

# ALEMBIC

PROVIDENCE COLLEGE



VOLUME XXII

NUMBER 3

MARCH, 1940

TRAUMEREI  
JOSEPH A. CONWAY

ONLY THE VALIANT  
MATTHEW GALLAGHER

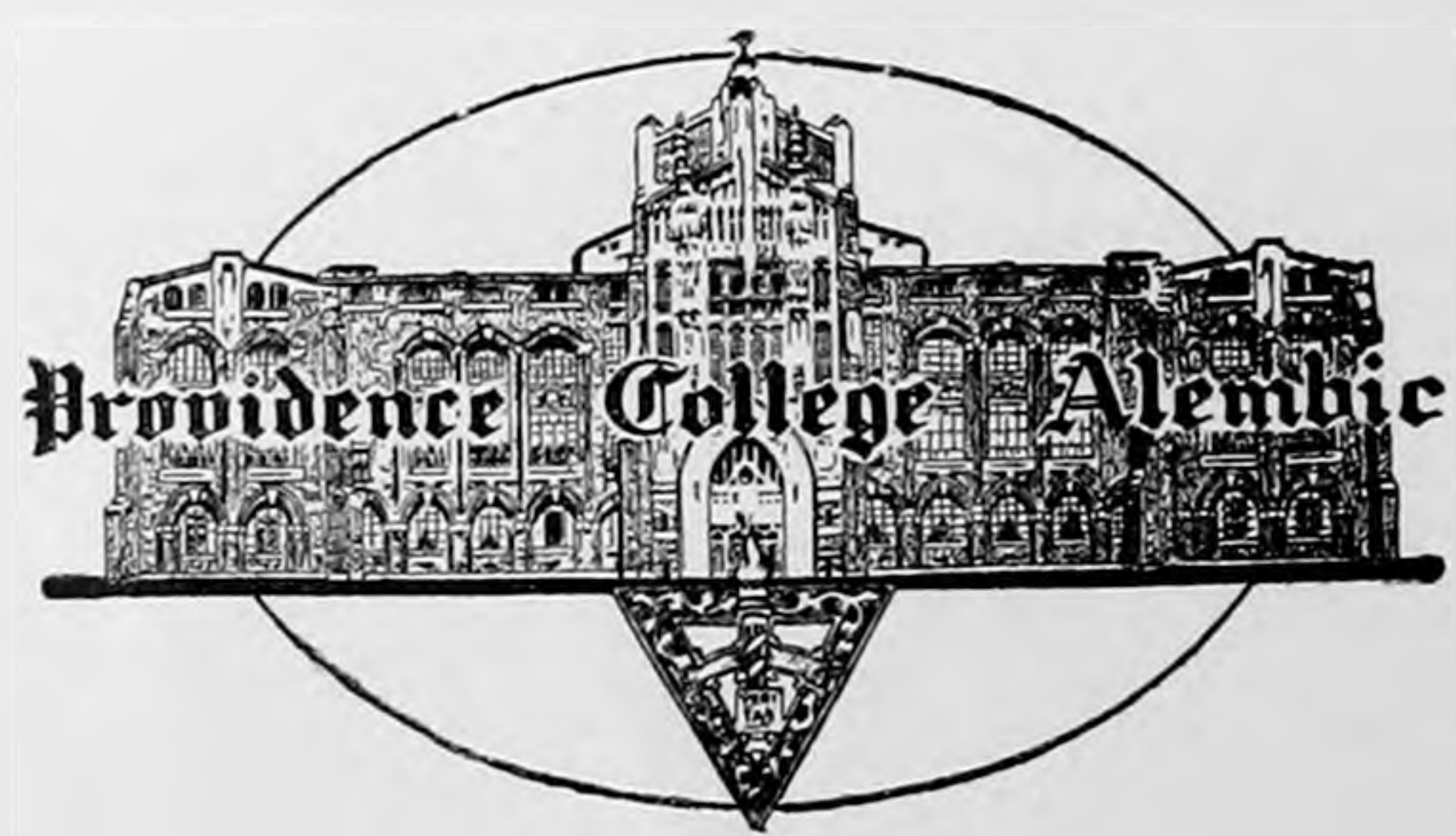
THE EARTH AND THE STARS  
CHARLES MCGOVERN





# THE ALEMBIC

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## Only the Valiant

By MATTHEW P. GALLAGHER, '41

OVER Jerusalem that morning a thin haze hung on the soft blanket of warmth which stifled the earth, catching the rays of the rising sun and diffusing them in kaleidoscopic hues over the roof-tops of the city. In the deep shadows of the alleys the chill of the Mediterranean night still remained, but gradually the long fingers of the sun crept silently into the streets and drew bright lines across the market place and broadened them into triangles which moved toward the Temple and converged in glorious splendor on its broad dome. The soft sand of the square, bearing the footprints of time, lay dormant, soon to be sent scurrying under the shuffling of the multitude. The shadows to the left of the Temple began to shorten. On the west side of the square the adobe buildings were completely bathed in sunlight now, and the first signs of life became apparent. A yellow cur yawned at the sun and slunk down an alley; a determined pattering and a flurry of dust bespoke the activity of rats; from a dark corner a beggar dragged himself and settled painfully in the light of the sun. Then a peddler moved through on his way to the Cephass where the housewives were wont to gather at an early hour. Another appeared and displayed his wares at his accustomed spot. Soon others followed, but all were men of mean rank; the ancients and learned men of the people would not appear until much later in the day. The morning mist had lifted, and the sunbeams danced no longer in intricate



patterns through the colonnades of the Temple. High over Calvary the sun beat down upon the city. The cock had long since crowed and the city at last had come to life and begun to hum with its accustomed bustle and commerce.

This morning a new note was superimposed on the usual chatter of the market place. An atmosphere of excitement had gripped the people and they talked together animatedly. The word "Nazarene" was on everyone's tongue, and "Jesus of Nazareth" . . . "The son of David."

"Saw you the prophet, sire?" greeted a peddler.

"Ah, no. I am a stranger newly come. Tell me, pray. Who is he?"

"He is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee, sire. A great teacher, I have heard. Yesterday he entered the city and a great multitude came before him spreading their garments under his feet and cutting branches from the trees and strewing them in his path. And those who came before him and after him cried out, 'Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the Highest.' He is a great teacher, sire. I have heard tell of his wondrous deeds though I must confess that I scarce believe them. Oh, he is a great prophet, sire, have no doubt."

Two men strolled past and one, a handsome youth, whispered behind raised hand to his older companion, "Between us, friend, yon Caïphas, the high priest, appears none too pleased with the advent of the strange prophet. See how he wrangles there with the ancient doctors. Perhaps he fears a rival. It is said that the Nazarene will preach in the Temple today. Let us not fail to hear him. I must admit of a great pleasure in observing the discomfort of the ancients."

"It is already the fourth hour, young one. If he is to appear it must be soon. And I must warn you," cautioned the older



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man, "it is not well to speak of the Priests in such manner. The Law provides punishment for such rashness."

"Hark! what is that commotion? . . . There is a crowd moving from the Bethanian road. See, they move toward the Temple and in their midst . . . a stranger. A tall and handsome man. Do you know him?"

And as if to answer him, an awed murmur arose from the multitude, "The prophet! It is the prophet—the Nazarene."

"Come, let us to the Temple to hear this teacher."

And a hundred bodies moved, as if in answer to his call.

In the Temple they saw the prophet, standing amidst the people and talking to them. He was a man of superb stature, of piercing eye, and possessing a voice like the sound of "angels' trumpets". And as he was teaching, a group of the high priests and ancients of the people interrupted him, asking: "By what authority dost thou these things? And who hath given thee this authority?"

Whereupon, the teacher, Jesus, turned upon the Priests and answering them, he said: "I also will ask you one word, which if you shall tell me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven or from men?"

But the Pharisees could not answer him, for if they said "from heaven," the stranger would ask them why they had not believed him, and if they said "from men," they faced the fury of the people who all held John as a prophet. Therefore they answered, "We know not."

And the Prophet, with the faint flicker of a smile playing around his eyes, said: "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things." Then in sudden fury he lashed them with invective: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." His condemnation was not softened by fear. He did not allow the



respect due a high office serve as a cloak for sin. The tongue lashing which he administered that day was probably the most bitter that has ever been delivered, before or since—and that to the highest officers in the land. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,” he thundered, “because you devour the houses of widows, praying long prayers . . . Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you make clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but within you are full of rapine and uncleanness . . . Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you are like to whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful but within are full of dead men’s bones and of all filthiness . . . You serpents, generation of vipers, how will you flee from the judgment of hell?”

I happened by chance to stop at the account of this incident while glancing over the verses of Matthew the other day and I was impressed by its possible application to ourselves in this day, when one’s very ideals are measured and encinctured by the rule of expediency. Our Lord gives us a shining example of courage in his fearless exposure and denunciation of the Pharisees. It is an example which, sad to remark, has found few followers and still fewer champions throughout the history of man. The paucity of courageous men has been observed time and again by those who have been able to broaden their view by the contemplation of distant peoples and remote ages even as it has been noticed by us less fortunate in our experience.

Courage is real and glorious. Reflect on the pictures which flood the mind at the mention of our great heroes: of George Washington, of Booker T. Washington, Lincoln; all those who have fought against overwhelming odds to realize their ideals. Warmth fills the heart at the uttering of the name Poniatowski, Kosciuszko; Jeanne d’Arc; of Emmett and Parnell; or even of Ghandi. Our souls thrill at the thought of the number-



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less martyrs of the Church. In fancy we tremble at the feet of the Titan Savonarola as he strides like a Colossus through the streets of Florence scourging the cowering rabble. A saintly Cardinal Mercier appears, as he rallies his people against an invading northern horde. Then a bursting flame and a modern Apollo calls forth from Rome—Pope Leo XIII and his immortal encyclicals. The halo of these few came not in their victories no more than did the Nazarene's. None of them lived to see the realization of their dreams and most of them died in the belief that they were failures. Compare their glory with that of the world's great conquerors; contrast the heart-warming sympathy which their striving has enkindled within us against the cold awe occasioned by the deeds of the conquerors. How does Maccabeus compare with them; or Alexander, or Caesar, of whom it was said no greater encomium could be paid than his own name. Was Nebuchadnezzar of old, or even the Great Khan as great as they? The deeds of the conquerors are hallowed on the pages of dusty chronicles, but the memories of those courageous few are enshrined forever in the hearts of those for whom they fought, the poor and the oppressed. And the difference—that which made those few beloved—was their courage which persevered in the face of all opposition.

From this parable learn a lesson all ye who are oppressed yet outwardly flatter your oppressors; ye sycophants who measure your censure by that craven rule of expediency. The Prophet has shown the way of valour and so few have followed. Don't be like those who say, "That's all very well, my friend, but you must remember that the Prophet was God, and it is not reasonable to expect us to act as he did." The greater of our species considered this as a divine example rather than an excuse for cowardice. One of these was O'Connell who once dared, in the danger of *death*, to call the prime minister of Great Britain "the



heir-at-law of the thief who died on the cross." So was it the sentiment of Moses when he, without the reassuring example which we have, stood before the mighty Rameses and demanded, "Let my people go." This was the reaction of two of our great heroes to the emergencies of their times. Now when even more portentous and world-shocking events are taking place, there is a greater need of that old courage. In our day there is no room for pusillanimity. As never before we need soldiers to carry on in the footsteps of the Nazarene. "We stand at Armageddon and battle for the Lord."





## King O' Old Time Fiddlers

*Guess ya heard  
That old Cobb died.  
A queer old bird,  
Gol dern his hide!*

*Found him lyin' still,  
Fiddle in his hand,  
Up there on the hill —  
That's his piece o' land.*

*He'd sit in the shack,  
Sawin', sawin' away,  
Thinkin' o' the time  
He was "King" fer a day.*

*They crowned him fer his playin'  
At the county fair.  
'Usta help me hayin'  
'N fiddle in his spare.*

*Died without a con-sarned word —  
Liquor, so they say.  
Jessie—she's my cow—was skeered  
When she'd hear 'im play.*

*He'd sit in the shack  
Sawin', sawin' away;  
Tap his foot 'n holler,  
'Nough to turn ya grey.*

*The Alembic*

*Kept a gettin' stranger,  
Withered as thet corn —  
Recken ain't much danger  
O' it rainin' 'morrow morn.*

*There's the sun a settin' —  
Kinda pretty sight  
Y' know, I'm most regrettin'  
I won't hear Cobb t'night.*

*He'd sit in the shack  
Sawin', sawin' away.  
'Spec' I'll hear him fiddlin'  
When it comes t' Judgment day.*

By LOUIS ROSEN, '42





## A Man of His Times

By LIONEL J. LANDRY, '40

CHARLES LECONTE DE LISLE was born in 1818 on an island in the Indian Ocean known as Reunion, about 400 miles east of the coast of Madagascar. The island, which had been known as Ile de Bourbon prior to its becoming a British possession, had been a rather important French colony, with a good number of French-speaking inhabitants. Many of these, no doubt, felt more or less exiled and kept casting nostalgic glances toward the Paris and the provinces of their fathers, longing to return to the ancestral streets and soil. But young Charles, at least, was not unaware of the weird beauty of the lush tropical vegetation which surrounded him on Reunion. He was ever after to bear in vivid imprint the memories of the wild, mountainous terrain, slashed by deep gullies and ravines; of the burning, plumbing light of the tropical high noon; of the abundance of primitive animal life of that oasis in the desert of ocean. His vaguely sad, melancholic genius was to transform them into the monuments to his name which all his poetic works were to become later on, when he, too, would have succumbed to the lure of Paris.

At the age of 27, in 1845, he left his island birthplace to seek his fortune in France, where the French romantic movement had just reached its peak. He first cast his lot with the romanticists, but later abandoned them to identify himself with the socialistic followers of Fourier, revolutionists who hoped to



put into effect the positivistic sociological teachings of Auguste Comte and lesser social lights. The *Fourriéristes* thought it was time to abandon loose social speculation and to substitute in its stead a purely materialistic system of social ethics. They were to throw over all the traditional philosophical and theological conclusions which had existed previous to then in favor of "a broad humanitarianism" whereby man might love and help man without having to have recourse to supernatural ideas and sanctions. So enthusiastic was Leconte de Lisle with this brand of socialism that he hunted and finally obtained a newspaper job with the hopes of furthering the noble cause and lofty ideals of the world-regenerating Fourierists.

When the revolution of 1848 disrupted life in a France still struggling with the effects of the French and the industrial revolutions, Leconte de Lisle and his comrades in thought were sure that their time had come. When the Second Republic was formed, they felt certain that the fates had been propitious and that the long-awaited opportunity was at hand. True, the revolution turned France once more into a republic. But what a republic! "It was an undecided, tottering republic, filled with riots and terrible, brutally repressed insurrections, abounding in suspicions and worries," points out Mary Duclaux. In the turmoil that resulted, in which, by the way, Victor Hugo and many other prominent writers embroiled themselves with the authorities, the people of Paris did not seem to heed sufficiently the ideals which Leconte de Lisle and his fellow-revolutionists bore so high. The ideals were delivered still-born amid barricades, charging militiamen, rebellions, treason, death and destruction.

Profoundly disillusioned and seized with a bitter distaste concerning the Parisian populace, he sought refuge in writing, a refuge which he was never to leave. He was caught in the grips of a sometimes revolting pessimism and professedly shuddered



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at "the shame of thinking and the horror of being human". He took to poetry, but by far the great majority of his poems, although they were masterstrokes of form and color, never appealed to the general reading public of the period. This was added reason for the poet's insuperable disdain of the human race, a trait which grew more and more distinct as one poem succeeded another. It must be said, however, that it was the black outlook which Leconte de Lisle carried over into his poems from his life that did so much to repel all but a few critics and about all of the reading public of Paris. This positive contempt of life and the living found expression in a curious manner in his poetry, but more will be said of that later. The six volumes of his works, some published before and some after his death in 1894, have never been too widely read precisely because of the morbid cheapness in which he held the whole idea of existence.

Leconte de Lisle died in relative obscurity. This fact is strikingly brought home when we contrast to his simple death the brazen pomp and fanfare which had turned Victor Hugo's funeral into an apotheosis in 1885. But he nevertheless symbolized in many ways the era in which he lived, particularly with regard to matters of art and thought.

First of all, he was an anti-romanticist. The lack of order, precision and moderation of the romantic writers irritated him as much as it was shortly to irritate readers everywhere. The public was just getting its fill of lyric outpourings, and confessions, of exaltations and depressions of the *ego*. It was, as the Abbé Calvet points out, "tiring of romantic claptrap". And the death-knell of romanticism had been sounded when an audience hooted down Victor Hugo's drama, *Les Burgraves*, in 1843. Romanticism managed to linger on some time more, but it was becoming evident to the Frenchman in general and to Leconte de



Lisle in particular that there was need for a return to something a bit more moderate and a bit more formal which would not allow every sentimentalist who happened along to shed his literary tears in torrents. Reality was about to take the place in literature which had up to then been occupied by emotion and imagination.

Then, too, positive science was beginning to be hailed by many self-styled thinkers as the true means of obtaining the solution to the how's and the why's of man's existence. Everywhere some old conclusion was being exploded by the discoveries and the theories of Cuvier, St-Hilaire, Ampere, Fabre, Berthelot, Pasteur and Darwin. Science was arising on the distant horizon and setting in motion new forces, misunderstood or unknown up to that time, but sovereign and unquestioned for the remainder of the century. Leconte de Lisle was among the first to welcome science as the answer to the cosmic questions which philosophy had been attempting to answer for so long. Not content with embracing it as the prophet of a new era, he felt he must translate it in terms of literature. If he ever had a supernatural religion—he was born of a Catholic family—his ventures in Fourierism must have relieved him of them quite efficiently, for his violent tendencies toward science indicated that all his hopes were in a purely materialistic, scientific system of thought. He delved deep in philology, archaeology and history, studying especially Louis Ménard's works on Greek and history of various religions as well as the exposé of the religions of India by the Orientalist Burnouf. The earlier French poets Ronsard and Chénier had inspired him with his love and appreciation of pagan Greece, but it was principally through his readings of Ménard that he obtained his remarkable knowledge of Hellenic culture and customs. Pasteur had busied himself with test-tubes and mathematics, Saint-Hilaire and Darwin with anthropological observations and Ampere with physical apparatus. Leconte de



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Lisle spent his time in historical research and the study of Hindoo mysticism and introduced both into French literature.

Leanings toward science and aversion to romanticism were not the only two representative traits of the middle XIXth century to be found in Leconte de Lisle. In his disgust with romanticism, he had brushed aside the sentimental Christianity of the exponents of that school to such a point that he not only became absolutely unchristian, but even violently anti-Christian. As far as the Middle Ages were concerned, they were the object of a burning hatred within him, probably for no other reason but that they were relatively uninitiated in matters of positive science and that they were a Christian age. He adored, on the other hand, ancient pagan Greece, with its voluptuousness, its sensuality, its marbles, its pastorals, its Homer, its Phidias, its Theocritus. He conceived a notable nostalgia for antiquity and cried out:

*"Hellas, Mère sacrée,*

*"Oh! que ne suis-je né dans le Saint Archipel*

*"Aux siècles glorieux où la Terre Inspirée*

*"Voyait le Ciel descendre à son premier appel!"*

In the celebrated Alexandrian woman-philosopher of the fourth century named Hypatia he sees the symbol of intellectuality and physical beauty for which he loved Greece and its people. Christ, and Christianity with Him, because they uprooted these ancient pagan cultures, he denounces blasphemously, denouncing them both as one with the epithet of "the vile Galilean". In the struggle between Christianity and Hypatia, the latter must inevitably win, for she, representing human Beauty, "alone survives, immutable and eternal, capable of treading into the dust the features of all other civilizations." Leconte de Lisle was no doubt a firm believer that the Middle Ages, since they were so inherently Christian, were rightly being called the "dark"



ages. If he was, he merely reflected the opinion of advanced and "enlightened" intellectualism of his century.

His need for some kind of thought-system capable of answering the problems of human destiny he satisfied with the lore which he culled from Burnouf's studies on India. What he derived from them was not a picture of the India of religious pageantry, complete with processions of exotic dancers, stately elephants, nor bejeweled rajahs or venerable priests. Nor was it the India of voluptuous nights and sedate trees, of squalid, yet delectable cities, of strange rituals, of hauntingly beautiful mausolea of sacred animals, of obscene beggars and fakirs, of castes, filth, mire, gold, temples, or esoteric poetry. It was the cold, austere, metaphysical India that was revealed to him, an India that turned its face mystically to the great non-being, to the complete oblivion of the body, the senses and reality, to Nirvana.

For him this non-being, to all appearances, was the term and the aim of all existence. Man existed only by accident. He was to be absorbed into the immense Nothing after death, to take part in "blessed and holy Inaction". As a result of his holding these tenets, he expressed in much of his poetry the idea of the final engulfment. Death is the threshold which must be crossed for one to be swallowed up in the eternal anonymity and the final annihilation which he desires so ardently. He longs avidly for a death which is merely the cessation of a purely material existence. There is no question of anything but the disintegration of the body and the final absorption of his identity into the emptiness of the *Néant*. He tries, sometimes in vain, one feels, to heighten the desirability of this death by showing a proud, stoical contempt of human life and of all life. But this Nirvana of Leconte de Lisle, the reader cannot help but appreciate, is only a febrile and miasmic dream with which he seeks



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to console himself by reviling life and by showing again and again the corruptibility of all existing beings. The Supreme Forgetting of the gall and the heartaches which alone fill the life of man, cannot, he intimates, be found anywhere but in this privative state, this negation of all being and all existence.

But this severe ideal cannot do much to give the human heart the comfort which it craves and to find which it usually turns to the supernatural. He was adamant in his refusal to believe in the Christian tradition of Europe. Nor did he want to take part in the vague nature-worship which his contemporary, Victor Hugo, had made fashionable. Nature was not, to him, the mystical body into which all being would eventually blend. It was never, for him, no matter how wild and imposing, an awful occasion for venting teary thoughts on the puny stature of man and the tremendous power of that vague, veiled Force which had brought Nature into being and had identified itself with her. He sometimes expressed desires for a closer personal union with nature, but only in rare and exceptional instances.

More usually he was content to portray flashing nature-pictures in which motion, color, light were rendered in clear, sculptural and brilliant language. His power of evoking sun-drenched, hard, sharply outlined scenes to the reader's mind makes him rival many painters in his ability to conjure up vast, riotously hued pictures. And when he describes the virgin jungles of India, as in *Bhagavat*, or the luxurious and languid gardens of Persia, or the monotonous surging of the sea, or the mountains and gorges of South America, we see that the old boyhood scenes on Reunion are being re-created. This fondness for landscapes can be easily seen in most of his poems, and whether he be speaking of interminable vistas of wheat-fields, or the bleak forbidding crags of Iceland, or again the flower-banked, winding streams of the Orient, we can notice the influ-



ence which his youth, spent amid the varied topography of his native island, bore upon his creative life.

But always, it must be stated, his attitude toward nature is objective and exterior. He shows nature as it really is, not as it is distorted by lachrymose sentiment or by poetic emotion. It remains outside the poet, entirely devoid of the mysterious elements of gloom and might with which Chateaubriand had associated it. He was seldom stirred by it. As a matter of fact, he claimed to be entirely impassive to all of it. If he succeeded in introducing into poems on nature overtones of bitterness and sombreness, he rarely went further for fear of becoming lyrical and romantic.

In this, of course, he differed radically from the school of Lamartine, Hugo and Chateaubriand, which had held the opposite view, that the *ego* should be untrammelled in its expression. For some writers, the weepier the expression was, the better. And if a heroine had the good fortune of being a sickly, consumptive creature, given to swooning, with dark, feverish eyes, pallid and wasted and in the habit of giving lengthy explanations of her moods and melancholy, she was assured of popular success and of long life (in literature, at least). Leconte de Lisle represented a violent reaction to this. He and the school of writers which he headed, called the Parnasse, had as their catchword "Impersonality". It has been agreed that it was in Leconte de Lisle that the union of art and science, the prime desideratum of the school, was the most perfectly consummated. The result was not, of course, a thesis on evolution in verse, but the tempering of artistic imagination with scientific restraint and concretization.

Yet in spite of all these rules which Leconte de Lisle laid down concerning the writing of poetry, it was impossible for him to be as impersonal and impassive as he would have



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wished to be. His personal traits are to be found in his poetry even in a cursory analysis. It was no more possible for him to hide behind the mask of anti-lyricism than it was possible for the contemporary scientists to hide behind the mask of philosophy. His most striking characteristics, mistrust and distaste of his fellow-men, impatience with life, pessimism, bitterness, love of art and love of science, hatred of Christianity, mysticism, longing for death and dislike of living are all revealed to us in his poems in spite of his professed reticence.

True, he became downright lyrical, in one of his poems at least, *Qaïn*, in which Abel's cursed brother, surrounded by a primitive scene replete with earthy, husky men, Gauguinesque, large-breasted women, old patriarchs and vistas of newly ploughed soil, curses the God who once cursed him. He swears an awful and horrible vengeance. Heroic and awe-inspiring, yet an acknowledged traitor and fratricide, he shouts to heaven his direful blasphemies and defies the Creator to resist the God-destroying sciences and inventions which his progeny will discover. The *Qaïn* in question is no doubt a thinly disguised Leconte de Lisle, carrying his hatred of society and its accepted religion to deplorable length. He sees the God of Christianity about to be destroyed by Hypatia, although this time the Hypatia is the positive science of the disoriented and bewildered XIXth century.

This is no doubt one of the greatest of all lyric poems, its strength, its overpowering sweep and its agitated, burning pace making it live in the memory long after the original reading is forgotten. But this is exceptional in Leconte de Lisle. It is not often that he chooses to let us examine his innermost thoughts and desires so intimately and so closely. Admirable a poem as "*Qaïn*" may be, it is not very good theology, and an excess of open hatred of God would have made of the poet



merely a rabid anticlericalist, where he is now considered as being surely militantly atheistic, but a great poet as well. But digressions aside, this is probably the only poem in which we can see the secret soul of the poet brought out into broad daylight. However, may we repeat, it is not therefore impossible to plumb the depths of the poor misanthrope's heart and to draw the picture of a miserable, Socratic-appearing, kind-looking old man.

Leconte de Lisle was a great poet. He was, furthermore, a member of XIXth century French society who mirrored exactly and faithfully many of the thought-trends of his period. He was a man of his times and represents probably better than any other person of the XIXth century the multiple moral, philosophical and artistic crises which that bewildered and blinded century experienced. How much better Leconte de Lisle might have been had he lived in another century is an interesting speculation, but is entirely beside the point. The fact is that he reflected in his poetry the thoughts, the desires, the griefs, the sorrows, the bewilderment, the worries and the hopelessness of his people and his period.





## Vignette

By EDWARD KAYLOR, '41

DOC. FROMER meant well but the more he talked the more nervous Jim Sloane became. "Your record thus far is excellent, Sloan, and I have no doubt that you'll come through with flying colors. Naturally though you can't afford to make any mistakes. Now don't let my presence bother you, forget everybody and remember everything."

"Good gosh, doesn't the old buzzard ever stop?" Jim groaned inwardly. Feverishly his mind raced back over the mass of detail he had been absorbing during the past months—muscles, arteries, how to cut, where to cut, nervous system, bones—what hadn't he studied? And now he had to produce—or else. Try as he might the only things that were clear in his mind were stories he had heard about the few students who had failed to keep the heart beating.

Elbowing their way through Jim's thoughts, Fromer's last few words pounded home. "Well, Sloan, I think our patient is quite ready, or more correctly, your patient," he amended graciously. "He's well under the anaesthesia and, I might add, you have a splendid specimen. Yes, really a splendid subject." Whenever there was any cutting to be done the cut-ee was always a nameless "subject", or "specimen". How could anyone be so detached at a time like this? Did he actually realize how much this meant, Jim wondered? He took a deep breath, swallowed and exhaled slowly. He knew that the weight in his stomach



wasn't really there but the knowledge didn't help any. And the fact that twenty commiserating students were watching him only made matters worse.

Twenty pairs of eyes and one man followed his slow progress toward the table. Scalpel, forceps, pins, clamps, weights, string, stylus, cylinder, all in place waiting for him. Closing his eyes he breathed a silent prayer, then picked up the scalpel. As he touched it to the soft white skin of the patient's breast Jim saw the spasmodic jerk of the leg. Panic stricken he looked at Fromer. Fromer nodded, "Begin."

Once again the scalpel descended. What if it should slip and cut an artery? Gritting his teeth he tried to dismiss the innumerable possibilities which would spell failure. He had to succeed! Working swiftly but surely now the skin gave way to muscle and finally—the heart! This was the critical stage requiring all of his skill; all his speed. Beads of sweat formed on his forehead. The quiet of the room was oppressive. That heart *had* to keep beating. It was life and death. A race against time. Fromer, everyone completely forgotten now he sped through the final stages of the operation.

At last he sighed as he dropped the needle and wiped away the sweat. Done! and a good job. He heard Fromer's voice, how sweet it sounded now, "That was fine, Sloan. I don't believe I've ever seen a student do better. Your dissection was neat and the cardiograph is excellent. Yes, quite excellent. Of course as I said before you had an exceptionally strong frog to work with."

The practical exam in "Zoo' 202" was finished for Jim Sloan.



## Traumerei

By JOSEPH A. CONWAY, '43

NIGHT comes on roughly in Boston when the city lies in the icy grip of February. None of the soft outlines or seductive breezes that May brings, but every line drawn by man or God passing suddenly from sharp relief in the hard winter light to blocky indistinctness. The billows of frigid gloom smother the city with amazing suddenness; uneasily man watches the sun sink below the horizon, as he has since the dawn of time; he is seized by fear of the terrors that lurk in the blackness. The first man reached for his firebow, but slow centuries of progress have placed better means of illumination in the hands of the Bostonian: a throwing of a switch starts generators humming and whining desperately.

Light! It streams into the city, conquering the shadows along the thoroughfares, it banishes the night from countless rooms, it races aloft to twist tortuously through the tube lights advertising beer and gasoline. Boston lies like a great glowing bed of embers from which dart small fingers of flame toward the suburbs: automobiles, carrying their own light from the greater fire, much as the sub-man hurried fearfully back to his cave with a sputtering fagot lighted at the central blaze. Intermittent street lamps, like torches left to frighten away the ravaging beasts, spray current at the gloom, and man laughs, if hollowly, at the unnamed terrors of the dark.



Abortively man seems to be attacking the night, for immediately beyond the city limits the blackness wins again; it swirls thickly around the lighted areas as though they were the vortices of mighty whirlpools. Even so, rivulets of darkness are sucked down into the city itself, and only the theatre district seems really lighted. People make their way along the sidewalks cursing the biting wind, the traffic lights and their fellow man; they are in the vortex, and a part of the blackness seems drawn down into their breasts. Five hundred centuries have not divorced mankind entirely from the steaming forests of the slowly-cooling earth. When men collide with one another, the sub-man glares out through their eyes. Only their clothes separate them from an age when a slope-jawed forebear roamed the dark glades in search of prey. Light they have now, but in their breasts is a common bond with the shaggy ancestor: none quite knows what he is seeking, and is driven only by the fear of becoming lost.

\* \* \*

Yes, Tom liked the night man's job. It afforded him a chance to rest, and that was important; after forty years of work that had all but crushed him into the grave, it was good to just sit by the big oil furnace and smoke his pipe. Since the oil-burner had been installed in the Infirmary there was little for him to do; no more coal to wheel in or barrels to wrestle with. Aside from his hourly trip to ring in the clocks—and that was hard enough for a man with an artificial foot—his time was his own.

During the first hour after the Greek day fireman left, Tom wielded cloth and polish on all the brightwork, for Mehos came of a race which did not pride itself on the shining cleanliness that was Tom's birthright. He remembered the chaste tidiness of his old home in Germany, and the righteous hatred



his mother had had for dirt. He rubbed the brass until it gleamed in the light of the single naked bulb, swept the accumulated trash from upstairs into a battered drum, and after a final surveying glance, smiled with satisfaction and filled his pipe.

Tom's examination of the evening paper never took very long; there was nothing behind the screaming headlines that interested him. Murder done . . . another political scandal . . . squabbling in Washington. Russia's attack on Finland still bogged down in the Arctic snows—that did not interest him, for he was a lover of peace and a hater of Russians. It was in a Russian prison camp that he had lost his foot. Tom grunted in disgust and turned abruptly to the music section. *The Mastersingers of Nuremburg* to play the Opera House next month. Good! He loved all music, and for him Wagner epitomized all the passions and yearnings of a smitten world. A calendar hung on the wall, with a picture of a nude Indian maiden and a grocery advertisement. Tom glanced hopelessly at it, knowing even before he did that he had to work on the twenty-third. Oh, well, he could make the matinee, though it never seemed up to the evening performance.

The heavy, old-fashioned watch, with its fanciful German picture-face of gnomes and maidens, read nine o'clock, so Tom began the long climb up the three flights of stairs; he had to punch the clocks on the third floor first. The same old musty smell, the same tiny squeaking that always marks the presence of mice in old buildings; the same air of degenerate grandeur. His pocket light picked out familiar details: the messy spittoons, the empty light sockets in the over-elaborate chandeliers, the grotesquely framed pictures of presidents along the crumbling plaster wall, with President Hayes still tipped a little askew, and the same crack that made an acute angle with President Taft's moustaches. The pictures lined the staircase up to the second



floor, ceasing abruptly with President Coolidge; the Board of Overseers apparently ruled that American history had stopped there; certainly progress in the Home for Aged Men had. The tiny night lamp was burning on the heavy Victorian table when he reached the third floor. There was Mr. Williams' door ajar as usual, with a suspicion of strong tobacco smoke wisping out. Smoking was against the house rules, but that was the night nurse's worry. Someone was running water in the bathroom downstairs; the ancient plumbing gurgled and groaned, and shook the building.

Tom always stopped at the third floor window to enjoy the view for a moment. He liked the way the West Boston Bridge arched its graceful bulk across the Charles, tiny lights tracing the spans and floodlights tendering a loving glow upon the stone towers. Jawohl, the man who designed that bridge, must have been to Europe; the towers made the structure look like something out of the Middle Ages; one almost expected to see knights riding across. It made him think of a bridge over the Danube near Vienna, and for a moment he was sad. The bridge terminated in a broad highway; elm trees, naked now and shivering in the February wind, lifted high above it; lamps here were soft and dim, and his eyes followed them along the road until it disappeared into the mass of the city. The skyline of Boston was invisible at this hour, and only the thousands of lighted windows gave evidence of life and warmth within; they sparkled on the frosty air. A church cross outlined in a ghostly blue light hung on the horizon, and made Tom think of the emperor to whom the vision had appeared. He noted the floodlit dome of the State House, the severely functional design of the Technology buildings bathed in a white glow. Tom sighed. Truly, Boston was the only American city with a touch of Europe. Few jagged outlines, and the soft serenity that comes only with age. A nation had been born here.



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Tom always thought that the city across the river looked like a beautiful backdrop for the ugliness of his immediate neighborhood. It was as though an ethereal curtain hung between Boston and this section of Cambridge; seen through it, Boston had an exotic aura; the imagination saw there glittering Oriental spires and richly piled onion-shaped domes. But on Tom's side of the curtain there was poverty and hideousness. He glanced distastefully down at the red brick apartment houses, squat and unsightly, the rubbish cans set out on the sidewalks, drying clothes flapping hideously on the roofs. The gas-lamps sputtered and threatened to go out entirely; Tom wished they would. There was no room for ugliness in his soul.

Resignedly he started the clocks, hurrying to get back to his comfortable basement. The metal foot clanked and scraped. He must be getting old; lately he couldn't seem to get the stiffness out of his legs. He repassed the frowning Presidents, made the rounds on the first floor. Gott, what a relief to reach the last one! It had been prudently placed in the kitchen by the Directors so that he would have to make certain the gas were burning under the morning oatmeal, that the faucets were shut off tightly, and no lights burning. That was wormwood to Tom; it never failed to outrage his honest German sense of duty. As if he wouldn't do it anyway! He grimaced at the half-cleaned kitchen: verdammt lazy cook! Often he had even to prepare the oatmeal himself, to cover up her forgetfulness.

Once again the cozy basement—the third step squeaked; he would have to speak to the carpenter about that. Tom was thorough-going, and couldn't bear small imperfections. His artificial foot struck sparks from the stone floor. Linoleum would be safer, with the oil stored nearby, and easier to clean. He sank stiffly into his chair. Nothing to do for another hour.

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The diversions during Tom's shift were few. Sometimes one of the inmates from upstairs would come down to talk with him; they would discuss conditions and events of the past over their pipes. There was old Mr. Williams. He seemed never to sleep. The poor old man was feeble-minded. An ungrateful family, tiring of his oddities, had shunted him into the Infirmary. He had fought in the Spanish-American War, and his conversation always centered about the days of '98; he would mention long-dead generals as though their exploits were news topics; his reedy voice would quaver at long-forgotten battles. Tom remembered having seen a shrine-like portrait of Theodore Roosevelt in the man's room, and he always managed to speak reverently of the Colonel to Mr. Williams, though his own knowledge of the conflict was vague. The veteran's memory ceased at San Juan Hill; he invariably inquired of Tom whether Wheeler had finally been successful. He seemed to believe himself on hospital leave; he talked endlessly and incoherently, but Tom was always patient and kindly toward him.

Then there was old Chandler, a bitter man with an incredibly thin body. He seemed to speak with no one but Tom and his words were filled with venom toward life. A disordered system that made his life an earthly hell gave him a jaundiced outlook; he had once been a man of position, but had sunk under his ailment. Life held nothing for him but pain and bile, and he looked forward to death as a release; a tomb-like hollowness already held possession of his voice.

But tonight there were no visitors, and Tom turned eagerly to his favorite diversion: from a pile of music covered against the dust, he produced a score of Wagner. Another man might be content to read cheap magazines or a book from the library upstairs, but not Tom. He had scores of the great operas and classical selections for his literature. He loved the mathe-



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matical counterpoint of Bach, the tinkling loveliness of Mozart, but Wagner remained his favorite. The squared German head bent lovingly over the score; the music lost its paper-and-ink character; always Tom would see himself first violin of a great symphony orchestra. Then even that reality would diminish, and Tom would soar off into a world that consisted only of mighty crashings and harmonies; his spirit would be borne upward, it would expand with Wagner's dramatic crescendoes, until finally he would see himself armed in splendor at the head of a glittering host, passing into Valhalla by the side of the gods.

He had marked in advance a place to stop, because he knew that in his rapturous flights he would forget the realities of making the rounds. When he came to the marked place, the big jaw snapped shut with something like anger, the inspired gleam went out of his eye, Valkyries and gods vanished as suddenly as if a beautiful bubble had burst. Only a last reverberating tone seemed to hang on the air, and the twilight of the gods diminished to the dull roar of the furnace fire awaiting his inspection. Regretfully he put the music aside, and glanced again at the old watch. Ten minutes before ten—time yet to rest.

\* \* \*

It was always difficult getting back to earth again; Tom dutifully stopped reading in time to re-gear his thoughts to realities. The transition was difficult. Wagner always seemed a part of his boyhood; both were difficult to associate with mundane affairs. Every line of the music reminded him of the Fatherland; he could picture the Germany of his youth.

That had been a time of plenty. He remembered how he would come in from the fields, sweaty and exhausted, to his mother's wonderful cooking. Details sprang out of the mists: the fresh red-checked tablecloth, the steaming dishes of the



Homeland. The rich-red carrots, the bowls of greens and turnip, everything grown on their own little farm, produce of the good earth of the Rhine Valley. He remembered how proudly his father would grin through his formidable moustaches as he carried in the Sunday roast, with its rings of fragrant roasted potatoes; the big table set with snowy linen, and the sparkling glasses for the Rheinwein. And oh, the tall clay steins, with the little castles and German sayings painstakingly carved on them—how they creamed with the marvelously good beer of Munich, the color of a ruby, solid and nourishing, with thick foam running over the top.

The good life, the *Gemütlichkeit* of pre-war Germany; the local *Hofbräu*, with its genial townspeople joining lustily in roaring the songs of the Fatherland. The lovely waltzes of Strauss, newer then, and dancing with the pretty village girls—ach, Gott, where had it all gone? What was this mad order in the new Germany, this Third Reich, where people received two eggs a week and had to show cards to procure rancid butter and rotten fruit? How could such things be?

But Tom knew why such things could be, and knew at first hand. He had been a part of the war which had created the conditions. 1914 had found him entering upon his thirties, with a good wife and two beautiful blonde babies—ach, *meine Bübchen*—a happier home a man never had. On that fateful day when Uncle Karl had come in gravely with the news of the mobilization, they had nearly gone crazy with grief; Tom, as an artilleryman of the Class of 1902, had been summoned immediately to a Bavarian *Geschütz* regiment. In the mad years that had followed his old life had been shattered, and the pieces could never be put together again. He had gone with the first wave against the Marne, then his regiment had been one of those recalled from the west to stem the Russian advance in the blunder which cost



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the Kaiser victory in the opening months. The Germans had been markedly successful against the wretchedly equipped Russians, but Tom had been captured, and spent the rest of the war between a nightmarish prison camp and a frightfully-treated labor gang.

It was in working with the gang in the terrible Russian winter that he had lost his foot; a drunken, bearded giant had amputated it badly after gangrene followed the frostbite. Even with the metal foot they made him work, and he had developed his passionate hatred of the Russian officers. Those were his outstanding memories of Russia: the terrible, relentless cold that seeped into his body and drained the vitality from his blood; and the merciless Cossack guards, their free use of the *nagaikas*, steel-tipped whips that could and often did flick off a half-frozen ear. He remembered the fate of his stubborn friend Schmidt, whose rebelliousness had caused his own death. The guards had stripped him to the waist in the sub-zero weather, and beaten him until his back hung in shreds. Then they had rubbed the raw flesh with chunks of dirty ice. Schmidt was a Prussian, and underwent the torture without a whimper; that had infuriated the Cossacks; they stuffed his mouth and nose with snow and left him naked to die in the drifts.

The plain Russian soldiery wasn't so bad; they were usually deserters or pacifists. He had a blurred memory of playing the violin while the soldiers hummed sorrowful Russian peasant songs in those deep, powerful basses that only Russians have. It seemed more as though the ground were coming to life than that men were singing; the voices themselves were indistinct, and only a low, organ-like tone hung on the air like a sigh, intangible and beautiful. At first, when food had been better, they would sing wild Cossack songs and do that squat-kicking dance with arms folded, the others keeping the barbarous tempo by



clapping their hands. After 1916, though, only the filthiest garbage had been thrown to the prisoners; dysentery set in, and no one felt very enthusiastic. After that they had consoled themselves with the mournful songs of the steppes.

After the war, it had been as bad. With his frostbitten fingers he could no longer play the violin and had wandered over Europe with that ravaging pack of human refuse vomited into being by the war. Terrible times, when one stole if there was anything to steal, slept in the filthy Berlin Nachtsyls, or their equivalents in Paris and Vienna. He remembered the sour, oppressive stench of excrement and unwashed bodies. He made only the one trip back to Germany; on the graves of Maria and the children he vowed never to return. Germany had become a foreign land to him. Maria had died of some sickness brought on by waiting long hours in the ration lines, the neighbors told him; the children had caught pneumonia in the unheated house—there was no fuel—and how could one take proper care of them? Every house had its own sorrows, and the hospitals were needed for the soldiers.

Bitter and sick at heart, Tom had come to America, shipping as fireman on a British tramp steamer. The wealth of the world had flowed to America, he heard; the cities streamed with prosperity, and there was food in abundance for all who would work. He had done every type of labor: travelled with the harvesting gangs north to south, orange picking in California under dirty Mexican foremen, harvesting wheat in the Mid-West. He had had his first disillusionment concerning American standards of living in Texas, where he was a driller in the oil fields. The people lived on beans and green coffee, their children were rickety and pellagra was an accepted condition. He had mined coal in West Virginia until his lungs refused longer to pump the tuberculous atmosphere of the shafts.



Finally approaching age and the difficulty of keeping up the pace on account of his metal foot, had led him to seek easier work. He had hopped a freight going to New York, riding the rods with professional bums, a tougher gang than he had met even in the army, men who sneered at the idea of respectability, and resorted to petty thievery. Tom had witnessed the killing of one of them for the ten dollars he had with him. New York had overwhelmed him; everything in it suggested size and power, but he had tired of tramping the employment agencies. The depression had set in, and cripples weren't wanted with a million strong men roaming the streets looking for work of any kind.

Defeated, he had gone to Boston, and in a fit of nostalgia, had visited a German Hofbräu. The old folksongs, the *Essen, trinken und lässt uns fröhlich sein* carved over the door, the Munich beer, all were there, but an essential part of it all seemed missing, and Tom was sad. It chanced that a comrade of his from the Marne was a waiter there; the man had directed Tom to the job at the Infirmary.

After that life had been easier; he was free to read and attend the opera, he had a respectable job and felt like a man again. But never, even in this city so suggestive of Europe, had he been quite content; a vital part of him lay buried back in the modest little graveyard of Windesheim. Often he would come to a place in the score where the music was sadder; it would take possession of him, and he would sob like a child. The day man had once come in and found him so; Tom had been gruff and abrupt with the Greek, and bad feeling had existed between them from that time.

Often he would take from his pocket the little cracked snapshot of his family; Maria's sweet smile and the little blonde heads of the children would deepen the lines around his mouth. Perhaps God really knew best; when he yearned for their pres-



ence it was as if a splendid archangel stood between him and his dreams. Maria was up there, and the children; one day they would be reunited. But meanwhile Tom was immeasurably sorrowful, and took refuge in his music. That escape at least had been provided, but the Teutonic gods seemed a flight below God the Father, and Valhalla was more easily attained than Heaven.

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Mechanically Tom made the second round. The routine had become a fixed part of his life; he knew in advance that when he reached the second floor the night nurse would be preparing the evil-smelling medicine for the neurotic patient in Room 28. Tom nodded curtly to the nurse; he could never bring himself to like the man, with his smug, patronizing air and his irritating way of gazing at Tom's artificial foot. The nurse looked up from his fussing with the nasty-looking bottles; Tom noted the familiar pig-like eyes, the brick-red jowls larded with fat; the slow turn of his head, as though he were a genius disturbed in the midst of an experiment.

"You, Beyer? A little late on your round, aren't you?" He pursed his lips, and eyed the measuring vial critically, seeming to dismiss Tom with the gesture.

Tom flushed furiously. "A minute, perhaps. I'm no athlete, Mr. Guild." The fat swine! What a world of good a month under the Cossack whips would have done him . . . ah, God, give any of them their bellies filled and they were the same. It took agony and blood to strip the shell from the real man.

The oatmeal was simmering slowly; the rich fragrance of it filled the kitchen. Tom noted in disgust the sleek-looking water bugs darting about near the sink, then laughed to think it should revolt him, who had survived months of lice and corpse-rats in the war. He must be getting soft.



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Well, there was another hour gone, *Gott sei dank!* Now he could retire to his pipe and music again, forget Guild and his narrow ilk for the nobler world of his beloved gods and heroes. Guild's kind must have inhibited souls, he thought; they live, they are in the world but not of it; they glut themselves with food and reproduce their kind, but they don't really live. They never have a glimpse into the fuller world of music and books and beauty. Even of the simpler pleasures they were ignorant; *Gemütlichkeit* was an unknown quantity to them. They failed to grasp the true pleasure of sitting in a Hofbräu, conversing over a bottle of Rheinwein with its fragrance of flowers and its graceful slenderness; of listening to the lovely strains of Strauss, until wine and Wienerwalzer merged into a beautiful catharsis of the spirit, a state of mind. To them Strauss was but a restrained Dorsey or Goodman, and a noble wine but a costlier way to intoxication.

Money or education they might have, but they didn't belong to the real aristocracy of intelligence. That stratum of society found its recruits in the materially poorer but aesthetically far richer; not that all poor people were lovers of beauty, but that lovers of beauty found their consolation chiefly in intangibles. They remained indifferent to the standards of position set up by a warped society. The two classes travelled around God in separate orbits, and Tom couldn't help thinking that of the two, the aesthetes must be the nearer to Him.

Tom had just started to trace the place where he had stopped reading, when the basement bell set up a nerve-shattering ringing. *Gott verdamme Ding!* He would attend to that in short order, after he answered the door.

The door opened creakily to admit a blast of air almost liquid in its iciness. Tom immediately recognized the two rather unsteady figures standing in the ghastly glow of the street lamp.



"Well, come in, boys, come in! You needn't stand there und freeze!" He wasn't being entirely hypocritical in his welcome; visitors broke up the monotony of his night—he couldn't read all the time. But in one way he was regretful, for there would inevitably be a discussion of religion; one of the pair was an atheist and argumentative about Tom's Catholicism.

"It looks," grinned the godless one, "like a cheery spot for toasting the feet and reviving the flagging spirit. How goes it, my Teutonic friend?"

"As usual, your spirits don't need reviving," grunted Tom, but his eyes were understanding, "you've been making the rounds of the beer places again."

"Lissen ta him!" said the other visitor, "and him brought up on the stuff!"

"Beer we enjoy, yes," Tom retorted, "a solid beverage, but not this stinking stuff you swill here in America. But sit down—you don't look fit for many more steps. And if you feel sick, please leave; I haf just cleaned the floor."

The two visitors enjoyed the gruff reception; they knew Tom well. Once on a snowy night they had stopped by for the warmth, and Tom had become acquainted with them. The atheistic one Tom knew as Stephens, a thirty-year-old Englishman who had had a year at Oxford and been expelled for drunkenness. Tom liked to talk with him, for Stephens had sailed up and down the world, and could speak interestingly of his experiences. He had remained at Oxford long enough to acquire a purity of accent that ten years of rough associations had not corrupted, and he had a colorful way of speaking, of creating pictures with his words. Tom liked the fellow, though he resented his way of putting God under a verbal microscope and attempting to label His component parts.



"You worship an anemic Christ, a picture God," Stephens had said that night, "a face on stained glass, a statued Jesus. You forget the hardy teacher who fasted in the desert, who railed at the Pharisees and whipped the usurers from the House of God."

The other fellow Tom didn't particularly care for; he was a young, cocky sort, a product of the city's vilest slums. What the intelligent Stephens saw in him Tom couldn't understand, unless it could be the boy's ability to drink glass for glass with him. Tom noted with relief that the kid was nodding from the heat and the alcohol he had consumed; in a minute he would be asleep.

"We won't make this a lengthy stay." Stephens stifled a yawn, and rested his feet on Tom's pile of music. "It's about time to sip of the sluggish Lethe, what? And I have to get up for the early Mass." He laughed aloud, a little unsteadily. The heat was affecting him too; the thick fumes from the ale were smothering his brain. Tom mentally resolved to get rid of the two shortly; he seethed under Stephens' mocking remark.

"A little communion with your God wouldn't harm you," he retorted angrily, "you need some guiding force."

Stephens sobered a little at the rebuke; Tom saw some of the native intelligence showing in his eyes, the heavy mists enveloping his brain lifting briefly.

"I have my guiding principles." He weighed the words carefully. "If you are referring to the liquor I am carrying at the moment, it is an avenue of escape for me. I preserve my better self by drowning my baser side. If I am weary of mankind's ignorance and hypocrisy, why should I not escape to a plane apart, a misty world where I can at least forget? If you can't carry away a barrel of trash alone, don't you cover it until help comes, to drown the stench? My help comes in companionship with kindred souls, and that I haven't found yet."



"You would find it in the Creator," Tom replied seriously, "take the side of Christ and you will find yourself happier."

Stephens smiled indulgently; he fumbled for a cigarette, lit it and sucked the smoke deep into his lungs before replying.

"Your terms are too harsh." The smoke trickled from his nose, and rushed from his mouth with the explosive syllables. "My personal religion is Hedonism, or aestheticism, Tom, the pursuit of the beautiful and the pleasures of this life. Your tenets recommend mortification of the body, cultivation of the soul, as though they were things apart. I feel that they are inseparable, that attention to the body leads to expansion of the soul, as does fondness for beauty. Why should I overlook my body, and earthly loveliness? What is the good of it?"

Tom's eyes softened with a rough reverence; he might almost have been one of the apostles preaching to the mocking pagans.

"There is a more beautiful life to come, Stephens; one which makes this period only one of impatient transition, whatever its beauties."

"But that's where I don't follow you," argued the Englishman. "Faith is the fulcrum of your whole belief. I don't have it. Anyway, I agree with Nietzsche that Christianity is for the meek, the followers. The leaders are those strong enough to reject religion. Your church prescribes repression of fleshly desires and impulses; to my mind that has an harmfully inhibitory effect on the natural manifestations of the body."

Tom spat vehemently into the trash barrel. "Why don't you leave Freud to the worms, Stephens? But then I don't think even they would touch his filthy carcass."

Stephen's lip curled derisively. "Take off your halo for a moment, Tom. Freud had his grain of truth. You crush down your so-called baser impulses, but you can't destroy them.



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Consequently inhibition builds up dams; your normal desires become muddy puddles in the brain, and they throw off a filthy reek. Hence most of your degenerates, your auto-eroticists." He paused, like a general preparing to bring up his heaviest artillery. "The ancient Greeks were worshippers of beauty, and in my opinion they had a more genuine morality than Christianity ever produced."

Tom smiled sadly. "You're wrong there, boy. By recourse to God in times of trial we build up strength for resistance; dams indeed, but they are filtering dams. I too am a lover of beauty, but I keep that feeling second to love of God. I look forward to the fuller life hereafter."

Stephens shook his head gloomily, partly in defeat and partly from the effects of the alcohol that clouded his vision. He puffed resignedly on his cigarette, and lapsed into silence.

Nor did Tom speak. His mind was reviewing the part that religion had played in his own life. *Herr lieber Gott*, what would there have been to fill the emptiness—to keep before him the vision of some day rejoining his wife and babies? His memory sketched scenes: the beautiful Nuptial Mass at the German cathedral, with its groined massiveness—how proud he had been of Maria that day! He thought of his parish church here in America; a splendid edifice, with its altar tracery and polished gold vessels, its richly tinted glass and dramatic pictures, painted on the ceiling, of saints and popes, and the awful flames of Hell licking hungrily up at Lucifer named Satan. And the rolling, powerful vibrations of the church organ—without all these life suffered a great lack.

Stephens' younger companion awoke suddenly; he gazed in bleary-eyed bewilderment around the basement, then looked horror-stricken past Tom.



"All'gators!" he rasped drunkenly, "all over the bloody place!"

"Millions of them," Stephens grinningly agreed. He rose unsteadily to his feet, crushed his cigarette carelessly on the stone floor. "And time for us to get a gait on, too." Between him and Tom, they piloted the kid to the door.

"Until I'm sober enough to argue with you, Tom!"

Then they went out into the night again. Tom watched them weaving past the rubbish cans on the corner; it seemed even colder and blacker than before, and the street lamp shed only a half-hearted light. A milk team clop-clopped past; the horse breathed long plumes of vapor, and the driver clattered noisily among his bottles. In the apartment house across the street a Negro chorus was practicing late; Tom listened for a moment to the simple spiritual.

*"Sometimes Ah feels like a motherless chile,  
A lo-ong wa-ay from home . . . . ."*

Stephens and his companion turned the corner, and Tom returned to the warmth of his basement.

\* \* \*

Six o'clock. Two hours now and the Greek would come in, scowling at the polished brasswork.

"So the place ain't clean enough for you, eh, Beyer?" he would say sourly, and Tom would answer as always, "I haf never yet worked in a pigpen, Mehos. Someone must take care of the place."

And then there would be breakfast, the carpenter chewing hastily on his oatmeal while he absorbed the morning's paper; hostile silence between Tom and the Greek, and the night nurse entirely oblivious of the three of them.

"By God," the carpenter would gulp, "them Finns is still beatin' hell outa the Rooshians. Now, can yuh tie that?"



## *Traumerei*

The same routine always, same faces, same arguments. Nothing ever changed. But Tom was satisfied; it was a steady and substantial means of earning a living, and he didn't complain, even though he felt his companions as far removed from him as Hell from Heaven. It was better than beating over the country with the harvesting gangs, better than the Berlin Nachtsyls, better than the Russian prison camp, the cruel Cossacks and the relentless Siberian winter. But the comparison went no further, for beyond that were his wife and babies, the abundant life of his beloved Fatherland, the far-off time that seemed somehow bound up with the German legends of his boyhood and the imaginative genius of Wagner, who had made those legends live.

Life had been harsh with him; it had taken his family and his home, and smashed his little world to bits. But through it all, under the Russian whips, drifting over the Continent with thieves and murderers, he had clung with a ferocious stubbornness to his religion, his music and his dream of joining his little family again. Life had cursed him with the companionship of godless, embittered men; it had scourged him with jeers and mockery and a consuming pain. Now, as he looked out into the blackness of the night and observed a single star, the thought of astronomical distances occurred to him: let them live out their shallow little lives, these insignificant men; one day he would turn his back upon the Guilds and Stephenses, the swillers of drink, the jeering hoboes and all the others with their taunts and brutality and narrowness; he would follow Michael and Gabriel, splendid in their robes and their mystical beauty, beyond the sphere even of Valhalla and the heroes, past all the exulting choirs of angels; in Paradise there was no *Gottendämmerung*, and a just God awaited to grant him his dream. Of that Tom was positive.



## Stand-Up

By GEORGE BOWEN, '40

“ONLY eight minutes to go,” breathed Nurse Manning thankfully to herself as she glanced at the operating room clock. It had been a busy day on the surgical floor, and the trim, capable “girl in white” had good reason to be glad that it was time for relief.

“Guess I’ll wear my new blue outfit this evening; Dick has never seen it,” she mused while automatically checking the equipment in the operating rooms. The shrill ring of the house phone interrupted her thoughts of the vastly different kind of ring she would be getting later: the beautiful emerald-cut diamond she and Dick had selected as her engagement gift.

“Scrub for emergency,” crackled a voice authoritatively as she lifted the receiver. “Set up Surgery One; Dr. Adamson will be there shortly.”

“Darn it!” she exclaimed vexedly, heading for the scrub-up room. “What will Dick think when I don’t meet him on time? . . . Hope he waits.”

As she began industriously to scour her hands and arms, the assisting doctor, an intern, hastened in and commandeered an adjoining wash basin for his preoperative cleansing.

“This is a fine time to have an emergency,” she teased him. “Why couldn’t you have waited until I was off duty?”

“That would have meant an eternity of waiting for the patient,” retorted the intern. “His chances are slim enough now.”



## *Stand-Up*

"What is the case?" Miss Manning inquired.

"Gunshot wound in the upper abdomen. I hate to sound hard-boiled, but I'm glad it happened, because a chance to assist at an 'op' like this will certainly help my record."

"It will mean a lot to Dr. Adamson, too," asserted the nurse. "Successfully performing a major operation of this type should surely influence the powers that be to appoint him chief-of-staff, and . . . Oh, here he is now."

"I was told that the patient would be brought in directly," said Dr. Adamson by way of greeting. "Please see that everything is prepared immediately, Dr. Robbins."

"Certainly, sir," the intern assented, hurrying into the operating room. Following him, Miss Manning noticed that already the patient had been wheeled in, draped, and had the anesthetist's cradle placed over his head. Quickly she donned gown and gloves and started to set up her suture and sponge table and the Mayo table. Meanwhile, the technician proceeded to administer the anesthetic while the intern proficiently painted the patient's abdomen with ether and iodine.

Dr. Adamson, approaching the table, asked, "What's the story on this case?"

"This man was attacked and robbed in the park a short time ago, and in the scuffle was shot in the upper epigastric region," answered the room supervisor. "We don't even know who he is, because his wallet was stolen and no means of identification could be found. . . . The police are checking the laundry marks on his clothing," she added as an afterthought.

"Bullet in epigastric region? Hmmm, that's bad," murmured the surgeon. . . . "Scalpel, please, Miss Manning." Turning to his attentive assistant, he remarked, "This promises to be interesting; watch carefully, and I'll explain as I progress. . . . First, an incision is made through the skin and fascia. . . . Clamp the bleeding points, doctor. . . . Good."



Dr. Adamson noted the intern's work with approval while thinking ruefully, "If only I could hope that some day my son would be here in this room with me . . . but he has no use for my profession. Never once has Richard even come to see this hospital of which I am so proud. . . . I don't believe that anyone here knows that I have a grown son, except by hearsay. . . . Clean knife, nurse," he demanded, breaking off his thoughts.

"Now," he continued, "I will penetrate the peritoneum. . . . Hmmmm, just as I feared: the bullet has lodged in the anterior lobe of the liver. That makes the prognosis very poor. . . . Respiration and pulse normal? (This to the technician.) Good. Now comes the most delicate procedure, the extraction of the bullet. . . . Nurse—"

Anticipating his wish, Miss Manning slapped a probe into his gloved hand. The instrument's iridescent gleam reminded her of the diamond she was to receive that night, and unconsciously her thoughts reverted to her first meeting with Dick at Marge's party. She would never forget his look of surprise as he exclaimed, "Don't tell me that you're the efficient Miss Manning I've heard Dad speak so highly of!"

"This will never do," she admonished herself severely. Forcing her attention back to her work she became aware that Dr. Adamson was speaking.

"I've located the bullet," he was saying, and then, taking the forceps which Miss Manning handed him, he grasped the leaden slug and with the uncanny skill of a competent surgeon began to withdraw it. An immediate gush of blood indicated to the observers that the bullet had pierced the inferior vena cava. With an exclamation of dismay the doctor clipped out orders.



## *Stand-Up*

"Suction! . . . Westerly roll! . . . Doctor, pack the wound. . . . Careful, now."

When the flow of blood had been arrested, he completed the extraction and turned to receive the suture which Miss Manning held ready.

"Now," commented the surgeon, "we come to a very difficult task: that of stitching the liver. Because the tissue is so friable, a mattress suture is the only safe method to employ."

As he was dexterously attending to the wound, blood spurted suddenly into the peritoneal cavity, indicating the most feared of all occurrences: Hemorrhage!

Coincidental with the doctor's perception of this danger came the technician's startled cry: "Doctor! pulse rapid and thready . . . respiration shallow."

"Prepare an intravenous glucose injection!" Dr. Adamson shouted to the operating room supervisor.

Like cogs in a well-oiled machine, all five in the room worked frantically with one purpose, the saving of a life. Conversation was limited to the technician's terse reports on the patient's gradually weakening condition:

"Skin cold, clammy . . . pulse dicrotic . . . respirations increasing rapidly—" There was a sudden break in her speech, and before she could utter the words, all knew instinctively that further effort would be futile.

With a sigh the surgeon straightened up and turned to the intern. "Close the incision," he directed dully; "nothing more can be done."

A mantle of enervating age seemed suddenly to drape itself upon his stocky figure, displacing his usual vitality, as Dr. Adamson spiritlessly plodded across the room. Miss Manning felt a twinge of pity for the eminent disciple of Aesculapius



as she watched his leaden progress toward the door. Losing a case at this point in such a highly successful career . . . it must be so disheartening. . . . Oh, well. . . .

The sudden snap of the rubber as the intern pulled off his gloves aroused Miss Manning and she turned to find that the inert, sheet-covered body was being wheeled from the room. Going quickly to her own room she began to change her clothes, thinking, "Dick will be furious. . . . Glad I'm to meet him in the park—it's only a short walk. . . . Gee, but I'm late!"

A few minutes later, as she passed through the office to check out for the evening, she saw Dr. Adamson standing before the switchboard and heard him ask as she approached, "Has the patient been identified?"

"No, doctor," replied the operator. "The police haven't reported yet."

"No matter," said the doctor, "I was merely curious. Well, good night. . . . Good night, Miss Manning."

"Good night, Doctor," they chorused, and a third voice chimed in the farewell as the accident room nurse entered at this moment.

"Oh, Elsie," the latter added excitedly, "do you want to see something? We—"

"Show me later," interrupted Elsie Manning, rushing to the door. "I've got to run. My date will think I'm standing him up."

The slam of the door affixed an effective period to Miss Manning's abrupt statement. The accident room nurse, unrebuffed turned to the switchboard operator. "Look, Grace," she exclaimed, "isn't this a beautiful ring? We found it in that emergency patient's pocket."

"Gosh," remarked Grace admiringly, "isn't it gorgeous? A real emerald-cut diamond."



# The Earth and the Stars

By CHARLES MCGOVERN, '41

THE kid at the end of the bar flipped the ashes from his cigarette, lifted his glass of beer, and took another drink. Rick looked at the kid a moment, glanced quickly at the clock, and, pushing his empty glass toward the bartender, signalled for another drink.

"Tough night," volunteered the bartender.

Rick looked up, and spoke disinterestedly. "What? Oh, yeah, sure."

The kid, clad in a brown suede jacket and blue serge trousers, lit another cigarette, and turned around apprehensively as the door opened. A middle aged woman with sharp features entered, followed by a tall melancholy-looking man, whose face reminded Rick of the English setter he had had when he was young. The couple walked across the room and sat down in a corner booth, as the bartender's wife shuffled across to the booth to take their order.

Rick glanced toward the other end of the bar where a too blonde blonde and a bulbous-faced man rolled dice with the bartender for drinks. Rick eyed the clock again, and took another swallow from his glass. In another hour he would phone and make that date. Lord, how the boys at the fraternity house had ridden him when they found out that he had never been out with a married woman. That afternoon in the frat house—Len, the roué of the house, standing there and calling him a



Boy Scout. He had argued that dating a married woman was against his principles, but they had continued to taunt him. It was only to himself that he would admit that it was only because he was afraid, that he had never gone out with another man's wife. Their continual merciless jibes—and last night when he had walked into Len's room and asked Len to get him a date . . . The interested voice of the woman when he had called. He had become nervous when she had told him to call again at eleven o'clock when her husband had gone to work. Now, in less than an hour, he would call to find out where she would meet him, have his date, and be able afterwards to stride around the frat house freely, now that his manhood was established.

The bartender's dog, a fat, sleek-looking mongrel, walked to Rick's side, and, placing his paws on the bar rail, nuzzled Rick's leg. He extended a potato chip to the dog. The mongrel accepted it, and moved around behind the bar, and, standing on his hind legs, stood against the bar opposite Rick. The bartender's wife hastened towards the dog.

"Down, Pat. You damn hog." She smiled for Rick's benefit. "That dog is always eating. Eat us out of house and home, if we'd let him."

The berouged blonde looked at the dog. "Cheez, you know, sometimes dogs are almost human. My two dogs are just like babies to me."

The blonde appeared as though she once had been pretty. Her figure still gave evidence of once trim lines.

With almost paternal affection, the bartender patted the dog's head. "Pat's a damn nuisance," he growled, "but he's still a good dog."

"Now, you take my dogs," interjected the blonde, "they're glad to see me when I get home. They sit up and beg for something to eat. Of course, the collie always has to bring her bones



## *The Earth and the Stars*

into the living room to eat them, but I always say 'What's good enough for me is good enough for my dogs.' Ain't that right, Dutchy?"

The bartender nodded assent, as he drew another ale from the tap for the kid at the far end of the bar.

The paunchy man with the blonde put down his glass, and wiped his mouth with his coatsleeve. "I'll be damned if I'd let any hound eat bones on my living room rug. I'd scatter his ribs over the lawn if he ever tried it."

The blonde laughed. "Yeah, my husband doesn't like it either. But he isn't home much, so you can tell anybody," she added, looking at the man beside her. "If he ever caught me with you, it wouldn't be anything to tell the kiddies about."

The man laughed uncertainly, and resumed his drinking.

The bartender moved down the bar, and switched on the radio. Rick listened to the routine news reports while he thought of the blonde at the bar who was out with another man while her husband was miles away. The Bruins had beaten the Maple Leafs in an overtime hockey game at Boston. Was he really any different from the man with the blonde—after all, he, Rick, was only going on this date for a lark, not to steal a man's

The Finns had repulsed another Russian division. Fighting devils, those Finns. Two kids had shot and killed a druggist in an attempted holdup in Sharon. Sharon, why that was only three miles from here. The kid at the end of the bar rose, and nervously walked along the bar to the door, and out into the night.

The blonde gazed after him. "Cheez, he sure left in a hurry. Wonder what was eatin' him."

The news reports ended, and Rick listened to the dance music which followed. The orchestra was playing "Stardust". Rick thought of Fran. The clean smell of her blonde hair, that



night when they had parked by the yacht club, waiting for the dance to start. Fran had laughed when he had told her that her hair was soft and silky.

Glass splintered on the bar, and Rick, turning at the sound, saw the bleeding fingers of the blonde clenched around the stem of the shattered glass which she had dropped on the bar. Rick looked beyond her and saw a man standing in the doorway. The paunchy man with the blonde stood up, and looked at the man fearfully.

The newcomer advanced wearily, as though this were something that he had done many times before. Lord, he must be the blonde's husband. If there was going to be a shooting, he'd better get out of here. Rick started to rise.

There was no sound in the bar as the blonde's husband continued his advance. He extended his arm, grasped the paunchy male, and knocked him against the bar. The blonde shrieked, as her husband's fists rose and fell. Rick recoiled as the blood streamed from the paunchy man's face. Only when the man lay moaning on the floor did the husband speak. "Come on, Mary, we're going home."

The battered man sat down on the bar stool with a thud, as husband and wife walked out the door. Perspiration showed on his forehead, and blood streamed from the cuts on his face, as he lit a cigarette with shaking hands.

Rick looked at his watch. 10:50. Maybe this idea of dating another man's wife wasn't the exciting adventure that the boys at the house had made it seem to be. The blood on that man's face—suppose he should be caught by the woman's husband. Hell, it wasn't thrilling at all, but only a big risk. Then, he could always tell the boys that it was morally wrong.

The bartender was cleaning the bar, and looking at the paunchy man sitting with his head on the bar. Rick stood up.



## *The Earth and the Stars*

He walked to the phone, stood there a moment, and then strode to the door, opened it, and stepped outside. Rain fell on his face, and seeped down his neck, as he looked up at the murky sky. South, the road led to the home of the woman. Rick grinned as his headlights swept the road that stretched northward in front of him.





# Catholic Action and the Catholic Collegian

By MARK JOHN RYAN, '41

**A** MOST notable feature of the nineteenth century was the extraordinarily large amount of evil it produced. This world of ours has never distinguished itself by being angelic, but at least it has not always been uniformly bad; it was less reproachable at some times than at others. The last century was one of its worst periods. Diabolic movements and subversive "isms" sprang up everywhere.

Capitalistic industrialism, which some benighted souls still consider a blessing, took root in England and spread throughout the world. Liberalism, economic and political, did its best to cut religion out of the life of the State and even out of the public lives of individuals. Science, over-confident because of its many important discoveries, insisted dogmatically that materialistic evolution was a fact, thus causing great subsequent harm to revealed religion. Materialistic philosophy reigned supreme; and Communism, the most virulent form of this philosophy, launched its vicious attack on the world, seemingly determined to destroy everything that is really worth while.

Although these tremendous forces of evil, with the exception of industrialism and Communism, are not so flourishing as they once were, nevertheless the world is still suffering from them. The root-cause of all the evil in the world is, of course, original sin. More immediately, the present disorders of the world, which have brought our civilization almost to the doors



## *Catholic Action and the Catholic Collegian*

of death, are due to the so-called Reformation. Great masses of people at that time cut themselves loose from the solid pillar of truth, Christ's Church, and since then have drifted ever farther from Him Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Today their illness, occasioned by their separation from the Divine Physician, and intensified by the plagues of the nineteenth century, mentioned above, has brought them to the point of supreme madness: they are opposing Christ's Church with a united Satanic front, determined, it seems, to wage a final decisive battle with the Invincible.

In this crucial moment, in order that the Church might not only not suffer a setback but rather win an overwhelming victory and rout forever the organized forces of evil, the Holy Father has issued to the faithful a resounding appeal to assemble for battle under the banner of Catholic Action. We know that the Church cannot suffer a final defeat, but it would be possible for Her to suffer great losses in the present struggle, were the faithful to fail to respond to the Holy Father's plea. The Popes have reminded us constantly that Catholic Action is absolutely necessary and indispensable.

If Catholic Action is so important, then certainly we, as Catholic collegians, ought to be doing our part in applying its healing power to the wounds of the world. But in order to do that we have to know precisely what Catholic Action is—and it seems that there are few who do. Our late Holy Father, Pius XI, gave us our best definition of Catholic Action when he called it "the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the Church's hierarchy." It is evident from this that Catholic Action is primarily an apostolate, that is, a mission. An apostle is one who is sent, one who has a mission to perform. Now the apostolate of the hierarchy is the same as that of the Twelve whom Christ sent to teach the Gospel to all nations—the work of saving souls.



The first Christians, those who were converted by the Apostles and their disciples, practiced Catholic Action very ardently. They realized, much better than we do, the value of the human soul and the inestimable price of the Blood of Christ, shed for our Redemption; hence they threw themselves eagerly into the work of helping the Apostles. They knew, as our modern Christians unfortunately do not, that it is not enough to save our own souls; the only true Christian is the one who also assists in his neighbor's salvation.

True it is that there is much that could be and ought to be known about the Church by her children, but much knowledge is not necessary in order to appreciate the spirit of the Church. We have had a number of saints who never learned to read and hence could never have studied a catechism. Yet they understood Christ and His Church well enough to attain heroic sanctity. This was possible because they understood the fundamental truth that the first law of Christ is the law of love: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength. This is the first commandment of all. And the second is like to it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is no other commandment greater than these."

So we can sum up the spirit of Christ and the spirit of Christianity in the one word *love*. If we love God above all things and if we love our neighbor as ourself, we fulfil the whole law, because our love will prompt us to fulfil all our duties. The most important characteristic of love is that it tends to unite the wills of the lovers. He who loves another desires what that person desires, and if he does not, he cannot say he truly loves him. Now as St. Paul tells us, God wills that all men should be saved. If we love God, then we too will desire that all men be saved, and we will not stop with merely desiring, but will also do what



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we can to further the salvation of others. Moreover, love of our neighbor, as well as love of God, demands that we be solicitous for our neighbor's eternal welfare, for we know that salvation is the most important thing in life. Heaven is our goal, and if we fail to obtain it, then our whole life is a failure.

This general apostolate to our neighbor is binding on all Catholics; it always has been and always will be. Catholic Action is merely a new specialized form of this general apostolate; its novelty lies in the fact that it is an organized apostolate. Nevertheless, it also, according to the teachings of the Popes, is a duty binding all Catholics.

What was the special purpose of the Popes in sending forth a call for Catholic Action? None other than the purpose of Christ in establishing the Church—to lead men to heaven. The supreme and general aim of Catholic Action is, then, the triumph of the Kingdom of Christ in individuals, in families, and in society; in other words, the honor and glory of God and the salvation of souls. But in order to bring about such a wholesale Christianization of the world, Catholic Action must first bring about certain more limited reforms, such as the Christianization of the family, the defense of the rights and liberties of the Church, expansion and improvement of our schools, promotion of the Catholic Press, the Christian solution of the social question, and many others.

It can be seen at once that the program of Catholic Action is both intensive and all-embracing. It will not be accomplished in a day, nor a month, nor a year. Neither will it be accomplished haphazardly by untrained men. No, indeed; the work of Catholic Action must be done in an organized and logical manner, and it can be done only by well-trained apostles. The Catholic child's training for the apostolate ought to begin when it enters grammar school. But the sad fact is that such a



training is almost totally lacking; seldom is it, in fact, that the child is even taught that it has a duty to engage in the apostolate. The result is that the Catholic high school or college graduate, instead of carrying the Faith to others, is in grave danger of losing his own faith by his contact with the working world.

Thus the very first step in the Catholic Action program is to make honest-to-goodness Christians out of its members; whole Christians; true Christians. This work is known as the formation of consciences and is preliminary and preparatory to the exercise of the apostolate. In the words of Pius XI, "The profoundly Christian formation of the members of Catholic Action is presupposed: fruitfulness comes second."

It has already been pointed out that Catholic Action is not an innovation, but rather that it was practiced most fervently by the members of the early Church, and that the novelty of Catholic Action lies in its organizational form and in the details of its program. We have also declared that all Catholics have a duty to engage in the apostolate to their neighbor since love of God and neighbor, which is the core of Christianity, demands that the Catholic be solicitous for his neighbor's spiritual welfare. Now besides this general duty of the apostolate, every Catholic also has the duty, according to the teachings of the Popes, to engage in Catholic Action, or at least to assist it and co-operate with it to the best of his ability. This duty devolves principally from the necessity of Catholic Action.

The need for Catholic Action should be apparent from a single glance at world conditions today. We have already mentioned the great evils which arose in the nineteenth century, all of which seemed to converge on the Catholic Church in the vain hope of crushing her once and for all. The Church's enemies did not of course succeed in their ultimate purpose, but, on the other hand, to state that the Church passed through the



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attack unscathed would be far from the truth. While only a few left the fold completely, the faith of a great many more was badly damaged. A great number of people, while still professing to be Catholics, ceased almost entirely to practice their faith.

Great harm, moreover, was done even to those who remained staunch Catholics, for hardly a single soul escaped infection by the poisons of liberalism and its unholy offspring, secularism. More and more have Catholics confined their religion to their private lives, imitating in public their unfortunate brothers who do not possess the faith that they possess. More and more have Catholics forgotten that they form one body in Christ, that Christ and His Church are not two separate beings but one living reality, a single organism, and that Catholics, being members of Christ's Mystical Body, are also members of Christ's Church. Having forgotten this fundamental truth, they naturally fell into the individualism which liberalism fostered.

It is evident from the preceding paragraphs that, while there is an enormous field for the apostolate outside the Church, there is also a great deal to be done inside the Church before the majority of those who call themselves Catholics will be true and integral Catholics such as our Lord and Founder, Jesus Christ, wants them to be. Our Lord never intended that there should be such a divorce between the public and private lives of His followers as only too apparently exists today, nor that they should practice the sort of religious and social individualism which is at present so prevalent among them. Rather He intended that their religion should be the basis of their whole life in every aspect, secular as well as religious, public and social as well as private, that it should provoke and permeate their every action. Moreover he desired them to be fully conscious of their role as members of His Mystical Body and to act accordingly, not as individuals making up a collective society called "the



Church," but as integral parts of a divine organism of which Christ is the Head and they the members.

It is clear, then, that there is plenty of work to do. But is it being done? No, sadly enough, it is not. Why? Primarily, I think, because there are too few lay leaders. The bishops and priests of the country, on the whole, have done their best to arouse Catholic Action, but they have not received sufficient co-operation from the laity. A beginning has been made in a few places, such as San Francisco, where the Catholic Men have a mandate from Archbishop Mitty to engage in Catholic Action (such a mandate is necessary for Catholic Action to be considered truly official). But as yet the United States lags far behind almost all the other countries of the world, even such seemingly backward places as India and Africa. And principally because there are too few laymen willing to do their share.

With thousands of young men and women being graduated from Catholic colleges every year, it seems strange that there are not more who are willing to take the lead in organizing the lay apostolate. Surely if there are any who are trained for leadership, they are the ones. A speaker at the Pax Romana congress in Washington last August stated that it is from among university men and women that the Holy Father is awaiting the efficient, able general staff of Catholic Action. But before we can staff Catholic Action there has to *be* Catholic Action.

As long as Catholic collegians and Catholic college graduates continue shirking their duties with regard to it, Catholic Action is not going to flourish in the United States. And we may be sure that little or nothing will be done by Catholic graduates unless they make some sort of preparation while in school. As has been pointed out before, this preparation ought to begin in the grammar school. We, as Catholic collegians, cannot do



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anything about the grammar schools just now, but we can do something about ourselves.

The very first thing to do is to acquire a thorough knowledge of Catholic Action itself, the theory of it, the principles on which it is based. For this purpose there ought to be organized a study club, or clubs, preferably under the guidance of a priest, composed of students of the College. Along with study on the part of the members the priest could begin the work of formation of consciences, building up and rounding out the spiritual life of his charges.

Soon the study group would be ready to become also an action group. Its action would be small and seemingly insignificant at first, but then every beginning is small. Remember the acorn and the oak, the tiny seed and the mustard tree. The little group which landed at Jamestown in 1609 never realized to what an extent their labor would spread and produce fruit. Their descendants can say that they founded a great nation. We cannot say to what an extent the little beginning we make here may increase. Perhaps our descendants will be able to say that we have renewed the face of the earth. At any rate, we can make the beginning; we ought to and, God willing, we shall.





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