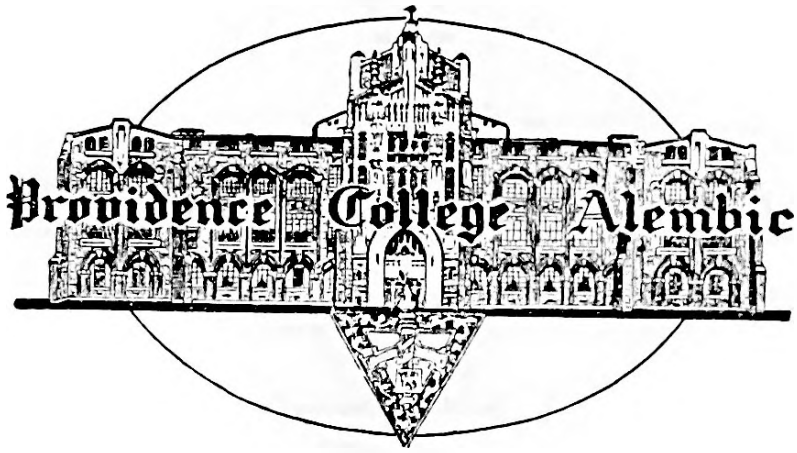
THE ALEMBIC

VE RI TA S

APRIL, 1952

THE ALEMBIC



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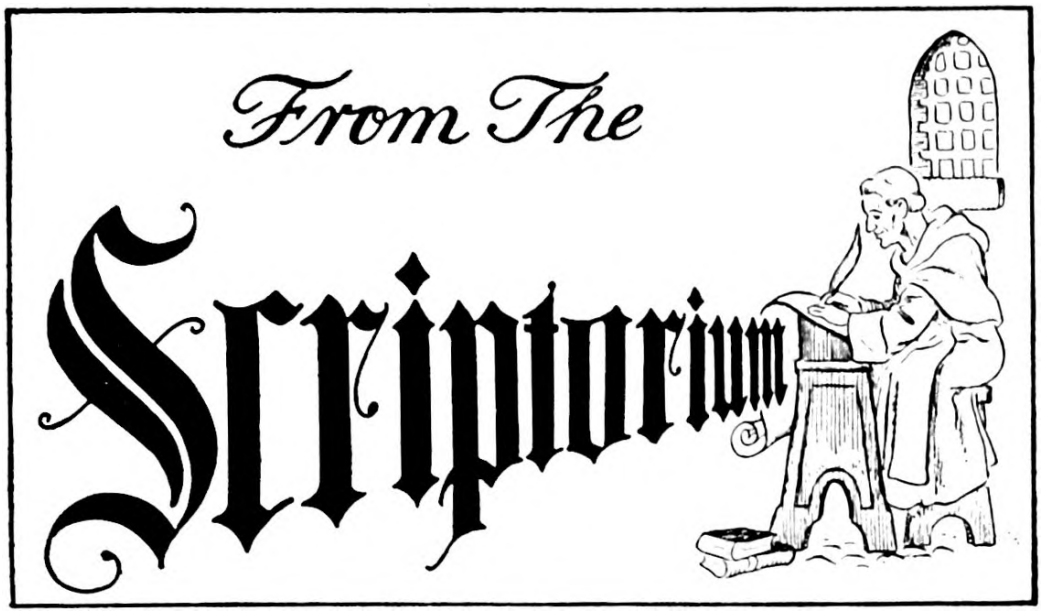

I was approached recently by a local savant who, quite seriously of course, told me that the most telling criticism he could advance in regard to the ALEMBIC was based upon the poor quality of paper upon which it is printed. Since this gentleman's opinion is quite well considered in critical circles, the reader may well believe that I was somewhat taken back by his statement. I was also quite wary, for I was being attacked from a completely new quarter. Needless to say, my fears were more than allayed when he went on to tell me about his experiment.

It seems (he stated), that the pages, when torn from an ALEMBIC and twisted into tapers, are practically useless for starting fires in a hearth. He said (and I can't dispute him, because he is a thorough critic and undoubtedly did it) that he had conducted an experiment in which he exposed similarly twisted pages from several college publications to a flame to determine precisely which contained the greatest I.P. (Inflammable Potential). The results of this experiment, I readily recognized, are of importance to all the readers of these publications and I would be the last to keep them ignorant of them. In strict justice, you must agree, they demand publication.

The subjects of the experiment were six local college publications which he chose primarily for their immediate accessibility and general likeness. My scientific informant has asked, and I have agreed, that the names of those publications, other than the *Cowl* and ALEMBIC be withheld, since neither of us wish to detract from their fame. Further, I am quite well assured that the body of the experiment was

conducted under the most objective circumstances and that the conclusions derived thereby are unassailable.

In order to place the entire procedure upon a firm, empirical foundation, my inquirer first tested a local non-collegiate newspaper. Upon thrusting it at the (constant) flame, he found that it flared up almost immediately, burning rapidly back to the hand that held it, indeed, singeing him before he dropped it. He wishes to note that in using this particular grade faggot, one should first take the precaution of having a large quantity of water nearby with which to counteract this singular, fierce tendency.

He next, in deference to his allegiance, applied the ALEMBIC to the flame. It was here, he ruefully admits, that he first realized the need, indeed the most necessary need, for a distinction. Simply stated, he had forgotten or ignored, the fact that there is a basic specific difference between the magazine and the tabloid. That difference, he assures me, is not in grade alone, but in the primary consistency of the page also. I had always suspected that some such distinction existed, but he further assures me that it is by no means a well-known fact. Of course, this distraction proved to be of slight moment since, as my ardent investigator pointed out, it was a very simple matter to establish two species under the same genus and, as he so succinctly put it, ". . . caddy on!"

Of the three eligible periodicals in the "magazine" species, the ALEMBIC, I am sorry to say, rated only second. Happily there are factors outside the reference of the I.P. which somewhat alleviate the sting of mediocrity though, and they do bear investigation. The page which bore the flame that did us in was taken from an ornate journal, of slight renown in local circles. It proved to be easily inflamed, and it did burn with an even, slow flame but, it was found that when the paper had finally burned through, it exuded a most pungent stench which hung on the air interminably. This stench is described as resembling (of all things) smouldering marijuana, and is ascribed to the exceedingly poor grade of ink used upon the pages. The ALEMBIC, although its pages were not as readily inflammable and did not burn with as bright a flame, left very little odor in its wake.

In the tabloid class, we are gratified to note that the *Cowl*, for all around burnability, carried off the honors easily. Its closest competitor, a collegiate daily, was found to have what are described by

our experimenter as "very transient" qualities. When parried at the flame, it caught fire and burned very quickly, giving off practically no heat and making very little, if any, effect upon the atmosphere about it. The *Cowl*, on the other hand, started slowly and burned for a much greater length of time with a white and black speckled flame.

The last experiment involved two publications of a vaguely local institution. These, my scientist informs me, fell far beneath the others in every incendiary test. It was almost impossible to ignite either one of them and this phase of the inquiry was made almost ludicrous by the attempt. It appeared, upon closer investigation that the pages were quite damp and almost pulpy, a situation brought about by the very damp atmosphere of the institution's immediate surroundings. When finally the paper was dry enough to burn, however feebly, my informant (I would not believe it from any other) insists that it smelled precisely like damp goat skin.

And thus, at this critical apex, my Ardent Test Tube rested his case and relaxed luxuriously upon his laurels, contented with the knowledge of a job well done.

But, and this is a question every thinking reader must ask, is this the time to relax? Have not new critical horizons been exposed? Have we not perhaps tapped the keg of new criterion? Consider well, for we may very possibly be looking down the literary muzzle at a critical bombshell. Perhaps it is time for every publisher, and reader, to look inward and ask " . . . and how does *my* fire burn?"

E. A. K.

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"At the End of an Era"

By John C. Manning

THE black clad man strode confidently toward the door. His Gibraltan frame wheeled about, and with a smile that seemed to be the common denominator for all the happiness I had ever encountered, waved good-bye. He opened the door, passed through and was gone.

I sat for an endless moment, mute, staring at the sheen of the glass like an expensively catered crystal ball gazer exhibiting his best style. The gilt-edged black letters spelled out my name.

Dr. Emmet Powers

Consulting Psychologist

I mentally removed the titles and my name remained naked: "Emmet Powers". It was not that this particular arrangement of letters had any special significance or occult talents, yet remaining alone, it reincarnated, like a diary, an era which this generation has fortunately missed . . . "the roaring twenties."

To me, sitting in my office haunted by the now vital memory, the vivid flow of that great railroad train which symbolized the era, came flooding back and blotted out all perception of the present like high tide roaring over shoals.

The roaring twenties, the great train ride.

It began, maybe, in Apache Falls, Arizona, or perhaps in Wells, Montana; it makes little difference where. Someone sold somebody fifty shares of Copper Vein preferred. It was sold, resold, exploited, insured and jotted on the tally

sheets of the *New York Times.* The great engine was fired and the cars moved ominously East. Transaction and close-out; all aboard and destination; today you're a winner, tomorrow you go without your dinner; the great steel thing gained momentum. Through switch and whistle stop, without engineer or destination, the great train rumbled on. It grew and grew with each new bond and stock adding fuel and blast air to the now dynamic engine. St. Louis, Baltimore, Chicago . . . Woodrow Wilson faded. St. Paul, Detroit, Cleveland . . . Harding lasted two years. Philadelphia, Minneapolis, Boston; . . . Coolidge called the Charleston a fad.

Around and around endless track it rumbled and roared; engine white hot and ambitions hotter yet. Buying, selling; the gross, the net. With its octopus eye scanning hamlet and village, city and town, its wild light was all too bright to notice the darkness. Prospectors fell from the Pullmans, made frantic grasps at the caboose, clung on, then clawed their way back to the engine room, adding their frustrated coal to the ill-fated express.

"Hail, hail, the gangs all here," faster and faster, and in a lurching screaming lunge it divorced the tracks and hurtled toward New York. There was one whirling spin, and when its momentum died from sheer overweight, the engine sputtered, coughed, came apart at the seams and expired.

Some took the elevators, others used the stairs; all reached the summit of the Wall Street skyscrapers and leaped off into the abyss of false hopes that was their America.

In the distance, as they groveled on the pavement amid the confetti that was yesterday's millions, a shrill voice wheezed out from the vacuum of the past . . . "Hello sucker."

I had had no fare, no bluff to gamble. I sat out the last tragic ride in Cairne, Ireland; away, so very far away from the

ugly black smoke that settled on America. And yet I was part of that era, an integral fragment that even distance could not disengage. The era remained, its emotional impetus and weird personality had spanned an ocean to leave its indelible mark on myself and Matthew Garnault.

The road from Cairne to Droughda is quite medieval. The pseudo-macadam road, hardened by the arches of a thousand Irish peasants and the wheels of a thousand more jaunting carts, winds through an aura of Thirteenth Century atmosphere. It was the "feeling" I received going through the place that finally interrupted the twenty-minute silence.

"I wouldn't be surprised, Matt, to see a moat at this next bend."

"That's your trouble," he replied in a practitioner's tone, "you're too damn romantic; this whole continental gypsy ride isn't worth the cost of a volume of National Geographic."

I smiled at that when I thought about the posed pictures and the too-colorful pageantry of the magazine.

"You're probably right," I confessed as the next bend produced naught but another endless peat bog.

"Does Dr. Heublien know you're coming to Vienna, Emmet?"

"Dr. Heublien doesn't even know I own a birth certificate, let alone that I intend to study with him."

"Why didn't you write and send along some references?" Matt questioned. "Your work at the Foundation might carry some weight."

Knowing him as I did, I let the question rest unanswered in mid-air. Matt always had to have a reference, or a calling card, or at least some embossed stationery as his entrée to every situation. My answer would only give rise to renewed questionings so we lapsed into silence.

There are some times when, and some places where, speech upsets the contents of a mood. I think Matt sensed it too, so it was a mutual consent to partake the banquet of silence.

It was now growing dark and the mist was beginning to gather on the windshield of the Stutz. It was a clinging mist supported by a very solid foundation of Irish countryside. It surrounded and drenched everything less than six feet above the ground. Pea soup fog, shamrock style, I thought.

Matt braked the big Stutz, put down the top and began to clear the windshield.

"I'd hate to drop a thought in this fog," I called, "you couldn't find it with Ponzi's memory."

"If you had Ponzi's memory you wouldn't be traipsing around Europe looking for culture. If there's one thing I admire about the man it's his practical outlook."

"Just about par with yours, huh!" I smelled a little autobiography emit itself from Matt's gesture and sought it out with, "I've always wondered why the Chase National honors your signature, it must be your practical approach."

"It's my father's account," he countered. That was gospel truth and he realized he said the wrong thing. He got back of the wheel carelessly and slipped the gears into low.

"Maybe I should have said on account of my father."

He was clever all right, Matt was; I wondered if that was the reason I had grown so attached to him during the last five years. Clever enough to outsmart himself. I first thought about that at Dartmouth. The campus paper, read only by those whose name appeared in it, introduced Matthew Garnault in its "Who's Who" as "talented, well-to-do, Back Bay bred, clever manipulator of feminine hearts." The picture which customarily graces the caption showed a too-handsome

face grinning a too-clever smile. Perhaps I was envious, for envy is a sneaky vice which appears only with anger, but I did not care for him at all until I met him. It was in the Fall of my sophomore year and Pete Yagoshi, a Jap-American art student, introduced me to him. The three of us soon started a martyr's campaign against the low American Culture, the fad that season; we had finagled . . .

I became acutely awake as Matt made a snatching twist with the wheel and his big foot searched vainly for the last brake. There was a tearing screech, and a sickening, so bloody, scream, then a deafening silence.

"Good God, Emmet, I hit him!"

Matt tore open the door and stood like a mad man. I ran around the car and looked at him; all I could see were his eyes and teeth forming a grimace that told me something bad had happened. I jumped back in the car and grabbed the storm light. Matt was too sick, too near faint to move. I pushed him aside quickly and turned the beam under the car. It was awful. Matt took one cursory glance and vomited.

I crawled under the Stutz and grabbed a hand that was too warm, too soft, feeling too much alive. I tugged and felt nauseated. The right side of his chest was pinned by the front tire. Tight, firm and sickening. The car was at a crazy angle with the right side resting on human flesh.

"Get in and start the car, you'll have to roll forward, he's wedged beneath the tire."

Matt remained still, white and fixed.

"Get in and start the car!" I was angry from sensing the effeminacy of Matt's suspended animation. I grabbed him by the arm and shoved; he fell and I felt like spitting on him.

I slid behind the wheel and with the starter eased the

car a few feet forward. There was a dull thud as the car touched ground, I jumped out quickly.

The yellowish ray of the beam lit upon the sprawled figure of a young boy. I felt his heart . . . "Now and at the hour of our death, Amen."

Matt was up and standing next to me, his face an ashen hue of no primary color, and his hands trembling in a million gyrations resembling a humming-bird's wings.

"Yes he is, Matt."

We stood there looking, peering, speechless, like ballet students at Nijinsky's last performance . . . awed, enthralled and terrified.

He had apparently fallen and the car's impact caught him flush on the right side of his face. I looked twice to make certain, but my first look had been correct. He was probably the most handsome lad I had ever seen. I didn't even see his mangled right side any more. I saw his left side, exhibiting a deftness of feature that terminated in a singularly striking face. Everything exact, precise; a face drawn on Stanford White's chart. Its construction so complete that it shocked me back to a terrifying reality.

Matt was a complete vacuum operating within a cacophony of emotional frenzy. His presence added nothing but distaste for the job to be done. A hospital was out of the question, or at least its curative value was of no use to the eternally silenced lad lying on the wet ground. Matt was sitting on the road staring at nothing with eyes that had, or could comprehend, no sense image at all.

I knew something had to be done. What to do consisted of blind disarranged thoughts, the primary one being to bring the boy somewhere. I realized the inevitable and finally summoned up enough courage to face the task of put-

ting the boy in the car. I let the car door swing wide, took a deep breath and held it, for I feared the job was going to be accompanied by some ill odor. I grasped him under the arms and dragged him ever so gently to the car. I slumped him on the back seat in a half-leaning, half-sitting position. I was now afraid to look at his face again for fear that some responsive chord would make the task more distasteful than it was already.

I returned to Matt and leading and helping him into the car was awe-struck at the complete absence of expression on his face. Matthew Garnault . . . well-to-do, Back Bay bred, talented; the whole idea smacked of tragic comedy and I might have laughed except for the presence of that third party at whose expense the awful joke would have been consummated.

I started the Stutz and headed nowhere. Emmet Powers, Matt Garnault and a nameless handsome boy riding a 1927 Stutz hearse with a convertible top at no extra expense. I drove for about five minutes till I came to a combination barn and house. Like so many others it had no distinguishing characteristics, yet it was a definite place to go for help. I stopped the car and walked up the muddy path soggy with grass and weeds. A door of archaic wood marked the end of the foot trail and I knocked on it. I didn't know what to say nor how to say it, I only knew something had to be said and I trusted my vocal chords would convulse some sound out. I knocked again, and as I became impatient with myself and the whole idea, the door opened.

I believe the female instinct can distinguish the sentiment in particular door rappings; when I saw this woman's face I was sure of it. There was already a look of apprehension that enabled me to blurt out, "My companion just hit and killed a young boy."

Her face assumed a grey wan pallor as she hastened to the car. She evidently expected me to bring her to the accident, for when I opened the door of the car she groaned a long wail, the most striking element of which was startling surprise.

Her long, low sob rising to a name, "Donald," told me everything I needed to know about their relationship. The joker of destiny played his last trick on the dead boy and it was on the last person ill-suited to play the game, the dead lad's mother. Her eyes told her the story that Matt had prefaced. I began to talk in soothing phrases, not knowing whether they made sense and caring less. I was trying to express my sorrow in tone, and at a time like this actual words held no significance anyway. She picked up her son's hand and pressed it to her cheek in a drama that was magnificent because of its simplicity. I glanced at Matt and his eyes were trying to say something to the woman; he was not being heard for her eyes were gazing solemnly and intently into her son's handsome face.

I turned to go to the house again, when a man, who looked as if he had just been rudely interrupted from his sleep, came striding down the path.

"Mary, what is it, Mary? . . . Who are these men?" A look inside the car and a glance from the woman called Mary stopped him short. He looked at me feverishly.

"Help get Donald out and I'll get Doctor Neilan." There were volumes written on his face as my head waved an unsteady "no."

"Too late, . . . I'm sorry, . . . There's nothing you, I, or the world can do now," all these consequent phrases stuck in my throat like cinders on ice. Gritty, grating and immovable till the spring thaw. He took his wife into the house and returned.

"The boy is my son, Donald, my name is Nigel Byrne; I think we had best drive into Droughda and notify the town officials." There was no malice in his voice, no taint of criminal aggravate. It seemed the thing to say, the thing to do; sensible and distasteful.

On the way to Droughda, which was about ten miles south, I told him the story. Matt made affirmative gestures in agreement, and Nigel Byrne wanting to nod in disagreement. I did all the talking and by the time we reached Droughda I had a clearer notion of what actually happened and Matt was beginning to look as if he knew what had happened.

The interrogation at the Constabulary was routine. The quaint official expressed what seemed to be subsidized grief and Matt played the role of a defendant who had the jury stacked. He was now completely changed; his silence gave way to talk of settlements, reimbursements, insurance houses and claims. The transfer was complete when he put his hand on Nigel's shoulder and mentioned in an added, nonchalant tone that his insurance company would take care of all expenses. If I had been the elder Byrne I would have bashed his head in. Hearing the sickening proposal, Mr. Byrne looked resigned, dispossessed and without emotion.

"Call Father Dacey," he said to the constable.

I had heard people use that type of phrase before, but had never understood its meaning. It was a call, a crying out for assurance, a plea for help and aid from the one tree that bears fruit in a frigid situation. In those words, I suppose, I found half the culture of the western world. Those words signified a faith and a hope in something, which for me would have been exposed to the barrenness of despair. I knew Matt's insurance company ran second best.

The constable said we could spend the night in the detention room upstairs. There would be no criminal action taken; no courts, no family grievances cloaked in the vindictive garb of legal proceedings. Law held its place but it was not in the Acts of God. The Byrnes understood that. I realized negligence on Matt's part was out of the question. It was foggy, the car was traveling under forty miles an hour, everything was satisfactory as far as the officials were concerned. I don't know if Matt sensed it or not but something was very much amiss; there was too much resignation in the constable, almost as if this sort of thing happened every day, which I knew didn't. The Byrne family had that same type of resignation; everyone seemed resigned to the fact that the accident had occurred and that it ended with the calling of Father Dacey. I thought I was the only person who remained upset, but in the small room upstairs, where we were supposed to sleep, I found out differently.

Matt had smoked all the cigarettes and was sitting on the edge of the bed. We talked about home, my going to Vienna, my future in psychology, everything except the accident. Matt couldn't continue the pretense any longer.

"What shall I do, Emmet?" His tone of voice was sincere and I think he expected an infallible answer.

"Call your insurance company." I said it with an air of sarcasm, that even my quick smile failed to cover. It visibly affected him.

He became aggressive. "You know that's not what I mean Emmet. I'm sorry I broke down at the accident and made a hell of a mess of things, but let's not have any of this tongue in cheek baloney."

I knew then he was really upset, more upset than I. At the accident I overlooked his actions because of the shock,

but this straining of his emotional fibre struck an odd chord in my chromatics of his personality.

"I don't know what you should do, Matt; make amends as honestly as you can and let time straighten out the jumbled feeling."

"At times, Emmet, I've violently disliked you. It's your honesty, I suppose. I feared that more than anything and I believe I secretly admired it. You're not kidding me, Emmett; you haven't got two hundred bucks and I know it will take at least two years to get your Doctorate at Vienna. I'd like to finance it Emmet, I feel as if I owe you that anyway."

He was grasping at straws and he knew it. It was true I was just barely in the black, financially speaking, but I figured I could work in Vienna and defray my expenses. He knew I did that in college and he knew I could and would do it again.

"I'm sorry I offered that, Emmet, I feel as if I owe somebody something. I can't offer the Byrnes clan anything. I tried and was ignored for my troubles. What in hell's wrong with them?"

"There's nothing wrong with them, Matt. They believe in compensation one way and you in another. You can't change them because they don't believe in insurance companies and monetary compensation. Their values are different, they go deeper, they have their roots in something you don't understand."

Matt lay down with sleep in his eyes and anxiety in his head. He wouldn't sleep soundly; I didn't think I would, either. I don't know if he fully understood what I was telling him, but I knew he was certain that his Stutz Auto Policy didn't mention anything about a sense of values.

I made time pass by thinking about Donald Byrne.

I wondered what he was like, what he did, and how different he must have been from Matt. Around 1 a.m. I heard Matt get up and go downstairs. There was some talking and the door opened and closed. I figured he wanted some air and had gone for a walk. I slumbered off and awoke about five-thirty.

The wash basin water was tepid and had a long standing reputation in the room. I splashed on my face and felt like going back to bed. I had a headache and a sour disposition. Glancing over at the other bed I noticed Matt hadn't returned. I went downstairs to borrow a cigarette.

At the bottom of the flight the constable was talking to a young priest. I turned to question the constable but a smooth voice interrupted.

"Good morning, Mr. Powers, my name is Father Dacey."

I managed a good morning in return and inquired,

"I noticed Mr. Garnault was not in bed this morning, I'm a bit worried. He left about . . ."

Father Dacey cut me short. "Mr. Garnault is up at the Byrne Home; I took the liberty to bring him there after he came to see me last night."

"Matt at the Byrnes', you must be mistaken, Reverend, I'm sure he wouldn't go there."

"He asked me to take him there, said he wanted to talk to them. I drove back in his car; he wants you to come up there."

I grabbed my coat from the hanger and strode out after Father Dacey. A million things crossed my mind, the most repulsive one being that Matt had gone completely mad and was up there talking insurance to the family.

Father Dacey drove the Stutz like a seasoned veteran.

"We don't have an opportunity to drive often. It's mostly shank's mare. I like to drive, though."

His last remark sounded American. "Are you from the States, Father?"

"Born in Chicago, Mr. Powers, played ring around the Du Pont at the Loop often."

My big grin showed him he had gained my confidence and he continued, but in a serious vein. "I don't know much about this Matt Garnault except that he's confused. Most American's are, you know."

My silence added nothing but affirmation to his remarks.

"Americans," he continued, "were driven by ambition until they reached the ennui of personal aggrandizement; then they tumbled. Individually, as soon as tragedy comes close, they assume a 'Weltschmerz' philosophy on God's creations."

"A 'what', Father?"

"A gloomy outlook on everything that cannot be accounted for in a daybook."

It was not a Sunday school sermon or a pulpit exposition with no practical remedy. It was hard; it was cold, truthful and shameful; it was fact.

"Matt believed that the end of existence was the creation of a little empire with the personal 'I' as emperor. He found out that his little kingdom had to include other people and other values beside his own. Finding that out cracked his outlook like it was an eggshell."

I was awe-struck by the simplicity of the proposition. I wondered if he had mentioned it to Matt last night. There wasn't need to. Father Dacey realized Matt's dilemma and I had been too close to him to see it myself. The Byrnes' home was just ahead.

"Thanks, Father," I said.

"For what?"

"Oh! nothing in particular."

There were many people at the house even at this early hour. Father Dacey and I expressed condolences and sought out Matt. He was sitting next to the cast iron, pot bellied stove, talking with Mr. Byrne.

"I'd like to, Mr. Byrne, until after the funeral anyway." He noticed me, and continued as if he had the monologue memorized. "I'm going to stay here awhile, Emmet. You go on to Cork and book passage."

I had half expected it and I nodded. When a man finally finds himself, all friendships give way to acquaintance. Matt had finally found himself. I shook hands all around, and promised to write to Matt in care of his New York address. Father Dacey drove me to Cork and I boarded the Cunard liner "Darien" for Le Havre on August 27th, 1928. I felt sad as I left Ireland.

I remained in Vienna eighteen months and graduated in 1929. I returned home to a sadder America. Hoover said it was transitory . . .

The "Doctor Emmet Powers, Consulting Psychologist" flooded back into the room. The white-clad nurse added the final touch of reality.

"Shall I make out a report for the gentleman, Doctor?" she asked.

"No," I said finally. "You might jot it down in the memo, though. Just write that the Reverend Matthew Garnault dropped in to say that he had remained in Ireland for . . . for the funeral of an era."

And so we find, like explorers, new continents where the seed blossoms into fruit.

Footsteps

By Wilton E. Gervais

O! WHAT an oppressive plight, to be a prisoner of a city at night. But that is not being fair to the versatile city; it is not the metropolis which is to blame, rather it is "place". "Place" is the cell which locks a man in and destines whether his night is to be one of revelry or one of pensiveness and loneliness. If he happens to be placed among the chattering, jostling mob on the streets, he may lose his sense of loneliness by throwing himself into the conversation and laughter of others, if not in actuality at least in his own mind as he walks among them. Or he may place himself in his cell-like room in the highest reaches of his rooming house and be not unlike the Count of Monte Cristo in his prison tower. The room is his cell; the turn-key is his sense of not belonging; no one in the prison yard knows him, and he knows no one.

Then as the man diverts his mind with books and reminiscences and eventually tires of them, he is visited by the shades of Milton's "Meditative Man" and Irving's traveler of "The Stout Gentleman" and he soon is wrapped in their occupations and it is then the man hears footsteps. His thoughts are in contrast to Goldsmith's, because he sees life or rather hears it and predicates what is able to be seen to what is audible to him high above the street.

Hoppity-skip! hoppity-skip . . . little shoes against the concrete pavement. Happy little feet, beating out a tune of warmth, pleasure and love; unmindful of the coldness

underfoot and the sadness above. Hoppity-skip! hoppity-skip . . . bump. Yes, a fall. But no harm is done. Up like a rubber ball and on their way go the little feet. O! If only the adult, who has had many such falls and others less obvious, could bounce back like that. Perhaps he has in the past, but now he is tired of getting up and remains as he has fallen. Ah! It is sad and pitiful that from such below can grow such as above. The skipping feet fade in the distance as a parent interrupts the bliss of the child, and then silence. Tantalizing, terrorizing, silence.

Hark to the sound of more approaching feet. Not skipping or running this time, but ambling slowly. Two pairs of feet; one pair wearing high heels. Their gait denotes happiness, and the steady smoothness of their steps murmurs their confidence in shared purposes. They will arrive to the end of the street in step with one another; not one before the other, but side by side. Their cadenced stride is disrupted at intervals as the leg of one brushes against the leg of the other. O harsh, cruel street below, do not impede this most beautiful of relationships of God's Creation. There will be obstacles to strengthen the love of these footsteps, but allow them to step over as four and not separately. They, too, have been swallowed by the dark mist at the end of the street, out of the range of the straining ear, which is still tingling from the soft, musical laughter of the pair.

It is still early in the evening, and the slow, plodding steps below are repeating hope, hope, hope and not despair. But where can they be going? To visit friends? To see their children and grand-children? To pay their respect to their Maker, Who is much closer to them now? Or to express condolences to one of their childhood companions? Whither go these feet which probably seem to be traveling rapidly to the

mover, but more truthfully very slow to an observer. You have walked your way, why do you still have the sound of joy in your footsteps? Are there still things in which one can derive pleasures at so late an hour in one's life, when above, at the noon of life, an observer is despairing? Do not fade away, proud feet of the aged; let me hear more, speak to me. Plod-scrape . . . plod-scrape . . .

It is later now, it is past ten-thirty o'clock. There are no more footsteps. But wait! What is that? A swish, click-click . . . swish, click-click. Oh! Yes, this is their walking hour. Now they walk hand in hand with night to their pleasure or business. The swish of tight skirts and the sharp click-click of long heels accompanied by heavy perfume waft up the walls of the building to the cell window of the lonely man. The nauseating, cheap perfume invites him to companionship; the click-click invites him to laughter; the swish-swish invites him to love, but all for naught. The prisoner avidly turns to the memories of the sounds in the early evening and the present footsteps sicken him almost to the point of vomiting. Suddenly the click-click stops. And a shuffle approaches. There is silence for a moment and then click-click . . . shuffle-shuffle into the darkness.

What footsteps are these? Loud steps . . . tramp-clump . . then soft . . . slide. Fast and now slow. Ah! The familiar walk after the cup of Bacchus, the cup that cheers and inebriates. Whither go these footsteps? They are undecided. The guiding mechanism says forward, but one foot goes sideward and one backward. However, some progress is being made, because on past the ears of the observer go the staggering, stumbling footsteps. On to where? Perhaps to a gutter, a park bench, a lonely room, a large house, to a wife, to a family, to nowhere.

Are these the last of the footsteps? No! In his reverie, he had forgotten the footsteps which he had invited to be his last. There they are now. No other can hear them for they glide softly over the pavement on the light breath of air sweeping the streets. They do not go past, but stop below his window waiting, waiting expectantly, patiently. He had invited them earlier in the evening, but now he wants no part of them. He does not wish to walk with them. There are other footsteps to accompany his. He passed his hands over his face and stared at the moisture in the palms. He was resolute now. He would walk with those footsteps heard earlier in the evening: and by keeping pace with them, he will be guided to the end of the street. The man grasped the object on the windowsill with shaking fingers and shouted, "You down there, go away! Leave me! Here, take this with you."

Morning! Glorious day! The cop on the beat pushed aside the newspaper in the gutter. He stooped. As he straightened up, he scratched his head perplexedly and put the unfired revolver in his pocket and strode up the street.

Sometime After Three O'Clock

By Henry Griffin

Dark against the sky they stood,
Three crosses fashioned out of wood,
Three symbols of that deadly lull
On Golgotha, the mount of skulls.
Above this scene a great hawk shrieks,
Upon the smell of blood it seeks
With ravenous eye and greedy claw
To clutch, devour the Corpse before
Some other hungry thing of prey
Consumes His Flesh and wins the day.
But, look! the distant sky is flecked
With myriads of tiny specks—
They grow in numbers by the hour,
These grey birds of satanic power,
Until they form an awesome cloud,
And people standing in the crowd
Upon that mount look up, then race
In stricken terror from that place,
And from the shadows overhead,
Forever screaming, "He is dead."
Three o'clock has come, has passed
So long ago and still the last
Unwearied wings beat wildly in the air
Above a cross which is no longer there.

People Who Live in Glass Houses

By Joseph P. McGowan

FANNIE MAGUIRE had tried hard, but she just couldn't get to like the woman. There was something about Priscilla which irked Fannie, but she couldn't quite put her finger on it. Perhaps it was Priscilla's long, pointed nose, or her neatly dressed hair, which was never out of place, or more than likely, the false front which Priscilla always assumed, even in the most familiar conversation. Fannie had fought for a long time against this growing feeling of dislike, but in vain. Priscilla's whole personality and manner were just out of tune with her own.

Priscilla Langdon was forty-one, but hardly looked thirty. Her husband's position with an insurance firm allowed her to make a weekly visit to the beauty parlor, and she had only one child, who, to listen to Priscilla talk, was the model boy. Fannie, at the age of forty-four, appeared to be in her middle fifties. The care and upbringing of five robust boys had streaked her hair with gray, and added lines to her face ten years ahead of time. Besides, you don't buy fancy cosmetics on a fireman's salary.

The Langdons lived three houses down the street from Fannie and Jim Maguire. They had moved into it twelve years before, while the Maguires had been living in the neighborhood for over twenty years. Fannie, because of her mild and unassuming manner, was on friendly terms with all of her neighbors, without exception. Priscilla, although not quite so popular, had managed to talk her way into an important

position in many of the neighborhood social clubs and organizations, holding the presidency in more than one of them. In secret, Priscilla was extremely jealous of the popularity enjoyed by Fannie and also her children. Whenever the housewives got together, the names of either one or all of the Maguire boys were always brought into the conversation. To counter this, Priscilla usually raved about how big her Billy was for his age, and how much stronger he was than the other boys at school. And, moreover, he always received good marks in his studies. Not honor marks, mind you, but good ones just the same.

Of late Priscilla had been almost insulting when she talked about the Maguire children. Fannie had taken it lightly, for she had recognized the jealousy in Priscilla's voice. When Priscilla called one Saturday morning, however, and invited her and Jim to dinner that night, Fannie sensed something strange about the whole affair. She and Jim had been over to the Langdons for Sunday dinner before, and on Christmas or other holidays, but never on Saturday night. Priscilla and Pete Langdon usually spent Saturday night at a show or a night club, leaving Billy with one of his aunts.

That night Priscilla greeted Jim and Fannie with a bright smile and led them into a beautifully, if somewhat gaudily, furnished parlor, where Pete Langdon was sitting in an easy chair.

"You're right on time," said Priscilla, as she took the older woman's hat and coat.

"And that's unusual for a fireman, hey Jim!" laughed Pete, lifting his large frame out of the chair.

Fannie smiled at this. She liked Pete. He was a good-natured man, even if he did let himself sometimes be dominated by his wife. The four of them sat down and began to

chat amiably, until they were interrupted by the sound of the front doorbell.

"That must be the Tracey's," said Priscilla, as she got up from the piano stool and started towards the door.

A young man and woman in their thirties entered the room amid the sound of pleasant greetings. In a few minutes the room was filled with feminine chatter and the loud laughter of the three husbands. Presently, the six neighbors moved into the dining room, which was lit by two candles placed at either end of the shiny mahogany table. Gleaming silverware was set at each place, and an elegant coffee service adorned the buffet. The two male guests were seated opposite their wives, while the two end places were left for the Langdons.

As the guests began the fruit cocktails, Priscilla disappeared into the kitchen and returned with a large tureen of soup. Although they could afford a cook, she always insisted on preparing and serving her own meals. She did not sit down at the table now until the main course had been served. After eating silently a few minutes she looked up and smiled at Fannie.

"How are your boys, Fannie?" she asked.

"Oh!" replied Fannie, "they're still causing us their fair share of trouble. They had a free-for-all in the parlor just before we left."

"Well," smiled Priscilla, "that's one problem I never have with Billy, although I can't say he doesn't make up for it in other ways."

With this Priscilla fell silent, as did Fannie, and both addressed themselves to the delicious meal set before them. Little was said by anyone for the next five minutes, except for an occasional remark about the quality of the food, or a request for salt and pepper. When the dessert had been served,

Priscilla looked up once more, this time past Fannie towards Mrs. Tracey.

"Helen," said Priscilla, "you and Frank must be very proud of your Eddie."

Helen Tracey smiled and answered, "Yes, we certainly are. Frank can't stop talking about it."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Priscilla, "who could? A ninety-eight average! Why, it's unbelievable. Eddie must be a genius."

Mrs. Tracey was beginning to blush a little, and could not find the right words to answer. Just as she was about to speak, Pete Langdon reached over and slapped Frank Tracey on the shoulder, and roared jovially, "Well, you know how it is, Priss, like father like son. Hey, Frank?"

Everyone laughed at this, except Fannie, who could only muster a slight smile. During this exchange a feeling of uneasiness had begun tugging at her, for she guessed now what Priscilla was leading up to. She didn't believe that Priscilla could be mean enough to mention it, but, nevertheless, kept her eyes fixed on her plate, not daring to look towards her hostess. Suddenly she started at the sound of her name. The nervous fear she had been experiencing made Priscilla's voice sound sharper than it was.

Fannie looked up.

Priscilla's voice was now soft and almost tender as she said, "I hear your John had some bad luck with his math."

She had done it. Fannie could still not believe it. How could Priscilla mention it at such a time, right here in front of the Traceys? Fannie's cheeks began to redden, and in her confusion she hesitated a moment before answering. She spoke haltingly, "Why, yes . . . he did . . . he . . ."

But Priscilla wouldn't let her finish. Shaking her head

slightly, she said, "Too bad, and just when he had a chance to make the Honor Roll. But heavens, he only failed by three points! Some of the others had marks as low as forty."

Fannie made no answer. A new feeling was pushing the fear from her senses. Anger began rising slowly in her heart. She dared not look at her husband. This was her battle and she had to fight it herself. She tried to think of ways to counter Priscilla's sly attack. She knew that Billy Langdon had picked on the smaller and younger Jenkins boy a week ago, and had given him a thrashing, but she couldn't use this, for she would have to be very direct and blunt, and Priscilla had been so subtle. Fannie's conscience, moreover, began to enter into the debate stirring in her soul. The simple goodness of her heart kept urging her to rise above Priscilla's pettiness and not to return the injury.

Priscilla, however, would not withdraw her knife. She continued in sugar-coated tones, "Billy tells me that it was the final exam which hurt John the most. From what I can gather, it seems that it was rather unreasonable."

Hot words rose to Fannie's lips, but died there. She said nothing, but kept looking straight down at her plate, resolved not to betray her anger.

After a few moments of silence, Frank Tracey, seeing Fannie's discomfort, sought to change the subject.

"Priscilla," he said, with a smile, "you know the only reason we accepted your invitation was because of that wonderful coffee you make. If you two women keep talking, we'll never get to it."

Laughter once more resounded throughout the room, and Priscilla rose smilingly from her place to oblige her guest.

For the rest of the evening Fannie tried to avoid Priscilla as much as possible. She concentrated her attention on

Helen Tracey whenever she felt it necessary to enter the conversation, or sat silently listening to the others. Her husband Jim did not have much to say either, and Fannie continued to avoid his eyes. When it came time to leave, Priscilla stood in the doorway, with a beaming smile on her face to bid the guests good-night. Jim Maguire thanked her for everything, but Fannie merely nodded as she passed out the door.

Outside, the two couples took leave of each other and began walking away from the Langdon house in different directions. As Fannie walked along beside her husband, she was possessed with a desire to talk about the evening's events. She wanted to talk about Billy Langdon and what a bully he was, about Pete Langdon's fondness for highballs, and particularly about Priscilla's shameful conduct. She wanted to experience the satisfaction it would give her to enumerate these many shortcomings of the Langdons, for it would help to assuage the injury she had received. Instead, she maintained silence for the few minutes it took to reach their house. Just before they entered Jim put one hand on her shoulder and whispered, "Don't worry, Fannie, Johnnie'll come through next time."

Sunday morning at Mass Fannie refrained from receiving Communion. She knew she had done no serious wrong, but her simple soul could not let her approach the rail. By Monday she had almost forgotten Saturday night's incident. Preparing meals for her five hungry sons, and getting them ready for school gave her no time to think about Priscilla Langdon.

About ten-thirty Monday night Fannie was sitting in her parlor, reading the newspaper. This was the only time she had to read it, after the children had gone to bed. Jim was dozing quietly in an armchair, and soft music issued from

the radio. The sound of the phone broke in upon Fannie's reading, and she got up to answer it.

It was Priscilla Langdon, and her voice sounded frantic.

"Fannie," she cried, "something awful has happened. I don't know what to do. I'm going crazy."

Fannie could hear her sobbing, and asked, somewhat alarmed, "What is it, Priscilla, what is it?"

"It's Billy," was the tearful reply, "they want to take him away!"

"Who? Who wants to take him away?"

"The police. They want to send him to reform school. That's why I called. Jim knows a lot of policemen, doesn't he? Maybe he can help."

Fannie drew in a sharp breath. She asked, "Why do they want to send him to reform school, Priscilla? What's happened?"

"Billy had a fight this afternoon with Eddie Tracey, and Eddie's in the hospital. They took Billy down to the station and I had to go down to get him out. Oh, Fannie, I don't know what to do.

"Well, where's Pete?" asked Fannie.

"He went out."

"He's out? Where did he go?"

"To the bar. He said he didn't care what happens to Billy. He said he deserves to go to reform school. Oh, Fannie, if they take Billy away I'll kill myself.

Fannie thought quickly. "Wait a minute, Priscilla. Calm down! Listen, stay where you are. I'll be right over."

Priscilla said something which was lost in the noise of her sobbing, and hung up. Quickly Fannie snatched her hat and coat, and, waking Jim, told him what had happened.

In another minute she was at the Langdon house. Priscilla opened the door, wearing a fur coat which she had neglected to remove since coming back from the police station. The first words out of her mouth were "Oh, God! Why did this have to happen to me?"

They walked into the parlor, and here Priscilla dropped into one of the chairs and began weeping violently. Fannie went over to her, and putting both hands on her shoulders said, "Here, give me your coat. You'll suffocate."

Priscilla meekly complied with the request, and then broke out sobbing again. Fannie stood by her until she had calmed somewhat, then, removing her own coat, said, "Sit right here, Priscilla. I'll go make some tea. That'll steady your nerves."

Priscilla nodded, and dabbed her eyes with a handkerchief. Fannie went out to the kitchen, and returned in a few minutes with a pot of tea and two cups on a tray. Priscilla, after consuming two cups of the steaming drink, had regained some of her composure and began talking about what had happened. After listening to her describe the terrible afternoon she had spent, Fannie asked, "How is Billy?"

"He's asleep in his room now," answered Priscilla. "It didn't even bother him. I don't know what's wrong with him. He never did anything like this before."

"What about Pete?"

"Oh, he'll find his way home all right. Can you imagine deserting me at a time like this. How callous can a person get?"

Fannie placed her cup on the small table before her, and rose to her feet.

"The best thing for you now is bed," she said to Priscilla. "Come on. I'll go up with you."

Priscilla got up slowly and turned towards the stairway which led to the upstairs' bedrooms. Fannie took her by the arm, and together they went up. In her bedroom Priscilla burst out crying again, and Fannie had great difficulty in calming her. She had to help her undress, and buttoned her nightgown, just as she did for her own children.

When Priscilla was in bed Fannie bent over her and said, "I'll stay here with you tonight, Priscilla. I'm going to call Jim and tell him."

Priscilla looked up at the gray-haired woman and whispered, "Thank you, Fannie. You're too kind."

After she had called Jim, Fannie returned to Priscilla's bedroom and seated herself next to the bed. Priscilla did not say anything, but lay there sobbing very softly, almost inaudibly. After about a half-hour she fell asleep, and Fannie got up and pulled the blankets up about her shoulders. Then she seated herself again and folded her hands in her lap. Gradually, the shapes and forms in the room became blurred before her eyes, and then disappeared, and the mysterious oblivion of sleep wrapped itself about her.

The golden paths made by the morning sun were slowly advancing across the floor when Fannie awoke. She glanced at the clock near Priscilla's bed and saw that it was seven-thirty. Hurriedly, she rose and straightened her dress, which was creased and wrinkled. As she did, she noticed Pete Langdon lying face downward in the bed next to Priscilla's, still dressed in his street clothes. Fannie picked up a blanket and went to place it over Pete, when suddenly Priscilla awakened. Fannie spread the blanket over Pete's prostrate form, and then turned towards Priscilla.

"I've got to get home," she whispered. "I didn't realize what time it was. I have to get my gang ready for school."

Priscilla said nothing, but just lay there looking up at Fannie.

"I'll be back when I've got them out to school," said Fannie softly, and with a smile turned towards the door to leave.

Suddenly Priscilla cried out, "Fannie".

Fannie turned quickly around, startled by the strange sound of Priscilla's voice. Priscilla had risen to a sitting position in the bed and was looking pleadingly at Fannie. Her hair hung down loosely over her forehead, and her lips were moving in an attempt to form words, but no sound came forth. Her eyes, however, bespoke the burning question her lips could not form, the question which came from the depths of her anguished soul.

Fannie smiled.

"Yes," she said calmly and assuringly, "I'll be back, Priscilla. Go back to sleep. I'll have your breakfast ready when you wake up."

Catherine, the Fourth

By Vincent C. Trofi

HENRY WILKS stood before the mirror. He was almost dressed, but he was having trouble with his tie. Even after all these years, he thought, he still had difficulty tying a suitable knot. He tried a few more times and then, although not entirely satisfied, let the knot remain as it was.

Downstairs he could hear Catherine shouting orders to the twins, who were cooking dinner for Catherine's guest. Henry frowned. She was certainly excited about her guest, she wanted everything to go just right. The guest was the young man who lived down the street. He had been to the house to see Catherine several times, but never for dinner. Tonight was something special and Henry knew why, too.

He looked once more into the mirror and pushed the knot deeper into his collar. He frowned again. He knew the purpose for inviting the young man to dinner. It was part of a youthful, carefully calculated plan. Catherine undoubtedly thought the young man quite wonderful. Wonderful indeed!

Then Henry realized he was staring at himself in the mirror. He grumbled something to himself, not out of general discontentment though; the tie didn't satisfy him. He untied it quickly and went to his wardrobe and chose a new blue silk from his very large collection of ties. He thought it sober enough to go with his dark blue suit but, more imporant, it would go well with the occasion. He must appear as judicial as possible. Surprisingly enough the tie knotted very easily and neatly. Henry was so pleased that he whistled

softly as he put on his vest. Before fixing his watch chain through the middle button hole, he looked at the watch and smiled quietly. He read the inscription: *To Henry Wilks, in humble recognition for service rendered to . . .*

Downstairs, Catherine's loud, last minute instructions to the twins interrupted his reverie. She *surely* must think the young man wonderful, he thought, for all this bother. He glanced about the room. The easy chair caught his eye and beckoned to him. Henry was very tired so he couldn't refuse. He decided not to go down to dinner early this evening in order to give Catherine more freedom to arrange things just as she wanted, since it was a big night for her. So Henry went to his easy chair, took off his glasses, rubbed his eyes, and leaned back and let his mind wander easily to the minute incidents in his long, eventful life. It hadn't been too eventful to him; but to those who looked at it closely Henry's life was rather extraordinary and sort of remarkable, because Henry was a remarkable man.

He was good, honest, and intermittently stubborn and cross. He wasn't the sort of person one loved immediately. It took time to understand why he did and said the things he did. He was also a hard man to approach and, paradoxically, he was difficult to leave once one had entered into conversation with him. For beneath that bothered, disgruntled look was a marvelous nature and a heart as big as life itself. His conversations were always interesting and in retrospect, one found Henry's words were filled with wisdom and purpose.

He had been a successful government worker for forty-five years, and had traveled extensively all over the world. Yet no matter how far he traveled or how often, whether times were prosperous or not, Henry remained steeped in his own

idiosyncracies. Every action he performed unmistakably bore the label of "Henry Wilks."

Therefore while the times and life changed all about Henry, he remained the same. Life was never just routine for him, never was it a problem. That was the case until sixteen years ago when Henry was fifty-five, for something rather unusual happened to Henry. For it was then that he suddenly became the leader and guiding light of an uncompromisingly difficult family of six girls.

Now this fact is extraordinary exactly because it involves Henry Wilks. Since in the first place, Henry was, and is now very much a bachelor. In the second place, to add that note of rare, beautiful irony. Henry has persistently pursued all his life that virtue signified by the white color of the small flower that always adorned the lapel of his coat. It was never blemished.

He was in London when he received news of the sudden and tragic death of his youngest brother and his wife. They were killed while on a trip marking their fifteenth wedding anniversary. The letter was from the family doctor who explained that Henry's brother left little money and his six daughters were in danger of being separated.

Like so often in his life, Henry had to think quickly and so he decided to leave for America immediately. When he arrived he was confronted with six very sad and very lonely girls ranging from four to thirteen years of age who hardly knew him. The first few years were difficult for the girls and Henry to adjust themselves to each other. For, while their real father had been young, carefree, and over-solicitous of his children, Henry, eighteen years older than his brother was grave, only rarely gay and conducted family affairs much in

the same brusque manner as he did at the office. He never expected to set up the usual father-daughter relationship between the girls and himself. He was too wise for that. Unconsciously he treated it as a business affair marked by its very many happy occurrences and the usual sad ones. He loved the girls deeply—in his own way. A love that only became glaringly apparent on a few occasions. Like the admiration he showed when he ushered them to church every Sunday and at their birthdays and graduations.

The girls soon came to confide in him, be the matter trivial or important. This made Henry secretly happy. In no time he found himself judge and consultant on such foreign matters as: the extent of the depth of a gown's neckline, hair-dressing, early womanhood indispositions, boy-friends, and prospective husbands. In the latter case Henry's consent was needed for marriage; the girls voluntarily conceded this. However, in answering all questions, in solving all problems, Henry used the only approach he knew: the virginal bachelor's approach. The results were sometimes humorous, always enlightening.

So it was with these thoughts that Henry was occupied that evening when he sat alone in his bedroom waiting for dinner. He must have fallen asleep for he felt Catherine's hand on his arm.

She leaned over him and said apologetically, "I'm sorry, Uncle Henry, for coming into your room. I knocked but you didn't answer. Dinner's ready," she added anxiously.

"That's all right Catherine," he said, "I fell asleep, I guess. Isn't that a new dress you have on?" He was obviously trying to please her by noticing it.

"Yes, it is, Uncle Henry. Do you like it?" she asked eagerly.

"Yes, I do very much. Turn around a moment. Yes. Yes. *Red,* too. Very nice. Tonight must be a special occasion. I'm glad I decided to wear my new tie, it's from Saks, Fifth Ave., you know."

She only smiled and helped him into his suit coat.

"I hope you like the dinner, Uncle Henry. The twins surely have profited from their Home Economics course.

"I'm sure I will. Say, by the way, hasn't your guest arrived yet?"

"Oh, yes. He's downstairs now," she answered with her eyes sparkling.

"Well, get down there," he said, "before the twins do something drastic, like cook him. They've been reading about cannibalism lately, you know."

After planting a hurried kiss on his forehead, she whirled and ran downstairs leaving Henry laughing quietly to himself. He knew why she was happy; and he hoped he could say yes, but he wouldn't if he weren't sure.

Catherine was right. The twins had greatly profited from their course in Home Economics, for the dinner was delicious. It was also served with amazing dexterity by the twins, who at nineteen were the youngest of the girls. Henry could hear them laughing off in the kitchen between courses, for they knew what was to follow after dinner.

After dinner, Catherine, the young man, and Henry went into his study where they made themselves comfortable. After several painfully silent minutes, the young man stole a glance at Henry and addressed him with quickly assumed candor, "Sir, I'd like permission to marry your niece."

Henry lifted his eyes from his folded hands suddenly and glared at him. "You would? Why?"

This caught the young man completely off guard. He groped for an answer. "I don't know 'why' sir."

"You don't know why." Henry grew forceful, "Young man, do you conduct yourself thusly in all business, without a reason, without some directive or purpose. You know, this is a serious matter?"

"Well, I guess I do know why. But I can't explain it. I love—I mean—*we* love each other.

"You do?" Henry said in a feigned surprised tone. Catherine, who sat to the right of the young man, was red beyond description. "How long have you known each other?"

"All our lives it seems," the young man replied weakly.

Henry coughed, "Well, that seems like a sufficiently long time. However, young man, marriage is a serious business. You need money, a position."

"I have a reliable position in the bank," he said with authority.

"Are you a vice-president?" Henry asked as he looked at him somewhat enthused.

The young man was stopped again. "A teller," he said dejectedly.

"A teller," Henry repeated. "Well," he sighed, "there's hope for a vice-presidency anyway. Tell me, do you belong to any lodges?"

"Yes, Sir," the young man replied so enthusiastically that he startled Henry. "The Young American's Nationalist Society," he said almost proudly.

"Not really!" Henry exclaimed with astonishment. "But do you realize that that society, innocent as the title may seem, has Communist leanings and is on the Un-American

Activities list? I'm not sure that I would have my niece married to a member of the Communist Party. Impractical to say the least."

"But I didn't know the club had Communist leanings. I only joined last week," the young man said feebly, sensing that his build-up was being destroyed.

"Did you sign your name to any documents?" Henry asked.

"No, I didn't. I just attended a few hurried meetings."

"Good! You will do well not to attend any more meetings."

"I won't, sir. Does this mean that I have your consent to marry your niece?"

"Certainly not," Henry snapped. He appeared very cross.

Silence now reigned in the study. Henry stared out the window, the young man took a sudden fascination in the design of the carpet, and Catherine's eyes were filled with tears.

Henry saw her.

As the young man got up to leave, Henry motioned him quickly to stay and went to Catherine's chair. "You know, my dear," he said softly, "I only ask these questions for your sake; I believe that's what your father would have done." He hesitated and then said, "You love him, don't you?"

She nodded.

Henry went over to the young man and shook his hand. "Maybe I was rather harsh. But if you promise to love her half as much as we do here, you may become engaged."

As the couple went out of the study, Henry shouted, "And forget about that confounded society!"

It was all over. In the hallway Catherine was talking to her prospective mate, who was just getting over the effects of the ordeal.

"Boy, he sure hated to see you go," he said, shaking his head.

In the closed study, Henry yawned; he was very tired. Confident of the fact that the twins were sleeping and that Catherine was innocently saying good night to her young man, Henry afforded himself that reckless freedom he took every night when everything was all right in the house: he removed his shoes. This was pleasure beyond compare, he thought. He shut off all the lights except a small lamp beside his reading chair. He then walked over to the glass enclosed book case, opened it, and took out a photograph album. On his way back to his chair he loosed his collar and cast a wondering thought on how well his tie went over with the young man.

When he sat down he opened the album. On the front page were six pictures—of his six nieces. He studied them very carefully for a moment and then with his pen he placed a check mark over Catherine's picture as he had done over her three married sisters. He leaned back in the chair and sighed, "Thank Heavens, that's over with." Then he cast a gleaming eye at the twins' picture and murmured softly, "Just two more to go."

"Message for Arlette"

By John Slain

Take it up shyly, slyly
quickly, but not briskly
—desiccated leaf in a dry December—
Take it up gently, pently—
but Lently;
kitten in the canary cage,
sandpipers on a swift surf side.

Take it up gently, pently . . .
very surely, though, forlornly,
shyly, slyly,
quickly
. . . but gonely.

Memories of Alderney, laughter over cakes.
a lovely young duck and three drakes:
The warmth of an Indian summer,
the staling water in a skinning tumbler.

Oh! take it up quickly, quickly,
if necessary, even briskly.
Take it up shyly, slyly,
. . . . . quickly,
. . . . . whiskly,
sandpipers on a swift surf side,
too frightened birds shy of the ride.

"Message for Arlette"

Take it tenderly, pently,
kitten in the canary cage,
sandpipers by a nervous surf side.

But, still, somewhat warily,
nothing is offered quite caringly;
Best that be is not quite pure,
one part Penelope, one part whore.

Yet, take it,
timid ephemeron that may endure
both good disease and evil cure,

my message for Arlette:
(i love thee)

Secularism and Education

By John Martiska

OF the many justifiable criticisms of American education, there is one which stands above all the others. The criticism is this: the educational system in America is naturalistic and as such it does not turn out a complete man as the finished product. Not only is the system lacking in religion, but it also lacks a sound philosophy on which to build its curriculum and base its final aims. The idea of the supernatural has been kicked out the door and replaced by the natural order alone. Matter is exalted to such an extent that to think of it as having been created by God is a form of blasphemy. Man is a creature of God? This is even more blasphemous. He is an animal, nothing more. This sort of thinking has led to the interesting question . . .

If man is nothing more than an animal, why in the world spend twelve to sixteen years trying to teach him to live like a man? There may not be much difference between a pig and a little boy, but the little boy grows up to be a man and the pig ends up as pork chops. It does not take an erudite philosopher to see that man is not just an animal. He is part animal to be sure, but he is also endowed with a rational nature. Not many people would think of sending sheep and goats to school, but a great many do not bat an eyelash when they send their children to school to be taught that just structural differences separate them from the sheep and goat. In order for a man to be a man he has to be taught to think, act,

and talk like a man and without the mediums of religion and philosophy, it is impossible to turn out a complete man.

At one time, religion was the cornerstone of the educational system here in the United States. For our Forefathers to conceive of a school without religious instruction was tantamount to the denial of God. In our present day we have swung completely to the other extreme. To have religion in the school is to show weakness, and worse yet, it would mean that God is still around. Once the schools did not make religion a requisite of education it was not long before these schools became godless. This is not surprising. If it is left to the individual to decide whether to accept religion or not, the chances are that he will reject it. No man likes to have a club waving under his nose and the most common notion is that religion is a club and is therefore to be avoided. This is false.

Religion should make the man free, not servile. If the religion is true and rational it has no relation to servility. There are no chains or shackles which can hold back a man's will or intellect. Religion, true religion, gives a man freedom because it liberates him from the ties of doubts and uncertainties. A man who moves with the certainty that truth gives to him is the man that is completely free. It is the chains of secularism that tie him down.

With the loss of religion, out of the window went the stability of the educational system. Ends and means are confused; truth and error are compounded to give a distorted view of reality. There are quite a few results of this rupture. To be sure the schools have progressed without the help of religion. Our universities have enrollments running well into five figures and their buildings sprawl over many acres. They turn out graduates by the thousands, and the variety

of courses that are offered beg description. In spite of the gigantic amount of men that are graduated from our universities and colleges, one has to look long and far for those that are truly educated. As Cannon Bell so aptly observed in his recent article "Know How vs. Know Why" in *Life* Magazine, "Leaders of business and industry commonly deplore the ignorance, laxness, and *gaucherie* of the products that tumble by the thousands each year from the end of our educational assembly line." Then there are doctors who perform abortions and advocate mercy killings; teachers and intellectuals who turn to Communism; businessmen whose only goal is to become fabulously wealthy regardless of the means; lawyers who devote an honorable profession to the rescuing of criminals from the justice they deserve. These too, are the result of a religionless education.

Closely allied with the religious element is a philosophy to back it up. A religion without a sound phlisophy is weak. Man is naturally curious and to have him accept everything on faith alone is a difficult task to accomplish. He must have answers to his questions. With the loss of religion the schools had to fill up the resulting void. There were many questions but no answers. This difficulty was solved with secularism. This was a tragic choice because secularism is probably the greatest single cause for the sterility of religion today. Religion may have returned, but the philosophies bred by secularism killed off any hope that may have existed. The freethinkers threw off what they thought were obnoxious, the cloaks of religion, and went careening on their ways searching for substitutes. It would be naive indeed to say that they did not come up with new ideas.

The last hundred years has seen quite a conglomeration of new systems of thought. Naturalism abolishes the super-

natural and has faith in nature alone. Positivism limits man's knowledge only to that which can be verified by science. Empiricism worships the senses and nothing else. Behaviorism claims that man is nothing but a bundle of reflexes—give him a stimulus and out pops a response. Pragmatism sets the mold for truth; if it works it is true, if it does not, it is false. These are just a few of the replacements that have been offered. Men who do not wish to believe in something will go to tremendous lengths to disprove it no matter how ridiculous their arguments may be.

The ideas of God, the soul, free will, and even the intellect have been denied or eliminated. It is fairly easy to deny something, but to find a suitable substitute is a task which in some cases assumes gigantic proportions. In other cases, the task is impossible. I say that the man who disposes of God and seeks a substitute is guilty of the colossal presumption that he can even think of a substitute. However, the secularists seldom openly deny God. Atheism, as a rule, is never too popular. They might just as well call themselves atheists though, for the God they speak of isn't really a God but a convenient fiction. Some claim that God is Mind; others that God is Process, or Symbol or the Great Mathematician. They use some of the old terms—God, nature, soul, reason, but the words have been defined and redefined so many times that they mean nothing. Instead of the divine personal God, the God Who died on the Cross, they offer the cold dreary ideas of Process, Mind, or Symbol as substitutes. Christian supernaturalism is regarded as myth and superstition and unworthy of belief, but will anyone offer his life for Mind, get on his knees and pray to Process, or make sacrifices to Symbol?

The authors of these new philosophies are not wrong

in their quest for a philosophy. An education, if it is to be a complete education, must have some sort of philosophy to guide it. Piecemeal education is worthless. Integrating the whole structure is a necessity, or a mere ghost of an educated man is turned out. But, a philosophy without religion leads to doubts and if all these modern philosophies have anything in common, it is doubting. Their starting principle is to doubt everything except the maxim that everything is doubtful. Doubting certainly plays an important part in man's reasoning for it is because of doubts that he investigates and through investigations he arrives at knowledge. However, when even First Principles viz. the Principles of Contradiction, are doubted, this doubting becomes unreasonable. How can the vast intricacies of the universe be explained, nay how can man be fully explained, when the very foundation of all knowledge is questioned.

Father Farrell, in Volume II of his admirable commentary on the Summa Theologica, "A Companion to the Summa," sums up these modern theories very nicely. He says, "Watson, the founder of Behaviorism, once said 'Give me the baby,' meaning that he could then make the adult to order. Well, he certainly got the baby. In fact all modern philosophy has been left with the baby in its lap, and the howls of discontent and unhappiness grow louder and more despairing day by day. All the odds and ends that a distracted philosophic mind could think of have been piled in front of the baby, like peace-offerings before an angry god; philosophy has sung songs, dreamt dreams, done tricks, laughed and frowned, suggested and threatened, but the baby is unhappy. These philosophic antics—playing that men were machines, or that men were animals, that they were processes, or periods, or even commas; men have been offered riches, liberty, sensu-

ality, oblivion, slavery, glory, power and despair. But still the howls of discontent make the walls of the world shudder.[1]

All of these antics by philosophers, searching for a philosophy, seem a little foolish to me when they have a perfectly good philosophy in the system of St. Thomas Aquinas. Aye, but there is the rub. You are not going to teach Catholic philosophy in all the schools! That is going too far, cry the educators who pride themselves in their complete divorce from religion and marriage to secularism. They want nothing to do with a philosophy which has ties with a religion, least of all with the religion of Rome. Strange as it seems though, they can never wholly be free of the influence of Rome, no matter how hard they try. "After two thousand years it is very hard, indeed, even to say what is secular and what is not. The emancipated free-thinker, scornful of religion, lives upon an ethical code that still borrows from the faith of his fathers. The Christian heritage shines everywhere on men who scarcely realize what is shining on them. In all walks of life, in science and industry, in the learned professions and in the homeliest of their duties, people make sacrifices and give consecrated service to others out of instincts derived often from a forgotten religious idealism of which they themselves would say they were ashamed."[2] That is what is needed, a return to Christian principles not just as survey courses, but as the foundations of the entire educational process. But, even before that, the schools must realize the fundamental differences between education and instruction.

An education is comprised not only of teaching the underlying principles of life, but also includes the shaping of the moral character of the student and instilling in him the notion of human dignity. This is where the importance of religion and philosophy is felt. Instruction on the other

hand, is simply the absorption of knowledge which civilization has accumulated. Using these two definitions as yardsticks, we can see that the majority of students belched forth each June as college graduates may be well instructed men, but their education is sorely lacking.

The solution in putting the schools on a rational basis is now evident. The schools must educate instead of merely instruct, and their education should be based on Christian principles. Modern philosophies should be left to the modern philosophers and not let into the schools. If our educational system is to turn out complete men, educated men, and above all, men with morals, it must do these things.

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[1]Farrell, Walter, *A Companion to the Summa,* Volume II, Pg. 276, Sheed and Ward, New York, N. Y., 1945.

[2]Lowry, H., *The Mind's Adventure,* Westminster Press, Philadelphia, Pa., 1950, Pg. 23.

My Soul Has Known A Song

By Henry Griffin

My soul has known a song, lonely
As an airy threnody played upon
A bridge's steel strands at night,
Lonely as purple summits dissolved in mist,
As October's quick corruption—
    For you are lost in death,
    And lie beneath me in the earth,
    And cannot come again to me.
Expectation reduced to grief,
A solitary course but remains:
Above the isles of time's broken past
The bridge of memory wheels an arc,
Descends among those isolated reefs,
Half submerged in blue reality,
Where dead dreams are interred
And the days are buried.

The Common Weal

By M. Howard Gluckman

THE Congressman is Samuel Wilkie, a junior senator from one of the New England states. He is recently back in Washington from a summer recess and has hardly been in his office a week when his secretary enters the office with the morning's mail and a rather heavy list of appointments for the day. The contents of the mail consist of letters from a few personal friends, one from his law partner back in his home state, an advertisement for fall suits from his tailor, various letters from his constituents asking for certain trivial favors and a letter from one of his best friends and firmest supporters, Byfield Adams. By is a wealthy mill owner and had taken notice of Sam early in his law practice and had persuaded him to enter politics to run for Congress. Sam's personality and friendliness were natural and matched back to back with his strong sense of duty and a very keen mind were oustanding assets to him, but Byfield's personal influence, in and out of the party, and his wealth, which is needed for the strong backing of any candidate, were absolutely essential. Sam pushed his other mail away and sat back in his chair to open By's letter first.

By wrote Sam that he was coming to Washington to see how Sam was coming along and that he had something on his mind he wanted to discuss with him. After reading the letter Sam felt both happy and a little puzzled.

But the weeks passed in a rush and Sam had forgotten By's letter since he plunged headlong into Washington poli-

tics. He never seemed to get caught up. The days without end were a long series of callers and committee meetings. At night it was necessary for him to take home a brief case full of papers which needed to be carefully read by the next day. Congress had just convened and soon Sam was very weary from overwork. But he enjoyed his work like he had enjoyed no other. He felt vitally important, and an important cog in machinery of his government. One day he got a telegram from Byfield. It said that By was arriving at 8 o'clock the next morning in Washington and, of course, wanted to see Sam as soon as possible.

In the next twenty-four hours By's visit was a reality. The two friends in Sam's office greeted each other warmly. They talked first of things back home, their friends and how the party was doing. Then the conversation shifted to the condition of things here in Washington. It wasn't long before By got down to the real purpose of his visit.

He narrowed his eyes and drew deeply on his cigar. "Sam, you might not know it, but things have changed considerably back home since you've been gone. The threat of the Southern Textile Mills in New England is becoming severe now. Two of ———— Woolen Worsted Mills have closed up and moved south. Hamilton Stockton is gone and now Royal Woolen is getting set to move. I'm in a very precarious position myself. Most of my money is invested in New England and my whole background comes from there. This summer I was forced to limit myself to two six-hour shifts a day. Things might pick up though, and I hope to get some government contracts, but if those contracts don't come through I may have to cut the shifts even more. To speed up production I've ordered almost $80,000 in new machinery and I'm spending $50,000 more in modernizing my plant to

a one level operation. I'll lay my cards on the table, Sam, this next year and a half will either keep me in business or break me here in New England." "Well, well," said Sam smiling at By's sudden turn of seriousness, "do you want me to draw up a bill outlawing textile manufacturing in the South?" "No," said By, showing no interest in Sam's humor, "I want you to play a heads up game in respect to the lowering of tariffs on British Woolens. If this bill goes through — I'm through, and so is everyone else in New England. The British goods together with the goods from the South would put New England in so strong a competitive market that only the most successful mills could survive and on only a very limited basis. This bill would be the opening in the dyke and frankly, Sam, we can't buck it. Some people say it's about time New England got rid of the textile business and that it was only a necessary evil. But now they are realizing the distress that is coming from only a few mills closing. A man can talk about quiting a job from one week to the next and it's still only words. But when the time comes and the job is gone it's a different story." "I see what you mean, By," Sam said. "I'll see what I can do for you as soon as I can." The two men talked on for some time after that and then By said good-by to Sam and left. That night Sam couldn't sleep, he was still thinking about By's visit. He knew how important this issue was both locally and nationally and especially internationally. He hated being torn so in two, yet when it came time for him to vote he must be absolutely sure of himself.

The ensuing weeks brought no solution. As a matter of fact the situation grew worse. Many of his hometown friends had been to see him. Almost all of them on official calls, asking him not to let them down. The weight of the problem of splitting his loyalty and yet keeping the faith of

his constituents was growing almost unbearable for him. His work became meaningless. He began to hate the very things he had at first loved. The endless paper work. The lobbies and the various selfish pressure interests. No, democracy was not as he had thought, an orderly organization of justice, but it was an inefficient, corrupt platform for professional politicians who furthered their own gain by satisfying the powerful lobbies and businesses. Labor union leaders from his district came to him for the same purpose everyone else did, only these men weren't asking favors, they were demanding. Sam's constituency was small and almost everyone there belonged to the unions. One word from these men in the next election and Sam was through in New England, both as a politician and as a lawyer. Sam only half listened to these men. He was spending very little time in his office now and the work was piling up on his desk. Sam was spending his time in the city either going for long walks or just sitting in the park feeding the pigeons. It was only at the urging of his wife that he did any work at all.

It was one of these days in the park that he met a retired businessman and one time government aide. The two men introduced themselves to each other and after a fashion proceeded to talk together for some time. They discussed many things but mostly politics. Sam asked this man's opinion on all of the major issues except the one most important to him. There seemed to be a mental block in Sam's mind and he simply avoided any mention of the problem. Sam's friend had a strange way of discussion. He ventured personal comments and solutions to the various problems, always in a philosophical way. Yet the solutions were always entirely feasible and very practical. The day was growing to an end and Sam bid good-by to his friend. But he did ask him for an appointment

to visit him that night after dinner in his hotel room. The elderly man agreed and the two men parted.

That night the two men again met and sat down to talk. The discussion went on for hours and was only interrupted by a servant with refreshments, but it never lagged for a moment. It was too vitally important to both men. For Sam it was to learn, for this man it was to teach. The subjects they sought to discuss were only used as test cases or as examples. Sam saw at once the brilliance of this man's mind and marveled at the speed with which he got to the heart of the problem. Once able to understand the essentials of a problem without the outside covering of complexities and misleading aspects, Sam realized he was able to arrive at satisfactory solutions almost as quickly and as easily as his friend. Being thoroughly heartened and warmed by the discussion, Sam was tempted to ask his friend's advice concerning the lowering of American tariffs. But the time was growing late and Sam decided to save it for another time. They shook hands and said good-by. When Sam got to the street he noticed that the weather was warm and he decided to walk home. In the silence and closeness of the night Sam unconsciously mulled over his old problem. He realized that for future survival America had to make friends abroad and to make these friends we must, as one of the basic steps, drop our high tariff barriers. It was the duty of every honest congressman to his country to vote for the bill advocating the lowering of this tariff. Yet it was also the duty of each congressman to vote in the interest of his constituents in regard to their letters, telegrams and visits. As a man in direct contact with the people he must act according to their specific wishes and if each congressman does likewise, the national policy is formed. Whether or not the course of events taken was good or bad cannot be immediately determined

but it must wait inevitably for the future. Sam now knew his course of action. As much as it was against his better judgment he knew he must vote against the lowering of the tariffs or at least ask for an amendment in regard to the British woolens. Sam knew he wasn't a judge on the bench but a voice of the people who had put him there by the action of a vote. He wasn't flag waving but he felt good again about his government. The enemies such as the lobbyists and big industries took off their masks and Sam recognized them as friends. Congress emerged as a sounding board with a course of action. For the first time in his life he realized exactly how the individual American gained a voice and was able to share a part and responsibility in the governing of himself and the welfare of his country and neighbors. So after all the problem was no problem at all. It was so simple. The rules had been set more than two hundred years ago. He had merely to play the game according to these rules and the results, the scoring, the action would automatically justify itself. For Sam to vote against the lowering of the tariff would not be wrong but actually right since it was actually in the interest of the people he was representing.

He hurried home feeling like a small boy again, wondering what the next day would bring. It is something we all might ask here and everywhere—what would it bring?

The A. M. Spirit

By Fred A. Barbieri

IT was early morning on the P.C. campus, an autumn morning brisk and full of sunshine. A gentle wind dusted the various buildings and curled its way up toward Aquinas Hall. Here this huge, red-brick dormitory was just awakening, stretching its wings, its insides bustling with involuntary activity. The building seemed to resent this inner movement of its component parts, for in peculiar rhythm it would open its apertures and vomit one or several students at a time. Out they came either straying by themselves or flocking with the herd, some voluntarily in anticipation, others involuntarily by force of discipline, and still others half-asleep propelled forward through sheer force of habit.

It was a member of this latter ilk who ventured forth from the "Hall" at 8:29 A.M., little realizing that he had just sixty seconds to make his 8:30 class. Dick Dilatory was his name and tardiness was his game this morning. A quick glance at the watch on his fat wrist shocked him to the realization that his punctuality was in jeopardy. With the eagerness of a greyhound and the speed of a hippopotamus he descended the five stone stairs in front of the dorm. They seemed to wince in agony under his ponderous weight and a vague "Phew!" could be heard when Dick's form finally shifted from the steps to the sidewalk.

The tremendous problem of reaching Harkins Hall in the next fifty seconds loomed up before our fat friend. With a quickness of mind, that was indeed admirable, he applied

the ancient geometrical axiom of the shortest distance between two points and cut quickly to his right across the stunted green herbage that clothes the campus earth. Having achieved his initial momentum, he streaked past slumbering maple trees and scurrying students. His one-hundred and ninety-pound, five-foot eight-inch frame athletically squeezed into the rear door of Harkins Hall, a huge structure which seemed to laugh at the mechanical movements of the fat boy.

A blast of the 8:30 bell shouted to Dick that his efforts were in vain. Puffing and panting he proceeded promptly, pausing past the office of the inquisition, the office of the Dean of Discipline. Here he would have to obtain a late slip to be admitted to his class. His legs obeyed the impulse telegraphed to them from his brain and carried his torso into the Dean's office.

"What's your excuse this time?" came the booming voice from within.

Dick didn't seem to hear these words for deep within him there surged a feeling of accomplishment. At least I tried, he thought, at least I tried.