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1948 LITERARY PRIZE MATERIAL

Cancelled Flight ....................................... George Fullen 3
Poems ................................................. Ruth O'Mahoney 7
Mr. John Doe—Public Hero ............................ Donald Emrick 10

UPPERCLASS CONTRIBUTIONS

Finesse ................................................. N. Umbenhower 12
Lucky ...................................................... John Miller 15
The Kitten In The Wolf's Den ......................... Tom Wagle 16
Voyage ..................................................... George Fullen 18
The Way And The Wayfarer ......................... Margaret Lanahan 19
Remembrance ........................................... Anne McDonnell 20
Swift's Attack On Pedantry ......................... James Lawson 21
Voyager ................................................... George Fullen 23
Destiny Squeaks ........................................ N. Umbenhower 24
Time! Time! ............................................. Anne McDonnell 26
Old Fib ....................................................... M. R. Huntzinger 27
Variations On A Theme By Candide ................. Frank Slupesky 29
Rainy Season ........................................... George Fullen 31

FRESHMAN CONTRIBUTIONS

A Most Charitable Man ................................. Dick Cassidy, 102-16 34
The Question ............................................ Richard Owens, 101-9 36
Fate ? ? ? .................................................. Carlton Bowles, 101-10 37
Europe's Forgotten Children ......................... Arlean Lemke, 101-3 40
Patience ..................................................... Patrick Mahoney III, 101-17 41
Soul Incarnate ........................................... Roland Crim, 102-8 42
I Wonder And The Reason ............................. Diana Harvey, 102-23 43
The Listeners Misinterpreted ......................... Jim Pappas, 201-1 44
Democracy Of Art ....................................... Arnold Wajenberg, 202-1 45
How Green .................................................. Russell Foster, 101-11 46
The Price Of Victory .................................... Lee Lovell, 101-12 47
Adrift ....................................................... Roland Crim, 102-8 48
An Apology For Loving ................................. Basil Raymond, 101-6 48
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The smell of gas was sickening.

"It's all your fault, Jane," he thought he could hear his own voice saying in a distant room.

It sounded so strange that he forced his eyes open, against the nausea, and tried to focus them. The lurid, dirty wall-paper focussed, receded and focussed again. It only increased his nausea. He had been sick when he turned on the gas.

And then he was falling, falling, falling. He never knew just when it was that the sensation of falling ceased, but he became aware, finally, that he was walking, stumbling across a field toward a distant light. As he approached it, the light and the building from which it shone took shape. The building was a small hangar; and outside it, with the motors running, was an airplane. The sight of a plane, ready for flight, caused the dull longing which was always with him to become more intense. He walked around it; he bathed himself in the "prop wash." Suddenly, he felt that he had to fly the plane. He shouted but no one appeared from the hangar. He walked to the hangar and looked inside. He shouted again, but still there was no answer. It was empty.

He walked back to the plane, got in and shut the door. There was no one in the plane. He stood for a moment, enjoying the purely sensual pleasure of the rhythmic vibration of the plane. Then he took his place in the pilot's seat. The instrument panel looked familiar and strange at the same time. He checked the instruments, turned on the landing lights, released the brakes and taxied out to the landing strip. He looked back at the hangar, but no one had appeared to protest his theft. He pushed the throttles forward. The engines revved up, and the plane began to race along the rough, unpaved strip. As the plane was airborne, he felt the surge of a moment's happiness, the first real pleasure he had felt for many months. When he had gained sufficient altitude, he indulged his whim and put the plane through every trick he knew. Then he gained altitude again, climbing until he had topped the ceiling of clouds. The moon was bright and the air was clear as it always was above the clouds.

As he leveled off, a feeling of contentment came to him. He settled more comfortably in the seat. The drone of the motors gave him a delicious feeling of security. It had been so long since he had felt secure about anything. And his mind seemed as clear as the atmosphere—clarity was also a rare thing. Life had been so hopelessly muddled. One disappointment had occurred before another dimmed in his consciousness. He had been unable to cope with them, even to think about them.

The war, he supposed, had been the beginning. Or had it been the end? Anyway, life had been wonderful until the war came along. He had grown up pleasantly. His childhood was filled with pleasant memories. Baseball, tennis, swimming, ice
skating, digging caves on vacant lots with the gang, Hallowe'en pranks, the smell of smoke and wieners roasting, playing stagecoach with bicycles and a wagon which always ended by capsizing the wagon and hurting someone—everything had seemed to be pleasant in those days. And later, there had been the great, the earth-shaking revelation of the ecstasy of sex. Then there had been dating, dancing, learning how to smoke, the soulful satisfaction of shaving. He had met Jane in his last year in high school. Like most of the couples in school that year, they had fallen in love. They had been just nineteen when they were married. God, how he had loved her! They had had a year, and they'd made the most of it.

Then he had enlisted in the Air Corps. He'd always wanted to fly. The war really hadn't been so bad. Oh, he'd been aware of the waste, the ruin, the terror of death, all the things that made war truly hell. But it had been necessary. He had known that it was necessary. And he had done what he could do best and been happy, though frightened, doing it. The worst thing about the war had been the way he missed Jane. He'd missed her terribly because he loved her and because he'd been faithful.

Somehow, the war had seemed to end too soon. It wasn't that he hadn't wanted it to end. God knows, he'd been as eager as anybody for it to be finished and to get back home. But it had been hard to believe that the end so long awaited, so eagerly awaited, had actually come. Even though it had taken some time to get home, it had seemed very short.

He remembered well the day when he arrived home. Jane had been sharing a room with a friend. Of course, he knew she wouldn't be waiting in the little house where they'd spent their idyllic year, but still, he felt very strange as he approached the apartment house where she was living. He had been excited and frightened. He had been frightened just like he was before their wedding. It was foolish, but that was how he felt. He remembered that, when he entered the apartment house, he'd stood for a moment by the mail boxes. It's here! It's here! The moment we've waited for is here! He remembered thinking as he stood there, trying to regain his breath. Then he'd rung the bell for Jane's apartment and run up the stairs. She was waiting for him at the door.

All he had managed to say was a strangled: "Jane." Then he kissed her. She had dragged him inside. They had fallen on a couch, clutching one another.

"Darling, darling, darling," Jane had chanted.

They had tried to talk, but he had continued to be too breathless. Every breath was such an effort that it made the next one more difficult. Jane had been much calmer and he had cursed himself as a fool. But, finally, the absurd excitement had passed. They had dashed frantically from one subject to another, trying to cover all the things that had not been or could not be said in letters. Eventually, they had had to give that up, too, for they were trying to say too much in too short a time.

Jane had brought them back to practical things when she said, with a gesture indicating the room: "It isn't much, but we have it to ourselves for a whole week. After that, we'll have to find a place for ourselves or for my roommate. She is tripling with two of our friends in their apartment. It is no bigger than this one, so that can't last."

"That's swell of her," he had answered, though, of course, it was no more nor less than she should have done.

"Darling," Jane had continued, "What would you like to eat? We have some steak. Would you like that?"

He would have eaten anything, then.
He had followed her around while she fixed the meal, interfering constantly with her preparations because he could not keep his hands away from her. That week had been idyllic, too.

After that, it had been different. The week had lengthened to a month while he, Jane and her roommate had tried to find something to relieve their housing shortage. Finally, his mother had had her way and made room for them with her. That hadn't gone well from the start. Everything about it was wrong. In the first place, he didn't know what he wanted to do about a job. Of course, he wasn't in a very big hurry to find one, either. He thought that he deserved a vacation. Jane thought so, too, until his vacation had gone into its third month. Then Jane joined his mother who had been nagging him about working since the second month.

He found a job, all right. He didn't like it; so he found another one. He didn't like that one either. That happened several times.

One morning, he announced to Jane: "Hon, I've been thinking about going back into the army. I think I can still keep my commission. How would you like your husband to be a regular army man?"

Jane's face clouded and she replied: "I don't think I'd like it. No, I wouldn't like it at all."

"Why, Hon? I'd be making plenty of money. They would furnish us a nice home. You know, they don't move you around so much during peace time."

"Darling," Jane said patiently, "It'd be all right for us. But I wouldn't like it for our children. I think it would be rather unnatural—like playing war in peace."

He looked at her sitting there, solemnly pronouncing this judgment. For the first time he was really exasperated with her. Of all the foolish things he'd ever heard, rejecting his suggestion on the basis of children not yet born.

He had left the subject drop, but after that nothing went smoothly. It seemed to him that inflation, shortages, especially the housing shortage, had been brought about just to make his life more difficult. He had insisted that Jane quit her job; and with his constantly changing jobs, their finances were usually pretty precarious. Jane and his mother nagged constantly. He began to spend a lot of time drinking with his old high school buddies, those who were available. Most of them were unmarried.

What had caused the final big scene, he couldn't remember. Jane had said something, and suddenly, he'd hated her; he'd hated her voice; he never wanted to see her again. And he'd told her so. She had been silent while he packed his bag. At the door, she had told him, in a shaking voice: "When you know what you really want to do, I'll be glad to see you."

"I know what I want to do; I don't want to see you ever," he had replied. And he had left the house feeling liberated.

The feeling of freedom had been short-lived. It had lasted while he found a room. He had finally found one in the very slummy part of town. It contained a bed, a dresser, a chair, a table, a small cabinet and a gas plate. He had enjoyed his freedom while he sat alone in his room that night, drinking. He slept all the next day and drank throughout the next night. After that, his freedom disappeared. He wouldn't go back to his old job or find another like it. He had very little money. He slept, ate and drank. He had met the blonde who lived across the hall as he came back, one afternoon, from spending his last money for more liquor, cigarettes and coffee. He'd been very apologetic because all he had to offer her was a share of his liquor, cigarettes and coffee. She hadn't minded. She was one of those people too easily moved to pity. But not even she could help him to
escape from his acute melancholy.

There had been that terrible feeling of guilt, too. That was what he really couldn't escape. He had a feeling that he had been wrong, and he couldn't stand that. That was why he had turned on the gas.

He straightened up in his seat, shocked by the realization that turning on the gas plate was the last thing he could remember before finding himself walking toward the hangar. The more he thought about it, the more unaccountable the transition was. How had he got from his room to the small air field? Then the truth came to him. He had tried to commit suicide. He had succeeded. He was DEAD!

He sat, stunned by the truth. He stirred, finally, and fumbled in his shirt pocket to see if he still had a cigarette. Yes, he had been able to bring those with him. He laughed ironically. Who said you couldn't take it with you?

Well, he thought, I wonder where I'm going.

He lit the cigarette and puffed reflectively. Funny situation. The last mission. And what was the objective? He supposed he was heading for—somewhere.

It's funny, he thought, now that it's done, there are some things I wish I'd done while I was alive. I thought when this happened I'd be old and my wife and my kids and their kids would be around my bed. My God, this will be a terrible shock to Jane. No, I guess it won't, either. She'll be glad to get rid of me. I've never been any good to her. She can get married again. She doesn't even have any kids to keep her tied to me. One good thing I did do: I left her with a clean slate.

He felt the tear leave his eyes and run down his face. Clutching the wheel, he let the sobs rise—the gasping, tearing, wrenching sobs. He let them come. They had been down there so long; it felt good to be rid of them. It passed, finally, and he sat there with his head cradled in his hands which still held the wheel firmly.

I haven't done a thing to recommend me. I haven't really lived at all. I wish I could go back and live. I wish I could go back and do the things I should have done.

He rocked his head, rocking his hands at the same time. And the plane rocked, too. He sat up. The plane rocked! It was still under his control! He wondered what would happen if he turned it around. He put the plane into a steep turn. It responded promptly. How far had he flown? How would he find such a small, obscure field in the dark? Could a dead man hope to live again?

As the plane flew steadily on, he prayed. He prayed hard. He prayed for the first time since he was a child and believed that a prayer would solve any small problem. Not even the war had made him pray again, but now he was praying. He decided to get under the cloud bank. He could see a few distant lights shining in the darkness below him. He descended until he was only three hundred feet above the ground. The lights, closer now, flashed by, but none of them had any meaning for him. Any one of them might be the one, but he wouldn't know it.

The engine sputtered, caught, sputtered again and "conked out." He gripped the wheel and glided, losing altitude. Could a man die twice? It looked like that was what was going to happen to him. He had very little altitude to lose. He couldn't see a thing. He felt the first thump and the bounce.

He could feel himself rising and falling, rising and falling. The sensation resolved itself into waves of nausea. He was sick. He was very sick. He fought to place himself. He fought to conquer his illness. He
fought to open his eyes. But he couldn’t. He was too sick.

He accepted his sickness. He lay in it. Then he felt something in his nose, something which was giving him needed vitality. Then he remembered the gas; he remembered speaking to Jane; he remembered blackness.

In a distant room, he heard a voice ask:
“Is he all right, Doc?”
“Yes, he’ll be all right. Lucky you found him when you did.”

“I knew he was in bad shape, but I didn’t know he was this bad. I could smell it in the hall. I was worried about him.”

He knew it was the blonde. He owed her an apology. He owed a lot of people apologies. He’d do that when he could open his eyes. He had failed everywhere. He had just failed again. If there was a way, he had to apologize for his failures. Right now, he was too tired. And he wondered why he felt so absurdly glad to be alive.

---7---

Poems

RUTH O’MAHONEY

(First prize in poetry, Butler literary contest, 1948.)

DAY

In the half light before the sun
The hush of the sleeping world
Fills the air with waiting
I hold my breath
Watching
Listening
Will it never come

Then the light slips over the rim
Day

HARMONY

The existence we call life
Seems more the tuning up
Each melody sweet in itself
Discord with others

Waiting the leader
To blend all
In an harmonious whole
THE HARP

I have a harp in my heart
That vibrates when you are near
It sings in harmony
To everything you love

Then come love
And we will sing to you
My heart
My harp
And I
Come sing with us

THE DARK GREEN ISLE

To the dark green isle
Home
I will go

Prayer and fasting
Be my lot
In the sweet green isle
I go

I seek in the isle
I will find

O if this be my lot
There
My soul

ASH WEDNESDAY

In the fields of green
Shepherds watched their sheep
Remembering a night long ago

The stars followed their courses
Across eternity

Earth
How fair

Remember man
You are dust
Dust of a star
That rolls thru eternity

And into dust
You must return
ADAM AND EVE

There was a rustle in the grass
Between them
They did not see it

They gazed at each other
Fascinated

He touched her cheek
With his fingertips
She smiled
He looked at her and smiled

Masterfully he gestured
Pointing to himself
"Man" he said
She repeated
"Man"
She pointed to herself
"Man?"

Loftily he smiled
Brushing aside a lock of her hair
"Woman"
"Woman" she repeated
Then "Man?"
Sure "Man Woman
Woman Man"
She giggled
He laughed with her

They chanted together
"Man woman woman man
Man woman man woman"

They hugged each other
Laughing
As they rolled
Not noticing
The rustle in the grass
Mr. John Doe---Public Hero?

DONALD EMRICK

(First prize in the essay, Butler literary contest, 1948.)

Have you ever wondered how many tons of paper roll daily out of the nation's thundering presses to imprint the legendary and statistical status of Mr. John Doe upon the hearts of the masses? Neither John Gunther, the World Almanac, nor the "Fact and Fiction Department" of the Kremlin could cast any light upon this ponderous query. Although this matter seems to have escaped momentarily the attention of "Renegade Joe," I am certain that Moscow will waste no time in ferreting out the requested statistical lore.

In the meantime I must content myself with the legendary aspect of this famous public figure, Mr. John Doe. (P. S. to "Renegade Joe": Don't forget the Mister as our friend Doe is very touchy on the subject.) These same tons of paper I was speculating about perform a tremendous task of molding the public concept of the man-on-the-street. Each of us assimilates a certain proportion of this newsprint according to his valid powers of concentration; and henceforth each considers this portrait of John Doe to be his own original work of art.

Whether we accept the power of the press to influence our ideas concerning Doe (alias Mr. Average American) or not, the majority of us have come to accept the fact that the gentleman consumes the same foods upon which we individually thrive. He wears his favorite old hat at the same angle, reads his morning daily over the same-tasting orange juice and gives as generously as the Doe budget will permit to the same humanitarian organizations. In addition, we have set John up as the very embodiment of all that springs good and kind from the American heart; we like to feel that the virtues embraced by the revered Mr. Doe derived their humble start from our own altruistic souls cradled beneath the spotless exterior clay of human form.

This contention that our public hero took his embryonic start in life, that he evolved from the human heart, leaves us wide open to the broadsides of the opposition forces. What opposition? That which strides forth gallantly to do battle under the banner and inspiration of Conscience—your small but mighty Man Friday. All of us at one time or another have faced this valiant little trooper and have felt his sharp stinging blows. Conscience wastes no words in condemning the weak spots in our liberal attitude toward "human" behavior.

Any decent dictionary will tell us that the term "human" refers to the qualities of man, neither divine nor brutish. Most of us have managed to corrupt this definition to suggest that a sort of mortal divinity has attached itself to the self-worshiping human race. As the result of this assumption, we are bound to further disgrace the dictionary; our behavior consequently takes on the hue of brutishness. It is this brutish activity which bids my Conscience to ride forth in quest of atonement.

I refer specifically to the American weakness of condoning any act which tends to the unethical side of the game as long as it squeezes precariously by the "letter of the law." I refer to the American habit of turning one's head away from shady behavior as long as the results of such doubtful activity are not deposited heavily and painfully in our own backyard.
At the risk of being tagged a left-winger, an adherent to “Renegade Joe’s” anti-capitalist fanaticism and unloyal to the American tradition, I shall further my prosecution of Mr. John Doe by baring for your inspection likely samples of his erratic behavior. By doing so, I wish to emphasize, I am not forsaking my fealty to “Old Glory”; neither am I expressing favorable sentiment for any land-grabbing capitalist-hating Brutus. To heighten the picture of my lusty patriotism I would enjoy nothing more than expounding my humble theories supporting universal military training—except for the fact that such a discussion would be an irrelevant digression from criticism of John Doe.

Pull up a comfortable ottoman and prepare to defend yourself and Brother Doe against the accusations of Conscience. Ask yourself how large a portion of Mister John’s questionable actions is the direct product of your—yes, your—behavior. How many situations in the following category precisely express your public performance as a citizen of our broad land? Is it time for a housecleaning in your spiritual abode?

John Doe—excuse me, Mr. John Doe—is captivated by the fancies and whims of money-worship. He finds it a very demanding religion, taking up all of his waking hours and possibly many of his dreams. It isn’t the smile on your face or the kind word on your lip that he judges you by; rather it is the amount of silver that jingles in your pockets. If your pennies don’t ring as loud as his nickels, you won’t rate that last page of his address book.

Mr. Doe abhors the dictatorial methods of his office superiors although he isn’t particularly opposed to roughshod tactics incorporated in his own treatment of employees. Tread lightly upon the toes of the boss and let the heel fall heavily on the hapless foot of the office boy.

Doe doesn’t believe in crucifying the “Chosen People.” On the other hand you won’t find any Levinskys or Greenbergs on his payroll. He holds in disdain the order of the Fiery Cross . . . . He doesn’t oppose the practice of “Jim Crow” taboos; he does oppose the right of the colored race to compete with him in the business world.

Mrs. Doe always knows better than to speak to her husband before mealtime in regard to a household problem. His perspective returns as the dinner progresses. Dessert finished, he is prepared to tackle any domestic difficulty. He can’t understand why all the hungry peoples of Europe haven’t already sworn allegiance to democracy.

Mr. Doe is grabbing bigger commissions than he ever dreamed of in the groping days of NIRA; he doesn’t want them pared down but he wants cost of living prices sliced in half. He dreads to see inflation spiraling to new and dizzier heights. He demands more and bigger tax reductions, larger profits and, inversely, smaller production costs.

If you have been fooling yourself about the “Simon-pure” pattern of John Doe’s existence, I repeat: get out that discarded broom and sweep away the greed and prejudice pervading your spiritual repose. A good thorough housecleaning on your part will permit Mr. Doe to walk again with straight shoulders—straighter than he has carried them since he solemnly affixed his signature to a piece of paper “. . . in order to establish a more perfect union . . .

After you have completed the task, may I borrow your broom? It is possible that Conscience has misplaced mine . . .

— 11 —
Mrs. Brooks flipped the pages of her cook book back and forth. The lemon pie would be easier; but it wouldn't take much longer to make the spice cake that Martin liked. Yes, it would be the cake, she decided, because that was Martin's favorite dessert. She was a little tired of it; but, as long as Martin insisted that each cake was better than the last and that nothing else compared with it, she should have spice cake, all he wanted of it, every week, all summer too. September would come soon enough when he would have to go back north to that little college close to the Canadian border. Teaching physics year after year there where the snow covered the ground most of the winter could, she suspected, become monotonous, for each spring in June when Martin arrived at his sister's farm home he would dash upstairs two steps at a time to change suit and dignity for overalls and a happy grin. Fun loving Martin! He was not only her favorite brother, but her son's favorite uncle too. Bill was probably out with Martin now. She would have to see that he came back in time to take his music lesson. After the cake was in the oven, she would go find them.

Bill kicked up the dust in the lane that led to the east wheat field. He had had a bare two weeks in which to forget geography, arithmetic and all the other necessary evils that accompanied the winter months and curtailed his enjoyment of the spring when this new evil, this horror, raised its threatening head. Piano lessons! He loathed the thought. How would he ever catch up with all the things he had planned to do this summer? It took hours to find a bird's nest and days and days of watching to catch a glimpse of the opossum. He never had found the log where it lived, but early this spring he had seen it sunning itself on top of the rail fence about half a mile back in the woods.

All that would be ended now. Piano lessons! And practicing too, hours and hours of it. The whole summer vacation would be spoiled. Bill's soul was filled with disgust. He was on his way to find Martin, for Martin was his only hope.

Martin might have an idea; he usually did. Martin could solve almost any problem. One summer when the hayloader picked up a bunch of tough ragweed growing at the edge of the ditch across the low field and stopped working then and there, Martin brought out pliers and baling wire and a bolt or two, and he put it in working order before you could say "Jack Robinson." Maybe, if he could fix the hayloader, he could break the piano! Martin was taller than any of the men who helped on the farm in the summer, and he wasn't skinny either; he must have weighed at least a hundred and sixty-five in his overalls and straw hat. He had a fine head with lots of gray hair, prematurely gray, Bill's mother said, and dark brown eyebrows. He never seemed to take life on the farm seriously; but when Bill came to him with his problems, Martin's eyes were serious and understanding.

Only last summer he had convinced Bill's mother that books from the library had no place in a boy's life in summer. It was better for him to saddle Snip and carry cool jugs of water to the men working in the fields. Martin had a way with him.

This afternoon he had gone back to look over the east wheat field, the one farthest away, to see how soon it would be
ripe for the binder. The field was beautiful in the afternoon sun. An erratic breeze swept little valleys here and there in the wide expanse of heavy, rich tan heads.

As Bill reached the end of the lane and climbed up on the gate to wait for Martin, he saw none of this beauty; he saw only himself chained to the piano bench, wearing his fingers to the bone on the implacable piano keys. He didn't even see Martin at first.

"What's the matter, Bill?"
"What? Oh, nothing much."
"Out with it!" Martin removed his straw hat. The upper part of his forehead which it had covered was very white and contrasted along a sharply-defined line with the flaming sunburn on the rest of his face.

"What's Sue up to this summer?"
"Piano lessons," muttered Bill, kicking his heels absent-mindedly against the third board from the top of the gate. He stared out across the field. "She talked to Miss Redfield this morning."

"Redfield?"
"They're the people who bought the Dorman place. Mr. and Mrs. Redfield and the two girls moved in early this spring. Ruby is the oldest one; she's the one who gives piano lessons. She's an old maid, past twenty-five at least. Mother talked to her this morning, on the phone."

"When do you start?"
"Right away. Today. She's coming late this afternoon."

"Hmm." Martin fanned his forehead very slowly with the old straw hat. Finally he said, "Well, let's go up to the house. If she's there, we'll see what she looks like."

Her long green Buick came to a stop under the locust tree at the end of the walk, and Miss Ruby Redfield rolled the window down. She looked over the lawn. Everything seemed peaceful, the dark cool shadows of the trees on the grass, the long open veranda with rosebushes and honeysuckle trimming it at the corners. Overhead, though, in the branches of the locust tree, a frustrated bumblebee buzzed up and down the scale.

Ruby was very small and thin. Her hair was dark and neatly waved, and her black eyes were intelligent. With a manner not exactly of determination; but rather of methodical purpose, she quickly stepped out of the car, picked up her purse and music roll from the seat and turned to go up the walk. Coming around the side of the house with Bill was Martin, impressive and distinguished even in overalls.

For a fraction of a second Miss Redfield's eyelids flickered and she unconsciously tightened her grip on the music roll. Going straight to him, she held out her hand and said, "I'm Ruby Redfield. You're Bill's father?"

Martin swung his old straw hat awkwardly. "Noo ma'am! No siree, I just work here."

Bill caught his breath. That didn't sound like Martin. Why, Martin was talking like a farm hand or worse; he was slouched over, most of his weight on one foot. What was going on, wondered Bill. Then it dawned! Of course, Martin was going into action. Good for Martin! The piano lessons were practically a thing of the past before they were ever begun.

"Come right on in and start to work, ma'am," Martin said. "Here, let me help you with your music." He took the roll awkwardly and unaccountably the strap around it loosened allowing the sheets to scatter far and wide. Miss Redfield helped to locate and gather them up, seeming to enjoy the accident. Not a shade of annoyance was even indicated by her expression. She calmly proceeded up the steps to the veranda, was greeted cordially by Mrs. Brooks, shown the piano and very shortly
thereafter left to introduce Bill to the mysteries of music.

Miss Redfield had barely begun to explain the few simple notes on page one of "The Beginners Book" when Martin opened the screen and stepped inside. "Don't mind me, ma'am. I remember my first music lesson, and I thought I'd give Bill a little moral support. He helps me with my work, and I help him, so to speak. You go right ahead. I'll sit on the other end of the bench here."

Miss Redfield smiled a funny little smile, and she did go right ahead. She and Bill had plowed through the first bar or two when Martin said, "That reminds me of my first piece, the only one I ever did learn to play right. Here, Miss Redfield, you play the soprano and I'll play the bass. Bill, you're in the way. You sit over there a while. Now, Miss Redfield, it goes like this—"

Out in the kitchen Mrs. Brooks thought that Bill must be doing very well considering that it was his first lesson; but as the music became gayer, she suddenly realized what was happening. "Martin," she thought, "This is one time you are not going to change my plans." Half an hour later she interrupted them, and with very little persuasion convinced Miss Redfield that she should stay for dinner. Indeed, Miss Redfield's acceptance was a trifle enthusiastic and Martin for once seemed to have nothing at all to say. Bill, a forgotten boy, was sitting quietly in one corner of the room, still trustful but unable to follow the turn of events. He did not notice that his mother looked for a second, very, very straight at Martin and lifted her chin a shade higher. For some reason she was smiling and Martin was not.

Throughout dinner Miss Redfield's enthusiasm remained undampened, and Mrs. Brooks' enjoyment of her brother's discomfiture was scarcely concealed. Martin said almost nothing, and for the first time Bill was assailed with doubts regarding the omnipotence of his uncle. He had never seen panic or fear in Martin's eyes; but now he sensed that something was wrong, something very definitely was not going according to schedule. Looking at his mother, he thought she seemed positively victorious.

After dinner the two women sat in comfortable rockers on the veranda and talked, mostly about music. Sitting on the steps nearby, Bill listened with a heart of lead. He wondered what had become of Martin. Had even Martin deserted him? He realized that they were defeated, that the long anticipated summer, his vacation, was lost. The weeks to come would be nothing but tantalizing torture. Tied to the piano bench, he would have to listen all summer long to the vireo's monotonous triple note and its minor echo without ever knowing exactly where it nested. The sun was already down and daylight was nearly gone, taking with it the last ray of hope too. In the twilight a solitary bat flew dizzily around catching its dinner of tiny bugs. Once or twice as it sailed around in irregular circles between the veranda and the big locust tree, it narrowly missed Bill's quiet head. But, suddenly, the bat was chasing bugs no longer; it was fleeing something.

The kitchen broom jerked around the corner of the house. Wham! Swish! Wham! It thrashed in wide arcs, now in front of the terrified bat, now close behind it. Now it sailed out into the lawn with Martin hanging on to the end of the handle. In the darkness it was impossible to tell whether he was madly wielding the broom like a live weapon or whether the broom itself was witched to life and held Martin in desperate thrall. He had tied a paisley bandana over his distinguished gray head. This and the extreme height of his abandon to the chase robbed him of the last hint of dignity. But to Bill he was a rescuing hero.
"By gravy," shouted Martin. "The smart little deervill. Bet I get him next time." With a mixture of facile awkwardness and incredible agility, he pursued the frantic creature to the point of his own exhaustion and the utter rout of the women.

A queer look had come over Miss Redfield's face. With the few shreds of composure left to her, she gracefully accepted her share of defeat, rose to her feet and murmured that perhaps it would be better to wait until fall and cooler weather to start Bill's lessons. With a supreme effort Mrs. Brooks unfroze from the edge of her chair, released her anguished grip on its arms and bade her guest godspeed. When the Buick had pulled away, she collapsed into her chair and remained silent for a while. The bright evening star came out in the sky just over the black outline of the west woods. For Bill the world was again in tune.

After a moment or two Mrs. Brooks remarked slowly and emphatically, "Martin, if I ever visit one of your classes, you may be prepared for anything. I suppose, though, I should forgive you. You're probably right; a vacation ought to be a vacation."

Lucky

JOHN J. MILLER

The heavy oak bar looked solid enough, but the short, slight man at the end, face loosely cupped in his hands, was holding it down with his elbows. The tic on the right eye of the pale-faced bartender twitched slightly as he flicked a dirty towel across the top of the bar.

Removing his chin from his hands, the little guy emptied his beer bottle into a glass, tipping the glass expertly. "Gimme another beer," he remarked absently—drank the glass and replaced his chin in his hands.

Opening the bottle with a practiced jerk, the bartender lumberingly placed it on the bar. "How goes it, stranger?" he addressed the smaller man. "You look like you lost your best friend."

The stranger raised his eyes from a point fixed on the floor and, running a hand through his sparse hair, replied "You married?"

"Yep," the bartender sounded satisfied. Pursing his lips, he leered at the little man. "Married a family tailor-made; she already had two children. I wouldn't even know her ex if he came in here, but I'll bet he ain't so happy. My wife gets fifteen bucks a week alimony." He made another pass at the bar with the towel. "Pretty good deal, huh?"

"Yeah," the stranger replied, draining the rest of the beer in a gulp. "Yeap, you're sure lucky." He rocked off the stool, teetered slightly and moved toward the door.

"Wait a minute," called the bartender. "It's slow tonight—have one on the house."

The stranger turned in the doorway, looking at a point to the right of the bartender. "I'd still be buyin," he remarked and passed out into the street.
The Kitten In The Wolf's Den

TOM WAGLE

You are beautiful aren't you Jean? And you know it. You are dressing for tonight with precision unusual even for you. When you finish you will be lovely, won't you Jean. Your clothes and make up will create the effect you are now building for. But there is one thing that bothers you through all your sureness. Where are your prospects Jean?

Oh, you have had your chances, but you are at least wondering. Maybe you are too particular Jean. Or maybe your idea of the perfect mate is somewhat exaggerated. Sure, maybe you should be particular—you have money, you are a college graduate, you travel, you can boast of being intelligent and beautiful—why you can even cook, can't you Jean. Why not wait for the right man? Is that why you are looking forward to the party with all your controlled eagerness?

You know Steve Crandall will be at the party—the fabulous Steve—you have heard your friends mention him often. You are to be his date tonight. He is coming down from the city and as luck had it you were home on one of those rare occasions and was asked to fill in. He might be the man you want Jean. He might be different from all your others. You want a man that will slap you down and keep you down. You want a man you can't dominate, don't you Jean. Somehow you despise the weaklings who make love to you up to a certain point and then let you laugh in their faces. You want a man who will completely overpower your will. It sounds strange, but that is you, isn't it Jean. It isn't that you don't know what sex is, you thoroughly enjoy it, but only that on the rare occasions you permit yourself the luxury, you are always the hunter—never the hunted. And from what you have heard about Steve Crandall...

You are late Steve. Surely when you invite yourself in on old friends you can be prompt; but that is part of your reckless charm, isn't it Steve. You are the guest of honor—the moment they received your wire they arranged the party just for you. Old times you know Steve. They will have a girl for you, people always do. Why is it your friends throw attractive girls your way? You will settle down when you meet the right girl; but you wonder if you will ever meet her, don't you Steve. Steve did you ever stop to think? It might be that you expect something you will never find. You have been looking quite a while you know. You want a girl who won't play until she has a wedding ring on her finger—your wedding ring Steve. Look at you Steve—you are too attractive, too smooth. Do you really expect a woman to resist a man like you? You make a sport of love and you know it only too well. Do you make a pass only to test a girl? Is it for that hungery conceit of yours, or do you think that if you can't seduce a girl no one can or has?

You drive on through the perfect summer night Steve. Your expensive convertible gives a burst of reckless speed—the speedometer says eighty—bounces up to ninety-three. But you have everything under your finger tip control, don't you.

Better slow down now. Their house is just around the next curve. They always call on you when in the city—now you are here. You look forward with a strange enthusiasm to the evening ahead. This girl might be the one . . . .

Well she is worth the drive isn't she Steve. Her name is Jean something-or-
other. Didn't know they grew like that down here, did you Steve. It was a little obvious, though, the way they introduced you and then had to see other guests. What's the difference? You would have managed to be alone with her in a few minutes anyway.

This is Steve Crandall, Jean. Gives you a funny feeling, doesn't he. He is worth all your trouble. You can feel his strong arms around you now, can't you Jean. Many women have so you're not alone. Better get those thoughts out of your mind, after all you are Jean—Jean the unyielding. It might be dangerous to play with this creature, even for you. Children shouldn't play with fire Jean; but you aren't a child, are you. No, you're a grown woman; you make a game of fires; you turn them on and off like a light, don't you Jean. Wasn't it lucky that they left you alone with Steve—not that you wouldn't manage.

Steve you should really go inside and meet the other guests. This party is in your honor you know; but, no, you aren't interested in your manners. You have something new—something that arouses an unnamed tenderness in you. Where has it been all your life Steve? It is much nicer on the veranda with Jean dancing slowly and closely. Where is your line Steve? Why Steve I believe you are sincere with this girl. Steve Crandall—what is happening to you? You don't believe in love at first sight—you're too worldly.

Jean you have neglected your hostess and her guests. You—the center of every party. And that glow on your face—I never saw it before. Steve is all you hoped he might be, isn't he. You find yourself not playing games for a change. You actually listen to this male and answer with sincerity, don't you Jean. It is a funny feeling for you Jean. Maybe it has happened at last. You feel like a glove on his hand, don't you Jean. Play your cards right—Steve Crandall will be quite a catch. And you can catch him. Besides this might be love—wouldn't that be something.

Steve wants to take a drive, does he Jean. Well, that suits you doesn't it. Your starry eyes will blend in perfectly with the starry night. Maybe you had better stay here. No, that wouldn't be you. Besides it seems fate meant for you and Steve to ride through the night.

You drive and drive, not saying a word, but that's all right, you both understand the silence. You both feel the mounting excitement when you finally stop on the hill overlooking the lake. Neither of you ever saw the moon like this before, did you. Its shimmering image in a path of roses across the shining surface, isn't it.

Have you forgotten Steve? Have you forgotten the thoughts you had only a while ago? Or is it reflex action when you take her hand that particular way? Think Steve. This girl might mean something to you. How can you make love to her from sheer habit?

And Jean, remember dancing on the veranda? Your games are starting again Jean.

This is Steve, Jean. Steve this is Jean. You both had vague thoughts of destiny just a few minutes ago. How can you cheapen it with your stale patterns? But she comes to your arms Steve—your expert arms.

Your lips insist, Steve, and hers are willing. This is something new even for you, isn't it Jean. Put out that fire Jean. You have so many times. One more kiss—you want just one more kiss, don't you Jean. Then you will put exciting Mr. Crandall in his place—the same easy way you put all lustful men in their place, eh Jean.

This witch tantalizes you, doesn't she Steve. She's bothered too Steve. She's trying to push you away. Look in her eyes.
No, she doesn't want you away. Her arms might feebly push, but they cling more. Her voice might plead one thing, but you hear another. You have heard many voices like that, haven't you Steve.

Steve Crandall has lived up to all your ideals, hasn't he Jean. You suspected that he might be the one when you met him only a few hours ago—now you are certain. He is stronger than you isn't he Jean. This is the man you want to marry. Judged by your own pattern, Jean, this is the man you want. You have never met a man you couldn't have; but this is the first man you have ever wanted, isn't that right Jean. There is a new look on your face—the look of one who has waited and searched and, at last, found. You feel like a kitten, don't you Jean. Steve Crandall has tied a pink ribbon around your neck. You close your eyes Jean. Are you reliving your delicious defeat or are you planning a future for you and Steve?

And Steve—are you disappointed? You have just accomplished what many have tried—you should be proud or don't you feel like gloating at your latest conquest? Are you shocked Steve? Does it suddenly seem you have destroyed your own ideal? She begged you, she pleaded for the first time in her life; but you wouldn't know about that, would you. Well, Steve, you can always tell yourself that she come close to being your kind of woman. It was easy though, wasn't it.

Make a mental note Steve. Get her phone number and name—put a circle around it in your little black book.

VOYAGE

When the last sure sight of land is gone,
The ship rides in the ever changing point
Of an inverted blue crepe coolie's hat.
Where sky and water meet,
The horizon ring rocks the strong to sleep
And lures the weak to the rail.
The vessel is an isolated bobbing world
Peopled only by gamblers and philosophers.
The gamblers hope to discover
For whom the dice roll,
And the philosopher knows
They roll for him as well as you.
And win or lose,
We lose the day and gain the year,
Though nothing seems too dear a price to pay
To gain the year and yet to save the day.

GEORGE FULLEN
The air in the confessional was dry and unsatisfying with the mustiness associated with old wood, heavy drapes and dull black cosack cloth. In the dim light which shed its mellowness into the narrow corners and over the grills to right and to left, the aging priest studied the scriptbook of prayer that he held in open hands.

A rustle proceeding the parting of the heavy drapes which were meant to shield the confessor from the curious attracted his attention causing him to lay aside the black leather breviary he had been reading, switch off the reading light and lean in the still darkness toward the tight grill.

"Bless me, father, for I have sinned."

The voice was that of a boy—a small boy. The voice was hesitant and just a bit inquiring in inflection.

"What was your sin, my son?"

"Well, uh, father, I'm not real sure it's a sin, but I made somebody cry and it seemed like I'd done something wrong, so that I guess maybe it's a sin."

"What did you do to make this person cry?"

"I—uh—well, father, I told him there wasn't any angels."

"Why did you tell him that?"

"Well, because there isn't any. Not any real angels."

The priest, secure in his darkness, nevertheless covered the grin which threatened the decorum of his priestly state. Then he paused to recoup his mental resources which had fled momentarily before the last aggressive declaration. Quickly he formulated a plan of action which could be understood by a child's simple logic.

"You know there aren't angels and knowing it doesn't make you sad, does it?"

"No, father, it doesn't make me sad. I just don't believe in 'em."

"But your friend did?"

"Yes, father."

"I wonder why he cried?"

"I don't know. I s'pose because he didn't want to know there isn't any."

"Do you know why he wanted to believe there were angels?"

"No, father."

"Do you think it could be that the angels he believed in were good things that he thought would help him sometimes?"

"I guess so, father."

"Then you took his angels away from him—and the help he hoped to get."

"Yes, father."

The lad's voice was humble with the slow and somewhat sorrowful admission of youthful realization.

"Do you think that was a sin?"

"Yes, father—I—I guess so."

"Why?"

"'Cause I took somethin' away from him he wanted."

"What kind of a sin would it be?"

"I guess maybe it'd be stealing."

"Did you steal?"

"Yes, father. I guess I did. What'll I do, father?"

"You will have to decide that, my son."

"Well, how can I give 'em back?"

"You will find the way."

"Yes, father, I guess so."

Father Flynn settled back in his chair inside the dim confessional booth. Today's two hours of confession-hearing had been tiring; so many people came to confession the day before the first Friday of the month.
And so many people had so many problems that it made the priest's head bow before the onslaught of the wrongs people committed upon themselves.

Once more, however, he heard the drapes swishing and the accompanying screech of the floor boards as another penitent knelt.

"Bless me, father, for I have sinned."
"What was your sin, my boy?"
"I stole the angels from my friend."
"Oh, yes. And is it all straightened out?"
"I think so, father."
"Is he happy again?"
"Yes, father."
"What did you do about it?"
"Well, father, I couldn't give 'im back the angels, but I gave 'im somethin' else."
"Well, now, and what did you give him?"
"His mother and dad."

That remark struck into the priest's integrated logic and caused him to exclaim in surprise.

"What's that! I'm not sure I understand what you mean."
"Well, father," the lad's voice adopted a confidential tone, "I told 'im there wasn't any angels—spirit angels, that is. I told 'im his mother and dad were the helps God gave 'im to get along with and they were real people that were s'posed to watch out for 'im and help 'im and they were responsible for 'im."

"Oh, I see now. And did that make him happy again?"
"Yes, father. He said he never thought of that and they did take care of 'im."

"Well, then, my son, it seems to me that you have made up for the angels by replacing them in a more tangible form."
"Is it all right, then, father?"
"I don't know for certain. How do you feel about it?"
"He doesn't miss the angels any more."
"That's right. He's happy. Are you?"
"Yes, father. I guess I am."
"Then you have done your penance, my son, and all is forgiven."
"Thank you, father."

The boards squeaked again, the drapes swished and the priest sat alone once more with his musing thoughts. No doubt the lad had found his own angels again as well as his friends.

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REMEMBRANCE

Remembrance puts celestial tints on the black and white of every day
And makes lyric the flat prose past.
It sets to throbbing the guilt of old wrongs
And the pain of old slights
And the peace of memoried joy.
Part gall, part honey, Remembrance, you only endure.

ANNE MCDONNELL

— 20 —
Swift’s Attack On Pedantry

JAMES P. LAWSON

It may seem to the modern reader that Jonathan Swift fell short in his attempt to ridicule pedantry, for Swift's most sarcastic illustrations of the follies of learned men might well find their parallel as commonplace news items in the magazines or newspapers of today. Swift must have felt that he was exaggerating to absurdity the follies of the learned of his time in the fields of science and the arts; and in order to accord him the proper credit, we must look at his works in the light of historical perspective.

Swift's best efforts to ridicule the learned of his time are to be found in "A Voyage to Laputa," part III of Gulliver's Travels. The Laputians were a strange-looking people whose heads were all reclined either to the right or the left and one of their eyes turned inward and the other upward. These intellectuals, unable to look out or down, went about so deeply engrossed in speculative thought that they were forced to employ servants to accompany them and rouse them whenever they approached steps or obstacles in their path or whenever they were to speak or to listen.

Everything in Laputa was done in the most scientific manner possible. The musicians were so advanced that they were able to play the music of the spheres, and Laputian mathematicians had only contempt for such simple things as practical geometry. This scorn for the mundane had its disadvantages. For instance, in the construction of houses the Laputians were quite unsuccessful, Gulliver reported. "Their houses are very ill built, the walls bevil without one right angle in any apartment, and this defect ariseth from the contempt they bear to practical geometry, which they despise as vulgar and mechanic, those instructions they give being too refined for the intellectuals of their workmen, which occasions perpetual mistakes." The modern reader may have observed, at first hand or through his newspaper articles, that the Laputian type of construction is quite prevalent today, particularly with respect to the veterans' housing projects in the United States. It remains uncertain, however, whether these modern defects arise from the designers' superior geometry or from their inferior arithmetic.

Swift's most outstanding vituperation of pedantry is found in that section of "A Voyage to Laputa" which is devoted to a description of the Grand Academy of Lagado. In this academy there were a number of professors whose duties were to "contrive new rules and methods of agriculture and building, and new instruments and tools for all trades and manufactures, whereby, as they undertake, one man shall do the work of ten, a palace may be built in a week, of materials so durable as to last forever without repairing. All the fruits of the earth shall come to maturity at whatever season we think fit to choose, and increase an hundred fold more than they do at present, with innumerable other happy proposals."

Swift doubtless considered this statement to be the height of ridicule; and, for his time, it probably was, but let the same statement be examined in today's light and the academy and its objectives seem to be more factual than fictional. The academy itself can be compared to a modern research laboratory where determined scientists perpetually carry on a series of seemingly meaningless experiments by strange methods and by utilizing mysterious instruments.
The follies of the professors of the academy of Lagado are not so readily apparent today as they were in Swift’s time. Modern hot-houses have brought the fruits of the earth to maturity in any chosen season; and cross-pollenization, crop rotation and insect control have increased them many fold. Today, one man using a power crane, a bulldozer or a ditch-digging machine can indeed do the work of ten and many more. While our modern scientists have not yet found an everlasting material, they have many which are much more durable than the adamant which made up the bottom of the Laputians’ floating island. It isn’t likely that modern builders could construct a palace in a week, but modern machines can stamp out a prefabricated house in less than twenty minutes and it can be erected in three and a half hours. It must be admitted, however, that these modern builders are comparatively slow in their work, for there are other men who have devised effective means of removing these buildings and their inhabitants from the face of the earth in a matter of seconds.

A little further on, Swift described fifty Laputians at work attempting to condense air into a dry tangible substance; modern science recently utilized a good many more than fifty men in condensing it into a wet liquid substance called rain. Because of certain difficulties and resultant inconveniences, however, it is not considered feasible at the present time to change all of our air into a liquid. Yet another Laputian projector attempted to produce colored threads by feeding spiders on colored insects; the modern scientist has succeeded in producing pearls by feeding sand to oysters and colored honey from bees.

In the field of learning, as well as of science, Swift’s outbursts against pedantry amused or provoked, as the case may be, his eighteenth century readers without, however, necessarily having the same effect on the modern reader who may feel that what Swift conjured up as the height of folly may in our time be regarded as a perfectly normal situation. For instance, Swift had one of the Academy’s professors devise a word frame containing all of the words of the Laputian language. The words in this frame could be shaken about until a phrase or two resulted. These, in turn, were carefully copied down in the fond hope that by such means books in philosophy, poetry and other fields might be compiled. Of course, modern writers guard their professional secrets very carefully, but a device such as the Lapution word frame must not seem preposterous to any reader of modernist writing; in fact, it seems quite logical to assume that a similar machine has been employed in the creation of literature by such contemporary writers as James Joyce or Gertrude Stein.

It is in the field of politics that conditions have changed least in the past three hundred years and that Swift’s creation of eighteenth century fiction has its closest parallel in twentieth century fact; therefore the modern reader should not hesitate to render him full credit for his not undeserved attack on the political pedantry of his time and ours. In a particularly bitter paragraph, Gulliver, visiting in the school of political projectors, opined that the professors in charge were “wholly out of their senses.” These professors, “these unhappy people,” as Gulliver called them, were engaged in such “wild impossible chimeras” as proposing schemes whereby rulers might choose favorites upon a basis of “wisdom, capacity and virtue” or “of teaching ministers to consult the public good, or rewarding merit, great abilities, eminent services” and “of choosing for employments persons qualified to exercise them.” Such preposterous principles as these are, of course, equally unthinkable among modern poli-
tical pedants. However, some modern political philosophers in an attempt to outdo the Laputian professors have proposed, probably in jest, that the public should be told the truth in political and economic matters.

A physician in the Laputian political school proposed a very ingenious method of achieving political unity. It consisted in slicing in two the brains of rival political leaders and reassembling them by joining together one half brain from each of the rival parties in the individual skulls. It is evident that this procedure must have been attempted recently on many modern politicians, for an appraisal of the modern politician and his work, whether his scope be local or international, plainly indicates the half successful results of such a brain operation. The present difficulty seems to lie in the inability to find skulls powerful enough to contain together such violently opposed ideas as the public good and the personal gain—or the national gain and the international good.

All things considered, if Jonathan Swift were alive today, he would find vast new fields of pedantry to ridicule. He might be aroused to describe allegorically the theory and theorists behind some labor unions which result in such activities as painters being paid to simulate painting by going over with dry brushes objects which have already been painted or musicians standing by with idle instruments and at full pay while a recording is being played. These and a thousand other modern follies would surely provoke a modern Swift to take up his pen against the pedants responsible for them and, in all probability, he, too, would fall short in his attempt to render present fiction stranger than tomorrow's truth.

VOYAGER

A lonely voyager leaned against the rail
And scanned the sea and sky.
He faced the flippant wind and watched the foam dance passionately slow pirouettes
A flash of cloud-based lightning traced an arc
Against the blackness of the night.
A somber roll of thunder sounded
And furious waves beat the decks,
A threat to iron bubble hopes of men.
The voyager drew closer his wind-whipped coat
And wondered why he sailed a wrathful sea.
He felt what he sought so near, so thinly veiled
That he strained to hear a whispered word.
He heard then: “Insecurity.”
As quickly as it came, the intelligible word returned to cacophonous mystery.
He studied the word and guessed the truth
And then he reinterpreted the sound;
That which he sailed to seek and find, he found.

—GEORGE FULLER

— 23 —
Rat adjusted his spectacles and flipped the pages over and over. This was really a windfall. Since clean-up week last year he had found only scraps of news. True there were newspapers, but they were concerned mostly with local news, and they were quite often gathered up by the garbage collector before Rat had had time to read them. When accounts of national or international events of momentous significance to Ratdom were printed, they occasionally were found by Rat; but as likely as not the succeeding issues could not be found anywhere along the entire alley. At times too, when Rat, by searching diligently among wrapped up potato peelings, found a long awaited account in a really good newspaper, he was unable to read it all at once—at least not in safety. He had enjoyed a long and useful life by being careful, and for that reason his opportunities for keeping up with the news were somewhat limited. But here in this tall stack was a mine of information, a wealth of thought. Dawn had barely broken; so, if he hurried, Rat could read the most important articles before Man began to move about. He could fit together into a comprehensible pattern the scraps of information he had gathered during the year and also fill in a background against which to set the information he would find in the coming year. Information which he would get only in small bits and pieces, but to which Man had free and continuous access. If Man did not have this advantage, things might be different. Somewhere he had read that in relation to the total period during which life has existed on earth, the supremacy of Man was a mere flash in the pan. Rat’s beady eyes hunted through the index of the next magazine. Who could know? Ratdom might still come into its own. *International News*, page forty-one. Here was the shortest route to the most important events. What was this? Czechoslovakia in the news again? He always watched for news from this country; it was a crossroad of something. Conquerors were quite likely to put in an appearance here; and, whether it was a variation of Man wielding warlike weapons or some variation of Rat bearing disease and death, events in that area had historically signalled the march of significant change. This article was an account of the same old play by Man on the same old stage. World reaction about the same too. Mongol barbarian, Teutonic barbarian—what difference did it make? Hitler, Stalin; Rat held his foot over his mouth to stop a yawn. The repetition was stale; same thing played in other little theatres nearby—Tito and Mihailovitch. It was during clean-up week at least two years ago that Rat found both magazines, the one extolling Mihailovitch as the true leader of his country, the saviour of members of the United States Air Force, the hero of the western democracies—and the other magazine deep down in the pile splashed with mud which told of the execution of Mihailovitch. Mihailovitch, the same hero of democracy—*democracy*, the word was a little strange to Rat. Where had he heard it recently? Oh, yes! The radio was blaring one Sunday evening about “making democracy live.” Mihailovitch did not live, and nothing whatever was done about it. Rat ran his toes through his whiskers. Democracy was getting careless with her heroes.

He reached for another *Neusmagazine*. This was really an old one with stories
about Chinese fighting each other as they had been since before Rat's grandfather had been born. There seemed to be a new angle now: the Chinese agrarians, red agrarians, were now simply referred to as communists. Rat wiped his spectacles; yes, there it was without trimmings, communists. Always before they referred to themselves as agrarians or leftists. Rat yawned again at the memory. That had been old stuff; when he was young, there were already jokes about parlor pinks. There still were. Last week he had breakfasted on some green salad leftovers wrapped in newspaper. Though it was badly smeared with the salad the article was still legible. It quoted a young European lecturer who had said that all intellectuals (when he read "intellectuals," Rat squinted and moved his head from side to side twice instead of once) in France were leftists, not communists, just leftists. Rat had chewed a piece of green cucumber with relish. Even he knew that for years Thorez and Duclos had been in bed with La Belle France herself.

The vague morning mist was disappearing under the bright rays of the sun, and Rat knew that he must hurry. The next magazine had news of another atom bomb test. Atom bomb factories, cyclotrons, neutrons were all a little beyond Rat's comprehension. The general picture was interesting though; it might even be the thing for which he constantly watched. His scraps of information over the last three years had repeatedly pointed to some new development that hinted at destruction of the present order. He had noticed for a while that Man considered underground factories, decentralization of cities; but lately he seemed to have forgotten; he surely was not doing much about it. Man's political memory was short. First Mihailovitch and now defense against the bomb. Rat threw the magazine aside; he didn't like the idea of decentralization either. Rat would follow Man, and so would have to live in the ground like his country cousin, the field mouse. In the ground, no lovely warehouses, no crowded, stuffed buildings, but in the ground. No! Wait! Not in the ground; but underground. Rat's little brain began to click. The pattern, the pieces—everything was fitting together. They were not all there; some of the pieces were still missing. Rat seized the next magazine. Nobody but Wallace on the cover. From atom bomb to Wallace; from invention of a new weapon to invention of a new political idea. A doubt entered Rat's cunning brain; was the idea so new? He read more furiously than ever. The news from Berlin was wonderful: armed American guards on trains running in armed Russian zones, Russia about to take over the German capital. For some reason Rat recalled the enormous headline he had seen once early in World War II, about a pact between Hitler and Stalin, the implications of which had never been fully explained to most of Man's kind. By the size of the headlines Rat knew that some guessed its import, and in his own heart had flared a diabolical hope. Now even though it was a time of peace, the news seemed more complex than in wartime.

The biggest puzzles to Rat were the newer magazines, each of which contained something about Italy. Time was getting short so that he had to resort to a mere spot check of important articles. Here was one about what per cent of the vote was given to each party in the last election in Italy; the article seemed right to Rat; but in another magazine farther down there was news that democracy and freedom had won. Rat read a little more closely. There was a small item about money spent before election; and buried in a paragraph in the back of that issue was the story of some solid,
quiet and effective work by a militant church.

Rat was not sure he liked the news about Italy, but he picked up one of the magazines he had skipped in his hurry. This was more like he expected. Now he was recognizing the pattern again. Bogota. Rat saw it all, he thought. While the democracies were busy in Russia's continent, she had been busy in theirs. Playing in each other's back yard, were they? This was fine, just fine. Rat licked his lips and hurried on. The Finnish treaty, bases in Greenland, a collision in the air in the Arctic regions. In his haste his claws cut deep slashes in the pages. Russian air power, American production, air mileage from Bogota to Panama, Los Alamos might.

The brilliant and revealing rays of the sun fell on Rat surrounded by torn and bruised pages of history. Quiet and still, he studied the wreckage intently, and his tail twitched spasmodically like that of a cat watching a bird almost within reach. He was already rehearsing the speech he would make at noon today, underground, of course, in Rat Hall by the River: "Young Rats, organize! The time has come—!"

TIME! TIME!

Time! Time!
Fleeting stuff of life.
Purest
gold,
Vainest
dross.
Each bit of you
becomes my loss
And of this loss
eternity is
made.

—ANNE MCDONNELL

— 26 —
Old Fib

M. R. HUNTZINGER

That's a mighty fine lookin' mare you're drivin' there, mister. You say she thowed a shoe about a mile from here? Well, I guess we can fix that soon as I run down some tools.

Didn't think I'd ever seen you round here before. You say you're passin' through to Upland? Well, you only got about an hour's drive ahead of you.

Whoa!—There now—steady gal, lift your foot—easy, that-a-babe. She's a peppy lookin' little rascal. Looks a mite too fat for much trotting'. You oughta keep 'er 'way from grass for a day or two before you driv'er much.

Guess I talk too much, but there ain't much else to do. I used to have another blacksmith here to help me, but he got shot. He was really a yarn teller. Most folks called him a liar but I never could see him that way. Course he did lie most of the time I guess, but he did it with such taste that it's hard to think of 'im as a liar.

Men folks 'round here could set and listen to old "Fib" tell tales from mornin' till night. He always went by the name "Fib," cause that's what his buddies all called him while he served under General Grant durin' the Civil War. Never knewed 'nother man that could drink and talk all the time and still get fifteen stallions shod in one afternoon. Course he'd knock off some days to go on a bender and never show up for a couple days, but when he did work he could do the work of two men.

The steady boozers down at the tavern usta get 'im tanked and start 'im to tellin' tales. They called 'em lies, but I called 'em tales.

Old "Fib" could really keep you laughin'. Most every night after the tavern closed he'd go somewheres and play poker till morning. He was a shark too. Won losta money cause no one could tell when he was bluffin'. Luckiest man on drawin' face cards and aces I ever seen. I seen 'em stick in a three-hundred dollar pot one night on a little pair of duces. He took three cards from the dealer and damned if he didn't draw three aces. Come time fer bets and "Fib" set still as a mouse. Finally he drawled out, "Reckon I ain't got no business stayin' this hand with three little aces, but I'll be game and raise the limit." He flipped a wrinkled fifty-dollar-bill to the center of the table and never took his eye off his hand. The other fellers looked at each other sorta sore like and they raised old "Fib." He foller'd suit and raised the limit once more, and his hand was called. When he flashed his hand, his full-house was good as gold. He seemed plenty surprised at winnin' the pot and was real pleased with hissel.

"Fib" wasn't no real hansom man but he was awful careful how he dressed. I guess he spent most of his money on fancy duds and liquor. When he stepped out in his Sunday suit, he could make you stop and look twice. After a days work here in the shop you get purty dirty. I guess that's what makes a smithy look purty neat when he dolls up.

One day durin' spring rainin' season there wasn't much doin' here so I told "Fib" to take off for a couple days. Well, he got dolled up and walked down town. For a change he walked right past the tavern without stoppin' in for a snort. Well, some of the heavy drinkers noticed 'im not stoppin' in so they walked out to see what was the matter. They asked 'im to come in and
tell 'em a lie, but he said he didn't have
time. Course they asked 'im why and he
told 'em he was goin' down to see old Teddy
Crane's corpse. The all lifted their hats
and said they was sorry to hear that he had
died. Teddy was the old feller I bought
this here shop from. Well, the fellers all
went straight to home and washed their
faces and then met at the tavern to go
callin' on the corpse. But what do ya know,
when they got there, old Teddy was settin'
on the porch smokin' his pipe and arguin'
over a checker match with his missus. Yes
sir, old "Fib" could really tell tales.

I don't recollect if it was the glare of
the forge or the liquor that caused Fib's
eyes to start goin' bad, but any how he sure
picked up a case of bad eyes. Got so he
couldn't do much work by the time he was
fifty. I kept 'im round here to do little
things and that kept 'im in clothes and
liquor money. I felt sorry fer 'im. He'd
git mad 'nough to stomp holes in the ground
whenever anyone mentioned his bad eyes.
He picked up some dime-store cheaters, but
they didn't help 'im any cause his eyes were
just past fixin'. This cramped his shootin'
eye somethin' awful too. Nevertheless
he'd go huntin', but it sorta got under his
hide when he got razzed about not gittin'
any game.

The last time old Fib went huntin' he
went into Conner's woods, which is just
packed with fat fox squirrels, and he stayed
all day. He seen a dozen or so, but didn't
git a dern one. On the way back to town
he runned into old man Conner's youngun'
with his pockets bulgin' with squirrels. Fib
managed to trade his knife and a box of
shells fer six of the fattest ones the kid had.
He told the kid never to tell anyone about
this little swap and the kid kept the
promise.

Fib displayed his kill to the tavern flock
an' then hung the tails over his anvil here
in the shop. They served to sorta stop the
fellers from teasin' Fib about his eyes fer
a while; nobody believed he killed 'em.

Well sir, it was just about this time two
year ago durin' spring plowin' that old Fib
got shot. It was just before quittin' time
and me an Fib was gittin' ready to go to
supper. I was puttin' way some tools and
Fib was out in back of the shop gittin' some
coal for the forge. Here come a stranger in
lookin' for Fib.

"Does a guy named Filbert Browning
work here?" he asked. I told 'im Fib was
out in back gittin' coal. He was tall, dark
and sorta puny lookin' and he had a clean
look. He was young, 'bout twenty-five I'd
say, and talked a little like a Rebel. I was
tryin' to place 'im when I heard a shot out
back. I reckon it was five minutes after that
when old Fib died with a hole in his chest.

The stranger come back in the shop and
asked if I'd go with 'em to see the Marshall.
Damned if I wasn't dumbfounded. I stood
lookin' at Fib bleedin' in a heap. I didn't
even notice that the stranger had taken off.
Course I run over to the Marshall's place,
but the stranger was already there. The
Marshall locked 'im up and the young Rebel
never said nothin'.

It wasn't until the day of the trial at
Bilby's grocery that I learn'd about Fib's
passed years.

It seems that Fib had been a prisoner
of the Confederates in Georgia and escaped.
He got as far north as the Kintuck-Tennes-
see line and couldn't git any further. The
confeds were checkin' every thing that was
tryin' to get north. Well, he was lucky, as
usual, and some Tennessee'en took 'im in
as a hired hand. He worked fer nothin' till
the war was over fer this feller. Durin'
this time he got attracted to a little Rebel
gal and they got married on the sly. Bout
three months 'efore the babe was due his
little woman got struck with a bolt of that
Tennessee lightnin'. Well it hurt her purty
awful and she went blind right away. Well,
Fib took off from them hills right then, and left that little gal blind and carrin' an un-born chile'.

Since my misses hails from Tennessee I felt like I outa talk with the Young Rebel. I felt sorta sorry fer 'im, I guess, but he wouldn't talk to me or anyone fer that matter before the trail. Course he talked to Squire Davis and the Marshall.

The day of the hearin' the whole town crowded in the grocery and the puny Rebel told his story. Then he fished a marriage license from his pocket and the jury looked it over. It was passed around the crowd and sure enough it had old Fib's signature scribbled on it.

There wasn't much else to do but release the stranger and nobody wanted any action against 'im. I guess everyone felt kinda' sorry for the young stranger's ma'. A hat was passed and enough money was collected to see the feller home. He never did tell anyone except the Squire and the Marshall how he happened to know that Fib was livin' here in Matthews, Indiana.

Whoa! Back up girl—there now, you're good as new again. That'll be two-bits mister.

Variations On A Theme By Candide

Frank Slupesky

"The United States, best of all possible countries," is the conviction of most non-thinking, yet sincere Americans. Was our government not formed by people who rebelled against the despotism of Europe? Was our Constitution not formed to give equality and self-government to the citizens of America? Did we not fight a civil war to insure equality? Have we not always been a humane nation? Were we not too generous in donating millions to the Japanese earthquake relief, just to turn around and have them "stab us in the back" at Pearl Harbor? Have we not more radios, telephones, automobiles, washing machines, lawn mowers and phonographs than all the rest of the world? Is our standard of living not higher than that of any other country?

But, upon reflection, is the United States the best of all possible countries? Is it not possible that, like Dr. Pangloss, we are merely suffering from many illusions? Patriotism, the cause of our illusions, is an admirable quality only when it does not blind reason.

I first suspected the fallibility of the United States because of a high school history teacher. Of course in grammar school the history texts are more devoted to the eloquent speeches of Nathan Hale and Patrick Henry than to an objective delineation of history, and the high school texts as a rule are equally biased. But, fortunately, this teacher thought we had been exposed to enough illusions. For the first time I learned how the United States rudely and unjustly acquired California from Mexico, how we shamelessly failed to fulfill our agreements with France after the Revolution and how we inspired the Panamanians to revolt from Columbia just so we could build the Canal. And now we apply some very choice adjectives to the Panamanians for not renewing the lease on the islands which we have been using as air bases to protect the Panama Canal. Is there no
honor between thieves!

Our most monstrous illusion is the complacent attitude we have toward the use of the atomic bomb against Japan. Here the great mesmerizer was Henry Stimson; he wrote articles in nationally-consumed magazines, “justifying” our action. He said that if the bomb were not used, the Japanese would have fanatically defended their home islands. I, on the contrary, could not visualize the Japanese even feebly defending their land in the late summer of 1945 with the two most powerful countries of the world closing in on her. It seems elementary that supplies and food are necessary to resist an enemy; Japan had neither. During all the time spent in Japan, I did not see one war plant that had not been destroyed by our bombers.

What will the people of the future think of the Americans for the wholesale killing of 80,000 Hiroshimans all in one morning? That not being enough, our military leaders decided to have a little more fun with the Japanese, so they singled out Nagasaki as the site of the next massacre. Certainly, the Romans and the “barbarous” Macedonians were not as adept at civil destruction as we. The Romans only burned Carthage and Corinth and enslaved their inhabitants. We burned Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and killed and maimed their inhabitants. Alexander, acknowledging Greek culture, left the home of Pindar untouched when he burned Thebes. Were we so considerate?

Foreboding, some Americans are beginning to wonder what an atomic bomb explosion is like, for unless something unforeseen occurs only a miracle can save us from an even greater slaughter than that we rained on the Japanese. What a dramatic climax!

And what about the illusion of our superiority in education? True, we have spent more time giving more people an education than any other country; but, I ask, what are these educated people doing? Why do they not come out of their hibernation? Why have we never produced a great physicist, chemist, painter, writer or composer? We have produced some skillful technologists who have applied scientific laws to practical purposes, but why can we not produce scientists who can discover the scientific laws as did Galileo, Copernicus, Kepler, Newton, Boyle, Lavoisier?

Most of us call ourselves Christians and Americans, but do we believe in the Christian code of ethics and the Declaration of Independence? Christians are supposed to believe that in God’s eyes all men are equal. We Americans are told by our Declaration of Independence it is self-evident that we are created equal. Why then must we be so hypocritical? We can not be true Christians and Americans if we believe in racial inequality. We must make a choice; either we accept Americanism and Christianity or we accept racial inequality—we can not accept both. Were our own legislators not perverting our American ideals when they passed the Oriental Exclusion Act? Are our people today not repudiating Christianity and Americanism when they refuse to accept the Civil Rights Program?

What then is the aim of such an iconoclastic paper? I do not mean that our country is among the most degenerate; quite to the contrary, I think it is among the best in existence. But it is still quite a distance from that ideal, the best of all possible countries. We must in the future try to approach more closely that ideal in order that we shall be above reproach—in order that Viachislav Molotov will not be able to point, as he recently did during a United Nations meeting, to the racial strife in the United States as requiring correction by an international agency.
Rainy Season

GEORGE FULLEN

It was a gloomy, drenched day. The sky was darkening imperceptibly but steadily, obscuring the view from the very small mess hall which huddled in the middle of a muddy waste. The only thing which identified it as a mess hall was the presence of the two soldiers who were sitting over their coffee. To them, it was weather of a monotonous sadness which seemed to have settled upon them, branding them permanently.

Bob picked up an awkward canteen cup with the adeptness of constant use, closed his eyes against the steam from the cup and swallowed some of the hot coffee. When he could feel it finally warming the pit of his stomach, he turned to his friend and asked: “Do you suppose we’ll ever feel warm again?”

“God, I hope so,” Bill replied. “If anyone had ever told me I’d be this cold when water wouldn’t even freeze in puddles, I’d have told them they were nuts.”

“At home,” Bob said repetitiously, “it gets a lot colder than this, but you don’t feel it like you do this cold. It’s not so penetrating, and besides there is always heat wherever you go. My joints have frozen up until I feel almost ninety years old.”

“I think I know what you mean. We used to go up in the mountains where the snow was several feet deep and the temperature was at least twenty degrees colder than it is here, but the air was not so damp, and you could always build a big fire in the lodge and be warm as toast.” He took a big gulp of coffee, spit it out, made gagging noises and banged his cup on the table in disgust. “Cold!” His nose wrinkled menacingly. “A man can’t drink out of these cups. The coffee is always too hot or too cold. Maybe there is a moment when it is just right, but I’ve never found it.”

The anger in his voice was infectious; and Bob hurled his cigarette butt to the floor, threw his mess gear together, arose hastily and hurried out of the mess hall. Devoid of anything human, the shack that was their dining room was nothing but a few sticks of wood thrown together to keep out the full fury of the weather. Small puddles on the floor proved that it was not a success. The only furnishings were four tables and benches similar to those found in most park picnic grounds.

Outside, the two men slipped through the mud toward the three drums of water mounted over nearly-extinguished fires. In silence, they dipped their mess kits in the greasy water and then made a futile pass at them with equally greasy cloths which they both carried for that purpose. When they had completed this operation, they slipped and skated through the mud to their barrack. The barracks was a large red masonry building which looked substantial and comfortable. It was substantial and it would have been comfortable if it had been heated. The building had two floors which were divided into large, long rooms. The room which Bob and Bill entered was furnished with nineteen beds. Their lack of uniformity attested to the ingenuity to which the men had been driven in order to provide themselves with sleeping facilities. In one corner of the room, there was a table with two long benches. Three men were seated at the table, playing rummy or pinochle. Several of the other occupants of the barracks were sitting, reclining, sleeping, reading, talking, smoking, medi-
tating, dressing or undressing.

Bob and Bill hung their mess kits on nails behind their beds which were side by side. Bob removed his coat, peeled a blanket from his bed, draped that around his shoulders and sauntered to the table in the corner to kibitz. Bill repeated the ritual of the coat and blanket, lit a cigarette and joined Bob at the table.

"How about a game of poker?" asked Kenneth Anderson.


"Sure," Bob replied.


"Right," the other four men said.

They cut for deal. Bill won and riffled the cards. The ante was carefully counted and the game began. They played soberly, carefully, unenthusiastically. It had become quite dark and they were hunched over their cards, straining their eyes to interpret them when the lights finally blinked and came on. The power was weak and the lights were feeble and inconstant.

While they played, the activities of the barracks went on about them, virtually unnoticed by them. Three men sat on two beds in the opposite corner of the room, solemnly stowing away the contents of some bottles of cheap wine which one of them had just brought from the neighboring small French village. The other occupants continued to sleep, read, talk, smoke, meditate; and more and more undressed and went to bed. However, this was usually a defense against the cold and did not greatly change their activities.

The money flowed back and forth across the table. The conversation continued to be limited to the exigencies of the game. They underwent occasional tense, emotional crises when they all became more sober, more careful, more unenthusiastic. There was a halt in the game when the lights flickered and went off. It was growing late, but the lights had ceased to function due to a power failure, not a curfew. There had been a curfew at one time, but it had been ignored by the men of the base for so long that the authorities had forgotten it, too.

When candles had been lighted, the game continued. Now, the reading ceased. The barracks became, if anything, noisier, for those who still were not sleepy joined the talkers. The wine-drinkers in the opposite corner gained a member. The stories were the funniest stories being told in the barracks. They laughed, slapped their legs, rocked, refilled their glasses and ventured another story. As they became louder, there was an ominous threshing in the bed next to them. They ignored it.

Outside, the rain fell nonchalantly. It was a brief reprieve from the vehemence of the weather. The base was quiet. All planes were grounded. Only scattered flights punctuated the moments of good weather in the normal three months of rain.

The card game went on. The four men in the other corner who were drunk were each singing snatches of songs, trying to find one that they could all remember. Finally, one of them got out a book which had come into his possession and which had some of the latest songs in it. They found one that had managed a degree of infiltration from the States and began to sing.

"Long ago and far away,
I dreamed a dream one day,
Long the skies were overcast . . ."

"Can't you guys shut up. It's late."

The disgruntled voice came from the bed next to the drunks. It was a bed that was constantly occupied by its owner and from which such remarks were always expected. The card players were playing the war away; the drunks were drinking the war.
away; the guy in bed was doing his best to sleep the war away.

The drunks replied, each in his own way, and continued to sing. The card players became more intense. Bill held a full house and was betting heavily. Bob and Kenneth were staying with him. Bob, who held three queens, finally got cautious and folded his hand. Kenneth raised. Bill called. And Kenneth spread four treys and a jack.

Bill raved: “Of all the Goddamned luck. Of all the stinking, dirty, Goddamned luck. I never saw the like of it.” He raved and banged the table. The rest of the men laughed as Kenneth triumphantly raked in the pot.

“I’ll be damned,” said the guy who had been threshing in bed. “I never heard such a damned lot of noise in my life.”

“Go to hell,” the drunks and card players shouted him down in chorus.

The guy got up, muttering to himself: “I never saw such damned, inconsiderate people in my life.”

The rest of them watched him go. Then they laughed.

“Who does he think he is?” Bill asked.

“Does he think he’s a privileged character?” Bob asked.

“To hell with him,” Kenneth said. Many of his poker games had been interrupted in this way. “He sleeps all the time or a little noise wouldn’t bother him. He can go straight to hell.”

But the drunks were swinging into action. They had devised a plan. They were busily preparing his bed for him. They worked slowly and deliberately. When they finished, the bed was a masterpiece of delicate balance. Quickly, they all scurried back to their places, resumed their singing and refilled their glasses. The card players endorsed the action by resuming their own normal activities.

The man returned. He had had many tricks played on him, but his anger had made him forget again. He threw himself petulantly onto the bed. It collapsed with a clatter. There he lay, shaken and outraged. When he could finally speak, he growled, “You bastards.”

The desired effect sent them off into mirthless laughter. The elements had again marshalled their forces. The wind had blown up again; the rain beat with renewed fury. The rainy season was endless.
Phillip Kingsley was a banker and looked the part. He was a typical example of the sort of man people expect to be president of a bank. His carefully shined shoes, conservative clothes and distinguished manner were complemented by his slightly greying temples and pale blue eyes. When he spoke, he did so in carefully selected sentences, making use of his wide vocabulary. A popular man, he was noted for his friendliness to the local townspeople and for the fact that he could be seen at any time to discuss a loan for a new silo or an additional building on a farm. If rumor could be believed, Phillip Kingsley would be the next United States senator from Indiana. In short, he was a man of whom the community could be justly proud—a solid citizen.

On this particular afternoon he was having tea at his spacious home with Mrs. Byrne Van Burrell, head of the Centertown Civic Culture League and a prominent figure in local society, in order to discuss plans for the erection of a clinic for needy families in the vicinity. Mrs. Van Burrell was a member of that international society of women who, finding themselves with nothing to do, form societies to aid "our less fortunate brothers" and who then fancy themselves benefactors of humanity.

She was speaking now in her high pitched, pseudo-cultivated voice with deep emotion, leaning forward from time to time to stress a point. She held the miniature cup daintily in her hand at a point halfway to her mouth. It would seem as if she were going to take a sip when a fresh idea would occur, and she would lower the cup. Kingsley was thinking that he could easily be lulled to sleep by that monotone.

"Mr. Kingsley, I derive deep satisfaction from the knowledge that I have your support in this matter. It warms my heart to know that a man in your position can still remember his duty to those who are less fortunate than himself. When the ladies suggested that we request that you be chairman of this project, I sincerely felt that a better choice could not have been made; we haven't forgotten your part in seeing that the children at the orphanage were remembered with oranges at Christmas."

"I endeavor to do my part, Mrs. Van Burrell, and as I have already asserted, I will do every possible thing within my power to see that clinic erected. Furthermore, I —"

"Begging your pardon, sir, there is a man to see you."

It was Thomas, the butler. He had come in so silently that neither had heard him.

"A man? I didn't hear him ring."

"He came to the back door, sir. He says he is your brother."

"My—my brother?" Although it was a warm afternoon, Phillip felt a distinct chill. It must be Silas. He had warned him the last time he had seen him, years ago, not to come around, and Silas had promised—but now he was here.

"Send him away, Thomas," he said. "Probably some beggar. Besides," he tried to smile, "I have no brother." He tried to appear unconcerned, but he wondered if Mrs. Van Burrell had seen the deep crimson coat which had blanketed his face when Thomas had mentioned his brother.

"I told him to leave, sir, but he insists..."
upon seeing you.”

Thinking that he couldn’t risk the chance that Silas might make a scene, Phillip said in an aggravated tone, “Oh well, then I’ll see what the beggar wants and send him packing. Excuse me, please.”

“Certainly,” shrilled Mrs. Van Burrell.

Phillip hurried to the kitchen and there, clutching a broken felt hat in front of him with both hands, was his brother, Silas. The shoes he wore were at least a size too big and the tops were covered with crevices where the leather had dried and cracked. Over the tops of his shoes wrinkled his faded trousers which, in spite of having been rolled up, were too long. A red kerchief was tied loosely around his neck and it stood out in sharp contrast to his blue denim shirt. His face looked tired and drawn. For a moment he just stood there; then he spoke.

“Phillip—Mr. Kingsley. I’m sorry to bother you. I ain’t never bothered you before; you know that. But I’ve been walking all day, and I’ve got the chills, and I want to know can I sleep in the garage. I wouldn’t ask you except I’ve got thirteen miles to go to get home and it’ll be dark soon and I ain’t well. I’ve got the chills. I could do chores in the morning and then I can start for home and I won’t never bother you again. Can I sleep in the garage?”

The banker’s face was purple with rage as he hissed, “Get out.” Then louder, “Get out.”

Silas cast his eyes to the floor and like a dog that has been whipped for something he did not know was wrong, turned and walked slowly to the door. He grasped the doorknob, opened his mouth as if to speak, closed it again and still wearing the puzzled expression, opened the door and slowly shuffled out.

Phillip walked to the window and watched until Silas reached the road. After straightening his tie and adjusting the carnation in his lapel, he strode briskly into the parlor.

In answer to his guest’s questioning look, he explained, “It was as I thought, just a beggar. Something of a lunatic, I think; he wanted me to give him money; he insisted he was a relative. Utterly absurd, of course.”

“How vulgar,” exclaimed Mrs. Van Burrell. Her face registered her disgust. “A man like that is a threat to the community and should be dealt with by the authorities.”

“You’re absolutely right.”

“Oh yes, as I was saying before that awful man interrupted,” Mrs. Van Burrell went on, “the ladies feel as strongly as I that we couldn’t have made a better choice for director of the clinic drive.”

Phillip took a deep breath. And in the voice which he usually reserved for addressing the Rotary Club, he replied, “It gives me great pleasure to have a part in this undertaking. No one, Mrs. Van Burrell, realizes his duty to the multitude of unfortunates in our society better than I.”

“Mr. Kingsley,” said Mrs. Van Burrell, her voice trembling with emotion, “you are a most charitable man.”

Not for down the road, Silas drew the kerchief tighter around his neck and tried to walk faster. It was growing dark, and he was over twelve miles from home.

“The first thing I’ll do when I get home is ditch the meadow,” he said aloud. “But I’ll have to rest some first. I’m awful tired and my head hurts. It must be the chills.”
He stood beside his car with one foot resting on the rear tire. A crowd of people were gathered around him looking curiously into his face. They asked questions that he answered automatically — not giving the answers any thought because he had heard them over and over again from people who were trying to form a possible story. They wanted a little personal touch to add in case they got the chance to tell about an ex-midget race driver with whom they had had a little chat once. He did not look at anyone's eyes particularly, but he knew what was there: admiration, excitement and that question that he had never heard, yet knew by heart. He didn't have an answer for it; he didn't want an answer for it. He knew the mechanic had shined his car and that the motor was in perfect condition but something wasn't quite right, something was bothering him.

The blare of the loud speaker announcing the feature event of the evening reached his ears. The crowd faded away from him, back to their seats where they could see the whole track. He reached into the cockpit of his car, picked up his helmet and gazed aimlessly about him as he put it on and adjusted the chin strap. He climbed into the seat and four men pushed him out on the track. The car coasted down the banked turn and toward the starting line. He stopped the car, fastened his safety belt; and as he reached up to adjust his helmet once more, his hands touched his face. His hands were cold and perspiring.

He felt a jar from behind as the tow truck bumped into him and started his car rolling around the track. The gears whined, the motor coughed, backfired and roared into life. He drove slowly around the track waiting for the other cars to be started. He glanced up at the crowd gazing down like vultures waiting for a meal. The cars were in position; and as they came into the straightaway in front of the starter, the cars leaped forward as if they had been propelled from a gun. His head slammed back against the rest and his neck muscles grew taut as the cars thundered past the starting line. He gripped the brake stick and threw the car into a slide around the first turn. He released the brake and the car shot forward again as he accelerated on the back straightaway.

He glanced down at the gauge on the dash board; it looked like two glassy eyes. He jerked his head up as he heard the screech of tires in front of him; there was a car sideways in the middle of the track. He flipped the wheel and grabbed for his brake; the track and lights began making circles about his head in a crazy pattern; there was a sudden shock and a crash. The lights faded and the noise dimmed, then slowly came back. People were standing around him and another car. It was lying upside down on the track with an inert body pinned beneath it. He looked at the people standing around the cars; they looked at the body with horror in their eyes, then they looked at him and their eyes changed. They changed slowly, but they changed.
A few days ago I ran into an old friend of mine, whom we can call Judge Smith. I had not seen the Judge for several years, but it was apparent to me that in that time he had aged rapidly—almost too rapidly for a man of his good health. When I questioned him on this point, he invited me to lunch and during the meal told me a very interesting story.

The Judge began, "Do you remember several years ago when the case of Roger Williams came into my court?" I did very vaguely and said so. "The man was being tried for embezzlement," the Judge went on, "and when the jury found him guilty, I had no choice but to sentence him to jail for a period of ten years. He vowed then that he would get even with me, but I paid no attention to him, for being a judge, I have heard that boastful statement before.

Williams was released at the end of seven years for good conduct; and a week after he was free, I received a letter from him. It said that he had not forgotten his promise and that he still intended to kill me but in such a way that my death would be attributed to natural causes. Naturally, I was a little worried; but when nothing happened for two weeks, I soon forgot the occasion.

"About one week later I received a small box with no return address; and being a curious sort of person, I quickly opened it. When I removed the lid, I gasped at the contents and threw the box from me. Inside the box I had glimpsed a deadly poisonous tarantula spider. The box landed near the hearth, and I looked in that direction expecting to see that ghastly thing creeping away. But as I watched, I saw that it was not moving. I went over for a closer look, and then I saw that it was a toy, carved minutely in every detail. As I picked up the box again, I noticed a note under the lid; and removing it, I read, 'It's a cute little toy, isn't it?' There was no signature; but none was needed, for I knew that Williams had sent it.

"Naturally, I was a bit shaken up, but I was determined not to let that fiend know that he had given me a scare. It was ten days later as I was going to my office that the next 'accident' occurred. I was crossing the main thoroughfare when suddenly a car came careening down the street at a terrific speed, just missing me as I leaped for the curb. Recovering my composure, I went on to my office; but I couldn't keep my mind on my work because of worrying as to what that maniacal fool might try next. I was thoroughly convinced by now that Williams did mean to kill me, and I was baffled because I did not know from which direction the next attempt on my life might come.

"The next Sunday I decided that I had to get control of myself or lose my mind from worry. I thought to myself, where would be the safest place to hide? He wouldn't dare try to kill me if there were a lot of people around, so that, obviously, the thing for me to do was to determine where the biggest crowd would be and stay with it. The only place I knew that was good and crowded all the time was Coney Island, after some deliberation I called a cab and went there.

"It was a warm sunshiny day with just a touch of spring in the air. As I walked around through the milling crowds, I began to feel an ease of mind that I had not had since receiving Williams' letter. I almost
felt at peace with the world as if I had just awakened from a nightmare. After walking aimlessly around the park, I began to get hungry. I finally located a hot-dog stand just beneath the roller coaster. After much pushing I was able to get a seat.

"'What'll you have,' asked the waiter.

"'A cup of coffee, please.'

"'It sure is a nice day, ain't it?' he remarked as he set my coffee in front of me. To that I readily agreed, for I was beginning to feel more and more at ease. Suddenly as the roller coaster roared over our heads, an object hurled through the roof of the stand and thudded to the ground next to my stool.

"'Those crazy kids,' shouted the man, 'they'll kill some one, one of these days!' I had already gotten to my feet, not seeing or caring where I was going, I fought my way through the crowd. I had to get away before it was too late! I ran and ran until on the outskirts of the park, I found an empty taxi.

"'Drive as fast as you can! I shouted, I don't care where, but drive, get me out of here! The driver looked a little perplexed, but started off in the direction of the city. As he drove along, I looked nervously out the rear window to see if I were being followed; but after a few minutes, it became apparent that I wasn't. I sank back into my seat and wiped the cold sweat from my forehead; but as I tried to light my cigarette, my hands shook uncontrollably.

"'By this time the taxi driver was becoming a little disturbed, and he looked into his rear view mirror at me.

"'Say is there anything I can do for ya? Cheer! You look as if you seen a ghost or somethin',' he said. I tried to get hold of myself and answer.

"'No thank you, just take me to 1524 Riverside Drive.

"'When I finally reached home, I paid the driver and dashed madly into the house.

I ran into the den and fell on the couch still shaking nervously, and lit another cigarette. I wished I were dead—I was so frightened; and I was at my wit's end, for I knew that if much more of this kept up, I would go mad.

"'That night I tried to go to sleep, but as soon as I closed my eyes I could see that rock hurtling at me, and William's face seemed to be sneering at me as he kept saying over and over again, 'I'll get even with you'—death from natural causes, death from natural causes. I sprang from the bed and went down stairs to the den where I poured myself a drink and then another, and another, and another and that was all I remembered until the next morning when I woke up in the den. At first, as I opened my eyes, I couldn't imagine where I was, but when I saw the half empty whiskey decanter, the whole thing came back to me.

"In desperation I decided to call Williams to see if I could buy him off, and as I reached for the 'phone, it suddenly rang. As if in answer to my thoughts, I heard Williams' voice.

"'Did you have a nice time out at Coney Island yesterday?' and then that harsh laughter. I decided in that split second that I would die rather then let him know how frightened I really was.

"'Williams, what do you want,' I asked.

"'I'm giving a little party tomorrow night, and I thought you might like to drop in,' he said, 'unless you're too scared.'

"'I'll be there, I said, and hung up. What have I done I said to myself. That is the last place I want to go, but it was too late then; and if I didn't go, the truth of how scared I really was would come out.

"The next evening as I arrived at Williams' house he answered the door himself, and with a sardonic smile said, 'Welcome, Judge. Come on in the study and have a drink with me.' He poured the two drinks and handed me one, I gulped it down, and
he watched me with a slight smile twitching his lips.

"That drink was poisoned you know, Judge, and you will be dead within an hour;" he remarked calmly.

"You wouldn't dare poison me, I said, if you did, you'd hang for it, and you know it.

"'You're right, Judge,' Williams answered, toying with a small package, 'but I did think of it, for this package contains arsenic poison.'

"Williams, I asked, when are you going to stop this nonsense?

"'When you are dead, Judge,' he answered coldly. Laying his glass down, he turned and left the room.

"The next morning as I picked up my paper, I saw the glaring headlines: 'FORMER CONVICT DIES OF POISONED DRINK; LOCAL JUDGE SOUGHT FOR QUESTIONING.' As I read on I saw this report: 'Roger Williams, former convict, died last night from arsenic poisoning.' Good Lord! So that was how he intended to kill me—by having me indicted for murder—his own murder; and with just the two of us in the room, I didn't have a ghost of an alibi.

"Dashing from my home, I ran into the arms of two burly detectives who had been sent to arrest me. When we arrived downtown, I went before the police captain and told him the whole story.

"'You realize, of course, that you are building up an air-tight case against yourself, don't you? Williams was poisoned by a glass of whiskey that contained arsenic. Do you deny that he had a drink with you in the den and that you two were alone for fifteen minutes, and that this package of poison we found on the desk wasn't what you used for the murder?'

"No I said, I guess not, and then suddenly it struck me. Yes! I shouted, I do deny it! Williams didn't drink that glass of whiskey, I did.

"'Well,' said the Captain, 'We'll soon know; here comes the coroner's report now.' The captain looked at the report and glanced at me.

"Release that man; according to this report, Williams died of heart attack brought on by too much excitement.'"
Upon my arrival in Europe, one year after the war had ended, I found the people busily clearing away the wreckage and rebuilding the damaged structures. The reconstruction of the ravaged cities was being carried on with great rapidity; but, in their preoccupation, people overlooked the millions of children who were orphaned or deserted. Left to shift for themselves in a world of hunger, misery and squalor—and deprived of human care—these children wander aimlessly about the streets, begging or stealing. They have lost all sense of security, morals and decency.

My first experience with one of these unfortunate children has left such an indelible mark on my memory that in my mind's eye I can still see her skinny body, small white face and her dark curly hair that might have been lovely with proper care. Her dark strange eyes were the eyes of one who had been frightened, neglected, hungry and unloved. She could not have been more than ten years of age, but the expression on her face was that of an adult; and it disclosed that she knew about life—every hideous phase of it. Her bare feet were bruised and calloused, and she was inadequately clothed in a threadbare dress that was tight and much too short. The little waif kept tugging at my coat and repeating the same words over and over. I could not understand what she was saying, but I knew that she was begging for food or money. As I stared at her, I noticed a striking resemblance in this little gypsy to my young cousin. Although there was a great similarity in their features, their lives would be entirely different, for my cousin Judy would grow up educated, cared for and loved. This little brown-eyed street urchin would grow up in ignorance and filth.

I took her to a cafe and bought her a meal which she devoured in gulps as though she feared it would disappear. Then she gazed at me slyly, and her eyes followed my hand as I reached for the money with which to pay the check. Quick as lightning she snatched the money from my hand and fled down the street. This poor, neglected child in her fight for existence had no sense of right and wrong and felt no shame in begging and stealing from the same person.

Many of these children are weakened by tuberculosis and other diseases. Some have been wounded, received no medical attention and are crippled and maimed for life. One of the saddest sights I remember was a little boy of eight or nine years of age who had one leg and one arm amputated. He hobbled about on crutches, carrying a basket filled with good luck and fortune-telling cards. On his shoulder was perched a tame bird, which would dip into the basket, grasp one of the cards in its beak and hand it to a person in exchange for a coin. In this modified manner of begging, the crippled boy managed to support himself in spite of his deformities.

These children need guidance and education, decent living conditions, treatment for their diseases and handicaps and, above all, love and security. It is just as necessary to rebuild their shattered lives as it is to reconstruct the war-ravaged cities. These children will become tomorrow's citizens, tomorrow's parents, tomorrow's leaders and tomorrow's hope for a more humane, peaceful and unified world.
No, they aren’t going anywhere today, nowhere at all. Not as long as I, Corporal Nick Shekro, USMC, have anything to say about it. I had discovered five of the little bandy-legged so-and-so’s holed up in a cave on the north side of the hill, not sixty yards distant. With the help of “The Widow Maker,” Browning Automatic Rifle, number 2250783, I am going to keep them in that cave till the boys with the flame-throwers arrive to prepare the “Filet a la Nip,” a delicacy which has become quite common as of late but, nevertheless, always heartily welcomed by our guys. With time on my hands and being quite comfortable lying here on my stomach between two boulders commandeering the entrance to the cave and with the “Widow” resting on her bipod, with the hinged butt plate firmly secured in my shoulder, I took up my vigil, praying for a couple of them to come out soon. After what seemed like an eternity, I saw first one and then another inverted stew-pot rise slowly from behind the boulders at the mouth of the cave. These stew-pots with their netting soon rose higher revealing the squinty-eyed, scrubby-faced heads beneath them. The safety on the “Widow” clicked off and old thoughts raced through my head; two-two-one, two-two-one, just like they taught us in Boot at P. I.—no long bursts, burn up the barrel, crystallize the firing pin, just two-two-one. With these thoughts in mind, I squeezed off three short bursts in that order. One Nip fell, head over the boulder, face down, exposing the missing back of head and helmet. Dum-dums, International Law, ha! The second Nip was knocked flat against the side wall of the entrance, with the lower part of his face now missing. That ought to give the other three inside something to think about. Just like Coney on the Fourth of July; clay ducks just waiting to be knocked down. I waited for those ducks, and I’ll wait for these too. It may take a long time before they make a move now, but I’ll wait. Hell, I’ve got nothing else to do; and besides, I’ve got patience.
It would come. It would spread its inky blackness before me, dark as any night.

So I prayed to God to give me light to see it, strength to fight The unexplainable fear of the unknown. That which is not known to sight.

I would fall. I would stumble within myself, be covered by my fear. And I would plead with Him to see my ebbing courage, beg Him to hear My lost soul slipping into nothingness. Falling, tear by tear.

He would help. With one swift movement, His sweeping hand Would blot out my sins, my faults, that shameful band, With renewed courage. Then alone, before my God, my cleansed soul would stand. —ROLAND CRIM
I Wonder And The Reason

DIANA HARVEY

The whole day is in a minor key and colored gray. I sit on a high cliff with my back against a tree—gazing at the sky and the water—trying to make myself a part of their tranquillity. Up above is the sky—spread with a thick layer of gray clouds; it hangs low over the earth. Beneath lies the water—endless rows of small waves, pinched into shape and pushed to shore by the slow wind. The trees, too, are play-things of the wind; it uses their stark, black branches as strings and strums long sad chords upon them.

I am calmed by the serenity of these things—the sky, the water and wind. Not always are they serene—sometimes heaving and lashing in a mighty storm; but I have the feeling that this violence throws them out of their correct place in the scheme of things. Thus when they return to serenity, they are once more akin to the calm, ordered mechanism of the universe.

The universe—I wonder—how did it begin? How will it end? What is its purpose? My mind asks these questions—tormenting itself—for it knows there is no answer. Yet it continues to ask, why?

Simply because that driving, seeking force—sometimes called “intellectual curiosity”—will not allow it to cease. If this curiosity is present in a human being, it will first be evident when he is a child, asking why the sky is blue, why the dog barks and why the fire is hot. As a person grows and becomes truly mature, his intellectual curiosity will become one of the two most essential forces in his life.

The other force is faith, faith in God. This may vary in concept, but not in intensity. Strong faith is necessary as a counterbalance; and if it is lost, the intellectual curiosity will run rampant, leaving the individual in the midst of spiritual shambles. He needs it desperately to sustain him, to strengthen him so that he will not become overwhelmed and disillusioned by the knowledge he has gained. And the greater his knowledge becomes, the stronger must be his faith to sustain this knowledge.

Thus man, ever searching and straining upward in his quest for knowledge, is immeasurably aided by these two magnificent forces: intellectual curiosity and faith.
Once upon a time, the editor of a metropolitan daily newspaper sent out three journalists to bring back a story. The first person he sent out was the editor of a small town weekly newspaper. Here is his story:

"Two of our local boys, Jeb Collins and Danny Stuart, report a queer occurrence over by the haunted Banner house. While they were coming from the barn dance which Clem Chowder gave last night at his farm an unknown rider, riding a sleek mare, passed them at a high rate of speed.

He did not seem to see them, but rode up to the door of the mansion and rapped twice. When no one answered, he shouted, "Tell them I came and no one answered; that I kept my word." He then rode away.

The boys, who heroically tried to capture the heavily-armed culprit, could not give any explanation, but your editor looked up several who remembered the history of the house.

The house belonged to the Widow Banner, whose husband met death at the hands of a person unknown.

The house . . . ."

The second person to go out on this queer scavenger hunt was Casey, a police reporter who had seen so much of the sordid and seamy side of life that he had forgotten how to smile. His story follows:

"Police early today investigated reports of a prowler who tried unsuccessfully to break into the old Banner mansion, 432 East Main street.

Witnesses report that they were passed by a rider on a black mare, travelling at a great rate of speed.

The mysterious rider turned into the drive-way of the Banner mansion. According to witnesses, he tried twice to break into the front room of the house.

After failing to gain entrance, he angrily roared, 'Tell them I came and no one answered; that I kept my word.'

Lieutenant Holmes, homicide squad, who is investigating the crime, reports that no fingerprints have been found. He did find two well-preserved hoofprints and two of the best men of the force have been put on the trail.

Police report nothing stolen. They believe the prowler was a member of a gang who had planned to ransack the house.

The house . . . ."

Last to go out was the society editor of the paper. She is known as the "sob sister" of the paper. This is her story:

"Mr. and Mrs. Waven Banner, currently vacationing in Florida for the winter, were honored by the visit of Mrs. Jack Traveller, formerly of this city. Mrs. Traveller arrived here last night on her late model Black Mare.

She wore a white satin, princess model gown with a deep flounce of silver lace on the skirt, the sleeveless gown being studded with rhinestones and pearls. From her shoulders hung a court train of mousseline embroidered in pearls and rhinestones in a lily pattern outlined in silver threads. Over this long train hung the tulle veil which was arranged from a close-fitting cap of Burano lace.

Mrs. Traveller rapped twice on the door. When no one answered, she shouted to the maid, 'Tell them I came
and no one answered.' Mrs. Traveller is weekending at the home of a friend, Mrs. Gowen Under."

After the editor had read the three stories, he smiled and reached for his type-

writer. Which story did the editor use for his paper? He didn't use any of the stories. He wrote an editorial on the old Banner mansion.

Democracy Of Art

ARNOLD Wajanberg

Many people today, both artists and laymen, believe that art is essentially aristocratic. Some artists admit readily that their work is not for the "masses." The "masses," on the other hand, often regard art as something strange and dull, reserved for eccentrics who live in an imaginative half-world of their own. Usually the artists who boast that their work is for the upper two percent will also add that "the common man" is incapable of appreciating "real art." This gives rise to the question of what "real art" is.

In this theme, I shall consider as art that which is beautiful. Apparently, this definition leaves much to be desired. First, beauty is a purely relative quality, for what is beautiful to one person is not necessarily beautiful to another. Yet the same thing is true of art. Many cultured persons condemn the work of Moussorgsky, and their condemnations usually include the statement that his compositions are not art. Yet other equally cultured people defend and enjoy his music; to them it is art. Another complaint which might be raised against my definition is that no mention is made of messages or great truths or ethical themes. It is true that many indeed most great works of art contain at least one fundamental truth. Yet so do most scientific, philosophical and theological treatises. To the extent that art expresses truth, it becomes science, philosophy or theology, but there is undeniably a difference between these studies and art, however slight that difference might sometimes be. That fundamental characteristic which separates art from other academic pursuits is beauty.

This concept extends art beyond its traditional though ill-defined boundaries, for there are many kinds of beauty: sensuous, emotional, imaginative and intellectual. The enjoyment of cool sheets on a hot summer night, delight in the delicate scent of a violet, the pleasure of a tasteful meal—all of these are on a primitive, physical plane, the appreciation of art. Similarly, the joy one might find in reading a beautiful thought beautifully expressed in Aristotle's Poetics would also be the appreciation of art. In a sense, then, art is extremely exclusive, for everyone has a slightly different concept of it. However, everyone who enjoys a good meal or a walk in the sun has some concept of art. Therefore, we might well say that art is so exclusive it is democratic.
Eons ago when the government was donating an existence to me as payment for a few negligible risks, I lounged about and zig-zagged the Atlantic six or eight times aboard a tired old Liberty ship named in honor of Buffalo Bill Cody. Now Bill may have been a smooth-riding, fast-shooting pioneer—not so his namesake. She couldn't push ten knots burning mattresses; nevertheless, she attracted the elite.

These elite included the Finnish, gruff Captain Skold (whom I affectionately called "grandpa"), my buddy, Mardie, the second mate, and, of course, me. We three formed an inseparable triumvirate which unassisted could, I'm sure, have sailed that five hundred and fifty feet of scrap through any of the seven seas. General Eisenhower, however, sent us an assistant who desired to learn much from our scintillating company. This junior member was Richard Lewellen Lloyd, who lived as a parasite guest among us for a month.

All of us were extremely anxious to be interviewed by this august personage and used as source material for his next book; Mardie and I locked ourselves in the radio shack, and the Captain spoke Finnish. Lt. Lloyd (Lt. by courtesy of Parliament and a previous Welsh title) was gathering data for a book about an American "melting-pot" crew aboard a fast-built, slow-moving Liberty ship thrown together by Kaiser.

Our first cook was Chinese, the second cook was Welsh, the third cook was Negroid, the baker was German, one deck-hand was Portuguese, another was Korean, the captain was Finnish, the first mate was Scotch and I was from Indiana. There we all were—the gentleman author of "How Green Was My Valley" and we American mongrels.

I had struggled aboard ship before our second sailing, dragging an extremely heavy suitcase behind me. Stealing silently up the precipitous ladders, I had stowed it away in the darkest recesses of the radio shack. Frequently Mardie would give me the word, and the two of us would slip into the shack, lock the door, bolt the porthole, stuff paper into every crevice, quietly slide the suitcase from its hiding place and play our classical records on a not very reliable, home-constructed device that would omit half a movement of my favorite symphony if the ship rolled a bit. The crew preferred "boogie."

One night as I sat idly sketching and Mardie transferred us from the second record of "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" to the third, an insistent rap startled us out of the second movement. Was it one of the crew come to pilfer our needles or some other dastardly deed which would render our phonograph impotent? No, it was merely Lt. Lloyd. We invited him to bring us a pot of tea and some fresh cakes (the English appreciate these little courtesies, you know) and asked him to sit down—even listen if he liked.

To make conversation I asked him if he had noticed any similarity in pattern between a phrase in the "Apprentice" and a passage from Beethoven's "Ninth." He was adamant; there was no possible similarity; I must be demented. His withering glare removed the top layer of paint as it mentally noted every unadorned feature of our weary little radio shack. In time his eye fell on my poor attempt at a portrait of the Captain (the portrait now hangs in the New York Yacht Club); his eyes fell on the
portrait and ran down the edges. In a condescending manner he confided in us.

"When I was young and foolish," he admitted, "I thought that art was a great field in culture. I studied in Vienna for a while, but then I discovered music; it offered more. The theatre next attracted my talents, and I was very successful there.

It was quite a while before I understood that these so-called attempts at culture were just stepping stones to the acme, writing. Writing is everything. Art is just the beginning."

Mardie asked him if he had ever had anything published; he left; I pulled out my typewriter.

The Price Of Victory

LEE LOVELL

It was early in the fourth round; I measured it by the four swallows of whisky taken from the half empty pint of "Old Grandad" nestling against the palm of my left hand. The whisky produced a warm sensation that loosened my tongue, causing me to yell as did the rest of the wild beasts around me. Urged on by the mastery of alcohol, all the savageness of primitive man overshadowed the culture of civilization; and I felt the supremacy of the conqueror ruthlessly beating his victim. Each of his blows became my own; each smack of his fist slamming into soft flesh created a thrill. "Kill him," I yelled. "Kill him!"

Hysterically I lifted the bottle to my lips and with a quick jerk tilted my head backwards. For a second the arena lights glared into my eyes. The whisky seemed to draw my mouth. It slid across the top of my tongue and burned the tenderness of my throat before adding more fuel to the increasing fire in my belly. I screwed the cap tight and for a moment stared through the glass at the quivering liquid inside. Within its dark depths I saw the Roman Coliseum, the betrayal of Jesus and the swastika of Germany. Somewhat shaken I once more became aware of the people around me. I noticed the expressions, the sheer delight that reflected in their faces at the brutality occurring before them. I saw eyes that smoldered dangerously, mouths that twitched at the sight of blood and expressions of sweet happiness as pain was felt.

A young woman in front of me leaped to her feet. "Look! Look!" she screamed. "His teeth, they're loose!" The manner in which she placed both hands to the side of her face and stared reminded me of a buddy I once knew. It was just after a hot piece of shrapnel had disemboweled him. The body twitched and jerked, but not the face; it remained the same. With a curse the woman's companion pulled her back down into the seat. "Naw, that's the mouth piece," he muttered. At the same time he glanced around and smiled. I nodded.

Leaning forward I placed my hands against the hard chair back. It shifted as my weight was applied. A smacking noise drew my attention once again towards the ring. Momentarily the beaten fighter rocked on his feet from the force of the punch, then slid to one knee. Stubbornly he clung to the conscious world before falling sideways to the canvas. His mouth piece, which was protruding from the corner of his mouth, rolled across the floor and stopped at the feet of his conqueror. A red blotch on the right cheek bone of the prone fighter turned a soft blue color as the winner's hand was raised into the smoke filled air. Somehow the sweetness of the life-saver I had placed in my mouth turned bitter.
ADRIFT

Perhaps we do not love today,
But by all lover's tears I say
We loved before—and by the sun,
That love can never be undone!
If now we are remote and strange
To such a love, be sure the change
Is in ourselves. For love once given
Stands immutable as heaven.
If chartless now and blind we move,
Then you and I are lost—not Love!

—ROLAND CRIM

AN APOLOGY FOR LOVING

That I might have loved you more,
This I could not do
For I have loved until my soul was sore.
Life was love for you.
The brightness of the moon is stolen sunbeam.
So in my dark heart
I took the stolen light of love's dream
To light my spirit
And make it soar into the realms of joy.
Yes, I stole from God.
I should have known that such as I destroy,
But I say, I loved.
Somewhere in the reckless labyrinth of time
I carved my name
Upon ethereal walls where others shine;
Even I have loved.

—BASIL RAYMOND

— 48 —