

Hit the Deck

Robert Dugdale

THE United States destroyer *Henderson*, DD645, was steaming toward Wonsan Harbor, which is located on the East coast of Korea. It was returning for more bombardment duty from a routine patrol at Hungnam, where it sank a North Korean *san pan* attempting to lay mines.

I, Bill Wilson, quartermaster third class of the United States Navy, had the visual communication watch on the bridge, along with quartermaster striker, Tom Anderson.

It was 5:30 a. m., and although we had been on watch for an hour and a half, neither of us was quite awake. "You hold a sweepdown and I'll put on a pot of mud," I said, as I started for the ladder.

The sea was calm, but the sky was overcast, and the barometer had been dropping—a good sign of a storm.

"Where are we going to hit first when we get back in port?" Tom asked, as he dried out the swab.

"Oh, I don't care. After forty days at sea I'll be able to have a good time anywhere," I replied.

"Sure is good coffee you make," marveled Tom. "How come you never drink the stuff?"

"It's one of the few bad habits I haven't gotten into yet," I told him.

"Tell the Officer of the Deck it's a half an hour before sunrise," I reminded Tom. With only fifteen minutes before dawn alert, I wanted everyone to be prepared.

"Combat reports an unidentified plane, bearing zero six zero degree true, distance fifty miles," Tom said, as he hurried out of the wheelhouse. "The skipper told the OOD to sound general quarters so it looks like trouble."

The alarm sounded and within seconds the ship became alive with men running to their battle stations. "What's the trouble?" asked first class quartermaster, Don Taylor, as he headed for the wheelhouse to take the helm.

"An unidentified boogie," I answered, as I put on my life jacket and helmet.

"All stations manned and ready," came the report over the phone circuit. Phone talker, Jack Peterson, informed the captain along with a report from combat that the plane's bearing was remaining constant, but the distance had closed to ten miles.

"Attention all hands," came a report from the loud speaker. "This is the captain. Combat reports an unidentified plane. The relative bearing is about three hundred and thirty degrees, distance ten miles. I don't have to tell you to keep a sharp lookout. Make all reports to air defense."

"Think it's a Red?" Tom asked, as he scanned the starboard bow. "It must be," I replied. "Or he would have identified himself by now. I'm sure glad we've got that blanket up there," referring to the overcast. "He'll have to come in low, and these gunners aren't the type that miss. Not when the chips are down."

Then from mount one came, "Plane three hundred and fifty degrees relative, position angle ten, closing fast." Mounts one and two opened fire, and we watched the flack getting closer, but none hit. The plane commenced strafing, and as it pulled out of its dive, let go its bomb.

"Hit the deck," I yelled, as I knocked Tom over with a flying tackle. "Sightseeing will get you nowhere in this league," I warned him. Then came an explosion that shook the ship, but luck was with us, and the bomb hit about twenty-five yards off starboard beam.

We looked up just in time to see mounts three, four, and five open fire. Flack was bursting all around the plane, and for a couple of seconds it looked as if he might get away, but after months of training, the gunners weren't going to let their first bird get away. What followed looked like the Fourth of July. The next instant the plane burst into flames and plunged into the sea.

"We got him," yelled Tom, as he jumped to his feet. "Yes, but he came too close to please me," I answered. "If it never happens again, it'll be too soon."

"All hands, secure from general quarters," came a report over the loud speaker. "Let's get some chow and hit the sack," I said to Tom. "We've got the twelve to four watch this afternoon."

"That's all right with me," he replied. "I can use a little relaxation."

"Relaxation," I thought. "How can you relax when up ahead lies Wonsan and there lies the enemy?"

It's for the Birds

Nanci Golten

I DON'T like birds.

The professional ornithologist is hard enough to understand, although I do give him his due credit. But I don't comprehend the amateur or the true bird lover—the tree climber.

I appreciate the people who put food out of doors in snowy weather so that through the long bleak winter the air may be filled with the melodious songs of their grateful friends. I know many an invalid's day is cheered watching the hungry guests at a window suet tray. I have been told that young children learn not to mistreat pets because at even more tender ages they have been instructed in the system of attracting birds to rustic feeding stations, purchased through courtesy of House Beautiful Mail Order Service, at the incredibly low price of twenty-nine ninety-five.

But I do not understand the tree climbing urge.

A tree climber, when in good form, rises at four in the morning to be on his way before the birds begin winging about in search of insects and undernourished field mice. Bleary eyed, he starts the day cooking a mammoth breakfast to sustain his energies while tracking down a tufted titmouse when the titmouse has better judgment than to be out tracking down the tree climber. He wears boots weighing twelve and a half pounds each and a coat so heavy it knocks over small furniture as it is tossed around casually while binoculars and field guides are located. Rarely is he awake enough to see what he is doing, so he drops cartons of eggs and pitchers of fruit juice while trying to kick shut the refrigerator door. A tree climber also makes more noise putting the skillet on the stove than a navy cook. The final affront to a sleeping household is to leave everything as is: "I didn't clean up the kitchen—'fraid the noise would wake you."

Tree climbers never drive their own cars. They are always picked up by other tree climbers whose cars, perhaps not really as dilapidated as they appear, have suffered the ravages of swamp and prairie. Tree climbers are never waiting for these free rides. They must always be honked for. If it is Sunday, tree climbers never leave the funny papers for the family but take them along to read in the car, together with the magazine section and the sporting pages. They wrap sandwiches in the society sections.

To be good, tree-climbing territory must be well stocked with poison ivy and berry bushes. Thorn trees are not to be overlooked in hunting the ideal place since it is against the rules of the game ever to be comfortable. There should be a plentiful supply of strong vines, close to the ground, well covered and hidden, which prove handy contrivances for tripping the novice.

At the drop of a mating call, someone speaking in a stage whisper begins the rumor that there is a downy woodpecker close by. Immediately the speaker is the center of attention as all follow the direction of his arm indicating the white oak over there—second branch from the bottom, out near the end, and hidden in that clump of dead leaves. Up go field glasses and out come pencils and record sheets. Everyone seems capable of seeing the bird, and through field glasses, too. This is no place for the uninitiated. All are satisfied with the hunt except one frustrated little man who voices his opinion that it wasn't a downy woodpecker but a red-headed woodpecker. His binoculars are the best that Abercrombie and Fitch list in their Spring Catalogue.

Understanding, wiser heads calm down the party with suggestions of hot coffee. This is a fine idea except that the rugged naturalists have brought along neither cream nor sugar for the sissies in the crowd, and the coffee is too hot to drink from tin cups. By the time it has cooled enough to swallow, everyone is gathering himself together, anxious to be off because there seems to be a barn owl in that hickory tree.

The advanced stage of tree climbing is evident in severe cases no longer able to traipse through the meadows looking for birds. They stand silently, in uncomfortable positions, rooted to a given spot, listening. These are the people who after years of bird watching are now capable of recognizing, by the song, the difference between a yellow breasted chat and a rose breasted gross-beak at one hundred fifty yards. Perseverance gradually increases this to the all-time high record of two hundred and fifteen yards. This is the goal of every tree climber as his arteries begin to harden.

Aside from myself, the only group of people I know who don't like birds are entomologists, who claim birds eat the insects. I now recognize it as a futile battle, so I don't fight tree climbers any longer. I'm considering learning taxidermy.

A Struggle for Existence

Jean Jose

THE greatest struggle for existence that the human mind must encounter is not directly the preservation of living, moving life, but rather a more basic preserving of the ideas that are the very breath of life. Life is ideas. No conflict that ever has to be faced on earth is any harder fought than the battle to save an idea from obliteration and to raise it instead to a realization. The fierceness of the struggle results from the fact that the idea, by its actual nature, originates, lives, fights to secure a permanent foothold, and either dies or is fulfilled within the boundaries of the human mind. Although expressions of thoughts are released constantly through word and action, the actual thought or idea must remain concentrated within the individual. Considering the millions of ideas that are formed, how few of them are ever realized. This would indicate that there is a variance of importance placed on thoughts; only those that are of the highest importance gain the attention necessary to even bring about an attempt to accomplish them through tireless actions.

The struggle for existence begins the moment an idea is born and continues more desperately as the idea increases in importance. This desperation for the existence and consequential realization grows out of fear. Once something or someone has become of great importance, a fear arises of losing that which we prize so highly. The most detrimental of all obstructions to the fulfillment of our ideas is time, the indestructible enemy of existence whether it be bodily or mental. Time brings with it stumbling blocks, sometimes so many that we are unable to raise ourselves again to the task of accomplishing our ideas. Consequently, the struggle of ideas for existence is most difficult because, in addition to being within us, the stumbling blocks are forever coming.

In Defense of a Real American

Joseph Landis

VERY recently, there appeared on the editorial page of *The Indianapolis News* a letter which had been written to the editor. The letter was more than a little disgusting. It began thus:

"Yes, my friends, it's more than ever time for a change.

"Eisenhower should change his tactics and pay attention to the advice of Senators Taft, McCarthy, and Jenner, along with the others who helped to elect him, instead of cuddling up to Democrats and Fair Dealers, as he seems to be doing.

"Eisenhower wasn't elected to placate the Democrats. He was elected to get this country on a sound and stable economy. He has all the tools at hand and tried and experienced men to help him if he will recognize them and give them the support they need. . . ."

In answer to this letter, first let me state that President Eisenhower is a statesman, not a politician. Because of this, he has tried to surround himself with men who are most capable in their respective fields. Some Democrats were included in his choices, which brought vigorous protests from many Republicans who still believe in the Jacksonian spoils system. Furthermore, it is to the advantage of the American people that the President realizes that the Republican Party does not have a monopoly on able men. Yet he is charged with sugaring the Democrats and forsaking his own party, especially Messers Taft, McCarthy, and Jenner.

These three men are well known throughout the nation. Part of their renown comes from the radical conservatism they often display. To say that the President has not listened to the advice of these men is to say something which is not entirely true, but which somewhat compliments Mr. Eisenhower's balanced judgment. Further, it would be more nearly correct to say that it was not Taft, Jenner, and McCarthy who elected Eisenhower, but that it was Eisenhower who elected Jenner and McCarthy.

The letter writer (who not very surprisingly calls himself "a Regular Republican") went on to say:

"If he (Eisenhower) insists on letting pseudo-Republicans like Dulles and Lodge hog the limelight, then it will be up to the real Republicans to give him a lesson in practical politics."

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and Henry Cabot Lodge have their faults, as do all men; they will make wrong decisions, but they are hardly to be greatly insulted by being called "false Republicans."

Mr. Dulles has initiative which is recognized by both great political organizations. He can not in all fairness be classed as a pseudo-Republican because he negotiated the Japanese Peace Treaty under a Democratic Administration! He is not a great orator, but he is a great man. He will in all likelihood be the best Secretary of State the United States has had since James Byrnes held that position.

True, the Republicans, like the Democrats, will make mistakes. We must forgive them the human element just as the Democrats, who were re-elected continually, were forgiven for it in the past. This man who calls himself a "Regular Republican" should become a real American. He should be more careful in appraising government officials. Doubtless he has never heard Pope's famous words, "To err is human, to forgive, divine."

In the Cathedral

Paul Stricker

KNEELING on the hard wooden prie-dieu he became slowly aware of the heavy atmosphere of quietness and solitude which inhabited the old cathedral. He could still smell the heavy, sweet odor of the incense, and the pungency of burning wax, age, and polished wood seemed to drug him. The huge colored windows suddenly caught his attention, and while he silently gazed at their beauty the late afternoon sun slotted coins of gold through them. Instantly the cathedral was lit in a blaze of color. The sunburst, reflected a hundred fold by the marble mosaic of the floor, was reflected and refracted a million more times by the gold and stone of the high altar. The colors slowly faded from a startling brilliance to a soothing and melancholy tone as the sun began to fail; finally they dimmed, leaving the church cloaked in a cape of ecclesiastical black.

The church was dark, but on the great walls were cast flickering shadows, as hundreds of little votive lamps sent their silent and endless petitions swirling upward.

As he knelt there meditating, a feeling of spiritual quiescence and satisfaction warmed in him. His eyes drifted slowly across the news of the great church, and he suddenly discerned a slight form bent in silent adoration.

Through the darkness he saw the flickering of the tiny rosary beads as they prayed their way through the small, aged hands—"the Lord is with Thee"—"Thy kingdom come." These humble prayers, he reflected, must be pleasing to Almighty God, and He would undoubtedly take this soul unto His Sacred Heart.

While he watched her, he heard the ancient organ, high in the loft of the cathedral, begin to intone the beautiful music of the Gloria from the "Missa Choralis." He closed his eyes, and in his imagination he visioned a legion of angels descending from above the high altar to join the old woman in her adoration.

As the organist completed the hymn, the vision seemed slowly to ascend and he awoke from his reverie. His eyes searched in vain for the old woman, and they turned toward the altar and then slowly upward.

Description of a City

Walter Maynes

IT WAS the midst of summer and the war was over. Eager to get home, we patiently waited for orders that would send us back to the States. We did not mind waiting, because during the summer Italy was the garden of the world. The Mediterranean lulled in its summer sleep and the gentle slopes of the majestic Appennines made this country an ideal place in which to recuperate from the horrors of war. We had nothing to do but relax, until our orders came.

It was on one of these relaxing days that I decided to walk through the hills to one of the neighboring towns. As I approached a road, a wooden sign with black, hastily written figures on it indicated that it was five kilometers to Presna. The air was cool and refreshing. I walked slowly and thought about going home. Then, off in the distance, I heard the faint hesitating music of a mandolin. I have heard the mandolin many times in Italy, but this time the national instrument was in gifted hands. As the winding road straightened, a small boy appeared at the roadside.

He was perched on an empty ammunition box, and carefully placed before him, on the ground, was an old cap. Hearing me approach, he struck up a gay peasant song, but somehow his sad voice did not match the lyrics. I stood still and watched him play. He was a handsome boy about eleven years old. His delicate features and curly hair gave him a somewhat regal appearance. He could have passed for a legendary prince, but there was one defect. He was blind.

When I spoke to him, he stopped singing and turned toward me. I learned that his name was Gino. It was Gino Antonio Alfredo De Maria to be exact, for his father, not unlike most peasants believed that this splendid youth would someday need an eminent-sounding name. As we talked I also learned that he was left blind and orphaned by the war. Then he asked me where I was from, and I told him New York City.

"New York City? I was there once," he replied in a heavily accented voice. "It was for my eyes. The doctor said I would never see again. He didn't charge me for his work. He was a good fellow."

Eager to discuss my home town, I asked, "What did you think of the big city, Gino?"

"You know," Gino began, "That town reminded me of a marvelous concert."

"How so?" I quizzed.

"Well, as I entered the harbor of the city, I heard people cheering as we passed the Statue of Liberty. I imagined this tall lady in her green flowing garments was ushering us into a huge concert hall. Since we had arrived early, we could hear the musicians tuning their instruments. They were instruments which emitted strange sounds. However, they all went into creating the orchestral cry of the city.

"The first sounds I heard were the deep throated tubas. They sounded vigorously as we entered the harbor. The men who played them must have been big, because they made a tremendous sound. They continued tuning for a long time. Then everything was silent for a while.

"Afterwards, the violin virtuosos placed their instruments on their shoulders and began to tune up. As we approached a busy intersection, we heard their sounds. They shrieked and squealed. Then they hesitated a few moments, and they shrieked and squealed again. In the background now and then I could hear a shrill whistle. It could have been a flute, I thought, but it sounded too rough.

"Suddenly, a rumble filled the air. It came from overhead, and that too came at certain intervals. At first, the sound became audible off in the distance, and then it grew louder as it approached. It tugged and squealed and finally came to a halt. I thought this was surely a strange way for a percussion section to sound, but I remembered this was an American concert.

"Then everyone began murmuring something about 'tall and massive!' I heard someone exclaim it was a hundred stories high! Another person explained that every morning at sunrise this colossal being would, upon awakening, stretch his arms toward the sky. He is 'famous all over the world for his majestic appearance from the ocean. 'Ah!' I thought, 'this at last must be the conductor'."

Gino talked rapidly now, and he smiled like a boy who was just promised a piece of chocolate cake. I listened in silence as he went on.

"When this immense conductor tapped his baton everything grew still. In a moment the orchestral cry of the city rose in a roaring crescendo. The music was strangely beautiful. The tempo was governed by millions of passing footsteps, as they scurried in all directions. The tempo always remained the same, always andante.

"Then, in the back ground, an aria became audible. The tenor's voice wasn't of the best quality, but it was lusty and from the heart. He sang in my language. I mean as I would, if I were to sing in English. His song was gay. The lyrics said something about ripe fresh fruit. He sounded as though he was glad to be in the 'Big City'.

"This concert started at the same time everyday, and everyday the same music was played."

Gino stopped now and apologized for not giving me an opportunity to speak. We bade each other farewell, and as I began to leave, Gino tugged at my sleeve. Then he pointed to the old hat on the ground.

"Hey, Joe, don't forget to put something in the hat."

Now, whenever I grow tired of New York, I take a long walk in the morning, just gazing at the colossal maestro and listening to the wondrous concert.

IMMANUEL (GOD WITH US)

Ben Strasser

God be with us every day
Throughout every lonely hour,
Guide us along our pilgrim way
To the everlasting tower.

Teach us the spirit to forgive
To be humble, to be true,
Bestow a better way to live
On sinners who have martyred you.

Give us the impulse to atone
For wrong committed, men betrayed,
So our hearts may someday own
The many mansions You have made.

Tom-Boy

Jane Hallam

WHAT is a tom-boy? The dictionary says "a girl of romping and boistrous conduct." My childhood actions were such that I received the reputation of being a decided tom-boy. All of my after-school hours I spent playing with two boy cousins who lived near me. These boys were proud of my ability to join in rough games, and they considered me to be just another brother.

We enjoyed all sports—football, basketball, baseball, and marbles, but football was my favorite. While playing football one day I gained the respect of the boys in the neighborhood by tackling one boy and giving him a bloody nose. After this unpleasant experience, he said, "From now on I either play on the same side she's on, or I don't play at all."

Playing basketball was also one of my major achievements because, being left handed, I could perform a one-handed push shot, that none of the boys could equal.

We spent many happy hours playing Tarzan in my Aunt's backyard where there were several cherry trees. The boys took turns being Tarzan; and I, of course, was Jane, his mate.

My first fishing experience was a memorable one. With a home-made pole and a can of worms my friends and I sat down on the creek bank hoping to catch some fish. In a very short time my line began to jerk; immediately I pulled the line out of the water, and there, to my surprise, dangled a sunfish. While I stood transfixed admiring this beautiful aquatic specimen, it flipped off the hook. My disappointment over losing the fish was great, but I have never forgotten the thrill of that one moment in which I thought the fish was mine.

Most girls would consider it an insult to be called a tom-boy, but I did not share this view. Since I have reached maturity, I find that little girls who are also tom-boys appeal most to me. I think this is because I can understand them better than little ladies.

Rebirth of a Nation

Howard L. Rose

WITH full scale building projects underway Germany is slowly and steadily rebuilding much of the destruction it suffered during World War II. These industrious people, who have a tremendous amount of spirit and ambition, have come a long way since the tragic war days.

Besides rebuilding material things the German people are striving desperately to maintain and even improve the peace they now have. It is not easy to forget the perils of war when a country's soldiers are still being released from Russian concentration camps. The effects of such a devastating war are hard to forget, especially since so many of the shadows of days past still linger in the background.

The continued shipments of American troops to Germany is helping much to give the Germans a feeling of security. Their attitude and behavior toward the American soldier is very commendable. It is not at all unusual to see many of our servicemen in German homes on holidays and weekends. This among other friendly actions is helping much to improve the pleasant relationship which exists between our troops and the German people. This is probably contrary to the thoughts of many Americans who believe that the Germans still retain a certain degree of resentment toward us and our soldiers. In most cases, that is not a prevalent condition.

Another factor toward building national unity and security is that the German people will soon be allowed to have an army of their own on a limited and restricted basis.

It is indeed surprising but wonderful to see the continuous accomplishments which these people are attaining. Perhaps the greatest factor in their wonderful recovery is their never-say-die attitude. The American soldier stationed in Germany is an eye-witness to the moral, spiritual, and physical rebirth of the nation.

A Letter to Pogo (IN THE STYLE OF WALT KELLY)

Peggy Edwards

Okeefenokee Extra Special

Dear Pogo,

This here crittur, name of Porkypine, just wish to convey its deep appreshiashun for the top-notch time that was had by all at yo' fish-fry and stomp.

Churchy and Porky (name of me) had us a humdinger of a confab on the way home. Mr. Racketty Coon deposited me on my own everlovin' doorstep about middle day, safe, sound, and chonk full of happiness and cinnamon-type balls. All ten toe-bones is gettin' a li'l rest; but they also claims they had fun, even if'n they *was* throwed out of their natural-born joints.

A pretty sizeable hunk of excitements was carryin' on when I got home. Lumpy Looie's li'l tad nephew had upped and got hisself lost in the batter of a raisin cake, an' Miz Frog kep' on a' fishin' out raisins a' stead of her own everlovin' tad. Man, how terribobble it would've been if'n she hadn't cotched him. Ol' Looie was beginnin' to get quite a worry on him.

Li'l Grundoon, the groun'chuck chile, still has the bitin'est set of natural-born tooth-bones I ever seed. Bit ol' Albert's ceegar in two places and guv it a mortal ache.

Miz Manzelle Hepzibah and Boll Weevil enjoyed the circus magnet's perloo—you know ol' P. T. Bridgeport, the circus feller with the drummer named Floyd, don't you?

Write to me when ol' Homer Pidgeon starts his south to north mail delivery in the summer. I will send you postern card from the East Okeefenokee when I go over for a couple weeks to visit my Uncle Baldwin.

Profound reegards from
Porky-Pine, Esq.
(writ by han'.)

"Button, Button——"

Skip Bloemker

TO THE unobservant, buttons are buttons. But to those who know them, buttons are as different as people. The common work-a-day buttons are round, flat, and white. Their centers are pierced by two to four small holes used for sewing them on garments. This everyday group earns its living by holding together the various, ordinary garments of human beings.

Less conservative are the middle class buttons which sport bright and varied colors and are of different sizes and shapes. These flashy buttons amuse themselves by playing follow the leader on pretty blouses and dresses.

The aristocrats of the button clan are often made of gold, silver, crystal, and other precious substances. They try to out-do one another by adorning themselves with rhine-stones and pearls which flash and sparkle on chic, high fashion clothes.

Members of a dying generation are the shoe buttons. The dictates of fashion occasionally bring them back into existence as members of the fashionable clan, but their number is steadily decreasing.

Other members of the button tribe are the collar button, the elevator button, and the black sheep of the family—the Dewey button.

Buttons, like hobos and children, are very fond of wandering. They also like to play games. Some of the buttons' favorite games are called "Popping Off," "Hide and Come Scek," and "Who Misses Me?" Buttons most enjoy their playtime when the button-wearer is already fifteen minutes late for an important engagement. It is at such times that buttons are often replaced by safety pins.

To the unobservant, safety pins are safety pins. But to those who know them. . . .

Spring

Carol Manwaring

SCENERY is no longer ethereal. The pleasant mystery of the white is over. There is an awkward stage of transition everywhere.

There is no heraldry of summer. Not yet. There is no cheery promise of that which is to come; only the ugly reminder of that which was beautiful a few days ago. White crystals are now black mud, unpleasant and inconvenient. Trees, whose branches had been laid barren for the explicit purpose of receiving the bounty of winter, are barren now without purpose. Their branches hang limply, overcome by the weight of the struggling sap. A few bilious yellow crocuses try to shout the message. Lacking the volume needed to make themselves heard, they surrender to their environment. The brown, patchy grass surrounding them wilts their exuberance. Unhappy robins and cardinals, dirty, muted in color and voice, pick their ways distastefully across mires that once were lawns. They find food scant and tasteless. The dingy grass, insulted by its aggressors' appearance, is impervious to making itself more desirable. Earthworms, tricked by the concealing beauty of the night, lie listlessly, pink and bloated on sidewalks. This is the beginning of Spring.

Then, suddenly, the grass seems to resent the tweaking of the birds. Its color rises, and its blades bristle upward. The silt of the puddles finds a certain affection for the rocks at the bottom and

clings to them. The remains furnish little mirrors in which the birds realize their sad condition. They preen because the social life of bird-dom is quickening its tempo. More visitors from the South arrive daily. Song fests have more volume. The olive-drab forsythia, wishing to attract these desirable tourists, turns a brilliant yellow. Realizing the new amicability of old enemies, tree and sap unite in a common purpose. Delicate green sprouts grace rain-washed branches. Curious crimson tulips venture a look around, followed closely by shy hyacinths, who can no longer compose themselves.

NEVER LAND

Walter R. Miller

Before me glows a studded sky,
A shining star, a journey of a day.
An isle of joy, of trees, of birds,
Of golden suns which never set,
Of silver nights which never die.

Beside me hangs a tiny bell,
Which tinkles softly in my ear.
The sound commands my loyalty,
My everlasting adoration.

Across the sky
A graceful ship sails by.

Before me steams a musty swamp,
A pit of mire, a journey of a day.
An isle of sadness, sin and toil,
Of suns which never set,
Of nights which never end.

Around me hangs a brazen bell,
Which clanks and jangles in my ear.
The scream of horn,
The wail of sax,
My blood pounds within me.

I glance back toward the studded sky,
The shining star, the journey of a day,
The isle of joy, of trees, of birds,
Of golden suns which never set,
Of silver nights which never die.

And as I gaze,
Across the sky a graceful ship sails by.

Democracy

Roland Becker

OUR ship dropped anchor in Phaleron Bay late in the evening of a buoyant August day. All was still except for the metro-nomic beating of the water against the sides of the ship. The stars seemed near as I leaned on the rail and gazed at the multitude of glittering lights before me. The shoreline was marked by the streetlights of the boulevard lining it.

Over to the left, the city of Piraeus was visible. A carpet of lights swept inland and seemed to disappear into the sky. And there, above the carpet of twinkling rays of light, as if on a cloud, aloft from reality, stood the most famous of ancient structures. The Parthenon, with its Doric columns gleaming in the lights of the modern era, portrayed the beauty of classic Athens—Athens, the capitol of the nation that had seemed crushed under oppression time and time again, only to reappear; Athens, the city whose history was summarized by Sylla when he said, "The inflated skin may be dipped under water, but cannot be sunk."

It was my privilege to walk the streets of this ancient city, to wander in the footsteps of the great statesmen of twenty-five centuries ago. I visited Pryx Hill, where the ancient Athenian Assembly met. I wonder how many times Socrates spoke from its orator's platform. I visited a triangular rock, known as Areopagus, or Mars Hill, from which Saint Paul delivered his message to the Athenians. I visited the Acropolis.

It would be folly to attempt to describe the beauty of this, the greatest of all citadels. It would be folly for one so lacking in wisdom to attempt to convey its history and its significance. Facts, such as "The Parthenon's construction was started in 447 B. C. and was almost completed in 438 B. C.," are too cold and impersonal. I would rather ask the reader to think of the Acropolis as a visible monument to the wisdom of the philosophical mind. I would rather ask the reader to think of it as an indestructible shrine to "Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of art and eloquence." I would rather portray to the reader the realization that was mine, the realization that "I" am small and insignificant, but that "we" are great and mighty, and that "we" shall endure.

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