with utter contempt for style or even cleanliness, but they make their clothes subservient to themselves.

But most of us aren't like that. Our clothes, especially for us girls, are a very important part of us. And so, let's look at a case for clothes.

Helen is twenty-seven. She is taking graduate work at a large university. She has limp, depressed hair of a reddish color, which she continually frizzes out around her face.

"You'd look better," one of us told her, "with your hair smoothed back against your head. Here, let me show you." She arranged it a new way. We all agreed it was a great improvement. But the next morning Helen appeared with the same unsightly frizzes. We laughed about it but were annoyed, too, at her stubbornness.

Helen's clothes are very much like Helen herself—indeterminate, half-frivolous, half-sensible, and a bit perverse. She wears frilly blouses, tight tailored skirts, wool hose, and unattractive shoes. We laugh among ourselves at those absurd shoes and the heavy, bulky flannels which all our persuading fails to make her discard. We try to dissuade her from smearing lipstick all over her mouth but that, too, fails. She comes to us for advice about her clothes but has never followed any of it. Helen, too, along with her clothes, is something of a joke—moody, sentimental, perverse, striving after effect. Clothes may mean ridicule to a girl.

Janet is about nineteen, pretty, and very feminine. She is just entering college and is far more interested in boys than in passing her classes. She is much of a kitten in disposition, being amiable, full of fun, easy going, ready to give in to the crowd. She almost invariably wears clothes of the strictly feminine type, lacy silk dresses, too much jewelry, high-heeled slippers, and sheer hose. Her hair is fluffed out

over her head in an amazing number of curls. She likes boys who are tall, so that she can look up to them,, and who are rather protective, fussing over her wet feet or steering her very carefully across the street. Clothes for Janet mean dates.

Eleanor is a senior in high school. She is not pretty. She likes people, enjoys her friends, and is fond of meetings, parties—any place where folks are gathered. She is witty, and better than that, wise. She has a large mouth, an unlovely complexion, and is quite tall. Yet Eleanor is never ugly. She studies herself. She wears clothes that shorten her height, that do not emphasize her muddy skin. She dresses plainly but well. Her hair is always well kept, as are her shoes and her fingernails. People admire her for her good taste. Clothes, for Eleanor, mean popularity.

Slats is working as a secretary in a business office. Of course she isn't called Slats by her boss and her fellow secretaries, but the name still clings, reminiscent of earlier days. Slats has always been an outdoor, athletic type of girl. In grammar school she fought the boys with her fists, often emerging the victor. In high school she was star of the basketball team, and brought home medals for swimming. She loved sport clothes, especially corduroy knickers, boots, and an old sweat shirt.

Slats intended to become a teacher of physical education. Then in her third year of college she had a nervous breakdown and graduation had to be postponed. With that came doctor's orders to give up all strenuous physical pursuits. It was a blow, but Slats was a sportswoman. She graduated from college, took a business course, and became an expert secretary. She enjoys it, too. But there is one part of her old life Slats has never given up; perhaps it is partly habit. She still wears her sport clothes, her trim, mannish skirt, her low-heeled oxfords and heavy stockings. In dress she is still the outdoor, athletic type of girl. In Slats' case clothes mean a sublimation, an outlet for a baffled ambition.

These four cases together make our case for clothes. And of course by this time you have discovered the important point, that in every instance, clothes and character are very, very intimately woven together.

ON GROWING UP

M. DURHAM

To be grown, to be a man or woman, is every hearts' desire. When will I be grown? is the question first voiced by a little child, as tugging at his mother's dress he asks, "Mama, will I grow up to be as big as you some day?" Each person can best answer this question for himself, since he has set his own standard of maturity. Upon reaching this goal, he feels that he can turn and declare to the world, "My childhood days are over. I can now take my position of respectability in the world, for I am a man." Have you ever realized how humorous some of our ideas on growing up are? Perhaps we may not be able to appreciate their ridiculousness now, but I'll warrant that they amuse our elders a great deal.

Have you noticed that when a boy has reached the age of stacomb, a safety razor, and a rattling contraption painted in gaudy color combinations of red and yellow, green and blue, or orange and purple, and bearing such names as "Mother's Angel Child" or "Sweet Spirits of Ammonia" in which he tears over the country side, he believes that he is a man. Again when he has learned the art of nonchalantly blowing smoke rings with the brand which "keeps you kissable," "does not irritate the throat," or the one for which "you would gladly walk a mile," he believes he has reached the height of maturity. If a boy can develop a so-called "John Gilbert" line whereby he can gaze deep into the eyes of any girl and without a quiver of an eye lash tell her in a husky whisper that she is the only girl he ever really liked "that way," because she is so different, this boy in his own estimation is a man. But boys are not the only ones to have queer ideas on the subject of growing up. Those of the other sex are not immune to these oddities either.

When a young girl appears in her first evening gown, a trifle longer and a little more daring in cut than any of her sisters have ventured to wear, a dress which causes her old-fashioned parents to catch their breath and swallow once or twice before permitting themselves to pass judgment on the new creation, daughter feels that life for her has just begun. She is growing up. Likewise when the young lady of the family excitedly opens the mysterious package which the messenger boy has just delivered, and finds a large bouquet of deep red roses accompanied by a card bearing in an almost illegible scrawl the signature of the nicest boy in school, she experiences a thrill that only youth can know. The daughter of the home feels that no situation is beyond her sympathy and understanding, for she is at last a woman.

Still the question remains: When are you really grown? Never! You may grow tall or thin, remain short or wide; your hair may become streaked with silver, then fade to snow white, and wrinkles may replace the dimples in your cheeks. You may remain obscure to the world or become famous and acquire dignity because it is demanded of you; yet at heart you are still the same little boy who once played hookey to go fishin' or the little girl who at one time rocked her dolls to sleep. As you look back over the pathway you have traveled gaily from childhood to manhood or womanhood, recalling the joys and sorrows, and as you gaze into the future, the trail winding between maturity and old age, you continue on your way. The journey is harder and perhaps you travel more slowly, but you still possess the indomitable spirit of youth. Though your body has aged, your heart is still young—it has never grown up.

COMPLEX CONSCIOUS

CARIL CARRINGTON

Whether or not the youth of today is too flaming to form an effective adult society in the years to come depends upon the psychological wisdom of being complex conscious. For the modern generation, especially the collegiate class, is undoubtedly complex conscious on account of the torrent of popular and applied psychology that has been pouring down upon their heads So fearful are they of being classed in the dread ranks of the inhibited, that they obey every impulse and satisfy every vague emotion as completely as they can.

During the last school year, a charming young co-ed came to me bewailing the fact that she had recently broken her engagement to a graduate student at the same college. "I couldn't help it," she said regretfully; "he was always psycho-analyzing me, and you know yourself that you can't explain everything a woman does by the rules of psychology."

That is a very true statement, but it doesn't in the least keep these amateur psychologists of ours from trying to analyze completely the emotions and actions of either sex by the rules of their particular God.

I walked into a late afternoon "bull session" in which seven girls were discussing the value of experience in developing an attractive personality. The group had just reached the conclusion that the more experiences an individual could have, the more expansive and attractive the personality of that individual would be. The trial and error method was the one they advocated for use throughout life.

"But," I protested, "then all the experiences and lessons gained by the past generations will be of no value to you."

The answer came in the form of a disdainful chorus from the assembly.

"Don't you know," said a vivid little brunette, "that no one can gain by the experience of others? Everyone is so different psychologically that they can only learn by experience the things that will bring the most happiness."

"Then," I asked, "is happiness the thing you want more than anything else?"

The answer was unanimously affirmative. I left hurriedly before the impending discussion of that most illusive of human goals—happiness. Happiness is what all these young people are looking for, and they have chosen psychology to show them the way. They are about to rush greedily out into life taking all they can get of every kind, denying themselves nothing in order to achieve that most admirable thing—attractive personality. However, they are overlooking the fact that the long years of experience gained by their ancestors should prove something to them. This attitude is more inimical to the future welfare of the race, however, than the less modern one of "keeping your hands behind your back lest you get burned." But only time and the experience they crave so much will teach them to find what they want, and even then they may learn that "a little knowledge is a bad thing."

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

ANONYMOUS

At present there is a great deal of hurrying and hustling around the campus. The atmosphere is tense — rushing season is here. There are two main groups — those who participate and those who look on. I am observing as an outsider, and yet I have the chance to see both sides and know them well.

The girls who are in the limelight at present are those who are being rushed. For several weeks they will be asked to bridge parties, the dances, luncheons, and other social functions. They will be made to feel as if they are wanted, and college life will be pleasant to them.

These girls now experience such a thrilled and exalted feeling as they have never felt before. But with Preference Day comes the blow. Some of the girls are taken in and some are not. The girls who are not

asked in are dropped — but not carefully. They find that all the members of sororities who had been so cordial to them before simply are too busy to bother with being nice. Even old high school friends who have been close chums, but who have been taken into a sorority are too busy being initiated and meeting new friends to pay much attention to the old group. The girl who is dropped finds it quite hard for some time. She loses the interest she had when she first entered school. She becomes morbid. She wonders just why she was not accepted, and her family secretly wonders at the so-called calamity which has befallen their child.

The sorority in some schools is one of the most important factors of the institution. It is almost a case of "to be or not to be". The relations between the non-sorority girl and the fraternity man are usually strained. It is known that a fraternity man will actually drop a non-sorority girl simply because he thinks that she is below his level, even though she is made of better stuff than some sorority girls.

One girl who was very active in high school in dramatic work, school activities, and social functions, entered college and was completely changed. She was rushed and dropped, and formed an inferiority complex which after two years of college life she is just beginning to lose. To some people this complex seems to indicate a lack of character; they think that the slight should be overlooked entirely. Such is not the case, for no one realizes how vastly important a sorority is made to seem in a girl's life.

The girl who is a member of a social organization of the sorority type becomes a biased creature. She begins to wonder at the non-sorority girls. She observes the outsider and wonders just what fault kept her from being a member. Faults are found in some girls which would be entirely unnoticed otherwise.

There is a group which has never been sought and never been rushed. No one can imagine the feelings of these girls. Probably all their lives they had waited for the time when they should go to college and their life-long dream should come true. To have such a dream broken in a few weeks, after years of anticipation, is too much for any normal girl's morale. She shies away from the sorority girls and the non-sorority girls alike. She is afraid of being termed a climber or of being called a nobody.

There is no possible solution to this problem. There always have been sororities, and there always will be. In fact there are as many good arguments for the sorority as there are against it. Perhaps if the sorority girl could realize the pain that she is inflicting upon the non-sorority girl she would be a little more courteous toward the unappreciated non-member.