

ALEMBIC

PROVIDENCE COLLEGE



VOLUME XXIV

NUMBER 2

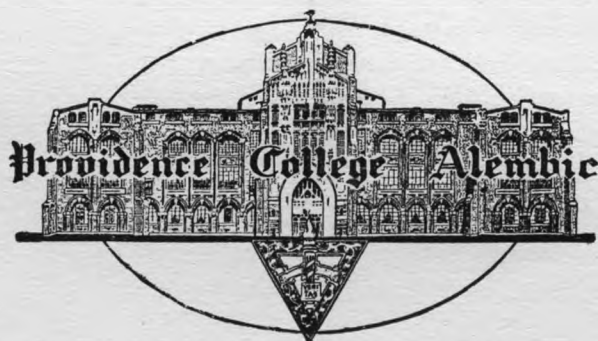
DECEMBER, 1941

POETS AT SEA
JOHN S. SHARKEY, '43

RUSSIA—A FRESHMAN ANTHOLOGY

DAMON RUNYON AT COLLEGE
THOMAS MULLIGAN, '42

THE ALEMBIC



PUBLISHED QUARTERLY
BY THE
STUDENTS OF PROVIDENCE COLLEGE
PROVIDENCE, R. I.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOL. XXIV

DECEMBER, 1941

NUMBER 2

DEDICATION	3
POETS AT SEA.....	5
By <i>John S. Sharkey</i> , '43	
KEATING AND THE FOUR MASTERS.....	9
By <i>James F. Shiel</i> , '44	
RUSSIA—A FRESHMAN ANTHOLOGY.....	14
The House of Rurik.....	14
by <i>Vincent J. Hickey</i> , '45	
The Hero of the Russian Peasants.....	16
by <i>Leo McWeeney</i> , '45	
The Political Police of the Soviet Union.....	18
by <i>James Gill</i> , '45	
Peter the Great.....	20
by <i>Edward McCool</i> , '45	
The Soviet Press.....	21
by <i>Robert Kaminski</i> , '45	
Some of Russia's Leaders and Governments.....	23
by <i>Z. A. Krupowicz</i> , '45	
Stalin.....	25
by <i>Maurice Greenstein</i> , '45	
Social Life in Russian Farm Communes.....	26
by <i>Martin Garber</i> , '45	
Social Conditions of Russia.....	28
by <i>Anthony Gennaro</i> , '45	
Russian Language and Literature.....	30
by <i>Herbert Maddren</i> , '45	
DAMON RUNYON AT COLLEGE.....	32
by <i>Thomas Mulligan</i> , '42	
ALEMBICHORDS	36
WINE FOR THE MERRY.....	41
by <i>Charles F. Cottam</i> , '43	
BY THE WAY.....	54

Nobis

Now that it's come, we feel almost relieved.

For now we can lay aside opinions, suspicions, prejudices and cynicism. There are no more parties, committees, factions or critics. We are a nation at war. Before, we discussed; now we can only act. This war can end only in extermination of one ideal or the other; our way or theirs. Pray God it will be theirs.

Most of us will be called upon to fight; we shall be secure in our belief that it is a just war, that we are fighting for something as imperishable as the Ten Commandments. From Providence College we shall take memories of comradeship, of the best days of our youth, of professors who taught us ideals which we firmly hold to be the essence of all that is good and true and beautiful in life. To the earthly hell into which we shall be sent, we take a determination to conduct ourselves as men.

May God have mercy upon us.

J. A. C.

THE STAFF

Editor-in-Chief

J. A. CONWAY, '43

Business Manager

JOSEPH O'SHEA, '43

Advertising Managers

PAUL CUMMINGS, '43

JAMES SHIEL, '44

Circulation Manager

JOSEPH McLAUGHLIN, '42

The ALEMBIC is published bi-monthly by the students of Providence College, Providence, Rhode Island. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office, Providence, Rhode Island, December 18, 1920, under Act of March 3, 1879. Subscription \$2.00 the year. "Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103. Act of October 3, 1917; authorized April 9, 1932." Printed at the Oxford Press, Providence, Rhode Island.

Poets at Sea

By JOHN SHARKEY, '43

WE do not pretend to be poets; we will not attempt to interpret your favorite poet; but we do know a little about boats and sailors, and can in this field interpret like hell. Most poets who mention ships, sailors and the sea are as accurate as a ten-cent store watch. Nothing bothers us more than to read lofty sentiment in iambic pentameter concerning nautical things by one who got no closer to the ocean than drinking a glass of water. Surprisingly enough, most of these dry-land sailors are English, and we have taken the liberty of correcting some of their verses.

To start, we shall take Southey's "Inchcape Rock". The poem has to deal with one "Sir Ralph" who is a rover. (Rover is English for pirate when the pirate is English.) Sir Ralph cuts a bell buoy and later, when returning, hits the rock where the bell had been. Before the thrilling wreck, there is a verse which tells the remarks of one rover before the sinking:

"Canst hear", said one, "the breakers roar?
For methinks we should be near the shore;
Now where we are I cannot tell,
But I wish I could hear the Inchcape Bell."

In a spot like this, imagination should be used. Southey flopped. Having spent many happy hours at a local seaman's union hall, we insist that the verse is remarkable understatement. The average able-bodied seaman wouldn't say that for

the best berth in heaven, and Southey has a pirate saying it!
With a few careful revisions, it becomes plausible—

“Listen you ——’s! Hear that roar?
Where by —— is the shore?
Send me shivering down to ——
I wish I heard that —— bell!”

Tennyson, a poet laureate, as was Southey, stuck pretty well to knights and cavalry charges, but now and then he attempted to go to sea. For example:

THE SAILOR BOY

“He rose at dawn and, fired with hope,
Shot o’er the seething harbor-bar;
And reached the ship and caught the rope,
And whistled to the morning star.”

He did not! Just go to any wharf and watch.

THE SAILOR BOY

“He rose at noon and shot from play
He sought the seething harbor-bar;
And when at last he reached the pier,
His vessel since had sailed away.”

Another Englishman, Procter, who, in public, was a solicitor and in private a poet, evidently walked over London Bridge and then wrote this:

THE SEA

“I’m on the sea! I’m on the sea!
I am where I would ever be,
With blue above and blue below
And silence wheresoe’er I go.
If a storm should come and wake the deep,
What matter, I shall ride and sleep.”

Poets at Sea

Blah! You might pass this off on some six-year-old in the dust bowl, but we have slept on both power and sail boats, and can speak authoritatively. Power boats are not too bad, but get yourself off Field's Point in a dinghy, try to sleep in four inches of bilge water, and then you see the inanity of Procter's verse. The correction would read:

THE SEA

"I'm on the sea! I'm on the sea!
To get off I would pay a fee;
With water over and water under,
This expedition was a blunder.
A breeze would be a welcome thing,
My God! What did I do to deserve this?"
(poet's license)

It is sad to admit that an Irishman wrote a silly bit about the sea, but not wishing to be partisan, we submit these lines from Moore:

I SAW FROM THE BEACH

"I saw from the beach, when the morning was shining,
A Bark o'er the waters move gloriously on.
I came when the sun o'er the beach was declining,
The bark was still there, but the waters were gone."

We have tried to vindicate Moore by reading the rest of the poem to locate a deeper meaning, but in vain. This first stanza means only one thing.

I SAW FROM THE BEACH

"Low tide ——"

As a fitting climax we have Southey's wife, Mrs. Southey of course, who was the daughter of a captain. It is our earnest

The Alembic

hope that this gentleman was in some far country when this poem of his daughter was published.

“Slacken not sail yet
At inlet or island;
Straight for the beacon steer,
Straight for the high land;
Crowd all thy canvas on,
Cut through the foam—
Christian! cast anchor now—
Heaven is thy home.”

Heaven or points South. God help the poor sailor with
Mrs. Southey at the helm.



Keating and the Four Masters

By JAMES F. SHIEL, 44

NO people on the face of the earth have ever been more interested in the past of their native land than the Irish.

Long after he has left the "Ould Sod", the Gael will be found telling stories of the land he loves so well. You shall hear him tell of the medieval gates of Drogheda and its rich tradition of history. He will proudly beam with the characteristic Irish smile as he states it was once a Norman-English stronghold, but is now the headquarters of the Drogheda Holy Name Society. To be sure, he will not fail to mention the wanton slaughter of its garrison in the seventeenth century by the tyrant Cromwell. Other tales handed down by his descendants will be heard time after time again.

Albeit his interest in the land of his birth, the Irishman, if he is questioned on any but the superficial events of Irish history, will be found to be uninformed. He knows of oral tradition, but that is as far as his knowledge goes. The average Irishman knows very little of Ireland's early history. This ignorance, for which he is not culpable, is due to his lack of knowledge of the written works of Irish history. He knows virtually nihil concerning the most important sources of information of Irish history—the annalists.

The annalists lived in the modern period of Irish literature and writing in the first half of the seventeenth century. Their leader was Michael O'Clery of Donegal. Michael, called by his countrymen "Teige of the Mountain", was descended

from a learned family who had been for centuries hereditary historians of the O'Donnells, princes of Tirconnell. He was born in County Donegal in 1575 and from his youth possessed a noticeable piety. He became a lay brother of the Franciscan Order when he grew older. On his admission to the Order of St. Francis, he abandoned "Teige of the Mountain" and assumed the name of Michael. He joined the Order at Louvain, but was sent immediately back to Ireland by his countryman, the learned Hugh Ward, to collect manuscripts and documents. The antiquities and annals of Ireland were no longer read in Ireland. It was his purpose to rescue Ireland's precious heritage from the comparative oblivion into which it had fallen.

O'Clery recruited three other assiduous scholars; Conary and Cucogry O'Clery and Ferfeasa O'Mulconry. The ambition of Michael O'Clery and his comrades was to collect together as many of the old accounts and as much of the old information as possible before they should be irretrievably lost.

Michael O'Clery was skilled in the Irish language and eminently qualified for the task. He pursued his research for fifteen years. During this time he visited the best Irish scholars then living, and transcribed from ancient manuscripts of Irish hagiography, genealogies, martyrologies and other literary monuments. His two kinsmen and Mulconry, a descendant of the Kings of Connaught, aided him considerably in this prodigious task. They spent the years 1632-1636 in compiling their annals—"The Annals of the Four Masters", as it was called.

"The Annals of the Four Masters" is perhaps the most important single contribution ever made to the study of Irish history. They arranged in chronological order the materials they were able to collect and gave an account of Irish history

Keating and the Four Masters

from long before the beginning of the Christian era to 1616. The value of the work of the Four Masters in the realm of Irish history may be better appreciated when it is known that almost all the materials they used have disappeared since their day.

Michael died in 1645, three months before the third volume of "The Annals of Ireland" appeared. He typifies the Gaelic scholar, as his life was one of disinterested devotion to Gaelic learning. He regretted the ruin of the ancient families and religious houses, but never did he complain of his own discomforts or boast of his performance. He lived in poverty, and wrote his longest tome in an incommodious cottage. His only reward for long and faithful service was the esteem of every friend of Irish learning. Michael and the other three annalists were essentially chroniclers. Ireland had another great literary character at this time, Seathíun Ceitinn—a historian.

Seathíun Ceitinn, better known as Geoffrey Keating, is one of the best known names in Irish literature. Born in Tipperary in 1570, Geoffrey received his early education near his birthplace. After his primary schooling, in which he absorbed much Irish literature, he went to Salamanca, Spain, for his university education. Keating returned to Ireland as a Catholic priest after an absence of more than twenty years. Becoming a popular preacher in the south of Ireland, he delivered sermons in many parishes. They were enlivened by stories and by historical illustrations. In one of the seasons of Catholic persecution which then occasionally swept over Ireland, he was obliged to secrete himself in the Glen of Aherlow. Here he found leisure for the compiling of his great work. Although he was a fugitive, Keating often ventured forth from his cave near Tipperary. He often traveled in disguise over the country in search of ancient vellum books still preserved in the families

of scholars and historians. He had access to materials and manuscripts which other historians had not.

The fruit of Keatings' toil was the first connected history of Ireland in the Irish language and one of the best known books until the final decay of literature after the famine of 1846. "The Foundation of Knowledge of Ireland", this important work, held within its pages the history of Ireland from the earliest times to the English invasion. This was probably the last book of importance to circulate in manuscript in the British Isles. Many manuscript copies were made and the verses it contains were often quoted. As a whole, it has never been printed. Written in a pleasant, facile style, it shows an extensive knowledge of Irish literature, but is devoid of all historical criticism.

"The Foundation of Knowledge of Ireland" is the choicest collection of ancient records that can be recovered from the ruins of time, to support the honor of Ireland and to give the world a just idea of the dignity of that glorious land and its intrepid people. A true and impartial account is given by Keating. Not only are the country and its laws considered, but also the customs and manners of the Irish people.

Besides the contrast in form—a history in place of a chronicle—"The Foundation of Knowledge of Ireland" differs in two noteworthy respects from "The Annals of the Four Masters". The former is controversial in design and setting, the author avowing his object to be the refutation of the calumnies against Ireland put forth by her enemies. The latter were produced in a spirit of historical detachment. While the work of the Four Masters is more dry and formal, and is written in archaic diction, Keating's is composed in an interesting style

Keating and the Four Masters

and in the best modern Irish, for which it has established the standard.

Of the writers which Ireland has produced none were more disinterested than Geoffrey Keating. Although perfectly skilled in the English language, he chose the Irish, the language of his country, not only for his history but for his numerous other works which still exist. Laboring with no view for pecuniary compensation, he *sua sponte* gave his production to confirm and edify his countrymen. He fought the enemy of the souls and of the character of his countrymen for many years, which reflects infinite honor on his memory and renders the Irish nation forever indebted to him. Geoffrey Keating remains the monument and classic model of Irish prose.

Geoffrey Keating; Michael Conary, and Cucogry O'Clery, and Ferfeasa O'Mulconry are classed among the immortals of Irish literature. Their contribution to Irish history constitutes one of the richest sources of Irish culture. It has furnished inspiration to numerous writers in the years intervening since they laid down their inspired pens. Perseverance and perspicacity in bringing to light the rich past of Ireland have raised them to the exalted position as the greatest historians of Eire. We must know them to grasp Eire's cultural heritage.

RUSSIA---A Freshman Anthology

Written as assignments for a professor who left it at "Write about Russia!" Here is the Frosh opinion of our new allies—horsed out of reference books and quite original; hilariously inaccurate or showing signs of real ability.

The House of Rurik

By VINCENT J. HICKEY

THE system of ruling in early Russia somewhat resembled the Egyptian Dynasty. The rulers were called Tsars. They appointed their successors, and so kept the throne in their own family for long periods of time. The succession of rulers from a single family was termed a "line" or a "house". The three most important Houses were the House of Rurik, which was the first line of Russian rulers; the House of Romanoff; and the House of Romanoff-Holstein. I shall discuss the first of these, the House of Rurik.

This group of rulers derives its name from the first leader, named Rurik. The name "Russia" is also derived from this man's name. The House of Rurik was established at some time during the twelfth century, and continued in power until 1598. Kiev was the first capital under Rurik. The entire line of Rurik was marked by bloodshed, revolts, civil wars, despotism and the like. Surprisingly enough, these rulers were good Christians; outwardly, at least. Indeed, Rurik's grandson was called

Russia—A Freshman Anthology

“Vladimir the Saint”. Vladimir’s reign was one of continuous civil war, the causes of which lay largely in his attempt to divide the Russian Empire.

Vladimir was succeeded by Yaroslav the Wise, who compiled the first Russian code of laws. He also established relations with several foreign leaders. Vladimir II eventually assumed the throne. Under his reign, Russia was a very prosperous medieval community of thriving cities, but it was not to endure. The armies of Ghengis-Khan overran most of Russia. After draining Russia of her riches, Ghengis-Khan withdrew his forces, leaving the empire again in a state of chaos.

Ivan I came into power and made Moscow his capital, building the Kremlin as a residence. Ivan decided to carry the war to Ghengis-Khan, but his war backfired, and the Khan burned Moscow to the ground. It remained for Ivan III, a century and a half later, to throw off the Mongol yoke. Ivan called himself “the Lord of All Russia”. His son, Vassili III, was the first to assume the title of Tsar. Vassili finally succeeded in uniting Russia. He introduced into Russia the autocratic ideals which have ever since been associated with Russian monarchy.

After Vassili came one of the most famous of all Russian Tsars, Ivan IV, who was called “Ivan the Terrible”. Ivan IV established the strongest tyranny ever seen in all Eurasia. He ransacked and burned the cities which favored his political opponents, and provided wholesale massacres. He waged terrible wars upon neighbors of Russia, and succeeded in annexing Siberia to the Russian Empire. The House of Rurik ended with the death of Ivan’s son, Feodor, in 1598. In spite of the

political and social unrest during the Rurik reign, a small measure of success was attained in the several attempts made to unite the various Russian states. This stands as the single noteworthy achievement of the House of Rurik.

The Hero of the Russian Peasants

By LEO McWEENEY

Vladimir Ilyich Ulanov was born of noble parents in the year 1870, in a small village near Saint Petersburg. The ambitious Ulanov entered Kazan University with a firm desire to help the lower classes. He was expelled from Kazan University as a result of his part in a student uprising against the government of Russia.

It was at about this time that Ulanov became a strong advocate of Karl Marx. Vladimir became a powerful leader in a radical party called the Social Democratic Party, later called the Communist Party. It was during his leadership of this party that he obtained a great political hold over the Bolsheviks.

As a result of the Russo-Japanese War a tendency towards revolution arose toward the imperialistic government of Russia. Ulanov seized the opportunity to give his policies of government to the lower classes. His three policies which finally resulted in forming the Soviet State were:

Russia—A Freshman Anthology

1—Temporary seizure of real political freedom by the Bolsheviks;

2—Creation of a new revolutionary power in the form of soviets of workers, of soldiers, and of peasants;

3—Use of force against those who used force against the common people of Russia.

Due to his direction in matters of state and matters of war, Ulanov's side won the Revolution of 1917. He became ruler over all Russia, and was honored by the Bolsheviks as well as by the upper class. As soon as his position as head of the Russian Government was secure, he began to make changes in government to suit his own purposes. He moved the capital from Saint Petersburg to Moscow, he made political changes in government, and shifted commands in the army.

As a result of his hard work, Ulanov transformed Russia into an European power. The name of Russia was changed to "Union of Soviet Socialistic Republics".

The more common name of Vladimir Ilyich Ulanov is Nikolai Lenin. Lenin's body is preserved by wax and scientific methods, so that people passing by his glass-enclosed tomb can get a glimpse at their hero. His tomb is situated in Red Square, outside the Kremlin in Moscow. Daily hundreds of people go to see him and mourn over their great loss.

The Political Police of the Soviet Union

By JAMES GILL

In October of 1917, the Tsarist regime was declared to be at an end by Leon Trotsky, then leader of the Bolsheviks. His declaration, however, did not give the Bolsheviks full control of Russia. The loyal officials still held forth in some cities, and there was no force in the nation to preserve law and order. The population was full of revenge and anger at the upper classes, and these emotions were released when the sailors in Kronstadt Harbor murdered all their officers. All over the country mobs of sailors and workers murdered and laid waste, unchecked by any kind of police.

Realizing the futility of trying to establish a forceful government while uncontrolled violence prevailed, Lenin, who was the President of the Council of Commissars, established a government police force known as the *Cheka*. At the head of the organization he placed one Uritsky, an old-time revolutionary who was more or less of a nonentity in the party. Although at first Uritsky was opposed to capital punishment, the failure of more peaceful methods forced him to make capital punishment the rule in dealing with persons arrested. In a ten year period the *Cheka*, and its successor, the OGPU, caused the liquidation of one and three-quarter millions of people in Russia. Although the *Cheka* ostensibly was formed to aid the worker and peasant classes, over one-half million of its victims were workers, peasants and soldiers. At periodic intervals the *Cheka* itself was purged and executed those in its own ranks suspected of disloyalty toward the Soviet. This was typical of

Russia—A Freshman Anthology

the Cheka's position in Russia; it was feared by all common people and government officials, and it was itself fearful of sabotage from within.

In the ten years between 1917-1927, the Cheka grew from a group which hardly knew what its duties were, and which had for a leader a man with pacifist leanings, to the most efficient force the world has seen for the extermination of a class. Naturally, many of the persons in the Cheka were sadists, tendencies in that direction being especially noticeable among its executioners. The most cruel in torturing their victims were the women executioners (*'twas ever thus—Ed. note*). Some of the ladies skinned the objects of their affection alive; others buried the victims without bothering to kill them first. All sorts of amputations were performed, and gouging of eyes, cutting out of tongues, and emasculation were common. The agents of the Cheka were the dregs of Russia's gutters; the Tsar's police were as the angels in heaven compared to these jolly people.

Naturally, with such a group ever-present, the revolutionary urge quieted itself in the Russian's breast. Having successfully persuaded the Russian people that Bolshevism is in Russia to stay, the Cheka (now the OGPU), looked into other fields. The dream of the Soviets is that some day all nations will adopt Communism, and that then Russia will be the ruler of the world. The OGPU is now assigned to foment world revolution, and it is notable even in America that many follow the Red Banner, especially since the American press crowned Stalin with a halo. Agents of the OGPU are in all nations, fomenting disorders, "rubbing out" opponents, and in general making their presence felt. But this problem has an entirely different aspect.

As yet the OGPU has not gained much ground, except in pre-war France. Certainly the possibility of such an organization having control over the United States holds little appeal for the average person in America.

Peter the Great

By EDWARD MCCOOL

For thousands of years the Russian people were oppressed by powerful rulers. The land in Russia was divided into huge estates which were owned by nobles and farmed by thousands of serfs who were no better than slaves.

The House of Romanoff ruled Russia during the seventeenth century. Peter the Great came to the Russian throne a few years before 1700. The Russian people disliked European influence, but still Peter set about making Russia like unto her European neighbors. He seized pieces of land along the Baltic and the Black Sea, strategically situated places which then gave Russia seaports in Europe. He built a capital which was later called Saint Petersburg, on the river that flowed from Lake Ladoga into the Gulf of Finland. The city is today called Leningrad. Peter, the Tsar of the Russians, established schools, printing presses and factories. He succeeded in making Russia a powerful European country. Peter's successors kept up the large armies, but this did nothing toward helping the people to become happier or more comfortable. The Russian people continued to be serfs and had no right to property.

Russia—A Freshman Anthology

Peter met with opposition in his own family. His son Alexis grew up under the influence of the clergy, and disapproved of Peter's reforms. He fled Russia, but was brought back through deceit and put to death by torture in 1718.

The Tsar was not a social reformer, but his reforms brought about great changes in the social composition of Russian society. His educational reform, however, proved premature. There had already been formed a theological academy in Moscow. Peter added to this school a navigation department. Both academies soon became the centers of two sets of lower schools, clerical and lay. As the clergy was opposed to his reforms, he deprived the Russian Church of its spiritual head.

Peter, like all Tsars, did much for the rich and nothing for the poor. He did, however, work hard for his own means. He went to war with Turkey, and in 1696 he conquered Azov. He was given the title Emperor of all the Russias when peace was concluded with Sweden in 1721. Peter the Great died just four years later, in 1725.

The Soviet Press

By ROBERT KAMINSKI

The purpose of a Soviet newspaper is not to entertain the reader, nor to make money, but to stimulate a person in Communism. This is done by long editorials and detailed

descriptions from the various fronts. To the average foreigner the papers are both dry and meaningless. The Soviet journals carry no extravagant advertising, they do not play up scandal, and there are no sport, comic nor stock exchange sections. A relief from monotony is to be found in the articles on foreign affairs, art and science. The Soviet papers still seem dull to the foreigner, but not to the Russian. The big editions are sold as fast as they come off the presses, and Moscow daily papers have more subscribers than they can handle.

The shortage of paper prevents the Russian papers from being the largest in the world. Instead of one periodical for every fifty persons, as under the Tsar, there is one for every three persons in Red Russia.

The Soviets have tried to encourage everyone, from the peasant to the intellectual, to write for newspapers. They have told the people to write about all they see in nature or in life that gave either joy or pain to their hearts. As a result newspapers received news from all parts of the land. Letters from people also reflected the sentiment of the people and the temper of the masses. From the different types of letters and articles to newspapers emerged some of the greatest Soviet authors, cartoonists and general writers of today. The masses of Russia now regard the Soviet press as they do the schools, the mines and the factories—as belonging to them. It is evident then that the Soviet press is much more than a collector of news. In the words of Lenin, it is the “collective organizer” of the life of the nation; an instrument for mobilizing the minds and energies of the people.

Some of Russia's Leaders and Governments

By Z. A. KRUPOWICZ

Tsar Nicholas II might easily have won undying fame and glory had he the foresightedness to fulfill the expectations of his subjects. Unfortunately, he was narrow-minded and of a very stubborn nature. The autocratic government of Russia during the reign of Nicholas II was notoriously inefficient and corrupt, and it was due to this fact that there were so many disastrous defeats and retreats suffered by the Russian forces in 1915. Reigning from 1894 to 1917, Nicholas II was the last of the Tsars.

Then we have the provisional government of Prince Lvov, which was principally a middle-class setup. It was under this type of government, dominated by the Constitutional Democratic Party and principles of political democracy, that autocracy was overthrown. As always happens, there was one misfortune connected with the Provisional government, and that was that it simply did not represent the Russian people.

Following Prince Lvov's government we find Kerensky and his policies. Kerensky was the most interesting and intelligent member of the reconstructed Provisional Government. He was an ardent social revolutionist, backed at first by the peasants and the Menshevist workingmen; he labored to bring the war to a prompt but honorable conclusion, and to assure the Russian people both political democracy and social reform. Kerensky's labors were in vain, for he was perpetually handicapped by politics.

In time many of the Social Revolutionists transferred their loyalties from their own leader, Kerensky, to the leaders of the Bolsheviks, who were rapidly taking over the reins. Shortly Kerensky was thrown out entirely, and the Red triumph was complete.

At the head of the Bolshevik Government we find a zealous socialist who calls himself Nikolai Lenin. He was president of Council of People's Commissioners of the Russian Soviet Republic until 1924. He was feared and hated by the upper classes in Russia; a courageous man, and highly intelligent. As time went on, the Bolsheviks got the upper hand in Russia. They struck terror into the hearts of many opponents by putting to death the Tsar Nicholas II and his family, in 1917. But the Allies refused to recognize the Bolshevik Government until 1924.

Still later, after Lenin's death, the Communistic Government grew and flourished under the guidance of the shoemaker's son who made himself the Communist leader—Joseph Stalin. This party, a very small minority, enjoyed absolute control of the government. Stalin, a clever politician, knew well how to overcome his rivals while adopting their policies.

The Communists waged a ruthless war against religion. Atheism was taught in the public schools, and the spreading of Christian Doctrine in the schools and churches absolutely forbidden. In many towns and villages young Communists pillaged the churches, burned the sacred ikons, and tried to stamp out Christianity.

Russia—A Freshman Anthology

It is in this condition, under the Communist Government of Joe Stalin, that we find the Russia of today engaged in a war with its very powerful enemy, Germany.

Stalin

By MAURICE GREENSTEIN

Never in all history has the world seen such a display of sadism as that illustrated by Stalin and his contemporary, Hitler. This son of a cobbler, Stalin, began early his mad rise to power, which was to bring upon the Russian people massacres on a scale which was unprecedented since the dawn of civilization.

At the age of seventeen he joined the Social Democrats and instigated a revolutionary agitation in his native Georgia. Between the years 1902 and 1912 his political activity led to frequent imprisonments, from each of which he escaped. In the year 1912 he became one of the editors of the newspaper PRAVDA, which incidentally is now Stalin's own. The following year saw him directing the Bolshevik Campaign in the Duma, although keeping himself carefully hidden from the public eye. Stalin joined his lot with those of Lenin and Trotsky in the fateful year 1917. Together these men made two attempts to overthrow the Kerensky Government; the second was successful. During Lenin's régime Stalin firmly entrenched himself as Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party, maliciously undermining the position of all those

who remained in his way. Upon the death of Lenin, he chose two methods for the removal of his rivals—banishment and “extermination”. Among his exiled adversaries was Trotsky, whom he vehemently hated. Leon Trotsky, exiled to Siberia, escaped to Mexico. Until his dying day, Trotsky was never to know peace, being ever vigilant of the dreaded OGPU, Stalin’s vicious secret police.

So intent was Stalin upon gaining power that he eliminated all forms of religion, a force the power of which he did not overestimate. That he disposed of religion is not the point, but the method by which he brought about this elimination will go down in history as one of the most brutal acts of all times . . . ultimately it will prove his downfall.

It seems ironical indeed that this arch-villain should oppose Hitler, and even more ironical that he should be supplied by those very people who hate him most. But we remain confident that Stalin will meet his deserved end, as certainly will his German comrade-at-arms.

Social Life in Russian Farm Communes

By MARTIN GARBER

The farm commune is Russia’s pride in showing the benefits of Communism. The illiterate, ignorant, impoverished peasants of Tsarist days have undergone almost unbelievable

Russia—A Freshman Anthology

social changes in the relatively short period of twenty-odd years. Through united effort a good percentage of the farmers are now literate and have an intellectual and modern outlook upon life. Through concentrated effort the same number of workers are cultivating much more land and are producing better crops. The farmers' sun-up to sun-down work day has been substantially reduced, and the proposed "rest day" has the approval of all concerned. When work is done, the commune farmer may find enjoyment in the house library, listening to the radio, or entering into the nightly discussions. These are the changes that have made the uncultured peasant a man with humane rights and privileges.

Communism has also made a new type of social life. Both husband and wife work. This is not too radical a change, however, and I personally think it has its advantages. Having done her work in the commune the woman knows she is free. The housewife or farm wife always has the supper dishes to do and she knows that she ought to do the ironing while she has a few minutes (usually hours). A woman in the commune can still be feminine, if she wishes (Definitely a concession—Ed. Note) and do her share of the work in the kitchens, nurseries, and the like. If Mr. Commune Worker decides that he would like a Junior, he finds it a comfort not to be compelled to think of the expense of raising and educating the youngster. The children are brought up in hygienic nurseries. The parents are with their children a certain part of each day, and family relations are strengthened. Youth with a lust for knowledge is sent to the universities. Youth that wishes to remain in the commune has no difficulty in finding employment, nor are they required to undergo a period of unprivileged apprenticeship (the young man is also assured that mademoiselle is interested

in *him*, and not in his finances, and vice versa) . After doing his share of work in life the farmer can feel entitled to retirement without considering himself a burden to anyone. Life in the commune exemplifies social security.

Commune life has proved to be a means of raising the standard of living on the farmlands of Russia. Without condoning Communism in general, I laud Russia's effort in creating a better social order among the peasants.

Social Conditions of Russia

By ANTHONY GENNARO

Russia's chief impediment against her advancing civilization lies within herself. In order that a country advance on a sound basis, there must be unification of people and ideas. In Russia this consolidation is prevented by a number of causes. Of prime concern is Russia's vastness. This immensity yields a diversity of interests, and therefore encumbers her progress. Secondly, extending from the Far East to Eastern Europe and from the Arctic to the Equator, Russia engulfs a great variety of races with as varied ideas and beliefs. Each group centers its thoughts about its own immediate surroundings and accomplishes very little for the national welfare. The land system, in general, is another obstacle to Russian progress. Finally, the government is controlled and administered for the benefit of a few individuals. With a background such as this it is not too difficult to realize the causes of Russia's slow advancement.

Russia—A Freshman Anthology

However, it is not possible to say that Russian social conditions are not improving. That is not true. In spite of all obstacles, Russia has managed to advance slowly. We who are in a democracy might consider a country which is willing to accept a dictator to be lowering its standards socially. But it requires time to find the most suitable government for so great a group of people. In this regard Russia is advancing slowly by the trial and error method. We might then say that since the results of the dictatorial Russian Government are not too satisfactory, the Russians should immediately adopt a democratic form of government. Even if this were possible, would a country with so high an illiteracy rating be capable of managing a democracy? No, I fear not.

The majority of the peasants are bewildered and disappointed since it is necessary to work hard and long for small wages. Yet they declare with a certain amount of truth that times are better than they were under the Tsar.

One of the hardest struggles has been that for education. Until recently the wealthy enjoyed remarkable opportunities for education, while the masses were left in ignorance. However, under the Red Government a complete system of education for all has been formulated. They are striving for "first and second degree" schools which correspond to our grammar and high schools. Among the especially encouraging results is the liquidation of a certain amount of adult illiteracy.

From the time of pagan beliefs in Russia the religion has been more or less controlled by the State. Today it is merely tolerated by the State.

Since Russia has only comparatively recently started to improve its social conditions, it will be interesting to note how soundly these improvements have been made—by the effects of the present war.

Russian Language and Literature

By HERBERT MADDREN

Russia is a huge country with an enormous population; it is now one of the major powers of the world. One would expect to find its language taught in many of the schools and colleges in the United States, but by comparison with the languages of Germany, Italy and France, it is rarely taught. The Russian language was originally Indo-European, but now it contains such non-Indo-European elements as Finnish, Tartar, Slavic, Polish, Greek, Dutch and German. After the 18th century, the church tongue, which was Slavic, the administrative tongue, which was Muscovite, and the vernacular tongue were blended. The Russian alphabet has thirty-seven letters, and the language is rich in grammatical forms. It has three genders, two numbers, and seven cases for nouns; for verbs there are two conjugations and many participial forms. The pronunciation of Russian words is phonetic, and sentence structure is a simple coördination of clauses.

The literature which comes from Russia is not often mentioned when one speaks of literatures such as those of France, England and Italy. However, Russian literature has many

Russia—A Freshman Anthology

good qualities which are not often recognized. Early Russian literature consisted of religious works, which were followed immediately by chronicles. At that time most of the works which were non-religious were suppressed. In the 16th century, Russian histories were begun. Peter the Great introduced a modern alphabet and encouraged the use of vernacular Russian. In the latter part of the 18th century, drama flourished. Two of the best works of that period are Knyazhnin's "Old People" and von-Visin's "The Minor". The French, English and Italian influences are shown in "Poor Liza", which was written by Karamizin. The 19th century displayed a variety of literary activity such as the fables of Krylov, the sentimentalism of Koxlov and Vyazenski, the patriotic and religious poetry by Glinka and Rlyeev, and the romanticism of Bestuzhev and Pushkin. Other literary works consisted of criticism, instructive writings, nihilism, which contained ideas pertaining to Communism and Bolshevism, and altruism, which consists of the practice of sacrificing one's self for the sake of another, and socialism.

The chief modern writers are Merzhkovski, Bryusov, Ivanov, Solugub, Zaitsev, Savinkov, and perhaps most important of all, Mikhail Sholokhov.

Damon Runyon at College

By THOMAS MULLIGAN, '42

FROM Monday on I am sitting in Murphy's Beanery listening to "Chattanooga Choo-Choo" make its hundredth trip through Dixieland and trying to pick at least four sure things in this Saturday's games. I am filling up a table in the corner, playing with my coffee and talking with The Shark, who is a very special guy, and whom I am glad to have as a friend. The Shark is a classmate of mine, and he has an almost uncanny way of diagnosing exams before even the professors know what they are going to throw at the jerks. Of course this is a very wonderful talent and The Shark does not lessen its value by shooting off his face to every guy that wants the advance dope on an exam. On the contrary, The Shark is a very shrewd character. For a subject like history, information on the coming exam will cost a guy a bob. If the prof is the kind of a guy who becomes very vague on his exams and springs what are known as thought questions, advance notice of these cost the guy a deuce. For the real thing on a philosophy exam where the sucker cannot understand the drift even if he stewes over it until the day that this rag hurrahs for Communism, he must unshell a fin. All this is very profitable for The Shark. Naturally certain parties higher up do not approve of this occupation of The Shark's, and he stands to exit very fast from this college very fast if they find him out. But that is not likely, for a guy who quizzes The Shark for the right dope on a coming exam is in no position to squeal, and besides The Shark gives very fine service, and he is also a very nasty character to cross.

Damon Runyon at College

"I am going to retire", The Shark says. I slop a whole cup of Java over my pants, a very sharp looking pair of gabardine pants, too, and look at The Shark who is sitting there as though he just mentioned the possibility that it might rain this afternoon. I personally know that The Shark does very nicely by himself on his dope bureau, and I also know The Shark is a very practical guy, so I cannot understand why he mentions quitting the racket. Especially now, with exam time drawing near and as big a crop of the fat sucker breed floating around the joint as I can remember seeing in my five years around the place. I commence to tell The Shark that he is being very foolish. But The Shark says that the error of his ways is now apparent to him, and he feels that he is hurting the school and the guys in it by his operations.

This sounds very phony to me. A guy like The Shark does not change overnight. So I say to him that I do not believe that the perceiving of his sins is making him give up his very lucrative business, and I tell him he can level with me as we are the best of pals.

The Shark breaks his doughnut on the edge of the table and throws a hunk of it in his gullet. "Okay", he says, "I am going to tell you why, but only you." I nod and say that anything between him and me is strictly confidential.

The Shark begins his story back a few weeks. It seems that he is diligently poring over a racing form at our corner table, minding his own business, when a guy sits down beside him and gives him a tale of woe. This guy is a freshman with one of those up-the-river haircuts and not much of a face underneath it. He is groaning over the fact that a notice of his progress in college is at this moment on its way to his parents. His parents are a very strict type and a little old-fashioned,

believing he ought to spend all his time studying and getting good marks. He is very much afraid of what his folks may do if he does not suddenly become a very bright guy. He asks The Shark for help in the monthly exams which he is going to take during the coming week. The Shark is very mad that a Freshman can learn of his talents so soon, for he is very wary of publicity. This guy with no face says that he comes by knowledge of The Shark very confidentially. But this guy looks much dumber than the usual freshman does, and The Shark says nothing doing. But the frosh says money means nothing to him and for The Shark to quote his own price. The green stuff always fascinates The Shark and he says okay.

The Shark instructs the kid and tells him what to expect on the exam. But this time The Shark is too good and the kid is too dumb. The kid owns a very poor memory and writes down word for word everything The Shark tells him. Then the kid lugs the words of The Shark which are on two pages of very neat writing in the exam room. The Shark does not know of this as he would not allow it, being very ethical and conscientious about these things. To make a sad story sadder, the kid is caught redhanded with the notes. The prof eyes the notes and gets very hot under the cowl to find out how accurate and prophetic are the notes. One look at the lost-dream mug of the freshman suffices to tell him that he is not the composer. The kid keeps mum though, and the prof flunks him which is just as well for he is bound to get the bounce sometime, so dumb is he. And now this prof is gunning for the author of the notes, and the look on his pan is not one to make The Shark sleep well. So The Shark figures that now is the time to pull out, for there is no percentage in risking his chances of grasping the sheepskin come this June.

Damon Runyon at College

But the secret career of The Shark is ending and for a while I am very worried as The Shark is the indispensable man to me. But before the cold sweat dries on my brow The Shark says that of course he will continue to do me right as we are the best of pals, and I am the only one that knows his story. This makes me very happy and all the world is flowers and perfume again.



Alembichords

WELL, today we are a man, or a reasonable facsimile thereof, because we have made the amazing discovery that there are other varieties of music than the Russian. Not for a moment that we are swerving from our loyalty to the moujiks, but after all everyone must to a certain extent bow to convention. And when there are so many really solid bits of musical "convention", well, we can't go on forever being stubborn individualists. And it's time that we added a little tone to the ALEMBIC, nicht wahr?

The recording of the Month, of course, is the Toscanini-Horowitz-NBC version of Tschaikowsky's *Concerto Number One in B-flat Minor*, which has been attracting nickles into the juke boxes under various names, including *Tonight We Love*, *Concerto For Two*, and more accurately at least in name, *Concerto in B-flat Minor*. We don't for a minute blame the dance bands for picking on Peter Iljitch's First Movement; it makes a nice, not too rapid dance number, but it is a shame never to hear it the way he wrote it, and as only Toscanini et Cie can perform it. The popular orchestras use only the opening bars and plenty of imagination; they skip the various melodies which Tschaikowsky scattered freely through this concerto, as he did through most of his work. And the ALEMBIC respectfully doffs its chapeau in the direction of pianist Horowitz, who is really an artist. That's about all there is to say about it; if you like concertos, you will certainly like the B-Flat Minor; and if you like the B-Flat Minor, you owe it to yourself to hear this recording. (Victor Album DM-800. \$4.75)

Alembichords

Debussy, *La Mer*; Victor Album M-89; six recorded sides, \$3.50. For a long time we have been meaning to acquire something of Debussy, but kept putting it off until we had annexed what we called the more important things in music. That was a mistake; out of curiosity we played this album through at the dealer's, and that was that. We've been slighting M. Debussy; we had had only a vague idea of his music; oh, yes, fragments of color, sensual violins, impressionistic stuff, and have you read any good books lately? Which only goes to prove what Kipling said of another of life's good things, "You never can tell till you've tried them." So something new has been added to the ALEMBIC's fattening collection, and it's definitely on the asset side. The album (played, we hasten to add, by the Orchestra of the Paris Conservatory under Pierro Coppola) has three records, each complete on two sides: *From Dawn Until Noon On the Sea*; *Sport of the Waves*; and *Dialogue Between the Wind and the Waves*. The simple titles are enough; even if you didn't know them, you would gather an impression—Debussy is impressionism personified—that the man was trying to draw an orchestral sketch of the sea in various moods. We like especially the first record, which suggests the sea just before dawn . . . surly mutterings for muted strings and drums to get the picture of relentless power, gradually brightening through the theme; for the oboe, then the clarinet, are superb in calling to mind the slow lifting of night before the coming dawn. The coming of the dawn itself is announced through a change in rhythm; the violins and all the brighter instruments, backed up by our beloved 'cellos (our favorite instrument, next to the piano), then muted horns, a delicate flute solo—a marvel of suggestion. Debussy was an impressionist even in his letters; in the booklet

with the album we found these excerpts, the first from England, the second from France:

“The sea rolls with a wholly British correctness. There is a lawn combed and brushed on which little bits of important and imperialistic English frolic. But what a place to work! No noise, no pianos, except the delicious mechanical pianos, no musicians talking about painting, no painters discussing music. In short, a pretty place to cultivate egoism.”

“Here life and the sea continue—the first to contradict our native savagery, the second to accomplish its sonorous going and coming, which cradles the melancholy of those who are received by the beach.”

We still prefer gruff Ludwig Van B, being the coarse, gross sort; but in the proper mood we can enjoy these fragments by Debussy. But if you set about buying *La Mer* for yourself, better get the Boston Symphony Orchestra recording. We have since heard it, and Koussevitzsky adds his own touch to Coppola's mere authentic reading.

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN! If those words don't bring back an army of memories to you, then we'd best just let it go. It has never been our fate to meet anyone who didn't have some knowledge of one of those priceless operettas, and there is nothing we can add to the volumes of appreciation written about them. Our only regret is that they can't be alive today—what a job they might have done on Hitler! We are wreathed in grins at the thought. Our personal favorite, if it is possible to choose at all, is *The Pirates of Penzance*, closely followed by *The Mikado*; the best songs are contained in those

Alembichords

two. Perhaps we are prejudiced because our high school sweetheart of long ago sang the part of Mabel. That's the way Gilbert and Sullivan affects most people; they laugh year after year at the songs, but their chief pleasure is in recalling the memories of the first time they saw or played the part of Frederick or Yum-Yum or the Lord High Executioner. That is the chiefest charm of the things—they have a perennial freshness.

The best plan is to buy an album of a complete operetta, if you can afford it (we can't). Next best is to buy Victor's Album C-23, *Gems from Gilbert and Sullivan* (\$4.25), which has the best numbers from *The Pirates*; *The Yeomen of the Guard*; *The Gondoliers*; *The Mikado*; and *The Sorcerer*. Or you might try Columbia's less expensive album M-440, which has Nelson Eddy and Company singing *Patter Songs* from roughly the same list. The Victor Album is the better buy—many more songs, and we don't care too much for Nelson Eddy. He isn't bad on these records, though—his enunciation, which is the hardest part of singing Gilbert and Sullivan, is excellent, and no rare talent is required—as witness the myriad commendable high school stagings of *The Mikado* and *The Pirates*. Either album would make a perfect Christmas gift for anyone who has a phonograph.

STARS AND BARS—*Invitation to the Waltz*, Toscanini and the BBC on a single Victor record, (Number 15192). You'll remember this if you saw our favorite motion picture, *Mayerling*. Toscanini makes it even better . . . Schubert's *Serenade* and reverse, *Ave Maria*; John McCormack; Victor Record 6927. Ireland's greatest voice singing two of Germany's

The Alembic

most tender melodies . . . Stokowski's beautiful performance of Debussy's *Clair de Lune*, on Victor Record 1812 A and B. The marvelous Philadelphia string section in a performance that is unbeatable . . . *Recollections of Tschaikowsky*, 10-inch Columbia Record by the Jaroff Don Cossacks. Contains *Marche, Slav*; excerpts from the Fifth Symphony and the Tsarist Anthem in march time, among other fragments. Unhappily marred by imperfect recording, but it's impossible to distort the Cossacks. These, the original Don Cossack Chorus, are after all the finest Russian choral group, and therefore, by our logic, the best there is anywhere. And we've "tried all three."



Wine for the Merry

By CHARLES F. COTTAM, 43

PERHAPS you can imagine my feelings as I stood in the tiny station platform of Cornwall Village that winter night which now seems so very long ago. Standing alone, hopelessness and despair tearing my every thought. Perhaps you could better understand such deeply resonant feelings if I told you that I had come up here to die. Oh! Yes. I knew I was going to die. No doctor could fool a man who has fought his way through life. And more especially fool me. For I had achieved success and its consequent wealth, only to realize how futile my struggle had been to health and happiness. But I felt no remorse for my life, only a dull sadness of never being free, never once being really happy. Always I had had my work, never play. Always the relentless pounding of a poor boy's youthful ambition to attain fame and glory. And then I had it; all fame, all glory but no peace, and no health. So now I had prepared for my departure, without fame, without glory, a stranger wandering alone.

When my train left Boston I had that forsaken feeling of leaving the world behind me. It was true, however, that I had never ventured so far northward before, so my conclusions about the aspect of the place were pure figments of my own somewhat vivid imagination. But often had I heard stories about New England, and my mind was forever mixing its tall, graceful pines and stern, rugged coastline into a weird conglomeration of bleakness. Such a concept as this, a country which I knew nothing of, only added to my disparaging state of mind.

Such were my emotions as I stood that night watching the train slowly depart, struggling along on its weary journey. I was almost fearful to turn and survey what was now to be my home. Thoroughly disinterested, disheartened and hateful towards something I had never known. But turning slowly, I was more than startled. I was amazed at the scene which unfolded before me. Faintly I discerned a neat little cluster of houses that represented the center of Cornwall Village. A soft orange glow was spreading from their windows, diffusing itself on the barren trees which surrounded them. Almost at the same instant I became aware of a white moon hanging high in the heavens, bathing the village with a cold silvery light and outlining the surrounding landscape in sharp silhouette. The brusqueness of early winter had made the roadbed brittle and its hard surface was shining like a Christmas ribbon as it wound down the hillside and disappeared in the darkness. I finally became conscious that a sharp wind had arisen and its clean, salty freshness whipped across my face, startling me with a richness that set my whole body tingling. This whole scene was amazing. It seemed like the setting of a quiescent novel, or the theme of a youthful past. How oddly distinct and utterly different from anything I had ever seen before. Such a quaint and quiet beauty, so proud and dignified its antiquity.

On the drive to "Thistledown" a new sensation enveloped me. My gloom seemed to fall away. Awareness and the exciting thrill of a new land had risen within me. I began to relax, more lighthearted, somewhat gay, slightly carefree, as the wind raced hard against me through the open windows. For the first time in months I found myself becoming interested and observant in what was going on about me. This was certainly a strange sensation. It seemed to kindle an alien and exotic passion in my very soul. Strands of a new life were being woven into a

Wine for the Merry

tapestry with this birth of thoughts. Revealing and speculative they were. A passionate sense of adventure had taken a firm hold and held me entranced like the long ethereal dreams of youth. This was a new country, deep, still and unknown to me. How much to discover, how much to know and learn and love. Why, I had not finished living yet! Finished, did I say? Finished! *Finished?* Why, no, I hadn't begun to live yet. A whole new life was unraveling before me; racing through my mind like the very wind itself.

Oh, how well I remember that night. I don't believe I shall ever forget it, for I can never be more happy than I was then. For you see it was then that I first discovered what it was to live. Though I had not discovered it completely, I was awakened at least to realize that at last I had come home. A place I had always longed for, but had never had.

I smile somewhat sadly to myself when I recall my debut to Peabody House. Floating into the hallway, lost in thoughts which tottered on the brink of new hope and old despair. But distinctly I remember how I beamed deliberately at the maid who had been starched and whitened for my coming. My manservant bowed slightly, too, and introduced himself, but I strode forward and more than firmly clasped his hand. Instinctively I wanted to be friendly with these people who were to form my family. Evidently they too were hoping for the warmth and friendship which I so desired, for evidence of the Yuletide season was sketched about the entire hallway. Why, I had almost forgotten the approaching feast! Jenny had smiled delightedly when I remarked on the sprig of mistletoe which dangled mischievously from a red ribbon overhead. Henry forgot his dignity, and broke forth in a deep, hearty laugh when he saw her blush deeply; then she scurried off toward the kitchen.

The next two days are like a long, sad dream in my memory. Sad not from gloom, but from the fierce sense of joy which clothed them. I began to see this rugged, rocky land and to become acquainted with its hard, simple yet noble people. Musketmen of olden days seemed still to stalk its quiet streets. Church spires and giant woodlands, village commons and small white cottages stood so solemn and staunch, unquenchable. Simplicity, peace and determination were portrayed in every character; the past so deeply rooted in its present. All this stirred an unquenchable thirst within me. A thirst to become a part of this place. A part of its trees and hills and earth and rocks. All my fevered interest of those first few days were absorbed with this striking panorama of my new home. It was not for some days that I thought to inquire as to who my immediate neighbors were. I didn't realize as I inquired about my neighbors how close at hand was the day when my whole outlook on life was to change. Change so completely, so startlingly that it would seem almost unbelievable.

I have recorded the day as December 23 in my diary, and I remember it well. I was just returning from a rather extensive walk along the coast, and with darkness fast approaching I was still a good way from home. I had not progressed very far when I was startled by a shaft of light which seemed to issue from a clump of tall pines which stood on a hillock that receded about one hundred feet from the coast. Upon closer inspection I discovered that it came from a huge old house which I had passed many times previously and deemed deserted. For the windows were shattered and reinforced, and from all outward appearances it had an air of abandon about it. It seemed to me to be more than odd, almost mysterious. That life should be apparent in such a place . . . and, above all, why this huge light?

Wine for the Merry

Upon reaching home I sent immediately for Henry, to see if he couldn't afford the solution to this mystery. When I did inquire, however, he glanced at me as though startled at my asking.

"Well, sir," he said, "there is a very old rumor in the village about Peabody House. But as to its truth, I am not entirely sure, though people of the village put absolute faith in it."

"Rumor," I sputtered, "rumor—what sort of rumor?"

"It is one about Miss Francia; Miss Francia Peabody."

At this I asked him to be seated, for I sensed that his tale would prove interesting as well as satisfy my own queries. I began to sip my evening chocolate as he began his story.

"Well, you see, sir, the rumor dates back to the Peabody House about the year 1861. It must have been a very gay place then, for I have often heard how it was always ablaze with light and bursting with festivity. This was especially true of Christmas week, for old Captain Peabody had always insisted on a real old-fashioned celebration of the feast. But the rumor deals mostly with his daughter, Miss Francia. She must have been a very lovely young lady, for often did I hear my father refer to her as the most beautiful in the whole country. Miss Francia was to become engaged to a young Midshipman from Boston and a great party was held for all the village. But before the festivity was ended an urgent message had arrived informing the young man that he was to leave immediately for his ship. There was great consternation and bustle about the place, for apparently he was to sail within the hour. The party was soon dissolved then, for Miss Francia was taken to her room dreadfully ill."

At this point I had finished my chocolate, and, laying it aside, interrupted him impatiently to ask what part the light

played in the story. He merely looked at me and continued unhurriedly and undisturbed, speaking almost as though in a trance.

"Miss Francia was seldom seen after this, and soon the parties stopped completely. It was not until the next year that the light was seen by anyone, and when it was, great talk circulated about the neighborhood. No one knew exactly just why it was there, but most of them think it was put there as a beacon to guide her lover. For the light is seen only on the week preceding Christmas."

"You mean he has never returned?" I asked.

"That is what we don't know, sir. No one has ever actually seen him, and the authorities had declared his ship lost at sea. But there is talk here that he comes back here each year at this very time."

He must have seen my incredulous look for he continued hurriedly.

"I know it may sound absurd, sir, but some of the folks hereabouts have insisted that each year at this time a strange ship is seen on the horizon. None could ever testify as to its identity, but they describe it as a great sailing vessel."

I gathered that this was to conclude his rather eerie tale, but I asked him to stay, for there were still a great many questions I wished to ask.

"But what about you, Henry," I asked, "do you really believe all this?" He thought momentarily, then continued.

"I am not quite sure, sir; I know it does seem more like a legend than anything else, but I could never quite bring myself to entirely disbelieve it."

Wine for the Merry

This seemed to me even more incredulous. That one who had spent his whole life in this very region should harbor doubts as to the falsity of such a tale. I did not press him because I noticed a kind of stubborn look on his face, as if he were waiting for me to upbraid him for such foolishness. Rather I questioned him further, for I still had not satisfied my awakened inquisitiveness.

"Am I to understand, Henry, that Miss Peabody lives in this house alone, the year round?"

"Why, yes, sir," he answered, "there is no one else there but the lady herself."

"But why then is it all boarded up?" I asked, "and why has it been let fall to ruin?"

"Well, it seems, sir, that she has become, shall we say—eccentric—in her declining years. She had it boarded up soon after her father's death and she has lived in it just that way ever since. No one has visited the place to my knowledge in at least twenty years, sir."

And so on we talked into the night. The deep, dull notes of midnight were sounding as Henry begged leave from the discourse to lock the house. I sank deeply into my chair; puffing thoughtfully at my pipe in the darkness, trying to fit together the pieces of the weird tale which I had just heard. It sounded so fantastic, so unreal that its very thought enchanted me. At first I had been ready to lay it aside as a provincial legend, but Henry had changed my opinion. I don't believe it was quite the elements of the rumor itself, but rather the sincerity and utter mystery of my servant that brought me to such a state of bewilderment. Could it be possible for anyone really to see a strange sailing vessel on the horizon, each year

at this time? And why, too, should this mysterious light shine only in this season?

By the time the clock had chimed the first hour of morning, I was more baffled than ever before. There seemed to be no solution to it at all, and as I wandered up the winding stairway to my room, the thought became increasingly apparent that there might be some truth to all this, and so it was all through the night, constantly troubled by these questions which nagged me at every turn.

In the morning, I arose somewhat exhausted from such a restless night, but with a firm resolution to investigate this rumor at least to a certain extent. But it was mid-afternoon before I had summoned the courage for such an adventure. Just as I mounted the hillock that stretched before the decrepit old mansion, a thousand questions raced through my mind, and a slow chill of fear came over me. What would this woman be like? Would she consider me a trespasser and become violent? And, above all, what was I doing here? Why, no one had entered here in twenty years! But there I stood on a weather-beaten threshold; a fearful, inquisitive old man. As I reached hesitantly for the knocker, my hand fell short. The massive door was opening! My eyes must have bulged, for my heart was bursting in my body.

You can never know how startled I was when my eyes fell upon the lady, standing so straight in the doorway, standing fixed and frozen in the frame. I must have stood there gaping like an ox, for it was she who first spoke.

"Won't you enter?" she said.

As I did so she led me through a long, narrow hallway that must have penetrated the entire house, into a large darkened room that opened from the hall. At first I could not

Wine for the Merry

discern whether it was a den or library, for the only illumination came from a tiny oil lamp and a blazing fire on the hearth.

She must have perceived my trembling hands, for turning she said, "You have nothing to fear here, sir. My house is not phantomed, as I know many would have you believe." With this she pardoned herself, and I heard her footsteps retreating into the further passages of the house. With such a sudden departure my every sense became alert to any possible hidden danger that might lie before me. So much so that I trembled all over, like one stricken with the palsy. At this I fell to warming myself before the fire, trying desperately to rid myself of this fear. She was not long in returning, however, and when she did my apprehensions were somewhat allayed, for she was bearing a tall and very old bottle of wine. After pouring my glass and bidding me be seated, she looked me full in the face and asked abruptly:

"Might I now inquire as to your mission, sir?"

"Why, yes," I stammered, "it is but to make the acquaintance of my new neighbor."

"Oh, yes, I am quite aware that you are new here," she replied. "For if you were not, I doubt if you would dare enter this house. I presume that you are aware what is told about it?"

"Well,—yes," I faltered, "I have been told about it."

"And do you believe it?" she questioned.

"I am not quite sure," I answered, preferring to progress slowly. "You see, it was the constant nagging of this very question which has brought me blundering into your home."

She did not answer immediately, and all this time I was greatly astonished that my fear began to ebb. I marvelled at her easy manner and was astounded by her very pointed con-

versation. Was this the woman whom the countryside had termed eccentric? Why, this woman was a charming hostess, for all her age! She had invited me to her sanctum, had she not? Was not the wine a true and striking semblance of cordial welcome? What more could I ask? Yet for all of this I could not quite understand the glassy, penetrating gaze which she fixed upon me.

"Do you not think it rather odd," she continued, "that you should wander here on this particular night?"

I mumbled that it was somewhat of a coincidence, only to be interrupted with her brittle tone.

"Understand well, sir, that visitors are no longer frequent in Peabody House."

I hurriedly assured her that I was aware of what I considered to be the facts in this case, hastily adding that I was by nature not readily disposed to rumor.

"You are not disposed to rumors," she replied, "yet you come to this house in quest of one." Her tone became icy as she continued.

"I am quite aware of all that is told about me in the world outside. Their vicious gossip cannot have changed greatly with years. They were never able to let me suffer alone. Always their piercing eyes tried to steal my secret from me. But they never will; they never can. Never will I let them know my secret. For it is this alone that has kept me alive all these years."

Her eyes were staring now, like those of a frightened animal as she finished.

"But, madame," I cried, "I have no wish to intrude upon your life. I have come only to soothe myself."

"Ah, yes," she mocked, "you are a stranger now, but you will become like the rest soon. Laughing at me, scorning

Wine for the Merry

me, making me the object of your jest; telling others of a crazy old woman; trying to take my only happiness from me."

The sudden blast of wind that battered the house seemed to add a vengeful significance to her words. I tried vainly to find the words to still her anxiety, but none would come to me. The room was utterly silent. A sabbath sound seemed to haunt the place. We sat there motionless, worldless; she staring blankly now; I sitting speechless, like one bewitched. The only sound was a whisper coming from the wind as it wound its way among the eaves.

We sat this way for quite some time, listening to the gentle moan of the wind as it slowly began to rise. All the while my eyes had not left her face, and slowly I realized a change coming over it. More and more it became evident as if it changed with the rise of the wind itself. The thought occurred to me that she was listening to something or someone. Some mysterious power, I felt, was in some strange manner conveying messages to her. Suddenly I became aware that she had changed completely, for she was strangely elated and a fierce fire of joy seemed to burn within her. Presently she rose and moved from the room like one that walks on air.

For some moments I sat there stupefied, unable to release myself from the throes of this drama. Finally, however, I did, and it was then I realized that in my nervousness I had absorbed much of the wine and I could feel it taking its heavy effects. With this I arose and began to walk about the room, gazing through the dim light at the numerous portraits that hung from the wall. Their appearance intrigued me as characters from out of the past. I was about to move further along my tour when I was distracted by noise in back of me. When I turned to investigate, I fell back in amazement at the sight which greeted my eyes.

The Alembic

The room was ablaze with light! A huge, three-tiered chandelier was suspended from the ceiling, ablaze with flickering candles. Massive oaken and mahogany furniture was placed about the room. Silver vessels and massive punch bowls were in display. I thought at first that I had gone mad. But this could not be, for I could hear people conversing loudly and gayly in outer reaches of the house. Music and the tap of dancing feet came drifting in. Xmas music it was. Why, I thought, this must be a past Xmas in this very house and a great celebration is in progress. I sought to confirm all this, but I could not budge my legs to investigate. I felt my hands and arms and face. Yes, I was here all right. I was completely intact; I couldn't possibly be dreaming this.

Soon, however, a violent knocking came upon the door, and great bustle was audible in the hallway. The voices that carried the message seemed to scatter like leaves before an autumn storm. I could hear the rustle of skirts and the soft broken sob of a young woman as she rushed past the open doorway and ran up the stairway. The music faltered, then died away completely. The rising hum of excited voices increased in volume. I could hear hurried goodbyes, and then the great door closed with a thud, and all was quiet within.

I awoke with a start. I stood dazed, bewildered, waiting for my mind to return me to complete consciousness. No longer was I within the house. I was standing alone, standing just outside the entrance, facing out into the night. Frantically I tried to recall how I had arrived in such a position. I tried to recall my current experience, which seemed like a horrible dream. Yet it could not possibly be a dream. I was fully conscious. I could remember every incident! . . . Was it an apparition, then? . . . Yes, I thought, that's what it was, an apparition!

Wine for the Merry

But why was it such? Why had it come to me? Perhaps, I thought, it might be a foreshadowing of my future. Could it be a warning? Perhaps it was a warning. A warning to show me what sadness there might have been in my own life. Why—yes, that was it. I had been shown what it was to have a real sorrow. Shown how fruitless it was to live in a memory of the past, nursing old longings, desires and hates.

Slowly I began to perceive how closely paralleled my own life was with that of Miss Peabody. It came upon me that I, too, was living in a world of the past. A world sponsored and nurtured by these very same prejudices that must be tearing at the heart of this woman whom I had just left.

I started out towards Thistledown, stumbling blindly into that falling snow, which the wind drove hard against me, my thoughts jumping and racing ahead of me as I walked. Joyous and playful they were. I felt as though a great weight had been lifted from my soul. At last I had come to find that I was free. At last I was happy. At last I could forget the past and live for the future, and live to be happy.

It was Henry who greeted me as I stamped into Thistledown.

"Why, sir," he said, "you've had us greatly concerned. You've been gone more than three hours."

"Three hours, Henry?—Why, no, you must be mistaken," I cried hilariously. "I have been gone a lifetime. . . . Come, man, don't stand there gaping. Run, Henry, run!. . . . Bring glasses . . . bring wine! We must drink tonight, Henry! Drink to freedom. Drink to the happiness of now and ever after! . . . Run faster, Henry! . . . Bring on the wine, for tonight it's Christmas eve, and I've never, never, never been so merry!"

By the Way

WELL, lads, the ALEMBIC finally came out.

And the *Cowl* will continue to stagger forth from the printer's place. And the Pyramid Players will come out with another top-notch musical, through the efforts of a faithful dozen Thespians. And the debaters will pick up their notes and send the same four or five speakers out to grab the honors. And the intellectual barefeet from Aquinas Hall will continue to snore through their classes. And the Choir will somehow manage to muster enough voices to mumble through another Mass. And half a dozen of the College's clubs and associations will fold their tents like the Arabs, and as silently pass out of existence.

The French have a phrase for everything: *c'est à rire*. And as a matter of fact, we never do quite know whether to laugh or to cry. But the naked, unadorned fact remains: never in the history of Providence College has the student body been characterized by such a shining collective tabula rasa. Never until now have extra-curricula activities arrived at a point where it seems smarter simply to toss in the towel. Never have the corridors echoed to the bleatings of so many paying members who seem to have been deprived of possession of the fourth metaphysical essence.

We can proceed from the general to the particular with the greatest of ease. The facts are ample; we can't go anywhere

By the Way

in the school without being hit over the head with a few of them. Take for example the following few cases in point:

- 1—Providence College, a Catholic institution, has no Choir as such. A different group sings each Mass; each, we may regretfully add, a trifle less capably than the last;
- 2—*La Pléiade*, a society founded, aside from the social angle, to stimulate interest and knowledge anent a beautiful language and its magnificent literature, is for all practical purposes non-existent;
- 3—*The Philosophy Club*, founded to awaken a lively and informal interest in the study which is supposed to be the most important in our curriculum, is sounding what seems to be its death-rattle. It is hoped that it may be functioning by January;
- 4—*The Pyramid Players*, a dramatic group of which the College should be proud, is still forced to limit its work to one important musical a year, due to lack of co-operation on the part of the student body;
- 5—*The Cowl*, which in other and happier times used to receive national honors, has degenerated into a tight-knit group of overworked writers who are forced to rehash what meager news filters out of the student body; who plead in vain for feature articles, and who must stay at the printers' until three o'clock Friday morning to see that the paper is strung together somehow;
- 6—Last, and possibly least, this magazine, with the same old familiar writers, the same old stuff, with the editor turned stenographer and instructor in fundamental

grammar; one man to manage distribution and exchange, two men to get advertising, and two men to write the thing, make up the dummy, type the whole book, beg for contributions, meet a deadline with two stories on hand, and desperately point out to Juniors and Seniors that an adverb must *not* be placed between the parts of an infinitive.

We could just as well write "30" there, because we have said about all there is to be said. But since the ALEMBIC is our personal cross, we'll say on from that angle.

What should we write now? What could anyone write about a college of nine hundred students which apparently boasts only nine men able to set down a grammatical sentence? Because that's the fact, you know. We went with one hand out to every English professor at the College, and begged each to give us anything readable which he happened to receive from his students. We had been staggering under the delusion that we received no contributions simply because the men at Providence were bashful or lazy. But the English Department set us right on that. The replies of the professors were almost standardized: "Sorry—but I simply haven't a thing." With an expression that we too have assumed frequently of late; one of mixed disgust and amusement. Divested of the lovely verbiage with which we might clothe it, the fact remains that there are probably not twenty students at Providence College who could write English of a standard high enough to pass University entrance requirements. Understand, please, we mean that literally. We have never expected to find talent. We don't pretend to possess any ourselves, and we have given up hoping to find any in others. There are signs of ability in some of the stuff in this issue, yes, but what a sorry commentary upon the

By the Way

remaining hundreds who come here, sit through classes, crunch their salami at noontime and tell their friends they have been to college.

Of the few who can write, but who have made no attempt at it through the *Cowl* or the *ALEMBIC*, well—there are forms of cowardice other than physical. There seems no other way out; they must be afraid to place their work beside stories by Cottam or Gerhard or Sharkey. They fear that in print the stuff won't look quite as good as the other fellow's; that there will be snickers and pointing of fingers. Such an idea is ridiculous. God knows there have been enough literary miscarriages in the *ALEMBIC* to set a precedent. And yet we are forced to humiliate ourselves before the English professors, and to print dashed-off fragments to fill what should be a literary magazine.

But if that's the way it must be, why, Amen. We'll continue to print the same stuff by the same writers, no one will read it, and Providence College will be spoken of as a sort of intellectual never-never land. The corridors will resound to the wholesale collapsing of organizations, the Faculty will develop sunken jaws from having to face thirty mental foul balls several times a day, and the few on the campus who do top sensibility with rationality will begin seriously to wonder exactly who the hell it was that first described *homo* as *sapiens*.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Petro - Nokol Oil Burners

DOMESTIC—INDUSTRIAL

FUEL OIL



**Petroleum Heat and
Power Co.**

32 Franklin Street

Providence, R. I.

Gaspee 9166

**THE
OXFORD PRESS**

Printers of This Book

—
All Classes of School
Publications
—

Book and Commercial
Printing

Phone DExter 5463

100 South Street Providence, R. I.

Costello Bros. Inc.

*Distributors for Schrafft's
Chocolates*

PROVIDENCE

PAWTUCKET

Compliments of

Joseph Marcus, & Co.
INC.

Established 1906

184-194 North Main Street

Providence, R. I.

Quality furniture at lower prices

Shepard

The Christmas Store of Providence

**MEN! SOLVE ALL YOUR
GIFT PROBLEMS. VISIT
THE GIFT SHOP.**

Second Floor

VACUUM | | PACKED

AUTOCRAT

coffee

Perfect Flavor Always Fresh

BROWNELL & FIELD CO., PROVIDENCE, R. I.

PATRONIZE OUR ADVERTISERS

ADVERTISEMENTS

Here's a Habit Nobody Wants to Break

When you do the same thing until it becomes second nature—you've acquired a habit. And when you make regular Old Colony payments you soon acquire the habit of thrift.

Saving consistently will seem no hardship, because it guarantees such worth while rewards. You will find yourself forging ahead of others who have not discovered the benefits of a logical program.

For the easy first steps toward systematic saving, consult one of our representatives.



**JUST OUT
VICTOR
RECORDS**

The **OUTLET**
RHODE ISLAND'S LARGEST DEPARTMENT STORE

**TWO 12" RECORDS
For the Price
OF ONE !**

If you're looking for Christmas Gifts, why not
VICTOR RED SEAL RECORDS

Two 12-inch records for the price of one

1. The Emperor Waltz with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra, and Ballet Music from Faust with Arthur Fiedler and the Boston "Pops."
2. O Patria Mia, sung by Rose Bampton and Celeste Aida, sung by Benjamin Gigli. Also John Charles Thomas singing "When I Was A Lad" and "There Is No Death."
3. Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 by Jesus Maria Sanroma. Also Humoresque and the Rosary, by William Primrose and the Victor Symphony Orchestra.

**2
FOR
1.00**

OUTLET—Records, 4th floor

PATRONIZE OUR ADVERTISERS

ADVERTISEMENTS

*The Alembic Staff extends
to its readers
sincere
Christmas Greetings*

McGLINCHEY
Hardware and Paint Co.

Locksmithing	Garden Tools
Window Glass	Mazda Lamps
Paint Supplies	Roofing Supplies
Household Supplies	Electrical Supplies

420 Smith Street
DE 5674

*Save with
Electric Refrigeration*

Narrañansett Electric
Company

P. C.
CAFETERIA

•
*Good Food at
Reasonable Prices*

PATRONIZE OUR ADVERTISERS

With MAUREEN O'HARA
it's Chesterfield for Christmas

She is appearing in the
20th Century-Fox Production
"HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY"



FOR CHRISTMAS

It's Chesterfield

*Here are your Milder Better-Tasting
Chesterfields again . . . in the most attractive, up-to-the-
minute Christmas gift package of the year.*

Buy them for the folks at home . . . send them to your friends
and don't forget to mail them to the boys in the Service.

YOU CAN'T BUY A BETTER CIGARETTE *They Satisfy.*