THE ALEMBIC

DECEMBER, 1951

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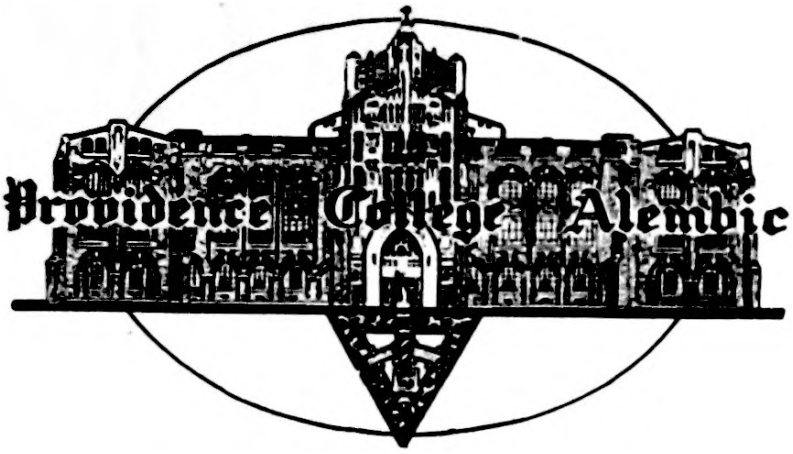

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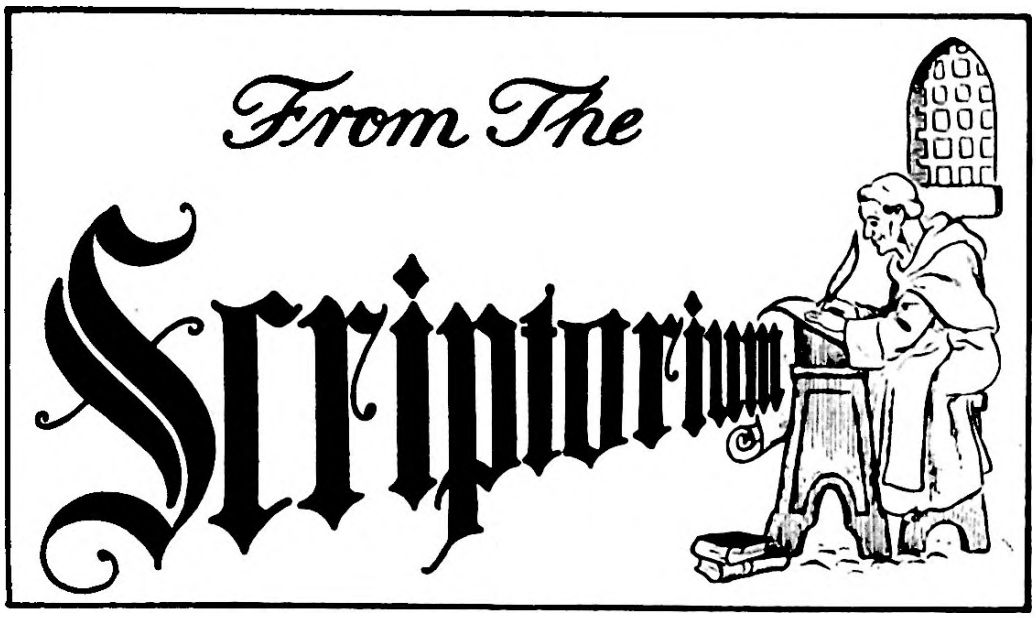

A SHORT while ago a moving picture was introduced to this country by the English overlords of the celluloid. It was forwarded by its backers as the cinema's reaction to the rash of bad productions which has had theater audiences of several nations scratching violently for a few years past. Advance publicity heralded it as the work that would finally force the recognition of the screen as a bona fide art medium. The preliminary blurbs were genteel in their approach and were aimed at the strata of our society which would be most likely to "appreciate" good art form. In short, the neighborhood theater became, overnight, the mecca for starving suburban dilletantes. All seats were reserved, and advance ticket sales were advertised. Naturally, since the price of art is arbitrary, the prices were doubled.

The first showing, referred to in each community as "opening night," would have done credit to any Broadway smash-hit; the best blue suit and the party dress were the uniform of the evening and bad cess to anyone who forgot himself to the extent of wearing a sport coat. Glossy programs sold like hot-cakes and all involved felt the impressive presence of "theater."

The picture was preceded by a lengthy explanation of the action

by an eminent critic-commentator, in which it was explained that the production which was to follow was a composite of several arts, among which were: opera, ballet, drama, and a smattering of poetry. This announcement was well received and a wave of artistically ecstatic ooh's and aah's swept the expectant audience.

And finally, at long last, thank God, . . . the picture.

The burden of the plot is carried by a student-poet who, while waiting in a tavern for his current love, relates the history of his three former loves to his companions of the moment. These loves are all tragic in that the same devilish antagonist succeeds, in each affair, to spirit the student's loves from him through the use of supernatural, preternatural and natural . . . means. When he has finished the telling, the student falls asleep on the table at which he has been drinking. At this time his current love enters looking for him and finds him thus. The antagonist, who has been sitting in the shadows of the tavern, rises and offers himself as a replacement and they exit, leaving the student with only another memory.

Now, the work which the picture was supposed to represent is a very well-proven opera, created by a man who is traditionally considered a true artist in his field. He, in the normal exercise of his talents, has stretched the realm of possibility to the uttermost in the name of art and poetic license. We accept this because we believe that art must eventually transcend and that the easiest way to achieve the transcendental is to introduce the supernatural or possibly the preternatural.

But, when, as was the case in this particular production, an enterprising producer starts with an already heightened effect and adds fade outs, instantaneous scene shifts, materializations, fantastic coloring, transparencies and double-takes, I believe that he is creating an impossibility. And when, to add further insult, he insists that the characters not only sing and act their parts, but that they must also dance them, I am sure he has paralyzed and negated his entire effort.

That producer is the man who has taken several very beautiful and very tasty dishes, thrown them into a mixing bowl and stirred vigorously until the ingredients are indistinguishable, and the results a gastronomic Frankenstein. He is the man who has a business advisor who, in his turn, garnishes the creation with well-planned adver-

tising and then proceeds to spoon-feed it to a public which knows no better.

In justice, it must be said that there were individual artistic triumphs throughout the work. The music was universally beautiful and the dancing, when free of dramatic intentions, was very well done. But when the end finally came the over-all effect was confusion, or chaos, or what have you, but definitely not the promised redeemer of the movie industry.

After the last notes had died and the house lights had come up, the majority of the glutted patrons felt it necessary to applaud loudly to show, no doubt, that their appreciation was no less sublime than the next fellow's. It died rapidly, of course, when they realized that the objects of their exuberant demonstrations were approximately four thousand miles removed from them and not at all likely to hear it. They substituted the hushed vibrant murmurings which are universally reserved for the beautiful and the dead, and filed out of the theater. They were impressed with the fact that this was a bigger and better extravaganza than Hollywood could ever produce and proved again that the famous estimate of Barnum's was a gross understatement of fact.

E. A. K.

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ANNOUNCING
the
Alembic Literary Award

An award of fifty dollars will be granted for the contribution judged to be the most outstanding in literary merit, published in the ALEMBIC during the school year, 1951-1952. There will be no restriction as to the form of the contribution; it may be a poem, an essay or a narrative.

Judges will be selected from the faculty of Providence College and the Editorial Board of the ALEMBIC.

The Cheat

By Joseph P. McGowan

CHARLEY HILL looked up from the package he was sealing, to the clock on the shipping-room wall. Twenty-five past seven. Why do these first two hours always go by so slowly, he thought. The last hour from eight to nine always flies by, but these first two! They just drag and drag, as if the minute hand had to struggle every inch of the way to complete its circuit. Already he sensed that strange feeling of helplessness running through his arms and legs, making them feel weak and limp. It hadn't started in his stomach yet, but he knew it would, because when nine o'clock came he'd have to go over to Terry's and tell her it was all over between them.

No use putting it off, he told himself. She'd just find out from someone else, and that would be the worst thing that could happen. But how the hell could he tell her? After all, when you go steady with a girl for almost two years, you just don't tell her it's all over as easily as you wave your hand to greet someone.

"Damn it," he said aloud. "What's the matter with this tape?"

A piece of brown gumming tape, with which he had just sealed the cover of a package, curled up at the end and came loose. He slapped it back into place, and threw the package into a large hamper already half filled with similar parcels.

Then he felt again that enfeebling sensation traveling down his arms. It was always there when he was in trouble,

or had to face a crisis. He resented its presence and his inability to overcome it.

Clenching his fists despairingly, he smashed them against the tabletop with a violent force that made the tape dispenser rattle noisily. Mr. Gough, the shipping-room foreman and the only other person present, looked up from his desk and smiled faintly. "Take it easy, Charley," he said. "What's the matter, anyway?"

"Damn tape is no good," Charley muttered. "Doesn't stick."

He dared not tell Gough the real reason for his sudden display of emotion. Gough'd think he was crazy.

Once more he turned his eyes to the clock. Twenty-three minutes before eight. He thought again of what he was going to do that night, and it frightened him. How could he tell Terry there was someone else? He dared not explain that next to Mary she seemed pale and unattractive to him. But he realized that the least he could do was to let her know he was breaking up with her. He couldn't just stop seeing her without a word of explanation.

So although he didn't quite know what he would say, he had decided to drop by Terry's after work tonight, to try to make it as gentle as possible. But every time he thought of how he would go about it, and what the consequences would be, that terrible nauseous feeling would return.

The clock read nine minutes to eight.

Now that feeling was beginning in his stomach which somehow felt as if it had disappeared, and had been replaced by a deep emptiness that made him feel hollow inside, like an eggshell which could be crushed with the slightest pressure. Once more his eyes darted nervously to the clock. Eight minutes to eight.

That was all!

He could stand no more! He had to get it over with. Dropping the parcel he was working on, he pulled off his apron and walked resolutely towards Mr. Gough's desk. Beads of sweat crawled down his brow, and he could feel the wetness on his back, and when he spoke his voice was quavering.

"Mr. Gough, I'd like to leave, now . . . please."

Mr. Gough, who had raised his head as Charley approached, looked quizzically at the young man's face and asked, a little over-solicitously, "What's the matter, Charley? Don't you feel well?"

"No, . . . no, it's not that," was the halting reply, "it's just that I have something to do . . . that I forgot about."

"All right, Charley," said Gough, after a pause, speaking slowly and softly. "Go ahead, it's all right."

On the bus Charley's thought wandered back to his first meeting with Mary. The uneasiness still was there, but not so pronounced as it had been back at the store. At least he was on his way now.

He remembered the first time he had seen Mary. She was working behind the cosmetics counter, and it was her first day at the store. Charley was on his way back to the hat department, where he was a salesman. He worked two or three nights a week in the shipping-room to pick up some extra money.

As he passed the cosmetics counter, Mary, seeing him without an overcoat, recognized him as a store employee, and smiled. He had smiled back, but nothing had really happened until that night at the hamburger place. There, Mrs. Carter, who ran the cosmetics concession, had introduced her to him, and he had talked with Mary for about ten minutes while they ate. This soon became a regular practice. If they were work-

ing at night they ate supper together, and every day they had dinner together.

From the first moment of their acquaintance, Charley had been enchanted by Mary's personality. She was not as pretty as Terry, but she could make him laugh, something which Terry rarely succeeded in doing. He had always made Terry laugh, but now, for the first time, he enjoyed listening to a girl talk.

It had been three weeks since that first meeting, but Charley had not acted until only three days before. It was a Saturday morning. So far, he had not formally dated Mary, and he had also kept his relationship with Terry from her, but now for the first time he took definite action. He asked Mary to go to the show with him Sunday night, but when she was unable to, he suggested Wednesday, and she had readily agreed. Elated by this prospect, Charley had decided then and there to break the news to Terry that Saturday night when he went to her house for their usual date.

But as afternoon came, Charley's courage began to slip from him, and when he rang the doorbell at Terry's that night he had definitely decided against telling her. He would do it some other time, he had told himself, but now it was Tuesday, and time was running out.

When he stepped off the bus into the suburban residential section where Terry lived, that terrible, helpless feeling gripped his senses again, and once more perspiration moistened his forehead. Automatically, he turned the corner and headed down a dimly lighted street. It had been raining earlier, and the wet leaves stuck to his shoes as he walked along.

After a short distance he came to the block where Terry lived. Her house was just around the next corner. His hands began to tremble, then his arms and legs, and finally even his

chin and lips. His stomach felt as if it were falling right out of his body. As he came to the corner, his head turned slightly to the right in the direction of Terry's house. Suddenly he quickened his pace and, instead of turning, started to cross the road. Halfway across he slowed down a bit, as though he were undecided, but then continued on straight ahead, walking very rapidly.

He couldn't go through with it. No force in the world could have made him turn that corner. How could he face her? What would her parents say? They thought so much of him. And suppose she started to cry. A thousand such possibilities flew through his mind, and each one terrified him. He increased his stride until he was almost running.

Suddenly an idea, a possible solution, broke through his frenzied thought and began to prey upon his mind.

Why not phone Terry and tell her?

He revolted immediately, however, against this thought. He told himself that it would be the coward's way out.

But when would he tell her? When?

He realized that he would never be able to summon the courage to tell her face to face. Twice now he had failed miserably. And if he did it by phone there would be no painful farewell. All he'd have to do would be hang up, and it would be over.

Over, he thought, over, if only it were over!

This last word kept running through his mind. Slowly, inexorably, determination began to take hold of Charley, and the more he thought of his idea, the closer he came to putting it into action.

After walking five or six blocks, he came to a small business center, and noticed the bright neon lights of a drugstore.

Quickly he started in its direction, but pulled up short just before stepping over the curbstone. He lingered a moment, undecided, then sucking in a breath of air, crossed the wet pavement and entered the store.

A young girl dressed in white was sitting behind the cigar counter, her eyes fixed on a dime novel spread out before her. Charley walked up to her and asked, "Where are the telephones here?"

"Huh?" said the girl, looking up at him with wide blue eyes.

"Where are the telephones here?" he shouted, without realizing how loud his voice sounded.

"Well, you don't have to blow my eardrums out," she retorted in a high-pitched voice; "they're right over there behind the magazines."

He turned and started to walk towards the back of the store. Immediately he disliked the place. No room to move around, everything piled right up to the ceiling, medicine bottles on one side, liquor on the other. It seemed as if everything were closing in on him. He reached a large stand containing pocket-book editions, which rose high above his head. Walking around this he came to three telephone booths built into the wall under a staircase. He entered one, pulled out two or three nickels and placed them on the shelf under the telephone. His hand was shaking as he dropped the first one in the slot, and he had difficulty dialing the number.

"Hello," said a pleasant feminine voice.

Suddenly Charley's hand stopped shaking. Sweat covered his brow, but inwardly he became calm once again.

"Hello," he said clearly and strongly, "is Terry in?"

"Well, no, she isn't. She's out for the night."

This surprised him a little, but then he realized that

she knew he was working late, and probably was at her girl friend's house. He asked, "Oh! Is she at Helen's house?"

"No, she left about an hour ago with a young fellow. She has a date."

"A what? . . . Is this you, Mrs. Foster?"

"Why, no, this is Mrs. Tabor, Mrs. Foster's sister from Albany. I'm here visiting for a few days."

"And you say Terry's gone out with some guy?"

"Yes. I was here when they left."

By this time Charley's face had become very red, and he shouted into the mouthpiece, "So that's how it is, huh? Well, I hope she has a good time."

"Really, Sir, you don't have to sh . . ."

"WELL," Charley repeated, this time louder than before, "I hope she has a damn good time!"

"Now, really, Sir, if you're going to . . ."

"ALL RIGHT, all right," he interrupted, still shouting, "I'm sorry I shouted."

"Well, do you want to leave a message?"

"NO, no, I don't, . . . good night."

"Why, yes . . . uh . . . good ni' . . ."

Charley slammed the receiver back on to its hook, and began to swear openly. Savagely he smashed his fist into the telephone box, causing the bell to chime feebly, and then threw himself onto the small stool built into the corner of the booth.

"Why, that little cheat, that little, that, that . . ." he blurted out, and gave the door a vicious kick.

Then, strangely, a smile began to crease the corners of his mouth, and he emitted a short laugh. The smile broadened, and the laughter became louder. "Why, what the hell am I getting sore about?" he suddenly thought; "that's about

the best thing that could've happened." A short piercing screech broke from his lips, and his chest shook almost convulsively.

As he reached for the handle to leave the booth, he put one hand over his mouth to stifle the laughter. But as he circled the magazine stand and started to walk towards the front door, he realized that he still had a broad grin on his face. He saw the girl at the cigar counter, still bent over her paper-backed novel, and made an effort to repress the grin. He couldn't, however, and when the girl heard him coming she looked up into his beaming face. At first she registered surprise, but then smiled, and asked, "Well, good news?"

For just a second he was about to answer "Yes," but then changed his mind and said, "No, no, just something that struck me funny."

About the Weather

By Chester Gough

THE sun was warm enough to make a jacket comfortable but not so warm that you sweated from just walking. That's unusual for New England. Most of the time you're too hot or too cold—there's always weather to gripe about—

There were clouds in the sky, but I didn't notice them until the girl said she didn't like to work on days like this one. It was the bright sun that made you feel as though the sky was clear.

Even country people don't notice the sky when they get to the city. In the country, you see the sky, but in the city you have to look for it; it's so much higher in the city than in the country, even a small city like this one.

The girl stood on the steps in front of the granite block that was her office building. She sensed my reluctance to continue talking and didn't know how to change it, even as I sensed her desire to stay and talk.

Talking to me was an adventure. She had not seen me before she sat beside me on the bus; we had discussed how late busses are if the people are on time, and how on-time the busses are if people are late. When we met in the store at noon, perhaps it was the hand of fate giving us another opportunity.

So we talked about the weather. It was the way to keep it commonplace, but it was different from every day. For some unknown reason, people can't talk to just anyone. They have to know each other. The same things happen to everyone—

school, work, taxes, death—and only the accidents change the particulars of time and place. But we're afraid.

So I told her I had driven through the hills of Connecticut Sunday. Common experience. Everyone's ridden in a car. She told me about her brother's car that she couldn't drive because she had no license. The story didn't last long enough though, and the steps of the office building were in front of her.

I could have asked her to meet me again. I would have —maybe—if I hadnt' been thinking of a blonde. She was different from this girl.

The blonde was taller. She had blue eyes, too, but they didn't say anything. Sometimes when you walk by a woman on the street her eyes talk to you. Sometimes they say "hello" but not very often. Most of the time, they're so scared they jump right back at the store windows, screaming in a too sharp way, "I'm not that kind of a girl!" The blonde just looked, and said nothing.

I knew she was a woman. I couldn't see her. The coat she wore was heavy, full and long—long enough to hide the tops of her riding boots.

So I stopped talking to the girl on the steps of the office building and she went in to her office. It was time to go home. I walked, watching the people passing me. As I went by the people bunched at the bus stop, I looked at them. Girls from high school, housewives, displaced bookies, newsboys, all kinds of people.

Then behind the people, standing against the store was the blonde with the eyes and the riding boots. We looked at each other. She was different from the others.

I didn't speak to the blonde. But I knew that the blonde was true woman. How did I know that? Was it the

simplicity of her dress, or her eyes, or did I connect riding with animals and animals with simplicity? This was a problem requiring consideration, so I had a cup of coffee at the nearest grill, and considered.

I considered in silence, until a man sat beside me and said "hello."

"Hi." I had seen him many times, and we had talked vaguely of nothing. He interrupted again.

"How's it going?"

"Not bad."

"Pretty warm."

"Yeah."

WHAT FOR?

By Bernard Boudreau

Streaked with the blood of war's mad math,
Wreaked with the wrath of the aftermath,
This specimen of a sanguinary trap
Reveals to us the still existing gap,
Between a world of faith, hope, and charity
Not existing in this unwholesome disparity.
What for? They wonderingly ask,
"Have I of a cosmopolitan task
To meekly, modestly, wonder why
I should go out, perchance, to die?"
Surely the time has come to decide
From which position we need watch the tide.

Play Construction

By John C. Manning

I HAVE been requested by the publisher of *Squirt,* a quarterly devoted to the analysis of art structure, to transform the nebulous theories concerning plot construction into a definite science exhibiting inalienable principles. To facilitate an early completion of this monumental task, I have been assigned, as an aide, Mr. Luke Warm. Mr. Warm's name is synonymous with the literary movement of the "New View" philosophers.

I am a modern in both thought and deed; therefore my treatment of drama construction will follow a tangent of utmost practicality. There are none among the "New View" literateurs who would pen anything considered non-practical. Mr. Warm, whose inventive and imaginative genius has been invaluable to me, suggested that I contact the officials of the Soft Shoulder Construction Company. He explained that since practicality in viewpoint was to be the underlying tone of my work, I would be most justified in seeking the advice and judgment of practical men in the construction field. Mr. Luke Warm wisely distinguishes that there is no deviation between drama and highway construction. I immediately recognized the tremendous possibilities in Mr. Warm's suggestion. The erudite exchanges which follow this prologue are the spoken words which I have been fortunate enough to record. It is the dramatic account of my field method of observation in searching for the principles of a new science.

It is a gracious gesture to entitle the prosy morsel . . .

The Road to Mandalay

Persons in the Play:

The Author: Any modern historian with ability to understand.

Mr. Luke Warm: An invaluable aide to the author.

Mr. Austin Tatious: Owner of the Soft Shoulder Construction Company.

Mr. Vin Dictive: President of the Amalgamated Union No. 020.

Mr. Owen Dough: 13th Veep of the Ben Deezy Shovel Corp., Inc., Ltd.

Assorted misfits and other suitable imagery.

SCENE ONE

Setting: A tool shack on U. S. Route 888, Humphrey-Pill Falls.

Time: 10:30 (Starting time for the members of Amalgamated 020).

Luke Warm: I believe two weeks will be ample time, Mr. Tatious.

Austin Tatious: We do things quickly 'round here, Luke, if your friend's a "New Viewer" shouldn't take him very long either.

Author: Two weeks will be ample time, sir.

Austin Tatious: Plan your time, son, plan it. Now our planning department says this highway we're building will take us two weeks. I don't tolerate a second either way.

Luke Warm: I suppose you have the Amalgamated time figured in there, haven't you? Of course, silly of me to ask.

Austin Tatious: Take the question as a compliment, son. Yes, the union's time is figured. We're thorough 'round here, most thorough.

Author: I don't understand, Mr. Tatious, about the union time, I mean.

Austin Tatious: Their coffee time—15 minutes every half day shift.

Author: Of course, antiquated of me not to realize.

Luke Warm: Learn to observe Mr. Tatious, young man. Learn from experience.

Author: Some friends of mine are anxiously waiting for this new highway. Understand things are real bad in Welfareville.

Austin Tatious: Soft Shoulder Company from Welfareville to Subsidale—U. S. Route 888—what a boom in industry! Don't worry about your friends, son—take half an hour on this new road.

Luke Warm: What a noble thought, Mr. Tatious! Have something to say about that in your next article, son. I'm going to have more than that to say at the Philanthropic Burial's October meeting—you're the man for president, A. T.

Austin Tatious: Nice thought—sound judgment, Luke. By the way, young man, aren't you a member of the Writers' Guild?

Author: Yes, the Renee Lodge, Number 1596½; our leader is an intellectual midget.

Luke Warm: Proves size isn't everything. As I was saying about the October meeting, (*A loud whistle interrupts.*). What's that?

Austin Tatious: Coffee time whistle—a gift from the union to the company. Runs by steam, can be heard for five miles. Care to have a cup with the boys?

Luke Warm: Be pleased to—c'mon, son, we'll have a hot drink as guests of the union. Times have changed things —greater harmony in economic circles today—note that, might write it down.

SCENE TWO

Setting: Laborers' shack. (A Cape Cod cottage with television, red leather chairs, gas heat and indirect lighting.)

Time: Same day—11:15 a. m.

Vin Dictive: Good morning, good morning, Mr. Tatious, lovely day, lovely. Say good morning to Mr. Tatious, boys.

Laborers: Good morning, Mr. Tatious.

Austin Tatious (Big grin and fanning of air with right hand): Good morning.

Vin Dictive: Now, Austin, I've spoken to you before about those shovels. They're too heavy—one dram multiplied by a thousand shovels is a lot of extra weight.

Austin Tatious: I know, Vin, and . . .

Vin Dictive: And we're not getting paid for the extra load. We have our agreements, Austin—we have our agreements, don't we, boys?

Laborers: We have our agreements.

Vin Dictive: It's my responsibility to protect their rights.

Laborers: He protects our rights.

Austin Tatious: Certainly, Vin, certainly—Luke, call R. Bitration at the State House to get in touch with the company that's making those shovels—they're too heavy.

Author: That seems like such a minor thing. One dram doesn't make that much difference.

Vin Dictive: Are you anti-labor?

Austin Tatious: Hold on there, son! Are you stirring up trouble?

Luke Warm: The boys look angry.

Author: I didn't mean any offense. I was just thinking of the people who are in need of this road. A dispute would cause delay.

Austin Tatious: The road will go through.

Vin Dictive: There's nothing left to do.

Laborers: Sit down and have a chew.

Luke Warm: Include that in your treatment, son—unity of action—very essential, son.

(*Loud whistle.*)

Vin Dictive: Back to work, boys!

Laborers: Heigh ho, heigh ho! It's off to . . .

Author: Are you going to the tool shack with Mr. Tatious, Luke? Oh, all right, think I'll start writing.

Luke Warm: Good idea; you've got a lot to write.

Austin Tatious: Start early, finish fresh—that's my motto!

SCENE THREE

Setting: Tool shack, (where capital now hangs out).

Time: 3 days later.

Owen Dough: I've been summoned by Mr. R. Bitration concerning the weight of the Ben Deezy shovels. First time I've known of any dissatisfaction in 193 years of Ben Deezy good-will business.

Vin Dictive: Your shovel's too heavy, Mr. Dough. Entirely inadequate for union contract work.

Owen Dough: The Ben Deezy shovel is the finest in the world, made from Gary steel, Maine oak, painted in Springfield, digging good ole American sod—you've got some gall calling our product to task.

Austin Tatious: Shovel's too heavy, Owen.

Vin Dictive: Do you realize in the course of a day members of the Amalgamated will be lifting two and a half pounds of non-budget dirt? You have to take the sweat of the workman's brow into consideration, Mr. Dough.

Austin Tatious: He's right about the budget, Owen—can't pay 'em a penny more. My planning department's got

it all figured out by working days, shovelfuls, and coffee time. With a shovel that's too heavy, we'll finish too soon. It's unjust, Owen. Man's got a right to a full week's work.

Luke Warm: What dramatic eloquence! There's something to note in your article—play construction is nothing without it.

Author: Do you have your pen handy, Luke?

Austin Tatious: Will you two kindly stop interrupting the negotiations!

Luke Warm: Of course. I'm awfully sorry—excuse me, please. I feel as if I behaved badly. Kindly accept my humble . . .

Author: Mr. Warm, gentlemen, apologizes.

Vin Dictive: Let's get on with it, Dough.

Austin Tatious: Yes, Owen, what are you going to do about it?

Owen Dough: I suggest that since we cannot compromise, that we follow the Executive's advice. He has petitioned the Commission on Internal Roads, and I believe that they are deducting funds from the road sign grant to purchase new shovels.

Vin Dictive: You know, Dough, I'm a unionist. Has the Sign Painters' Union been notified of this cut in their budget? They have to work, too! They should have a big say in these dealings.

Austin Tatious: You know perfectly well, Owen, my brother-in-law owns the paint plant for these state jobs. No, Owen, I'd be unalterably opposed to any watering of the road sign budget.

Luke Warm: May I say something?

Austin Tatious: Well, out with it, Warm!

Luke Warm: I believe you are absolutely right, Mr. Tatious.

Austin Tatious: Well, thank you, Luke. (to Author) What?

Author: I wasn't going to say anything, except maybe about where the money for new shovels is going to come from.

Vin Dictive: That's none of your business! I'm reporting you to the Writers' Guild. I do believe you're a revolutionist.

Owen Dough: Now boys! It's only a matter of "where." Nothing to bother about there at all. Ben Deezy will even do business with this state on credit. Not a thing to worry about.

Vin Dictive: Well . . . I make a motion we discontinue these negotiations till Wednesday. The Amalgamated is having a benefit for new cars—why don't you drop by?—Tickets are $100 a saucer—we're catering whole roast lamb.

Owen Dough: Excellent. I'll attend. I love talking business on a full stomach.

Austin Tatious: Fine, fine. We of the owner class take a real interest in benefits. I can't belong to the Union, but I love roast lamb.

Author: May I attend too?

Vin Dictive: Oh, we're not exclusive at all! Do you have the money for a ticket?

Author: I'll borrow the money somewhere. I'd enjoy meeting your men socially.

Austin Tatious: I have a brother in the finance business, perhaps . . .

Luke Warm: He can get his hands on the money—there's plenty of it around.

Owen Dough: Certainly. There'll be thousands more in circulation when we figure out this new shovel deal.

Austin Tatious: That's the beauty of negotiations like ours—everybody benefits—Vin, your boys—workers in your fac-

tory, Owen—yes, everybody benefits; that's the beauty of it.

Author: I hope the people in Welfareville benefit.

Austin Tatious: Oh, they will; everybody benefits. The road will go through.

Owen Dough: With Ben Deezy shovels new.

Vin Dictive: With Amalgamated, too.

Luke Warm: There's nothing they can't do.

Vin Dictive: How about that new stretch we were discussing, A. T.? That 6-lane job from the Old Folks Home to the State Memorial Cemetery?

Owen Dough: How many shovels will you need?

Austin Tatious: I'll have everything figured out by the night of the benefit—give my planning department a little time; they're overworked now.

(*Loud Whistle*)

Vin Dictive: Whew! another day gone—we're really moving along.

Author: What time is it?

Luke Warm: Quitting time—2:30!

SCENE FOUR

Setting: Union shack, (minus members and all comforts).

Time: Two years later.

Author: I must thank you, Mr. Warm, for your invaluable aid in my work. I believe I now have the ideal in drama construction measured by an exact science.

Luke Warm: Oh, don't thank me! You really should thank Mr. Tatious, Mr. Dictive and Mr. Dough. They are the ones who supplied the body to your new theory, aren't they?

Author: Yes, I certainly am indebted to them—the beginning is always difficult.

Luke Warm: It's easily understandable why they're leaders in their respective fields. Now you take Vin Dictive there . . .

Author: He's the new president of the Federated Union of Unions and Guilds now, isn't he?

Luke Warm: Yes, he and Austin Tatious, you remember him, are again leading the fight to harmonize labor and capital interests. The presidency of the Philanthropic Burial Society exerts tremendous influence, you know.

Author: Is it true that the society is anti-trust, -capital, and -insurance?

Luke Warm: Well, Austin never does compromise. Made him what he is today.

Author: And Mr. Dough, a Federal official in the Tests and Weights Bureau?—changing the entire system to avoirdupois weight—a pioneer.

Luke Warm: Yes, success has crowned the efforts of each of them—achievement their slide rule, boundless in powers. My only hope is that your publication will be another milestone in the "New View" chronology.

(*A pale, worn figure enters the room; his drab clothes are pocked with burrs, his hands and face are gaily ornamented with poison ivy.*)

Stranger: I'm two years out of Welfareville. This is the road to Subsidale, isn't it?

Luke Warm: This is it, friend, U. S. 888—you'll be in town in 15 minutes.

Stranger: Thank you; you've been very helpful.

Luke Warm: Don't thank me in particular, friend. Thank the whole spirit of the "New View" movement. Remember to vote "New View" in elections, friend.

Stranger: Oh! I will. Don't worry about that—I know what side my bread's buttered on.

(*Exeunt all*)

. . . And so, dear readers, having experienced the miracles which modern construction has performed, I began the writing of my analysis. I've been working on it now for seven years, and I intend to have it finished very soon. When it is completed, it will encompass the whole spectrum of philosophy, science and economics, as well as the new foundation of drama construction. I assume that it will be used as a bible in that particular field for generations upon eons. If the reader surmises that I am taking too much for granted, may I make it plainly understood that my sources have been the best possible ones offered by my age. The authorities who have assisted me, are men whose integrity and ability are beyond doubt or question. They are men worthy of imitation; their example an inspiration to a young aspiring author like myself.

The Messrs. Dictive, Tatious, Warm and Dough are practical living examples of what character men should play in construction. Their burning ambitions, fired by a common love of humanity, are the tones, and the only valid ones, which should govern the atmosphere of the Thespian orbit. They are living drama.

And if, my learned ones, you are vitally interested in learning how climax and solution are resolved, drop in at my office. I am located half way between the completed portion of U. S. 888 and Welfareville. It's the second grove of pine trees to the right after you pass the mud creek. There you will find me, sitting on the horns of a dilemma, with no solution in sight—if you've been observant, you will notice there's no road in view either.

All Alone

By M. Howard Gluckman

I GUESS there are as many reasons why people bet on horse races as there are people who bet. Of course, you know as well as I do that the only legitimate reason for pari-mutuel speculation is for the preservation and advancement of the breed. The breed to be preserved and advanced was supposed to be equine but in the passing of time the term was corrupted to such an extent that today it applies mostly to the speculators—if they win—or if they lose, to their bookies.

I don't want to sound too harsh when talking about this subject, but when the season comes around and I meet individuals who spend all of their time and all of their tangible assets for the sole object of "improving the breed," and hear them boast that they have never been to a horse race or are unable to distinguish an Arabian from a quarter horse, I think you can see that I have no alternative.

When the fall racing season opens there is a certain atmosphere created, which, as atmospheres go, is akin to the Thanksgiving atmosphere or a Christmas atmosphere or an Easter atmosphere. Because each season creates a certain high spirit, a sort of quickening of the hearts of the celebrants, and the color of excitement, and an expectation of good things to come, this atmosphere permeates all fibers of the population either actively or passively, and wherever crowds gather it comes to life in the form of anecdotes, stories, and reminiscenses; each tale being as individual as the teller, yet having, somehow, a certain ring of familiarity. You try to recall where you might have heard that story before—but you never do.

Well, my friends, I have such a story. It's not about some sort of Damon Runyonish character such as Harry the Horse, Sorrowful Jones, or Benny the Book. It's about an average American husband, Henry Hashenslinger, who possibly escapes being too average by being a little henpecked.

At one time, when he was single, Henry, or Heshie as some of his friends called him, had a good paying job, but was quite an improver of the breed. Henry didn't improve the whole breed, exactly, but just one of the species, a bookie by the name of Sam Gatz. In fact, Harry, and a hundred other Harrys have improved Sam Gatz to such an extent that now Sam has found it unnecessary to book for a living but at the age of forty-two is retired to the board room of a Florida brokerage firm where he leisurely spends his time clipping coupons and occasionally raking the gravy off the fluctuating stocks. Since the board room of a brokerage firm is similar in most way to a book parlor—except that the freight handled here comes in on a ticker-tape and is called A, T, & T, and Bell & How instead of *Bugle Boy* or *Spit Luck*—Sam is very much at home and doesn't at all mind going into retirement. But to get back to my story.

Well, as I was saying, about this time Heshie was pouring about fifty or sixty percent of his salary into Sam's pocket. This state of affairs continued until he fell in love with a girl by the name of Alice Bonwitte who was a buyer for a local department store. Henry met her at a Christmas party that the department store threw and right away he wanted to marry her. But first of all he didn't have any money to get married on, and secondly she wouldn't marry him because he didn't have any money. Alice didn't tell Henry this but she had a sock-full of money in the bank. This money was supposed to be a nest egg for her old age—which was galloping close behind her.

Finally, despite his hunches, his systems, and all the contortions of black magic that a horse-player goes through before dropping a bet, Henry did manage to win a race. The nag he bet on was called *Golden Flea* and it was a long shot—at three hundred and four to one. Everybody except Harry knew why the odds were so high. It seems that when the nag was shipped to the East from California, where it hadn't come into the money once, it had fallen out of a speeding boxcar and was lost. Three weeks later the owners had found it at a bull ring in Mexico City where every Sunday afternoon it was used to drag the dead bulls out of the arena. But to get back to my story.

Well, Henry bet twenty dollars on that race and cleaned up over six thousand dollars. When Sam Gatz saw the turning of the worm—at six-thousand bucks a twist—he went into retirement.

Alice married Henry right away, but before she did she made Henry promise that he would never bet again. He agreed.

In the next few years, the Hashenslinger family prospered. Henry kept his promise and never laid a bet—except on paper where he was forty-five thousand dollars behind. Alice gave him three healthy children, a boy and two girls. Henry was now vice-president of his firm but his old desire to bet live money on a horse never left him. In time, Alice noticed it. Then one year, as a sort of Christmas present, Alice gave Henry permission to spend four dollars once a week on the horses—on the presumption that he must go to the track to bet.

Harry was so happy that he was practically in tears. And so, all that next season, as soon as the snow cleared, and

the track opened, Henry went out to the races. Every afternoon you could see him there, dressed in tweeds with a green sheet in hand and binoculars slung over his shoulder, alert to everything. It was the first time he had ever been to a track in his life, and he loved it. There was only one catch. Henry had only four dollars to spend. Since it cost a dollar twenty for admission and he usually had a sandwich and a bottle of beer in the club house, he only had two dollars left to bet with —enough for only one race. So he usually spent his time betting on paper or went down by the stables.

As the summer months waned and the leaves began to turn, Henry was getting to be a fair judge of horseflesh. He looked important dressed in his sport clothes, and when he was ahead ten or fifteen dollars, he sat in the boxes or the top deck. Because he usually bet on one race people began to point him out as a shrewd gambler, and frequently came to him for advice. By the middle of October, Henry was known by everyone; from the obscurest stable boy to the track stewards. The track touts called him One-Bet-Henry but that never got around. Henry was sure in his element.

Then the big day came. It was a day that people dream about or write about in fantasies. It was a sort of "death takes a holiday."

It was a bright crisp Saturday morning in November and Henry, feeling lazy, stayed in bed until 10 a. m. Then he got up, washed, dressed, and had breakfast. At about eleven-thirty when he was leaving for the track his wife reminded him—as she always did—"Don't forget, Henry, you only lose four bucks and no more." "Yes dear," he answered. Henry thought to himself, "She always says lose, and never gives me the credit that sometimes I win." But he just shrugged his shoulders and walked out.

All Alone

Henry picked up three of his buddies on the way and the four of them drove out to the track. They got there with just enough time to play the daily double. Henry didn't play the first race because of his limited reserves so his three pals did and left him alone in the box. He was sitting there reading his green sheet when he noticed a horse called *All Alone*. He quickly looked up on the board and saw that the odds were 20 to 1. Those odds were just enough to give Henry an appetite. He also remembered that he still had six dollars of winnings from three weeks ago. Since a hunch doesn't come all the time, Henry went to the two-dollar window and bet the six dollars. Now he could lose and still have two dollars to bet with the rest of the afternoon. When he came back to the box with his three tickets his friends were already there. Ashamed to have made such a foolish bet he put the tickets in his pocket and looked unconcerned over the whole matter. They asked him where he had been and he said he had stepped out to greet a friend. Nothing more was said. His friends had bet respectively on *Broken Twig, Allscab,* and *Smellbound*. The horses were now at the post and the race was about to begin.

Henry opened his binocular case and focused the glasses. The bell rang and the race was on—except for *All Alone,* who merely stumbled out of the gate. A tear rolled down Harry's cheek. Then *All Alone* picked up speed and in the stretch was neck and neck with the last horse. Harry got up and said he was going for some beer. But *All Alone* refused to give up and gained ground every second. Henry bought his beer and was drinking it when the horses were around the third corner. *All Alone* was running third. Henry tilted the bottle and took a swallow, oblivious to the screaming of the crowd and the position of his horse. The race ended with

All Alone the winner. Henry was just about to take another swallow when he heard the announcement. In astonishment he dropped the bottle. Then gathering his wits he fished in his pocket for the tickets and went to collect.

With the 160 dollars in his hands he ran out to tell his friends. The four of them, realizing that today Heshie was hot, nervously picked the second race for him. They asked him all kinds of questions, from what he had had for breakfast to the size of his wife's shoes, for a clue. Finally they all agreed upon *Apocalypse* for Henry. No one was to bet on the horse except Henry and he alone must go or otherwise it would break the spell. With only seconds to spare Henry rushed up to the window and got in line. Just before his turn came up someone pushed him and in the shuffle he forgot the name of the horse. Because there wasn't any time to look back on the forms, Henry bet on the same horse that the man in front of him did, *Iron Face*. Broken-hearted he made his way back through the crowd. The race started. When he got to his box he didn't have the stomach to tell his friends that he had bet on a different horse. When he looked at the board and saw that the odds were 85 to 1, against *Iron Face,* Henry almost fainted. A few moments later the race was over. To the dismay of Henry's friends, *Apolcalypse* lost. The winner was *Iron Face*. When Henry told them what had happened they were stunned. Henry quickly rushed up to the window to collect a total which was almost $14,000. His three friends begged him to quit and to go home. Henry, thinking that his day had come, refused. Not only would he stay but he would bet all his winnings on all the races.

The next five races were a nightmare of prediction. Henry remained firm and cool but his friends were close to a nervous breakdown. Their clothes were in shreds and their

hands were smudged black from the ink of the racing forms in which they were standing knee deep. In the short space of two hours, during which the five races were run, the three buddies by sheer force of memory had memorized to the minutest detail every fact possible, relevant or not, about the horses running that afternoon and by a miracle they won every race. The winnings now totaled $255,000 and it was the last race. Henry was going to bet.

The three men steeled themselves for the last supreme effort. With this last magnificent *tour de force* of prediction, this last test of prophecy, they would have to lose their identity as men and become only minds—three automatic areas of gray matter.

As each man went into a stupor of concentration the screaming crowd around them dissolved into silence. The daylight became intense and in the twinkling of an eye they left the world of sense, and large columns of figures appeared before their minds. Possibility after possibility, proportion and combination were mentally analyzed, checked and rechecked. One by one each horse was eliminated until there remained but one magnificent stallion. There could be no error. The horse was *Slobberlip IV*. This was it. They reentered the world of sense and conveyed their choice to Henry. Nothing remained but for Henry to make the bet of $255,000 on *Slobberlip*.

The foursome, three minds and one bettor, advanced to the hundred-dollar window and bought 2,550 tickets on *Slobberlip IV*. The die was cast.

Henry and his friends doggedly walked back towards their box. They sat down with the weariness of an athlete who had run a great race. They saw up on the board the odds

tumble on *Slobberlip* because of their heavy betting. The odds fell from 10 to 1, 7 to 5, and then 6 to 5. Had the race been delayed another moment the betting would have forced the odds to even money on *Slobberlip.*

The bell rang and as if in a trance the four men rose. The horses pounded down the track in front of the grandstand and swept around the corner into the back stretch. Of the four standing men standing not a muscle twitched, not an eyelash flickered. Even a cigarette one of them was smoking went out. The horses rounded the last post and headed for home. Deep in the herd was *Slobberlip IV*. The winner of the eighth race that day was a horse called *Mother's Prayer*.

The men could find no voice at all. When Henry reached his house he had gained some of his strength back and was beginning to mutter. His wife was in the kitchen preparing supper. When he came in she saw the dejected look on his face and as a consolation, stopped supper, and said, "Did you lose the four bucks, Henry?" Henry was on the way upstairs. He turned around to face her.

"Yeah," he said.

The Return of Victor Thurber

By Vincent C. Trofi

FRIDAY, today was the day. He woke up with that thought. He knew what he was going to do, but just why, for what reason, he didn't know. Maybe because everything was the same, nothing was new or different. He was still Victor Thurber and he still lived alone in that rather elegant apartment on the East Side. The apartment was the same. The book compartment over the bed, the lamp, the *Renoir* over the mantle, and the rug beneath his slippered feet were all the same. The old walnut veneer desk in the other room, the shower, the bath mat, the feeling of the heavy towel against his wet body, and now the shaving brush and the razor. Everything was the same. His face, too, there in the mirror. The rough face that showed no rest. The face that showed nothing. It was the same. The thinning grey hair, the shoulders, the arms, they were still the same and they all belonged to Victor Thurber and *he* was Victor Thurber.

But today, this morning, was what was different. The world wasn't the same. Everything that wasn't his had changed. Before, the world was something constant, a thing subordinate and incurably corrupt and evil. It was different now, he thought, as he finished shaving with sure, reliable strokes.

When he was done, he cautiously dried the razor, slipped the blade into a silver cased portable strop and carefully placed it in the cabinet. It was part of the past; the dead past that would come alive today. As he dressed very deliber-

ately he thought of this. The razor was the only thing he retained from the past that had abruptly changed today. Maybe it was the razor and the years it represented that was the reason for *today,* he thought. But no, that couldn't be. He had read and heard about men who did what he was going to do, some in just the same circumstances. However, no one ever did it so abruptly. There was some deliberation, some force, someone there to show the way. He had never heard of anyone just waking up one morning, with no counsel, just proceeding from an apparently long starved and neglected desire that he most certainly never allowed to become manifest, and do what he was going to do. He began to worry now. Maybe it wasn't real. Maybe he couldn't go through with it. But oh, how he wanted to go through with it. However, it was this suddenness about it that continued to trouble him.

Victor Thurber was now dressed. He took his grey hat from the shelf in the wardrobe; and as he placed it on his head, with nervous, shaking hands before the dresser mirror he noticed that small crystals of perspiration that quivered like little gelatin dancers had begun to gather on his forehead. His heart was beating hard and his throat was dry. He was ready and he was afraid. Before he left the bedroom he instinctively went to the bed and slipped his hand under the pillow. It wasn't there, the small black leather case with the broken zipper. Of course it wasn't there, Victor Thurber thought as he slumped against the wall. That too, like the razor, was part of the past. But the leather case and all that it stood for had slipped out of his life; the razor remained, but not in the way it did then. Things had certainly changed since he first began to use it a long time ago when he was twenty. No, the leather case with the broken zipper wasn't under his pillow. It hadn't

been there for twenty-two years. That he thought it would be there somehow gladdened him.

He left the apartment at 7:15. He walked resolutely down the hall and then down two flights of heavily carpeted stairs. Outside it looked as if it were about to rain. As he walked to the garage he thought how very different this morning was. He was frightened and nervous, but so eager.

He eased the car out of the garage and bounced softly toward the city. He didn't turn on the radio. The sick feeling in his stomach now invaded his arms and legs. His hands were frozen to the wheel. But his determination, for the moment, didn't subside. It was still there and he was glad of that.

He began to drive faster and as he did his heart beat harder. He started to breathe heavily. He wanted to be there at 7:45. When he stopped for a red light near his destination, the idea that he shouldn't go in—that it wasn't to be done, today or even at all, entered his mind again, but more vehemently than before so that he gave the thought serious consideration.

The light changed and Victor Thurber continued to drive toward the place. As he came nearer to it he stepped down harder on the accelerator. He was going to pass it and drive on and on and not look back. As he passed the place, however, with the same abruptness that he displaced there in his bedroom when he groped under the pillow for the black leather case, he brought his right thumb to his forehead as he did many years ago. Just then the tears he didn't expect to come flowed slowly down his face. He turned the car about suddenly and parked near the place.

The large doors were open and he went in.

Like a mute he stood in the entrance for a few minutes. He removed his hat and moved slowly to one side to allow the

other people to enter. He felt weak, as if he were going to collapse. With those tired eyes he looked about. It was the same. The columns, the windows with their colors and stories, the statues, the candles, the brightness and the darkness, the beauty, and the Truth, and the Love, and the Hope—they were still there in that place. They were the same. They had not changed, though he had.

He moved slowly along the wall and then his heart stopped when he placed his hand on the back pew as he had done many times many years ago. *His* pew he thought; and again he became aware of the dry throat, the pain in the eyes, the tears in the face.

He sat in the pew lonely, empty and frightened; but as yet eager. But the loneliness and the emptiness vanished when the great Love was borne, there, in the monstrance onto the altar of blazing light at the far end of the church. He sank to his knees as also did the First Friday devotees assembled there. He looked at his Love and he was no longer frightened and uncertain. The reason why he was here was no longer on his mind. He *was* here and so was His Love and his love and that was the reason why.

Victor Thurber was home again. He had come home after twenty-two years. And when he thought of those years away from Home and the emptiness, he rejoiced more in his homecoming because now he would know as before and hope as before and love as before. And also, again, under his pillow in that apartment that seemed so far away, there would be a black leather case, eventually with a broken zipper, that housed the round black beads that told the story of his long abandoned Love.

Folio

By Henry Griffin

Beat on battered drums a crude tattoo
And the echoes screaming will reply
Savage prophecies of sea and sky
To a lost and foredoomed Pequod crew.

Ahab on his quarter-deck descries
Death in cruising schools of spuming foam,
Yet through seas he lurches, far from home
Bent upon the blood of his despised.

Lay demented visions of revenge
To the packet of a human pyre,
Then will flames streak up, careening higher,
Then will crazed destruction snare its ends.

Sharp harpoons flash sunlight in the air,
Flailing fins thrash men and ships to wreck,
Broken lie the Pequod's hull and deck:
Battle ends but little trace is there.

Fling the smashed debris to sucking slime,
Cast adrift the drowned and dead remains,
Marvel then while all that appertains
To this voyage perishes, too, in Time.

Ripe Limes Hung Crinkled

By Henry Griffin

Ripe limes hung crinkled in their coats of frost
When night began its murdering ascent
Into the hugeness of the firmament
With brutal thrusts of deepening hues that crossed
And blotted with a blackish dye those lost
Uncaptured sky-scenes where the sun had blent
The rainbow on a cloudbank 'ere it bent
Beneath the bulge of night's protruding force.
They hung there for a time in solitude
On boughs which sagged beneath the weight of snow
In steepening twilight's mutely pensive mood,
And then, bestirred, they wept a soft and low
Lament of tinkling ice that was imbued
With notes more poignant than the heart can know.

The Commuters

By M. Howard Gluckman

IT was mid-September, the time when most colleges were starting their fall semesters. On the platforms and waiting areas of the many railroad stations throughout the country groups of students and their luggage could be seen awaiting trains to take them to their various colleges and universities. In the metropolitan City of New York at the Pennsylvania Station the effect was more than noticeable. Here trains left hourly for the great multitude of education plants which tend to become more numerous than gasoline stations in upper New England.

The buzz of voices was high pitched and excited. The meeting of old friends. The introduction to new ones. The rapid relating of the past summer's experiences, the laughter, the brightness, and the smiles, as the students filled and took over the station. All this activity was usually ended with a series of shrieks and a grab for luggage when one of the huge iron gates opened and the passengers were allowed to go down the stairs to the awaiting train.

In the waiting area this usually left a vacuum where a lone person would be easily picked out. On this specific day there was a person noticed crossing the void of the station. He made his way immediately to one of the many ticket booths along the far wall, set his luggage down and purchased a ticket to a large, well-known New England city. He inquired the time of the departure of his train and then returned to his luggage.

The train wouldn't leave for forty minutes yet so there was time for a smoke. Besides he had promised to meet someone here and without a doubt she would be late. So he upended the largest bag near the station wall, pulled out a cigarette and sat back to smoke.

The smoke drifted up from his fingers and curled in front of his eyes. Slouched against the wall in bow tie and tweeds he had the look and the burn of average college youth —to get started in life; to get the feel of real money between his fingers; to be self-sufficient; to tell the world to go to blazes! When there was war he fought,—hell, what did a kid of eighteen know. But in those three years of war the kid of eighteen became a man and now he was trying to become a kid again. He dressed like one, *crewed* his hair like one, and swore like one. Yet when he added it all up he knew he wasn't one. A kid tries to imitate a man. Now how could he, a man, try to imitate a kid, who is all the while trying to imitate a man. With this thought he chuckled to himself, dropped his cigarette on the marble floor and stepped on it. He looked at his watch and swore softly, "What's keeping that girl?" Then he went back to the ticket booth and bought her ticket and then returned to his bags. This time he didn't park, but picked them up and made his way to one of the large iron gates. He dropped them at his feet and anxiously began to look for her. He scanned the various small entrances and the huge marble staircase, but to no avail.

As the departure time grew very near a crowd gathered and milled about the gate. He was closed in on every side by people of all descriptions. He kept shifting his attention to study each type. Behind him were a group of co-eds about the age of the girl he was waiting for. Their talk rattled like a loose window. Two conversations were going at once and

each girl eagerly awaited her turn to cut in. No one heard what the other said because she was so eager to talk. They were oblivious to the people around them and proved it by screaming with joy when "Fluff" came running up as fast as her high heels would carry her. "Where did you go this summer?" "How is Hank?" "Who are you rooming with this term?" No one listened to her answers. It was all part of a plan started before the reckoning of time, carefully preserved and handed down from generation to generation. He looked at them and thought of his girl and wondered what he ever saw in her.

It was moments before train time. In a last glance his eyes swept the floor. Then above the hubub of the crowd he heard himself being paged. "Mr. David Stone, Mr. David Stone. Mr. David Stone." Quickly he pushed himself past some bystanders and walked toward the page.

"I'm Dave Stone."

"There's a call waiting for you, sir, in booth number 10."

"Thanks," he said and dropped a quarter in the outstretched hand. He ran to the booth and lifted the receiver.

"Hello," he said.

"Hello, Dave darling, is that you?"

He could hardly hear her. He jammed himself into the booth and slammed the door. The light went on and a little fan started whirring.

"Nancy, where are you? The train leaves in three minutes."

He glanced over toward the gate. It was now open and the crowd had gone down to the train. His bags standing there looked forlornly naked.

"Well, Dave darling, I haven't been able to get everything packed yet so Daddy will have to take me to get a later

train. I wanted awfully to go back with you but I guess I got all crossed up. I'm terribly sorry."

"The train is going to leave any second now, Nancy, I'll call you from school." He hung up.

Dodging some and bumping others he raced across the huge waiting room, grabbed his luggage at the gate and ran down the stairs to his train and, with only moments to spare, jumped on the last platform. Without waiting to catch his breath, he made his way through the train to find a seat. He pushed past co-eds who had found seats and were standing in the narrow aisles talking to nearby friends. The coaches were hot and he was perspiring heavily under his topcoat. He finally found a seat by the window. He threw his bags onto the overhead racks, took off his topcoat, folded it and put it on top of the bags. Then he opened his jacket and sat down.

A few moments later three girls came through and occupied the remaining seats around him. They went through the same settling process he did. But they had no intention of quieting down. There was too much to talk about. He knew that during the trip he would get a razor sharp account of their "dearest" girl friends and "cutest beaux." He considered this incessant chatter like a breeze from an electric fan without a switch—possibly enjoyable but impossible to turn off.

The train started imperceptibly and glided along the tunnel under 5th Avenue. About twenty minutes later the conductor came along to collect tickets. Dave handed him his ticket to be punched and also Nancy's ticket for a refund. Then he dropped his chair back and fell asleep.

He awoke 15 minutes before the train pulled into the station. The three graces were gone with the rest of the harem. He pulled his gear down and when the train stopped he

stepped down into the station and started walking toward the street. At the door was a line of cabs. He spotted two of his classmates sharing a cab and joined them.

When he got to his room in the dorm the door was open. His roommate had arrived first and was just finishing unpacking.

"Hi! Dave, welcome home."

"Hello, Al, glad to be back."

Dave looked around and saw that nothing had changed since last year except that the plaster had peeled more.

"What train did you take?" Dave said as he offered Al a cigarette and took one for himself.

"I didn't take a train, my old man drove me down."

Dave took out a lighter, lit both cigarettes and began to unpack.

"When you finish, Dave," said Al, "I have a pinch bottle of Haig and Haig. We can have a few shots before turning in."

"Sounds great but since when have you gone capitalistic? I remember when we used to celebrate with a dollar bottle of Dago Red."

"Capitalist nothing. My mother gave me ten bucks as a going away present and I figured that there's nothing like Scotch to make me feel gone."

Dave smiled and said, "Figures."

Late that night when they were sitting on Dave's bed in pajamas, smoking and passing the pinch, Al came around to asking about Nancy.

"Say, Dave, how's that gal of yours, Nancy?"

"I don't know. I was supposed to meet her on the train in but she was too late to make it."

"The way you were moaning over her last year," said Al smilingly, "I figured you'd have married her by now."

"Nope," said Dave taking the bottle, "I had too much work this summer and only saw her on week-ends at the beach —except once when she came in during the week. But what are you getting at? She's too young."

"What, Nancy," said Al swallowing another shot, "she's over eighteen and you're twenty-four. Either you marry the gal or throw her to the pack, that's what I always say. During the depression, my old man was telling me, he remembers people celebrating their tenth year being engaged. And when he married my mother she was only nineteen."

"For Pete's sake, Al, let me alone! I don't want you or anyone else shotgunning me into it. Besides I'm beat. Let's hit the sack."

They screwed the cap on the bottle and Al, dizzy from the whiskey, weaved over toward the desk to turn off the lamp. He fumbled for the switch. "Where's the button, Dave?"

"How should I know. You can sew it on in the morning. Knock off the light and let's go to sleep."

"That's what I'm talking about. I can't find the button to the lamp."

"Pull out the plug!".

Enraged, Al took off his slipper and smashed the bulb.

"What did you do that for?"

"I couldn't find the plug either."

"O. K., come here and help me open the window."

Al stumbled back toward the window wearing only one slipper. Both boys struggled with the jammed window until it flew open.

Then Al took off his other slipper and got into bed. But Dave stood at the open window looking out over the darkened campus, thinking about nothing in particular.

"You know, Dave," said Al sleepily, "I like Nancy. She's a good kid. You ought to marry her."

Now Dave knew what he was thinking about.

"Ya Al! Sure, tomorrow."

And he turned in.

Dave got up about nine the next morning. Registration was at ten and he had to buy books. Class started the next day. He washed, dressed and went down to the cafeteria for coffee. Over toast and coffee he chewed over the past summer's activities with several of his friends. The rest of day passed slowly.

That night Dave borrowed a car and drove the seventy miles to where Nancy was at school. He pulled up to her sorority house and called for her. She finally came down looking very much like one of the three graces who had sat next to Dave on the train. He greeted her and ushered her out to the car. They drove to the edge of the campus and parked. Nancy immediately turned around expectantly. Dave recognized the motion and smiled. "I didn't come seventy miles for that."

Nancy was sharply taken back. "Since when?"

"Since tonight."

She halted for a moment and said, "Well, no one asked you to come at all."

Dave thought to himself that here were the makings of a great fight and then said, "O. K. I'm sorry. But I've got a lot on my mind to talk about."

"Go ahead and talk. No one's stopping you."

"I think I ought to patch up relations first though."

He leaned over to kiss her, but she pulled away. The car was small and she wouldn't go far.

"I thought you wanted to talk?" she said.

"Later."

"Now."

"Shut up."

A few minutes after, Dave sat back in the seat and pulled out a handkerchief to wipe off some smeared lipstick. But Nancy handed him a tissue instead.

"Here, use this."

Then he opened a fresh pack of cigarettes and offered her one. She nodded and took one. Then he took one and put the pack away. She pushed in the car lighter and lit first his cigarette, then hers. They sat silent for a while until Dave collected his thoughts.

"Oh Nancy, did you ever think of us getting married?"

Of course."

Still a little unsure of himself he said eagerly, "You have? When?"

"After we were going together a few months."

"Did you talk to anyone else about this?"

"Yes, to my mother—and my father."

Dave was amazed. All along he considered the idea of marriage solely his own. But he contained himself while he asked, "And what did they say?"

"My mother said you were a 'nice boy'—and my father didn't say anything—"

Surprised with such favorable results he said, "That's great. Why didn't you tell me before?"

"Simply because you never asked me."

Very alert and eager he said, "Well I'm asking you now! . . . I've saved most of the money from this summer and I can get my tuition money back . . . We can get married immediately." Then as an added thought, "The way things are today it wouldn't be too hard for me to get a job."

Nancy was taken aback with the suddenness of the whole situation and remained intensely silent.

"For Pete's sake, Nan, say something—anything."

"I don't know, Dave, the whole thing sounds so crazy. I have to think about it; we have to talk about it more. People just don't up and marry."

Dave listened to her carefully and then when she had finished talking he remained silent for quite some time. Finally he said, "Nan, I can't leave tonight until I at least know one way or the other. Do you want to marry me or not?"

"Of course I do . . . but we just can't be married immediately. There's too much to do first. Besides, I want a big wedding and you have to finish school."

"But you still want to marry me?" he said.

"Yes."

"And we can consider ourselves engaged?"

"Yes."

Dave was so happy he didn't know what to do. Nan leaned over and kissed him.

"Oh! Dave, I'm so happy!"

He looked at his watch and said, "It's late, you have to get back." He started the car and put his arm around her. As the car moved forward he steered and she shifted. In a few moments they were back and then she was gone.

On the road back he began to pick up speed until the car was screaming along at 70 miles per hour. When he shot past a crossroad close to 80, a state trooper pulled out and gave chase. When Dave heard the siren he slowed down and came to a stop. A few moments later the trooper pulled up and said, "You out to kill someone special or just anyone who comes along?"

"No officer," said Dave, "I didn't realize I was going so fast. I guess I was just feeling good."

"Have you been drinking?"

"Me? No, I never touch the stuff. I'm going to get married."

"When?"

"Next June."

"O. K., wise guy, that's enough, let me see your driver's license."

Dave didn't say any more but gave him his license and then pulled out a cigarette for a smoke. The trooper went to the rear of the car and wrote him up. Then he came back and handed him a ticket and said, "I suppose, like the rest of them, you'll be commuting between the colleges regularly? The next time I don't want to see either you or your buddies traveling this road any faster than 45. Get it!"

"Yes sir," Dave said.

Then as the cop turned around and drove away Dave looked at the ticket. Across the face was written: "Remember, Junior, no faster than 45 mph."

A Song of Sadness

By Henry Griffin

When rivers trickled blood,
And blood ran out to sea,
And swelled into a flood,
You whispered, "Come to me."

When kingdoms shook and fell
To reels of panoply,
I lingered in the spell
Of you and "Come to me."

When histories recalled
To me the undead past,
I hurried from them all
And vanished from its clasp.

And sped with headlong haste
By house and field and tree
In searching for your face
Which beckoned once to me.

And then I reached the place
Whereat we crossed our ways,
But there alone the waste
Of earth returned my gaze.

There silence stood unbent
By cries that came stillborn
To lips that yearned but spent
Themselves in murmuring, "Gone."

Now fear is wrung from me
In tears of wild remorse
Restained in misery—
I know that you are lost.

Yet streams still trickle blood,
And blood still runs to sea,
And somewhere in the flood
Itself I cry, "O come to me."

An Impression

By Henry Griffin

The wind is sharper now, and now the leaves
Splash bronze-like in the dying light;
A sea of leaves is rolling through the dusk
Toward the dark port oblivion,
Where desolation stalks its poor prey
And the winds shriek in mockery to watch
The leafy spindrift's vortex
Blown high above kaleidescopic waters,
    Racing in flight.
        Racing.
  I twist a sinking eye away
  To focus it on yesterday.