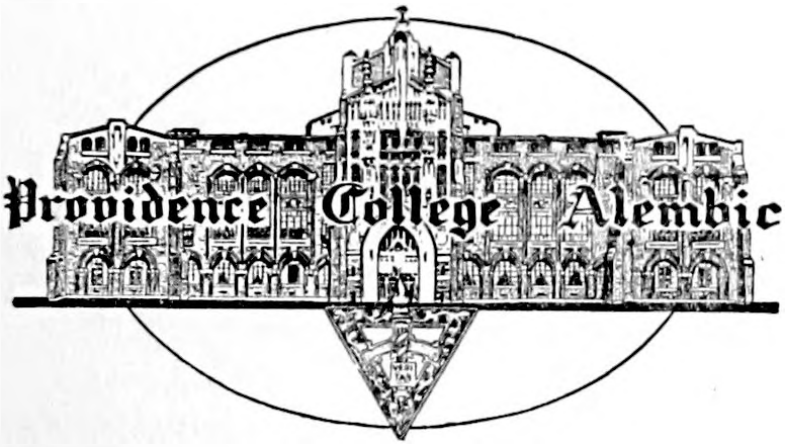
THE ALEMBIC

VERITAS

JANUARY, 1951

THE ALEMBIC



PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

BY THE

STUDENTS OF PROVIDENCE COLLEGE

PROVIDENCE, R. I.

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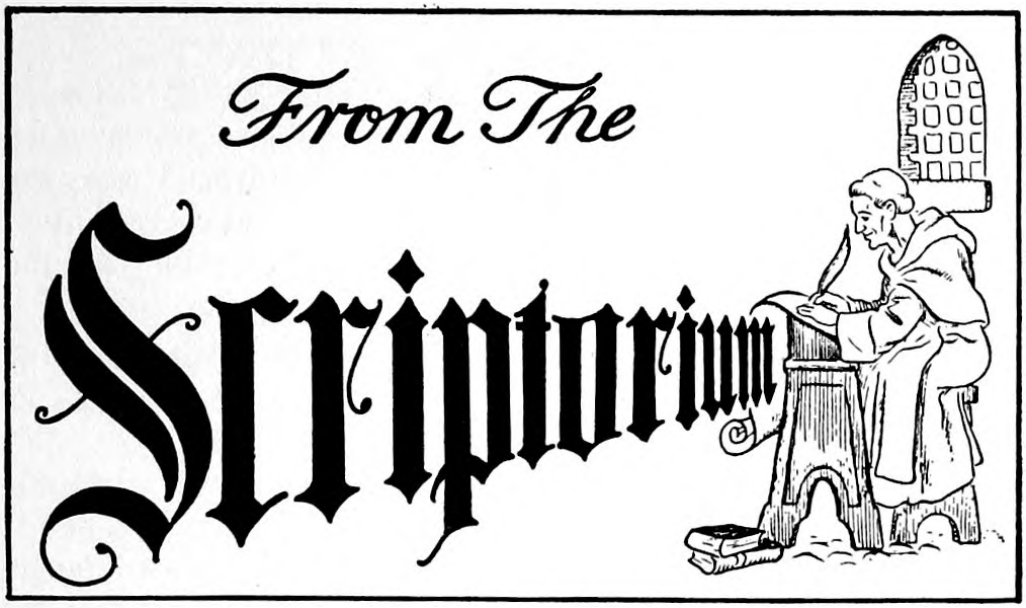

Editorial

When the brave new World of Television bravely crashed through the front door of the American home and planted itself firmly in the most imposing corner of the living-room, another "that without which you simply cannot afford to be" was added to our already over-padded repertoire of labor-, time-, money-, and thought-saving gadgets. Intellectuals roared protests. Pseudo-intellectuals howled. Educators turned soulful eyes to Dewey and wept. Child-guidance experts considered the whole thing objectively; then locked themselves in consultation rooms and flipped a coin. The rest of the nation read the press accounts and magazine articles pro and con, nodded sagely, and switched on their sets.

The television industry, needless to say, hailed their modern Cyclops as the greatest boon to mankind since the discovery of the wheel. Granting all of its potentialities, we might be inclined to agree; but judging by its present entertainment, educational, and advertising output, television is about as valuable to the human race today as a pneumatic spaghetti-press in Tibet.

The most that can be said for the field of TV entertainment is that it will probably improve someday. Sports coverage is by far the

best, even though the cameras have an uncanny ability either to go dead or to be wandering aimlessly over the audience whenever a crucial score is made or a fighter lands his Sunday punch. Variety shows, which are many and poor, consist mostly in tired old comedians doing tired old acts which someone should have had the decency to strangle long ago, and female singers whose main intention, apparently, is to utilize the klieg lights in order to give a tan to as much of themselves as the law will allow.

Educationally speaking, our chief criticism centers around the fact that TV has overlooked a fertile field, namely, the field of education. This, however, does not mean that the TV audience is languishing in total ignorance. If one is really interested he can look below the surface and discover that teeth should be brushed with a circular motion, that proper people drink their beer from a Pilsener, and that atmospheric conditions sometimes interfere with good reception.

Not until the field of TV advertising has been considered can we fully appreciate the true worth of this, the twentieth century's gift to posterity. Five years ago no one would have believed that advertising could become any more nerve-wracking than it was at that time, what with jingles and the like. But this was before TV. By means of extreme diligence and costly research, the agencies have come up with a series of commercials which, for sheer maddening power, is unparalleled in the history of the world. The basic philosophical tenet behind all of this seems to stem from the doctrine of repetition. In other words, if you hit a man on the head with a hammer often enough he's liable to resent it and take the hammer away from you.

Perhaps the best example of this sort of advertising occurs in cigarette commercials. Usually they begin with a blank screen and soft music. Suddenly out of nowhere appears a tiny black spot. The spot (a pack of cigarettes, naturally) grows and grows and the music gets louder and louder until, with a final leap it practically breaks through the screen and grabs the viewer by the throat. Then a voice breaks in and threatens the public with dire consequences unless it immediately changes brands and smokes the only cigarette worthy of

the name. This systematic process of mass terrorization is repeated daily, including Sundays, several times an hour. We think it a tribute to the American people that they have been able to stand up under such merciless pummeling.

On a somewhat less bombastic plane are the electric-refrigerator sellers. Their little gems of rhetorical and photographic art commence with a scene showing the product and a model wearing clothes that no kitchen has ever seen. The model is smiling demurely. The refrigerator just stands and looks bored. And now the time has come for her to go to work. She crosses quickly to the refrigerator, opens the door, and smiles triumphantly, as if she had expected the darned thing to fall off. Then, revealed for all to see, is the interior of the richest, biggest, newest, brightest, and finest refrigerator on earth. The audience lets out a well-cued gasp, and the national viewing public is treated to the sight of shelves: rows of shelves. A few more moments of pleading and cajoling brings the charming interlude to a close. We have watched this type of commercial for several years, but we have not given up hope: someday that door is going to stick.

If TV continues much longer at its present pace, a day will come when the tormented masses will rise from their easy-chairs, seize the nearest bookend, and hurl it unerringly through the eye of this squat tyrant. For a time there will be cries of treason; the television industry will raise itself to its full height, utter a few imprecations, and reconvert to radio production; Hopalong Cassidy will be reduced to rustling Bar-20 cattle to keep up the payments on his Rolls. But within a few weeks a great calm will settle over the nation, and people will begin to wonder why they ever gave up Bridge.

H. E. V.

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

The Madonna's Face

By Raymond D'Ambrosio, '51

CHARLES pulled the rope that hung motionless beside the closed gate, and the small bell in its own small bell-tower atop the gate vibrantly tingled through the listless day the message that a visitor had come. In a few minutes, the judas opened and the shrivelled face of a toothless old woman asked, "What is it, signor?"

"I've come to see Signor Cordorna, signora. I'm Mr. Rand. Signor Cordorna is expecting me," he told her in his faltering Italian.

From the woman's dumb, unwavering stare, Charles thought that she hadn't understood him. He was about to speak again when she abruptly closed the judas and opened the gate.

Charles entered into a courtyard. Before him was a long, two-storied pink stone house of pretentious architecture. To Charles, the house didn't belong in this day and age. There was something medieval about it. And its presence here on this quickly warming Italian day seemed as incongruous as a resurrected Renaissance man would seem walking in his odd costume through modern Italy.

Charles followed the old woman from the blazing courtyard, under a graceful colonnade, into the sea coolness of the house.

"Take a chair, signor," she mumbled indistinctly, gesturing toward a chair. "I'll tell Vittorio that you are here." And, with an inhuman quietness, she left the room.

From his seat, Charles looked around the room with curious eyes. The room was oblong, and at the farther end there was a large aperture that was a fireplace. Ornately carved tables and richly tapestried chairs were placed here and there. Curtains of heavy brocade framed the two casement windows. And in the center of the room was a russet rug. Clinging to one wall was a gaudy arras; and on one side, where the evenness was unbroken by a window, there were a dozen portraits of different sizes and subjects. Charles, who had risen to examine the portraits more closely, considered them well-done. This was his layman opinion. For Charles Rand was no art connoisseur. He couldn't distinguish an El Greco from a Matisse. But, like so many people, he did have a peculiar love for brush and easel, without the accompanying interest of learning more about art. When he looked at a picture, he enjoyed it for its external beauty and appraised it according to its visible worth. After all, any man can appreciate a thing of beauty. If Charles liked what he saw, he said so. And if he didn't, he didn't hesitate to say so either.

Yet, there was one portrait he had seen a week before; a portrait so magnificently executed that it had held him spellbound. It was a portrait of a Madonna in the Pitti Gallery in Florence, a portrait that had sent him looking for Vittorio Cordorna, its creator. Ah, that Madonna's face. For a minute, Charles closed his eyes to bring again on the screen of his memory the portrait of the Madonna. The Madonna had a placid face, and her holy features were illumined by a corona of light that seemed to envelop her. Of course, such singular beauty did not belong to one person. The face, without a doubt, was a composite of the loveliest features of different women. The eyes, lowered in humility, were taken from one woman; the nose, smooth and even and delicate, the pink nos-

trils finely shaped, from another; the lips, full, tinctured the palest red, pressed ever so gently together, made soft by prayer, from still another.

"Mr. Rand?"

Charles opened his eyes quickly, the portrait crumbling to nothing. Turning, Charles faced Vittorio Cordorna. Vittorio Cordorna was about five or six years older than Charles, who was forty-six. He was of medium stature and there wasn't an ounce of fat on him. His black hair was smirched with white. And there was something about his narrow eyes and slightly aquiline nose that reminded Charles of the old woman who had let him in.

"Signor Cordorna," Charles said, going over to him and shaking his hand. "It's a great pleasure to meet you."

"Thank you, signor." Vittorio's English was slowly but precisely spoken. "Take a seat, Mr. Rand. Take a seat." Obediently Charles sat down. "Would you like some wine?" Vittorio was already pouring the sweet liquor into a glass. Charles sampled a little of his drink and, after the exclamation of praise, "Excellent!", emptied his glass.

"Now, signor," Vittorio said, sitting in a chair opposite Charles, "suppose you tell me why you wanted to see me so urgently. From your letter I judged that your very life depended upon your meeting me."

"Ah, Signor Cordorna," laughed Charles a bit embarrassed, "you must forgive my impassioned letter. I could not keep myself from writing it; the words, no matter how hard I tried to restrain them, most forwardly persisted in coming. In my great desire to see you, I became wild and exuberant."

"Speak no more, signor," Vittorio said good-naturedly. "I forgive you your letter. However, your letter did not say why you wished to see me."

"I will tell you. Very simply, I wish to have a portrait made."

"I presumed as much."

"Will you paint it, signor?"

A minute of reflection passed before Vittorio answered, "I would be greatly honored to paint a portrait of you, Mr. Rand."

Charles gave a deep sigh and settled more comfortably in his seat.

"You seemed to be relieved," Vittorio observed. "Was something wrong?"

"I will be truthful with you," Charles said. "I came here with a great many fears."

"Fears?"

"Yes. I feared that you wouldn't be home—"

"Ah, Mr. Rand!" Vittorio exclaimed, putting his palms together as if in supplication. "I would never be so rude as to tell you to come and then not be home."

"Perhaps," conceded Charles, "that fear was unfounded. But, the greatest fear I had was that you would refuse to paint my portrait. You see, when I asked Signor del Vecchio, the curator in the Pitti Gallery, if he knew where you lived so that I might get in touch with you concerning the portrait, he gave me your address, but told me that it was futile to approach you about a portrait for you didn't paint anymore." Charles paused for a moment; then, his brow furrowed with lines of skepticism, "Is it true, signor, what Signor del Vecchio told me? That a man of your genius doesn't paint anymore?"

"Signor del Vecchio was wrong. I have not stopped painting, nor shall I ever stop, for I would never know peace. Signor del Vecchio assumed, I'm sure, that I've stopped paint-

ing because I haven't submitted a single painting to any gallery since the Madonna."

"The Madonna," repeated Charles, his eyes expanding at hearing the name of the portrait that had thrilled him so peculiarly. "Not the one that hangs in the gallery in Florence?"

"The very one. The only one. You have seen it?"

"Yes. Of course."

"Do you like it?"

"Like it, signor?", Charles said in a tone that suggested such a question to be needless and almost rude. "How could anyone gaze on such beauty and not like it—*love* it, that is a better word. It was that picture that brought me to you. When I saw that indescribably lovely face, that Madonna of such majestic beauty, I knew that I could not rest until I had a portrait of myself by her creator."

"You flatter me by your words, signor."

"No, no, for no words of praise could do justice to that portrait. Her face, her eyes, her lips—"

Charles would have gone on in a wild dithyrambic had not Vittorio interrupted him. "I see she has captivated you, too. It seems that she—she, well, dazzles, bemuses every man who goes near her. Indeed, the Madonna has a strange influence on men; she seems to be quite irresistible. I'm afraid that unintentionally I painted a little of the fascination of the devil in the Madonna."

"Oh, no, Signor Cordorna. There is no devil in her. Only beauty. Unbelievable beauty."

"Yes," Vittorio murmured, nodding his head, "she has captivated you. But then, you were powerless against her. How could you resist her, when I, who gave her life and beauty, couldn't resist her. I was—and still am—so com-

pletely hers that I haven't been able to paint anything half as beautiful in these past ten years. All my work, compared with that portrait, seems amateurish and juvenile and—and inferior. Because my work has been poor these last years, I send no portraits to the gallery. For the inspiration I received to paint the Madonna is dead."

Later Charles was to remember these words of Vittorio Cordorna. And they would have deep meaning.

"And, now, signor, I must return to my work. I've allowed myself the luxury of these few moments. The light is at its best."

"Tomorrow shall I come, signor?" Charles said, rising from his chair.

"Yes, Mr. Rand. Tomorrow. About ten. *A rivederci.*"

"A rivederci." Charles left the house and started back for Florence.

* * * * *

Charles Rand was not the only visitor that Vittorio Cordorna had that day. About a half-hour after Charles had left, the grave-faced old woman let in another man. Like Charles, this other man had walked from Florence with the promise of an interview with Vittorio Cordorna. Unlike Charles, Gino Rogetti, for that was the young man's name, was young and an art student who had come to serve an apprenticeship under the critical artistic eye of Vittorio, who, if the truth be known, had accepted the young man for pecuniary reasons.

"Signor Maestro," Gino told Vittorio in his young, awe-freighted voice, "you'll never know what this means to me to be able to study with you. Thank you, thank you, *mille grazie,* Maestro."

Vittorio was amused by the boy's lavish thanks. And Vittorio remembered the day long ago when he had gone to study with the great Delmardi; and he remembered how profuse he had been with his humble thanks, and he remembered, and now knew, why Delmardi had smiled.

"Believe me, Gino, I will be a strict disciplinarian. I will only accept the best; not second best or almost best, but the best. I'm a perfectionist; and perfectionists are disagreeable people. But, I fear, you will have to be one, too."

"Maestro, under your tutelage I will be able to do only my best. I want to paint more than anything in the world."

"More than anything?" Vittorio picked up his word. "Tell me, Gino, would you give up anything to be a good—not a famous—but a good artist? Food, proper shelter and clothing? And all the little luxuries that you may have to forego for your art? And, the greatest necessity of all: love? Would you forfeit these things for art's sake?"

"Yes, Maestro. Only too willingly."

"H-m-m," hummed Vittorio. "You answer too quickly. You do not think."

"I have thought about these things before. And you must believe me when I tell you I would give them up. To paint a portrait like your Madonna is worth any great or small privation that I may have to suffer."

"My Madonna? You hope to paint a Madonna to equal mine?"

"No, Maestro. For me to say so would be presumptuous. Never could I equal your greatness. Never!" Gino was contrite, as if he had physically harmed the man.

"Modesty and humility, Gino, are admirable in moderation. But, and I don't mean to offend you, I always distrust the over-modest and the too-humble. Yet, who knows,

perhaps someday you will paint a great Madonna."

Gino's voice was uneven with the breathless thrill that such a thought gave him. "If I could, Maestro, I would ask for nothing else from life."

"It will take time, Gino. Time filled with sweat and pain and defeat."

"I will endure anything to paint such beauty as you have created."

Vittorio's last remark seemed to Gino unrelated to the conversation. It was, "But without love, there is no beauty, there is no greatness. Because first we're men; and only second are we artists. And the artist is dependent upon the love of man for inspiration."

II

Charles sat unrelaxed in a chair a few feet from Vittorio, who stood, glancing for a second at Charles, then sketching on the canvas before him what he had seen. They were not in the same room in which Charles had met Vittorio yesterday. This room was nearly all casement windows, affording excellent light for painting. Large and small canvasses, one against the other, rested against the wall. On a table, in a confused heap, lay tubes of paint and brushes and dirty, besmeared rags.

"How long do you think it will take to complete my portrait, Signor Cordorna?" Charles asked.

Vittorio shrugged his shoulders. "Perhaps a month, Mr. Rand, if I work diligently and if the light is good. Perhaps longer if I grow lazy and the light fails," he smiled. "Right now, I feel as if I have a superabundance of energy; and, as you can see, the light feels strong too."

Indeed the light was strong, falling in millions of motes of gold through the clean-paned windows.

From somewhere in the house, Charles could make out what seemed to be the hurried whispering of two people; but the whispering voices flowed through the house, growing louder and more agitated and coming closer to Charles. And when the heated voices—one quick, crisp and firm; the other slow, weak and unsteady—were outside the studio, Charles realized that someone—women obviously from the high tones—was having an argument. Vittorio, who had put down his brush with a soft curse of annoyance, was about to open the paneled door to learn who was arguing so violently, when the door was flung open rudely and a beautiful woman boldly entered, the impotently furious gap-toothed old woman behind her.

The old woman mumbled something unintelligibly in Italian, only a part of which Charles got: "—that you were working—"

Vittorio said something to quiet the old woman who had gone on in quivering rage. "All right, all right. *Basta! Basta!*" To the young woman, he said, "Come in, Marina."

Casting a haughty glance of triumph at the old woman, Marina meanly slammed the door in the woman's face.

"Mr. Rand, I'd like you to meet my wife, Marina," Vittorio introduced her.

Charles did not say a thing; he didn't rise from his chair to greet the wife of Vittorio Cordorna. He sat transfixed, like a person gazing upon a celestial creature of inconceivable beauty.

"Mr. Rand," Vittorio asked, "is something wrong?"

With the same rapt expression on his face, Charles slowly rose from his chair. "She is the Madonna. She has the face of the Madonna."

"Yes," Vittorio said. "Marina modeled for that portrait."

"Excuse my rudeness, Signora Cordorna," Charles apologized. "But, seeing you come in, for a moment I thought the Madonna had come to life. It's so beautiful." The last sentence he whispered to himself. Yes, the Madonna was beautiful. But Marina Cordorna was even more beautiful than the portrait. She was indescribably beautiful.

"It is all right, signor," Marina assured him, in a voice soft and resonantly sweet. "It seems that people think that anyone as beautiful as the Madonna could not be human. But, I am human, signor." She laughed gayly, and in Charles' ears her laughter rang like the purest sounding carillons.

Marina moved toward the newly-started portrait of Charles. "I see that you're having a portrait done, signor."

"Yes."

"You should feel honored. The great Cordorna does not condescend to paint everyone's portrait."

Vittorio, standing behind her, placed his hands on her shoulders; but she very deftly, making it seem a natural movement, slipped out of the brace of his hands.

"I am honored, signora," Charles told her sincerely.

"If you will take your seat, Mr. Rand, we shall continue," Vittorio said, as if suddenly incensed.

"Oh, yes, do continue. Don't let me interrupt."

Charles took his seat and once again struck a stiff position. Although he did not move his head, his eyes were

always on Marina, who stood, watching Vittorio over his shoulder.

"Please, Marina. Don't look over my shoulder. It's unnerving."

"I'm sorry, *Vittorio mio.*" As reparation for her inconsiderateness she kissed him playfully on the cheek. And Charles thought the reason for Vittorio's trying to avoid her lips as one would move fearfully away from the sting of a poisonous snake was that he was embarrassed.

"Has signora served as model for any other paintings?" Charles inquired, turning in his seat, to the displeasure of Vittorio.

"One or two. No more. But none as good as the Madonna, eh, Vittorio?

Vittorio nodded, not stopping his work to speak.

"Vittorio started it on our honeymoon ten years ago. He completed it within two months. And when it was first shown in the gallery in Florence, its creator, my own Vittorio, was acclaimed throughout Italy. He was compared to all the great Italian painters of the past: da Vinci, Lippi, Michelangelo, Raphael. And the highest honor of all was given him when his painting was placed in the Pitti Gallery with other famous Madonnas by the masters."

"Please, Marina," Vittorio snapped.

"Do I embarrass you, Vittorio? I'm sorry. But I only say what is true."

"Truly it is a masterpiece," Charles added his humble word of praise. "Perhaps, Signor Cordorna, you should try another Madonna with signora as model. If one was so well executed and received, surely another, after ten years, would receive equal if not greater acclamation."

"No, Mr. Rand. I could not paint another. My first was my best. Another Madonna would only suffer in comparison with the beauty of the first."

"But with Signora Cordorna as the model—"

"No. I think it useless to try. You see," and Vittorio paused in his sketching, "I saw Marina as a Madonna then."

The smile that parted Marina's fully-formed lips faded. "Perhaps we should try another subject, Vittorio. If once you thought of me as a Madonna, what do you see me as now? I shall inspire you anew."

The room was tight with silence. And Charles felt that he shouldn't be here.

"If you would be kind enough to leave us, Marina," Vittorio said, renting the quiet. "I fear you're too great a distraction for Mr. Rand. We would accomplish more if you were to go."

Marina took a step toward her husband and was about to say something when she suddenly turned to Charles, and, very graciously, said, "I'm glad I met you, Signor Rand. We will, I'm sure, see much of each other."

"I hope so, signora," Charles said standing.

"Will you have lunch in here, Vittorio?" she asked.

"Yes."

Before she closed the door, Vittorio called, "Oh, Marina, I forgot something."

"Yes?"

"Welcome home."

His sharp pointed words pinked her.

Smiling, she murmured, "Thank you, my love," And the door closed with an unusual, planned softness, more eloquent than a bang.

* * * * *

After leaving the studio, Marina had the discomfiting feeling of a general who has lost a major battle. She had hoped to humiliate Vittorio; instead, he had humbled her so that she felt defeated, and Marina hated defeat. Now she thought it best not to stay in the house, for she wished to avoid any encounter with the old woman, who was waiting, Marina was sure, to start to quarrel again. Not that Marina feared either the old woman or her pointed words. Never. It was just that, at this time, Marina didn't wish to bandy words with her. So, she went into the garden, where she was startled to find a young man sitting on a stone bench, sketching. It was Gino. And, so engrossed was he in his work that he didn't notice Marina's approach.

"Who are you?" she asked after watching him work for a minute, waiting for him to take notice of her.

Gino looked up, his mouth falling open with a surprise at seeing Marina. It was a moment before he could speak, in a unnatural, halting voice: "You—you're—the —the Madonna in the painting."

"You too!" Marina exclaimed with impatience.

"Are you real?" Gino asked, thinking quite insensibly that a vision was standing before him. But, in all justice, Gino was a sensible young man. So, the senselessness of his belief must be ascribed to the shock of seeing Marina, the Madonna who had the face of a woman who couldn't be real. Of course, if Gino had been able to think more clearly at the time he would have realized that the Madonna never appears in a white blouse and gaudily printed flair skirt.

"Here," said Marina, extending her hand, "touch me. I'm real."

Gino did not touch the hand, but just looked at her suspiciously.

"Don't be silly, signor. I'm no Madonna. I'm Signora Cordorna. This is my house. And what are you doing here in my garden?"

"Signora Cordorna," he repeated softly to himself a few times, tasting the words, hearing them, and understanding them. When he realized that she was real, he was embarrassed by his stupid behavior. "You must forgive me, signora," he said, shamefaced.

"Of course," Marina forgave him, observing how tall he was standing before her and how straight and slim his body. "Now, perhaps, you will tell me who you are."

"Oh, forgive me—"

"Forgiveness again?" Marina broke in, teasingly.

Gino smiled. "I'm Gino Rogetti. I'm studying art with Signor Cordorna."

"An art student."

"Signora sounds surprised."

"Yes. A bit."

"Why? "

"Vittorio hadn't told me he planned on taking a student. When did you arrive?"

"Yesterday."

"Oh. I was not home yesterday. I've just returned this morning from—from my cousin's home in Pistola."

"That explains our not having met before this."

"How long do you plan on staying with us?" Marina queried, after an awkward silence.

"I don't know, signora. Three, four, perhaps, six months. I hope I won't inconvenience you."

"Not at all," Marina quickly assured him. "And what will you do after you leave us? Where will you go?" Looking at him playfully, she teased, "Maybe there is some

nice girl waiting with an anxious heart?"

Crimson from ear to ear, Gino replied," No, there is no girl. I have no time for women."

"Nonsense. There is always time for women."

"Not for me. There is just work. I want above all else to be a great painter."

To Marina, it was Vittorio speaking.

"After I leave here," Gino went on, "I may go to Paris."

"Ah, Paris."

There was a strange inflection in Marina's voice and Gino detected it. "Have you ever been in Paris, Signora Cordorna?"

"Once, when Vittorio and I were first married. Right after he painted the Madonna."

Marina's mention of the painting made Gino say, "The Madonna has your face. Or is it that you have the face of a Madonna?"

"Very pretty," Marina praised with the consummate coyness of a coquette. "I'm afraid the Madonna has my face. I was Vittorio's model."

Suddenly, Marina whirled about. Standing in the shadows of the arched gallery that led to the house and looking at the two with slit-eyes was the old woman. Sounding more like the hoarse cawing of a crow than the tones of a human voice, she called for Marina.

"I must go," Marina said, blanch with rage at having been called like a giddy school-girl away from a corrupting boy. "Mama needs my help to make lunch."

Before Gino could utter another syllable, Marina walked from the garden to the house. And Gino, sitting once more sketching, but not so intensely, and now beset by the

bothersome thoughts of Marina's youth and beauty, could hear a shrill feminine voice. Unmistakably, it was Marina's.

* * * * *

Supper was over. Sitting on a low, cushioned bench before the windows in the filmy greyness of the oblong-shaped room, Vittorio pensively watched the chatoyant sky and waited, like a person for a train he could hear in the distance, for the black night to curtain everything. Vittorio liked to sit by the window at this time of evening and go back to the dead years to things that used to be and could have been. As if it had happened only yesterday, he could remember the first time he had seen Marina. She had been sixteen, young and beautiful and happy. At first sight, Vittorio had fallen in love with her. Her youth and exuberance and contagious happiness were like a soothing, cool emollient applied to the sore, hot shoulder of Vittorio's depression. For, after almost two decades of studying, of persevering, of doing without, Vittorio at forty-one, was still an unknown painter. And his being a nobody when he desired to be a somebody gave him the most cutting pains of frustration so that he had even considered ending all. But then, luckily or unluckily, he met Marina. For him, fame then lay in attaining Marina. He must have her; she too would not be deprived him. And, although he was some twenty-five years older than she, he won her with a persistent, uncombattable campaign of love. If nothing else, he had Marina. He had won something. Life wasn't as useless as he had thought. Then, he painted the Madonna. And, like a late guest, came fame, whose presence now that he had Marina, tangible evidence of fame, was *de trop*. Then, Paris. Vittorio sighed in his remembering. It was in Paris that his trouble began.

Someone entered the room. Vittorio looked to see who it was, his thoughts flying like birds in a belfry who, frightened by the sudden deep clang of the bell, flee to the quiet safety of the heavens. In the dimness Vittorio could make out the slender figure of Marina.

"Come and sit by me, Marina," he said, stretching his hand toward her for her to take.

For a moment Marina hesitated; then, she went over to him, took his hand in hers, and sat beside him.

For a long while Vittorio didn't speak, not wanting any word, any sound to spoil the pleasure he received from sitting next to Marina.

"Where have you been these last three days?" he asked, sensing that she was becoming bored with him and his silence.

"I told you before I left that I was going to visit my cousin in Pistola," she said curtly.

"Yes, your cousin. I forgot." And he pressed the matter no further.

Another century of silence. A sigh of mounting boredom from Marina. Vittorio spoke.

"I was sitting here thinking of the past, Marina."

"Were you?"

"Do you ever think of the past?"

"Not any more."

"Why not? We were very happy when we were first married. You were happy, weren't you, Marina?"

"I thought I was," she told him briefly.

"Of course you were. For I loved you and you loved me. We were so happy," he repeated, as if their happiness had been a rare thing, worthy of being remembered. "You said you wanted me and no one else. And how could I have wanted anyone but you. You inspired me to paint the Ma-

donna. Such a beautiful painting. I should never have been able to paint it if it hadn't been for you. And then we went to Paris. Do you remember Paris, Marina?"

"I shall never forget it."

While he had spoken, Vittorio had been looking out the window at the night changing from one grey shade, each a bit darker than the other, to black. Now, he turned to Marina, whose face was suffused by the moon's silver, which gently slanted through the windows. Her features were placid; and her eyes shone with the silver in them; and she seemed to radiate a silver peacefulness. And Vittorio felt that he could paint another Madonna: a silver Madonna. But, the feeling lasted no longer than a second.

"What happened to us? What came between us to destroy all the happiness we had?"

"You know as well as I. You left Paris; you came here to this place of deafening quiet. You brought your mother to live with us."

"But," expostulated Vittorio, who had always given the same reason for the action of which Marina complained, "my father had died. She was all alone and old. I could not leave her by herself. She would have starved, for she had nothing. After all, didn't she pay for my painting lessons at the Academy, when she hadn't money to buy food for herself? I would have been an ungrateful son if I had left her to starve. You agree, I owe her something?"

"She would not have starved," Marina spewed forth her words with a pinching sharpness. "Just to be the mother of Vittorio Cordorna would have been enough payment for her years of hunger. You did not have to bring her here. I gave up all my family for love of you. I've forgotten them, you could have forgotten your mother. She causes the trouble

between us. She fills you with the worse possible lies about me. She hates me, Vittorio. She hates me. But, I don't care. For I hate her."

"No, no, Marina. She doesn't hate you. Believe me."

But, Marina did not believe him. Nor did Vittorio believe himself.

Marina tried to rise to leave; but Vittorio held her hand more firmly.

"I must go, Vittorio," she protested his keeping her.

"Where?"

"I promised Signora Sforza that I would visit her tonight."

"Stay with me, Marina. Just tonight." He was pleading.

But, Marina was a callous goddess. "I promised, Vittorio."

Once again she attempted to get up; once again he held her.

"Marina, why can't we be as we used to be? Why don't you model for me anymore? We could try another portrait. Not a Madonna—no, never again. Perhaps a shepherdess. Yes, a simple shepherdess, tending her flock. We could start tomorrow, Marina. Say you will, please."

"But what about Signor Rand's portrait?"

"I will forget it, if only you will agree."

Without giving his suggestion an ounce of thought, she answered, "No."

Shaking his head as if incapable of believing something, Vittorio whispered, "Why you dislike me so is beyond understanding."

"I don't dislike you, Vittorio," she said with unwonted

tenderness, perhaps suddenly pitying him. "If I did, I should have left you long ago."

"Then if there is still love in you for me, why can't we be as we were before?"

"Oh, we could be, *Vittorio mio,* if only we could leave this place and everyone and lead the life you should lead as a great painter."

"No," he said, "not great any more. Besides, where would we go?"

"Back to Paris."

"You know we can't go there."

"Why not?" she asked. "All has been repaid. No one will be able to utter a word against you."

"No, Marina. I can't go back."

"Then," she said, all tenderness gone from her voice, "stay here. But as long as we do, things will not change."

Vittorio forced a chuckle. "I am a fool to think that if we were to go away things would be as they used to be. Paris will be Paris, Vittorio will be Vittorio, and, you, Marina, would still be Marina."

"What do you mean by that?" she demanded.

"Simply, that no matter where we go, you will never change. You will go visiting your cousins, you will continue mistreating me and laughing at me. After all I've done for you. After all I've given you."

"After all you've given me!" she repeated after him, pulling her hand free of his grasp. "What have you given me, Vittorio? Nothing. It is I who have given you everything: inspiration, fame, and the only happiness you ever had. And what did you give me? This house, surrounded by a high fence! Why, it is a prison! A mother-in-law who despises me. And you, a husband grown morose and sullen. You expect

me to be the dutiful wife, doing your work all day, while you paint. And I'm to be happy if you smile at me and say a kind word to me. I'm to be content sitting here day in, day out, year after monotonous year, in this—this empty house. Well, I cannot play the part of your dutiful wife. Oh, Vittorio, Vittorio, have you never been so bored, so depressed that you wished for death as something different, something exciting? Have you never been at home, alone, always alone, wondering what other people were doing, envying their good times, crying to join them? Oh, Vittorio, life is too short to waste it wishing to do things. We all of us must make our own wishes come true."

"But," Vittorio tried to explain, "the life you wanted to lead was impossible for us. The money for the Madonna was gone in no time. How could we have lived? On my painting? The money would never have been enough for you. And was I to continue painting men like the Englishman?"

"The Englishman! I knew it would not be long before you mentioned him."

"It was because of him, wasn't it, that *you* had me buy this villa. This villa that you hate so much. This villa that cost me a fortune and my reputation."

"You're melodramatic," she snapped. "Next you will say that I am the cause of all your misfortune."

"It does not have to be said. You know, that all I have done, I have done in hope of pleasing you. You wanted me to take another client. I did as you wished."

Not caring to hear any more, Marina rose from the bench, "I must go."

"Yes, go. Signora Sforza will be impatient."

Slowly, Marina crossed the dark room. Suddenly, her voice flowed evenly and confidently through the ebon stillness.

"By the way, Vittorio, you will have to give me some money for my cousin in Pistola. To see the way she lives would make tears come to your eyes."

"You will have the money."

He knew that she was smiling. "Shall I turn on the light?" she asked.

"No. The darkness is comforting."

"As you like." And she was gone.

With ambivalent feelings of love and hate, Vittorio listened to her sandals echo jeeringly against the rugless floors. And as he sat there alone, he no longer thought of the past, but what his life would have been if he had never married. He could have done such great things without a wife. He had no need of a wife. And yet, he had, regrettably, married. Why? There was no answer. But, his hand still stung from the warmth of Marina's.

III

Gino was hopelessly in love. And love was the one thing which he had always fought and feared. With all the strength in his body, he fought it continually, seeing love as the powerful enemy athwart his path to fame and greatness. He feared it because love was like a temptress, a temptress whom you know is evil, but it is the evil that fascinates. He feared it, for he knew not where it would suddenly attack his heart and body and mind, enticing him from his work.

However, despite all his caution and safeguard, Gino found himself susceptible to the blandishments of love. And the object of his love was Marina. The minute he had laid eyes on Marina, he capitulated to his enemy, realizing that he was powerless against it.

Now, Gino's love for Marina was a guilty love. For, here he was a guest, so to speak, in the house of Vittorio, who

had condescended to take him as a student, and how did Gino repay Vittorio's kindness: by falling in love with his wife. It was because she was Vittorio's wife (if she had been someone else's wife, who can tell what would have happened?) that he never spoke of love to Marina, who soon learned Gino's feelings from his cautious manner, as if he were always on his guard not to give hint by the slightest syllable how he felt. And, since Gino could not speak his love to Marina, he had to content himself with only having her near him.

While Vittorio was busy painting Charles' portrait, Gino was engaged in the pleasurable task of sketching Marina, who had graciously consented to sit for him. For hours they sat in the neatly trimmed garden, a monochrome of green, talking and laughing as Gino drew. Yet, Gino didn't finish any of the drawings that he began. He would always start one, and, after an hour or more, he would lay his drawing board aside and pass the time in light conversation with Marina.

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Vittorio handed the drawings back to Gino, who took them with downcast eyes, like a young boy who had just been scolded.

"I know, Signor Cordorna," he murmured, "they're not very good."

The boy's suffering was so obvious that Vittorio, not wishing to add to his torment, began, "They are not bad, Gino. But, you never finish any of them. The sketches and water colors you did when you first came here were excellent. They proved to me that you had real talent, and that you would one day, with patience and practice, become a good painter. But these," and by the movement of his head he indicated the sketches in Gino's hands, "are not—not so good as your

first endeavors. There is no interest in those sketches, no love. Yes, that's it. In all your work until now there has been love. Love, as clear and real as if it were talking. What has happened to the love that you had for your work?"

Shaking his head slightly, Gino said softly, "I don't know, signor. I try to do my best as I've always tried."

"H-m-m," breathed Vittorio, as if he had some secret knowledge. "Perhaps," he suggested, "you should find a new model."

"Oh, no," Gino came back with the quickness of a riposte. "Signora Cordorna is a perfect model. She is patient and uncomplaining. I am fortunate to have gotten her to sit for me."

"Very fortunate indeed," Vittorio assented. And he could have gone on to tell him many things; but, of course, he did not. "Well," Vittorio sighed, as if there was nothing more he could say, "I suppose you might as well continue with these sketches."

"Yes, signor."

"Better still, why not try that portrait you said you wanted to do. No need to waste your time on these drawings and sketches. A portrait would be the thing."

Gino took to the idea. "Yes, I could try a portrait. When I first came here I was going to try a beautiful landscape. Remember? With the castle on the hill."

"Why not do it?"

"I think I will." For a moment, he seemed to be reflecting what he had said; then, "On second thought, I don't think I will do a landscape."

"No?"

"No. A Venus. Yes, that's it. A Venus," Gino said, waxing enthusiastic over the portrait he could already see

in his mind. "A Venus in a woodland. The sky will be amethyst and clear; the grass will be velvet green. And playing around her will be nymphs. And I—"

"Do not paint it with words," interposed Vittorio. "Put it on canvas. Then we shall see—what we shall see."

"Do you suppose that Signora Cordorna will sit for me?"

"I'm sure she will."

"Then I will start tomorrow."

Rising from his chair, Vittorio put his arm around Gino's shoulder. "Now come, let's have supper. Forget your painting and eat."

They entered the tile floor dining-room and sat at a long table with Marina. As they ate, Gino and Marina talked incessantly about the Venus portrait while Vittorio and the old woman, who would have said something had she dared it, listened. So, Gino saw Marina as Venus, thought Vittorio. And he had seen her as a Madonna. He wondered when Gino would see her as she really was.

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The night was bright. The moon was a sparkling diamond in an onyx sky. A slight cool breeze made the bushes and hedges in the garden shiver. And all around was a palpable calm.

Gino leaned against a thick column, gazing across the moon-washed garden that was filled with shadows. For a long time he stood there, happy with the thought of the portrait that he would paint. Perhaps, he told himself, for he would never speak it to another, he would immortalize Marina as Venus as Vittorio had assured her eternal fame as the Madonna. Perhaps this portrait would make him famous; perhaps he would excel Vittorio. Ah, to be famous and to have

people fawn over you and want to meet you and almost revere you. To Gino, these thoughts were as warm and comforting as a heavy counterpane on a cold night. He was just about to go into the house and go to bed—although he knew that he should never sleep—when he heard a low whistling sound. At first he believed it to be the breeze in the shrubs. But then, it came again, soft and furtive.

Like a phantom, someone came out of a back door and ran soundlessly through the garden. Gino was going to call out; but then he considered it best not to. Instead, he followed the figure to a postern gate. From behind a tall thin bush, he could make out, by the revealing light of the moon, Marina's graceful figure as she gently, warily opened the gate and stepped out into the night. A second or two passed, and Gino, curious to learn what all this seeming secrecy meant, opened the gate a few inches so that he could see. A few feet from him he saw Marina run to the arms of a man. She must have said something for the two walked away.

Long after they had gone, Gino remained by the gate, refusing to believe what he had seen. Was it really Marina who had thief-like run through the garden? Was it she who had willingly gone into the arms of a man who had been waiting for her? No, it couldn't have been she. Yet, he had seen her; he had witnessed her unfaithfulness. Her *unfaithfulness!* Without bidding it, the word had entered his mind. That she was unfaithful was unthinkable. He had always considered her the perfect model of wifely submissiveness and fidelity. And it was because he had thought of her as wifely perfection that he had hesitated to speak his feelings to her, fearing to offend her. However, her actions this night proved to Gino that she could not love Vittorio.

Not without a pang of jealousy had Gino watched the

scene before him. He was jealous of the man who had Marina. Why couldn't *he* have her? Why indeed. No longer was Gino stabbed by any stinging pains of guilt and ingratitude to Vittorio. For now he would be taking something that didn't belong to Vittorio: Marine's love. And, anyway, he would not have been the first to steal that love. Since he had convinced himself that he need not fear doing Vittorio an injury, he decided to let her know how he felt this very night. He would wait for her to return from her friend's embrace.

And so he waited in a night that seemed endless. Two or three times his courage began to flag; but, he mustered it again, telling himself that he must speak now or never. Still, he wished that she would return. And she did, about three hours after she had left.

Standing in the concealing blackness under the gallery, Gino could see Marina come stealing watchfully across the garden. Closer and closer to him she moved. In a minute, she walked under the gallery and right into Gino.

Gasping with fright she backed away from him. "Who is it?" Her voice was tremulous. "Is it you, Vittorio?"

"It is Gino, Marina," he said, coming out of the shadows.

A breath of relief escaped from her; and her tense body relaxed somewhat. "You gave me a fright."

"Did I? I didn't mean to." It was as if he were apologizing. And he was.

"What are you doing out here so late anyway?" she asked.

"Waiting for you," he told her.

The not too improbable thought that Vittorio had stationed him here to spy on her jumped into her mind.

"Waiting for me?" she said on her guard. "Vittorio didn't send you here, did he?"

"No. He does not know I'm here. Nor does he know where you went tonight."

"Where I went?"

"Yes. With the man?"

She looked at him indirectly, distrusting him. "You saw," she whispered huskily.

"Yes," he answered laconically.

"Well, that man—he—he was my cousin," she explained, hoping that he would believe her lie.

"You are very affectionate with your cousins," he smiled.

Pretending to be hurt by his insinuation, she said, "You don't believe me."

"No, I don't."

"Well, then, who was he?" she asked, defying him to reply.

"I don't care who he was. Forget him."

"He is forgotten, *caro mio.*"

"Think only of me, Marina," he said softly, his voice uneven with love. "I love you, Marina. More than Vittorio or any man could love you. I want you, Marina. Could you find it in your heart to love me?"

She took a step back, and Gino was sure that he had insulted her, that she would tell Vittorio, even at the risk of having her nightly escapade brought to light. "Even in your love you are humble." And she threw her arms around his neck and kissed him hard on the lips, satisfying his starving desire for her.

IV

At a sidewalk café bordering on the wide Piazza Santa Croce, Charles Rand sat alone drinking sweet, hot, apricot brandy. As he drank, he glanced about at the talking and laughing people at the other small tables; and their talk and laughter, their close companionship, made Charles feel alone and not wanted. With envy—envy that was futile—he watched the young people, hands entwined, easily and without a concern in this world, walk across the piazza and sit on one of the stone benches that flanked the open square. To be young and in Italy would be wonderful, thought Charles sadly. He had sloughed his youth long ago in a noisy American city, a youth in which there had been no time for love, only work and success. Suddenly, a verse he had read somewhere, sometime came to mind. A verse he had had no intention of memorizing, but which had just stuck to the walls of his memory. How did it go? Oh, yes.

"Midnight and youth and love and Italy,
Love in a land where love most lovely seems."

Marina saw Charles just as he happened to look up to see her. Pretending not to have seen him, she started to walk across the piazza. But, she stopped and went to his table when he called her.

"Signora Cordorna," he greeted her. "Sit down. Do sit down."

Marina didn't want to sit at the table; but what could she do?

"You were going to go away without speaking to me," Charles reproached her good-naturedly.

"Not at all. You seemed so deep in thought that I did not want to disturb you," she gave as an excuse. "What were

you thinking of so intensely, signor? That is, if you wish to tell me."

Feeling slightly foolish, he told her, "I was envying all the young lovers about me."

"Love is the food of the young," she repeated a hackneyed sentence.

"I wish I were young again," wished Charles.

"You are not so old, Signor Rand," she flattered him.

Charles flushed a little, something he never did. "Would—would you have something, Signora?" he stammered like a bashful school-boy talking to a girl with whom he was infatuated.

"No, nothing. I cannot stay. I have to meet my cousin."

"Oh, that is too bad. I was hoping that you might talk to me for a little while."

"I should like to, but I promised my cousin."

"Well, if you promised," Charles said, becoming resigned to the fact that he would have to spend the evening alone. "You do not come in to watch Signor Cordorna paint my portrait any more. I miss you."

"It is rude of me not to look in on you, I know, but I am very busy. You see, Gino, Vittorio's student—"

"Yes. I met him once," Charles broke in.

"Well, he is painting me as Venus."

"Venus? Signora is a most fit model for Venus."

"You are kind to say so," she thanked him. Rising she said, "Now, I must go. My cousin will be impatient."

"But, you haven't been a minute," he complained. "Couldn't you see her another night? Couldn't you stay?"

On his face she recognized the expression of a lonely

man. If she hadn't promised her cousin, she would have stayed. But now, it was too late.

"I'm sorry, Signor Rand."

"Tomorrow is the last sitting. Will you promise to come in to say good-bye?"

"Of course."

And she made her way across the piazza, Charles following her lissom figure with an insatiable longing. The further she moved from him the smaller she became. And he saw a doll-size Marina stop at a bench and take the hand of a doll-size man. She had said that she had to meet her cousin. Her cousin was a *man*. But then, she had never said that her cousin was a woman. And Charles observed that her cousin bore an uncanny resemblance to Gino.

The sun no longer colored the high spires of the church of Santa Croce orange; and soon the street lamps that necklaced the piazza would go on. Charles paid for his drinks. Casting a last jealous look at Marina and her cousin, he walked the two blocks to the Verdi theatre.

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About a half-hour after Gino entered the house by the front gate, Marina came in the postern gate. Through the darkness of the rooms she knew so well, she moved quietly. Up the wide staircase she went, then down the dark upper hallway toward her room. Unexpectedly a door opened and a beam of yellow light, like an accusing finger, pointed into the hallway.

"Is that you, Marina?"

It was Vittorio.

She did not answer at once. Then, realizing there was nothing else she could do, she said, "Yes, Vittorio."

"Would you come in here a minute?"

"I'm very tired," she complained.

"I have something to say to you."

"It can wait for tomorrow."

"No. I must speak to you now."

Sighing, she moved from the obscure hallway into the room, Vittorio closing the door noiselessly after her. They were in the upstairs library. Marina hadn't been in the room for some time, for it was exclusively Vittorio's domain. At noonday, this library, alive with light, is a pleasant place. But tonight, with only one dull lamp ineffectually lighting the room, it seemed as gloomy as a charnel house.

"I am very tired," Marina said peevishly. "So say what you have to say quickly."

"Where were you tonight?" he asked; then, before she could answer, he said, knowing what her lie would be, "Never mind. Don't tell me."

"Is that why you asked me in here: to question me of my whereabouts?"

"No." As if standing took too much of his strength, he fell, like a tired dog, into a high-backed velvet chair. "A short while ago I heard someone walk down the hall. I looked to see who it was. It was Gino."

"Yes?"

"It is a very late hour for him to come home. I didn't even know he was out. This is not the first time he has gone out without my knowledge and has come home late. I worry about the boy."

"You sound like a fretful mother," Marina said nastily, in an attempt to make Vittorio feel foolish. But, she did not succeed.

"Lately he has neglected his work. Even the Venus that he was painting of you remains not half done. He doesn't

seem interested in art any longer. His sudden lack of interest, his neglect, his late hours have convinced me—"

"That he is in love," Marina finished for him.

"Exactly."

"Well, why shouldn't he love someone, Vittorio. He is a man and human. Or don't you classify artists as men, with men's passions and desires? No, I don't think you do. There was a time when I made you forget your work. You didn't need it; all you wanted was me. And we were happy. Then, you neglected me and returned to your painting. Now, you want to make Gino the same way. Let him give up all the happiness a man should have for his art."

In a slow, controlled tone, he said, "I thought it was you. You are the one that has changed him."

"Yes," she spat out at him. "I will make him live as he should."

"You will destroy him as you have destroyed me. As you have destroyed other men," Vittorio predicted.

"No, no," she shook her head amain. "I will inspire him to do great things. *I* will make him a greater painter than you ever hoped to be. He will have fame; but he will not forget me. He will be so grateful that he will do whatever I say."

"You will destroy him," repeated Vittorio as if these words comprised a short chant. "I will not let you harm him. He has a great future without you. You would only pull him into the pit of depravity with you, as you have dragged me. For a while you would make him insane with love; then, when you tired of him—and you would—you would leave him to go on to another. And he would have forfeited every chance at fame and wealth for you. You're evil, Marina. All these years I wouldn't allow myself to think of you as evil, for I loved you. Even now, as I say these wicked things to you, I love

you; knowing what you are, what you did, I love you. So that if you were to come to me and put your arms around me, I would forgive all." The talking was too much for Vittorio.

"You can forgive me for nothing, for I've done nothing for you to forgive me," she said boldly.

"You told me that you still loved me, can't—"

"I did not say I loved you," she broke in abruptly. "I don't love you. I haven't loved you for a long time. I only pity you, Vittorio. Pity you for the fool that you are."

"If you have no love for me why didn't you leave me years ago? Why have you stayed to torture me?"

"I don't know; truly, I don't know. Perhaps it's because I'm your wife. No, that couldn't be the reason. Perhaps because your name gave me the respect and honor that I wanted. Perhaps because I could do what I wanted without your saying a word. But, I really don't know." She stood before him with a disdainful smile on her face. "Now, let me ask you a question. Why didn't you leave me? Why didn't you throw me out? Any other man would have done so without hesitating. Why, *Vittorio mio,* didn't you?"

There was no answer from Vittorio.

"You cannot answer," she smiled maliciously. "All your hollow speeches about wanting to save the boy from me, as if I were some murderous doxie, all your sacred talk about watching out for Gino's future was just some holy cloth covering the evil truth. And what is the truth?" she said, lowering her voice to a hissing whisper and going over to him and putting her face in front of his. "The truth is you've always been afraid that I'd leave you, and you would be left alone with that old hag. For if I had gone, there would have been no one. No one!"

Taking a short, deep breath, she straightened her body and looked at Vittorio's eyes, with puffs of skin beneath, at his lips dry and quivering, and at his sunken cheeks. And the light suffused his features with a jaundice color. "You look tired and sick Vittorio. You should rest more. After all, you are getting old."

Opening the door, she said, as if at any moment she would burst out in derisive laughter, "Goodnight, *caro.*" The door closed.

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If the truth be known, Marina had, as Vittorio had prophesied only a few minutes before, already grown tired of Gino. To her, he was young and callow, and not yet hardened by life and women into a man. His cloying love bored her and his talk was dull. So that she had decided that after this night, she would be done with him. She had only flirted with him in the first place because she was sure he would be an easy conquest and the others had no longer amused her; and, the main reason, he was Vittorio's student. However, she had decided all this before her conversation with Vittorio. Now, nothing could take her away from Gino. If she were to leave him alone now, Vittorio would think that he had won some doubtful victory, that he had made her feel so cheap and low that she had suddenly reformed. Oh, no, his words had only urged her on to baser things. She would show Vittorio.

Gently she rapped on Gino's bedroom door. In a minute it was opened, and a still wide-awake Gino said, surprised to see her, "What is it, Marina? Is something wrong?"

"Nothing, my love," she whispered sweetly, and if he had been a bit wiser and more experienced he would have realized immediately that something was definitely wrong. "Gino, you asked me tonight to go away with you, and I refused. I

was mean to you, Gino. Do you still want me to go away with you?"

"You know I do." And he raised his voice with hope.

"Well, then, I shall meet you in half an hour, no later, mind you, at the gate in the garden." Kissing him quickly on his cheek hot with anticipation, she hurried to her room, leaving him speechless, confused and unbelievably happy.

In a half-hour two figures stole from the garden into the swirling inkiness of the night.

V

The next morning, when the old woman let Charles in for the final sitting, Charles, observing the woman, surmised that something was wrong. For her face was more solemnly set than ever; her lips twitched nervously, as if she were having a hard time to keep from saying something that she dared not say; and, although usually uncommunicative, she never failed at least to speak a few words to him, no matter how abrupt. This day, however, she was significantly quiet.

Even Vittorio was not himself. Usually he greeted Charles with a *"Buon giorno"*, a wide grin, and a cup of strong black coffee (or stronger red wine) which they sipped leisurely, conversing about nothing in particular. But this morning, Charles found Vittorio gazing vacantly out the window. There was no cordially warm *"Buon giorno"*; there was no smile; there was no coffee or conversation to share.

"Signor Cordorna," Charles spoke his name quietly, since Vittorio seemed not to know he was in the room. But, still Vittorio did not turn to him. "Signor Cordorna."

With the sleepy movements of a person awakening from a dream, Vittorio turned to Charles.

"Oh, Mr. Rand," he said, as if he had not expected to

see Charles there. And Charles heard the weakness in his voice. "Today we finish the portrait, don't we?"

"Yes," murmured Charles, noticing how peculiarly wan and tired he looked. "Is—is something wrong?" he asked.

"No, Mr. Rand," Vittorio assured him, in a drawling tone.

But, of course, Charles realized that something was wrong with Vittorio. "Perhaps," he suggested, "we should wait for tomorrow to complete the portrait. I'm sure that I could wait another day."

"Why put it off till tomorrow? We will finish it today. Take your chair, please."

Charles took his chair and Vittorio picked up a brush and touched the canvas with a lazy stroke.

For a long while Vittorio worked in silence. Every time he glanced at Charles, he saw that Charles' gaze rested on the closed door.

"You keep looking at the door, Mr. Rand. Do you expect someone to enter?"

With an embarrassed smile, Charles told him, "Last night in the piazza I met Signora Cordorna. She promised that she would look in on us today."

"She will not come," Vittorio said, always wielding his brush.

"No, I think she will. She promised."

"She cannot keep her promise. For she is not here."

"Not here?"

Anticipating his next question, Vittorio told him, very simply and matter-of-factly, "She ran away last night with Gino."

Charles was sure that he hadn't heard rightly. "She ran away with Gino?" he echoed unbelievingly.

"Yes," Vittorio said.

"But she couldn't have!" exclaimed Charles, as if Marina's running away were a personal affront.

"Ah, but she has," Vittorio said calmly. "Please sit still, signor.

It was impossible for Charles to sit still. "When I met her last night she said that she had to meet her cousin. I remember thinking her cousin looked like Gino." Then, with the light of revelation, *"Her cousin was Gino.* I can't believe it! I refuse to believe that she would do this nefarious thing. And you, signor," he addressed Vittorio with an unnatural violence for one who was acquainted with the woman only slightly, "how can you stay here painting calmly, unconcernedly, as if nothing has happened!"

"What would you have me do?" Vittorio asked. And in comparison with Charles' vehemently quavering tone, Vittorio's voice seemed lifelessly even.

"Why, go after them!"

"I don't know where they went. And if I did, I would not follow them."

Taken aback by Vittorio's words, Charles inquired, personally, "But why? Don't you love her? Aren't you angry?"

"Please, signor, sit still," commanded Vittorio; then, "I love her. Very much. But I do not have to go after her because she will return in a few days."

"How do you know?"

"She always has."

"Always? You make it sound as if Signora Cordorna has run away before."

"She has. Two or three times."

"Signora Cordorna!" Charles said with stunned incred-

done if you had had my fears. But, let me put some order into my story.

"Marina had many lovers when I first met her. She had flirted flagrantly with every attractive man who came her way. And every unattractive, *wealthy* man also. But, few rich men passed Marina's house. Often she told me that she would marry only a man of wealth who could afford to lavish her with all the luxuries she demanded. Why she ever married me, a penniless painter, I'll never really know. However, I could conjecture. Perhaps with a foresightedness possessed by many women she saw that I was going to be rich and famous someday and for that reason she married me. That is a stupid conjecture. I chose to believe that she wasn't mercenary and that when she married me, she married for love alone, and nothing else.

"Happiness is not a continuous feeling, Mr. Rand. It is sporadic. And like money, it is unevenly distributed. To further the comparison, at one time or other everyone has it. I had happiness the first months of my married life; a happiness that made up for the following years devoid of an ounce of joy. There is no need retelling the part about the Madonna. You have heard it before. I started it on our honeymoon, completed it within two months, sent it to the Academy, and it was bought for more money than I had ever had in all my forty-four years. I was glad to have the money; not for myself, but for Marina. Now I could buy her all the things I had wanted to give her. We took a vacation in Capri. What days and nights we spent there; sailing and swimming, and dancing in that fabulous hotel high on the cliffs from which one can look on the ocean, going on and on like a limitless stretch of eternity. Over a month we remained in Capri; then back to Florence, to work.

"However, I did not work. Marina kept me from painting. We had too many places to go, too many people to meet for me to work. Just as I was having my fill of all the social demands that success had levied on me, I received a letter from a Mr. Brendan Joslyn, an expartriate Englishman living in Paris, who had seen my Madonna while I was in Capri, had liked it, and had decided to commission me to paint his portrait. To get away from Florence, where I could not find ten minutes to paint, I accepted the commission and went to Paris. I did not know then that Mr. Joslyn had only become interested in the portrait after he had learned that the model for the Madonna was the creator's wife.

"Needless to describe Marina's youthful excitement at going to Paris. I, myself, had been there once before and had disliked the city and found, like Dostoevsky, the people ugly. You may speak of it as a beautiful city; and, indeed, it is. But, for art and culture, give me Florence, which was aptly described by some English writer as 'the treasury of art'. I've always liked that description. It fits as snugly and as properly as a glove.

"At the time, Mr. Brendan Joslyn was an attractive man of some forty years. He was not only attractive, but wealthy. He was an incurable snob and with the snob's conceit considered himself a connoisseur of artistic things. He knew as much about art as a sixteen-year-old American schoolboy. Well, perhaps, I have exaggerated a bit.

"When we arrived in Paris, he insisted that we stay in his home, a palatial mansion a few miles outside the city. If I thought that I was going to work in Paris I was sadly mistaken. When I was ready to paint, Mr. Joslyn was not. It seemed that he had to take Marina—me, too, of course—to the races or some other places. Then began those endless,

wasteful days. The parties, the soirées, the operas, the musicals, the concerts. One right after the other. To me, those days were like the phantasmagoria of a delirious man. Soon, I realized that Mr. Joslyn had no intention of sitting for a portrait. And soon, he forgot to ask me to go with him and Marina to these places. Once, I suggested to Marina that we go home. She flew up and told me that I was a selfish man, that I didn't like to see her have a good time. Oddly enough, I felt like a selfish man, so that I didn't broach the subject again for a while.

"Right here I must tell you of the great expense of this Parisian sojourn. Marina had to have more and more clothes by the famous designers after viewing the ostentation of the highbrows. Gambling alone in a place somewhere in Normandy cost me almost my last lire. The money I had received for the Madonna was nearly gone. I knew that I must take up my brush soon if I were to avoid poverty.

"It was then that I met him: the Marquis de Chantilly, a most noble man of sixty years. Now this Marquis respected my artistic eye so greatly that he entrusted to me an enormous amount of money to purchase for him, in various galleries in Italy, paintings that would be suitable to hang in his chateau. He explained that he would have made the journey himself, except that he had the most painful rheumatic legs so that he could not move as agilly as he once had. Naturally, I accepted the offer. To me, anything was better than the frivolous life I had been leading the past months.

"Again I told Marina that we were going home. Again she became angry. She did not want to leave; she was having too good a time to leave; this was the life she had been born for. She could not, would not leave it now. What she really meant, Mr. Rand, was that she would not leave the English-

man, who had pandered to her every whim and had spoiled her. I threatened to leave without her; she never frightened easily. Then, like an abject fool, I promised her anything if she would go with me. Picture it, Mr. Rand, feckless husband begging his wilful wife to return with him to his home. In the end, she left with me. Whether it was my promise or whether she had wanted the doubtful pleasure of having me crawl to her, I don't know. Sometimes I think it would have been better if she had remained with her Englishman. No, I don't mean that.

"From now on, you will become quite impatient with me, Mr. Rand. You will think me a weakling, a man of little spirit and less courage; and you will be right in your judging of my character. But remember, I did all for love."

He stopped his recital just for a minute; then, as if reluctant to resurrect the past, he went on. "I did not purchase one painting for the trusting Marquis. One day, when we had been home for two days, Marina hired a cab and took me up here to this villa. We went through all the rooms, Marina chatting continuously about its beauty and richness as if repeating a panegryic to an old friend. Of course, I knew immediately why she had brought me there: she wanted me to buy it for her. It was useless to try to explain to her that I had no money. She accused me of not loving her; she reminded me of my promise; then, she said that she would leave me and go back to the Englishman. What could I do? I bought the villa with the money that the Marquis had entrusted to me.

"It was not long before the Marquis learned what I had done. Fortunately, he was not one of those rash, easily-heated men who would cry for one's neck. He wrote me a letter—I still have it—saying he did not understand what had possessed me to do such a thing; but since I had, he would

not shame me by prosecuting me. If I would return a part of the money as surety of my faith to return the rest, all would be forgotten and forgiven. I wrote back that I was terribly ashamed of my action and that I had insulted him by betraying his trust in me. And I agreed to his offer of repaying part of the money.

"First, after an ugly scene, went Marina's jewels; all of them. She hated me for taking them from her. She hated me even more when I had my poor mother come to live with us. She despised my mother because my mother could see Marina as she actually was and because she tried to open my eyes. But, you see, my eyes were never closed, Mr. Rand. I only pretended that they were. It was then that she started to go out with her 'cousins'. I knew those men were not her cousins; she knew that I knew; and she also knew that I would do nothing to stop her. And she laughed at me.

"After a while, I went back to my work. I took every commission I could and every lire, except what was necessary to live on, went to the Marquis, who very generously, after three-quarters of the money had been repaid, canceled the debt, saying that he admired a man who kept his word. Oh, God bless that man!

"Afterwards, I took one or two commissions a year. And, believe me, I consider myself fortunate in still being able to attract clients. I painted continuously, neglecting Marina, whom I should not have neglected. Now and then I sold a canvas or two, nothing noteworthy. Nothing like the Madonna. So now, I live for my painting, for Marina no longer loves me or this house, of which she has grown tired and for which I have disgraced myself. But, she has never left me; and for that I am thankful. For you see, Mr. Rand, I love her."

Laying the three brushes that he held between his fingers on a table next to his paints, he said, "Now you know."

Charles, who had not interrupted Vittorio's narrative with a sound, but just sat listening with interest and understanding, murmured, "Yes, now I know."

The two said nothing for a while, Vittorio having nothing left to say and Charles unable to find anything suitable or apropos to the moment.

It was Vittorio who said first, "Come, Mr. Rand, come and look at your portrait. It is finished."

Charles rose from his chair and went over to look at the completed portrait. Not only had Vittorio's brush seen the outer Charles but it had captured remarkably the inner man. In the portrait, Charles sat before a background of books and paintings, globes and maps. He sat in a chair, his legs crossed, one hand on his knee and the other hanging limply over the end of the arm rest. Vittorio painted his face as it was: kind, with incipient crags around his mouth and eyes, which were softly hazel and not unnervingly penetrating; around his temple the faintest grey lent him an air of distinction. It was a face that in a few years would grow more deeply creviced and yet more benevolent with age. Yet, this was the face of the outer Charles. Vittorio, with the piercing, soul-seeing gaze of some painters, had seen something else in Charles. His conservatism was displayed for all to see—if all bothered to look closely—by his blue-grey suit, simply made, almost funereal in color, his solid colored cravat, touched by the beginning of what was to be his second chin. The discerning would detect the supercilious turn of the lips into what could easily pass for a smirk—a smirk showing his contempt for the world in which he had found little happiness. On careful scrutiny, one could see the slightly raised eyebrows, as if Charles were

finding fault with someone or something. Of course, anyone could find these things if he looked for them—and had the genuine prober's psychoanalytic mind. But, who would discern anything except a well-painted likeness of Charles? The portrait would hang over the mantel in Charles' study, and, at first, he would gaze at it admiringly now and then; and the few people who visited him would praise it. Then, after becoming used to seeing it in its place everyday, Charles would see it no longer.

"It is excellent, Signor Cordorna," praised Charles. "Excellent."

"I'm glad you are pleased."

"How could I be otherwise?"

"Now, you must find a suitable frame. There is an art shop near the Piazza Michaelangelo where I usually buy my frames. If you like, I will send your portrait there to be framed, then they will send it to you at your hotel."

"That will be fine. And now," Charles said, taking out his checkbook and fountain pen, "the money."

He wrote a check and handed it to Vittorio, who took it with feeble fingers.

"You are most generous," Vittorio thanked him.

"Not at all. A portrait of such execution is worth far more than what I have paid you. Far more than money." Glancing at his watch, he said, "I must go. I told the cab driver to come early."

"Won't you have a glass of wine before leaving?" Vittorio offered.

"No, signor. Thank you." He extended his hand to Vittorio, who held it in his own cold one.

"We shook hands when first we met, Mr. Rand. A client and a painter. Now, we say goodbye, a painful task

anywhere. But, we shake hands now not as before, for now we are friends. I have few friends in this life. And those few I have chosen with great care. I like you, Mr. Rand. If I had not, I would never have told you about Marina. You must be my friend."

"I had hoped we would be," Charles said, pressing Vittorio's hand as if with a seal of perdurable friendship. "You must come to have dinner with me Thursday before I leave for Rome. That is, if you're up to it."

"I will come."

"Good. Eight o'clock. You know the hotel."

Vittorio nodded his head.

"Good."

"Come, I will walk with you to the door."

"Signor," began Charles, under the warm shade of the colonnade, "I know you are laid low by your wife's unfaithfulness, but you must not make yourself sick by worrying over her. From what you told me this day, I would deem it a blessing if Signora Cordorna were never to return. If there is anything I can do to help you or—"

"You are most kind, Mr. Rand," Vittorio cut in. "But, there is nothing that anyone can do. Except God. And God today is not thinking of Vittorio Cordorna."

Through the light air the voice of the bell flowed tinklingly.

"That must be the driver," Charles announced. Looking with pity at Vittorio's haggard face, he said, "Till Thursday, signor."

"Thursday," Vittorio repeated after him; then, as if it were a strange new word, "Thursday".

VI

Under a magenta sky Marina returned to the villa. She did not pull the bell rope, but, finding the gate unlocked, opened it, walked across the courtyard and into the house, as if just coming back from an evening stroll. The house was quiet and a cold mahogany-brown dimness lay over everything like sheets covering furniture in an empty, forgotten house. The touch of the gloom on Marina's flesh made her shiver. And suddenly, she felt alone and uncared for so that she was about to cry out for Vittorio.

"You've come back."

Quickly, her eyes expanded, Marina turned. For a moment, no longer, she was glad and relieved to see the old woman standing behind her. It was she who had spoken and not some shadow.

"Yes, I've come back," Marina said, unable to keep her tone free of any tartness when talking to the old woman.

"I saw you open the gate and come across the court," the old woman mumbled, staring at her with her slit eyes, to which, like a great river, the deep tributaries of wrinkles were connected.

"You see everything," Marina spoke harshly.

"Everything. Yes. I should have locked the gate. But I am waiting for someone."

"Who?" Marina inquired with some curiosity.

In her painfully slow and almost unintelligible voice, she told her, "The priest."

"The priest? Why, are you dying, *dear* mother?" But her dart of sarcasm did not pierce the shrivelled flesh of the old woman.

"No, Marina. I am not dying. Vittorio is."

Intensely she looked at the woman as if waiting for her to deny what she had just said. "What is wrong with him?"

"I do not know. The doctor said something about fever and—I don't know. But he is dying. That I do know."

"I don't believe it. He was all right when I left a week ago." No sooner had she said this than the picture of Vittorio, jaded-looking and pale, the night she had run away, stung her memory.

"If you do not believe me, come upstairs and see him," the old woman suggested.

"No," she answered curtly. "I don't want to see him."

"Why? You are his wife, if only in name. Are you afraid to look at him? Or do you fear the death that you will see in his face?"

"I'm afraid of nothing."

"Then come, since you are here," muttered the old woman.

With the measured step of the members of a funeral cortege, Marina followed the old woman up the stairs to Vittorio's room. The windows were closed, keeping out the purple gauze of night that slowly descended upon the house. In a large, high-posted bed lay Vittorio, looking small, almost childish. Standing next to him, Marina noticed the hoary face, so changed by sickness and thinness and coming death that she didn't immediately recognize her husband. For a while she remained staring at the unmoving Vittorio, not knowing what to say or do.

"Speak to him," commanded the old woman, who had turned on a lamp near the bed. And the white brilliance of the lamp formed a pattern of shadows on the ceiling.

"He is sleeping," Marina said, hoping to escape.

"No, he isn't," the old woman told her.

"What will I say?" Marina asked in an anxious whisper.

"Say his name. Say anything. But be kind to him now, at least."

Softly she repeated, "Vittorio, Vittorio."

Vittorio did not stir.

"He does not hear me," she said to the old woman.

"Try again."

She was about to protest and run from the room, from the house, when, glancing at the old woman, something prevented her from moving. The old woman's face was set with determination, as if she would will Marina to speak, to remain; as if Marina were the last hope she had, the last remedy she could use to try to save Vittorio. Never before had Marina ever been afraid of the old woman; but, at this instant, she feared her.

"Speak to him again," she ordered Marina, her narrow eyes becoming even narrower and slashing Marina with their gaze just as deeply, as painfully as a saber would.

"Vittorio, Vittorio," she said, unevenly.

Ever so slightly his head moved on the pillow.

"It is I, Vittorio. Marina. Open your eyes."

As if the lids were too heavy to raise, Vittorio slowly opened his eyes. He stared at Marina, whom he thought not real, but just some substanceless figure, some incarnation of a wish, created by his longing, hot, confused mind.

"Are you really Marina?" he asked.

"Of course."

"No, no, Marina ran away from me. She is far away." He would not be convinced, having the doubt of a sick man whose senses deceive him.

"It is Marina, Vittorio," his mother assured him.

And he believed her. A smile, or what for want of a more descriptive word must pass for a smile, parted his dry lips. "Marina, you've come back to me." And his voice was tremulous with joy.

"Yes, I've come back." Just for a passing minute, Marina had an ache of compassion for her husband.

"I knew you would. I was positive you would. Mama said that this time you wouldn't, but I didn't listen to her."

"You should have never listened to her, Vittorio," she said, looking obliquely at the old woman who stood at the foot of the bed by a swan-shaped bed post.

"Where is Gino, Marina?" Vittorio asked, as if the whereabouts of his former student had been troubling him.

"Must we talk about him? What has happened, has happened. It cannot be changed."

"I want to know where you went," Vittorio insisted—a weak insistence.

"Always asking questions, Vittorio. But, if you must know, we went to Venice. A beautiful city. A gay city. But I would have had a much better time with anyone but Gino."

"You left him there?" he continued his catechizing.

"Yes. I left him there."

"Did he know that you had left?" The last word died on his tongue.

"He knows now," she laughed; and her laughter resounded incongruously in this room where there should have been only sadness and tears.

"You have treated him cruelly, Marina. He was only a boy. Now, what will he do?"

"Who knows? Throw himself in the Grand Canal perhaps. But, he is not our concern, Vittorio. This experience

will make him a better judge of people; make him a bit wiser; make a boy a man."

"Make him bitter." He stopped his talking for a minute or two to gain some strength to go on. "You are growing more callous, Marina. More wicked. More evil. You shall end in hell."

His mild condemnation of her set fire to the tinder of her anger. "Callous? Evil? Hell? Who are you to judge me, to describe me with these ugly words? Who are you to say if what I do is right or wrong? Your time for speaking has passed." She walked away from him, turned and looked at him, no longer with pity but with naked hatred. She had gone off with Gino just to prove to Vittorio that he could not tell her what to do, to declare her independence of him, to show how little she cared for his pride and feelings, to make a fool of him. If he had gone after her, had brought her home in disgrace, perhaps she could have, if not loved him, respected him. But he had never, from the beginning of her unfaithfulness, gone to seek her; she had always come home to him. And now, Marina realized that by always returning without his asking her to, that she was the fool, for he must think she needed him. But she needed no one. "You lie there dying and you set yourself up as an immortal God to judge me. I should never have come back to this house. If I had known you were dying, I wouldn't have. But, it's not too late. I can still leave you to die alone. To die with no one to mourn you but this old woman."

She started for the door; but her hand froze on the knob at hearing Vittorio's voice raised with the last ounce of power in him to a high, heartrending wail, "Marina, do not go! Do not go! Stay! Forgive me! Forgive me!" He would have got-

ten out of bed to crawl to her if the old woman hadn't held him down.

"Marina!" she cried. "In the name of God come back! Have you no pity; no heart." And she fell awkwardly, impotently to her knees beside the bed, her face in the blankets, her old shoulders shaking violently.

Still by the door, her head boldly erect, Marina gazed imperturbably at the portrait that Vittorio made, laved by the barren light of the lamp, sitting tremblingly up in bed, hand stretched beseechingly toward her, with his crying mother by his bedside.

"Do not leave me, Marina! Please! Please!" he begged her.

"Why should I stay?" she asked.

"I love you."

"But I do not love you."

"That does not matter. I will give you anything," he bribed her.

"Anything? Will you sell this house?"

"Yes."

"Will you take me away?"

"Yes, Marina. Yes. To Paris, if you like."

"And your mother. Will you send her away?"

"Yes," he agreed to this condition too. "Anything, only stay. You will make me well. And we shall be happy again. And I will paint you once more. Another Madonna. I will have wealth. I will give you anything. We will be happy. Stay! Stay!"

The lamp light did not reach Marina so that Vittorio could not clearly see her face and the twisted smile. Like a horrible pronouncement from a judge, Marina said, "No, Vittorio. I will not come back. You are going to die."

With a desperate urgency she opened the door and ran, as if someone were chasing her, down the dark hall, down the stairs, out of the house, and into the black arms of the night.

"Marina! Marina!" he called after her, until he fell back on the pillows, without voice or strength or life.

It was a small funeral in a beautiful church in Florence. Three or four artist friends of Vittorio's were there, Signor del Vecchio from the Pitti Gallery, Charles Rand, who had journeyed from Rome especially to attend, and the old woman, a spectre in black. The aging Marquis de Chantilly sent his genuine condolences. However, Marina was not present. No one knew where she was. And no one cared.

VII

Charles entered the Pitti Gallery by the gate in the left Rondò, which was also the entrance to the Boboli Gardens. In front of him was the grotesque Buontalenti's grotto. In the garden before him was a statue of Pietro Barbers, the dwarf jester of Cosimo I. And, to the left of the garden was a passage leading to the Uffizi Gallery. Taking his right, Charles entered the Pitti Gallery.

Down the long hall he went; then up the wide white marble staircase, ceilinged by a huge Coat of Arms of the House of Savoy. On the second floor landing, framed in a doorway directly ahead of him, was Ferrucci's white marble fountain, having the gace of a ballerina. Past the Stove Room and the Prometheus Room he made his way. Through the Iliad Room with its gilt chairs and large portraits in golden frames and doorway with gold architraves, to the Jupiter Room he moved.

The walls of the Jupiter Room are worth millions. Covering them for all to see and praise and be inspired are such paintings as del Sarto's youthful St. John the Baptist, and the same painter's self-portrait of himself and his wife; Fra Barlotommeo's Desperation; The Three Fates by Jacopino del Conte; Perugino's incomparably beautiful Adoration; and, of course, Madonna by Vittorio Cordorna. Not giving the other paintings so much as a cursory glance, Charles went over to the Madonna.

For a long time, as if never having seen it before, he scrutinized the painting. It was beautiful; that fact no one could gainsay. Pink-fleshed cherubs floated on white pillows of clouds on either side of the Madonna's head. Directly over her black hair which ran like a shimmering rivulet from her head to her shoulders, where it lay in an ebony pool, was a pearl-white dove, wings outspread in a Godly benediction. Her robe fell in a cascade of blue folds from her round shoulders to her hidden feet. Unlike most Madonna's, this painting had no Child. So that her arms, covered with a loose-fitting red garment, worn beneath the robe, were many inches from her body and raised slightly as if waiting to embrace, to give her benison of love and hope and help to whomever wanted her. Her fingers, long and pointed, more graceful—how inadequate a word—than a swan's neck were shaped into a beckoning curve. Yet, it was the face—Marina's face, Marina's beauty—that was the center of the portrait, which tempted one's eyes; then held one in a strange, ecstatic hypnosis.

For some reason, the beauty of the face did not affect Charles as it had the first time. But, then, the first time he had not known Marina. Now, he had seen behind her mask of loveliness, had seen her wickedness and ugliness. Now,

he was not extraordinarily thrilled by or enraptured with the painting; he would never be again. From this moment to the last, he could not look at it with objective eyes. For him it could never be a painting of a beautiful Madonna. It would always be proof of Vittorio's love for the undeserving Marina. Gazing at the painting saddened him, for it brought to life thoughts better off dead. He wished he had never come here; he wished he had never been in the last act of Vittorio's life. For then he would not have bothersome memories.

"Now, that is a beautiful painting," someone behind Charles suddenly passed judgment.

"It certainly is," assented another voice.

"Who's it by? Fra Lippi?" the first speaker asked his companion who was scanning a page in his guide book.

"Here it is," he announced with success. "Madonna by Vittorio Cordorna."

"Never heard of him," the first one said.

"I haven't either. But he must have been a master. Why, look at the beauty of the portrait."

"You mean the face," corrected the second speaker, who spoke with a give-away drawl. "She's beautiful. Do you think that there could be a woman as beautiful as she?"

The first speaker, whose *r*'s were a bit too pronounced, laughed at his friend's senseless question. "Believe me, she doesn't. Women like that live only in an artist's imagination."

Charles listened to no more. Without casting a last backward glance, he left the quiet gallery. And the sounds of Florence were pleasant to his ears.

The Eighteenth Century Gothic Revival

By William H. Plummer, Jr., '51

ALTHOUGH the name of Viollet-le-Duc is universally known, and Chateaubriand could certainly be considered a Gothic revivalist, the Gothic Revival was an essentially English movement. Unlike the continental countries, England had never completely abandoned the Gothic tradition. Inigo Jones himself did not abandon the pointed style until 1612 and Sir Christopher Wren was not unfamiliar with it, as can be judged from the details of some of his London churches. Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor were baroque architects but an affinity for Gothic can be seen in Vanbrugh's use of mass, as in Blenheim Castle, and Hawksmoor is thought to have designed the towers of Westminster Abbey. He also erected the first Gothic temple, in Colonel Tyrel's garden at Shotover. As Sir Kenneth Clark wrote in his essay on the Gothic Revival, "Gothic sentiment survived. The curious were impressed by its bulk and variety, the pious reflected in an age which could propitiate God so lavishly; most travellers noted the churches or cathedrals of the towns through which they passed. Above all, the antiquarians made Gothic ruins their quarry; . . ."

Leo Stein defined art as "an excited equilibrium. Classical art tends toward the equilibrium and romantic toward the excitement." It was inevitable that the eighteenth century should give birth to a movement such as the Gothic Revival. At no other time had emotion been so completely ruled out of both art and life as it was in that century which called itself *"the Age of Reason."* Emotion was so decried that "En-

thusiastic" was an opprobrious term. But man is a creature of emotions as well as reason and (sic) it is unreasonable of anyone to attempt to live by reason alone. An unbalance is immediately created. When the pendulum has swung so far in one direction it must swing as far in the other. The rigid Palladianism of architects produced a counter-movement expressed in terms of Gothic just as the rigid classicism of eighteenth century literature produced a romantic revolt.

Further impetus was given the Gothic Revival by the sudden rise of a new Middle Class grown rich in the India trade and soon to be made richer by the new industrialism. Like movie moguls they knew what they wanted, even if they could not always spell it, and what they wanted, among other things, were ancestral homes, country seats and town houses. Being people without background they attempted to create their own. England became more and more a nation of shopkeepers, the green fields withered beneath layers of soot, and a sturdy people was condemned to misery and disease in the new industrial centers. But, as reality became more sordid, art divorced itself from life and that division was set up which remains to this day.

"Every Romantic style reflects the day-dreams of its creators, some Utopia in which they live the life of the imagination."[1] As England changed its way of life a sentimental picture of old England was recreated in the minds of Englishmen, unlike any reality which had ever existed. Industrial barons must have battlements and towers like their medieval predecessors and even the old nobility succumbed to the prevalent taste, as can be seen in the Duke of Norfolk's Arundel Castle.

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[1] *The Gothic Revival,* by SIR KENNETH CLARK, p. 53.

As is often the case in England, the Gothic Revival began as a literary movement. Interest in Gothic, as was mentioned above, was maintained by a small but distinguished group of gentlemen whose curiosity was aroused by the Gothic ruins they saw around them. Among these were Sir William Dugdale whose book *Monastican Anglicanum* (Vol. 1) was published in 1655, at which time it was well received, perhaps because of the Puritan supremacy; Mr. Roger Dodsworth, and Anthony à Wood. The *Monastican* was republished in 1722 and Buck's *Antiquities and Venerable Remains* in 1774. Kenneth Clark said of the Gothic movement:

"Their enthusiasm for Gothic springs from a literary impulse which first made itself felt as antiquarianism was beginning to decline. This literary impulse, if anything, can be called the starting point of the Gothic Revival . . . Above all it was Shakespeare, so unmistakably great in defiance of all the rules of Aristotle, who broke the back of Classical prejudice. If Aristotle's rules could be defied with success, why not those of Vitruvius too?" The poet Thomas Gray, who combined an interest in antiquarian lore with a poetic talent which if not of the first rank was nevertheless substantial, had a direct connection with the Gothic Revival in its literary form through the graveyard poets and, to some extent, through his friendship with Walpole, in its architectural form. He influenced the poets Joseph and Thomas Warton. Joseph, the elder of these two brothers, published *The Enthusiast*: or *The Lover of Nature* in 1740, when he was eighteen years old and Thomas, the younger, was only seventeen when he wrote *The Pleasures of Melancholy*. These were followed by Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination;* Blair's *Grave;* and Young's *Night Thoughts*. In 1762 Horace Walpole published *The Castle of Otranto*: *A Gothic Story*. Its success was instantane-

ous and other stories in that vein were published, among them Clara Reeve's *Old English Baron;* Matthew Lewis' *The Monk;* and Mrs. Radcliffe's *Northanger Abbey.* Bishop Percy's *Reliques* appeared in 1765.

But long after Gothic became popular among the lower classes it was scorned by people of taste. Lord Chesterfield called it vulgar. It might well have gone the way of similar fads if a champion had not been forthcoming. And the knight *sans reproche* who gave the new style social standing was Horace Walpole. A dilettante—educated, travelled, well-connected—in 1747 he decided to build himself a country retreat at Twickenham. He took a lease on Strawberry Hill, a small property, and set about remodelling the house in the Gothic manner. When one of their own number adopted it the world of fashion, as ever fickle, decided there was something to Gothic after all and its success was insured. Walpole was assisted in his building of "a little Gothic castle" by Chute and Richard Bentley. The latter, son of the great scholar, was an indolent, talented young man and the partnership between him and Walpole had especially happy results at Strawberry Hill.

"For the medieval details of Strawberry Hill Walpole assisted by his friend Bentley copied and adapted bits of ancient buildings; but his pursuit of authenticity was in vain, for in the gay irresponsibility of ignorance he has jumbled together architectural features of varied origin. To medieval tombs he was especially indebted for many of his ideas of interior ornament. The design of Gothic wallpaper in the entrance hall and on the staircase was taken from the screen of Prince Arthur's tomb in Worcester Cathedral; the ceiling of the China Room was by Muntz after one in a Borghese villa at Frascati; the walls were covered with blue and white Dutch

tiles, and the floor with tiles from Gloucester Cathedral. The roof the Tribune was suggested by that of the Chapter House of York Minster, and in its center was an unmedieval star of yellow glass which filled the room with 'A golden gloom.' The ceiling of the Holbein Chamber was from a royal dressing-room in Windsor Castle; the chimney piece imitated a tomb at Canterbury, and the entrance screen embossed with ideas from the choir of Rouen Cathedral. The ceiling of the Gallery was an imitation of that in Henry VII's Chapel; the large door at the end of the room was adapted from one at St. Albans; and the 'gold network' incongruously placed over the looking-glass was copied from Bourchier's tomb in Canterbury. The walls of the Gallery were hung with crimson damask of Renaissance design, and the chairs and settees were similarly upholstered."[2] Gothic indeed.

The eighteenth century used Gothic frivolously, as another form of Rococo. In their naivete these early efforts often possessed a charm completely lacking in later and more correct work. When one considers the dreary panorama of Victorian Gothic he can only regret that stone ever replaced stucco.

Batty Langley was one of the earlier designers in Gothic. Without precedent or tradition, being imbued with classical ideals, he nevertheless appreciated the grandeur of the English cathedrals and made a not altogether successful attempt to re-establish it as a legitimate architectural style. He proposed to do this by applying classic measurements to Gothic architecture. In 1742 he published his work entitled: "Gothic Architecture, Improved by Rules and Proportions in Many Grand Designs of Columns, Doors, Windows, Chimney-pieces, Arcades, Colonades, Porticos, Umbrellos, Temples and

[2] *Tides in English Taste* (1619-1800), by B. Sprague Allen. Vol. 2, pp. 74-81.

Pavillions, etc., with Plans, Elevations, and Profiles; geometrically explained by B. and T. Langley."

James Wyatt, another architect of the period who was famous for his work in the Gothic style was regarded so highly that Walpole expressed regret that there was no William of Wykeham to patronize him. He was employed by his contemporaries to restore old country houses, colleges, and cathedrals, and to design new ones. His work which was so admired in his own day was as extravagantly condemned by the learned gothifiers who followed them. Today, when the heat of controversy has died, it is generally thought that while his restorations were often unfortunate they were not always so. Salisbury and Durham are to be regretted but his work at Henry VII's Chapel was competent. And in his design for Fonthill Abbey he gave evidence of a grandeur of concept worthy of genius.

Fonthill Abbey may be considered the last Gothic building of the eighteenth century. It was built for the fabulously wealthy William Beckford, son of an alderman of that name who had amassed a fortune in the West Indies. Mr. Beckford had conceived a hatred of the Italian style in which his father's house was built and, becoming interested in Gothic, built for himself one of the most unusual houses ever constructed. Eastlake gives the following enthusiastic description of it:

"It was cruciform in plan, its length from north to south being 312 feet, while the transverse portion extended to 250 feet, from east to west. The principal feature was an octagonal tower, which rose from the center to a height of 278 feet . . . South of the central abbey tower was a wing, then known as St. Michael's Gallery. On the west side was a covered cloister, which connected the hall with a block of

buildings at the end of the south wing, buttressed and flanked by two octagonal turrets. Between this cloister and the south wing of the Abbey was a *cortile,* in the centre of which a fountain played. The east wing was carried up rather higher than the rest, and included in its design two turrets . . . and features of the same kind, but of a smaller size, were repeated at the end nearest the central block. The south side of this wing was lighted by three large pointed windows, filled with tracery.

"The principal entrance was on the west side, and consisted of a lofty doorway, thirty-one feet high. It was spanned by a richly moulded pointed arch, the drip-stone of which bore crockets and terminated its ogival curve in a finial. In the wall above was a small window, and above this the gable was decorated at its apex by a niche containing a statue of St. Anthony of Padua."

Fonthill Abbey was planned as a ruin in 1796 and enlarged to its final proportions when Mr. Beckford decided to make it his permanent home, in 1807. Due to its owner's impatience Fonthill was rushed to completion, a work crew of some five hundred men working day and night (by the light of huge bonfires) to this purpose. Wyatt had little opportunity of supervising the work directly and the contractors did not install the strong foundations required to support such a huge building, although they took payment for them. In 1825 the central tower collapsed, destroying most of the building and today hardly a trace of the Abbey remains. It is a commentary on the vanity of human wishes that the great building on which so much effort and money were spent should not have survived a quarter century while Strawberry Hill, that toy castle stuck together with plaster and papier mache which Beckford sneeringly referred to as "a Gothic mousetrap", is still standing.

SO, Who's Counting?

By Edgar A. Kelley, Jr., '52

"—then she leaned back on the pure white leather like an animal of prey, waiting—waiting. He leaned toward her slowly, his cigarette hanging limply from his lips, a contemptuous expression playing across his hard features.

'Yeah,' he breathed, 'Yeah'. The smile vanished. 'Just like the rest', he spat.

He straightened up quickly, catlike, and with a motion quicker than the eye he slapped her—hard—so hard her eyes went dim and she fell back on the couch.

Without watching the effect of his blow, he turned and headed for the door. When he reached it he turned back to her and the smile played across his face again. The smoke from his cigarette curled lazily up his face, clouding his steel, glinting eyes. Gently he reached up and gripped the butt and fixed it between his thumb and forefinger.

'See ya around', he drawled, and he flipped the cigarette at her feet. He turned slowly and slipped through the door.

As he went, she heard him whistling a few random bars—"

* * * * *

Rodney Adams snapped the pulp novel shut with such force that the cover tore at the binding. He looked at it for a moment with satisfaction and then, with a motion that was almost catlike, he slid off the bed, landed on his feet and hurled the book into the corner. As he stood in the middle of the floor looking at the disheveled novel splayed on the rug, his

features began to harden. His eyes acquired a steely glint and his jaw squared. A sardonic grin played about his hardened features. He reached slowly into his pocket and drew out a single cigarette which he hooked negligently in the corner of his mouth.

He lit the match slowly, deliberately, letting it burn slowly between his fingers before he touched it to the cigarette. Then he flipped the match onto the bureau.

Turning slowly, he faced himself to the mirror that hung over the maple dresser and watched the smoke curl up his face, clouding the steely glint of his eyes. He leaned forward slowly, his eyes intent on the eyes that looked back from his reflection. The sardonic grin hardened—.

"Yeah," he said, "Yeah".

With an agile, effortless grace he straightened and turned to the rumpled bed behind him. Complete contempt shot from his eyes as he stared dispassionately at the offensive form of the pillow before him. Drawing his hand back a bare five inches, he slapped the pillow—hard—so hard that it fell tumbling off the bed. Without looking back he strode to the door and drew it open. Then he turned back and surveyed the room.

"See ya around," he whispered.

As he hurried down the hall, past his wife's room, down the stairs to the front hall, Mr. Rodney Adams, insurance agent, was transformed. A quick pass of his hand through his thinning hair, a violent pull at his tie and he became Rod Adams, man without a past, cast in that indefinable mold from which only real men emerge. He was a hard guy.

Moving quickly, but surely, he reached up and took his hat from the antique rack and jammed it on the back of his head. Stealthily he moved to the door, looked cautiously

through the glass panels on the sides of the door, and finally opened the door and slipped out. He closed it behind him, watching the street vigilantly. It was raining in a desultory, drizzling manner. Rod Adams pulled up the collar of his suit-coat and moved swiftly to the sidewalk and on down the deserted street.

Both of his hands were jammed into his coat pockets and he was bent forward, as if he were leaning into a high wind. His heels clicked damply on the sodden sidewalk as he made his way from the house to the corner of the block. As he approached the intersection he slowed, looked both ways, and then, as if satisfied, leaned against the shadow side of the telephone pole on the corner. He stood there, immobile, for more than a minute, and then, cautiously, almost imperceptibly, he reached into his pocket and drew out a cigarette. When the match flared in the depths of his cupped hands it revealed his narrowed eyes, cold, stony, menacing.

"Rod" Adams flicked the glowing match violently toward a puddle and launched himself, catlike, down the main avenue on his left. A few lights were still lit on the deserted street and they glimmered wetly through the mist. As he walked, he considered each of them closely, attempting to evaluate each, undecided.

Finally his damp gaze centered on a row of glowing windows about half way down the block. He slouched forward more determinedly then, heading straight for those windows.

Just above the yellow lighted windows a small neon sign blinked the word "diner". "Rod" made his way toward it cautiously, evading the small pools of misty light under the street lights, making his heels click with cold menace.

Arriving at the small diner in the middle of the block,

he stopped and looked both ways, flipped his butt, and turned slowly toward the door. He opened the door quietly, leaving only enough room for his body to slip through.

He stood just inside the door for several seconds, letting his cold eye flit over the steamy interior and the two occupants of the place. He gave only the slightest attention to the sweating face of the cook that looked out through the sliding panel that connected the counter with the kitchen. Fixing his face in an expression of supreme contempt, he let his eyes move slowly to the somewhat full-blown girl who managed the counter. She looked at him for a moment and then began wiping busily at the glass top of the counter.

Keeping his steely eyes on the girl, he walked slowly to the stool directly in front of her, slipping down on it gently, and placed one hand on the counter, leaving the other in his pocket.

The girl looked up from her task and asked hurriedly, "Well, what'll it be t'nite, Mr. Adams?"

He looked at her intently for several seconds and then let the words ooze slowly out of the side of his mouth, "Coffee and a do—sinker."

She moved quickly to the large silver urn behind her and drew off the coffee with a flourish. On her way back to him she swept a doughnut from a small mound on the counter. "Sure, here y'are, Mr. Adams. Pretty wet out, huh?"

He held her eye for a moment with a coldly questioning look and then muttered, "Yeah, wet; yeah."

He drank his coffee quickly and swallowed his doughnut in two bites. Flipping a quarter on the counter, he rose from the stool and stepped back toward the door, watching the girl and the cook all the while. When he reached the door

the hard lines of his face relaxed into a mirthless smile and he murmured sardonically, "See ya around."

With that he turned and was gone through the misted door.

The full-blown girl stood watching the door swing back for a moment and then she walked over to the sliding portal.

"Ya know, Charlie, that guy gives me the creeps sometimes. I don't mind so much when it's Ronald Coleman but when he's like this—Gawd! Who d'ya figure he was t'nite?"

Charlie lifted his steamy eyelids and shrugged. "Dunno, maybe Bogart, who knows; any Bogart shows in town?" He shifted the weight of his massive chin to his other hand and shrugged again.

Dostoievsky and Christianity

By LeRoy C. Hoinacki, *Special Student*

FYODOR DOSTOIEVSKY, in most of his books, is interested in two things: ideas and characters. One might say that Dostoievsky is obsessed with ideas, important ideas, ones that concern God, man and all his actions as they are related to God. And his ideas range from dramatizations of affirmations of a deep and firm faith in Christ to powerful arguments in defense of atheism. Berdyaev calls Dostoievsky Russia's greatest metaphysician. But he is not merely a metaphysician. He is also a profound Christian. Father Lubac states: "His Christianity is genuine; it is, at bottom, the Christianity which, reaching beyond his great gifts as a psychologist, lends so much depth to his vision of man." And all his ideas have meaning only within the context of Christianity, which is to say that his books have meaning only for the Christian. If one is a Christian, one sees the true universality of his thought.

Added to Dostoievsky's great interest in ideas concerning God, is his interest in character and character development. And his interest in character is surpassed by his great ability to search out the depths of the soul of man. He has been hailed, and rightly so, as a great psychologist. He is able to look into the secret thoughts of man, into his subconscious, into his dreams. He comes out with startling results that are later verified by the professional psychologists.

To my mind, Dostoievsky's real genius is in the fact that he is able to synthesize and blend together the two ele-

ments of idea and character. On the one hand, the ideas are given force, intensity, and, in most cases, a strongly passionate quality. On the other hand, the characters have meanings for us which transcend the limits of their characterizations. In many cases the characters themselves discuss and live these ideas. But they do not, in most cases, suffer in character delineation because of this. Dostoievsky's knowledge of psychology and sense of drama save him from creating wooden or one-dimensional people.

If necessary, Dostoievsky will sacrifice plot for the sake of his ideas. A good example of this is The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov,* his last and, in many respects, most mature work. But in *Crime and Punishment* there is a very fine co-ordination between plot and idea. The two coincide, or, strictly speaking, the plot is the gradual evolution of the idea. And the idea is, in a sense, the main character, Raskolnikov. I should like to show some aspects of the relationship between idea and character in this book.

The meaning of the book is this: it is the progression of the rectification of the will and intellect of Raskolnikov to the will of God. Raskolnikov, a poor and brilliant student in St. Petersburg, works out a theory in which he divides all men into two classes.

> The first category, generally speaking, are men conservative in temperament and law-abiding; they live under control and love to be controlled, because that's their vocation, and there is nothing humiliating in it for them. The second category all transgress the law; they are destroyers or disposed to destruction according to their capacities. The crimes of these men are of course relative and varied; for the most part they seek in very varied ways the destruction of the present for the

> sake of the better. But if such a one is forced for the sake of his idea to step over a corpse or wade through blood, he can, I maintain, find within himself, in his conscience, a sanction for wading through blood—that depends on the idea and its dimensions, note that.[1]

Raskolnikov thinks himself to be one of the superior men and decides to attempt a crime in which he will be able to test himself. He has another theory about the psychology of the criminal and he intends to use this as a sort of criterion by which he may judge himself. After the crime, a robbery and murder, he realizes that he is not one of the superior men but he still believes in the validity of his theory. The more important aspect of the crime is in the theory, not in the deed. In the theory Raskolnikov has, as it were, put himself in the place of God. He has assumed the power which belongs only to God and his crime (sin) has no meaning if this is not understood. He has also sinned in not admitting the supreme worth of every man. But he cannot admit this since he does not see the image of God in man. Dostoievsky makes the point of the worth of all men with peculiar force. The victim of Raskolnikov's murder is a seemingly worthless old hag.

> Besides, what value has the life of that sickly, stupid, ill-natured old woman in the balance of existence? No more than the life of a louse, of a black beetle, less in fact because the old woman is doing harm. She is wearing out the lives of others . . .[1]

But the terrible irony of the situation, for Raskolnikov, is that Alyona Ivanovna is not just a harmful old wretch who would be better dead.

The actual deed has more importance for the development of the story than for the idea, as such. After this deed we see another one of the main ideas in the book. This is the

idea of isolation or solitude. It is portrayed in terms of psychology but its meaning is moral.

> Something was happening to him entirely new, sudden and unknown. It was not that he understood, but he felt clearly with all the intensity of sensation that he could never more appeal to these people . . . and that if they had been his own brothers and sisters . . . it would have been utterly out of the question to appeal to them in any circumstance of life. He had never experienced such a strange and awful sensation. And what was more agonizing—it was more a sensation than a conception or idea, a direct sensation, the most agonizing of all the sensations he had known in his life.[1]

Later in the book there is another intensified expression of this idea.

> . . . he was suddenly overwhelmed with confusion and turned pale. Again that awful sensation he had known of late passed with deadly chill over his soul. Again it became suddenly plain and perceptible to him that he had just told a fearful lie—that he would never now be able to speak freely of everything—that he would never again be able to *speak* of anything to any one. The anguish of this thought was such that for a moment he almost forgot himself.[1]

He feels cut off from everyone, especially those dear to him, because of his crime against man. This idea only achieves its full force and meaning when we understand that Raskolnikov has also sinned against God, directly, in the theory, and indirectly, in the murder.

Raskolnikov suffers terribly and would probably have committed suicide if he had not realized the supreme value of existence. In a remarkable passage, Raskolnikov states his realization of the importance of being, even if it means living cut off from everything.

> . . . if he [one] had to live on some high rock, on such a narrow ledge that he'd only room to stand, and the ocean, ever-

> lasting darkness, everlasting solitude, everlasting tempest around him, if he had to remain standing on a square yard of space all his life, a thousand years, eternity, it were better to live so than to die at once! Only to live, to live and live! Life, whatever it may be! . . . How true it is! Good God, how true![1]

Raskolnikov has not yet reached the limit of his departure from God. That comes in moments when he curses Alyona Ivanovna, curses her because he hates her, because he thinks her to be nothing, nothing but a miserable louse. Even near the end of the book he is far from God. But soon after the crime the agent of his regeneration enters his life. This is Sonia, a prostitute who is at the same time a saint, one of the truly beautiful women of literature. But Sonia is not really a completely perfect character. She seems to lack something. Her lacking stems from two sources: the difficulty of a writer to create a saintly character, and the fact that she has no meaning, no life, outside her life in Raskolnikov.

Sonia is also a symbol, the most important of many in the book. She is the symbol of divine love. Dostoievsky wants to show the love of God for Raskolnikov and does this through the symbolical meaning of Sonia's love for him. It would almost seem that the love of Sonia is infinite. She loves God so much that the filth and degradation of her life as a prostitute is not able to touch her spirit. The strength and power of Sonia's love must be realized in order to understand how it can so strongly affect a character like Raskolnikov.

The influence of Sonia and her love have an immediate effect upon Raskolnikov. He is able to talk to her, to communicate with her because he thinks that she is like himself. That is, he thinks she has sinned and is also cut off from all men. But she is not guilty of the sin which Raskolnikov at-

tributes to her and loves him, at first, because she sees that he is suffering horribly. Their relationship has three climactic moments: when she reads the story of Lazarus to him, when he takes a small cross from her, and when, in the prison, he finally realizes and shows his love for her.

At first Raskolnikov cannot understand what it is that keeps Sonia together, that keeps her spirit pure. Then he finds out that it is God. He cruelly insists that she read the story of Lazarus.

> Raskolnikov saw in part why Sonia could not bring herself to read to him and the more he saw this, the more roughly and irritably he insisted on her doing so. He understood only too well how painful it was for her to betray and unveil all that was her *own*. He understood that these feelings really were her *secret treasure*, which she had kept perhaps for years, perhaps from childhood, while she lived with an unhappy father and a distracted step-mother crazed by grief, in the midst of starving children and unseemly abuse and reproaches. But at the same time he knew now and knew for certain that, although it filled her with dread and suffering, yet she had a tormenting desire to read and to read to *him* that he might hear it, and to read *now* whatever might come of it- . . . He read this in her eyes, he could see it in her intense emotion. She mastered herself, controlled the spasm in her throat and went on reading . . .[1]

In this powerful scene, Sonia identifies herself with Martha. Raskolnikov is identified with the sceptical Jews. She prays that he, too, will believe in this great miracle. Raskolnikov is also analogous to Lazarus. It has been four days since the crime and his spiritual death, and Lazarus has been dead four days. Christ must work here through the great love of Sonia. He does, but the transformation is not yet complete. It might seem that Raskolnikov has not outwardly changed, but this scene is one of the significant steps in his progression to God.

The next really significant moment in Raskolnikov's recovery comes at the time when he accepts a small cross from Sonia. At an earlier visit to Sonia he had asked her what he must do and she answered that he must first go to the " . . . cross-roads, bow down, first kiss the earth which you have defiled and then bow down to all the world and say to all men aloud, 'I am a murderer!' Then God will send you life again."[1] She also tells him that he must wear a cross. He does not then follow her advice but comes back later to get the cross. Sonia's advice is especially wise. She realizes that the first step in his recovery must be the breaking of his great pride. She knows what bowing down at the cross-roads will mean for him. He still considers himself much superior to other men and it will require great humility to bow down in a public place in this manner.

Raskolnikov's acceptance of Sonia's cross is highly symbolical. In the first place, the acceptance of another's cross is very important and establishes an unbreakable bond for the Russian. It is an event which one approaches with reverence. Secondly, its real symbolical meaning comes in its relation to the cross of Christ. As Father Lubac points out: "The gate of the kingdom is opened, as well as guarded, by the mystery of the cross." Raskolnikov's acceptance of the cross and his bowing down at the cross-roads is only a symbol of his acceptance of the mystery of Christ's cross and his adoration of God. Raskolnikov has not yet arrived at this point. But he is beginning to go through the motions and his acts are becoming more positive, more true.

Raskolnikov is reaching the beginning of his fully conscious acceptance of God in the scene where he shows his love for Sonia. Sonia has followed him to prison in Siberia and is waiting, waiting for her love and the grace of God to begin

their work. Here in prison, where Raskolnikov is more alone than ever, he continues to treat her with cruelty and a kind of hatred—the only things she has known from him. Prior to this expression of love he has a dream which haunts him continually, and which is highly symbolical.

> He dreamt that the whole world was condemned to a terrible new strange plague that had come to Europe from the depths of Asia. All were to be destroyed except a very few chosen. Some new sorts of microbes were attacking the bodies of men, but these microbes were endowed with intelligence and will. Men attacked by them became at once mad and furious. But never had men considered themselves so intellectual and so completely in possession of the truth as these sufferers, never had they considered their decisions, their scientific conclusions, their moral convictions so infallible. Whole villages, whole towns and peoples went mad from the infection. All were excited and did not understand one another. Each thought that he alone had the truth and was wretched looking at the others, beat himself on the breast, wept, and wrung his hands. They did not know how to judge and could not agree what to consider evil and what good; they did not know whom to blame, whom to justify. Men killed each other in a sort of senseless spite. They gathered together in armies against one another, but even on the march the armies would begin attacking each other, the ranks would be broken and the soldiers would fall on each other, stabbing and cutting, biting and devouring each other. The alarm bell was ringing all day long in the towns; men rushed together, but why they were summoned and who was summoning them no one knew . . . They accused one another, fought and killed each other. There were conflagrations and famine. All men and all things were involved in destruction. The plague spread and moved further and further.[1]

This dream is nothing but the symbol of his theory being carried out by all men. The dream persists in his memory but he does not know why. He only realizes subconsciously the

meaning of it. But this subconscious realization acts in a small way as an impetus to his moving expression of love. Of course, the remaining causes of this act go back to the time when he first met Sonia.

> How it happened he did not know. But all at once something seemed to seize him and fling him at her feet. He wept and threw his arms 'round her knees. For the first instant she was terribly frightened and she turned pale. She jumped up and looked at him trembling. But at the same moment she understood, and a light of infinite happiness came into her eyes. She knew and had no doubt that he loved her beyond everything and that at last the moment had come . . .
>
> They wanted to speak, but could not; tears stood in their eyes. They were both pale and thin; but those sick pale faces were bright with the dawn of a new future, of a full resurrection into a new life. They were renewed by love; the heart of each held infinite sources of life for the heart of the other.[1]

There is only one more indication in the book of Raskolnikov's state of soul. He asks himself: " 'Can her convictions not be mine now? Her feelings, her aspirations at least . . . ' "[1] Dostoievsky goes on to say that Raskolnikov will have a new life, will experience a regeneration. But he does not say explicitly what this new life will be. There is only Raskolnikov's above quoted thought. But there can hardly be any doubt about the nature of this life. There is too much in the book that points in one direction only, too much in Raskolnikov and too much in Sonia. The new life will be the life of grace, the life which Sonia represents and lives.

There is much more in the book that may be studied, interpreted, explained. But all of this only contributes to the meaning which is stated above. There is a unity of meaning to the book and one must relate all to this meaning. If there

is any element which seems to be incongruous, it must be weighed and judged; it will either destroy the unity of meaning or will show that Dostoievsky failed in some respect to maintain the unity.

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[1] FYODOR DOSTOIEVSKY, *Crime and Punishment,* trans. Constance Garnett (New York: The Heritage Reprints, 1938).

DEBUT . . .

LEROY C. HOINACKI entered Providence College in September of 1950 as a special student. Mr. Hoinacki, a graduate of Lincoln Community High School, Lincoln, Illinois, is concentrating in the Classics, preparatory to entering the Dominican Order.

"Acting Again"

By M. Howard Gluckman, '52

IT was night and I was lonely. Far up the foggy street men were laughing, but I was shivering in the dampness and alone. After a last drag, I flicked the end of the cigarette I was smoking into the fog and headed toward the tavern at the corner. When I arrived it was empty and, tossing my seabag into a corner, I dropped into a chair, at a table close to the door. I lit another cigarette and waited for the bartender. Presently he came and while he wiped the table clean I ordered whiskey with beer chasers—I was determined to tie a good one on tonight.

At last my silent host approached bearing a tray full of joy and comfort. The first drink burned its way into my stomach, and in a few moments this dive I was in brightened up a bit. I gulped down two more drinks in succession and was about to pour the next when a small group of seamen crowded into the midst of my reverie. "How about joining me?", I cried, raising the bottle of whiskey up high. They looked my way and then spying the bottle answered thirstily, "You bet, mate." "The more the merrier, Ha! Ha! Ha!" "We'll all go to sea together!" Then they all fell in around me and pounded the table for more glasses. When the bartender appeared with their glasses I shoved some money toward him and mockingly piped him off.

We drank steadily; shouting and swearing all the while. The jokes and remarks flew faster. "Is this table getting longer or is the fog comin' in?" "I can't see the end of the

table either." "We're all goin' blind!" We all laughed. The room shook itself loose and began to weave. I was beginning to feel no pain. I gripped the edge of the table to steady myself . . . No use . . .

The room closed in on us until it was no bigger than a fo'c's'le. Rhythmically it began to rise and fall like a ship in a heavy sea. I realized I couldn't sit here any longer; I must go forward to take command. Our captain was drunk, locked in his cabin below. Yes! I would pace the bridge again even if I had to crawl.

The harbor lights winked and blinked far off and the captain, locked in his cabin below, winked, and blinked, and smiled right back—he was drunk. But the men know they can depend upon me. I told them they could. They will. I know it. Sure.

So as the seas grew heavier and the sky grew blacker I raced along the three-quarter deck to the half deck and I finally reached the quarter deck. Quickly I climbed the ladder to the bridge. Then before I could reach it a wave crashed over the three-quarter deck, the half deck, and then the quarter deck. It roared up the superstructure and all over me. Soaked to the skin and spitting salt I climbed into the bridge.

Somewhere forward a man laughs faintly, and somewhere aft a guitar strums softly, but here I am wet and shivering. All the way up here in a world of my own, even apart from the wheelman and the lookout. I became afraid—it was dark outside.

Our last-mate, Mr. Hartung, brought in some dry coffee and hot clothes. The hot clothes felt good and while the next wave crashed outside he steadied himself and poured boiling water from a thermos into the cup of coffee concentrate.

Even though Mr. Hartung was dying with seasickness and already beginning to groan a bit, he was loyal and coolly awaited my orders. But being just as cool and not wishing to order anything just yet, I gritted my teeth and, steeling my eyes, I peered out into the darkness; wondering all the while whether I had wound my watch or not.

Mr. Hartung could wait no longer and with a gurgling scream he lunged toward the nearest window. Then to my horror-stricken eyes I watched him spew straight into a seventy-knot breeze.

Oh yes, somewhere forward a man laughs faintly, somewhere aft a guitar strums softly but poor Mr. Hartung looks pleadingly up and calls me "Mon Capitain".

Our men are anxious to shove off now and at last I see a pair of red and green running lights in the distance. Suddenly my voice is roaring orders into the darkness. The megaphone shakes in my hand. I roll a seven and there is commotion up forward. Then I thrill to the music that every seaman takes for granted, "You're faded". I make one more pass, then head for the wheelhouse. "Ahead one-third" I hear shouted as the pilot launch outlines itself in the darkness. Then, while it coasts in, the pilot gracefully leaps to board us, but he just misses. We throw him a line as the launch pulls away. Struggling and fishlike in the darkness the old pilot crawls, exhaustedly, to the deck from the sea below. This man is obviously in no condition to sit in at a rubber of bridge tonight. I order my men to push him overboard again. After a splash I hear him desperately shout something in guttural French. Of course! His papers! These we toss into the water also.

As I crawl to and fro on the bridge I realize I will miss my game of cards tonight, but it is Kismet. I have a feeling

of confidence I've never had before; I'm no longer afraid. So confidently, I grab the stick of the engine-order-telegraph and ring loudly. The ship comes alive beneath my feet. Terror-stricken I realize I didn't mean to do it. It was only an accident. Panicky I pull my revolver and pump three shots into the deck plates. Now it is very quiet—a tense, waiting quiet in the darkness. Mr. Hartung is still very sick in the corner and is crying, "She's dead, she's dead, she's dead . . . she's dead, she's dead, she's dead." "Bartender!", I shout, "another whiskey for my friend here, Mr. Hartung!" I pushed the dead bottle off the table, "Go on, Mike, you were saying . . ."

DEBUT . . .

VINCENT C. TROFI, '52, is the fourth member of the Junior Class to have joined the ranks of ALEMBIC contributors. Mr. Trofi is enrolled in the School of Arts as a Social Science major.

"The Black-Hearted Knight"

By Vincent C. Trofi, '52

IT was on a cold, bleak afternoon that the de Rochemonts stood before their new home, Marlan Hall, in Belshore, England. The huge, three-story mansion was well off the main road and flanked on all sides by endless fields; and beyond the fields were dark yet splendid woods. The wall that circumscribed the grounds proper of the Hall was broken momentarily by a tremendous black gate. Tall pointed iron bars that soared skyward at least fifteen feet were secured horizontally by equally large, but not so numerous, bars. It was an ugly gate, altogether in contrast to the beauty into which it gave admission. It seemed to say, "Don't enter, go away."

If it had such a message to convey, the de Rochemonts, the three of them, were unaware of it. They were completely enchanted by the beautiful white house beyond the gate. Maxim de Rochemont, the father, was very tall, with thin, greying hair. His thin, haggard face gave evidence of a life spent in constant work and worry. He was an extremely successful importer, an Oxford man, and there were rumors of a possible knighthood for him. His wife, a not too successful novelist, came from a wealthy family. She had been ill for a long time. "Incurable," the doctors said. She was extremely light with large, very beautiful grey eyes that always betrayed the futility of her struggle against the malady which usually kept her confined to her room. Then there was Gregory. He was eight. His blonde, almost white hair floundered over his forehead and now and then completely covered his right eye.

His eyes—he had his mother's eyes. They, however, betrayed nothing about Gregory. In fact, it was difficult to tell what Gregory would do from one moment to the next. He appeared too patient and passive in all types of situations, whether tense, trying, or even jovial. Gregory created fun. To him a practical joke, a ruse, a prank, was a thing of beauty. In his own eight-year-old way of thinking, life was full only when there was fun, excitement, and above all, liberty—liberty for Gregory.

The race to the house, between Gregory and his father, was won by Gregory. Without ringing, he opened the huge door and burst into the main hall, almost upsetting a chambermaid who was carrying fresh linen to the upstairs bedrooms. He would have continued to run through the whole first floor if his father had not called out to him. A quiet kiss on Gregory's cheek by his mother subdued momentarily his boiling urge to explore the fascinating new home.

The two weeks that followed were filled with glorious adventure for Gregory. His father was away; and his mother was, as usual, in her room. Marlan Hall was his! Nothing escaped his careful inspection. He found extreme delight in exploring the unused, dusty rooms on the right wing of the mansion. He was captivated by the huge beds with old, yet still beautiful fringed canopies. So strong was this fascination for the canopies that he decided to test their strength. He climbed upon, and succeeded in breaking through, four of them.

His exploring spirit found another outlet in the tiled fireplaces that were in every bedroom at Marlan Hall. His determination to climb up the fireplace was thwarted, however, when a down draft sent clouds of black soot upon Gregory. A steaming hot bath, administered by a servant wielding

extremely coarse brushes, convinced Gregory that fireplaces would have to be explored by those who possessed less noble talents, namely, the chimney-sweeps.

Gregory was master of all he surveyed. Life was full, wonderful!

The day his father was due back found Gregory on the third floor, in one of the rooms with the overhead windows, probably used once as a studio. His father's shouts brought him racing down the long stairway, and he darted directly into his open arms. Maxim de Rochemont then led his son into his study, slid the doors shut, and sat down at his desk. He arranged some papers; Gregory in the meantime sat quietly in a red velvet upholstered chair. Then Maxim said, "Gregory, we've hired a new governess for you. Don't frown. I know you didn't quite get along with the other two governesses; but Madame Korrinov, that's her name, is different. She's Russian. She is one of the most widely known tutors in Europe and Asia. She once taught French to the Princesses. I know you will like her, Gregory."

Gregory was unimpressed. He moved nervously in his chair; and after several painfully silent moments, he said, "May I go now, father?" He didn't wait for an answer.

As Gregory turned to go, his father, somewhat disturbed, called him back and said apologetically, "Now, Gregory, you know that your mother is very ill and she can't take care of you as much as she would like to. But promise me, for your mother's sake, that you'll try to get along with Madame Korrinov."

Gregory for the moment could only nod.

"And, Gregory," his father added, "promise also that you won't be as harsh with her as you have been with the others. Poor Mrs. Quimbley was forced to retire, and

Miss Eden is still convalescent. Putting ice in her bed—really Gregory!"

Thoughts of his two other governesses and the fun he had outsmarting them brought a smile to his face. He whirled and scampered up the stairs to finish his conquest of the third floor.

It was raining the day Madame Korrinov arrived at Marlan Hall. Maxim, huge umbrella in hand, escorted her from the car to the house. Gregory viewed her entrance from atop the stairway, outside the room with the overhead windows. He gasped. She was huge! Despite her corpulency she moved with a dainty agility. Gregory saw her exchange greetings with his mother and the head servants. His father then led her to the stairway, probably to show her to her rooms. Gregory remained immobile. They reached the first landing; then they hesitated. "Probably they wouldn't come any farther," Gregory thought. However, they continued to come up the stairs. Gregory still sat motionless.

"Ah, there you are, Gregory," his father called as they climbed the few remaining steps. "Now then, Madame Korrinov, this is Gregory."

The glances that were exchanged between Gregory and the Madame were equal in distrust, cunning, and suspicion.

"Hello, Gregory," she said lightly. *"Comment se va?"* she added.

"I'm sorry. I don't speak Russian," he said coyly, too coyly.

"My boy, that was French; you are going to like French," she said, enveloping him in her massive arms.

Gregory tore loose and ran into his room. From his very earliest days Gregory had been against opposition; and

the Madame was just that—opposition personified. The battle was on!

* * * * *

The days that followed the coming of the Madame were filled with great unpleasantness for Gregory. In the morning, he was taught French. After the first lesson, however, Gregory's interest lagged, never more to be spurred on to even slightly master the language of the Seine, Champs d'Elysses, and Montmatre. Afternoons were devoted to music appreciation. It was Tschaikowsky, Shostakovitch, and Rimsky-Korsakov. Always Tschaikowsky, Shostakovitch, and Rimsky-Korsakov! Madame Korrinov was definitely Russian.

As the days went on, it was true, Gregory did grow tired of his lessons. Moreover, he grew tired of Madame Korrinov. She seemed to thwart all his actions. All the customary ways he used to do things were declared improper by the Madame. He had to dress peculiarly. A different suit for every different occasion. He had to watch now, more than ever, his personal habits. She scolded him several times for neglecting to use his handkerchief. All this vexed him. Why must she think everything he did improper; the other governesses never corrected him?

Gregory later, to his great distress, learned that Madame Korrinov was not keeping all his misdoings to herself. A detailed report on Gregory's conduct was submitted to his father every week. The result was numerous calls to the library for Gregory and therein lengthy lectures given by his father. Gregory always left the library very much unimpressed with his father's lectures. Gregory soon learned that the Madame could not be trusted. He learned also that the Madame was tough opposition.

Unpleasantness grew for Gregory. The Madame was

unlike any governess he had ever known. As much as he disliked admitting it, she was outsmarting him. She was winning the fight.

Soon the discomfort that the Madame caused Gregory began to turn to sadness. His life, once so full of fun, was now loaded with sorrow. He felt that all his liberty was destroyed. The Madame was everywhere, especially when Gregory was about to embark on a new adventure. He was a prisoner, he thought.

Then one day something happened that raised Gregory's gloomy spirits. Uncle Paul was coming! From the moment he had received the news from his father, Marlan Hall seemed to breathe the name "Uncle Paul." Gregory was wild with excitement. He shouted to everyone he met that Uncle Paul was coming.

Indeed there was a reason for Gregory to be so happy. Uncle Paul was always his favorite. However, Paul was not held in such esteem by the rest of the de Rochemonts. He was an actor, ever shifting. He had squandered his inheritance and had now taken to living off his relatives. To Gregory he was a hero, one who had gone through countless exciting adventures; to Maxim he was a parasite, worthless. Paul's coming was his own doing, not Maxim's.

The day Uncle Paul arrived saw Gregory's dim outlook completely change. His sullenness was overcome by an exhilarating feeling of joy. When he spied Uncle Paul from his usual perch at the top of the stairs, he raced down and nearly toppled the aging gentleman off his feet. Paul, in his shabby tweed jacket and pleatless trousers, swept the boy into his arms.

"Gregory, Gregory lad, how are you? My, but you've grown. Why, in no time you'll be strong and handsome and

ready to take your old uncle's place behind the footlights."

Maxim coughed.

* * * * *

The days that followed were unbelievably happy for Gregory. Madame Korrinov never once entered his mind. Lessons were forgotten. There was only time for Uncle Paul, who obliged by giving Gregory his undivided attention. Being with Uncle Paul was an adventure. They took long walks in the woods beyond the fields to conquer that "black-hearted knight who lives in the dark, mysterious castle." Uncle Paul had a very active imagination and he filled Gregory's head with stories of brave knights and their heroic deeds. Soon Gregory came to think of the Madame and "the black-hearted knight" as being synonymous.

Then came wild rides in Maxim's new car. Round the grounds they raced, sending up huge clouds of dust. On rainy afternoons they carried their adventures indoors. Their shouts were heard from one end of Marlan Hall to the other. They upset everything in their paths. Newly waxed floors were ruined by their scurrying feet, and beautifully set tables were never quite safe from their mischievous games. Uncle Paul took no time in living up to his reputation. He proved immediately to the others that he really never grew up, that he still was a child at heart. Although he was Gregory's idol, he was the despair of the servants. He was also their favorite topic of conversation in the kitchen. They all remarked about the way he had taken Gregory from his governess.

The Madame, however, was very much aware of this and she acted swiftly. After a curt talk with Maxim, she saw to it that Uncle Paul's stay at Marlan Hall would soon come to a close. One day, when the old gentleman was talking to Maxim in the library, Gregory knelt listening by the half-

closed door. He heard his father say, "I'm sorry, Paul, you must go. I know you don't like to. Gregory especially is going to be sorry to have you go; I know he is very fond of you. But Madame Korrinov feels that your influence over the boy might become harmful. Already he has lost interest in his lessons; and his manners—well, that's another thing."

These words cut deeply into Gregory's heart. The Madame, she was at the bottom of this!

His father continued, "I don't want you to go away feeling that you're never welcome to come back, Paul. Why, you can come to visit us every once in a while. How's that? Fair, isn't it? Fair for you, fair for me, and most of all, fair for Gregory."

Uncle Paul didn't answer. For the first time in his life someone told him directly his status as a de Rochemont: an evil influence. Before they came out of the library Gregory climbed quickly to his room, where he flung himself upon the bed and cried bitterly. The Madame, he hated her!

With the departure of Uncle Paul, Gregory was once again under the power of the Madame. She was unbeatable, like an impregnable fortress. It seemed to him that she was his whole life. She made up his surroundings. He rarely saw his father; his mother, never. It was the Madame, always the Madame. Trips into town were made with the Madame. Walks were taken with the Madame. He was forced to obey her every command. She was moulding him the way *she* wanted. Gregory found himself helpless.

* * * * *

One day Gregory, on instructions from the Madame, went to his father's library to get a book. His father was there talking to the gardener. Maxim saw his son in the doorway and asked him to come in. Gregory, by now a darling of pro-

priety, asked pardon for the interruption and went about his business. His father was saying to the gardener, "Now Collinby, I know that the rodents have been active in the barn. You say that they have even attacked the small colts? That's terrible. Isn't there something we can do?"

Collinby pulled a small blue box from his pocket and placed it on the desk. "That's the newest thing, Mister de Rochemont. It's very potent. Just a few drops and the work is done. It's guaranteed to get rid of all pests," he added with a smile.

He passed the box to Maxim who looked at it casually, his eyebrows rising when he read the words "DANGER—POISON." "Very well, you can use it, but be careful where you leave it."

"I'll put it in the greenhouse tool box, and I'll instruct the other workers not to touch it," the gardener said.

Gregory stirred slightly near the book shelves. He pulled out a volume of Balzac but returned it quickly: he was looking for a Browning. (Apparently, he was concerned with what they were saying; but then he was always interested in other people's conversations.) As he passed the desk on his way to the door, Maxim called out to him, "Gregory! I have a surprise. Uncle Paul is coming for dinner Friday. Now isn't that nice?"

Gregory remained motionless, pensive.

"You don't seem happy," Maxim said. "Gregory, didn't you hear me?"

Suddenly he turned and looked up. A slight smile appeared on Gregory's lips, his eyes shone. "Oh, but I am happy, Father. It is going to be fun to see Uncle Paul."

With these words he took the book and darted up the stairs to the Madame.

It was Tuesday when he had learned of Uncle Paul's coming. From that day on Gregory seemed more affable than usual. He was friendly, even courteous to the servants. Especially toward the Madame was this change noted. It seemed he acted not out of defeat but out of an eager willingness. A very eager willingness.

It was remarkable the way the boy had changed. The Madame was delighted. He approached his lessons with more enthusiasm. He even sat through a whole transcription of Boris Gudonoff without so much as a restless stir.

Gregory extended his amiability to the kitchen. He made friends with Anna, the cook, and spent most of his afternoons listening to her tell of her home in Denmark.

The transformation, at least the physical transformation, was complete. Gregory, indeed, had changed. He no longer carried on his wicked pranks; but what seemed more astounding, he appeared to have submitted to the Madame. He had successfully battled two other governesses. Could it be that the indomitable Gregory de Rochemont III had at last, at the age of eight, met his match. From all appearances it appeared so.

On Friday, the day that Uncle Paul was to come, Gregory rose early in the morning and rushed to the kitchen to have breakfast with Anna. As he sat there nibbling on his food he suddenly asked Anna, "What's it like to be a servant."

"Why darlin', why do you ask that? Heavens, you'll never see the day when you have to serve someone else. Why, your father's a Knight and you're—why you're a little Knight."

These words, "little Knight," brought back memories. Why yes, he was a knight. Uncle Paul said he was a long time ago; and like all true knights he had to prove himself by con-

quering the "black-hearted knight" in that dark, mysterious, far away castle. He felt heroic. However, he returned rather determinedly to the reason for his visit to the kitchen, "But Anna, I would like to try, at least once, to be a servant. May I help serve the table tonight. I could fill the water glasses and place the napkin rings. Oh, I'll do anything."

"Well," she said hesitatingly.

"Please."

"All right, darlin', but not a word to the Madame, understand?"

"Oh Anna, thank you," he cried as he raced out of the kitchen.

* * * * *

Uncle Paul arrived early for dinner and he and Gregory spent all afternoon in the house because it was raining. A short time before dinner, however, his mother came downstairs, a rare occurrence. While she and Paul were chatting in the sitting room, Gregory took the opportunity and stole away to the kitchen to perform his promised task.

Anna was glad to see him and gave him a water pitcher and led him to the dining room. She showed him the exact level to fill the glasses. Gregory, when she had left, picked up the pitcher and started to fill the tall stemmed crystal water glasses. Everyone would occupy an appointed seat. Uncle Paul, as guest, would sit at Maxim's right, his wife at his left, and Gregory would sit next to his mother, opposite the Madame. As he poured each glass he reflected over each:

His mother's glass—*Poor mother, I do wish you were well again.*

His father's glass—*I don't think you're a good Knight. Why, you don't even carry a sword.*

Uncle Paul's glass—*Dear Uncle Paul, I do wish you could stay at Marlan always, but I understand.*

He paused a little longer over the Madame's glass—*Sending Uncle Paul away, really Madame!*

Gregory filled his own glass—*At least, you're a brave knight.*

Dinner was served at seven. Mrs. de Rochemont took Uncle Paul's arm and both went into the dining room. Behind them came the Madame and Maxim, chatting about something to do with the Antivivisection League. Gregory was already seated at the long, exquisitely set table. The huge solid silver candelabrum on each end of the table blazed with a warm glow. The large beautiful floral centerpiece was defiantly red. The food looked delicious!

Maxim proposed a toast, "To my wife, may she always be as beautiful as she is tonight."

Madame Korrinov cooed her approval. The compliment was ridiculous and even cruel. All that was left of Mrs. de Rochemont was a sunken hollow mask for a face and a thin, almost bloodless body. A choke came to Gregory's throat; he loved his mother.

During the dinner, Maxim was called to the library, it was urgent. He excused himself and hurriedly went to his library. There he met the gardener.

Before the gardener could begin, a large crash was heard in the dining room, then a scream. Maxim hurried to the room.

"It's the Madame, she has fainted," blurted out Uncle Paul.

"Quick, get some water," Maxim commanded. "That's right, darling, rub her hands, get the blood circulating."

Despite their efforts the Madame still remained uncon-

scious. Maxim became worried and sent for a doctor immediately. The Madame, however, was dead when he arrived.

Madame Korrinov's death caused a great deal of excitement at Marlan Hall. Her sister was notified and flew in from London to attend the funeral services at the crematory.

"It was her heart, her poor weak heart," she sobbed. "I told her it would be too much for her, this new job."

So it was that the Madame was committed to the roaring crematory furnace, on a very beautiful Sunday afternoon. Outside the small chapel, adjacent to the crematory, Uncle Paul and Gregory stood silent. Maxim thought it would be best to have Gregory remain outside during the services. He explained that her death must have been a terrible enough shock without submitting him to this final grim ordeal.

Uncle Paul stood sternly silent. Gregory kicked a tuft of grass with his foot. After endless minutes of silence, Gregory finally spoke, "Uncle, why are rodents called pests?"

"I guess because they're always doing the wrong thing at the wrong time," he said, trying to make it as simple as possible. "They chew up valuable plants and all sorts of things. Why, they even attack little horses and sheep."

"Then they are very wicked, aren't they, Uncle?"

"Oh, yes, I guess you could call them 'wicked,' he said with a smile. "It's necessary to get rid of them sometimes."

"I know that," Gregory said.

"But no matter what you do, Gregory, they always come back."

"They do?", not too surprised.

"Yes, I'm afraid so."

Several moments of silence followed. Then Gregory asked, "Uncle, remember what you told me once about all

knights; to prove themselves worthy of the title they had to conquer a 'black-hearted knight'?"

"Yes, I do," he replied warmly. "I also told you that the 'black-hearted knight' was any type of obstacle. It could be hatred, jealousy: anything or anyone that prevented a young knight from performing his knightly deeds," he added brightly, wondering all the time what Gregory was aiming at. This bit of philosophy was his own. He had to adopt it because he was an actor, and actors encounter all types of opposition.

Gregory continued, "Uncle Paul, would you call a 'black knight' a pest?"

Despite the fact that he was outside the crematory chapel, Uncle Paul laughed loudly, "That's a good one, Gregory—a 'black-hearted knight' a pest. You're certainly right; he is. And even though you get rid of him once, he always comes back at you." (He was thinking of an old rival for the hand of a bygone love.)

Gregory was laughing now, too. "Uncle Paul, I've conquered a 'black-hearted knight' and a pest rolled up in one. Now am I a true knight?"

"Pest? . . . 'black-hearted knight'? Really Gregory, *what* was it?"

"The Madame."

"Gregory, what are you saying?"

"The Madame, the pest, I've gotten rid of her!"

"What?"

"It was easy, Uncle Paul. I heard the gardener say this would get rid of all pests." He took out the little blue box and handed it to Paul.

Uncle Paul read the label. He was dazed. "Gregory, you didn't . . . ?"

"Yes, I put a little in her water; and, sure enough, she went away. I've gotten rid of her, for the moment at least. When will she be back; she was a very strong 'black-hearted knight'? You said pests always come back."

Paul stared at Gregory. He didn't answer. He couldn't answer.

"She's coming back, isn't she, Uncle Paul?"

DEBUT . . .

ANTHONY C. RICCIO, '51, whose critical essay, "Jacksonian Democracy, History, and Civics", begins on the following page, is an Arts major concentrating in Education. He is a graduate of Cranston High School.

Jacksonian Democracy, History, and Civics

By Anthony C. Riccio, '51

NOT too long ago a man imbued with rather radical ideas came out of the bayou country of Louisiana. He was resolved that the riches of this bounteous land should be equally divided among its inhabitants. Every family should have a radio, an automobile, and at least twenty-five hundred dollars in the bank. No one should lack the essentials and simple luxuries of life in a land characterized by a superfluity of material wealth. This man vowed that when he became president of these United States he would bring about the fruition of these urgent needs. The common man would come to the forefront. But, as the determinists would say, the ways of Fate are strange. The visions were never realized, for in 1935 Senator Huey Pierce Long was assassinated.

It would seem that the nation should have grievously mourned this catastrophe, for the sentiments and avowed aims of the deceased Senator were indeed noble. But such was not the case: everywhere sighs of relief were heaved; capitalists began to relax; political leaders once more had traces of smiles on their faces—the Kingfish of a would-be *benevolent* despotism was gone; the common man had lost his verbal champion.

But a century before the appearance of Senator Long, there had been another leader of the common man. It was 1828, the year of the presidential election, and this leader was a candidate for the nation's highest office. He stormed the country *à la* Truman. He spoke wherever people would listen

to him. He invoked the common man to follow him on to victory and equality. But our friend was not without opposition. His opponents found it smart politics to disseminate legends of his crudeness and ignorance. From their propaganda campaign came such tales as the one that 'O.K.' originated in our friend's belief that he was abbreviating the words "all correct". The common man would not be deceived; he triumphantly carried the day by electing to office Andrew Jackson, the candidate who had declared that there would be "Equal rights for all, special privileges for none."

One should not, however, think that Jackson alone was responsible for this wave of democratic feeling. There had been a constant rumbling among the people from 1820 on. The election of Jackson was merely a manifestation of the power of the masses when they have the franchise in their possession. The masses were dissatisfied with the existent conditions in America: the Westerners resented the New England feeling on the tariff question; the Eastern laboring classes were in dire need of help; the Southerners feared the New England doctrine of centralization; something had to be done. All that was required was a leader whose views coincided with the masses of the various sections of the country. Jackson came along: he was in *violent* agreement with the interests of the common man. Their champion had arrived; the common man swept him on to victory.

Jackson strode down to Washington to be inaugurated. His friends and followers were there *en masse*. Never before had such an enthusiastic inaugural been witnessed. William Hamm states:

> "Webster said that persons came five hundred miles to see the General. They seemed to think that the country had been rescued from some dreadful danger."

But it should be remembered that many of those present were there because of base motives. He remarks further:

> "One of them said, 'I am ashamed of myself, for I feel as if every man I meet knew what I came for.' 'Don't distress yourself,' said another, 'for every man you meet is on the same business'."

Party leaders had learned the value of state organizations to the party. They obstreperously demanded federal positions as rewards for the rank and file who had worked for Jackson's success.

They were not disappointed. Jackson felt that any federal office did not or at least should not require more than ordinary intelligence. He felt that no one should stay in office too long, lest the holder become corrupted. West, in his *History of the American Nation,* observes:

> "In the preceding forty years of the government, there had been less than two hundred removals from office for all causes. In his first term, Jackson made two thousand."

Quite naturally, these appointments degraded the civil service. The enlarged vote had demanded innovations in the existing political machinery. These innovations included the creation of such positions as ward "boss" and ward "heeler". The bosses did not always hold office; they were usually content to stay in the background and reap the incoming, though tainted, profits. This was merely one of the consequences of the heralded Jacksonian era.

The period was further characterized by the growth of the veto. Jackson felt that he was the incarnation of the people's will. Never before had a President had so much control over Congress. Nine bills had been vetoed by the first six Presidents—all on constitutional grounds. Jackson, in order to control general policy, astounded Congress by vetoing twelve bills. In addition he used the "pocket" veto, which

none of his predecessors had dared to use. But the people had spoken: they had placed this rather forceful individual in the White House. Intoxicated with victory, the people, according to West,

> "began to insist not merely that majorities ought to be supreme, as the best policy, but even that majorities were always right: *'Vox populi, vox dei!'* "

One should also note the growing secularization of society. The influence of the church had been considerably lessened. The church was diverted to what many believed to be its true function: the salvation of souls, not political interference. The Jacksonians felt that religion would be of most use to itself if it ended its entangling commitments with political reaction.

Since public education follows, for the most part, the spirit of the times, it is to be expected that Jacksonian feelings greatly influenced the school curriculum, particularly the social sciences. With the common man being placed on a pedestal in the period, it is not surprising that changes were effected in such subjects as civics and history. For when the franchise is almost universally extended, there is present in the minds of the intelligent the need to inculcate in the voter the obligations which are concomitant with the privilege.

The teaching of civics

> "is designed to assist young American citizens to make the most of their citizenship . . . It is presented as an instrument of the public schools whereby the goal of *good citizenship* may effectively be met through specific effort to that end."[1]

Civics considers the machinery and functions of government, race relations, labor unions, government ownership, and the like.

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[1] CLYDE B. MOORE, *Our American Citizenship* (New York: 1936), p. v.

Because our present form of government is merely an extension of the Jacksonian government, the civics taught will be based on the assumption that our form of government—Jacksonian government, to all intents and purposes—is the best form of government. Thus the author of a civics text used in Rhode Island schools commands:

> American teachers and American pupils are free to consider the problems of their time and of the days to come. We must insist, however, that teacher and pupil shall hold to the democratic point of view.[2]

But how do we know that our form of government is the best form? How are governments measured? In his *Politics* Aristotle asserts that two questions should be asked about governments: Is the end which they propose good? If so, do they fulfill it?

What did Jacksonian democracy propose? Jackson said: "Equal rights for all, special privileges for none." Let us assume, for the sake of discussion, that this is a good end. Then we will have overcome the first test. Next, did Jackson fulfill this end? No! I fail to see how the spoils system fits in with equality. If those men who had worked for Jackson received federal offices, were they not the recipients of special privileges? In the eyes of Jackson, were they equal to or above non-Jacksonians? Is the frequent use of the pocket veto—or any veto—a consequence of universal equality?

But to get back to the original question, or rather, assumption. Should there be equal rights for all? Are all men equal? Of course not, is every man the same size, color, or shape; are all men equal in intelligence? It would seem not. Alas, these are the words of an anarchist! The writer is mad. Anyone who has graduated from a public school *knows* that

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[2] R. O. Hughes, *Today's Problems* (New York: 1949), p. iii.

all men are equal. That is, if it is true that repetition fixes knowledge in one's mind, he should know. No one in a public school would even dare to insinuate that all men are not equal. A teacher who did so would soon be seeking a new position.

The student is taught in civics that he will one day play an integral part in governmental administration. He will be able to vote, to elect people who will work for his best interests. He is told that in this land of opportunity everyone has a chance. A chance to do what? Why, to become president, a millionaire, a captain of industry! But never is he told that there are limitations: that if his parents are in need, he may be forced to leave school; that if the right people will it, he will be supressed; or, to put in colloquially, "it's who you know more than what you know." He is given the virtues of democracy and told that the vices are negligible. Why is he not told that as a result of man's deprived nature, corruptions exist almost universally? Maybe because it will set him thinking. It would seem very difficult to reconcile a great form of government and Senator McCarthy's attack on one of its departments. The student will be puzzled and ask questions. He may, if he goes far enough, even come to the conclusion, God forbid, that a benevolent despotism may in some ways be better than a democracy.

But he will not go that far, for eventually he will take a street-car. There he will see a farmer or a house-wife staring down at him from a poster. Each will be proclaiming: "My vote counts as much as the President's!" He will once more retire to a blissful state of ignorance. Why did he ever bother to think about democracy? He must have been reading too much about the Communists.

The student of civics is living in a dream world. America, as it is portrayed in text-books, is a Utopia. I say the student should be made aware of existing conditions. He should not be led on to believe that all is fine. He should realize that, historically, new rights have been accompanied by new corruptions, Jacksonian democracy by the likes of Tammany Hall. Realizing this, he will be ready to take his place in society; he will not be shocked and thus quit when he learns by experience that vice and corruption exist in government.

I do not say that reality should be faced in civics alone; I am emphatically in favor of the realistic teaching of all the social sciences. To most students history is nothing more than an obstacle or hindrance in the path of graduation. Nevertheless, students are forced to *at least* listen to the teacher. But what does he hear? Nonsense, nothing but idealistic nonsense. He is told of impeccable leaders of yesterday, but in the newspapers he sees the present chief executive blatantly attacked. It is only natural for him to feel then that the world is going to pieces, that things are in tough shape. With a jaundiced eye he compares the present leaders to the "gods" of the past. The present leaders, to put it mildly, do not benefit by the comparison.

Is history just a time-filler? Is there no ulterior reason for teaching history? Of course there is. History is usually taught for one or more of the following reasons: the development of patriotism; the winning of support for a certain political regime; allowing people to square their beliefs and attitudes with the facts that competent historians are able to discover.

It would seem that teaching history idealistically would be a means of developing patriotism. However, a close

scrutiny will reveal that this is not so, for, as previously stated, a comparison of idealized historical figures to current administrators will result in nothing but scorn and contempt for our present leaders. Is that patriotism? May it not result in the student's attempting to get rid of these administrators by joining—in later years—factions which are also opposed to the government?

American history is at the present time undergoing what is termed a retroactive reinterpretation. Historical figures are all being portrayed as uncouth but captivating Horatio Algers. Thus the students read, in Schlesinger's article, "The Legacy of Andrew Jackson," of

> backwoods Andy Jackson, rough, tough, and lusty, hard as nails and irascible as a bumble-bee, defying successively the British, the Indians, the Eastern Aristocrats, the United States Bank, the Supreme Court—all in the name of the common people, the unpolished, uncouth, good-hearted rabble, clad in buckskin and flourishing bowie knives, who stormed the White House on the day of his inaugural.

They are not told that Jackson received a much better than average education, that he received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Harvard. These things are not in keeping with the brilliant picture of a man overcoming unconquerable odds in the name of the common man, but they should be known. Students should also be informed that in his first candidacy for office in Tennessee, Jackson was backed by fellow land speculators. The fact that Van Buren had a tremendous influence on Jackson should be made clear.

I do not contend that a teacher should be iconoclastic. He should present a complete picture of the topic treated. In most cases the good points will out-number the bad. The student will then realize that our founding fathers were great—but human. They will not be forced to labor under

a delusion. Thanks to Washington Irving, the writer—a product of the public schools—had been led to believe that Columbus proved the rotundity of the earth. It was not until his junior year in College that he learned the truth: that Columbus did not prove that the earth was round, that most of Columbus' contemporaries believed the Earth to be round, that the proofs given for the rotundity of Earth in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* are those of Aristotle. But this knowledge is not divulged in the public schools, for those in command of policy would have us believe that the world began with the Renaissance and the Reformation, that all that preceded these periods was dogma and drivel. They emphatically inform us that the scholastics uselessly spent their time in attempting to discover the number of angels that could sit on a pin-head. This is just another example of the garbled version of history that students receive in our public schools.

Some say that as a result of Jacksonian democracy we have developed a national sense. We like to look back on our forefathers and think them characteristic of American ingenuity and determination. The good that they did lives after them, the evil is interred with their bones. We are proud of the underdog, and in looking back into history we glorify all heroes by saying that they arose to lead the common man. How green the grass must have been in those days.

But how will the present era be considered in the future? Posterity may consider Huey Long a martyr and honor him by terming him a "second Jackson." Posterity may even be glad that Harry Truman left his haberdashery. You know, good old Harry, "rough, tough, and lusty, hard as nails and irascible as a bumble-bee."

December Ground

By Paul F. Fletcher, '51

Crystals crayon cart-tracks, white yet mauve and rose and earthy brown,
Down the reservation road like a tinselled wisp of smoke on a Christmas card;
Crystals cling to cocoons, cradles of cicada, and gypsy moth, and mad-orange monarch;
Crystals copulate at my feet and frozen, yet fission into a wealth of jewel-dust.

How long has all of this been going on?—that desiccated wombs are fertile,
And spray a fairy flock of progeny to rival the chandelier of the sky . . .
Ere dusk should blow them out
And hide them under a milkweed pod—or perhaps a blanket of snow.
Chickadees cluster on a chunk of suet and gulp the diamond dust,
That lights them up inside with warmth and a yen to be jolly;
And a piece of blue from the beyond of December penetrates the Nothing-Nothing greying sky
Vitalized into a chipper blue-jay—very much alive— and blue and white.

Walk an old country road on some winter evening
While there is yet a tinge of rose on the expiring face of day,

And feel the crystals straddle the leather of your shoes and
gnaw you to aching;
And the pinched pillaging of pearls that take you unawares
and sting;
And stop and listen, listen to this generating of diamonds . . .
and curse the ground no more.

Christmas 1950

By Paul F. Fletcher, '51

The sky lies hushed tonight;
Awaiting the signs of the times;
Awaiting the cry of the vulture
And the night-sable raven,
Wheeling high above in the cold outer strata:
Awaiting the carrion of war.

I saw a dog hit this morning;
Reclining against a car wheel;
Snuggling against the wheel;
Right in the middle of traffic.
And one might think it was being patted:
But there was blood on its belly.

Tonight the sky countermands the winds—
Shrilling too much like flak,
Ravaging too much like the yellow hordes—
To be still . . .
For tonight a boy lies as he used to when asleep:
But there is blood on his belly.

It is now tomorrow in Korea tonight.
Wincing under the wintry snow;
Dying under the hail of bullets:
Man's gift to man.
Yet here nature lies still, unaware it seems,
    Of the raging cancer in her other breast.

There Christmas-to-come-tonight has come;
Bombing Christ out of the caves,
Strafing the Holy Family off the roads.
And Christmas is all red—no green in barrenness . . .
    Silent night, holy night.

North Park

By Paul F. Fletcher, '51

There's a windswept place
Over Mount Hope Bay,
Where the clouds brew black liquor
To giddy autumn days.

And the leaves swirl up
Its sunburnt slope. . .
Gold champagne bubbles,
That buoy one's heart with hope.

Where a few hardy robins,
Their feathers all askew,
Cling to a pine-top,
Then cry a fall adieu.

There's a bench on its summit
(Above there's naught but sky)
And there I often sit and see
The dust smart Autumn's eye.

There's a canvas spread before me,
And an eager wind that paints
Blue and green and clouds for shadow,
And a gull that shrieks its plaints.

And the maples murmur madness
Under Saturn's greening lamp,
And the moon smiles on the water,
And the waves, deep-breasted, vamp.

There's a nod of mad complaisance
From bold Venus in the sky,
And the earth's at one last mating,
And the hemlocks sough and sigh.