

# ALEMBIC

PROVIDENCE COLLEGE



VOLUME XXII

NUMBER 1

OCTOBER, 1939

## THE WAY OF THE CROSS

EDWARD KAYLOR

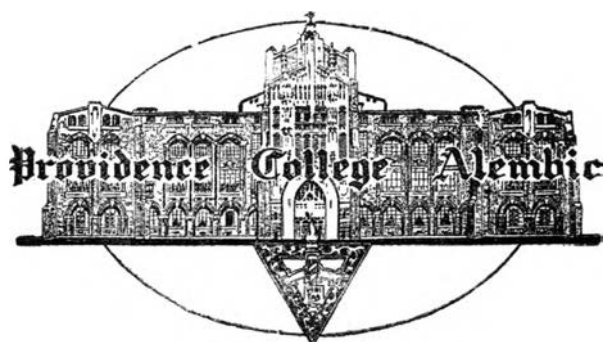
## LESSON IN LIQUID

JOHN T. HAYES

## THE ANGLO-SAXON

JAMES MCGOWAN

# THE ALEMBIC



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

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME XXII

OCTOBER, 1939

NUMBER 1

---

---

DEDICATION .....	3
THE ANGLO-SAXON	
A short story, by <i>James R. McGowan</i> , '41 .....	5
ON THE APPIAN WAY	
A short story, by <i>Seymour A. Sherman</i> , '41 .....	9
THE HOARDERS	
A short story, by <i>Anthony B. Sasso</i> , '40 .....	14
TAKE, FOR EXAMPLE, WAGNER	
An essay, by <i>Lionel J. Landry</i> , '40 .....	24
THE WAY OF THE CROSS	
A short story, by <i>Edward Kaylor</i> , '41 .....	30
A VETERAN'S TALE	
A narrative, by <i>Matthew P. Gallagher</i> , '41 .....	45
LOSS AND PROFIT	
A poem, by <i>John Houlihan</i> , '40 .....	48
LESSON IN LIQUID	
A short story, by <i>John T. Hayes</i> , '40 .....	49
CHARLES PEGUY	
An essay, by <i>Francis Lehner</i> , '40 .....	56

## Mal

FOR the second successive year the initial copy of the ALEMBIC is issued under the twin shadows of sorrow and loss. In 1938 we mourned the death of Rev. M. Leo Carolan, O. P., and now in 1939 we are afflicted by the passing of "Mal" Brown.

We of the ALEMBIC staff join the entire college organization in its expression of grief over the death of Mal. To him and to his memory we dedicate this ALEMBIC.

Mal is dead and all of us have lost a friend. We could go into endless praise of his self-sacrificing spirit, of his cheerfulness, of his piety, indeed we could run through the whole catalogue of virtues that mark a Christian gentleman, for that was Mal—a Christian gentleman. But eulogy is unnecessary. When we have said "friend" we can say no more, for in saying "friend" we say all. That Mal is and for a great many years shall be missed is evident. It is evident from the hushed and respectful manner in which the students group together and discuss their loss. It is evident in the faces and the general attitude of the student body. It is evident in the dull pain of loss that burns in the heart of each of us. But we are not wholly dejected, for ours is a Christian sorrow, and we believe in the "Resurrection and the Life" and we are confident that from a full life on earth Mal has gone on to the fuller life.

With bowed heads we murmur *Requiescat in pace.*

# THE STAFF

## *Editor-in-Chief*

LIONEL J. LANDRY, '40

## *Assistant Editors*

ANTHONY B. SASSO, '40

JOHN T. HAYES, '40

CHARLES E. SWEENEY, '41

EDWARD KAYLOR, '41

MATTHEW P. GALLAGHER, '41

IRA T. WILLIAMS, JR., '41

CHARLES J. MCGOVERN, '41

## *Business Manager*

JOHN M. REYNOLDS, '40

## *Assistant Business Managers*

BERNARD NADEAU, '41

ROBERT ROQUE, '40

## *Circulation Manager*

GEORGE F. CARROLL, '40

---

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.

# The Anglo-Saxon

By JAMES R. MCGOWAN, '41

CHRISTOPHER T. SAMPSON, business manager of Pomfret Refrigerators' mid-west office, was definitely not the type to let scruples about divided authority interfere with the selling of a Pomfret. So when the monthly sales report came in from the St. Paul branch, revealing a still discouraging picture for Section 11, he decided he'd override the branch manager's privilege of selecting the salesmen under him.

Doolittle, manager of the St. Paul branch, was no little bit exasperated when he received the telephone call ordering him to drop the salesman for Section 11, and to send all the applications in his files to Chicago. Letting Kaplan go was all right, for the man had proved himself well-nigh useless. But this butting into the branch manager's privilege of selecting the salesmen to work under him was wormwood to a man who had preceded Sampson in the business by fifteen years.

According to Doolittle's recollections, never before had a district manager been so high-handed in dealing with a branch. He was confident there was about Sampson's action a touch of personal vindictiveness arising from a buried rivalry.

Two years previous the Pomfret directors had set up a Chicago office. The purpose of the new office was to supervise the numerous Pomfret branches that had mushroomed in the Middle West in response to the American housewife's prejudice for modern refrigeration.

Selecting a man to manage the new office had posed a difficulty. The field had narrowed to Doolittle and a recent addition to Pomfret's managerial staff, Christopher (Call me Chris) Sampson. Doolittle was a quiet, hardworking, reliable type, with absolutely no pyrotechnics in his personality. Sampson, on the other hand, was a table-pounding, molar-grinding husky, who had learned to roar his way into the confidence of others. In the end, it was the latter's name which the lettering company put up outside Pomfret's newly-opened Chicago office. Sampson, though, had never forgotten the race that Doolittle had run for the job he himself held down.

The fileful of applications arrived in Chicago two days later than they were expected. That was how the older man back in St. Paul took out his innocuous revenge.

Sampson had convinced himself that he had a theory why Pomfrets weren't selling in Section 11. He found it supported, he thought, as he scanned the list of the last ten men who had been assigned to that area: Prybla, O'Sullivan, Jensen, Tortolani, Pashalian, Souza, Laboissonière, Ploshkoff, Schieckfriesser, and Kaplan. Not one of them from the old American stock.

Now Section 11 comprised the silk-stocking section of St. Paul. Not only that, but total membership of the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution was exclusively drawn from this area. So, Sampson reasoned, how can you expect to convince such a market when the seller, through a "background deficiency", is completely unable to "understand" the prospective buyer?

He used a cast-iron standard in sifting the applications that had come into his office. Any name that suggested an ancestor's boat arrival within the past seventy years was speedily rejected. The standard proved itself to be unusually indiscriminate. Only one application survived.

## *The Anglo-Saxon*

"W. Samuel Lee" . . . "Princeton graduate" . . .  
"studied abroad" . . . "extensive traveling background".

The name had a true American ring. This was just what Sampson wanted: a highly-cultured, well-educated American—with an Anglo-Saxon background. As for the W., that probably stood for "Wyndgate" or "Winthrop", he decided.

In ordering Doolittle to hire Lee, Sampson appended a rip-roaring commentary. In it he pressed on him his "neglect" and "lack of vision" in not selecting his men with a view toward suiting the agent to the territory. He greatly regretted that he had to urge "the use of psychology" and "progressive salesmanship" on one of his "subalterns." That last word had been deliberately chosen.

Two days later, members of the St. Paul office staff whispered anxiously to one another and cast concerned glances at Doolittle's office door. From behind the thick portal, and above the noise of the office machines, there came successive waves of almost hysterical laughter. It was strange enough that they should come from the dour Mr. Doolittle. It was even stranger that the wave would break each time he reread a letter newly arrived from the head office in Chicago. These intra-company letters were such prosaic things.

The next two monthly reports coming into Chicago from St. Paul were vindicating documents for Sampson. The course of Pomfret sales in Section 11 had changed with a delightful violence. Sampson, in his role as regional paymaster, smiled with self-justification every time he applied his signature to the fat commission checks that began to stream out "Payable to W. Samuel Lee."

Before the time for the arrival of the next monthly reports from the branch offices, Sampson had to appear at a director's meeting in New York to record sales activity for his area. Stand-



ing before that group of serious-faced men, he managed to insert a business anecdote. He recorded the profit history of a "certain section" in his territory. (He decided it would be unfitting his generous nature if he were to be specific.) Carefully he traced the growth of his early suspicions as to the "sales inactivity" of this area. Then followed an exposition of the remedy that "the exercise of a little common sense" had suggested. Next came a recital of the upturn in sales according to percentage and unit volume. As he sat down he knew he had scored by the looks that were directed to him.

A little wizened director who identified himself as a trustee of the Gotham Salesmanship Institute stopped him as he was leaving the room. When they parted, it was on the agreement that Christopher T. Sampson would appear next evening at the Institute as a "guest lecturer" on the topic "Effective Psychology in Business Operations."

Sampson's face was touched with the rosy glow of conquest when the lobby-boy at the Waldorf met him with a telegram. From its envelope he saw that it had been forwarded from St. Paul to Chicago, and reforwarded from Chicago to New York.

"WILL HAVE TO HIRE NEW SALESMAN FOR SECTION 11. WONG SAM LEE RETURNS TO HOMELAND NEXT WEEK TO FIGHT IN KAI-SHEK'S ARMY.

DOOLITTLE."

The next evening the Gotham Salesmanship Institute had a guest-lecturer from Chicago whose topic was "Recent Tendencies in Gas Refrigeration."

## On the Appian Way

By SEYMOUR A. SHERMAN, '41

A LONELY soldier crouched tensely on the firing step, eyes straining to penetrate the darkness that hid the enemy. Occasionally a starshell burst, throwing into eerie relief barbed wire and shell-ravished earth. Gripping his rifle with desperate strength, he sought to still the trembling of his hands, that once with lusty youth had gripped the plow and the fork on his father's farm in far away Wisconsin. In the east the sullen clouds were slowly turning gray. Under their ashy pallor throbbed the big guns' muffled roar and the lurid flash of gun-fire. With nervous frequency the soldier eased his position to glance at his wrist-watch. Cursing the command that had ordered his division—untested under heavy fire—to the front for a dawn offensive, he wondered if his buddies were as frightened as he.

His mind telescoped the events in his life of the past few months. He recalled that fiercely patriotic community whence he came, eyeing his husky, ununiformed figure with suspicion; shame forcing him to interrupt his senior year at college; manhood verging on tears at last handclasp with father; parting with Edith with promise to await each other; brass bands and training camp; goodbye to America at midnight and arrival at Brest; high spirits and further training; small taste of gun-fire and finally,—attack at dawn.

Dear God, I'm too young to die! He whispered a prayer and once more consulted his watch. His strength drained away with the time, as it mounted steadily toward the zero hour. The platoon leader approached, whispering encouragement along the line. The soldier smiled sickly in return with a violent tremor of his lips. His eyes turned slowly toward the east. A red rocket flared. Dawn! A whistle shrilled and the morning was shattered with a terrific burst of gun-fire dropping a barrage for the advance.

In the sudden surge of troops that followed, he was swept up and over. Shouts and curses and sudden death. He had gone forward some hundred yards when, a bullet striking him, he plunged heavily to the ground.

Noon came and passed into dusk, finding him still lying where he had fallen. As he lay there moaning, he was startled by what appeared to be a nurse moving from stricken soldier to soldier. Now she turned toward him.

"Go back," he cried, "go back. You'll draw their fire; we'll both be killed."

She smiled. "I'm not afraid of death. Many men lack the courage to go where I have been. Besides, they call for me. I could not fail them."

It was true. Around him groaned the wounded and the dying.

"How brave," he murmured. "How brave, with the courage that only fools can muster."

"I do only my duty, yet there are those who would not have me help them. Truly, pain often spurs men to deeds of madness."

"Not receive your help? I would have you save me if you could; but it's too late. I know I'm dying, but I'm not afraid. How strange that this morning I was—but not any more."

*On the Appian Way*

Tenderly she stroked his feverish brow. "He's so young; they die so young these days."

"Your voice," he whispered, "how melodious. You must be very young."

"Many men have called me young."

"And beautiful? I cannot see you well."

She smiled. "They have thought me that, too; but come, Winston, we must—"

"My name. You call my name." With great effort he raised his head. "Who are you? My eyes—your voice, where have I heard it?"

"I have known you for quite your entire life, although you were not aware of it. Can you recall one day on the farm when you as a child fell from the old apple tree? I was there. The time you fell into the lake while fishing, I was there, too. And your football days in college, I watched you play every game."

"You do know me," he mirrored his amazement. "Come closer that I may see you. It is nearly night, and I am so tired."

Gently she clasped his hand and looked deep into his eyes. He gazed expectantly, then in puzzlement, then in horror. Sweat bathed his body, his chest heaved. "Your eyes," he gasped, "I cannot see them; there is nothing there, I see beyond; I see—"

"Death." She was stifling him with the closeness of her breath. "It is true. Come, I cannot wait. I have much to accomplish. The soldiers—hear them call for me."

"No! No!" His voice rose to a despairing shriek. "I'll not go. I want to live. I'll not go. Oh, God! Oh, Mother!"

She rose swiftly, yet not without a certain pity. "I will meet you on the Appian Way."

All night he lay on the ground, keeping himself alive with a will that refused to let him die. Toward dawn of the next day

a rescue squad finally crawled out and dragged him, half-conscious and moaning, to safety. Willing hands gave him a drink of water and lifted him into an ambulance. But he cried out in terror, "Don't take me. She'll meet us all in hell. She promised me. Don't go, I tell you."

The driver, accustomed to the forms that suffering takes, muttered to his helper, "If the others are any indication, his service is up." Then to the soldier, "everything's all right, buddy; we'll take care of you."

"For God's sake, no! Which road are we taking?"

"Road? Why, there's only one we can take."

His face blanched. "You mean—the Appian Way?"

"No. The Heinies have the range on that one. We don't use it any longer."

"Then, I'll live. She won't get me now. I'll fool her and live." He broke off into a fit of coughing that brought tiny flecks of blood to his lips.

The driver and his helper closed the rear doors, climbed into the front, and the ambulance slowly started, swerving around shell holes and deep muddy ruts made by the iron wheels of countless heavy artillery trains. The rumble of cannon hung in the sky like the playing of deep tones on a piano.

The road paralleled the trenches, at some distance, for a few hundred yards; when the trenches then fell away at an angle to the right, and the road itself turned sharply to the left into a narrow lane. This continued straight and then curved in a wide bow at whose end lay the field hospital at Mont-au-Feuil. A much shorter route, forming the string to the bow, was the Appian Way, so named by some farcical American doughboy. Its range had been accurately plotted by the Germans; and a few days before, an ambulance, in a futile dash to the hospital, had been blown to bits. Consequently, it was no longer used.

## *On the Appian Way*

The ambulance turned left into the narrow lane and continued on. Occasionally, the driver turned around. What he saw evidently disturbed him, for he spoke moodily, "He'll be a corpse before we get there."

"We're doing the best we can," argued his helper.

"Not good enough." Silence. Then, "I'm going to chance it over the Appian Way."

The helper paled. "Are you mad? Do you want us all killed? You don't know what you're saying."

The driver was stubborn. "They won't be expecting us to do it. If we make a fast dash for it, we'll come through."

They neared the Appian Way. It ran in harsh, exposed outline for five straight miles to Mont-au-Feuil. The ambulance careened as it turned into that road and raced forward. Tossed roughly, the wounded soldier groaned aloud. Suddenly a shell burst to the rear of them. He struggled to rise, but a hand gently restrained him and a voice by his side spoke. "I have come to keep my promise, Winston."

He looked at her wildly. "You're too late. You cannot get me here. They have saved me."

"They have saved you for me. This is the Appian Way."

Even as she finished another shell exploded so closely as to shower the ambulance with earth. It shuddered for a second and burst forward with renewed speed. A dawning suspicion terrified him. "Driver, driver," he screamed. "Fools! Oh—" A terrific explosion, a sheet of flame and pall of smoke, and a hole in the road gaped widely where his last words were spoken.

## The Hoarders

By ANTHONY R. SASSO, '40

EARL STACE paused in his hoeing, mopped his brow with the end of his tattered shirt, muttered something about rain, and resumed his task. His laceless shoes were well filled with dry dirt and stockingless feet. His dungarees, ripped at the bottom seams and torn at one knee, were damp with perspiration. The straw hat on his head was shredded at the brim; the crown had many holes in it,—put there by the owner's hand for the purpose of ventilating his partly bald head. He was mechanically hoeing his yellow colored plants,—hoeing, hoeing, hoeing,—constantly chopping at soil in which only weeds had the temerity to grow.

The pauses grew more and more frequent, the hoeing less and less mechanical, and as he faltered to the end of the row the man muttered, "Dawgone, woman, how long is it goin' t' be 'fore y' ring thet durn bell?" The sun was settling into the hump-backed hills; the shadows were becoming longer and birds were beginning to awaken from their lethargic siestas.

"I'll be damned if I'll start 'nother row," growled the man as he stubbornly sat himself on a decaying stump and fished for his "makin's". He was about finishing his cigarette and beginning to notice the mosquitoes when he heard the signal he'd been expecting for the last hour. Leaving his hoe at the beginning of a new row for work next morning, he picked up his rifle and a squirrel he had shot, and headed for home.

## *The Hoarders*

"Fry this fur breakfast in the mornin' 'n' give me a change from that durned sow-belly," he mumbled as he tossed the squirrel on the table in complete disregard for the meal that had been set for him.

"You'll clean it first Earl Stace, an' ez far 'z gettin' a change from sow-belly,—it's up to you to worry 'bout that. I only cook the grub you get me." Her little speech completed, Mrs. Earl Stace immediately busied herself about the small room that served as kitchen, dining room and living room for her and her husband.

"Cain't afford any fancy vittles, you know that," he muttered through a mouthful of corn pone.

"Cain't afford it,—humph—that's all I ever hear. What did you do with the money you got when you sold the hogs last fall,—never did hear or see any of it." The last remark was a statement, not a question, for the same thing had been discussed before and Hannah Stace expected no answer, nor did she get one.

She was a big woman,—as tall as her husband. Her hair was straight,—streaked with gray, loosely knotted at the back of her head . . . Her eyes were blue and listless, but heavy dark brows showed that she was easily moved to anger,—sharp, biting anger. The dress she wore was of an unnameable color,—sort of yellowish and dark brown at the same time,—color of the soil. Her feet were without stockings, and laceless shoes of the same shape and size as her husband's shuffled from one end of the two-roomed shack to the other as she tended to her chores while her husband ate.

"Come to think of it woman," Earl Stace announced after finishing his meal, "Nate Turno stopped by this forenoon 'n' told me your uncle's pretty sick."



The woman's facial expression did not change. But her eyes, no longer listless, took on a hopeful gleam. Outwardly she said, "That's too bad now, ain't it. Did his rheumatiz fin'ly catch up with him?" Inwardly she was wondering what he was going to do with the hundred dollars he had held onto for the past five years.

"No, t' ain't his rheumatiz," replied her husband. "It's pneumonie, so Nate told me."

Then, satisfied that he had given his wife something to think about, content that his stomach was filled, Earl Stace rose, rolled a cigarette and shuffled out to haul some water from the spring to his thirsty garden. That was one of the reasons why Earl always had something to sell at harvest time. . . . He always tried to make his plants grow. If there was no rain, unlike most of his hill country neighbors, he would water his garden after the sun went down. Rather tedious,—yes,—but his yellow plants lived while others shrivelled and shrank into the very soil which should have been nourishing them.

Hannah, left alone once more, milked the two cows, turned them loose to forage for themselves during the night, mixed a concoction of grain, swill and water for the old sow, and dragged herself back to the two-roomed shack. The beauty of the sunset was lost to this woman. The hills were changing colors,—purple, amber, gold, amber, blue, and purple once more, but she was oblivious of all.

Night birds were beginning to fill the air with thanksgiving that the heat of the day was done. The scene was peaceful. She watched her husband trudging down the dusty road to the little plot of ground he called a garden . . . Watched him return for more water, and again shuffle down the road, his laceless shoes, heels dragging, causing little eddies of dust to trail him in his weary task.

## *The Hoarders*

Hannah Stace sat on the box that served as a step into her kitchen and she thought. She sat there during two more trips of her husband from spring to garden. Then as though on an impulse, she struggled into the Model T which had served Earl and herself as a means of transportation for the past two years, and headed for the abode of her sick uncle,—about eight miles away.

Earl paused in his task to gaze after the chugging Flivver. After watching it disappear around a bend in the road, he smiled sardonically, shrugged indifferently and completed the row he was on,—finishing the job. The sun had set; dusk was becoming serious, and darkness was closing in on the figure of Earl Stace as he made his way up the lonely road to the little shack he called home. After cleaning the squirrel, he seated himself on the step and smoked a slow, thoughtful cigarette.

After his smoke Mr. Stace did something very unusual. By the light of a kerosene lantern he tipped the box-step over and dug in the soft dry soil with his fingers. With a grunt of satisfaction he unearthed a half-cannister tobacco tin. From the tin he took a small roll of bills. As he counted it for probably the thousandth time, he chuckled to himself. He counted fifty-one dollars in paper money. "Just forty-nine dollars more an' I'll have enough," he murmured. "Just forty-nine dollars."

That was where the money his wife had inquired about went to. That and money from many other secret sales,—a quart of milk once in a while, or a chicken or two sold to neighbors during holidays. But that was Earl's secret.

Fifty-one dollars could buy many things in that hill country where most business is carried on by barter,—where a real dollar would go a long way.

"I wonder what Hannah would say if she knew I had fifty-one dollars," the man chuckled. "Especially if she knew

what I was going to do with it." He chuckled once more as he returned the tin to its cache and carefully placed the step over it once more.

It was close to midnight when Hannah Stace maneuvered the ancient flivver into the yard. The faint, yellow gleam of the one good light rested momentarily on her husband's face as it flashed through the cracked glass window. This was enough to waken him and when she finally climbed into bed beside him he broke the silence. "How's yer uncle feelin'?"

She did not seem surprised that he knew where she had been. "He's dead," she answered.

"How much o' thet hunnerd did he give ye?" he chuckled.

Almost vehemently she answered. "He didn't give me any,—said he spent it all last winter when he was traipsin' around with thet widder woman. He sent everybody out'n the room 'fore he told me," she continued, "said he was ashamed to tell me in front o' the others."

"Who was there?" queried her husband.

"Just Lem Turnbark, Nate Turno, Mario Spurgard, Liz Wettle, an' me. . . . Now let's go to sleep," she concluded with finality that discouraged any further conversation.

The next day Mr. and Mrs. Earl Stace attended the funeral of the uncle of Mrs. Stace. Hannah was the only relative left in the vicinity. There had been others,—five or six, but two or three had died, and the others had drifted away, probably to cities or other places beyond the horizon of Hannah Stace. The fact remains that Hannah Stace was the only known relative of that once spry old Hiram Hitchins, who at eighty-one had carried on with a widow twenty years his junior.

Earl, Hannah and a few neighbors made up the funeral procession as they carried the wooden coffin to the freshly dug

## *The Hoarders*

grave a few yards from the little shack the deceased had occupied for the twenty-five years since his father's death. There were no tears at the funeral. Dying is as natural to the hill folks as eating or sleeping. Except in cases of very young victims who have suffered either violent or sudden ends, tears are seldom shed.

Hannah took the most valuable possessions of her dead uncle home with her and left the shack to decay and collapse in peace. Door unlocked, the rotting building was left to be swallowed and forgotten in the vegetation that surrounded it. Hannah was the end of the Hitchins line in those hills. It was doubtful that any of her wandering sisters, if they were alive, would return to the meager existence of the hills after tasting life in other parts.

Summer turned to fall, the nights became chill, and mosquitos retired after a successful season. Sparse rains had fallen intermittently but never in abundance. The labor of Earl Stace, combined with the frugal, natural rain, had produced a fairly decent garden.

Hannah, who had also worked in the garden at times, was too occupied with preserving to calculate the amount of money their combined labor had rewarded them. She surmised that their crops had brought them something, but being of stubborn nature, would not condescend to inquire of her husband what the profits were.

After his harvest and after Hannah had preserved enough food to keep them through the winter months, Earl Stace found that his sales had increased his horde by only twenty-one dollars. The total of his horde was therefore only seventy dollars,—thirty dollars short of his goal. Because of this he was rather disappointed and for days was very grump and hard to get along with.

Hannah was at her wits' end and finally, jaw set, decided to tell her husband that she wanted a divorce.

Although a woman of hot temper and sharp tongue, in matters of importance she was very slow and deliberate in her decisions. She had lied about the inheritance of her uncle's money. For a man to spend a hundred dollars on a woman in those parts would necessitate buying the stores (both of them) out, lock, stock and barrel. Uncle Hiram never went farther than the village and the mail-order catalogue for his purchases, and besides, the widow did not seem to be extraordinarily supplied either in house or raiment.

Because of her deliberate nature Mrs. Stace kept postponing the crisis. They had been married eleven years and, although in a crude way, Hannah loved her husband. She did not know what she could do after the divorce. She would probably keep house for some of the older women of the town. This would give her a meager existence,—probably worse than her present life, but anything would be better than living with a man who did not show any signs of affection towards her.

Although each loved the other, neither Earl nor Hannah showed any external signs of this love. Consequently, each thought the other to be lacking in that God-given quality, which hackneyed as it may sound, "makes the world go 'round."

It was Friday. Earl was restless,—acting as though something heavy was on his mind. Hannah decided to tell him of her plan Sunday. Saturday it rained,—a chilly drizzle that made teeth chatter and bones ache. Mr. and Mrs. Stace were at home.

Their hovel,—floor cluttered with pans to catch the water that was leaking through the ceiling, was damp despite the fire in the ancient stove. Hannah felt and looked miserable . . . Her garments were damp, her feet cold; her stringy gray and black hair ineffectively pushed behind her ears, gave her the appear-

## *The Hoarders*

ance of a very wet, cold bird who knew not where to seek warmth and shelter.

Earl appeared to be rather uncomfortable himself, but in spite of this, was rather talkative. He broke the silence. "You know, Hannah . . ."

Hannah!! She stared at him . . . Why, he never called her Hannah. He usually just talked and expected her to listen.

"You know, Hannah,—we could use some shingles or tarpaper on the roof 'n' walls o' this shack."

She grunted a reply.

"I was goin' tew wait 'till next year, but I guess I'll tell ye now," he continued.

"Tell me what?" She asked, her eyes a little bright, her appearance a little less miserable.

"Wait here," he ordered, and then went out. In a few minutes, he returned, a little wetter, but very cheerful nevertheless. He produced the half-cannister tobacco tin, opened it and handed the money to his wife,—another unusual action for he had always controlled the purse strings. "Count it," he grinned. She obediently counted seventy dollars in paper money, her face showing almost no emotion. Only her eyes sparkled.

"I saved thet money dollar by dollar," announced Earl Stace rather pompously. "I'd figgered on waitin' 'till I hed a hunnerd dollars, but I reckon with a little scrimpin' 'n' savin' seventy'll do."

"Earl Stace, what on earth air you up to?" demanded his wife. She was alive now, unmindful of the rain,—doubtfully wondering about the divorce plans.

"Well y'see I figgered,—with a hunnerd dollars we c'd get 'nother car,—the one we got's pretty well done fur,—put a few shingles on the buildin's (he called the lean-to of a barn a building), an'—," he paused a half dozen seconds, "an' take a,

uh,—vacation,—sort of honeymoon,—y'know we never did get 'round t' doin' thet, Hannah."

"*Hannah*" again, was she hearing things?—Was her husband's mind weakening? It seemed too good to be true. Her man continued.

"But with only seventy dollars, we'll have t'let the shingles on the barn go fur 'nother year."

No divorce for Hannah now . . . If he had said to let the honeymoon go,—maybe it would have been different,—but not now. Something had changed her man and she liked it.

She smiled and said, "But Earl, what's makin' ye do all this? Why you never showed much 'fection towards me before."

"I didn't think thet there was any need t'act foolish if y'love someone," he replied.

"But what made ye change?" she returned.

"A dream Hannah,—a dream," he replied. "A year ago I dreamed you was dead, an' dad burn it I made up my mind to show a little o' thet love I've held inside me for so long. I made up my mind to save some money an' give yew a vacation b'fore y'really died. Maybe we c'n take a vacation ev'ry two or three years if we save enough money for it."

He was holding her hand, the sun broke through the clouds,—a bright, crisp, sparkling sunset reflecting on multi-colored leaves, glancing off dripping foliage, making a veritable panorama of rainbow colors on the trees and bushes of the valley.

This is not the end of the tale however. Hannah gently released herself from her husband's grasp and, ordering him to wait as he had done to her, went out. Upon returning a few moments later, she gave him a small roll of bills and triumphantly told him to count it.

"Why there's thutty dollars here," gasped her husband.

## *The Hoarders*

"Yes," she replied. "We won't have to scrimp 'n' save or cut corners now. We c'n do just ez you'd planned."

"Where'd you get it, Hannah?—You don't handle this much money in a year."

"Now you know right well Uncle Hiram wouldn't spent *all* o' his money on a widder woman. I was savin' it fer a surprise," she explained.

"I reckon we both surprised each other," he said.

"Well, you shore surprised me," she replied. And they both grinned at each other.





## Take, for Example, Wagner

By LIONEL J. LANDRY, '40

IN the book-section of a large New York paper I once was struck by an advertisement which jumped out at the reader and commanded him to "Know All About Culture and Art! Keep Up With Your Friends! Keep Your Conversation Abreast of the Times!" I often recall, wistfully, I must say, the strange discoveries of which that bold-typed advertisement was the cause. It caused me to find out, for instance, that culture is something that seeps in through the pores, not something to be tasted, chewed and digested, like Bacon's books. Culture is the by-product of work, not its direct result. It is not, as the advertisement would have us believe, an accumulation of factual matter or conversational topics.

Take, for example, Wagner. When I read that advertisement I became quite conscious, I remember, that I knew strikingly little about Wagner even though everyone else spoke in hushed and reverent tones about him and even though the Metropolitan seemed on the verge of inserting Isolde's role into all the French and Italian operas. It wouldn't have been surprising, in fact, to hear of *Pelléas and Isolde*, and here I was almost entirely ignorant about the whole thing. To me Brunnhilde was a negligible Amazon and the Walkyries were Brunnhilde in the plural. Wotan was probably Fricka's wife and just who Valhalla might be was more or less of a puzzle. There were, however, two titles of Wagnerian operas that I liked at first sight: one, *The*

### *Take, for Example, Wagner*

*Mastersingers of Nuremberg*—probably because I once belonged to the parish choir; the other, *Tristan und Isolde*—undoubtedly for reasons best known by the late Dr. Freud. But besides that—and I'll never forget the shock I experienced when they told me *Here Comes the Bride* was written by Wagner—I knew next to nothing about it all. When my cultured friends mentioned the eroticism of *Tristan* or the leitmotiven in *Siegfried*, I had always had to listen respectfully and be careful not to betray my abysmal ignorance. It was to remedy these failings, then, that I resolved to pursue the sacred paths of culture and to know all about Wagner.

Now there were two means at my disposal. I could read about Wagner or I could listen to Wagner concerts and Wagner operas on the radio. Reading, of course, was difficult. In the first place people who write about Wagner know all about him and make you painfully conscious of it. In the second place they presume that you know as much about him as they do. They exhaust their supply of superlatives on the *Siegfried Idyll* when all along you haven't the remotest idea what the *Siegfried Idyll* sounds like. They explain Wagner's great music as the expression of a dynamic, extraverted, unrepressed and positive personality, so that a course in Psychology 101 is required before you can understand not Wagner but the authors. However it seemed rather futile to read all about that music without first being familiar with it at least to some slight degree. That was where the radio entered into the scheme of things.

The announcers were not quite as stupefying as the writers, of course, but they were very erudite too. When they weren't giving the correct pronunciation of Kirsten Thorborg or Lauritz Melchior's names, they explained parts of the opera and gave an interesting little story of what went on in each act. At last I became enthusiastic. It was all beginning to presage that soon

something would dawn upon me. But in my eagerness to acquire the knowledge which would stamp my conversation as that of a cultured person, I literally glued my ear to the radio. And when I listened to five all-Wagner symphony concerts and one Wagner opera during the same week-end I must have unconsciously smothered off any infant liking for the great Richard that might have been given birth to previous to then. Gentlemen, I loathed Wagner.

But if I could not appreciate music and music-dramas, I was still determined to wrest my share of culture from the elements. If I could not be thrown into a cataleptic trance each time I heard the overture to *Parsifal* as all my cultured friends seemed able to do, I resolved that there was yet one way of appearing, hence being, I thought, cultured: having a knowledge of literature.

Now since it seemed that Dickens was hopelessly outmoded, Chesterton full of wearisome, bourgeois wit, and Kipling very God-save-the-King-ish, consequently the logical writers to read were the inevitable Gertrude Stein, e. e. cummings, and James (gromwelled, ichabod, habakuk, opanoff, uggamygg, hap-axle, gomenon, pppfff, over country stiles, etc.) Joyce, the leaders of the "new era" in literature. I must say that I felt slightly suspicious not of Miss Gertrude's sincerity, but rather of her sanity when I read: "There is a way to see in onion and surely, very surely rhubarb and a tomato surely very surely there is that seed-ing." I felt surely very surely much the same way I felt after my indigestion of Wagner. Edith Sitwell and e. e. cummings did not set well on my stomach, either. Mr. cummings wastes a great deal of paper by not running his lines to the right-hand margin of the page. Miss Sitwell just wastes a great deal of paper. She says, in her *Aubade*:

"Cockscomb hair on the cold wind  
Hangs limp, turns the weak milk's mind."

*Take, for Example, Wagner*

Then and there, gentlemen, I shouted, "God save Dickens and Chesterton and, yes, even Kipling."

Dickens spoke of "serpents of smoke" escaping from the tall chimneys of English mills where the "trampling wild elephants" of thumping machinery made themselves heard all through the day. Chesterton jests about his "respectable but honest" parents. Kipling insists on calling people names like Gunga Din and Fuzzy-Wuzzy. But none of them says "Opanoff ugga-myg" or weaves gorgeous tapestries of sound about the intelligence quotient of milk. In a word I finally rebelled, not only at the prospect of having to say "pppfff" soulfully to appear cultured, but even at the whole idea of looking for culture. I was aware at last that knowledge of artificial trivialities in no wise constituted culture any more than did the ability to dissect Wagner minutely, or to trace the family history of the zither.

Over and above all that my excursions into the realms of this modern super-culture revealed two interesting facts about cultured people. They revealed that:

(A) It is not impossible to find people who understand. They are those who go to all the latest plays and concerts, read the very latest books on criticism and the latest books on the latest poetry. They really like Jacob Epstein's *Christ* in spite of the statue's heroic feet. They are, as you see, very clever. *Nude Descending a Staircase* gives them quite a thrill. This shows how clever they are, for one has to be clever to see anything in that picture, let alone a nude. But I suppose that they have been taught certain sound principles of criticism which give them their powers of discernment. Sound critical powers, they lead one to think, can make them see beauty where we plebeian mortals merely see geometrical patterns or attempts at an Anglo-Saxon form of Esperanto. Good norms and criteria can make one gasp in admiration and say "Ageless!" or "Awfully good theatre!" or

"Ethel Merman has perfect diction," where we less fortunate others say, "I thought it was pretty good," and exclaim over Miss Merman's more obvious qualities. But that is our bad luck. We do not enjoy art as well as these people do. They are the cream.

(B) Some people who understand are impossible. They are the intellectuals. Intellectuals are people who may or may not understand the enigmas of modern art but who never tolerate any one who doesn't. Their ranks are divided into two factions who never trust each other: the high-church group and the Friends of the Soviet Union. They wax sentimental when they hear *When You and I Were Young, Maggie* in swing, but writhe when Mozart or Tschaikowski is rejuvenated—in the American sense of the word. They are the ones who wear culture like a mink coat and consider it in terms of appearance. In public they are usually incredibly lofty, impossibly lofty. They may understand the relativity theory, but you may be sure that they studied it not to quench a deep thirst for knowledge, but rather to satisfy an urge to shine at intellectual gatherings. These poor benighted souls don't know what enjoyment is. A beautiful portrait is quickly forgotten because it is merely a portrait. Some absolutely incomprehensible abstraction or some mottled cubistic painting will, on the other hand, intrigue them until they have found its "meaning". The only thing left to suppose is that they enjoy not enjoying anything.

Rationalization and conversation about a work of art is always beneficial, no doubt; but when intellectuals gather together and psychoanalyze an author or a composer, or consider in a work only that part which was ostensibly intended to be considered food for thought; when they neglect the purely enjoyable and see only the purely intellectual aspects of an art-work, they are defeating, I think, the very purpose of art and culture. Literature, music and sculpture were not first created in order to give

*Take, for Example, Wagner*

someone the occasion to take up the intellectual scalpel and to put to work his ability to dissect, but rather were based on an honest attempt to make man's crude life a little less drab, a little more interesting. They were created, even in the earliest beginning, for man's enjoyment.

Oh, well, in any case, there may come a day when I will enjoy a number of fine things, things meant, I hope, to be enjoyed as well as discussed; things meant to be liked as well as analyzed; things meant to appeal to man's senses as well as his little grey cells. Take, for example, Wagner.



## The Way of the Cross

By EDWARD KAYLOR, '41

**S**LOWLY the figure plodded down the street, his shoes sloshing with water at every step. He pulled the sodden rag that served as an overcoat more closely about him, and in glancing at it wondered if there was anything that would identify it as a tailored coat. Probably not. Even he had barely made out his name sewed on the label. Brent L. Knowles. A long cry from Knowles, the most spectacular broker the Street had ever known, to this. He twitched the coat about him again, well knowing the futility of trying to shut out the rawness of this wet, blustery March night.

March weather. How he hated it with its chill unfriendliness that seemed to breed a certain hardness in people. Too, the people in this New England town were rarely generous and frankly suspicious, so handouts were fewer and refusals more frequent and colder. He pulled his belt tighter and became painfully aware that it was already past the third hunger notch. He smiled thinly as he reflected on this method of gauging hunger . . . by notches.

As he walked, he watched the black, glistening road stream beneath his feet. Like watching the flow of a silent river. After a time it made him nauseated. Perhaps if he looked up . . . looked up. It was ages since he'd done that, ever since he'd been caught with the others on the mad merry-go-round that crashed to a sickening stop and pitched them out of the saddles. Porter

## *The Way of the Cross*

and Black had done the only thing . . . accidental deaths, too . . . except to those who knew them. He had been afraid, couldn't face the unknown. And now?

He felt the fine spray of the drizzle full against his face. It was cold and numbing. Overhead the swaying telephone wires shed silver droplets that flashed in an arc and settled into the road with a comfortable clucking sound. Curtains of drizzle eddied and swirled about the street lights. During a lull through the half curtained windows of a house set close to the road he saw a family at dinner.

About dinner time now—if you had a dinner to eat. He could see the smiles and the laughter, see the laden forks raised, disappear for a moment and then reappear empty. He clamped his jaws until they ached. Then the scene was blotted out. Patiently he waited for a shift in the wind but even the elements seemed to conspire against him.

Slowly Brent turned and shuffled on. What were they eating? His fevered mind pictured a chicken, a fantastically plump chicken with bursting breast and round fat legs surrounded by steaming mounds of snowy-white potatoes. He could feel the carving knife slice through its tender breast and saw the little ribbons of meat curl with the passage of the knife. That's when chicken was tender! He could smell the tantalizing spicy odor of dressing as it was ladled from the bird, saw swirling black coffee shade to a rich coffee color as he added cream, and felt the streaking swiftness as it burned its way into his stomach. There it churned madly. Gradually he became aware that it was not the drink but the empty churning of his stomach. His tongue slit the envelope tightness of his lips as if to catch the taste of his imaginary feast.

Head bent, chin tucked in, Brent shuffled on through puddles that were alternately rippled and becalmed, past shivering



trees with paralytic arms bent heavenward. A tree that looks to God all day—and shivers, he paraphrased. Bitter? he asked himself with detached wonderment. Slowly, deliberately, he answered himself. Once, yes. How he had raved but he soon realized that was futile. You can't revile someone you don't know, and that's what he had done. After the first blaze of rebellion against the injustices done him the fire burned low and now there was nothing but ashes. Ashes of resignation and weariness.

There were more houses now. Close by he heard the banging of a loose shutter as the wind toyed with it; branches swayed and creaked before the tireless rush of the wind. The ragged tails of his coat flapped wildly behind him and sometimes whipped around his knees as though to trip him. His blood felt thick, thick and frozen. God, if he only had some place to stay, some place deliciously warm and comfortable; any one of these houses for instance. His mind rejected the thought as sluggishly as it had developed. No place for a derelict he reminded himself.

Brent's walk was now mechanical, devoid of effort, without consciousness. Tortured muscles had long since ceased to cry out, and now there was a blessed numbness accompanied by a peculiar headiness and giddy feeling. He was barely conscious of water sloshing between his toes, of the furious grinding in his stomach. He hardly touched the ground as he walked.

Fewer houses, and brightly lighted stores marked the beginning of the business section of the city. Clerks were hurriedly restocking and arranging their counters before the closing bell sounded. Through the latticework of deep purple and lustral white ribbanding forming the background of the window, Brent could see them scurrying about. Like mice, he muttered, fed mice, sleek and shiny mice. He couldn't even become a mouse.

His attention was drawn to the vivid green strips carpeting the floor and yellow crocuses scattered about. In the center

## *The Way of the Cross*

was a gracefully tall lily proudly conscious of its importance. As if transfixed from life were crouching rabbits and stiff legged, fluffy chickens. Cunningly placed they seemed to be grudgingly admiring the queenly grace of the lily. Delicately tinted eggs nestled in woven baskets filled with green straw.

Rabbits? He'd owned a rabbit once, but a rat killed it. With startling vividness he saw the stiff little body with its white neck stained red. Not much blood, just two little holes where the rat had seized it. And those fluffy chickens, yellow bodies, red bills and red legs; what funny-looking things. Whoever saw purple eggs and pink eggs. Ridiculous, ridiculous, the whole thing was ridiculous.

The word seemed to cast a spell over him, for he repeated it and repeated it until his head clanged with each new utterance. His eyes seemed to turn inward, and he saw them looming monstrously large. Cautiously, as though afraid that his head would split open, he shook his head in his hands.

Brent shuffled on. The clanging was replaced by the tinkling musical sound of a slanting drizzle dimpling puddles of water. Blindly he turned down the first intersecting street. Though aware his feet were not behaving properly he was powerless to control them. He staggered against a fence and the shock brought to him the reality of things, of the cold, his hunger and the new stabbing pain in his shoulder.

A passing couple gave him a wide berth.

"Ain't it simply awful?"

"Yeah, kinda tuff. Me now, I'm different, when I" . . .

"I'll bet you are" . . .

The wind snatched the words from their mouths as if unwilling the derelict should hear more. Drunk, eh? Brent felt that he could smile but for the grinding pain of twisting muscles. Still clutching the fence he looked down the street and a short

distance ahead saw colored figures shining through, then disappearing behind gusts of rain. Doubting his senses, he slowly made his way to a huge gray building. At times it seemed to be part of the night, then he would see its rugged outlines. As he gazed a door opened and a woman came down the steps, slipping something in her purse. She glanced at him, snapped shut her purse and crossed the street.

The shaft of light as she had opened the door played on the object in her hands. To Brent they seemed to be a string of beads. Beads . . . what were the beads for? What was this building that had stained windows? The answer developed with maddening slowness. Half-formed ideas tugged responses but he rejected each in turn. Suddenly spires towering to meet the sky. Of course, straightening he looked up and, through a rift in the clouds, saw a church. Why hadn't he thought of that before?

An automobile swung around the corner, skidding drunkenly, lurched aright, and went roaring down the road. The headlights picked him out as it sped by. The tires meeting the road made that eerie sucking noise that grows into a high-pitched whine and gradually fades with distance. The red tail-light winked faintly and disappeared.

Brent paused irresolute. In there it would be warm, comfortable, but . . . a church. Surely there must be other places, but were there? Fool pride, he thought, and cursing it, climbed the stone steps. The doors retreated before his slow advance and then rushed forward, bulging hideously. He swayed momentarily, lurched the remaining distance and clung to the great bronze doors. Soft enveloping arms seemed to enfold him as the world rocked and reeled in dizzy rhythm. Slowly the sickening motion ceased, but he was weak and trembling.

Bit by bit the doors yielded to his insistent pulling until there was space enough to admit his body. He slipped inside and

## *The Way of the Cross*

paused uncertainly in the grim bareness of the vestibule. There was none of the warmth he'd hoped for. Perhaps inside . . . ? A relic of a hat came off as he swung the inner doors.

Soft, billowy clouds of warmth caressed him as he stepped inside. As if in a dream, he stood still absorbing the exquisite sensation, and then slipped into the last pew where he crouched deep back into the corner. He couldn't be seen there. Furtively he slipped one hand down, feeling for the pipes that ought to run next to the wall. Yes, they were there. He slid from his seat into a kneeling position and pressed close to the pipes. After a time the numbness gave way to a kindling warmth that made him drowsy. Succumbing to the languor that was stealing over him he yawned. Ohh—ohhhhhhhh—what luxury to yawn. It was so—good—here—everything—so quiet.

His eyelids fluttered, then closed. As if too heavy to support, his head lolled on his shoulders and gently came to rest against the pew in front of him.

The reverent calm that brooded over the church was disturbed only by the sputtering candles and the sibilant sounds of the religious intent on prayer. Even the usually noisy hiss of escaping steam was subdued to a barely audible murmur. Far down in the front of the church were two small bulbs glowing in milky transparent globes. The light from them sharply defined the first few pews while the remainder were enveloped in restful shadows. Scarcely discernible pillars towered into the thickening gloom of the vault high above.

Brent felt as though he were effortlessly swimming through a void, rising until the motion ceased with a gentle bump. He mouthed a gusty yawn that swept throughout the quiet, gradually becoming fainter until it blended with the listening shadows. He dug his fists into his eyes to shatter the clinging threads of sleep and looked around him.

There were more people in church and the outer doors were creaking with regularity. Leather heels clicked on the stone flagging and the inner doors swung open to admit blasts of cold air that played at his ankles. Much of the cold was absorbed by the resisting warmth. He smiled as he thought of the impotency of the night to reach him. Like a child incredulous of his good fortune, he squirmed about in his seat and snuggled deeper into his steaming clothes.

Luxuriating in his new found comfort, Brent contrasted his present surrounding with those of the day. He recalled the grudging consent of the crusty old farmer when asked if he might stay in the barn, and the parting admonition, "No smokin' in there". No smoking—the old man didn't know that you smoked only on dry days when you could salvage enough tobacco from butts. Even if the barn did burn up it would be a small loss. There were chinks big enough to admit the first darting flight of spring's swallows; countless chickens scratched in the piles of horse and cow dung, and tangled piles of harness with its musty smell lay scattered about. Overpowering the clean, sweet smell of the hay in the loft was the stench of new and old rotting manure. Pigeons cooed incessantly and fluttered wildly as he approached and the chickens clucked nervously whenever he moved towards them. Only the dun-colored mare made the slightest friendly gesture, for it whinnied as he stopped caressing the velvety muzzle.

Cold, draughty, it was little protection, but still—some. But here—ahhhh. There was warmth, a serene quiet and protective shadows. The people at prayer seemed lifted out of the harshness of their daily lives as they communed with their God. Even the noisy candles seemed to carry a message of kindness and cheer. Faintly a scent of burning incense reached him. He felt that he would like to pray.

## *The Way of the Cross*

As the people rapidly filled the church the floodgates of boyhood memories burst wide and a wave of tender remembrances swept over him. With vivid clearness he saw his mother slipping on the white starched waist with its frilled collar and nacre buttons iridescent in the morning sunlight, and the black velvet knee pants and black ribbed stockings. The glistening patent leather pumps were Sunday shoes. They always left early so there would be no cause for hurrying.

Reluctantly he climbed the church steps and filed into the wooden pews that made him ache so. More often than not, drowsy with the warm sun streaming on him and lulled by the sonorous voice of Reverend Allwood, he fell asleep. Following the services friendly greetings were exchanged and small talk began but his mother took little part. She was quiet almost to the point of being self-effacing and she . . . Abruptly the reverie ended as a man genuflected beside the pew before striding in.

Startled into wakefulness by the elusive familiarity of the action he strove to definitely place it. In a blinding flash he remembered Black doing this very thing when they'd dropped in at his church one night. Then—he was in a Catholic church! Clutching his hat he rose swiftly but sank back into his seat as the lights whirled dizzily and the seats tipped on end. Oh God . . .

From the mass of confused thought there grew a gently chiding truth. He had died for Mankind, not for Catholic, Protestant or Jew. Differences in religion were man-made and the barriers of bigotry and intolerance were erected as a means of defense for the creed in which each believed. Had not He given all the same human body with its weaknesses and strength, the same soul with its plumbless depth of suffering and joy? The sunset was as beautiful whether seen by Protestant, Catholic or Jew. Did they not rejoice alike in happiness, sorrow, suffering?

Ahh no, universal accord in any one thing, most of all religion, was impossible.

In the spirit of thought and self-expression, a spark that warmed his entire being flared into a steady bright flame. Never were his thoughts so crystal clear and shining as now. He felt that he had a part in the scheme of things, that he was beginning to live again.

The church was lighted now and nearly all the pews were filled. A girl in a luxurious fur coat, the collar carelessly tossed back, sat in front of him. From it rose waves of perfume, heavy, intoxicatingly sweet, like the drenching fragrance of a huge cluster of lilacs. He moved forward in his seat to better catch the odor and, as if uncontrollable, his hand slyly touched the fur. He almost laughed aloud at its suggestive softness.

As he did there was a knowing cough from his right and Brent jerked his hand away as if the fur had become alive under his touch. A dull red flush mounted beneath the stubble of beard and though he hung his head to cover his confusion it but served to emphasize it. He wished he might crawl out beneath the seat.

Contemptuously his neighbor regarded him and wondered what this, this thing, was doing in a place of worship. He saw the thick matted hair tumbling about in the wildest confusion; fringe-like it hung over the collar of his filthy coat. From it rose steam and a strong odor as if he'd been unwashed in weeks, and probably had, thought the man. The cheeks were lean and drawn and there was a desperate tightness about the lips. The blue veins bulging beneath the sickly grayness of the clenched hands sickened him. Why, there was scarcely enough skin to cover the man. He wished he had sat in some other seat.

In turn Brent scanned his neighbor. The quiet strength in his rugged features, the confidence and poise that grows with



## *The Way of the Cross*

success set well with him. Probably a successful business man—the kind that didn't understand failure.

A new arrival, a woman in a severely plain black coat with bedraggled fur collar, plumped herself beside the girl in the fur coat. She knelt, blessed herself with short, jerky movements and in a trice had concluded her prayers and was glancing around. Brent noted the sharp, all-seeing eyes behind the steel-rimmed glasses that were perched atop a long thin nose. The lean angularity of every feature suggested the attitude "Everybody's business is my business." He was glad he didn't sit next to her.

He watched her scan her neighbor and sensed the contemptuous sniff as she flounced away. The same flush that had reddened him crept up his neck and lost itself in the thick coils of hair . . . and then he knew. The realization that there were others whose lives of utter hopelessness and wasted capacity were not unlike his own was like a balm on an aching hurt. He felt there was a bond of sympathy between them. From the sermons of yesteryear he recalled the story of the Master raising the greatest sinner of His day from the dust at His feet—Mary Magdalene.

He was surprised and abashed to realize that he could so swiftly resurrect the past he had once completely renounced.

Overhead was a click and a slight whining noise that faded into silence as an expectant hush fell over the congregation. From the choir loft, petal-like, a melody unfolded its beauty. To Brent it was a land of enchantment where beautiful dreams come true and every nerve was strained to absorb its sweetness. Chime-like the lingering silvery notes of the soloist seemed to live in the air as they did in Brent's heart. The girl in the fur coat sat with bowed head, the other fidgeted impatiently. With a sigh of resignation the business man returned the watch to his pocket.

The scraping of feet and the sound of many moving bodies roused Brent; he stood up as the congregation knelt. Feeling a



little foolish he followed their actions and from afar heard a low-pitched voice mumbling some prayers. Straining his head above those bowed he saw a number of boys dressed in simple black cassocks relieved by the white lace collars; they were grouped on the altar about a kneeling figure. All of them bore candles except the tallest who carried a wooden cross with the figure of the Saviour nailed to it.

The priest, carrying a little black bound book, rose and the boys formed a procession, with the crucifix leading. They walked into the center aisle and halted at a short distance from the altar. The priest faced the left of the church and announced:

"The first station, Jesus is condemned to death."

The stations of the cross, then this was Lent; the services he'd attended with Black that day. He hadn't given them much thought at that time; too many other things occupied his mind. Perhaps—perhaps that's where the trouble lay.

With a suddenness that was shocking, he recalled the colored eggs, rabbits and Easter lily; it would soon be Easter! Then this day was—racking his mind he tried to recall the exact day. A picture of a bakery window with its crusted brown hot cross buns jolted his mind into recognition. This was Friday—Good Friday. He felt inexplicably terrified and thrilled.

The priest was kneeling as was the congregation. All were facing the left of the church apparently looking at something. Looking up, Brent saw a number of plaques depicting the agonizing journey to Calvary. In the general movement Brent heard but a few words of the priest as he read— ". . . Thee . . . Christ . . . Bless." There was a swelling murmured response with the spinster generously contributing in a loud, flat voice, "Because of Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world."

The procession moved forward a few paces to the sad refrain of the choir. "Heart of Jesus pierced through . . .".

"The second station, Jesus is made to bear His cross."

## *The Way of the Cross*

Again the momentary kneeling and the response to the priest's words which were now clearer. It sounded as though he had said, "We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee."

He continued reading the message designed for that station. ". . . in making this journey with . . . cross on . . . shoulders thought of us . . . offered to His Father the death He was about to undergo."

The gulf between earthly and spiritual things was lessening and Brent felt moved by a strange blend of humility and exaltation. He was ashamed of having railed against Him.

The congregation genuflected and responded in hushed voices, "By Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world."

The priest was reading—"I embrace all the tribulations Thou hast destined for me until death." The bearded lips repeated the words as the priest continued—" . . . give me the necessary strength to carry my cross with perfect patience and resignation."

At the third station Brent heard—" . . . by Thy merits of this great fall deliver me from the misfortune of falling again." The words trailed off as Brent pictured the Saviour, head bowed low, exquisite agony in every line of His face. The monstrous cross was crushing Him beneath its weight. Would he rise—again?

Voices rose in muffled unison—"Hail Mary, full of grace . . ."

The fourth station now. ". . . And thou, my queen, who wast overwhelmed with sorrow . . ."

The Holy Mother. What sufferings must have been hers to see her only-begotten Son dragged through the streets, beaten, scourged, spat upon, mocked and hooted at by the rabble. In her was the epitome of the sorrows of all mothers. Mother of Sorrows—how beautiful that sounded.

The altar boys moved slowly down the aisle, the flame of

the candles flickering wildly. Their faces, shiny with scrubbing, were unnaturally grave; their eyes stared vacuously at distant points in the church, or gazed fixedly at the floor. Above, the choir was singing, "Heart of Jesus . . ."

" . . . constrained Simon the Cyrenian to carry the cross behind our Lord."

With cameo clearness he pictured the Master toiling up the Mount, stumbling, falling, beneath the weight of the cross; He had to be helped with His burden. To whom could he turn, save Him. The thought tapped the fount of welling pity and sympathy he had subconsciously felt for Him and the spring of emotion overflowed into a fervent expression of love and devotion. Its emotional strength seemed to cleanse and strengthen Him. His voice rang clear—"Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world."

Impatiently he waited for the message of the sixth station; raptly attentive he absorbed every word. The oft-repeated quotation at the end of each office he heard as if for the first time. "Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt."

Meekly his head bowed, "Do with me what Thou wilt."

The procession was opposite him. Gazing at the station just above his head, Brent felt the eyes of the tired Saviour, falling for the second time, falling on him. He was looking at him with such intensity of pity and tenderness. Did he imagine or did he see His lips move; did he imagine or did he hear Him say, "This day thou shalt be with Me in heaven"? He shook uncontrollably.

The girl in the fur coat knew an ineffable pity for the shaking derelict. She wished she might do something. Money? That was it, but there would be time enough after the services.

The other stared at him with venomous intensity and hurled a demand to the heavens that this drunken lout be pun-

## *The Way of the Cross*

ished for defiling the holy house. Faint splotches of color marked her cheeks in her righteous anger. She longed to reach over and slap his drunken face. Primly she recalled her prayer; she was satisfied she'd done her duty.

The business man shifted uncomfortably. He wished they'd hurry so the stations on the other side could be said. He couldn't see "him" then. Beneath his contempt he was vaguely uneasy.

Once turned towards the opposite side Brent regained control of himself but it was accomplished with an effort. He was just a little tired now; perhaps he'd been thinking too much. More likely his hunger weakened him. Strange how he didn't feel so hungry now and up to this time he'd completely forgotten it.

"Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem."

Brent thought the voice weary, almost bored, but that couldn't be. Why this was so beautiful; it was a living dream. A dream that might become a reality.

Funny how he didn't hear much at that station. He didn't hear much, perhaps it was because he was beginning to tire. Try to throw it off, but it seemed to be growing. The voice was getting fainter. Querulously he wondered why the priest didn't read louder, he wouldn't be heard unless he did.

"Consider—fall of Jesus. His weakness was extreme—cruelty of his executioners excessive, who tried to hasten His steps when . . . scarcely had strength to move."

A tired smile spread over his face. Even He was tired—could scarcely move. He wondered if he felt as tired as the Master had.

It was with an obvious effort that he genuflected at the tenth station, taking a longer time to rise again. A languorous feeling, as when he'd first came in, was creeping over him, only this was more blissful. Almost as though he was floating.

Slowly he raised himself, his hands clutching the pew in front of him. Desperately he tried to marshall his faculties but they seemed as elusive as the wisps of smoke drifting from the candles.

If he weren't so tired he'd tell the priest to read louder. He could hardly hear him. It sounded as though he had said, ". . . help me strip—self of all affections to earth—that I may place all my love in Thee . . ."

That was right, things of the earth—no use any longer. He had placed his love in Him—the Man Who redeemed the world. Perhaps, perhaps He might have some love for him. He smiled at the thought. Who could love him now? Long ago maybe—but—now?

He was—he was drifting—drifting. Above the people. They were rooted to earth but he was moving—floating—softness—quiet—peace.

His face shone, his eyes were wide with a wondrous light.

From afar came the murmur of the priest—"extended His hands and offered to His eternal father the sacrifice of His life for our salvation.

A whisper reached him as the congregation genuflected at the twelfth station but he remained standing.

The whisper grew into a whirring sound, as the beating of tiny thousands of wings. The floating sensation became a rushing flight. He was travelling—away—he couldn't stop. He was going up—up—up—to someone. He who had looked on him with such pity . . . He was welcoming him—the derelict was welcomed. What—what was He saying . . . The ineffable kindness of the soft greeting words was a benediction.

"I too, have hungered and thirsted."

". . . consumed at length with anguish, abandons Himself to the weight of His body, and dies."

## A Veteran's Tale

By MATTHEW P. GALLAGHER, '41

I ASKED him what he thought of war—that veteran of the Argonne “hell.” I watched his scarred face twitch as he turned his head and sighed almost inaudibly. He spoke harshly and his eyes blinked incessantly. His story has always impressed me as a great condemnation of war; an odium which divulges a terrible and widely overlooked aspect of mortal combat. This is the way I heard it from his lips:

“I remember . . .,” he started, and his voice trailed off. “My ‘buddy’ had hung on the wires a day and a night before he died. His screams were still in my ears when we went ‘over the top’ at dawn. I had watched him all night—I couldn’t sleep. I could see him twisting and hear his groans, but I couldn’t shoot him. I would have if my mind was straight but in war one’s half crazy. I just watched him and prayed. I think I even hoped that somehow he would be saved. I tried to reach him once, fool that I was. But I was glad when his groans ceased and he stopped twitching on the tangled barbed wire. His agony was over.

“We were waiting now for the attack. I was sick; I felt like vomiting. I pressed up against the trembling earthworks and watched the lieutenant. His hand shook a little as he looked at his watch. He had been a lawyer back in my home town but I couldn’t remember his name now—that was funny. The home town seemed hazy and unreal. The only real things were guns and blood. Then the barrage lifted. A whistle sounded and

everybody started to yell and climb out of the trenches. A man fell back on top of me and knocked me down. It was Corporal Fears. He was dead even before he started. I climbed out again and started to yell. A man slipped into a shell hole ahead of me and I followed him in. Another man was there and the three of us moved out and kept running ahead. They were ahead of me and to the left. There was a blinding flash before my eyes and a terrific concussion. When I picked myself up my companions had disappeared. They had been literally blown to bits. I heard screams and firing. Then I ran for what seemed an eternity. Men dropped here and there; bullets whistled past; over to my right a hand grenade blew a man's arm off. He rolled around on the ground and shrieked inhumanly. I fell into another hole. I guess it was the enemy trench. Other men were around me all running forward. The Germans were retreating. My corporal was dead and I had lost track of my platoon leader, so I didn't know where I was. I crawled out of that trench and moved on. Shells were beginning to drop around me. Now I stumbled over dead men and parts of bodies. A great crater loomed before me and I slid into it.

"Almost directly in front of me I saw the figure of a man—clad in the Prussian gray. Although startled I had presence of mind enough to jump to one side and thrust forward with my bayonet. It was not until then that I perceived that he was unarmed and bleeding from a shoulder wound. But he did not cower and cry for mercy. He was kneeling and in his hand he held a rosary. His eyes looked into mine but I could not meet his gaze. My mind was clouded with the craze of war. It told me, 'Kill, kill,—or be killed.' I looked down to avoid those haggard young eyes and shoved my bayonet into his belly. And he coughed and gurgled and his coat turned red. An he grasped the bayonet convulsively and looked at me with a pained expression. Oh!

### *A Veteran's Tale*

those eyes; that look! 'Why could you not stay your hand?' it asked. 'I was unarmed and in prayer. I have a family and a mother and a wife whose heart will bleed just as mine is bleeding now. Why did you kill me?' All this he said to me, but he spoke not a word. God! I can't forget that look. I have wished a million times that I had been the one to die. Even then in the heat of battle I crouched beside him and told him I was sorry. Foolish words! In his pocket there was a picture of his wife and child. See, I have them here."

The soldier handed me a frayed picture of a smiling woman holding on her lap a little boy. In her face was reflected all the happiness of a young wife and mother. The soldier's eyes were wet.

"I wonder if I have been the cause of her death too," he mused, almost to himself. "And her husband . . . Ever since that terrible dawn I have not taken a breath but that I have thought that he too should be breathing this air. He should be enjoying the life that I took from him. Those eyes of his have never left me. I can see them now just as clearly as on that murky morning in France when the cold steel tore into his vitals.

"Son, you've asked me what I think of war. I can only say that, if you could know the horror of having killed a man, if you could feel those eyes that have haunted me for twenty years, if only you had seen that look,—you would be eloquently answered."



## Loss and Profit

By JOHN HOULIHAN, '40

A wind disturbed my simple thoughtless peace;  
A gale from sea blew with it heavy thought  
That forced meditation on the mighty wreckage wrought  
Upon the comrades of my walk, a restless grave of trees.  
  
I deemed their wood too hallowed, their roots too deeply sod  
To give away to wind and rain that fostered them for years.  
But years are naught to timeless powers and God in seconds seres  
What He gave life from seed and soil and fed in fertile clod.  
  
I thought to live in ease and quiet and never think of pain;  
I thought to harvest fertile crops and never ask for rain.  
I thought I knew what beauty was 'til You walked in my lane.  
I looked to lesser things than You and found my love in vain.

## Lesson in Liquid

By JOHN T. HAYES, '40

THE rain beat hollowly on the tin roof, and a gentle breeze moved the moist morning air. No bird sang and nothing disturbed the quiet of the morning save the occasional honking cry of a passing fish peddler on the street below.

My cousin Lifter never had shown any fondness for fish, so I suppose the morning's price quotation on cod and mackerel was of very little interest to him. At the moment at least, nothing interested him, for he was cradled in a fitful slumber as he tossed and turned on his narrow bed. At regular intervals he moaned and beat at the air with his fists. Then he would make a wheezing, whirring noise, like an antiquated siren, and plunge his head hurriedly beneath his pillow.

"Crazy as hell," I muttered. "Poor devil certainly has some beautiful hangovers."

As I sat there gazing with feelings of mixed amusement and pity at this highly agile and acrobatic sleeper, he opened his eyes. Slowly they opened, and then closed quickly. Lifter groaned. Groan followed groan in quick succession. Once or twice he tried to raise himself to a sitting position, only to sink back into the feathery recesses of his pillow. Then with an almost superhuman effort he raised himself slowly, bit by bit, until he sat on the edge of the bed with his legs dangling over the side.

Now this is no mean accomplishment. Let those snicker who will. They are our sober-sided citizens, and no doubt the

country has need of them, but they know nothing of the heroic will-power necessary to force a frail human body to hoist a head, seemingly as big as a zeppelin, to an upright position. They know nothing of the tremendous effort required to keep such an inflated head anchored to such a body. Lifter did, and with both hands he clutched his head to its mooring.

For some moments he sat on the side of the bed, swaying rhythmically from side to side. Then he rose shakily to his feet, successfully negotiated a perilous course toward the window, groped for the shade, missed it; tried again, and missed again. The third grope was successful. His hand closed around the shade cord, and he began pulling it slowly downward. Half-way down he loosened his hold and the curtain shot up, hitting the top of the window with a cannon-like report and leaving the cord dangling hopelessly out of reach.

Now I have heard it said, and on good authority, that those addicted to profanity suffer from a lack of vocabulary. If this is true, Lifter would be unable to carry on a conversation with a backward first grader, since, for the next sixty seconds he let go a broadside of words black enough and bitter enough to cause a miniature eclipse of the sun. After sixty seconds, he weakened a little, and began to repeat himself. Soon his throaty cursings became softer and finally died away to a mumble.

"Steady, steady, old man," I said rising, and taking hold of his arm as he turned from the quickly blueing window. "A little rest, and maybe a little drink, and you'll be as good as new."

"Drink, little drink," he hissed. "So help me, Walter, if I ever so much as look at that foul treacherous stuff again, so help me—so help me—I'll—I'll——" He became speechless and was unable to say what he would do if ever he imbibed again. He broke away from my supporting arms and clutched wildly at his head and eased himself once more to the bed. There he

### *Lesson in Liquid*

sat and stared at me, as if seeing me for the first time. I could not be exactly sure that he saw me, for it was some minutes before he could bring his eyes to focus, and he blinked continually. His face was pallid and unshaven. I would hardly have been surprised, had his eyes dissolved and trickled from their sockets. Finally catching me in focus, his brow wrinkled into a frown that was rather frightening. He looked at me intently, then swayed forward, shook his head sharply, and I knew that he had lost focus once more. With a sigh he gave up and sank back on the bed.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"Well, listen——"

"You're my pal, aren't you?" he interrupted.

"Why certainly," I said reassuringly, and to clinch the point I went on to say that perhaps I always would be.

"Well then," he said, raising himself on one elbow, and pointing in circular sweeping motions of his index finger, "pull that——" and for the second time that morning the air was rent with a rapid and all-inclusive blast of profanity. I rose quickly and pulled the shade.

"Thanks, Walt," he said, sinking back on the pillow, "I can't stand having the sun shining in my eyes." I shook my head sadly, for the rain continued to beat hollowly on the tin roof.

"Come, old man," I said coaxingly, "Do have a drink. It'll do you a world of good."

"O. K., Walt, but just one."

Now I am no nurse-maid, and I was not watching over Lifter from any purely humanitarian motive. I had been out with him the previous night, and I was not feeling any too gay myself. I had tipped the cup of good cheer, but Lifter had swallowed the bottle. He had swallowed the bottle, glass, cork and label. But now Lifter was in trouble, for I had received a tele-

phone call that morning from one Ronnie Robinson, which sent me post haste to the bed-side of my cousin.

The drink seemed to brace him a bit, so I plunged immediately into the heart of my mission.

"Listen, Liffey," I began, "What do you remember about last night?"

His hand crossed his brow for the hundredth time that morning. "It was Four Roses, wasn't it. Quart, maybe two quarts?"

"Yes," I said impatiently, "Yes, but Ronnie, Ronnie, does that name bring a faint beam of light on your memory?"

"Ronnie," he echoed slowly. "Yes, it does. Didn't she do some sort of an Indian dance atop our table? Quite a leg as I remember her."

"Leg, leg," I moaned, "Listen, Liffey, last night you walked out of this room engaged to one girl. Early this morning we carried you back, engaged to two."

He looked at me blankly. "Back up a bit. What's this you say, engaged to two girls?"

"Yes, in addition to Shirley, you are now engaged to Ronnie." I laughed dryly.

"But I only remember her leg," he said pleadingly, "I couldn't possibly have become engaged to a leg." He looked pathetic. "Tell me," he asked, "What happened?"

"What happened?" I said angrily. "How do I know what happened. After this leg danced atop the table, you persuaded it to sit and talk with you."

"Was I drunk?" he asked.

"Do you remember what happened?" I asked accusingly.

He hung his head, and moaned.

"Well," I continued, "she seemed rather lukewarm toward you at first. It was not until you began telling her of a pet

*Lesson in Liquid*

cat you once had, and then insisted on getting down on all fours, arching your back against her legs and purring, that she was completely swept off her feet. Shortly after that she took you for a walk in the garden. She came back announcing her engagement to you. You came back brandishing a pine bough in the air, and shouting that a monster had attacked Ronnie, and you had driven it back into the woods. Lord, what a fool you made of yourself. Beating back monsters with pine boughs."

"Oh, oh, oh, oh," he moaned hopelessly. "Engaged to two girls. Flames of hell, but this is terrible."

"It's bigamy," I corrected.

"It's got to stop," he said, "I can't afford two wives, and think——"

The telephone interrupted him.

I picked up the gadget. "Hello. Yes."

"It's Ronnie," I said dismally. "Here you take it."

He came back from the phone, and he was shaking visibly.

"What now?" I asked.

"She wants me to have dinner with her at the Casino."

"Well?"

"Well, I already have a dinner engagement with Shirley, and it's at the Casino. What the devil can I do now?"

"I give up," I said wearily. "Marry them both and sail for Egypt, and in the meantime I'll be downstairs."

Lifter was dressing as I left the room. The door-bell rang when I was half-way down the stairs. My heart missed a number of important ticks when I opened the door, for there stood Ronnie, smiling, practically oozing self-assurance.

"Is Liffey in?" she asked.

"In! I'll say he's in," I shouted at her. "He's in a bloody lot of trouble, you and your leg."

"My what?" she asked shrilly.

I saw my mistake in technique.

"I beg your pardon, I am rather upset. Please come in."

She did. She rushed in. I closed the door and turned, and there she stood hands on hips, eyeing me with cold dislike. It was quite evident that I was in for a session.

"Now," she began, in a low, hard voice, "What's all this talk about trouble, and my legs? What is the trouble with my legs?"

I glanced at them for the fourth time since she had stormed in, and for the fourth time I was forced to admit that they were quite all right. "It isn't just your legs," I explained. "It's your getting engaged to Lifter that is going to cause an explosion."

"Explosion?" she echoed, "Explosion? Listen Mister, you're talking in circles."

At this moment Lifter came into the room. With a happy little cry, Ronnie ran to him, and threw her arms around his neck. Across her shoulder Lifter looked at me out of eyes that were red-rimmed and hopeless.

"What's that awful man saying about legs?" she asked him, keeping one arm about his neck and waving in my direction with the other. "He has done nothing but insult me."

They both looked at me questioningly.

"Listen, cousin," I began, "Why don't you tell the girl that——"

The door-bell rang again. I excused myself and went to the door. When I returned I ushered in a bomb, a bomb in the person of one Shirley Gordon, Lifter's first choice for a wife. I ushered her in, my duty was done; I left her there to explode, for she found Lifter in a clinch that she never should have found him in. I was just running down the back steps when the explosion came. From there on I flew.

It was a week before I heard from Lifter. He called by phone to tell me that everything was settled.

*Lesson in Liquid*

"Peacefully?" I asked.

"Well, rather," he answered.

"I'll be out in another couple of weeks," he continued, "and then we can celebrate my deliverance properly."

"Out?" I asked wonderingly. "Out of where?"

And over the wire came the one all-meaningful word, "Hospital", and I knew that Lifter had paid dearly, but not unjoyfully the price of his deliverance.





## Charles Peguy

By FRANCIS LEHNER, '40

IN her book, *Catholic Literary France*, Sister Jerome Keeler, O. S. B. finds that "Péguy, both man and artist, is quite enigmatic." Must we believe this very completely without attempting to find a veritable account of the character of a man the most esteemed by modern French critics? I mean that we must be careful in considering such a sentence. Certainly Sister Jerome must know her subject well enough, but her statement demands a bit of reflection, a bit of thought.

In the first place, Péguy seems to be the French Dante. His whole life and all his ideas are curiously parallel to those of the Italian whose life was passed in a period when one did not pursue too rigorously difficult matters in which justice and charity were concerned. In both cases we find that species of pride which leads ideas to action and inevitably to exile. Like Dante, Péguy suffered from separation from his fellow-citizens. Like Dante, it was only after the completion of his masterpiece that he was esteemed and beloved.

Born in Orléans in 1873, in the parish of St-Aignan, of a family of Beauceron origin, Charles Péguy learned the beautiful history of France from his unlettered and uncultivated grandmother. Since his father had been dead for some time the task of providing for the family fell upon the shoulders of his mother, who caned the chairs of the cathedral for a living. His visits as a child to this temple inspired him with a special devotion for

Charles Péguy

St. Joan of Arc, whom Péguy chose as his model for his life's work, the valiant saint who so furthered the cause of France as well as, not to say consequently, that of the Catholic Church.

That Péguy was obsessed by this admiration of his native land we learn from André Suarès: "I see once more the suburb of Orléans, where he was born, and the Loire-country where he grew. He loved the Beauce more than all other provinces because of the wheat of the plain and of Notre-Dame, the purest of cathedrals on the plateau of Chartres, everywhere, on the horizon. As he loved the Beauce, so he admired the Brie. These two lands ever afterwards became really his own: having left the one he entered the other. There, he sleeps, like a great worker."

The precocious child attended the then recently laicized primary school and his parish catechism classes, taking everything equally seriously. Then intelligent guidance led him to the lycée of Orléans, and later to the *Lycée Lakanal* and the *collège* of Sainte-Barbe. Impassioned in his study of antiquity—the chief interest of Dante—he transferred to the present day the great lessons of the past. At the *Ecole Normale* he seemed more occupied with building a model of the city of the future, following a purely socialistic doctrine, than with preparing for his degree. Thus, before even having tried to obtain that degree he left the *Ecole* to start a socialist library and to marry. Péguy was no longer a Catholic. He may have been one with regard to his most fundamental conscience, but he saw too clearly the vices of the dormant Church and as a result betook himself to the socialism of Bergson, not to that of Victor Hugo.

When the notorious Dreyfus case exploded, he hurled himself into the midst of the quarrel as into a sacred adventure. A spiritual exile resulted from this venture; an exile from the "men" who became the toys he wrote about in his *Cahiers de la quinzaine*. In 1905, having at last perceived the errors of atheis-

tic socialism, Péguy returned to the Catholic Church, but not without certain difficulties, for his wife was a staunch Protestant and his children were fast becoming atheists. The writer then restrained himself to prayer, to prepare himself, probably unwittingly, for the sacrifice of the Great War of 1914, in which Péguy completed his imitation of St. Joan on the battlefield. His martyrdom produced, one can say, beautiful effects, above all the conversion of his wife and his children.

A friend of Maritain, Péguy strove for the renaissance which is manifesting itself in France today. "Péguy," says his biographer, André Suarès, "was always religious. Did he believe? Where, how, did he believe? And in what? Incredulity was intolerable to him. To live, he needed a faith. In his eyes faith was the very foundation of justice. He did not talk religion or Church to the priestmongers, and for a long time, even less to the priests. He would have gotten along better with the unbelievers than with the Pharisees and the pious. The greatest and most intelligent of Catholics, he did not belong to Rome as much as to Paris and to Orléans. In maintaining a direct contact with God and Jesus Christ, he understood that nothing is more sensible even in Joan of Arc herself."

Suarès paints, moreover, candid pictures of his closest friend, a man who suffered from the ruling of his intellect by his pride. "When he had not too much time at his disposal, he always kept his cape on; and the cape, more or less, is the habit of a monk, of a soldier, of the scholar, of the laborer, and even of the woman. Underneath, Péguy was really the Friar Minor and the master of history whom I knew. But one day while I was searching myself for resemblance of him, he took off his mantle. The bare head, the colorless beard, well forward on his strong chin, the nervous and frail body, the jaundiced complexion, those good eyes, the polished forehead, and his generous mouth opened by some malice which I still hear, I suddenly admired."

ADVERTISEMENTS

GO ALL ELECTRIC  
ALL THE WAY

The Narragansett Electric Co.

*Part of New England Power Association*



***MEN! A Darn Good Friend***

The Zipper Lined  
**TOPCOAT** usually  
\$25

This smart coat is always on "your side." Covert Cloth in tan, brown, green and grey with detachable wool plaid lining.

**\$19**

*The "Zipper Clipper" at \$25*

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

WASHING

SIMONIZING

Narragansett  
Hotel Garage

(Opposite Narragansett Hotel)

POLISHING

STORAGE

Costello Bros.

PROVIDENCE

PAWTUCKET

PATRONIZE OUR ADVERTISERS

"Cautious, exact, a careful overseer, a man who corrected proof-sheets as many as ten times with a short-sighted eye riveted onto galley-sheets, the printer in Péguy, could not be overlooked. This was his profession. He had the pride and the calling needed for it."

And of his ideas, M. Suarès continues, "Péguy is not mistaken as a good worker. He could judge professional people and students, the lower middle-classman, those well-established in their profession, politicians and professors, admirably. He did not consider princes and artists from the same point of view. But at least if he understood nothing about music, he never concealed the fact. The honest laborer with a strong conscience was always, from Péguy's point of view, the one who is best capable of suffering for a good cause."

Equipped as he was with these implements, it can be readily understood that the French Dante wrote his works with ideas that are almost too exact. We have the *Cahiers*, *Le Porche du deuxième mystère*, *Nolite Judicare*, *Victor Hugo*, and *L'Argent* to represent his principal works, all ruled by an imperious precision.

With regard to his poetry, and it is here that Péguy is the most original of all French writers, and that he reveals himself as an almost slavish imitator of Dante in his attempts to gather all the possible fruits of his genius, we find the same fire and the same spirit in his epic. *Jeanne d'Arc*, one of his greatest epics, was inspired, it may be guessed, by the devotion to the gallant maid of Orléans, a devotion which had had its inspiration far back in the dim days of early childhood, and which had persisted through the dark days of mental anarchism and turmoil. It was a substantial proof of the fervor of his faith and of the new-found strength which his faith had received after his debilitating venture into the deserts of Bergsonism and of the Socialism of the

ADVERTISEMENTS

**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

*Shepard*

MEN! SHOP OUR  
MEN'S STORE FOR ALL  
APPAREL and FURNISHINGS  
NEEDS

Street Floor

**The Providence Journal  
The Evening Bulletin**



*Rhode Island's Great and Influential Newspapers*



*Compliments of*

**Joseph Marcus & Co.,  
Inc.**

Established 1906

184-194 North Main Street  
Providence, R. I.

*Quality furniture at lower prices*

PATRONIZE OUR ADVERTISERS

period. His greatest epic poem, if, indeed, the adjective can truly be predicated of his poetry, was *Eve*. Together with *Jeanne d'Arc*, it formed a pair of poems which were instantaneously successful with the *dilettanti*. But it has been pointed out that if his poems are to be called epic at all, it is only, but especially, because the characteristic French trait of *analysis* is faithfully mirrored in each of the compositions. Insofar as epics reflect in part at least the dominant quality of the people to which its author belongs, these poems of Péguy can be called such, for surely it is conceded that analytical exactitude is the most perceptible mental trait of modern France.

If Péguy succeeded in imitating Dante Alighieri in the epic form, we also find that we see direct influences of the Italian in the sociologist's other poetry, if not directly, as in ideas, at least in spirit and in music and rhythm. Compare, for example:

"Quand nous aurons quitté ce sac et cette corde,  
"Quand nous aurons tremblé nos derniers tremblements  
"Quand nous aurons râlés nos derniers râlements,  
"Veuillez vous rappeler votre miséricorde."

with:

"Per me si va nella città dolente  
"Per me si va nell'eterno dolore,  
"Per me si va tra la perduta gente."

When Péguy began to write his *Eve*, he said: "It will be an *Iliad*. It will be more powerful than Dante's *Paradiso*." And beyond a shadow of a doubt, he seemed to vie at a better poetic adaptation of the *Summa Theologica* than that which Dante had accomplished six centuries earlier. It was inevitable, then, that he absorb a good deal of the very matter that he tried so hard to surpass. In his zeal in attempting to outstrip Dante he imbibed Dante with the inevitable result that he wrote like Dante, but not so well. For, if he wrote in Dante's style, so he also fell from

ADVERTISEMENTS

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.

*Complete Lines for Schools and  
Colleges*

Comprising

C. P. CHEMICALS

SCIENTIFIC APPARATUS

LABORATORY SUPPLIES

**George L. Claflin**

150 Dorrance St. Providence, R. I.

P. C. CAFETERIA

*Good Food At  
Reasonable Prices*

College Bookstore

*Complete Line of*

TEXTBOOKS

PICTURES AND PICTURE  
FRAMING

Over 40 Years in the Old Arcade

**Providence  
Picture Frame Co.**

61 Arcade Building  
3rd Floor

FOR EVERYTHING IN

*Sport Goods*

*Sport Apparel*

BE SURE TO VISIT

**CITY HALL  
HARDWARE CO.**

Washington and Snow Sts.

GAspee 2600

PATRONIZE OUR ADVERTISERS



Dante's greatness. *Eve*, in the final reckoning, is too much an analysis to avoid the appearance of a forced epic.

Another quotation from Suarès's book resumes quite clearly critical opinion about the style of Péguy. "Péguy's work is one strange phenomenon. His books always begin and never end. He thinks in digressions; and his texts thrive on footnotes. The only unity in his works is his own unity. For him a sonnet serves only to begin another sonnet; and the second serves only to begin the third; they are related one to another not only in idea, but also in words. He told me once that he composed rhymes from a repertoire of rhymes, and that he had once inserted into a poem all the conceivable words which rhymed with two or three of the most frequently used consonances in the French language. He had wished it so. But I am not sure that he would have done otherwise in any case. He justified his tendency by all sorts of reasons, not the least of which was the one to the effect that all the old *Chansons de geste* and the lays were composed on a single rhyme."

Péguy is related to no French poet. Victor Hugo tried the epic and failed; Charles Péguy tried the epic and at least achieved an analysis. Paul Valéry is a philosopher; Charles Péguy is an analyst. The sociologist unites all his thoughts and in his poetry there are no concentrated, alembicated or obscure portions where one must spend hours in trying to probe the meaning of a single verse.

Moreover, Péguy amuses and teaches at the same time. If he is a poet, he is also a professor, a philosopher, and a politician—but never a *dilettante*. He is a disciple ready to show us the road to a revived thirteenth-century thought.



FOR REAL MILDNESS

*Swing to Chesterfield*

*Yes Sir-e-e! Chesterfields take the lead for mildness... they take the lead for better taste. With their right combination of the World's best cigarette tobaccos they give millions more smoking pleasure.*

*...watch the change to Chesterfield*

*They Satisfy*

