

ALEMBIC

PROVIDENCE COLLEGE



VOLUME XXI

NUMBER 2

DECEMBER, 1938

END OF DAY

WALTER F. GIBBONS

FAMOUS INFAMY

NORMAN J. CARIGNAN

WE THE STUDENTS ELECT

ROBERT C. HEALEY

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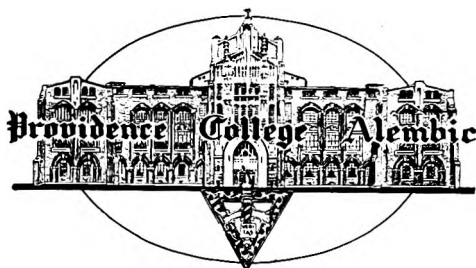
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THE ALEMBIC



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To Men of Good Will

MAN is forever striving. He strives for complete security, but finds himself beset by unforeseen misfortunes. He seeks perfect happiness, only to find that the happiness he has is not happiness at all but merely a temporal enjoyment of an agreeable circumstance. He strives valiantly to secure peace but concludes that there is no tranquillity in order since there is no order. Man strives for a myriad of things, but they are as distant as the stars yet they shine brightly with an enticing glow.

In his aspirations for the ultimate in human achievement, man surveys his environment to gaze upon a scene of disillusionment, dismay, tyranny, and persecution. He sees a farflung race of Jews almost thrown out bodily from their homes. He perceives God-loving Christians persecuted. He observes in fearful silence the almost fanatical exhibitionisms of tyrants. He sees men who now believe as they act because they have ceased acting as they believe, rule fearful people with an iron hand and an iron heart.

Without hoping for order in disorder, man turns to Almighty God for his unfailing source of solace. In the observance of Christmas he hopes for a rebirth of Christian faith, and love. And during the cold of that holy night, he sings aloud with a choking yet hopeful voice: "Peace on earth to men of good will."

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We, the Students, Elect

By ROBERT C. HEALEY, '39

“THIS year for the first time you are electing a student council president. It must be a fair and honest election. Nothing else will be tolerated.”

The voice of the Chancellor boomed slowly into the auditorium at the first assembly. He chose his words carefully and waited pointedly for them to sink into every one of the eight hundred minds before him. After a comparatively short time he went on:

“All classes except the Freshman and every duly-accredited extra-curricular organization will be allowed a candidate, but candidates must be of the two upper classes. The voting must be eminently fair, for this is a position demanding the highest responsibility and trust. Therefore, you are expected to choose the most capable student, not the most popular politician. I repeat: we shall not stand for politics, and any student caught in unfair or shady political activity will be dismissed immediately.”

There was a polite murmur of approval. To a man they hated politics, the type of politics that comes under the Corrupt Practices Act or the eagle eyes of a Congressional Campaign investigation. But college politics to them was broadly defined. They continued to listen more or less intently:

"One week will be allowed for campaigning. Next Thursday we shall have the voting. You have one week to select the best candidate and I am sure you will do it."

Harry Burns' sharp elbow woke "Crash" Bolton.

"Listen, kid, did you hear that?"

"Yes, I heard," Crash, magnificent in his 250 pounds, blinked and whispered.

"You know you didn't hear a word," Harry's voice was subdued, "but anyway we have to be cagey about this election. It's going to be tough business. Shut up!"

"Crash," a football player by trade, knew how to take orders, and though firm in his innocence, shut up. In dumb servitude that was half admiration of Harry's brains and almost wholly lack of his own he accepted everything his chief said as infallible. Nodding sagely, he was ready to say something he thought up himself, when persons started moving in several directions at once. The assembly was over and in disorderly silence everyone moved along the aisles.

"Hello, Naughton," Harry shouted to someone at the stairs as "Crash" followed through behind him.

"That's one of the boys we have to watch," Harry soliloquized to "Crash." "Him and Dave Dana. Yep, have a fight coming up."

Slowly they debouched into the rotunda which looked like Grand Central at rush hour. Fresh-eyed Freshmen were wildly running around trying to find rooms that were numbered in a system that everyone admitted was crazy but no one tried to adjust. Bleary Sophs trying to look sophisticated dawdled about. The Juniors complacently contributed to the general confusion. The Seniors, who by now were above all this, scattered to classrooms for first meetings with professors and text book assignments.

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"Crash" naturally trailed along with Harry. They landed in Room 19 for the first assignation. For some reason, a large crowd of Juniors and Seniors had gathered. Nearly all the campus bigwigs were there—Veterinary Science was an elective which had the reputation of being very healthful. Harry couldn't find a seat at the back of the room so he went up front. The class was fidgety and the desultory conversation hinged automatically on the election.

The room was nearly full when the door opened and Mr. ——— appeared. There were gasps of astonishment. Fully fifty students firmly decided they would not take this course. The wave of disapproval didn't bother Mr. ——— as he walked to the platform. He put on his glasses and began:

"This, boys, as you know, is a course on contemporary plant life. I shall demand particular attention and study. Your text, 'A Book About Animals,' can be obtained, I believe, at the bookstore. I suggest at least one of you buy a copy for appearance's sake."

Someone was brash enough to raise his hand:

But, Professor, this course is on Veterinary Science."

"My, my, that's strange. Is this room 17? No. Then I must be in the wrong room. Excuse me. I'm very sorry. Good morning, boys, and may we meet again."

He sauntered off without another word.

A few minutes later Mr. ——— entered, a charming soul with a good reputation. He never bothered much about marks, didn't believe in them. In fact, he never bothered about anything. His classes were very crowded.

In a voice that sounded like a nail resisting a hammer he outlined his program. They would most certainly have to study. They would have to do field work, or this or that.

As upperclassmen, they were used to this line by now, and when he waddled off they quickly sloughed off every single word he uttered. After his departure and the consequent sloughing there was a dash for the cafeteria.

The cafeteria also had a reputation—of being noisy, littered and cozy. Sooner or later everyone drifted there. Everyone felt at home and the place showed it. But in spite of the smokey atmosphere, the slobbered tables and the ambiguous food, there was a pervasive air of camaraderie and good fellowship that would excuse almost anything.

Harry mentally adjusted his pair of hip boots as he entered. "Crash" pushed on behind him. They bumped into two cups of coffee and stepped on seven shoes before sitting down with the gang. Hugh Dailey was there. He certainly would be the Junior candidate. All was safe on that end. The others were nondescript members of various organizations who would be ready and willing to work for "Crash" Bolton as the first student council president.

Harry knew it would be difficult. *The Trowel*, the student organ, was backing Dave Dana. Dana wasn't so bad. The only thing most of the fellows had against him was that he was a student and that was unbearable. It had even been whispered that he was "intellectual." Harry hoped that that alone would be enough to beat him.

Naughton would probably be "Crash's" most dangerous rival. The Criers Club and the boarding students were supporting him with all their power. He was a basketball player, smoked big black cigars and worked in the cafeteria. No one held the last against him, though some did say that passing masqueraded coffee over the counter was the only experience he had had in dealing with his fellow students.

The other candidates would not cause too much trouble. The Serpino Club would nominate "Dinky" Jones,

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a little fellow whom no one affected to know. He had been president of his class as a Freshman and this automatically nominated him for the hall of obscurity. And of course Dailey, as the Junior candidate, was in the Bolton camp. The Sophomores seemed too involved in internal squabbles to unite on any candidate.

"Sure, we won't have any trouble at all," Harry assured them at the table.

"We'll be riding high when 'Crash' gets in," timidly suggested a weasel-faced underclassman as he swallowed a piece of fig square.

"That is, if we all play the game," Harry put in.

"You'd better not forget anything though," said Mike Harris, a Soph leader.

"Don't worry, you'll get yours along with everyone else. We've got the whole election all sewed up if we handle things right. But get out now, fellows, and do a little talking."

They went out and did some more sewing up. The campus rang with protestations of electoral innocence and fraternal affection. Campaigners ambled about, clasping lapels and whispering a tearful "don't forget us." The bulletin boards were plastered with propaganda. A list of regulations covering political conduct went up on the official board.

On Thursday night Harry, sitting in his favorite haunt, was visited with an idea. Rather good, he thought, and called for another. We'll have to try it tomorrow.

Early next morning a little deputation sauntered into the office of the Vice Chancellor.

"We'd like to have permission to conduct a torchlight parade around the campus."

"A what?"

"A torchlight parade. We'll be nice and quiet. No noise. We just want to focus a little attention on the campaign."

"Now, boys, remember—"

"But we will be gentlemen. We won't even blow a bugle or do a thing."

"No, boys, higher education doesn't allow such things, even for politics."

The little deputation sidled out of the office and back to class.

The Trowel, meanwhile, had appeared with a vitriolic editorial calling for a fair and square election and stating that elections in the past had not been completely above reproach. It suggested that a policeman supervise the voting to prevent fraud. Immediately the presidents of the Senior, Junior, Sophomore and Freshman classes waited on the editor for a retraction or apology for the statements about their elections. After they had been told to don the footgear if it suited them they went off mumbling something about muzzling the free press.

Saturday and Sunday were quiet. The grapevine seethed with rumors. Everyone was agog. On College Row, in Child's, in all the other accustomed haunts the election was the only food for thought. Even the current adventures of the College Romeo were forgotten in the clamor.

Exasperated professors had to cut short their classes during the early part of the week. No one was listening to them, so what was the use of lecturing. The matter was brought up at a faculty meeting but was tabled.

Monday night Harry came up to the library to do some studying. As usual he didn't get much done. He quit at half past nine and left. Outside he stopped for a moment to look at the full moon and then started up Sophomore Lane, mar-

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veling at the shimmering mantle of moonlight on the campus. He was near the Senior Class trees when he heard quick steps behind him. He looked back. It was Naughton and his myrmidon, "Bud" Halsey.

"Hiya, Harry," they said, as he waited for them to catch up with him.

"Hello, boys," he answered.

"Doing a little more plotting up here," Naughton grinned.

"No, just trying to get in a little studying."

"How's the campaign coming, huh."

"OK, how's yours?"

"Swell, say, you wouldn't like to be chairman of the social committee, would you?"

"What do you mean?"

"Get on to yourself, Burns, your campaign for Bolton is hopeless. Play along with us and you'll be all right."

"Sorry, fellows. I'm playing straight."

"It's your funeral."

"Night, fellows."

"See you Thursday," Halsey derisively shouted as the two started down Eaton street.

Harry thought about that offer as he went home. It was all so base, this running around and trying to fix elections. It made him complacent to think that the other side was trying to run things that way. The essential thing about the campaign was to convince persons but not to buy them. That was corrupt. Of course, there were plentiful rumors about selling out. Anyway, Bolton was sure to win, even though it appeared as the week wore on that any one of the three leading candidates might get it.

Sitting in class Wednesday morning, Harry figured it out. With 250 out of 700 votes definitely promised he felt certain that he'd have enough to pull Bolton through. Nevertheless he would like to know how the others stood. After class he called a couple of his henchmen over to him in the rotunda:

"How about scouting around to see how things stand?"

They scouted around. They eavesdropped. They had confidential chats with various persons. And then came back to report as he sat in the cafeteria:

"Dana says that he has 326 dependable votes and about 100 more slightly doubtful."

"According to Naughton, they have 352 certain votes to start with. And he's counting on about 75 indefinitely."

"The Sophomores say they have 100 certainly."

"The Jones crowd has 125 definite, a lot indefinite."

Harry listed down the definites and indefinites in separate columns. He added them twice to make sure he was right. He looked at the results in amazement. Out of 700 possible votes, 965 had been promised to various candidates and another 300 were listed as indefinite.

So that was how things stood. Harry whistled. He looked around at the cafe crowds with new eyes. The boys were there, hundreds of them, gobbling down their lunches. Suddenly he conceived a new respect for them. They were all like himself, trying to play the game at both ends, and in spite of his superior resources he felt that they were outwitting him.

The Bolton campaign committee went into extraordinary session that afternoon. Harry outlined the situation and told them what they'd have to do before tomorrow if they wanted the election. They all agreed that such a drastic procedure was necessary in view of the way students were double-crossing them. Later that night they reported, their duties

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finished. Harry went to bed with a light heart, certain that everything in his power had been enough.

Thursday, the day of the great vote, dawned fair and clear. Their was a stiff wind from the north that chilled those who had to trudge across Bradley Hill. For the first time in the memory of the most croaky alumnus everyone came to class, or at least reported to vote.

Voting started at half past eight in the auditorium. A voting machine, hired from the State, stood impregably on the stage. Students were checked at the door as they entered. Through a line of watchers, two from each candidate, the voter walked to the steps of the stage where he was checked again. Then, in most cases with an awful solemnity he walked onto the stage and into the booth. A few seconds later he would emerge and go out through the cafeteria. There, where each group had headquarters at a separate table there was a frightful hubbub.

It was impossible to discover how the vote was going. Tight-lipped, everyone wore a meek, bland look of righteousness as he came from his voting. No amount of cajolery could pry anything about the voting. Yet, Harry felt that everything was moving admirably. He glanced over at the Naughton table and then at the Dana camp. They seemed pretty confident, too.

The day dragged on. No one went to class. The vote was to cease at two o'clock and apparently everyone was staying around to see the final fireworks. The cafe was completely overflowing.

Promptly at two everyone was put out of the auditorium while the machine was being opened and checked by the Chancellor. The two watchers for each candidate stood by, ready to flash the word. Mike Harris wanted to be the first to reach "Crash" to congratulate him.

There was a frightful expectancy in the cafeteria as the clock reached half past two. Then the door from the stage was shoved open and "Bud" Halsey, one of Naughton's watchers, came out shouting:

"We've been double-crossed. What a dirty, lowdown thing to pull."

Behind him rushed the other watchers. Mike came running over to Harry.

"Someone's done a job on us, kid," he whispered. "We'd better get out while we can."

They started to push through. Dave Dana was expostulating with his men, trying to get things straight. There was shouting and roaring. Someone knocked over a table and dishes broke.

"Well, who got it?" Harry shouted.

Mike was almost tearful as he tried to tell the story above the uproar.

"And when they read off the votes we nearly dropped. Something must have gone screwy with our plans. We never expected it at all. But he got 600 of the 700 votes. It was—" But Harry had fainted.

—And that was how "Dinky" Jones rose to power to become P. C.'s first and only dictator.

Famous Infamy

By NORMAN J. CARIGNAN, '39

“JOHANN GOTTLIEB is still at his foolish digging,” people were saying as they passed the old amateur archeologist who of late busied himself daily in his field digging a large hole. “Such activity in a twenty-sixth century civilization in Germany is pure insanity,” they would invariably add. But Johann Gottlieb, the city’s famous eccentric, kept on digging heedless of the disparaging remarks of passers-by.

Scanty information about his labors had been obtained by the neighborhood wags. It appears that he had had a dream in which it was revealed to him that if he dug down deep enough at a certain spot in his field, he would find something of an archeological nature that would make him famous. Two things appealed to him in this dream. First, anything of an archeological nature was of interest to him, for he had always been interested in the study in a desultory way. Secondly if he found this “something” he would be famous. And too long had his work and discoveries been ignored.

Gottlieb had dug and dug for a month now and he began to tire under the strain. He began to wonder if he were not a fool to have believed in his dream. But he persisted, hoping against hope that he had not been deceived. With each dig of the shovel, Gottlieb’s heart seemed to hesitate and his ears were quickly attuned to pick up any strange sound that

might signify he had found that "something". But disappointment after disappointment repeated with vexatious monotony had somewhat dampened his hopes and dimmed his fervor. He now became sluggish and somewhat disinterested. He would give it all up tomorrow, he decided.

The next morning had produced no results. He began to scold himself for having been such an idiot. Disappointment produced melancholy. Soon after the sun had passed its highest point, Gottlieb's shovel struck something hard in the ground. "It's nothing but one of those rocks I've been striking since I began this foolish work." He dug again and this time a muffled sonorous sound reached his rather inattentive ears. Melancholy gave way to curiosity. He tried it again and heard the same sound only a little clearer. Curiosity gave way to hope and then to a belief that at last he had found the "something". He dug with increasing activity. Why sure there was something there. As he cleared the dirt away, he saw that it was a long piece of metal, probably about six feet long and three feet wide. He cleared the top and then began to dig around the sides. When he had finished he backed away to look at what he had discovered. It was a large rectangular metal box, the most durable he had ever seen. Its sides were handsomely cast and showed the result of expert metal workmanship. On the top was engraved a curious symbol—two inverted z's, one of which was turned around and crossed the other in the center.

"It's an odd looking thing," Gottlieb said. "I must open it quickly."

The German worked with anxiety for an hour with hammer and chisel, and a crowbar, before he succeeded in loosening the top. At last he had it free. With all his strength he managed to slide the cover off and when he had, he stood aghast and frightened.

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"Why, it's a man's body," he cried aloud.

He surveyed the casket cautiously and noted all the fancy inner decorations. The sides were expensively lined with gold braided cloth. Hanging over the head of the man and attached to one of the sides was this same curious symbol he had noticed on the top of the casket. The pillow on which the man's head rested was likewise covered with gold cloth. The man himself was also elaborately dressed. He had on a soldier's uniform which sparkled with shiny gold buttons. Gottlieb examined the man's face with zealous scrutiny in an effort to identify him. His face was rather rounded with high cheek bones and a small mouth. Its lines seemed to show a very definite characteristic of determination. The man had straight wiry hair that fell over the corner of his forehead, and a small mustache.

"Why his mustache looks like a little brush," Gottlieb mused.

The old man tried in vain to identify the man, but every attempt met with further confoundment. At length he perceived an oversized book at the man's feet. Gottlieb picked it up quickly and examined it. How elaborately it has been embossed, he thought. He noticed too the same symbol which was on the cover of the casket and at the head of the man. With difficulty he made out the title.

"My Life," Gottlieb exclaimed. "Then this book will tell me who this man is."

Quickly he opened the book to the first page and began to read. As it went on, it told with telling accuracy in detail who the man was, and where he had been born; how he had worked hard during his youth, fought for Germany in a World War, resolved to rid Germany of its enslavement to the world, and how he rose to power.

"What a wonderful man he must have been," Gottlieb thought as he read on.

Gottlieb's interest grew apace and he began to read with deepening interest. The book recounted how the author strengthened Germany's economic system by stepping up production and demanded more working hours from employees all for the purpose of building a greater nation. He unified all the people in one party for solidification and those who would not join or conspired were banished in "protective custody." It told how the people of his neighboring country, which formerly belonged to Germany, were crying to be joined to the "fatherland" and how he saved them and brought them under his protection. The leader of these people who would not grant them their wish and who tried to enslave them under his tyranny was justly punished for his defiant act by being confined to a concentration camp, a solitary sanatorium for the mentally diseased—people who couldn't understand and said so.

"What a kind and understanding man he must have been," old Gottlieb said to himself as he read on.

The ageing eccentric turned the pages quickly as he learned how this man became the idol of his people when he won a great diplomatic battle by making the affectationally strong democracies bend to his will and concede more land to him in which more children of the "fatherland" wanted to enter their paternal domain; when he was host to the three great powers in Europe, he showed his generosity by taking the Czechs after a dinner in his mountain chalet; how he defied the world in this move; and how he made the world bend to the will of his strength.

Gottlieb raised his eyes from the book and looked at the body before him as he muttered: "What a strong man he was."

Famous Infamy

Gottlieb was all aglow. He had found a famous man and he would in turn become famous by this discovery. He returned his attention to the pages of the book which was becoming more and more interesting and revealing. Gottlieb read of this great man's next achievement—his purification of the German race. Before this man had come to power, he had written that he would some day rid Germany of its "pornographic influence" by exterminating the "filthy Jew". The Jew was a penny grafter and monger who hoarded his money for his own delectation. He saved and saved and preached poor mouth until he had enough money accumulated to throttle the economic system of the country. Even when he did have a lot of money, he still said he was poor. The Jews had all the money and the Germans had little or none, and after all this was Germany. By intermarriage with Germans, the Jews had protracted their "pornographic influence" to a large degree. So intermarriage with Jews was forbidden. Even by his presence, the "filthy Jew" spread bad influence among a people of high culture and profound reasoning. So he was forbidden common intercourse with Germans and lived his life in a ghetto. The German race had to be made whole, so the Jew had to go. He wanted to purify the German race for its perpetuity. By allowing the Jew free concourse with Aryans, the race would degenerate to a weak and despicable state. But by ridding the race of Jews, it would be made whole and strong.

Gottlieb read these accounts with amazement. He knew not what to think.

He read further where it told how he fought the Catholic Church whose power over the people was a drug which steeped their minds with insane ideas of devotion to God and going to Church on Sundays to hear brutal attacks upon his

character. These sportive and pietistic Church men who were supposed to care for the poor lived in palaces and entertained their followers by making holy smoke and jingling bells. They blasphemed him because he wanted to protect the German children from this pernicious influence by forbidding them to teach their absurdities in schools. They got mad because he wanted to protect his people in marriage. They said they were the only ones commanded by God to marry people. But his people were the property of the state and so the state should marry them. They had their hand in everything and would ruin Germany with their insidious meddling, if it were not for him when he kept them in check and subdued their power. Anyway he had been sent by God to save the German people. His people's devotion was due to him and not to these immoral masked saints who walked around with long robes while flashing a large ring. Furthermore his people died in his faith and were saved.

Gottlieb raised his eyes in questioning amazement. He looked at the man and then returned his eyes to the final pages of the autobiographical encomium. He read it aloud: "Germany now is the strongest nation in the whole world. It has a pure and healthy race and is free from any hateful perversion. It has the largest and most formidable army and is afraid of none. I have done all this through my own power. I have made Germany whole and pure and strong. Germany is a great nation. I am a great man."

The astonished old man closed the book slowly and laid it down where he had found it. He looked about him at the prosperous Germany in which he was now living. He recalled the moderate sized army his country was now maintaining merely for its own use. He thought of the people themselves and saw that they were quite one and pure. He recalled

Famous Infamy

how his Jewish neighbor had spent the afternoon with him only yesterday. Gottlieb had difficulty in harmonizing the idea of the Jew he had learned about in the book and the friendliness and fine character of his neighbor. Did he not love Germany with a spirited fervor? And had he not infused many others with this same pride and love of country? Gottlieb remembered too the old Catholic priest who passed him daily in his walks and oftentimes paused to talk over the latest findings in archeology. The old man remembered too the priest's kindness to him when he was sick and how he had nursed him daily. "And," Gottlieb said to himself, "he knew I was not a Catholic."

Gottlieb looked down at the body again, glanced about him, picked up his shovel, and began covering the casket with dirt.

"I have been deceived in my dream," he said as he kept shoveling.



Oops! I Split an Infinitive

By CHARLES J. MCGOVERN, '41

UNCLEAN! Unclean! People gaze at me with revulsion. Why do they do this to me? Why?—Because I am a leper of the grammatical world. Gaze at me with horror, disgust, and even scorn if you will, for I am an infinitive-splitter.

I know not why I slipped and started on the downward path to the despicable state in which I now find myself. I cower in my shame. It all started casually enough when one night the boys persuaded me to drop around and split an infinitive or two with them. Oh, I was young and light-hearted then and saw not the depths into which I might fall. I accepted their invitation and, filled with the high spirit of adventure, went gaily along with them.

Through refuse-littered streets to the tattered fringe of the town we went. We paused on a dingy side street before a disreputable looking building. The door opened furtively. We entered a room, heavy with the acrid fumes of smoke and filled with language capable of making a strong man blanch in shame. Near me one soul, more daring than the rest, shouted "Gosh," and the occupants of the room, toughened though they were, looked at him with horror.

The case-hardened characters in the room, dressed in garish clothes, subsided and the air was soon filled with split infinitives. The crowd coaxed and taunted me, and finally

Oops! I Split an Infinitive

with much trepidation, I split my first infinitive. Oh horrors of all horrors! It had the effect of a heady wine on me. I began to more infinitives split. In the early hours of the morning I went home to bed, to arise the next day and regard with shame the dissipated wreck which I perceived in the mirror.

I was not an addict at first, but as time went on I found myself committing this grammatical sin with increasing frequency. In a short space of time I was a constant member of the crowd, splitting infinitives right and left with never a care for the morrow. The urge raced through my body like an insidious drug, making my heart throb and sending the blood coursing through my veins. At first I split infinitives when I was alone so that no one would know of my shame. I became as bad as the perpetual closet drinker.

But soon I could no longer restrain myself to splitting infinitives in private and began my vice to exhibit in public. People looked at me with astonishment. I would say to swiftly run, to uncertainly state, to myself do, and to slowly walk.

However, people regarded these as mere slips of the tongue, and not as the acts of a man possessed by a vice. As time wore on, I saw people pointing me out and whispering to one another when I entered a room. Then came my downfall—I split an infinitive at a formal dinner. I well remember that night. The night seemed to be fraught with disaster, and as I entered the room I seemed to sense an electric tension in the air. Immediately I noticed the forced gaiety and the obvious mechanical actions of the hostess and her guests as they spoke to me. At dinner I remained silent and nothing untoward happened. Then came the fatal moment. I turned to Lady Van Van Vanderbilge on my right and casually said, "Will you please the sugar pass." Instantly the room was agape. I leaped up from my chair babbling incoherently that

it was a mistake, that I didn't know what I was saying, but the crowd sat there in solemn decision while Senator Seneca T. Thundermugg, the distinguished orator, pointed a scornful finger at me and muttered something about a man who had so far degenerated as to—— Amid silence I walked from the room.

From that moment on I was a marked man. The next day my partners coolly informed me that they sought the dissolution of our partnership. People shunned me on the streets. I forsook my old haunts and walked only on the side streets. I was ashamed to the few friends face that still remained true to me. I sank lower and lower with the result that there came a time when even the derelicts in the waterfront dives turned their backs on me. You who are young gaze at me and take heed. I am an object lesson to you. While you are still innocent and free from vices, shun the pitfalls that the desire to infinitives split will to you bring.



End Of Day

By WALTER F. GIBBONS, '39

"I'M SORRY," I said, and my face went crimson.

"It's quite all right. Nothing, really." Her voice was a glacier, and her eyes, hard and cold as ice, rushed right past me.

"But honestly, I . . . I didn't mean . . . You know how . . ."

"Please don't stammer. It irritates me. Besides, you're not helping matters particularly."

With that I shut up. Out there over the water the lights twinkled and winked as though there were some huge joke. The waves giggled in glee. Personally, I couldn't quite see it, and unless she was an awfully good actress, I don't think she was about to double up in laughter. Pretty soon a few stray wisps of music drifted out over the patio. Bending from the waist I said:

"May I have the pleasure?"

With just the faintest trace of sarcasm she replied, "My honor," and curtsied low. I could see this was going to be fun. Tactfully I guided her back onto the dance-floor, and by the time the orchestra had stopped playing we were near our table.

"Shall we?"

"As you please."

As we sat down she called the waiter and ordered a brandy highball. It was the first time I'd ever known her to

drink, and my left eyebrow jumped a quarter of an inch. She noticed my surprise and added:

"That is, if you have no serious objection."

"Not at all, not at all. And waiter! Make mine ginger ale."

It was her turn for embarrassment now. A gentle flush spread up her neck and face, and I was just mean enough to stare at her. Until the waiter returned not a word passed. Then she took a gulp of her highball and gasped. I looked very solicitous and asked if the draught bothered her. I'm afraid she didn't appreciate that. After a couple of minutes of silence I began:

"Lovely dance, isn't it?"

"Is it?"

"Why yes, Look at all those nice people enjoying themselves."

She made no answer. Then I began to see the humor of the thing. In the cave-man days she would have bounced a rock off my head, kissed it better, and everybody would have been happy. In this day and age, however, she smiled sweetly, nodded, and assumed a super-politeness, but all the while the fire burned within her, and she grew more and more bitter. The straight-jacket of civilization!

The quiet was becoming very, very prominent when Mary and Bill came up. Mary was gurgling all over the place.

"Hel-lo, Joe, how are you? And Anne!"

"Hello, Joe, old man. How's the boy?"

In the first place, I don't like people that "how-are-you" me, and in the second place I'm neither an old man nor a boy. But out of politeness I asked them to join us, and they jumped at the chairs. Bill was slapping me all over the back

End of Day

and shoulders, and Mary was gurgling to Anne with lots of "ands" and "ahs," when I noticed another crowd bearing down upon us. Friends of Mary and Bill, I guessed, and unfortunately I was right. Introductions followed in bunches, and everyone shouted at everyone else.

"Isn't the band nice?"

"Yes! And what a wonderful crowd!"

"Where've *you* been hiding, Jackie, you bad boy!"

"Say, Joe, old man, guess what!"

"What a nice gown, Sylvia!"

"Oh, don't be *sil-ly*! It's the one I bought last spring. I only had it dyed and the sleeves altered!"

"Honestly? Well, I never!"

"I was saying, Joe. The boss came up to me the other day while I was at the bubbler, and said, 'Say, Bill, old man, I was wondering . . .' Well, right there I knew that something was coming round the bend. The old boy never starts anything like that unless . . ."

"Oh Bill, let me fix your tie. You're incorrigible, really. There now, how's *that*!"

It was a mob scene. I've never seen exclamation points hurled about with such abandon. Finally they gurgled along on to the bar, and we were left alone.

"Friends of yours?" she said sweetly.

"Acquaintances, my dear, acquaintances. I rather think they like you."

"How nice."

"Something else you'd like, ma'm?" The waiter was whirling a tray over my head.

"Yes. Scotch, please." He bowed and scooted to the bar.

"You'll get drunk," I growled. Damned if I'd roll her home.

"Permit me to be the judge of that."

Already I could see she was feeling pretty good. After the next one she was positively glassy-eyed. I thought I'd better get her out of there.

"Come on, you're going home." I stood up.

"I shall leave when I please."

"I said you're going home." I almost carried her bodily out of the place. When we reached the car she was crying. I felt like a cad.

"I'm sorry, Anne. Honestly I am," I said. "Won't you believe me?"

"Shut up, shut up, shut up!" she screamed, and beat upon my chest with both her fists. Then, after a minute, she subsided into my arms, sobbing quietly.

"Why did you, Joe. Oh, why did you!" she sobbed. There was no answer to make, so I just kept still. After a few minutes she straightened up, dried her eyes, and said softly:

"I'm sorry for causing a scene. Now please take me home."

Neither of us spoke on the way. When I drove up in front of her house, she looked full into my eyes, and said in a whisper:

"Good-bye . . . Joe." That was all. And then she was gone.

The gears clashed as I started up, and it sounded like a foundry in hell. For a while I drove about the town aimlessly, till finally I found myself in front of a cheap little diner on the South Side. I pulled up to the curb and climbed out. As I opened the sliding door of the lunch-cart, my fingers jammed. I cursed the counter-man in good fashion.

"Sorry, fella," he replied. "What'll yuh have?"

"Coffee. Black."

End of Day

The stuff was wretched. I pushed it away disgustedly, and rested my head in my hands for a moment.

"Trouble?" he asked.

"Yeah." I got up to go.

"Well, so long," he called.

"G'night." The door caught my fingers again, worse this time, and I swore loudly. He didn't answer.

Little Man

He walked up the stairs and into the overshoe room. The acrid smell of rubber was somehow pleasant. Down between the long rows of work benches until he passed the supply room. As she looked lovingly at him he lay down the pail and the lunch on the bench. "Here's your tea and lunch, Ma. Made them myself. Don't know what you'd do without me." She wondered.

Sights and Sounds

Mid - afternoon. A smart coupe parked beside a crowded city street. A heavy-set man and a straggly blonde inside. Suddenly she jumps out and, crying, runs across the street. He calls “. . . Gladys,” starts the car and drives away.

He was a droopy patrician of the old school, moustached, wing-collared. She was a bejeweled, white-haired dowager. He shouted a few hellos to his friends as they left the symphony. She turned to him savagely and growled: “For heaven’s sake, Cyrus, cut that out. You look like Roger Williams shouting ‘What Cheer’ to the Indians.”

“Made 35c today, Muv. This shoe shining sure’s a swell racket. I’m going to work every week so that some day I’ll have enough to take you away from all this, Muv.”

He ran up and kissed her. She went back to her washing, a tear in her eye.

He really couldn’t hide the Christmas tree. It stuck out in front of him. It tuck out behind him. He saw people turning and looking first at his pince-nez, his Prince Albert and his staid hat and then at the unwieldy tree under his arm. He grinned sheepishly at himself. After all, it was Christmastide and anything was excusable.

The mountains were lovely, more lovely than he had ever seen before. The forest rose beautifully in serried rank. The trees sinuously undulated in colors as they climbed the mountain. The spell was perfect. And then someone shouted, “Let’s have a drink, all this scenery stuff gets on my nerves.”

A House Built on Poles

By IRVING WARDLE, '39

I

THERE was so much for him to remember about the hospital—the juices burning the skin from his belly, the doc that cracked his knuckles walking up and down the room, the nurse whose hair he thought was purple as he lolled soddenly in the depths of an hypnotic, and again, the time he saw Milan with the flames of hell beneath and the little angel heads, like bubbles, floating slowly up and bursting in his face—a flash of certain silken legs he never got to know, a silent procession with drawn-in lips, a silent, sheeted wagon, like some black funeral barge, upon a midnight—the constant, steady burning of digestive juices spilling on his belly . . . A poet might remember many things. The man with the beautiful wife was only one of all these many things.

He remembered a day when the sun was falling warm on the foot of his bed, when Jonesy had first came hobbling in, like a Yankee spinster coming in for tea, somehow.

"Well now," he said, "a newcomer! You're a welcome and happy addition to this den of mending, my boy. We need a touch of youth here . . ." He sat down suddenly. As soon as he bent his legs they collapsed like pocket knives beneath him.

"These legs, that's what keeps me here," he said. Then abruptly, with a hand upon the cover. "Tell me, lad, do they feed you well?"

"Milk!" Jonesy said, as if he spat the very thing itself. "That's damnable. By the way, what's your name? Harris? I knew a man in Paris by that name. Harris in Paris. He was a violinist. He had a little room with no windows in his house and he would go in there and play for hours and hours. I often sat and listened to him. He was quite mad. But he's rotten long ago. I went to his funeral. He was a good fellow but he was quite mad."

He broke off. Harris remembered his little uncomfortable waiting. Jonesy was staring out the window.

"God, boy," he said again, "this is a horrible place. You get to hate everything about this place; all their white uniforms, and shiny knives, and soft voices will kill you in the end. If you stay long enough they get you. You're young. You ought to get out now. I'm getting out. It's the rest I've had that fixed me. My wife and I came back from round the world in August."

He leaned to whisper, looking around. "Young Harris, when I get out of here, I'll do something for you. I'll get a ladder and get you out of here. I don't know where you live, youngster, but I'll put you on a train and it won't be a Hospital Street trolley. Damn it, no."

He chuckled, "Don't try to talk now. You're in bad shape lad. We'll have to get you out of here."

Miss Clarke passed the door.

"It's 3:30, Mr. Jones. You'll have to go back to your room," she said.

"You see?" Jonesy said. "They've got me shackled. You can damned nearly see the irons on my hands and feet. They're fiends, young Harris." He winked.

He heaved himself suddenly up from his chair, and stood, tottering weakly, flexing his knees, like a soldier mark-

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ing time, before striking out. Then he went off down the hall, without a word of farewell.

Harris, lying helpless on a hair-matted pillow, with his intestine sticking from his belly, spilling digestive juices on his scalded belly, thought about Jonesy until the sunlight went and the nurse brought his milk-laden tray.

He could still see Jonesy sitting there; an immensely tall, bald man, a retired business man. A beetle allowed to crawl freely and desperately a little way, and then recaptured.

He could still see him, the sun showing how deep his eyes had sunk, his hands like polished bone upon his cane. "What's his trouble? The man who was in here just now," he said when the nurse came.

She straightened the things on the table, letting a silence fall to help her evade him.

"He's funny, isn't he?" she said, finishing. "You'll get a kick out of him. "Good-night." She was gone.

Later she told him that Jonesy would never get well.

"He'll probably live ten years, but he'll never get well," she said.

II

Harris met Jonesy's wife one afternoon much the same as when he had met Jonesy, except the sun fell now more to the right and on the floor.

"Arnold, I must go in and see that poor boy," she might have said to Jonesy.

And she came on exaggerated tip-toe into Harris' room one afternoon.

"Hello," she said. "I thought you might be asleep."

She was startled, he remembered. You could see, in her eyes, that she was startled by the way he looked.

"I'm Mr. Jones' wife. He speaks about you so much I was cur—I thought I should stop in and see you."

"How do you do? I'm glad that you came in," he said stiffly in his hoarse voice. You are very young, you are very young and pretty, he remembered thinking. He glanced at the candy that he could not eat.

"Would you like some candy? I can't have it," he said, with that simple litany inside his head.

"Why yes," she said quickly. She was much younger than Jonesy. Certainly she was not more than thirty.

She was talking about Jonesy. Why didn't she say, Jonesy's a funny old fellow or something like that? Why didn't she say some little word that could be taken as he knew it ought to be? She was very young and pretty. But he could feel it though she never said. He wanted to scream, "I'm only twenty!" and a lot of things that would have shocked her little pink ears. And most of all he wanted to shout, "Jonesy's old, and you're young! Jonesy's good and you're rotten!" . . . And this might not have been if she had held his hand.

"Well, I ought to go now," she said after a while. "I'm going downtown to a movie. It's horrible going about alone since Jonesy's been laid up. We had a wonderful time going around the world, Jonesy and I. We're going around again—some day." Turning, pulling on her gloves. "Oh, by the way, Jonesy says you're quite a horseman. We'll have to have a talk someday. I love to ride. I'm going out—I mean I'm going to see that desert picture this afternoon. Keep covered now. I'll come in again."

She went out. Her heels clacked gaily, smartly in the corridor.

Women go riding alone. Even young married women go riding alone. A young married woman, secretary, second

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wife,—the line broke and ran. Poor Jonesy sitting watching Lisa go down to the car, watching pretty Lisa turning to throw a kiss up to the window, in her sleek black fur, her blonde young loveliness. Poor Jonesy . . . My good faithful wife, my little, gold, untarnished goddess! We'll go round the world again to Biskra, to Cairo, to the tramp carrying cinnamon on the Aegean. The moonlight falling clotted on a top deck, we, folded awestruck in the cinnamon-scented moonlight. Lisa and Arnold, alone. Poor Jonesy . . .

III

Spring came. Harris was wheeled now daily out upon the great glassed porch into the new spring sunshine. The porch looked down, across, the line of pine, upon the city, down upon the postured needles, narrow shouldered and broad-hipped, thrusting in the sky, pinheaded. Harris, the young poet, wrote that down.

Ships went out almost every day, down the horizon, bound for Cairo and Biskra, a hooded circlet of bare sea, a clotted moonlight midnight folded softly in the scent of cinnamon . . . Harris watched them go toward the edge of the world. Jonesy watched them, too.

Lisa came up almost every day. She sat with Jonesy and talked of nothing, gaily. Patient, and faithful Lisa. Patient Lisa. She read to Jonesy, in his room, sitting so the sun fell through her hair and glowed faintly on her face, as Jonesy wished her to sit. She read Halliburton to him while he held her hand and stared up into her face.

IV

They sat together, Lisa, Jonesy, and Harris, in the far corner of the porch, talking about the Rhine country.

Lisa wanted a drink of water and she went inside. Harris wished aloud he had his cigarettes. Lisa might have some, Jonesy said. He opened her bag and took out a square envelope. Harris saw the broad man's-writing. He turned and rolled his chair away, in through the door, down the corridor. Faster, and faster. He passed Lisa.

"What's the matter?" she said.

"Maybe I've got news; the mail just came," Harris said. He heard her laugh.

A sudden shock, the nurse said. He may live ten years, but he couldn't stand a sudden shock. He groaned and waited fearfully.

V

Jonesy did not die. Mrs. Jones, he said, had gone home to Dayton to visit her family. He said that once to every one who asked, with a slight tightening of his lip, and he never spoke of her again. His divorce papers were filed the next week.

He sat with Harris on the porch.

"I'll get you out of here, boy," he said. "I'll be out of this horror-house. I'm ready to go now. Strong as ever. But you're looking badly, youngster. I've got to get you out soon."

He droned them as mechanically as ever for a while. Silly, repetitious phrases now to Harris, young Harris, mending swiftly though Jonesy could not see it. Jonesy could not see that he had changed. They took on fervor. Jonesy grew excited. Daily he spoke them; they became his conversation. When he wheeled toward Harris on these sunny afternoons, Harris knew what he would say.

"Strong as ever. Fit as a fiddle. Ready to go. I'll get you out, lad."

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Serious, plotting, unaware of the young health flowing back in Harris' body, unable to see young Harris growing strong.

"Strong as ever. Fit as a fiddle. Ready to go. I'll get you out, lad."

Then Jonesy had a relapse. And he, Harris, hauled back from close to death, went home. They let him look at Jonesy those last three days before he left. Standing in the doorway, that last day, leaning on his brother's arm, he remembered Jonesy as he saw him that day. A gray blot upon the pillow. Jonesy, soundless, unable to even say, I'll get you out . . . Fit as a fiddle . . . to Cairo, to Biskra . . . the tramp on the Aegean." And no memory of these, no memory of anything. No voice, and no reason for a voice.

"We hope this will pass off," the nurse said.

"Goodbye, Jonesy," Harris said.

The acids still oozed burning through the hole in his belly; it must still be dressed every three hours, but, pale and bony, he went home.

VI

He remembered now that day at the end of the summer when he went back to be finally closed up and sewed.

He remembered meeting Miss Clarke that day; leaning on the arm of his little blond nurse, he remembered asking about Jonesy.

"He asked about you yesterday," she said. His voice came back and we hope his memory will. But you're the only one he's ever mentioned. He asked me, all of a sudden, how you were. He's never asked for Mrs. Jones or anyone but you, and then he began to mutter things about getting you out. "I'll get you out, young Harris. Strong as ever. Fit as a fiddle." He doesn't know that you've been out all summer."

Here was his door.

"Hello," Harris said softly. "Hello, Jonesy. Do you know who this is? It's Harris. Harris."

He stood at the foot of the bed. Jonesy looked at him. He looked at his tanned face; he looked at him standing alone without a cane, without leaning on anyone; he looked at him and turned his head down into the pillow.

"Damn it," he said. That was all he said.

Miss Clarke touched his arm.

"Maybe you had better go," she said.

VII

They closed Harris' belly for good, the fourth day, and stopped forever the acids soaking through the dressing to burn the skin from his belly.

But he was almost well when they told him that Jonesy had died at midnight the night that he had seen him. And he remembered this most of all.



Guiana Hell

By CHARLES E. SWEENEY, '41

LAST November the convict ship La Martiniere left France for French Guiana with a cargo of 700 human beings. Next November approximately 400 of them will be dead. Many who survive the first year will die during the second; others will hold on for a third year; others for a fourth, and a comparative few will survive for more than that. But in the end, the disease, torture, pestilence, and persecution of the Guiana Hell, so vividly described in Rene Belbenoit's "Dry Guillotine", will account for them all. La Belle France rids herself of her convicts completely and forever. The condemned never come back.

The long voyage to the equatorial torture hole in South America begins when prison cars, attached to passenger and freight trains, pick up their quotas from French jails for the journey to the coast. At Strasbourg, Jean Rondeau, the thief, is taken from the local prison by guards and chained to the bench in one of the twenty-three by four foot cells. Gendarmes pass food to Jean through the sliding panel in the locked door. At Nancy, Georges Girot, the murderer, is placed in the next cell. At Rheims, the cell car stops for Charles Goynoit, the forger. And thus the prison cars come from all parts of France to the coastal town of La Rochelle and the island prison of Saint Martin de Re.

Here the convicts receive medical examinations, are relieved of their personal belongings and are given bundles of prison clothes. They work in the prison shop under heavy discipline until the day when *La Martiniere* returns from her last voyage and is ready to receive them. Then they are marched in chains to the ferries before the curious eyes of sightseers, the hysterical goodbyes of relatives and friends and the grinding newsreel cameras.

La Martiniere contains two large cages in each hold, one to starboard and one to port. The cages are about seventy feet long and about twelve feet wide, and into each of these approximately ninety convicts are herded so that there is hardly one square yard in which each man can stand during the three weeks crossing to Guiana!

Discipline eases as the ship draws away from the homeland. Cliques are formed, Parisians associate with Parisians, men from Lyons get together. Sixteen and seventeen-year-old boys, with sentences of a few years for carousing, rub elbows with "les vieux" hardened old criminals from the North African prisons. Perversion flourishes as the unscrupulous "vieux" seek out defenceless and fear ridden boy companions. Les "vieux" organize gambling games while many other convicts, already planning escape, study maps of South America. Mutiny is never contemplated as *La Martiniere's* engineer could fill the holds with scalding steam should a riot arise. "Les vieux" steal the other convicts' clothes and sell them to the guards for tobacco. The food is brought into the cages in buckets, each man for himself and let the hindmost starve!

And thus the days pass. The heat and human stench become almost unbearable as they reach the tropics. At about the end of the third week at sea, *La Martiniere* reaches the Maroni river, steams up the French side to Saint Laurent,

Guiana Hell

where she turns the convicts into the hands of the Penal Administration of Guiana.

Contrary to popular belief, Devil's Island on which the famed Captain Dreyfus languished for fifteen years, is only a small part of the Penal Colony. Far more dreaded by the prisoners are the islands of St. Joseph and Royale, neighboring Devil's Island, where incorrigible prisoners are punished in solitary. Devil's Island is for political prisoners only.

The majority of the convicts are imprisoned on the mainland, some in the prison at Cayenne, a few down at the heel prison town. Others are held at Saint Laurent, and a great many convicts are sent out into the various jungle camps to live a life of back breaking labor amidst the disease and pestilence of the Guiana jungle.

When La Martiniere arrives, the prisoners are marched across the sleepy colonial town of Saint Laurent and are locked up in the barracks which border upon the jungle. There they have bare boards on which to sleep; leg irons keep them in place at night. The day following their arrival in barracks they are distributed among the various jungle camps in the colony.

Here in the camps their life is hideous. Men are assigned to them with no discrimination, no thought of their former occupations, or of the length of their terms. Bank clerks, waiters in cafes—men brought up in cities, many who never before had an axe in their hands are assigned to cut a lumberjack's share of timber each day in the feverish jungle heat. They are given tasks that the older prisoners are too anemic to continue.

The convicts' day begins at 5:30 in the morning. Breakfast consists of a half a pint of black coffee. Then the prisoners troop off to their jungle tasks. Each is obliged to

cut one cubic meter of the unyielding timber and pile it in a designated spot. No guard is placed over them, for it would be impossible for a man to escape into the jungle with only an axe in his hands. At noon he is given twenty-six ounces of bread, a pint of broth and three ounces of boiled beef. At three in the afternoon, the guards check up on the work done, and if the convict has not progressed sufficiently he is given only dry bread for supper instead of the usual six or seven spoonfuls of rice!

Since 1852, when the Penal Colony in Guiana was established, men have been tormented with the same conditions; malaria, dysentery, anemia, under-nourishment, bad housing, insects and daily rains. Often they wake up with their feet soaked in blood, jungle bats having sucked out their blood while they slept. Flealike insects, "chiques," dig under their toe nails and deposit egg sacks which swell up and burst, giving the convicts blood poisoning. One man stuck a needle into his eyeball in order to get out of one of the camps and into the hospital. Every night five or six bodies are buried in unmarked graves in the cemetery at Saint Laurent.

Guiana takes a regular and deadly toll of human life. Every year about 700 new men arrive and the number of convicts is increased from 2800 to 3500. But when La Martiniere brings another cargo the number has decreased from 3500 to the normal 2800.

The ordinary ways of civilized beings are completely lost. There is no religious provision for the men whatsoever, no priest. There is nothing to read. The convicts go barefoot and nearly naked. Luxuries like toothbrushes are unheard of. They can't wash themselves as the small supply of water must be kept for drinking. Perversion that begins in Saint Martin de Re becomes firmly established. The convicts are

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nothing more than biological entities and miserable ones at that.

Escape is uppermost in every man's mind. If he tries to serve out his term his chances for survival are very small. Every year dozens attempt the nearly impossible; some have tried many times. He also will try to escape. What can he lose? Though very, very few have succeeded before, his case will be different. It must be!

On one road of escape he is confronted by the Dutch Guiana jungles. He would have to cut his way through them, cross streams, escape camp guards, fight beasts and elude Indians who make a practice of capturing escaped convicts and turning them back to the Administration for a reward. Hundreds have tried this course. Some have remained free for months but were finally caught. Others stumbled back to the prisons, fever stricken and beaten by the dangers of the jungle. Some have succeeded in going many miles into Dutch Guiana and Venezuela, only to be captured and turned over to French consuls for a quick return to prison. Others have died unknown deaths in the jungle. A convict may try to beat his way through the jungle, but the chances of success are a thousand to one against him.

The other alternative is the Maroni River and the ocean. But this also has been tried by hundreds. There's the necessity of spending months on the sea on a raft or in a frail canoe, constantly menaced by sharks. And the question of landing? Some have gone hundreds of miles up the South American coast only to be turned over to the French consuls by authorities of local colonies. Thus the chances of success of an escape by sea are also extremely negligible. But desperate men take desperate chances and practically all of them fail.

The *evades* are placed in blockhouses at Saint Laurent

to await trial. Here their food consists of dry bread every two days and a little meat on the third. The blockhouses are far too small and the stench is nauseating. One bucket serves the needs of forty men. They sleep on boards raised two feet off the floor, their feet chained. Many die or are murdered by their comrades, before the trial takes place. And those who survive for the trial have years added to their terms, years to be spent in solitary in the "bloodstained" barracks on Ile. Royale.

These barracks are like huge gorilla cages and they've confined some of France's most sensational criminals. Not many incorrigibles go back from Ile. Royale to the mainland and to another chance to escape. Captain Dreyfus was confined there before he was sent to languish on Devil's Island.

Convicts are allowed to make money in the colony by making brick-a-brac to sell in Cayenne. Each one conceals his sous about him. Gambling and grafting with the guards is prevalent. Convicts steal each other's clothes and sell them to the guards for tobacco and food. At night on Ile. Royale the convicts slip out of their chains by soaping their feet and play baccarat. One man is the banker, usually a "vieux" adept in murder by stabbing. The others, therefore, don't dispute his rule over the play.

Hate and jealousy always crop out among the incorrigibles in the bloodstained barracks. Many a murder is committed. A man will slip out of his chains at night and stab his victim to death. In the morning the guards will come in and carry out the bloody corpse and feed it to the sharks. Soon afterwards the friends of the victim will probably murder the killer himself.

Muratti, the "madman," was once confined on Ile. Royale. He often declared that if his enemy Balestra was sent

Guiana Hell

there he would soon murder him. And eventually Balestra did come. Balestra knew about Muratti's intentions and the two men, each armed with knives, watched each other like cats during the first day. That night the gambling went on. Muratti was the banker. Balestra left the game. Muratti followed. The following morning Muratti helped the guards throw Balestra's body to the sharks. Muratti didn't live long. He was soon murdered by Balestra's friends.

The convicts call the cement cell blocks on St. Joseph Island, where super-incorrigibles are kept, the "dry guillotine". Ile. Royale is heaven compared to St. Joseph. The cell blocks are covered with a grill on which a guard walks at all times. Over the grills are roofs which keep out the sun. Convicts are kept in these cells night and day on a diet of dry bread. No one to talk to; nothing to do but to sit and think. Nearby is the "howling house" where men driven mad by the Guiana punishment are confined. No attempt is made to nurse them. They are treated like wild beasts. As the mental states of the men in solitary get worse, some poison themselves, others mutilate themselves in order to get into the hospital and see the sun once again.

The most humane of the prisons in the colony is in Cayenne. Here the convicts work in the town for many of the citizens, whites, black, or Orientals. The prisoners dispose of the sewage, repair the roads, serve as stevedores for the town's small shipping business, or work in the jungles.

Included in the population at Cayenne are the *liberes*, men who have served their terms in the jungle hell but who are condemned to exile in Guiana. They are free men and convicts at the same time. They cannot find work in the town because the convict labor is cheaper. It is their lot to eke a living out of the jungle. Some catch butterflies and sell them

to guards who send them abroad at a profit. A great many live in huts in the jungle and steal a small amount of food each day. They have finished their terms of horror, but they can't go back to France, to civilization, to their friends. They are exiled for life. Americans would call this the "payoff".

Approximately 50,000 convicts have been sent to Guiana since the start of the colony in 1852. There for nearly a century all kinds of criminals have lived the living death. Boys sentenced for little more than misdemeanors, yet never to come back! Vicious criminals. It is a hole of human degradation. Men lose their identity there, become animals, go insane. Immorality and crime are rampant. Reports on actual conditions there are stifled in the French press. No attempt is made to reclaim the men, to bring them back as useful citizens. It is the cruelest form of mass murder imaginable. A blot in the record of a world that calls itself civilized.

During the recent Administration of Leon Blum as Premier of France, the penal colony was officially put to an end. No more convicts were to be sent to Guiana. But when the Daladier government came to power the law was abolished. France was too poor to feed 2800 mouths! Its armament program cost too much! The reclamation of human life was too expensive!

And last November the 700 were herded into the cages of La Martiniere. A riot had taken place on the docks. Guards had squelched it. It had been a feeble convict protest against the French government's idea of justice. The 700 knew what lay before them. That four hundred of them would die during the first year. Young boys despaired at the thought of a disgusting fate. The 700 would bring the number of prisoners in Guiana to normal. They were just another batch to be killed off—men doomed to the Guiana Hell.

Old Schrieber

By JOHN T. HAYES, '40

“**W**ILLIE, Willie,” the cries rang sharp and commanding. “Come into the house at once.” The child hesitated, torn between his desire to stay and watch the old man coming down the street and his fear of a beating. There was, however, no hesitancy on the part of the mother, who running down the path grasped the child firmly by the collar and hurried him into the house.

As the old man passed the house he heard the cries of the child and he rubbed his hand beneath his eye as if to brush away a tear. But there was no tear there, for he was old and could not weep if he would. And these were the times when he wished to weep, when he saw mothers drag their children into the house lest he do them harm. And since he could not weep, his heart burned all the more fiercely within him. He knew that they were right in a way. He knew that he was a failure. But, “For the love of God,” he would cry out to himself, “For the love of God have they no understanding of charity?”

A failure, a failure surely, but he was no fool. And although he was wild in his youth his family had paid out good money to educate him. And in an age when it was considered a fine thing to have a high school education he had been sent to college to study for the ministry. For three years he had remained and had won honors as a student. But he had been leading a double life and in his fourth and final year he had been

expelled for misconduct. He had been found time and time again frequenting drinking houses and in the company of loose women. In spite of his brilliance and scholarship he had been dismissed.

He had returned to his home in the Virgin Islands, heart broken and despondent. He married, but he would not work. So his wife left him. Shortly after he left the Islands for good and came to America. For fifty steady years he bummed and begged his way, occasionally working for a few months at anything he felt inclined to accept. Once he was happy. He had secured a position as an assistant librarian, but due to his unsteady habits he was let go.

Now he found himself an old man, a man old and abandoned. But the memory of Old Schrieber was alive. It was alive with such visions that time and cruelty could not erase. He was idle and even if he would work not even the hot and dirty woollen mills had any place for a man whose hands were shaky from age and drinking. Utterly useless and helpless he lived on the small pension allowed him by the state.

For this reason he had no friends. People shunned him. They objected to his dirty clothes and drink laden breath. And above all they hated the stories he told their older sons of life in the Islands. It meant a severe beating for the lad who was caught listening to these tales. But there was one lad who was not beaten for hearkening to them, and he listened with eyes that burned with dreams.

It was a great wonder to the people of the neighborhood how Mrs. Layden put up with Old Schrieber, and allowed him to board at her house. "If she were alone it would be bad enough," they would say, "But she has a son and that makes it doubly worse." What they did not know however was that Mrs. Layden had no great love for this son of hers, and cared little

Old Schrieber

what became of him. Every time she looked at him she was reminded of his father, and she hated his father. And besides tolerating Old Schrieber for the little money he gave her, she felt at times a common sympathy with him. For she knew his story and she understood the loneliness of his life.

Years before, Mrs. Layden had come to the neighborhood, bringing a small child with her. No man was ever seen around the house until Old Schrieber had come. The neighbors had long since abandoned the idea of making her friendship, for she was strangely reticent and sullen. Only one thing ever stirred her from her lethargy, and that was any mention of her son's father. She could not bear even the slightest allusion to him.

One summer evening as she sat on the porch, her hands folded on her lap, and her heavy eyes half closed, a neighbor came up to visit with her. Mrs. Layden knew this woman for a busy-body and meddler, and was immediately hostile toward her. "A fine evening," said the neighbor sitting herself beside Mrs. Layden. "It was lonesome over at the house, so I thought I'd come over and visit you for a bit, if you don't mind. My man hasn't come home yet and the children are all out." Mrs. Layden unfolded her hands and began slowly to twist the diamond ring she wore on her finger.

"I hope Jim comes home soon," continued the neighbor, "Sure if he's away a few hours I miss him." Mrs. Layden continued to rotate the ring, but said nothing.

"I don't know how you stand it living alone, but then maybe you never really had a man." Her voice was heavy with insinuation. Mrs. Layden's hand tightened on the ring, and her eyes narrowed. A slight breeze stirred a lock of premature gray hair against her forehead and she coughed slightly.

"Don't speak of my husband," said Mrs. Layden sharply. The neighbor looked suddenly startled and then angry.

"I wasn't speaking of your husband," answered the neighbor, in an angry tone. "I don't even know if you have one. A woman usually wears more than a diamond ring before she has a son." Mrs. Layden drew a sharp breath. "Where is your wedding ring?" continued the neighbor, "Eh, where is it?"

"Why you she-devil," hissed Mrs. Layden, "You meddling hag," and she struck the woman on the face, and would have torn the clothes from her had she not broken away. As it was, aroused to a fury she hurled invective after invective after the fleeing woman, and then turned into her own house. From that day on no one ever came near her.

Old Schrieber and Mrs. Layden would sit in the kitchen for hours on end, seldom saying a word. Sometimes she would say to him, "You should never have left the Islands." But seeing the look of sorrow that would cross his old face and his hands steal toward his coat pocket, her heart would go out to him, for she knew the flood of memories that crushed his spirit. It was easy for her to sympathize with him. She could understand his careless habits and heavy drinking. She knew the secret of his tears and of his mad laughter too.

"Life is pretty much the same," she would say, when he had left the kitchen and gone up to sleep in his ill-kept room. "Life is pretty much the same and always cruel."

Years went by, and still they lived on the same old way. Three unhappy people, each of a different generation. Two dreaming of what had been and bitter on life, and one dreaming of what was to come and impatient for the future.

Schrieber seldom went out of doors now, for he could not see very well and he hated the whirl and din of the streets. And the youths on the streets no longer eager to hear his tales, derided and mocked him. But the son of Mrs. Layden still listened with never-failing interest to the stories he had heard over and over

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again. Yet the years had not left him untouched. He was a young man now and had taken to heavy drinking. Every Saturday night he would buy whiskey and beer to take home to Schrieber. Old Schrieber talked better with the drink in him and young Layden listened better. Together they would sit drinking and talking, and always they talked of the Island.

As the mother watched her son and this old man, her eyes would sometimes become misty and she would weep silently, for her son never smiled and there was a restless look in his eyes. And she who had seen it before knew that the wanderlust had seized him, and because he was unhappy he would soon leave her, and she wept the more because she knew that she was helpless. And her heart burned for she had never been close to her son, and she was at a loss as to how to remonstrate with him, for he was of a harsh and mean nature. Once, years before, she had pleaded with his father, and so incessantly had she pleaded that her tongue drove him from her. So now she held her peace, but a troubled peace it was.

Then came the Christmas season, and there was hardly a bit of food in the house, for the son had been drinking very hard and Old Schrieber was owing in his rent. One night just before Christmas, Old Schrieber was huddled close to the fire smoking his pipe and droning on about the Islands. He loved to speak of the Islands, and always his speech was flowery and somewhat affected.

"At night the stars seem so close overhead that it does not seem as if it would be impossible to reach up and gather them from the heavens. You can see well enough to pick up a pin in the street and the sea is like silver. And music, boy, there is always music. The music of the shore, of the waves, of the palms, and the music of the native guitars. I tell you, boy, if you could only be there once you would never return. The Islands do some-

thing to a man. For the Islands have a soul, and it is the soul that weaves its spell. A languid, softly throbbing, maddening soul, a soul"

A low sob broke from the corner of the room and interrupted the old man, for the sad mother had been watching her son, and her memories crushed her. Sobbing softly she went to her room.

Young Layden was aware of the tears of his mother, but he knew that they were not being shed over him. He stood at the window gazing with hateful eyes at the dirty tenement opposite across the little patch of dirt yard, and he thought of the beauty of the Islands as told to him by that thin rag-like man huddled by the fire. Thus he stood with the sobs of his unloved mother beating against his ears, and visions of night-lit waters surging against his heart. He stood silent for a moment and then putting on his coat and drawing his hat well down over his face, he went from the kitchen without a word. Somehow Old Schrieber knew that he would never return, for Old Schrieber was from the Islands. He rose unsteadily and went up to his room. In his room he drew his bottle from his coat and, raising it to his lips, drank a silent toast to the lad who had gone. And looking into the amber-colored liquid within the bottle, he saw dancing there a light brown face framed in dark black hair and a pair of sparkling eyes. He took the picture from his pocket and gazed at it again, and, as he did so, something seemed to tell him that it was not long now before his end.

He fell asleep with the picture in his hand, and his face was serene and peaceful. He started suddenly in his sleep, for there was a knocking at the door, and Mrs. Layden entered. She shook him into wakefulness and in a frightened voice kept asking: "Where is my son? Where is my son?"

He will return," lied Schrieber, somewhat surprised by the woman's unusual excitement, "He will return."

"You are lying, old man, he is gone for good."

"Of what matter is it? Life will perhaps treat him better where he has gone. He was always unhappy here so it is best to forget him."

"I'll not forget him," she cried, "I need him. So get out yourself. Follow him, and maybe life will treat you better. But get out."

"But, woman, I am old. I have no place to go. If you put me on the street, it will mean my death. I cannot go."

The old man's head bowed and his hand stole to his pocket where he had somewhat shamefacedly put the picture when he had been awakened. A look of pleading crept into his eyes, but Mrs. Layden felt no pity for him now. If he stayed he would ever be a reminder of her failure to win and hold the love of a husband and son. All sorts of memories surged up in her, and she grasped the old man by the collar and began to shake him violently.

"All right, "I'll go," he stammered, "But may God forgive you."

So Old Schrieber left. He had no belongings to take with him, and on a cold Christmas morning he walked the streets penniless and shivering. Even his bottle was empty and he had nothing to console himself with, not even a drink. Clutching at his coat, to hold it more closely about him, something seemed to snap within him and he burst into insane laughter. His knees buckled beneath him, and laughing he fell to the sidewalk and lay still.

A crowd gathered and viewed the old man with a cold indifference. A cold indifference indeed for a Christmas morning, but there was nothing about Old Schrieber to incite the imagination. There was nothing of the Islander about him, now that his eyes were closed and his voice was stilled by death. For

Old Schrieber was dead. He had died laughing but, above all, sober. Perhaps that was one of death's causes. Schrieber was never happy and sober at the same time. At the morgue when they laid the old man out, the torn picture fell from his coat. The attendant picked it up, looked at it a moment, and then threw it into the fire. But Schrieber remained still, there was no protest from him now. His secret had died with him.

Those who were accustomed to seeing him walk along the streets would shake their heads, and like the Pharisee of the gospel thank God that they were not as this old man, dirty and a drunkard. There was no limit to the stories these people invented about the old man. Some said that he was a convict, others that he was insane and finally they associated everything that was evil with him. Old Schrieber paid them no external heed but within his heart he cursed them. Cursed them for the uncharitable fools which they were.

"Blind, blind fools," he would mutter to himself, "Blind and cruel. Do what you like to me, and say what you please about me, still there remains something which you can never touch and hurt, and cause to burst in disillusion, for that is a dream, a dream that shall live until I am dead. There is one thing I shall keep from your curious eyes." And his hand would steal to his coat pocket.

From the day he had left his family in the Virgin Islands he had never heard from them. He knew not whether they were alive or dead, and indeed he did not care. But now that he was old and haunted by poverty he sometimes thought of them. At such times he would take most of his pension money and buy liquor. And when he was drunk he would draw from the inner pocket of his dirty serge coat a soiled and torn picture of the woman who had left him when he was a young man on the Islands.

Old Schrieber

For hours he would sit with the picture between his gnarled hands, and sometimes his eyes would become wet and his vision blurred, until he could no longer make out the form of the woman. Yet, even with unseeing eyes he would sit and dream. He was as one in a trance, and those who spoke to him would receive no answer. But at other times on looking at the picture he would burst forth in a laugh touched with madness, and those who heard it would cross themselves quickly, and be unable to account for the sudden chill which ran through their blood. "He is mad," they would say. "He is mad from drink. It would be better if he were in a home."



Ignominy

By IRA T. WILLIAMS, JR., '41

IT WAS night. One of those cold winter nights when one is content to stay by the cheery fireside with the evening paper and a friendly pipe.

As John Hawkins settled more snugly in his prodigious overstuffed chair and took another puff from his briar, the screen of his mind reviewed his present status in life. With a strongly established business, a fine wife and two youthful Hawkins as his pride and joy he considered himself much of a success.

Quickly his mind flashed back to days not so mirthful. How on cold nights such as this he stood shivering on wind-swept corners selling newspapers so that he might be able to help support his overburdened mother and fatherless children. How he was shunned by fellow students because he came from the other side of the tracks clearly returned to his memory. His battle for security in a world that begrudged him even his scanty food was made even more immense by the obstacles that confronted him as a young man. He remembered clearly his first meeting with Amy Peters, the pretty niece of his employer, who had been to a finishing school. He remembered how he had struggled to find words to match those that seemed to flow so effortless from her pretty rounded mouth. Later, he had been the envy of every young squire in town, courting Amy to all the social

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functions. Finally he had climaxed all this in winning her as his wife.

John thought of how they fought together to overcome the troubles that beset them in their early married life. A smile spread over his face as he remembered how happy they were when little John was born. Now they were really one, in ideal and principle, and their thoughts and plans centered upon the boy. He recalled now how overjoyed they were when a playmate came to join John—Ruth—to complete their dreams of a family. How they skimped and saved so as to buy the little hardware store on the corner and to enlarge it to meet its present demands as one of the leading stores in the community—how happy they were when John was graduated from the State College and was made a member of a well established law office.

But here his thoughts turned to the melancholy side and his face grew somber and grave. John had prospered in his law practice and everything seemed serene and complacent. Due to some dealings that were somewhat off color he was involved with a few men of notorious renown and in the plot to cover up, he, against his better judgment, allowed himself to be the driver of the car in which one of the men who knew about the crookedness was murdered. Finally they were apprehended and in a short trial were found guilty and sentenced to die in the electric chair. Tonight was the night when they were to pay their debt to society.

As John Senior thought we look in on the death row of the State Penitentiary.

It was 11:56. John stepped out of his cell behind Father Thomas accompanied by two prison guards. He was walking the "last mile." So often he had heard it described by witnesses and now he, too, was experiencing all those chilly sweats and unrestrained passion to cling to life a little longer.

"God, it seemed a mile to that little green door; would they never get there?" Piercing his thoughts John heard Father Thomas chanting so solemnly the prayers for the dying. He thought now of the trial, the verdict and the sentence. He raged inwardly, not because he was afraid to die but more because he was dying a criminal to the world that he had tried to persuade to his honesty and uprightness.

Vivid beads of sweat stood out in bold relief on John's forehead. Tears of anger and pent up forlornness flooded his eyes. He was too young to die and for a crime that he did not commit. But now all hope was despaired of as the *stabat* quartet neared the chamber door. He turned mute, appealing eyes towards Father Thomas who still read from the Scriptures. He thought of his mother whose faith in him had remained firm and staunch throughout the trial and who must be praying now to God in heaven for her boy. He thought of the happy times he and Jane had had together before this terrible shadow had darkened their lives. The reservoir of tears swelled over as he remembered his present condition, one of hopeless pity, facing death closer, closer, step by step, his face streaming with tears John's knees gave way, the burden was too great. He was helped up by the guards who now held him under his arms, his once powerful shoulders sagging with unprecedented despair and loss of faith in man's judgment.

The green door stood before him and opened mockingly as he approached. He stopped there on the threshold of life and death and looked back longingly at the world he was to leave reluctantly behind; then with a shuddering, heart-rending gasp, "O, God," he crossed the threshold of death.

On My Learning to Swim

By SEYMOUR SHERMAN, '41

MY first advent into the water marked a minor epoch in my life. I had ever entertained a fear of water in quantity, of the sullen surging of the ocean, of the primitive loveliness of lakes, and of rivers running deep and wide. I have read sea books with pleasure, but I loved water at no closer distance. Not a little of this fear was occasioned by a well-meaning but blundering relative, who had been warned (by a Gipsy reader of palms, as I later learned) that deep water was destined to be my Waterloo; that I would be wrecked upon "shallows and flats", if ever I ventured forth in my own bottom. But I am resolved, O ocean, to conquer thee. "Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain", but I shall soon float over thee in triumph, O mad ocean.

As a soldier shouts defiance, giddy in the heat of battle, so I cried challenge to my soul, ere my better sense dissuade me. Knowing of a lake not far removed from the country, I repaired there one morning. The summer sun had not yet warmed the air, but I hazarded a chill rather than a chance exposure to the cruel gibes of man, certain to offend my tender efforts. Besides I had ever maintained a high regard for the silent sympathy of nature. The water terrified me. Rippling gently to the first sweet winds of morning, it seemed to heave with agitation to embrace me forever. I could not go in. I dared not. But I did. Nearly swooning from the cold and fright, I ad-

vanced myself to the waist, and stood rooted. Through the shadowed water, I could see the sandy bottom, with a few white pebbles showing gray, and hosts of minnows darting about. I was sharply aware of the melodious song of the horned lark, as he startled the echoes ringing over the lake. So indifferent to me, and remote, seemed the performance of nature, that my trivial behavior shamed me. Drawing a mighty breath, I plunged my head beneath the water again and again.

Gentle reader, I cannot as yet transport myself through the waves to the delight and envy of despairing throngs. The face of the water knows me not for her own, and I must limp along in my crudely fashioned style. Yet I feel no sorrow. I have found that there is pleasure in the sullen surging of the ocean, in the primitive loveliness of lakes and in rivers running deep and wide.



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