

# ALEMBIC

PROVIDENCE COLLEGE



VOLUME XXII

NUMBER 4

MAY, 1940

ESCAPE

JAMES O'CONNELL

SHAKESPEARE ON SLEEP

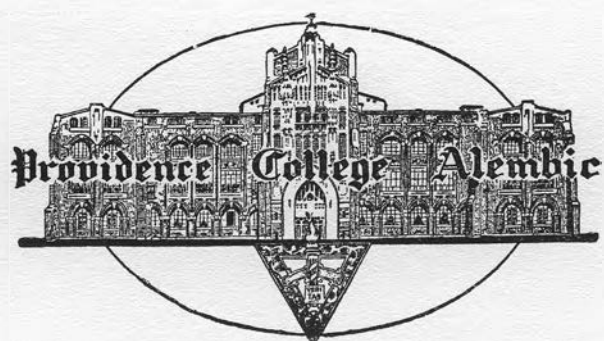
RAYMOND C. SMITH

LIFTER, LOVE AND BUTTERFLIES

J. T. HAYES

# THE ALEMBIC

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# Fyodor Dostoievsky

By RUSSELL R. JALBERT, '42

**A**LTHOUGH French literature is admittedly great in itself, perhaps its greatest value is its influence on the thought and literature of other nations. Especially in connection with Russia was this power important. Russia in its early period had no literature; even up to the seventeenth century the only writing that was done was the revising of the lives of the Church fathers or of the Bible. Then for a century and a half there were only folk tales, dramas, and fables. But "modern literature (of Russia) dates from the establishment of a continuous imaginative literature in the second quarter of the eighteenth century," as a result of the adoption of the standards of French classicism at this period. The importance of this is not so much the adoption of this particular style as the fact that Russia became aware of the position of literature in the field of culture. Indeed, the classical movement soon faded to be replaced by a literature that was really Russian.

Lomonosov is said to be the real founder of modern Russian literature, but it was Pushkin who first aroused the emotions of the people. This first genius was followed by Gogol, a novelist of "great and exceptional originality." He is important to our study because he was really the source of Russian literature as we know it today. He was "an opener of doors, an introducer of hitherto forbidden materials"; he was the founder of the realistic school. After Gogol came the two supreme in Russian letters—Tolstoy and Dostoievsky.



With some reservations it might be admitted that Tolstoy, the author of *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, is the greater of the two as a representative of Russian life; but the great influence exerted by Dostoievsky on the novels of the world cannot be denied. Some of the more notable contemporaries who show his influence are Henry James, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce. It is curious that many authors of today, who are opposed to Dostoievsky's fundamentals of thought, find their best and most appealing medium of expression in exactly the same style as he used.

Fyodor Dostoievsky was born in 1821. His father was an embittered and melancholy man, and his mother a loving and deeply religious woman; and from the conflict of these personalities, on his own there were printed permanent characteristics. Because of nervous temperament and physical unfitness, the spiritual fervor of his mother, and the desire for refuge from the despair and antagonism of his father, he became imbued with a desire to escape into an idyllic dream-world. He often found this in the poems of Pushkin and in the nature of his brother, Mihail.

Dostoievsky's education began fairly early in life, his career as a student being good but not brilliant. He studied at a preparatory school in Moscow, but any associations were difficult because of his sensitive nature. His life was filled with grief, first, at the death of his mother; then at the death of his idol, Pushkin. Later, to his dismay, he was appointed to the military engineering school at St. Petersburg. Here began the struggle that was to burden him throughout his life. Here he first felt the pinch of penury. Here he was still isolated from his companions. Here he first cried for freedom, the thing that was to be an integral part of his doctrines. In addition to all

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this, he felt the ache of his father's death; but through it all he sheltered himself with his books.

Despite his hatred for the army service, he tried to work in the government service, but within a year he could no longer bear it, so he resigned. His mind had a literary bent, he knew, and he fought to develop it. He first planned to write translations of such authors as Schiller, Sand, and Byron, but beset as he was by illness, without money, and having accomplished nothing in the creative field of writing, his life was wretched. He was sustained through this period only by hope of publishing the novel that he had written.

"Dostoevsky's entrance upon the literary stage was a piece of crude melodrama, of the sort in which both his life and his art abound." This is how one author summarizes it. And he was not far wrong. The plot of his novel came to him quite easily, and he soon had the complete story on paper. But he was not satisfied with it. He revised, rewrote, he added and he cut until he thought that it could be no better. Then he sought to bring it before an editor of a certain small magazine, and threatened to throw himself in the Neva if the book were not accepted. The manuscript never reached that publisher. Instead, apparently through the aid of a friend of Dostoevsky, the novel came to the notice of Alexis Nekrovsky, a young dilettante about to enter the publishing business. At four o'clock in the morning Nekrovsky burst into Dostoevsky's room wild with enthusiasm. Yet approval had to come from V. G. Belinsky, the outstanding critic of that time. Days of suspense followed as Belinsky ignored the manuscript. Then even the great Belinsky had hailed the novel! The new author was a second Gogol! After such impetus, the author was hailed from every source. Dostoevsky was successful, was famous!

In the flush of this triumph he continued to write stories,



both short and long. He had no trouble in selling his short stories, and when he finished his next novel it was immediately published. Then the novel was found to be dull and trite. Another novel suffered the same criticism. Then Belinsky, because of these failures and because of the disagreement on religious and political ideology, withdrew his support. With him went all the fame and potential fortune that he had built up for Dostoievsky.

Dostoievsky, hurt by this sudden fall, absorbed himself in the idealistic, revolutionary ideals which so many people were seeking to make a reality. He went as far as to live in a commune, where he devoted his time to writing. His writing was not the writing of a genius. He wrote to defend his *amour-propre*; to vindicate himself; to earn bread. The natural result of this kind of writing was that none of it was of any value, except, perhaps, to solidify his ideas and strengthen his purpose.

Unfortunately, these efforts ruined his health. Although his whole life had been a battle with sickness, it was not until this period that he became afflicted with the disease that was to make his whole life miserable. His weak body yielded to his strong nervous reactions, and Dostoievsky was to be an epileptic for life. Yarmolinsky, in his life of Dostoievsky, briefly states that, according to medical authorities, this condition accounts for his hypersensitiveness and his misanthropy.

The importance of these conditions to the works of Dostoievsky seem to be overlooked. Authorities argue as to the source of his epilepsy, but apparently ignore its effects. The contention here is not that the novels are solely the outcome of his epilepsy, but that the epilepsy undoubtedly brought about and sharply focused the importance of the *mind*—the author's peculiar field of study. There is no doubt that the author considered them important, for he goes as far as to make some of

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the more outstanding characters in his novels epileptics, or subject to fits of a similar nature. For example, in the *Brothers Karamazov*, Smerdyakov spends some time in discussing his fits; and there is shown the relation to the plot and the psychology involved.

What Dostoevsky was most aware of was the seeming inconsistencies in man. Not only the actions of man, but in his very nature. This "duality of temperament" places vice beside virtue, and man's external acts are merely the inexorable expression of the conflicts of these two forces. Dostoevsky's philosophy proceeds: this conflict shows the freedom of man; proves man's free will. Therefore, freedom means suffering. In *Crime and Punishment*, for example, after Raskolnikov has murdered the miserly, usurious old woman, he is tortured by his conscience until he is forced to confess. If he had no choice in the matter, no free will, the murder would not have made him suffer. Consequently, we can see that as a result of his own mental condition, Dostoevsky formulated his philosophy on the suffering and freedom of the mind.

Even as this development of his philosophy was taking place, he became absorbed in the ideas of the intelligentsia, keeping what was good and rejecting what was bad. And there was much to choose from, for this was the period in which radical writings, though banned by royal decree, were eagerly sought by the people. Karl Marx and the 1848 revolutionists of France were greatly lauded. But it seems that Dostoevsky absorbed the spirit rather than any concrete conceptions from this movement. In fact, he usually fought the ideas on such subjects as Christ, socialism, and the purpose of art.

The majority of the intellectuals at this time thought that art should have a social purpose, a message of reform; but Dostoevsky believed in its appeal to the higher emotions as a cul-

tural benefit and not as a false literature merely proselyting the common people.

Dostoevsky apologized for his belief in Christ against the intelligentsia. This group thought of Christ either as a "notorious demagogue who ended his career somewhat unsuccessfully"; or else, freedom being the suffering that it is, Christ made too great a demand on man by not coming down from the cross, by not *proving* the divinity that He claimed. Dostoevsky tried to refute these doctrines with every fibre of his intensely spiritual being. Christ was the God-man, and Dostoevsky's need of Him was rooted in the depths of his soul. Dostoevsky insisted that every man needed this influence. Without it there would be no morality, no purification of spirit; the world would be a chaos. Dostoevsky believed in this so firmly that it enters as an important characteristic of his works; it redeems his works from their apparent blackness and despair. "There is always light in his darkness and it is the light of Christ."

It is strange that Dostoevsky is considered as one of the first writers advocating communistic ideas in Russia. The socialists claim him as their brother; in reality he was opposed to their beliefs as the direct antithesis of his philosophy. Socialism meant the subjugation of liberty and of the freedom which he so loved; it meant the abolishment of the individual—Dostoevsky's greatest concern. He, himself, states in *Letters from the Underworld* that "it appeared man's whole business is to prove to himself that he is a man and not a cogwheel." From a spiritual standpoint, he stated that "socialism is a manifestation of the Spirit" and socialism is not only a problem of labor—but is even more concerned with atheism—, the Tower of Babel built without God, not to raise earth to heaven but to bring heaven down to earth." Dostoevsky also considered socialism as a result of sentimentalism and lack of honor, and forecast these

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as having a tremendous effect upon the Russian mind. All these things show that although Dostoevsky might have predicted the revolution he was not the precursor of it.

He did, however, believe in reforming the rule of the Tsar, although any attempt to bring this about meant violation of imperial law. Dostoevsky enthusiastically participated in the activities of secret groups which were trying to advance their conceptions of government rule. Dostoevsky, as part of his activity, read a letter, written by Belinsky to Gogol, at several meetings of the intelligentsia. Because it was "a vehement philippic against the bureaucracy, the Church, and the institution of serfdom" it met with widespread approval. He also took part in setting up a secret press to be used to print pamphlets for distribution to the common people.

No printing was done, however. Imperial agents had discovered the activities and had seized the plotters. Dostoevsky was bewildered. His activities had been a relaxation from his writing. He was an author, not a revolutionist. But inexorably the adamant Tsar brought the whole group to trial and passed the death sentence upon them. Later the Tsar commuted the sentence to exile in Siberia; but because of his love of the theatrical, he inhumanly marched them out to execution, after weeks of torment; and not until after the penalty had been read, and after the priest had prayed over the condemned, and the muskets had been leveled at the hearts of the pitiful men, did he have a courier dash up with a flourish to announce the reprieve. As a result, months later, on Christmas Eve, Dostoevsky passed through St. Petersburg to the black, frozen nothingness of Siberia.

His physical imprisonment was in a filthy, unheated, exposed barrack in which all types of criminals were packed together like swine. But it was not this that oppressed him most. He was driven to despair by his intellectual confinement. Writ-



ing materials were prohibited, and he was deprived of any reading matter except the Bible.

It was this Bible that gave him sustenance. From it he found the deep, full contact with Christ that he had been seeking. And this contact brought about an awareness of the virtues hidden beneath the crimes of the convicts. His love of man made him probe beneath the surface of these men, and he was richly rewarded.

His four years in prison were long, however, and he was glad to be released, even though he still had to serve four years in the border army. Conditions were better here. He was, in spite of his duties, allowed to act and move as freely as he wished. He could correspond, read widely, write, and have some contact with society. In this last regard, there were two notable associations: one, with Baron Wrangle who befriended him and was to prove a loyal friend throughout his life; and the other, with a woman, who, after the death of her husband, consented to marry Dostoevsky.

The result of this marriage was the striving of Dostoevsky to return to Russia. Finally, after borrowing money from every available person, pawning his goods, and selling himself into bondage to his publisher by drawing advances on publications, he returned to Russia—but not to his beloved St. Petersburg. By decree, he was forced to live in a small town located between Moscow and St. Petersburg. Here he finished writing a novel, *The Friend of the Family*, which proved successful enough to ease his financial worries and restore his long lost self-confidence. His health was so bad, though, that he sought to return to St. Petersburg where he could obtain proper medical treatment. He used all the influence that he had to aid him in returning in order to prevent “either insanity or death.”

His wish was finally fulfilled and he found himself in a



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new metropolis—one seething with demands for social reform, and strangely, receiving every possible support from the government. Dostoevsky took advantage of this condition by entering journalism and taking a neutral and conciliatory attitude toward all issues. Though he made money in this way, he accomplished little else. Two of his novels were published: *The Insulted and the Injured* and *House of the Dead*, the first of which was a very mediocre book, and the second, considering that it was the memoirs of his prison life, was astonishingly lacking in the introspection that was so evident in his later works.

These activities made him successful enough to make his long cherished trip to Europe—to examine the West which was to be the hope of Russia. Dostoevsky firmly believed in Russia, but he was not the Slavophil that so many critics believe him to be. A Slavophil was one who adhered stubbornly to his hereditary lands; who looked to the glories of Russia in the past and not in the future; who entirely ignored the growing individuality of the masses, exalting the Tsar instead, and believing any contact with Europe would result in contamination of his purity. “I have always been a Russian,” admitted Dostoevsky, but he also declared his brotherhood with men of all races. This was exemplified in his trip, in which he found Hamburg as dirty as Moscow, London filthy, Venice hot and depressing—but all of them only a backdrop for the activities of humanity.

After this trip there followed a puzzling chapter in Dostoevsky's life. It happened during the sickness and death of his wife, the sudden death of his beloved brother, and the failure of the paper he was editing. In the midst of these afflictions (because of them or in spite of them is merely conjecture) Dostoevsky became entangled in two love affairs that made him look ridiculous and yet pitiful. He was now middle-aged and he pressed his love for two young girls of the new “emancipated

womanhood". Despite his efforts, the two girls rejected him, apparently because of his over-forceful personality. After their marriage to other men the unfortunate period ended.

Even while he had been in this turmoil, he had begun to write another novel. It was solely to earn money, of course, but as he worked on it, it grew in size and worth. He began it as an exposition of a prevalent evil of that period—drunkenness. Abruptly he changed it to "a psychological account of a crime." He tried to write it in the form of a confession, but found it too rigid. Then he tried it in the form of a diary, but found it too cumbersome. Finally he discarded everything but the idea and wrote it in narrative form.

This painstaking development of his manuscripts was made in all of Dostoievsky's novels. Because his narrative often appears confused and jumbled, Dostoievsky is accused by critics as being an untidy and hurried writer. As shown by the above evidence, there is little basis for this accusation, and what the critics object to is really his art in expressing the "underground disturbances of human nature," for we must remember that he treated of "the impassioned and tumultuous dynamism of human nature." Therefore, instead of distracting from the work, his "untidiness" intensifies the reader's emotions.

The writing of this novel had two beneficial effects on Dostoievsky. The stenographer to whom he had dictated the last draft of his novel consented to become his wife, and gave him the sympathy, the kindness, and the aid that he so badly needed. Moreover, the novel itself, entitled *Crime and Punishment*, was an instantaneous and lasting success. It is related how, ten years later, when he was jailed for a minor violation of a censor law, he was amused for a whole day by the eulogy of his keeper on this book. The public approval of his book meant a brief respite from monetary worries.

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However, being the escapist that he was, at the urging of his wife he took her to Europe. They spent four years in Europe and these years were mostly unhappy. They had to endure much. They were always without money, and most of what they had was dissipated in Dostoevsky's obsession for gambling. He was harassed by publishers' demands to produce works for which he had received advances. He was more than ever tortured by his more frequent and more violent fits. They both were saddened by the death of their first-born child, and by despair in caring for their second child. With relief, they finally secured a loan sufficient to enable them to return home, and thankfully they entered St. Petersburg in 1871, after four years in exile.

The last period of Dostoevsky's life was comparatively secure. He had established himself as a writer, and was able to publish enough to make a fairly debt-free living. He published *The Possessed*, which met with the approval of the public. He spent one year as editor of another man's newspaper, but his work was so oppressive that he had to resign. After publishing *The Raw Youth*, he started a journalistic venture, *A Writer's Diary*, in which he tried to express himself on the contemporary social, political, and religious problems. Despite his self-contradictions, his own "duality of temperament," the organ appealed to all classes; and in spite of frequent conflicts with the censors, it continued to be profitable.

Yet to come was his greatest work, his most permanent contribution to world literature. The idea must have grown upon him powerfully, for he suspended his money-making journal entirely in order to devote his full time to it. He called it his last novel—he seemed to see his death near.

The plot of this work, *The Brothers Karamazov*, is fairly simple. It is a tale of parricide, with the usual sub-plots, closely connected with the principal theme, intermingling and more

closely uniting some of the characters. It is a tale of three sons—four if the illegitimate half-wit is considered—and a licentious old man. Each of the sons, in his own way, may be said to hate the old man, from whom they inherit their passion and sensuality. But the sons feel toward him each in a different way, for each of them has inherited also the characteristics of their respective mothers, the father having married twice, and having begotten a son by a half-wit. The evolution and outcome of these relations constitutes the plot. However, there is much more than this melodramatic plot. It is the individuality of the characters that is of the most absorbing interest; that makes this novel the classic that it is. This individuality is expressly characteristic of certain types, yet the individual always dominates. Ivan is a man without faith, a doubter who has rejected God because he cannot conceive of Him. Alyosha is the antithesis of his step-brother; he believes fully and his constant desire is to approach closer to God. For this reason he enters a monastery and leaves it only at the request of his elder, whom he loves. Dmitri is one who seems to take God for granted. The fourth, the half-wit, is one similar to Ivan in his basic nature, but shows the result of this nature when unguided by any intellect. All of these are important because they are the vehicles which epitomize Dostoevsky's philosophy—they show the duality of temperament and its consequent suffering, and we find the synthesis of Dostoevsky's religious convictions.

It is this last which is most evident in this work. In his other works he unfolds his religious philosophy, but never so deeply and completely. In this work he makes little display of his social and political and artistic beliefs. Within the novel itself, there is a prose poem written by Ivan, called the *Grand Inquisitor*, which most critics agree is completely and in concise form the doctrine of Dostoevsky in reference to Christ. It would



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take too long to develop a full analysis of this poem, but the fundamental theme is that organized religions, on the whole, have eased the necessary duties that go with the belief in Christ; and have attempted to replace Him by developing a man-God who is capable of guarding and interpreting God's laws which are detrimental to the *earthly* happiness of mankind. Some may regret that he had such a lack of knowledge of the Church, but we must admire such an outspoken defender of Christ.

In addition, we find the highest achievement in his art. There is the penetrating psychology; the rushing, overwhelming style that is such a perfect medium of expression of this type of story; and there is the complete individuality with which he characterized his novels.

Dostoievsky lived to see the success of his masterpiece, but died too soon to benefit from its fruits. Less than one month after publication of the novel in book form, he died of hemorrhage and epilepsy. Perhaps the work itself was full satisfaction for him, because it is known to be the only writing with which he was not discontent. Posterity has sustained his belief in this last effort; and far more applicable to this novel than to his others is the statement of Nichol Berdyaev, that his work "is the climax of Russian literature and it is the finest expression of its earnest, tormented character; its path of sorrow led to Dostoievsky and all the shadows of Russian life and history were gathered together in him." Although it is impossible that his works or his personality can be "wholly compassed," we are bound to respect all his contributions to world literature.



## Escape

By JAMES O'CONNELL, '42

EARL BARNES, better known as "Gippy" in underworld circles, sat on the edge of the small bunk, holding a cigarette between fingers that had long since ceased to be steady. He inhaled deeply, blew the smoke through his nose, threw the stub at his feet, and ground it to the floor. He smiled grimly as he glanced at the stub that had taken its place among so many others.

He mustn't lose his nerve now; he had been as calm and cool as could be expected. It had helped to sit back and think of something before, but even that seemed to mock him now. He leaned back against the wall and ran his fingers through his hair. A shudder ran through him; He wouldn't have that much longer. God, couldn't he do anything any more without that ghastly reality prodding him—and rising before him? He got up, walked a few paces, his hands encircled the now familiar bars, and he looked out upon the blank walls and the small covered corridor of which he felt that he knew every crack and corner, even to the small spider that hung immobile from the web at the far end. It seemed only a few days since he had stood in the courtroom and heard the judge pronounce the words that condemned him to die in the electric chair three days hence at 11:30 P. M.

Gippy turned from the bars and threw himself on the bunk. Funny, he thought, what ideas run through your mind

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when you know that what is going to happen is inevitable. Even the word grated. He found himself reflecting again upon the subject that had been the same for days: the possibility of escape. Imagine anyone escaping from this jail, from what amounted to solitary confinement, with the electric chair three days away. The idea was at best ridiculous, but he could think of nothing else. What else could he think about? If there were only a slight possibility . . . but there wasn't any, not one single, blessed one. No one had ever escaped from the death-house, but someone had said that the truth was stranger than fiction. If that could only apply to him. Oh, yes, and there was something else, something about there being an exception, about there being a first time. Great heavens! Where did he get such crazy notions? Crazy? He sprang from his bunk and again gripped the bars but this time in a grip that would have almost bent a piece of iron—almost. He loosened his grip, glanced around him, and sighed aloud—a long, broken, quivering sigh. Gippy Barnes was cracking.

The day set for the execution arrived and to Gippy Barnes, who by this time had to struggle to keep himself in control, it seemed to have come with the snapping of a finger. The turnkey had brought him his supper at six and Gippy, vainly trying to put on a front had asked him about the thing that had seemed to be the most casual—the weather. He had been told that it had been an exceptionally hot day, even outdoing the ones that had preceded it, and that thundershowers were forecast. He glanced distastefully at the food and murmured to no one, "a hot day." He laughed a little hilariously and said aloud, "It'll be a hot tonight, too." Five hours more of precious living and then . . .

Every minute, every second seemed to fly by on winged

horses and to say mockingly as it passed, "One more gone, one less to go," This thought pulsed over and over in his weary mind. The irony of it! He had lived through twenty-six years without even coming close to death and to no purpose except to have his life taken from him by a current of electricity. People said that electricity was a wonderful thing; it could do so many things. At this moment he wished there had never been a Franklin or an Edison or anybody who had had anything to do with electricity.

At 11:15 they came for him. Gippy Barnes cast a glance through the bars as the guards walked into his cell and took their places on each side of him. No one spoke. Outside, the sky was pitch black, and in the distance reddish clouds rolled over one another ominously. Large drops of rain disemboweled themselves on his window. The procession began. Behind him a priest mumbled a few prayers incoherently. They passed through the door, which had been to his left, and started down the corridor between the other cells, in which the prisoners were pressed to the cell-doors in order to obtain a last and better look at him.

No noise broke the silence except the whispered invocations of the priest and the sound of the footsteps. Gippy judged that they had about fifty feet to go to reach the small door that would mark his good-bye to the world. A cold sweat broke out upon him. At that moment Gippy Barnes gave under the mental strain. He wrenched free from the guards but they seized him again. He pulled backward crying and shouting desperate gibberish, but they dragged him onward.

Outside the walls that were about to witness the death of the man, the hot spell had broken. A terrific thunderstorm

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was adding its fury to the night. A drenching downpour of rain had made it very uncomfortable for the reporters and those others who had come to witness the electrocution. The thunder was very loud and every flash of lightning was dangerous.

The guards dragged Gippy Barnes through the doorway and forcibly placed him in that dreaded chair. For the moment Gippy stopped his cries. The scene before him was one of swirling confusion. He could make out the faces of men but they were indistinct. This indeed was his end, nothing could save him now.

Suddenly the room was thrown into pitch blackness. Something must have happened to the lighting system. It might have been the lightning. Immediately Gippy sprang from the chair, evading the restraining hands of the guards and made for the door. He burst through the doorway, slamming the door after him, and headed down the corridor between the cells of the prisoners in the inky blackness. Behind him the startled men realized what had happened and shots rang out sending jets of orange fire through the darkness. Gippy hurled himself to his left and down the stairs. Other guards, hearing the confusion, were hurrying toward the floor Gippy had just left. He realized the imminent danger of the situation and as he raced down another flight of stairs he saw a flashlight stabbing the darkness. Any noise that he made was drowned in the deafening clamor of the shouting prisoners. He stopped and crouched in a corner where a group of men passed so close to him that he could have reached out and touched them. In a moment he was up and rushing onward again. He went down another flight of stairs in his mad haste and through a door at the end of a corridor. It was miraculous the way he had found his way about in that darkness.



He found himself in the courtyard with the wonderful rain beating against his hot face and cooling his body. But here nothing faced him but blank walls. Desperately he raced along one of them, throwing himself face down at every flash of lightning only to rise and go forward again. In the name of God, was he going to be lost now that he had come this far on the path to freedom? It was an impossibility to scale those walls. Suddenly there flicked a blinding lightning-bolt, accompanied by a deafening crack of thunder. He was thrown bodily to the wet ground. Dazed for a moment he picked himself up and started forward again and then stopped short. No, it couldn't be possible; he must be dreaming. There was a rent in the wall before him. With a cry of joy he bounded forward and on winged feet he climbed over the mass of fallen stone, ignoring the sharp points in his haste to surmount them. The guards at their stations atop the walls, attracted by the disaster, spied the form fleeing in the night. Bullets whizzed through the air and nipped at his clothing; a strange numbness came over one arm and he felt a flow of warmth on his side. There was no time to stop now; glorious freedom was in his hands. His lungs were laboring mightily but he pushed himself on in spite of the exhausting footing of the mud. The pain in his arm was becoming keener now but that mustn't stop him; he wasn't safe yet. He forced himself forward for what seemed miles and then he stopped in a thickly wooded grove and dropped in the wet moss at the foot of a large tree. His breathing gradually became normal again and a strange weariness came over him. He smiled for the first time in many days. They had said it couldn't be done, but he had done it. He had escaped from the very chair. With this Gippy Barnes dropped off to sleep, realizing as no one else could what a great feeling it was to be free.



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Back in the small death-chamber, the loud buzzing that had filled the room stopped. The doctor who had been standing nearby walked forward and paused a moment beside the electric chair and then in his stuffy, solemn voice said, "Earl Barnes is dead."



## "Reward"

By THOMAS A. MULLIGAN, '42

**S**LICK MYERS rapidly packed his suitcase. With the suitcase on the bed, Slick strode about his small tenement room gathering his clothes in handfuls, looking at them, and throwing on the floor those that he considered to be of no future value.

He, Slick Myers, was leaving the big city. Oh! but he had planned it well. Everything was working out perfectly. In twelve hours he would be far from New York, cut off forever from the underworld. About time, too. Things were getting bad. The bulls were not afraid to crack down now. They knew that they would be backed up at the "top." And the protection racket was hit the hardest. Those cheap storekeepers were all being heroes now, squawking to the bulls whenever the boys dropped around. One pair of shoes ought to be enough, No use in making the suitcase too heavy.

How he had waited for this day. Having charge of the uptown business district had been profitable work, yes sir! Collect from the boys, take a little for himself, fix the books, and hand the money to Melan. Smart guy, Melan. But he was smarter. He had been getting his regular cut plus whatever he could chisel each week from the collections for the past three years. Maybe Melan knew he was chiseling. But, what the hell, everybody clipped the boss. No one got sore about that, if it was within reason.

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Damn! All these pictures wouldn't fit in the suitcase. Well he'd keep the one of Doris. Nice girl, always getting serious though. He'd place his gun in the suitcase—no need for it now. No, he'd wear it; feel undressed without it. Melan might not get sore about the weekly clipping, but he'd be sore now. Man! he'd burn up when he found out. But by the time Saturday came he would be far away from this sweating city, and this lousy room.

Saturday the collections were handed in to Melan. But they were in Slick's hands on Thursday. They always were. He kept the boys under him going; saw that their work was done early. Melan knew this, but he always waited until Saturday so that all the collections would be in at the same time. Well, Melan would wait a long time this Saturday. On Saturday he would be in Arizona, loafing on a ranch south of Phoenix. That was where the money chiseled each week had gone. No one knew about it; not even Doris. Well, no one, that is, who would interrupt his plans. Janotz, the big-shot's trigger man knew it. How that lousy killer had found out puzzled him. Slick knew from years of experience that Janotz found out everything that was going on or was going to happen—gutter rat's intuition or something. A few other guys had taken leave like himself and Janotz had known they were going to do it. But they had slipped him a wad of greenbacks and he had said nothing. Slick knew this because Janotz bragged about his exploits. He had always thought it funny that the boss had never killed Janotz for it; perhaps Janotz was too valuable a killer himself. He, too, had had to cut Janotz in on his retiring fund. He still wondered how that dumb. . . . Oh well, there had been nothing else to do but pay.

There, that's the suitcase packed. Slick threw on his coat and hat, grabbed the suitcase, and left the room with the inex-

plicable hurry with which people leave places they know they will never see again. Outside the enervating heat of a summer's day in New York City surrounded him. He walked a short way to a main street and got into a cab that was near the corner. He snapped, "Penn Station, buddy," and settled back in the seat.

The radio in the cab was tuned in on the Yankee-Red Sox game. He didn't hear this; he was thinking, a satisfied smirk on his face. He was on his way at last. He had bought the tickets a week ago. Everything had been worked out beforehand. He had the money in the suitcase; his ranch was waiting for him.

The cab went through the crowded streets with a speed that had long since ceased to amaze Slick. Look at that guy hawking sight-seeing rides; there's some lugs unloading a beer truck; there's another guy going to work in a restaurant. What suckers—always working—driving away. They never got anywhere; they were dumb. But he, Slick Myers, was pulling out of this rotten struggle for a living. Yes, sir, he was retiring.

Lord, that fellow looks tired carting around that suitcase. Probably a salesman—what a dog's life. What a chump this cab-driver in front of him was, scrambling with hundreds of other cab-drivers for some crummy change. He could see the guy's face in the mirror. Hell, he looked like that Indian guy Mahatma Grandi or Gransi, or something, after one of his food strikes. Lean, tense, bearded, ruining his life in this hard city. Well, guess there have to be such guys—the mob, suckers always plugging along, never getting anywhere.

A guy had to make a break for it some time, or else he got stuck in a rut, like the rest of these suckers around here. What would it get him to keep working for Melan. Nothing,

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absolutely nothing. Another big-shot would come, push Melan out and then where would he be? There was no future in it.

Melan would find out about him on Saturday, Slick grinned when he thought of the way Melan would feel when the collections from the best sections didn't come in on time. Slick knew that he would be scared if he thought Melan could get him. But Melan wouldn't be able to touch him. He wouldn't find out until Saturday and no one would know where he was by then.

Slick got off in the station, paid the driver, and walked down and through the station to the train tracks. He found his train and got on it, one of those air-conditioned ones. Nice, yes sir! Well, he was paying for it. He'd get the best from now on. No more cheap, stuffy rooms, no more greasy restaurants, and no more of those cheap, flashy suits.

This was Slick's first taste of luxury. He hungered for it, a big city did this. It gave a poor guy a chance to see the best in life, but never to have it. Squalor and luxury existed side by side, barely separated, yet remote. Slick sat in his plush-lined seat next to the window and these thoughts passed through his mind. He deserved this change in fortune.

What a time he had passed in New York all his life. He had always had to grovel to some stinking boss. His life had never been his own—in more than one way. It had belonged to the mob. He had spent nights in jails, the chaotic yet systematic jails of the big city. He had been brutally beaten by cops. He'd heard vaguely about his rights as a citizen; but he was a nobody, the cops always did as they damn well pleased with nobodies. He had faced the hard white light of the night courts, been degraded and exposed. At that time the bitter futility of it had often obsessed him. But the city kept on going—a guy couldn't stop it.

He had passed his best years in the rasping solitude of a



grimy small room of one of those row-on-row red-brick tenement buildings. God, but he had lived cheaply. He had come from the real Hell's Kitchen district and had never been far from that rotten place all his life. Riches and the rich had always been just around the corner. He had watched limousines roll up and disgorge lovely women and immaculately dressed men in front of theatres. Slick had seen the things money could buy in the show-windows of the fashionable stores. These things he had planned to have for himself some day. Well that day had come.

The train was moving now. It finally burst into the sunlight. Slick thought about the city he would never see again. The tall buildings—those weren't New York. It was between those buildings, on the streets—that was New York. He thought of the millions now slaving away in the hot city. He pictured his fellow-racketeers sitting around in second-rate hotel rooms. He knew the deadening grip with which the city could hold a man. It was hard to break away from the city and the rotten business in it. It took guts and a brain; and that was why he, Slick Myers, was now speeding away from the city in a first-class air-conditioned train.

Slick, for the first time in hours, relaxed. He had not realized his tenseness of mind and body. But now, with the city left far behind, with no chance of pursuit, his whole body seemed to sag. Slick pulled down the shade; he had been in contact with the hard realities of the busy city too long to form an instant appreciation of the beauties of the countryside. He pushed the button on the side of his seat, leaned on it as it slowly gave backwards, and closed his eyes.

He woke up hours later. It was getting dark, and the train was grinding to a stop. Slick looked out the window. "Some jerk town," he guessed. He found out from the con-

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ductor that the train was stopping there for five minutes. His legs felt cramped. Might as well take a walk around the station.

He descended the train steps to a wooden platform. The air felt quite warm after the manufactured coolness of the train. He walked into a small station room and bought a package of gum. His eyes glanced over the magazine rack. What lousy magazines; not one detective story in them. Well, got to stretch my legs; felt unreal walking on something fixed after the continuous movement of that train. Slick walked out and stepped off the platform. He started to walk around the station.

Wonder what the name of this dump is—never noticed it. Funny, places we stop at, leave, never see again, and know nothing about them. He'd forget New York some day. Yes sir, out on his ranch, life would really begin anew.

The small building was shaped in the form of the letter T. Slick was now walking along the inside of the horizontal part of the T. He nearly ran into the building where it turned outward. Damn! Got dark awful sudden-like. As he turned to walk along the station wall a figure in the light at the corner of the building made him stumble suddenly to a stop.

The light glared down upon the hard immobile features of Janotz, the big-shot Melan's ace gun-man. The light glinted dully on a heavy gun held in Janotz's hand. He could see in Janotz's pig-like eyes what was going to happen; he knew that he could expect neither mercy nor hesitation from this short-set hunk of meanness in front of him.

Slick's lower lip started to quiver. He saw in a moment, what a fool he had been; thinking himself smarter than Melan. But that this should happen to him, born and raised in gang intrigue; double-crossings, and triple-crossings; he should have known better; it wasn't even original.

*The Alembic*

He was breathing in gasps now. Oh God, not now—not now! I want to live. There's so much ahead. My ranch, my money, my——. A forty-five slug tore through Slick Myer's flesh to stop his throbbing heart.



## Monday to Monday

By FRANK J. WHALEN, JR., '42

THIS morning they buried Tony. Punctually at quarter past eight, a meager procession of his mother, wife, and young child, and an assortment of less proximate relatives and friends, wandered down the four flights from Tony's flat. They were followed by six men, friends of the family, bearing an inornate, wooden coffin. The whole procession walked slowly. Some were tearful; others, merely silent. The affair was oppressingly tragic, for Tony died before his time.

A week ago, Tony was happy and hopeful. The last two years had been hard on him. He had worked only occasionally. He had done everything he could, but it had not been enough: W. P. A.; P. W. A.; strike-breaking; two or three days, now and then, shoveling snow for the city. His wife and child had grown thin and worn. Tony had grown thin and worn with them. But last Monday everything seemed rosy. Tony had a job. It was not much—twenty-four dollars a week, for driving a truck sixty long hours. But, even though he would be on the road nearly all the time, it was something for the wife and little girl.

At eight o'clock Monday morning, Tony and the other driver (whom he knew only as Joe) left Chicago for New York. The truck was one of those big, ten-wheeled affairs that seem about half a block long, and twice as wide on the road. It was like a house on wheels. Tony was in the driver's seat. He and



Joe were to share the driving. They were to drive in eight-hour shifts. One man was to drive while the other slept.

Once they were on the highway, they rolled steadily along. At noon they stopped a short while at a cafeteria. They dallied a little, talking with other drivers, then moved on. Tony drove as far as a trucking terminal in Lima. There they loaded three cases of jewelry consigned to New York. It took a little over an hour to back the truck into the depot, load, and drive out. When they left Lima, Joe was driving.

About seven o'clock they stopped again to eat. Things were going well; they were on schedule. As they went along Tony and Joe talked steadily for long periods, and then lapsed into silence for an equal length of time. It was as though their conversation came from a well which, once it had been emptied, had to be allowed to fill up again. Tony felt happy and gay. He talked and told stories. He even sang. About midnight Joe stopped the truck, told Tony to push over to drive, and himself climbed behind the seat, onto the shelf which served as a bed. He promptly went to sleep. Tony drove on and on, now humming to himself, now day-dreaming of his wife and daughter, and of how much happier they would be now that he was working steadily.

About seventy-five miles from Pittsburgh, it began to rain—a slow, cold drizzle, which crept through the windows of the cab into Tony's very bones. He pulled his collar up and hunched his shoulders as if to draw within himself for warmth. It was along toward dawn that the engine of the truck suddenly sputtered, almost stalled, rallied, and then died altogether. Tony drew up at the side of the road, stepped into the rain, and lifted the hood to investigate. He pulled at wires to test for a short-circuit, and probed into the distributor to test the ignition. Finally he decided that the gas-line was blocked. He uncoupled

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the line near the carburetor, filled his lungs with air, blew into the line, and then sucked. His effort was rewarded with a mouthful of gasoline. However the line was clear. He coupled up the line, slammed the hood down, and jumped up into the cab. As he slammed the door, Joe awoke with a start.

"What's the matter?"

"Gas-line was plugged up."

"Fix it?"

"Sure."

"That's good."

Joe went back to sleep.

At half-past seven that morning, as they were entering Pittsburgh, Joe sat up, stretched, and, swinging his legs over the edge of the shelf, dropped to the seat.

"Let's stop to eat."

"O. K. Know any places?"

"Sure. There's one about three blocks down here."

Tony pulled up to the curb. They climbed down. In the restaurant they washed ham and eggs down with coffee. They stayed long enough for a smoke but they did not talk much. They were in a hurry. There was some cloth to be loaded on in Pittsburgh.

Joe drove through Pittsburgh to the terminal. They both had to help load. It was heavy work. There were about twenty bales of cloth to load and they weighed about two hundred and fifty pounds each. It was almost noon before they got out of the city. By then Tony was exhausted. As soon as Joe stopped for lunch, Tony climbed up on the shelf and slept. At four that afternoon, Joe reached back, shook him, and bade him get down to drive.

Tony drove until midnight that night. He took a couple of short naps once when Joe was having supper, and once

when they had to stop for a freight train which was being made up on a siding near the highway. Joe slept most of the time until midnight. Twice Tony caught himself driving along with his eyes closed. He was glad when midnight came and he could exchange places with Joe. The minute he was on the shelf, he went to sleep.

About two o'clock the next morning (it was Tuesday morning and they were near Reading), Tony was aroused by a sound which burst into his sleep like a shot. The truck was stopped. Tony jumped down from the shelf and out of the door. Joe was yelling at him.

"A right rear tire's gone!" Joe shouted.

"Well, let's get her up on the jack."

Tony, rummaging behind the seat, threw out the jack, the rod to pump it, an assortment of wrenches, and two flares. These last he lighted and set out in the road to warn approaching traffic away from the truck. In the meantime Joe shoved the jack under the rear axle and pumped the handle like mad. Luckily the jack took the weight off the good one of the dual tires before the unevenly distributed pressure burst it also. Tony, having set the flares, helped change the tire. It was hard work. The nuts were rusted and the continual pull of the bolts had nearly welded the tire rim to the wheel. At last, when the change was completed, the flat tire (with the one-inch roofing nail which had punctured it still in it) secured under the chassis, the flares extinguished and stowed away, they started off.

About eight in the morning the big trailer rolled into New York. Tony was driving. They did not stop to eat. They were too anxious to gain time to spend even twenty minutes at breakfast. They had to unload and reload the truck. All that work had to be done between eight and five, for that is the

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New Yorker's working day. They made twenty stops that day in twenty different parts of New York. They unloaded the three cases of jewelry from Lima, the twenty bales of cloth from Pittsburgh, and some freight they had brought all the way from Chicago. They loaded, with help only once or twice, six tons of various goods to take back with them. In addition to all these tiring tasks, Tony had to pilot the house-on-wheels through the congested traffic of the metropolis. When, after a quick supper, they were out on the highway again, they each breathed a sigh of relief. Tony said nothing to express his feeling. He merely climbed upon the shelf and went to sleep.

About ten that night, Tony was awakened by the shrill of a whistle. As he sat up and rubbed his eyes, he saw that Joe had stopped. A State Trooper was approaching from a shiny white patrol car which he had parked immediately in front of the truck.

"What's the matter, Joe?"

"Damned if I know."

The trooper was at the door. Joe rolled the window down.

"License and registration, please."

Joe reached up, unbuttoned the leather cases which held the papers above the windshield, and handed them over.

The Trooper looked at them, stepped to the front of the truck, comparing numbers, and then came back to the cab.

"These look all right. Do you know your rear light is out?"

Joe replied negatively. By this time, Tony was down on the seat. He said, "Let's take a look at it, Joe."

They both got out of the cab and went to the rear to look at the light. It was out. Tony lay down on his back,



and pulled himself along the ground until he could reach the electric cable which ran to the light. He shook the cable.

"The light's on now," Joe said.

Tony crawled out. "We can fix this in about twenty minutes, if it's all right with you, Officer," he said.

"Well, I suppose it's all right. But you be sure to fix that light before you move."

Tony spent the next twenty-five minutes in fixing the cable. Joe stood at the rear of the truck, ready to hand him tools as he called for them. At last, when the job was completed, they moved on. Tony was driving.

Noon, Thursday, they reached Pittsburgh. They spent two, three hours, in unloading and rearranging the load. Tony rested only when, late in the afternoon, they stopped for lunch.

About eight o'clock Thursday night, Joe suggested that they stop in a little town near Marion. Tony, welcoming the chance for some rest, drew up at the combination lunch-room and bar-room which Joe pointed out. It was one of those places where they serve a little food as an inducement to liquor customers. Joe went in. Tony curled up on the seat to sleep. He slept soundly until, perhaps three-quarters of an hour later, Joe came back. He was reeling.

Tony saw immediately that Joe could not drive. He would roll that top-heavy trailer into the ditch on the first curve. If Tony waited until he had rested long enough so that he, himself, could drive comfortably, or until Joe sobered down, they would reach Chicago far behind schedule. Tired as he was, he decided to chance it. He had to keep his job. He boosted Joe up to the shelf and sat down to drive.

It was only two hundred miles to Chicago. If he had luck he could reach there by seven in the morning. He thought he could stay awake until then.

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As he drove along, Tony sang to keep awake. When his throat became hoarse, he whistled, and when his lips grew dry, he hummed. As he grew more tired, he began to count the tenths of miles as the speedometer clicked them off.

"You're nearer to home. You're nearer to home. You're nearer to home," it repeated endlessly.

When Tony became weary of the monotonous counting, he began to think how wonderful it would be to be at home with his wife and daughter. To sleep until the sleep had gone out of him would be heaven on earth. As he anticipated this pleasure, he conjured up a picture of how happy his wife and daughter and he, Tony, would be together. The picture grew larger and clearer until it was all that Tony saw.

The next morning, a dairy farmer, driving along the highway near Fort Wayne, a little over a hundred miles from Chicago, found the big ten-wheeler in a meadow by the road. It was upright but all the windows were smashed. The whole front of the truck was battered in as far back as the cab. A telephone pole, dangling from the wires it was intended to support, explained the manner of the battering.

When the farmer stepped upon the running board and thrust his head through the smashed window, he was greeted by a groan from Joe, who was stretched out on the seat, to which he had fallen. Tony made no noise at all.

They buried him this morning.

## The Good That Men Do

By RALPH NAPOLITANO, '42

"You tell me to fight. All right, why?"

"Why?"

"Yes, why?"

"Well . . . life itself is just one long struggle."

"It's one darn mess, if you ask me."

"Oh, there you go again."

"Well, it's true, isn't it?"

"No, it's not true."

"Did you ever hear of the survival of the fittest?"

"Yes, I have, but . . ."

"Well, then you know it yourself that . . ."

"Oh, here it comes again."

"Well it's true, isn't it? It's not only a question of being hard and durable, but one has to be cheap and dishonest to get along up there."

"Even so. Doesn't one have to . . .?"

"I suppose I haven't. Losing her was the greatest sacrifice anyone could make."

"Well then. The very fact that she . . ."

"Oh, yeh. It's not as easy as all that. Did you ever try doing it?"

"Yes, but . . ."

"Oh, I know I have brains, talent. I'm not like any of the ignorant scum I associate with."

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"Yes, of course. You're . . ."

"Nevertheless, I'd rather stay here. At least, if you have something, it's appreciated here. Out there, they envy you."

"All right, even so. That's no . . ."

"Like that pig, Mr. Hargreaves. He didn't have to speak that way. What he could have said was 'Sorry fellows, no help wanted.' No. He tells his secretary, 'Get this rabble out of my office.' Why I could have planted one . . ."

"Still, you shouldn't have . . ."

"Oh, I'm tired of fighting, I tell you."

"Well, I guess, I can't . . ."

"No, no. Go away."

Gosh, I ought to snap out of it. I shouldn't think so much. I'd be better off. Heh, I should be kicking about being better off. They had me numbered before I was even born. Who? The fates. You know they toss up for you when you're born. If it's tails, why you're set. You're pretty sure of getting something out of this world. If it's heads, you're just put here to suffer, that's all. Something tells me that they used a nickle with two heads for me.

Oh, here comes our charming hostess again.

"What's the matter, handsome. Lonesome?"

That approach of hers is getting kind of sickening. I guess it's all she was blessed with.

"Come on, handsome, cheer up."

Why doesn't she go away? Can't she see I don't want to be bothered?

"Say, stop dreaming, will you. For goodness sakes, play something lively. You keep playing those 'blues' all the time. Say, didn't you hear me?"

"Sure, sure, now go away."

"Hello, Maisie."



"Oh, hello, Bill. Say what's the matter with that fellow anyway."

"Where?"

"Over there? In the corner."

"You've got me. We can't make him out."

They all think I'm crazy. Well, that just goes to show you how it is when people don't understand a guy.

I guess I ought to change my tune. I've been playing the same thing over and over again. After all I should give the boss something for his money. He's giving me something. Heh! That's a laugh.

You know, music *is* a wonderful thing. It sort of calms the nerves. If you're feeling high-strung or even if you're feeling sad, why just sit down and run your fingers over the ivories. You'll feel a lot better. Music is a very good means for expression. It does for you what beer is doing for that guy over there. It's all the same thing. I kill it with music. He kills it with beer.

Hm, the noise seems to have gone down quite a bit.

"What are you going to do, Joe, play all night. We're closing up you know."

"Gee, I didn't realize it was so late. Oh gosh, I hope Mary is still there. I'd better hurry."

"Say, it's raining awfully hard outside, you know, Joe. You ought to wear a coat. You'll catch your death of cold."

"So what?"

"Good-night, Joe."

"Yeh."

"What a guy!"

You know there's something nice about rain. It makes you feel clean and fresh. It has a soothing effect on your face. A lot of people hurry along so as to get out of it. Not me, I like to walk in the rain.

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But I'd better hurry along, or I might miss her. Then, I'd have to go another whole day without seeing her. Have to go another whole day without seeing her. Oh no, no it can't be. I must hurry.

"Say, look where you're going. Goodness, he might at least excuse himself."

"Gosh, look at him running. Like a madman. Oh, that car! It's going to hit him! Whew! that was close! I guess some people just don't value their life."

Won't I ever reach that dump of mine? At last. I hope she's there.

"Hey, Joe, what's the matter? Say, I thought you were in."

This stairway seems endless.

"Somebody was making an awful racket in your room. I thought it was you."

Oh, she's been here. "Mary! Mary!" Oh, she's gone. "Mary, please—please come back. Don't torture me so."

"Joe—Joe?"

"Yes, Mary? Yes?"

"Joe, listen—to—me. You must—pull—yourself—to—gether—Joe. You promised me that you would make something out of yourself. You have—the talent, Joe. You can be—a very—great pianist, Joe."

"I can't, Mary. I can't. Without you I just can't do anything. You know that."

"Change, Joe. Change. Let—me—rest—in—peace."

"Oh please don't go away, Mary. Please don't torment me like this. Come back, Mary, please."

Oh, she's gone again. Why must she disappear so? I should change perhaps. I should try to make something out of myself. What's the use? I suppose it's all my fault. If I had left Mary alone, things might have been different.

I was unlucky from the very start. I had two strikes against me. Who! Why, the fates, of course. Living in our house wasn't anything to brag about. Pop didn't know any such word as education. I got my piano lessons through Mom. A friend of ours told her I had natural talent. I should have lessons. I would make a great pianist. Heh, the guy must be turning over in his grave. I seldom worked. I was always quitting a job on account of arguments with the boss. I like the piano, though; I spend hours playing it. I'd often tell myself that maybe I should study hard so that someday I would be a great pianist. Then I'd always say that it was no use. They'd just make me get so far, and then they'd wipe everything out. You know the greater the height, the more painful the fall. I'd just as soon take it from here. It's less painful. Mary lived next door. I chummed with her brother. That's how I got to know her. I liked her very much. She liked me too. It was my attitude she didn't like.

As days went by I found that I was beginning to have some interest in life.

"Do you love me, Mary?" I asked her one day.

"Joe, you know I do. You know, Joe, you're beginning to change."

"Why, Mary, how can you say that? You know that I'm just as crazy about you as I ever was."

"I don't mean that, silly," she said, smiling. "I mean your attitude. You smile now and then. You don't complain about the world being against you as much as you used to. You shouldn't expect the world to do something for you, Joe. You should do something for it."

As days went by it seemed as if Mary was right. I was beginning to get a brighter outlook on life. Of course, the answer to it all was Mary. One evening as Mary and I were out walk-

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ing, I said suddenly, "Mary, let's get married." She was startled. "Oh I know I have no right to ask you, but—"

"It's not that Joe."

"Well, then why—?"

"After all you know there is—"

"Your brother will help us out, you know that."

"Yes, but—"

"There's no sense in waiting, we'll never—"

"All right, Joe."

Well, things went along swell for some time. I worked steadily. In the evening I would study my piano. Something inside of me seemed to be pushing me forward. I never seemed to get tired. The world wasn't such a bad place after all. The idea is to lick it before it can lick you.

One day as I came home I found that Mary was out. I couldn't imagine what had happened. Mary had always been home before. Then the blow came. The landlady told me that Mary was in the hospital. An automobile. I dashed like a maniac down the stairs and out into the street. Out of breath, I reached the hospital.

"My wife, my wife, where is she?"

The nurse told me to be quiet as Mary was critically injured. She told me that Mary kept mumbling all the time. They couldn't make out what she was saying except the word, Joe. I just stood there as if struck by a bolt of lightning. I didn't budge, I just stared, stared at Mary mumbling incoherently. I don't know how long I remained there, but as Mary called me I came out of my trance.

"Joe," she muttered, "I'm going to die."

"No, Mary, no. You must live. You must."

"No, Joe, I'm going to die. I know it. Promise me, Joe,

you won't change," she entreated. "Promise me. Make something out of yourself. Promise me that you will."

"How can I?" I argued.

"You must make something out of yourself, Joe, or else I shall not rest." That was all. I remember somebody saying something to me and then helping me out of the room. I didn't go home that night. I just walked and walked and walked. I roamed aimlessly. With Mary went my spirit.

You see as I told you they made it seem good. They were spinning a nice life for me. Then they decided, "Well, he's had enough, let's cut the thread." You see if they don't toss in favor of you at the start, you may as well give up. You can't fight them. The fates are too much for any guy.





## Shakespeare on Sleep

By RAYMOND C. SMITH, '41

IT is no reflection on Shakespeare to say that many a person has slept during one of his plays. Every age has its Maggie who forces the unappreciative Jiggs to attend the theatre or the opera. There the reluctant Jiggs falls asleep, only to be joined a few moments later by Maggie who forgets society when the plot becomes involved. I doubt Shakespeare would be insulted if he knew. In fact, I suspect he would enjoy the sight. His tributes to sleep almost beckon one to do it.

Take, for example, the words of Henry the Fourth:

*"O sleep! O gentle sleep!  
Nature's soft nurse, how have I frightened thee,  
That thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down  
And steep my senses in forgetfulness?"*

Here is a clear case of Shakespeare's high opinion of sleep. It is "nature's soft nurse" and with it the cares of the day are forgotten and the mind put at rest. At the end of this soliloquy, Henry found that "uneasy lies the head that wears a crown", for sleep he could not find. His means to gain the throne had lead only to the end of sleep. In anger he called sleep a "dull god", but only because it would not come to him. Poor Henry! After all his victories in war and his outward appearances of greatness, he envied the simple ship-boy whom "the rude imperious surge" rocked to sleep. For him, all the chamber music and the calmest of nights were but rebels to slumber.

Or, if you prefer, consider Macbeth. He called sleep "great nature's second course, chief nourisher in life's feast". After killing Duncan, he told Lady Macbeth that he "heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep.'" With this unpleasant thought, he began his remarks on the power of sleep. Like Henry, Macbeth had robbed himself of sleep, only to learn he could not make restitution. Obviously enough, neither of these gentlemen had the advantage of our political campaign speeches to lull them to sleep.

Yet, there was noble Brutus. He lived in a Rome bursting with orators but he had his troubles with the Sandman. In the thought of killing Caesar, Brutus assassinated sleep. Almost pathetically, he observed of his servant, "I would it were my fault to sleep so soundly." How welcome would forgetfulness have been to him! "Sore labor's bath," as Macbeth called it, would have cleared his mind to think more prudently. However, to these men sleep was denied, and because it was they could speak great lines of her glory. If it were the other way around, college students would have long ago outdistanced Shakespeare.

Nevertheless, we must not consider Shakespeare indiscriminate in his praise of sleep. Like a Thomist, he distinguished. The sleep of night is what was dear to him. Shakespeare was no friend of what we call day-dreaming. In the character of Richard the Second we gain conclusive proof on that point. Richard was virtually a playboy ruler. The throne was a toy to help him as he dreamed his life away. After Bolingbroke, later Henry the Fourth, had gained a foothold in his war against the crown, Richard spoke these lines:

*"I had forgot myself. Am I not king?*

*Awake, thou sluggard majesty! thou sleepest."*

Of course it was too late. All of which should show that Shakespeare held in low opinion the fellow who did not leave his dreams in bed, where they belong.

### *Shakespeare on Sleep*

From the above I am led to suspect that the English master himself had trouble getting to sleep. It is generally the case that he who has lost the jewel most appreciates its worth. If so, Shakespeare's position would be quite different from that of a recent young playwright. This lad sent his effort to a famous dramatist for the purpose of having it produced. To it the enthusiastic youth attached a note attempting to explain his genius. On it was written, "I lie awake nights thinking up my plots." Two days later a package came to him in the mail. It contained sleeping pills with the compliments of the celebrated dramatist.

I doubt if there is any proof that Shakespeare actually had trouble getting to sleep. Such an active mind as his might give credence to my contention. On the other hand, he may have slept as soundly as one of his rude mechanicals would have. At any rate, it would be cruel to read a moral into these lines on sleep. Henry, Macbeth, and Brutus had guilty consciences, that is true enough. Macbeth even said that "the innocent sleep". This might easily lend itself to false interpretation. There are many romantic writers who think every word Shakespeare wrote has some profound meaning. Yet Shakespeare wrote primarily to earn a living. His income came from his part ownership in a theatre. His plays supplied it with shows and in poured the money. It is not the Shakespearean way to preach or moralize. He wrote to entertain and not to reform. Shakespeare would no sooner change morals than George Bernard Shaw would praise England.

Thus, it is far from my intention to picture Shakespeare's words on sleep as appeals to go into the arms of Morpheus at any time whatever. I am merely noting his praise of him and the impression I get. From what has been said, one would think that, with such a deep appreciation of sleep, Shakespeare would have written "good night" with due consideration for it. This

would be his crowning tribute to sleep. Yet, when he did say good-night he wrote those oft-quoted lines of Juliet:

*"Good-night, good-night! parting is such sweet sorrow  
That I shall say good-night till it be morrow."*

This is almost a compromise, but the explanation is, I think, obvious. Shakespeare was first the poet of love. Not even his sentiments inclining him to favor sleep could cause him to make lovers desire slumber. In other cases, England's first man of letters is also the poet of sleep. Love and sleep! These are universal to all men. Perhaps the secret of Shakespeare's greatness lies in the fact that he knew how to express in words two of man's most fundamental urges—the urge to love and the urge to sleep.

Whether Shakespeare himself found slumber as evasive as his famous characters did, of course really does not matter. The main thing is, we have his plays. It is consoling, however, to know that when we cannot fall asleep, at least others had it worse. Henry the Fourth found only the sleep of the dead; Macbeth also finally found slumber in the grave; and Brutus killed himself to end his perpetual day. Such extremes are not recommended to cure insomnia; they are too decisive. It is permissible, I think, to fall asleep over a volume of Shakespeare. The great master had a deep admiration for sleep. Then, of course, for those who find sleep easy, it might be well to put to memory those memorable lines on sleep. They offer an excellent defense-mechanism for over-sleeping. Indeed, everyone should know them. After all, some of the happiest moments, both for us and for those who put up with us, are spent while we are asleep. And William Shakespeare makes it all so poetical.

## Lifter, Love and Butterflies

By J. T. HAYES, '40

TOBE rolled out of bed rubbing his eyes and blinking. There was a sharp pain directly behind and above his eyes. But all pleasure, he philosophised mournfully, comes at a price. He slipped thoughtfully into his bathrobe and went to the window. There on the spacious lawn below him was his companion of the night before, idly puttering around with a mashie.

"Hey, Liffey," Tobe called down, "Breakfast served?"

"Not yet," answered Lifter, looking up through red-rimmed eyes, and smiling wanly.

"How's the old bean?"

"Throbbing a bit. How's yours?"

"Likewise," answered Lifter, turning his attention once more to the perfection of his approach shots.

Tobe mixed himself a bracer and sat sipping it, dejectedly eyeing the telephone. A telephone is supposed to ring, and unless it rings it is valueless. As an ornament it is unworthy of notice. The ring is the thing, and it was the ring that a moment later sent Tobe out of his chair in a springing bounce that shot pains like a stuttering lightning bolt through his head. Through the ear-phone came the voice of the girl he loved:

"'Morning, Skunk," she was saying.

"Hi, Bean sprout," answered Tobe. "Where you calling from?"

"The old homestead. Why don't you drop up for the



week-end, it's kind of dull at present around here. I need a little excitement."

"What about the old Walrus?"

"Oh Algie, he's all right. Really he's a dear. I guess he can put up with your presence for a few days."

It was all right for Marie, his niece, to call Algerton Chantley Chase a dear, but Tobe's opinion of him was far less flattering. These two men had regarded each other with an intense dislike ever since the day that Tobe had deliberately frightened away a rare specimen of the butterfly family, just as Algerton was about to pop his net down on it.

"Dear?" echoed Tobe. "Why the man's a walking menace. Sticks pins through butterflies."

"Oh forget it, darling, it's his hobby. He just stinks with money. He has got to do something to pass time."

"He stinks without money," Tobe growled.

"Tobe!" came the exclamation over the wire.

"I'm sorry dear, but I'm a lover of nature's creatures, and this butterfly hunting goes against the grain."

"Do you love *this* creature?" she asked teasingly.

"Madly," came the response.

"Then are you coming?"

"Yes—but say, I have a friend here, a cousin, Lifter by name. I can't very well dash away and leave him."

"Oh heck, will he be in the way?"

"Naw, I guess not. He's pretty much of an introvert, and screwy about golf.

"Yeah, well bring him along."

"O. K., bish bash now."

"So long, I'll be expecting you for lunch."

"Right, bye."

An hour later Tobe and Lifter were speeding along the

*Lifter, Love and Butterflies*

highway toward the Chase homestead nestled peacefully in the Berkshire Hills. They drove along in silence, Lifter toying around with a new interlocking grip on a rolled newspaper, and Tobe brooding over the oddities of life, especially the particular oddity of how a malevolent and cold-blooded bloke like Algerton Chase could have such a niece as the tender and kind-hearted Marie.

At the Chase manor, the sun shone down on a happy scene. The great white house with its wide veranda, and encircling shrubbery, perched majestically above the long velvety green of the lawn. To the left, a swimming pool presented a sparkling face to the cloudless sky, and a few energetic water bugs darted about its surface. Marie was comfortably sprawled in a deck chair, watching her uncle who, net in hand and a gleam of anticipation in his eye, was crouched behind a juniper bush.

"A kiss says you don't get it," she called, eyeing the brilliantly colored butterfly flitting about among the flowers next to Algie's blind.

"You're on," he called back. "This one's a beauty."

Algie lunged, and with a downward flutter and a staggering upward sweep the winged beauty made off toward more tranquil surroundings.

"Damn!" panted Algie, pulling himself painfully from the close embrace of the juniper bush where his sudden lunge had sprawled him.

"Damn and double damn! I must perfect my overstroke."

"Well I'm off," he called over his shoulder, pottering away toward the house.

A moment later a car swung into the drive way, and a horrified "Ha" burst from Tobe's lips as he saw the spherical form of Algerton Chantley Chase disappearing around the corner of the house with his net trailing after him.

"Ha," he repeated, "he's at it again."

"At what? Who?" asked Lifter.

"That villain. After defenseless butterflies," Tobe hissed bringing the car to a sudden stop in a cloud of dust.

"Tobe!", cried Marie, running to him and suffering herself to be pressed with great violence to his vest.

"Tobe, you're just in time, lunch is about to be served."

"Fine," he answered, releasing her, and losing some of his anger against her uncle. It was hard for him to feel ill will toward even Algerton Chase, when he was with Marie. To him she was compensation plus, even for the atrocities perpetrated by her uncle.

Followed the introduction of Lifter, who glanced with an eye of approval on this pretty bright-eyed girl.

"Play golf?" he ventured shyly.

"A little," she answered. "I'm not much good at it though."

"We're in the same sand trap then," he laughed. "I'm no pro myself, but I'm improving."

"Great game."

"How about playing a few holes after lunch?"

But, before she could answer, Rance, the butler, buttled out onto the terrace and announced in a toneless voice that lunch was served, then buttled back. Tobe took the girl by the arm and, freezing Lifter with a stare, led her off toward the house.

Lifter after retrieving the cuff of his pants from the mouth of the Chase cocker spaniel, sauntered along behind them.

Lunch came off rather smoothly: Tobe confined his conversation and attention to Marie. And for two people who had just met Lifter and old Algie hit it off like long lost buddies. Lifter took an immediate liking for this round honest-faced gentleman, and Algie in turn beamed indulgently on Lifter, who

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during most of the meal demonstrated approach shots to him by means of a knife and a couple of green peas.

The meal over, Marie and Tobe flitted off like the love birds they were, and Lifter and Algie sat sipping their drinks and smoking on the wide veranda.

"Say, Mr. Lifter . . ."

"Call me, Liffy?"

"Well, Liffy—."

"Yes."

"This Tobe, known him long?"

"Buddies since college."

"Bosom?"

"Well, yes, you might say bosom."

Algie looked at Lifter unbelievably for a moment.

"Did you know the bloke is potty?"

"Screwy?"

"Loony as a bed bug. Frightens butterflies."

"Yes?"

"Lets canaries out of cages, and puts gold fish back in the ocean."

"Amazing."

"Should be locked up."

"Come to think of it," said Lifter, "when we were at school, he was arrested once for releasing a zebra from the zoo."

Algie gasped.

"Zebra didn't appreciate it though. Chased Tobe up a tree."

In Algie's mind Zebra Limited hit a new high.

"Would you," Algie asked in a horrified voice, "permit a goof like that to marry your niece?"

"Marie?"

"Yes."

"Well I don't know," Lifter said slowly, "he got a citation for it from the local S. P. C. A."

In a brief "tuhth" Algerton Chantley Chase summed up his opinion of the S. P. C. A.

"Are they in love?" Lifter asked.

"Rotten. What she sees in him stumps me."

"Love is blind," Lifter answered in an explanatory voice.

"But I'm not crazy, and I'll not permit it," Chase replied, in a voice that no series of periods could make more final.

"Well," said Lifter, indifferently, "care to play a few holes?"

The fourth hole on the Lake Side Course is an uphill dog leg to the left. Right in the crook of the dog leg just off the fairway, there nestles a rustic open shed in which on hot days a red-faced caddy sells drinks to weary divot-diggers. Tobe and Marie had not been divot digging but they had been walking, and also doing some very serious talking. And now they leaned against the counter of the shed morosely sipping sarsaparillas.

"It's the only thing to do," spoke Marie. "It's got to come sometime."

"Yeah, but if I go and ask him now, he'll crown me with the nearest lamp. As far as he's concerned I'm a dead issue on the marriage market."

"The Old Boy doesn't seem to go for you," she agreed.

"Masterful understatement," growled Tobe. "He regards me as a dangerous fugitive from the booby hatch."

"You could get around him."

"How?"

"Take an interest in his collection."

"I could never agree to butterfly transfixion."

They were silent awhile, and then Marie said dreamily,



*Lifter, Love and Butterflies*

"You know, Tobe, I always liked Butterflies. I used to race with them when I was a little girl."

"And now look," he answered bitterly, "they're keeping us apart." Something sticky lit on Tobe's neck. Instinctively he cracked the palm of his hand down on it.

"Oh," cried Marie, "look." And there on the ground lay a feebly fluttering butterfly.

"Isn't it beautiful," she said, picking it up gently. The spirit of the butterfly passed on, and a brilliantly marked species of the day-flying Lepidoptera of the sub-order Rhapadocera lay dead in the hand of the girl. Tobe was horror-struck.

"Look," Marie cooed happily, her face lighting with the birth of an idea. "This will help bring the old boy around. This one's a honey, and I know he hasn't any like it. I know his collection by heart."

"It was an accident," whispered Tobe.

"Come on," said Marie, "let's hurry back to the house. This is wonderful."

"Dead," muttered Tobe, gazing at it guiltily, and shaking his head. "Dead, and I did it."

"Oh, come on, sucker, this is what we've been waiting for. You didn't mean to kill it."

"No," he answered, brightening a bit. "I didn't mean to kill it."

Lifter and Algie whirled around as one man, as Tobe and Marie burst buoyantly into the trophy room.

"Oh, Algie," cried the girl, "look what Tobe brought you." Tobe advanced shakily, and with a trembling hand proffered his kill to Algie. With a rapturous gurgle Algerton pounced on it.

"My God," he cried in amazement, "how did you get that."

"Just by acci . . .," began Tobe.

"Caught it with his hat," lied Marie.

"Astounding, unbelievable," beamed Algie, and bent an eye of pleased approval on Tobe. Maybe he had judged this fellow harshly. The line between sanity and insanity, Algie knew, was hairlike. Maybe Tobe had suddenly snapped back to normal. He turned and began carefully storing the specimen away.

"Now," whispered Marie excitedly, nudging Tobe, "strike while the iron is hot." Rush him off his feet. Give it to him."

Tobe was still unconvinced. For a while he thoughtfully chewed his nether lip.

"I don't know how to thank you, son," said Algie, turning from his loving task.

"Tobe does," smiled Marie.

"Well you see, sir—"

Algerton Chantley Chase sniffed. He sniffed as one smelling a rat. "Yes?"

"Well Marie and I were hoping — that is we thought maybe—"

"Marriage?" asked Algie freezing a little.

"Why, yyyes," stuttered Tobe.

Visions of liberated canaries, goldfish, and zebras flitted through Algie's mind as he looked from Tobe to Marie and then back to Tobe. "No," he said flatly. "I can't trade my niece for a butterfly. Maybe a whole collection of butterflies, but not one butterfly."

That ended it. Their hopes dashed, the lovers walked slowly and sorrowfully out, and seated themselves at the edge of the swimming pool.

Lifter saw that there was something wrong here. Love should not be bucked by butterflies. Something had to be done.

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And then Algie's words floated back into his mind, "maybe for a whole collection." He smiled slowly and, after puttering around a while, excused himself. Out at the pool Tobe and Marie were idly tossing pebbles into the water. Lifter joined them.

"I guess we may as well pack, and tail it," Tobe said, without glancing up.

"Why?"

"You heard what went on."

"Yeah, you're a great pal," Marie said, "didn't even try to help."

"I can help now," he said mysteriously.

They were all ears. Lifter proudly outlined his plan to them.

Marie kissed him. Tobe wrung his hand.

"Stout fella," Tobe commended.

"Darling," Marie cooed with such sincerity that Tobe gave her a reproving glance.

"But wait a minute," said Lifter as an unpleasant thought struck him. "Has the blighter got a gun?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'll chance it anyway," he said bravely.

Again he suffered himself to be kissed and have his hand wrung.

They parted.

Shortly after ten o'clock, Marie excused herself, and leaving Algie and Tobe alone, sauntered off around the corner of the house. A moment later she came running back.

"Algie! Algie! There's someone breaking into your trophy room."

"What!" boomed her uncle, bouncing to his feet, and grasping a half empty bottle from the porch table. With remarkable agility he bounded down the steps of the veranda, and hied off toward the trophy room. Sure enough a window was

broken and he could see the swinging ray of a flashlight. Cautiously he crept to the door, inserted the key, and with a great disregard for his own well-being burst into the room. Tobe and Marie, standing expectantly outside, heard the sound of scuffling, and loud grunting, and then the form of Lifter bolted out the door. Algerton Chase rolled after him, sprawling on his face enmeshed in yards of netting. With a wild whoop, Tobe sprung on Lifter, and over and over they rolled. Marie tried to help her Uncle out of the netting but somehow or other only succeeded in more seriously entangling him. By the time he had finally extricated himself, Lifter was safely back in his room changing his clothes, and Tobe was standing over Algie with the specimens Lifter had given him.

"Here you are, sir," Tobe said, putting them at his feet. "Your butterflies."

"Did you get them away from him," Chase panted.

"Yeah, he got away though. Wonder who it was?"

"That doesn't matter now," Algie said. "What matters is that I've got my butterflies back, and you're the one who saved them."

"Isn't Tobe a dear?" urged Marie.

"That's going a bit too far," Algie countered, "but I've changed my opinion of him."

"I'm not potty?" Tobe questioned dubiously.

"No."

"Not even a little screwy?"

"Well—" Algie balked at that.

"Then it's all right for me and your niece..."

"Do what you please," said Algie tenderly folding his specimens to his stomach, and limping into the trophy room.

With a happy gurgle the lovers embraced.

Back on the veranda Lifter sat smoking and sadly contemplating the moon.

## The Old Harrington House

By JOSEPH A. CONWAY, '43

LONG after the chance visitor to Lexington, Massachusetts, has forgotten the Battle Green, the Minute Man Statue, and the clean-limbed schoolgirls in shorts, he should carry with him a memory of the old Harrington House. If you speed through the town at fifty miles an hour—and unfortunately that is the way most people see Lexington—you will have only a flashing glimpse of the place, for it is not indicated by neon lights or railed off; there is no hawking of tickets at the door, à la the Californian Chamber of Commerce; no, the speed demons will see only a patch of immaculate white shining through the foliage of six ancient elm trees. But those who may by the grace of God be gifted with a love of things beautiful, will stop with a screech of brakes just at the statue of Minute Man Parker, which stands proudly at the apex of the isosceles triangle which is the Battle Green. The true aesthete will ride no farther for before him are six surviving examples of the finest in Pre-Revolutionary architecture, with the Harrington House outstanding.

Probably the visitor, after he leaves his car to the mercies of the local gendarmerie (they're rather lenient as concerns parking rules, for Lexington has no traffic problem), will stop to focus his pocket camera on the Parker statue, then begin a walk along one side of the Battle Green, away from the business section of the town, away from the evidences of an



advanced civilization—away from the twentieth century. For that really is a stroll back into the days of embryonic America; to the left are homes built at various periods before the days of '75, a neat little row of sturdy, square-built houses set well back from the street. There was no premium on land in Soldier Harrington's time, and spacious, closely shaven lawns lend simple drama to the old places. As you walk along Lincoln Street—drawn irresistibly toward the Harrington House—you put your finger on Lexington's pulse; you absorb an understanding of the old town's leitmotif-rich, earthy greenery and shining white clapboard houses. Someone once half-humorously remarked that he wondered whether he should genuflect as he passed each shrine of history! That really is a part of the retained image: you feel almost a rude transgressor, to have driven your smoking, noisy twentieth century automobile into this shrine of an earlier and nobler day.

Then you come to one angle of the isosceles Green, and the Harrington House is directly in front of you. The finest pearl in the triangular necklace, this—presenting its solid, simple grace without flamboyance. The bower formed by the lovely elms obscures the roof, so that only the black-shuttered front is unobscured to you as you unstrap your camera again. Black on white—the acme of neatness. One glance will suffice to record every detail in your mind, for there are only four, and they are elemental: the unadorned oak door, the narrow clapboarding, the multi-paned windows (twenty-four panes, indicating Pre-Revolutionary architecture), and the above-mentioned black shutters. Your camera will record here a symphony in simplicity, purity of line and functional planning. There is only a small weatherbeaten sign to indicate that this is the house of Jonathan Harrington, who dragged himself to his doorstep with a British musket ball in his chest, and died at his wife's feet on

### *The Old Harrington House*

April 19, 1775. Your imagination will supply the rest—the panorama of history that has paraded before this house, the sons it sent off to other wars—and you will wonder what magical touch those rugged builders of houses and nations had, that this house has weathered the storms and snows of two centuries, and stands as fresh-looking and youthful as the girls from the Art Club who sit absorbedly transferring its charm to canvas.



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