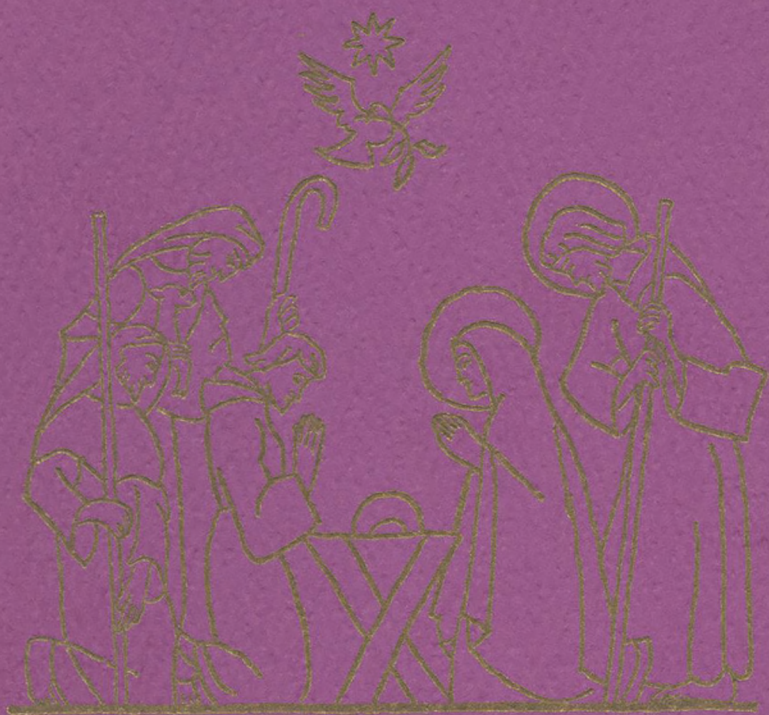


# ALEMBIC

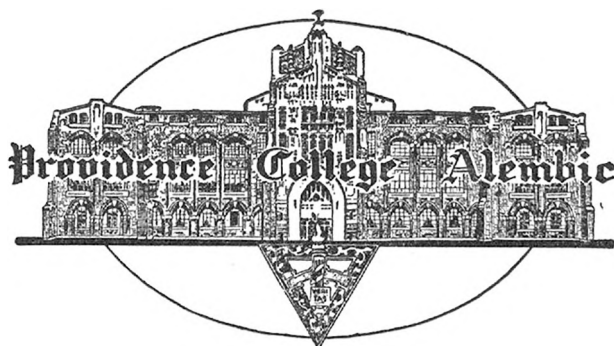


*... many will rejoice at His Birth.*

*Luke 1:14*

*Christmas 1962*

# THE ALEMBIC



PUBLISHED QUARTERLY  
BY THE  
STUDENTS OF PROVIDENCE COLLEGE  
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## EDITORIAL

In the past, there has been a considerable amount of comment concerning the *Alembic*. Some has been favorable, and for this we are grateful. Some, on the other hand, has been critical. For this too, we are grateful, since it helps us to produce a better publication. However, at this time it seems necessary to comment upon the comment. It is fitting that this be done in the first issue of the scholastic year, because we can thus propose our policy, if you will, our artistic manifesto.

As a basis for our manifesto, we must understand that a literary magazine is not necessarily required to be argumentative in content. There are available other organs which are eminently more suitable for the publication of articles of social comment, particularly those dealing with current events. This is not to say, however that the *Alembic* will reject a well-written argumentative essay on a subject in which the writer is competent. If the work has an intrinsic *artistic* merit, it most definitely will be considered for publication. But primarily, our interest is in entertaining the reader with light poetic (in the Aristotelian sense) works, and not in inciting him to action. This simply is not our function.

Let us further expand this idea, in order to ascertain exactly what sort of publication the *Alembic* is. The *Alembic* is an organ for the diffusion and dissemination of creative works. Again, we are forced to distinguish this somewhat encompassing term. Not all creative works are acceptable merely because they are creative. This, in itself, cannot be a criterion for publication, for if it were to

be, we should doubtless have a much larger magazine. Unfortunately, however, it could not be selective. Contributors should adhere to the more customary conventions, no matter how *avant garde* they wish to be.

The *Alembic* is the fruit of the earnest endeavor of many people. Since it is the publication of a Catholic institution, it should (and will) conform to certain standards. Material printed in the *Alembic* must adhere to the moral principles which are so important a part of our faith. Following upon this train of thought, it is felt by the editors that obscenity, questionable humor, immoral or spiritually degrading situations, and other matter of this ilk is not suitable for publication.

We are aware of the constant shifts which the trends of contemporary literature take, and are constantly made more aware of these changes by the nature of the material which we receive. It is here that the hardest part of the task of publication begins, the task of, literally, constructing a magazine which we feel will be acceptable to the majority of its readers. Every work which we receive is given careful consideration, and none is rejected without a sufficient cause. The final choice of what is to be published rests with the editors. It must be stated that all the material printed in the *Alembic* is printed on the basis of its conformity with those standards of literary form, style, and content which may be considered good literature. The publication of good literature is our aim, and it has been and will be, our policy.

THE EDITORS



# The Silent Echo

MICHAEL CASTELLUCCIO, '64

HE closed the book slowly, and stared across at the wall. The author's ideas, freed from their paper sepulchre, wandered through his mind. He sat quietly allowing the motion of these ideas to slow to languid familiarity. Outside the wind moaned as a tree scratched at its soft belly, and on hearing this he again saw the wall. He stood up and stretched his arms. Although he would have preferred to remain within the silence of the room, it was very late. Replacing the volume, he turned off the light and started upstairs.

With his shoes in his hand he slowly climbed the stairs. He purposely avoided the fourth. He knew that it creaked.

Gently he closed the bedroom door behind him. Through the darkness he knew that she slept soundly. The warmth of her presence filled the room, and he thought he heard her breath on her pillow. He stood motionless for several seconds. Not even darkness had the power to veil her beauty.

After returning from the bathroom in his pajamas, he silently walked over to his bed. He sat down, and took off his slippers. Suddenly he remembered the cat. If she were anywhere in the room, it was certain that she would awaken them later in the night. She had done so the night before by scratching on the door. Her kittens were downstairs. To find her he would have to turn on a light. He rose, and carefully eased over to one of the lamps on the

*The Alembic*

dresser. Although he knew that it would only partially light the room, he lifted and placed it on the floor. Kneeling, he slowly turned the switch and waited.

The sudden yellow flare startled him. He turned quickly to see if it had awakened her. Her eyes were closed, and her soft hair seemed no burden at all for the pillow. The cat lay in the wide folded shadows at her feet. It was lost in the mysterious sleep of an animal.

As he closed the door he heard the cat swiftly move through the darkness on the stairs. He returned to the lamp. Before turning it off he again looked at her. With the light at his feet he cast a gray shadow that spanned the room, and covered her form. He placed the hand of the silhouette on her shoulder, and bent over as if to kiss her. She did not stir.

The sun was warm on his face, and he turned to look at the clock on the bedstand. It was quarter after nine. Her bed was neatly made up, and she was probably now preparing his breakfast. A streetsweeper rumbled by outside. Sounds. There was really no need for sounds. He thought of how much more beautiful the world would be if the loudest disturbance was that of a snowfall at night . . . And people talking; or rather echoing the thoughts of others. He thought of how often during the day he would mouth someone else's words. Though at fault by necessity, not choice, this often annoyed him. And the way people actually judged others by their memory, and ability to mimic. It seemed the standard of judgment was a false one. Those who were clever in resounding the words of others were thought to be wise. To him, however, this collecting and



## *The Silent Echo*

frequent usage of others' thoughts was stifling. The cluttering lessens a person's claim on himself. When yellow leaves fall on grass, the greenness must be sought out as time allows the scattering of these aged things. A man must be himself just as a lake is itself, pure and alone, as are the clouds, and even the kittens downstairs.

She came into the room, and walked over to his bed. He turned on his side, and she sat down on the edge of the bed. She smiled as he put his hand on hers. Indeed, it was morning, for there was a fragrance of coffee on her breath. The sun, and clocks and all other measures meant nothing to him. Only in sleep could he be parted from her. He reached up to kiss her. Her lips, untouched by the plague of words, gently pressed against his. From the day of her birth she had never been able to form even the sound of her own name, Kathleen.

## Sadness

THOMAS ECK, '64

An ever so tender  
Sadness prevailed.  
The softness of it  
Spoke of green and shrouded valleys,  
Of mist and dusk.  
The strains of sadness  
Are mute,  
And yet fill the senses  
With melancholy music.

## In a Vision of Cities

JAMES M. DESCHENE, '64

and these cities are not our cities . . .  
in these cities old men hobble to their end  
on bamboo canes,  
feeding the cities' grounded pigeons with stale peanuts,  
reading yesterday's newspapers, talking about old times  
to themselves  
or to others if they will listen . . .  
there are the ancient sages, the philosophers  
who speak with a mellowed wordly wisdom  
who hobble to the end with quiet dignity,  
unseen pain—  
one day they are not found on their street corner  
speaking . . .  
where do they go, these old men,  
when night comes  
or winter?  
we do not know or care  
for these cities are not our cities . . .  
there are others, lonelier ones—  
no one listens to them on street corners  
but they do not care,  
there is nothing to say  
now—  
drifting from bar  
to bar  
leaving puddles of vomit behind them  
for us to avoid in disgust  
as we walk through the cities of light . . .  
where are they going, these old men,

*In a Vision of Cities*

where are they going with their canes  
stale peanuts and  
memories?  
we do not know or care  
for these cities are not our cities . . .  
we do not live here, we say,  
we do not live here.  
and they stare at us  
and know what we do not know.  
and they cannot speak  
for there is pain  
in the telling  
and we would  
not listen  
anyhow . . .  
so they drift along  
in their cities and we  
in ours, each of us alone.  
and they will drift on,  
hobbling on their bamboo canes  
to a welcome end, feeding  
flightless pigeons with stale peanuts.  
one day perhaps they will stop drifting,  
go quietly and peacefully  
like the soft gray pigeons they feed  
who disappear at night  
in unseen flight  
and who are found in a thousand cities . . .  
and so it is with old men  
who move by night, silently,  
into another city . . .

## Wind and Water

THOMAS A. HALLEE, '64

Falling is the first snow,  
A weight of cold wet white,  
With both gust and gentle blow,  
To blanket fall's brown blight.

Fallen has the first snow.  
Wronged by nature's reclined ray,  
Deep dead is dirt from glow.  
Stopped is staid winter to stay.

Fallen has the last snow;  
From candled ice, cold aquas cascade.  
Brisk breezes begin to blow,  
Sprouting spring is soon displayed.

# The Windmill

PETER J. CONN, '64

HE walked out into the street, blinked a few times against the sun, turned and went back inside. The sign over the door said "Carl's." The place was dim and empty, except for the bartender polishing the tumblers and arranging them in pyramids. The chairs were all neatly stacked, legs up, on the table-tops. He threw a helpless sort of grin at the bartender, who did not acknowledge, but merely watched him as he walked unsteadily across the floor to the end stool.

He was thirty-five, a small man who looked smaller because of the stoop in his shoulders. His face was particularly unattractive—leaden grey eyes set in two slits on both sides of a flattened nose. His feeble grin exposed blackened, irregular teeth. His hands were those of an old man, slender and fragile, and gnarled by veins and arteries.

He didn't exactly sit down: he grabbed the bar with both hands and pulled himself onto the stool.

The place hadn't changed much in five years. "My God!" he thought, but half out loud. The bartender glanced at him suspiciously. So much can happen in five years. In those days he'd been almost happy. He'd even been married for a couple of years. "But no kids," he muttered. The bartender stopped polishing and looked at him closely. "No kids," he repeated, this time to himself.

His eyes wandered absently over the interior—the cigarette machine, the jukebox, the tables. He'd had good

times here . . . good times. Those had been good days, all the way around. He used to go to church, almost every week. He'd occasionally spent some time and energy in those self-conscious good deeds used by the moderately successful to occupy their time. "No!" he uttered suddenly, with a rare glimmer of emotion. He actually used to enjoy helping somebody else out; he had gotten real satisfaction from it.

When he was sober he was depressed. Right now he was about half drunk and determined to be completely drunk.

"Carl," he said, with as much resolution as he could manage.

"No," the bartender said sharply.

"C'mon, just one more," he said, his voice descending into a sort of whine.

"I can't do it," the bartender said. Anger was creeping into his voice. "You're a month behind already."

"I'll make good. Next week," he pleaded.

"Get out," the bartender said, very slowly.

He eased himself off the stool and walked toward the door, trying to maintain as much of his composure as he could. The bartender watched him silently.

Out in the street, he turned and started walking downtown. "Bastard," he muttered over and over again. The faster-moving crowd jostled him constantly. The sun was setting; after walking a few blocks, he stepped into a store alcove to watch the shadows move up the sides of the great skyscrapers across the street.

## *The Windmill*

“God, how I hate this town,” he exclaimed aloud. He really wanted to leave the city and had often tried; but he never got further than the subway terminal. It wasn’t any sort of affection that restrained him—it was necessity. “Where the hell would I go anyway? To do what?”

He stepped out into the street again and walked a few more blocks, then turned down a side street. Darkness had settled on the city.

Half-way down the street was one of those churches found only in New York, distinguishable from the delicatessen and tailor on either side only by the small sign and cross next to the front door. He hesitated as he walked past; he had long since become aware that he wasn’t going to find his next meal in there, yet something about it troubled him. He didn’t have the energy to investigate, but just shook his head as if to say “The hell with it.”

He walked a couple of blocks further, turned the corner, and stopped. About six feet away from him, at the edge of the sidewalk, he saw a small black change purse. He pressed against the side of a building and stared at it fixedly for a full minute. His first impulse was to rush over and pick it up, but he stood without moving, trying to overcome that fear of reprobation, of being caught, that stifles so many illegal or unconventional actions, however trivial. His desire quickly won out.

He took three rapid steps and, in one remarkably sure motion, scooped the purse up and continued walking. He put it in his pocket but didn’t let go of it. For the first time in weeks, he was glad he was quickly becoming sober.



He turned again, on to a side street that was relatively quiet, and stepped under a street lamp. He took out the purse, pulled it open, and found two one dollar bills. He actually felt like giving thanks to . . . to he didn't know what. He folded the bills carefully and put them in his pocket.

Then his fingers found something else in the purse, a card which read simply: "Mrs. Floyd Coles, 114-68 West 84th Street." He read it again. The joy of his discovery had vanished and now he felt a gnawing uneasiness. It was not the fear he had felt before, but something he couldn't define.

He removed the two bills from his pocket and unfolded them in his hand.

"Two dollars is a hell of a lot of money."

He stood without moving for a few seconds. Then he placed the card back inside the purse, dropped the purse to the ground, and shoved the two dollars into his pocket. He started walking.

He had been travelling almost in a circle—Carl's was only two blocks away.

# Jake

ALEXANDER BARTLETT, '66

Is a God-fearing man.  
He can  
Hold his own in a fight.  
At night  
He is home with his loving wife.  
His life  
Is a model one indeed:  
    No greed  
    Or malice in his heart.  
He is smart,  
Though he never went to school.  
A mule  
Has not a stronger back.  
He is black  
And because he is black, he is hated:  
    Degraded  
    By the whites who are his neighbors.

He labors  
And sweats and sighs and groans.  
His bones  
Ache,  
Ache to the oily marrow.  
Jake  
Walks the straight and narrow.

Jake  
Is a God-fearing man.  
He can  
Smile to a white  
In spite  
Of the hatred that surrounds him.

I found him  
To be a loyal friend:  
    A friend  
    On whom I can depend;  
    A friend  
    Whose blood is red, like mine;  
    Whose spine  
    Supports as many ribs;  
    Whose fibs  
    Do no one any harm;  
    Whose arm  
    Is stronger than my own;  
    Whose bones,  
    Like mine are filled with marrow,  
And he walks the straight and narrow.

Jake  
Is a God-fearing man,  
And few virtues does he lack,  
But he is hated because he is black.

# Contention

JAMES P. FARRELLY, '64

Some ancients say, and well they know.  
That this is how a poem should go,  
With rhyme and feet and numbered lines.  
A simple thought that just defines  
The funny way a poet feels  
When he his mind to us reveals.

Sweetly  
other moderns claim  
that freedom is the true  
expression of an aching, errant  
heart.  
poetry just flows, endless  
and unformed in erratic lines and  
latent image—  
onward  
in magnificent nothings.

but,

which of all the naked author's  
styles I favor in my tossed and tumbled  
heart  
( though one I do ) I will not say  
Lest others rise scorning my way  
and scream and yell in interminable  
debate  
the pros and cons of this  
unresolved, elaborate dispute.  
So make your choice and make it well  
For either way you'll still get—  
arguments.

# Club Champion

BARRY BIRD

“MR. ROBERTS, Clemens, and Woods, report to the first tee, please,” boomed the public address system into the large locker room. The room, perhaps because of the early hour, had an other world atmosphere about it. Most of its usual denizens had never entered its confines before noon except for the few tournaments which drew them from their beds once or twice over the course of a season. Sunday mornings the clubhouse was usually deserted except for Calhoon, who was now feverishly engaged in his usual Sunday morning activities. The caddy master and general handy man was dressed in a sparkling white shirt which was starting to lose its fresh appearance as Calhoon stepped up his pace. In the small of Calhoon’s back a clear wet spot could be seen which made the cotton cloth stick to his back.

Jake Murphy entered through the heavy wooden door and walked gingerly to his locker. He felt uncomfortable walking in his new golf shoes. Their sharp spikes dug into the floor beneath his feet.

“Good morning, Mr. Murphy. It sure is a beauty, isn’t it?” said Calhoon as he peered over his clip board.

“It sure is, Calhoon. I could kick myself for not getting out here more often on these Sunday mornings.”

“Yes, suh. When the dew is still on the grass and the flowers haven’t started to droop yet and there is a special smell in the air like after a light rain. You sure can’t beat that.”

*Club Champion*

"No, I guess you can't. Sometimes, Calhoon, I think you get more out of this club than any of the members do."

"This is the first time you've reached the finals, isn't it, Mr. Murphy?"

"That's right. I guess those lessons and the practice sessions have finally started to pay off. I never thought I'd get this far. Have you seen Mr. Reedy this morning?"

"No, I haven't. He's your opponent isn't he?"

"Yes, he is."

"Well, good luck. He sure is a tough customer."

"I think that describes him very well, Calhoon. Perhaps better than you know."

"What's that, Mr. Murphy?"

"Oh, nothing. I was just thinking of how often Milt has won this championship."

"Yes, if he wins this year it will make three straight and he'll be able to keep the cup. Two years ago it was against that Mr. Wilson."

"Mr. Wilson?" asked Jake.

"Yes, you remember him don't you? Or did he quit the club before you joined. All of the members used to buy their cars from him. He was about the largest Buick distributor in the state."

"Oh, yes. It seem's I've heard some strange stories about Mr. Wilson."

“And last year he beat Mr. Andrews. That was the same day Mr. Andrews lost control of his car and smashed it into a tree.”

“He was lucky to live through that one, wasn’t he, Calhoon?”

“It sure is a coincidence with you and Mr. Reedy both being lawyers and playing each other in the finals. Everyone knows how you’re at each other all the time in the court room.”

“Out here I try to forget all that,” said Jake.

The door swung open and a tall slim figure walked briskly into the room. Milt Reedy’s long sleeved black nylon shirt contrasted sharply with his bright red trousers. In deference to his long, curly, black hair he wore no hat. A large cigar was clamped between his teeth.

“Good morning, Jake,” said Milt. “I didn’t get a chance to see you yesterday after the trial. It was a tough one to lose. I thought you were going to win it all the way but you can never tell about those things.”

“I would have won it if you hadn’t sullied the reputation of my star witness.”

“Tut, tut, Jake. You aren’t going to make another scene like you did yesterday in the court room, are you? You know what I did was perfectly legitimate. You could have tried the same thing on any witness of mine. Actually, I don’t see why you didn’t.”

“I didn’t expect you to see why I didn’t but just to set you straight, I don’t believe in degrading the character of any citizen who is just trying to do his duty.”



## *Club Champion*

"Come on now, Jake. Get off the high horse. You know Moss Gremmick is drunk more often than he's sober."

"Well what's that got to do with his daughter? That doesn't affect what she says does it?"

"The jury seemed to think so, didn't they?" asked Milt.

"Just don't mention it will you, Milt. I want to forget the whole episode."

"All right, Jake, if you say so," said Milt.

"Mr. Reedy and Mr. Murphy, report to the first tee, please," intruded the public address system.

"Calhoon, hurry and get my shoes, will you?" Milt asked harshly.

Calhoon walked through the door at the end of the locker room.

"I don't see why they keep him around here," said Milt. "Some day we're going to find him dead back here from a heart attack. He's too old to be of any use back here. He ought to be in some sort of a home."

"Calhoon gets around all right. You'd be surprised," said Jake.

"He gets around for those he takes a liking to, but for most of us he's more trouble than he's worth. I've asked Benny to fire him a couple of times but you know Benny. He'd do anything to avoid an embarrassing situation."

Calhoon emerged from the small foyer at the end of the locker room and walked slowly up to Milt's locker.

He placed the shoes down just out of Milt's reach. Without looking up, he turned and started back toward his office. The small wet spot on the back of his shirt had grown slightly larger and nearly reached his belt.

"I'll meet you on the tee, Milt," said Jake as he rose and left the room.

"Okay, I'll be right out there."

Both players stood awkwardly on the first tee going through their individual rituals prior to teeing off. The threesome ahead of them was walking away from the distant green and the lush fairway stretched out before Milt and Jake. Jake had already taken the prescribed number of practice swings and was now absently cleaning the imbedded dirt from the face of his battered driver. He meticulously worked the white wooden tee into every crack and crevice which marred the face of the ancient club.

Off to the side, Milt Reedy continued to swing his driver in wide arcs. He was conscious of the two people who had just emerged from the clubhouse and because of their presence he continued his practice swings. There is nothing a golfer enjoys more than the admiring glances of fellow golfers. Milt Reedy had good reason to be proud of his long, smooth, powerful swing. As he started his downswing the surge of power in his arms never failed to make its presence felt.

"Call it," said Jake, as he tossed a quarter into the morning air.

"Heads."

## *Club Champion*

"I'll go first, Milt. It may be the only thing I win all day."

Jake took his stance and, after a perfunctory practice swing, swung in an easy controlled manner at the shiny white sphere before him. He lofted it in a controlled arc nearly two hundred yards down the left side of the fairway.

"Not bad, Jake."

Milt Reedy took his stance and, after adjusting the height of his tee, he unleashed his powerful sweeping stroke. The sharp crack of club meeting ball echoed in the trees as his ball sailed far down the middle of the wide fairway. His was nearly sixty yards beyond Jake's ball. Without bothering to pick up his tee, Milt started walking briskly down the dew laden fairway. The two caddies trailed behind. Water kicked off the toes of both players' shoes as they cut through the wet grass. Off in the deep pines to the right, a lone sparrow could be heard chirping. The sun had not neared its apex and the area under the pines was still murky. Jake walked along swinging the head of his driver at the tops of the dandelions which marred the velvet greenery of the plush fairway.

The match was all even after fifteen holes. Milt had hit all greens in regulation except for six and eleven. On six his tee shot had caught a trap far down the left side of the fairway and he had been forced to sacrifice a shot to get out. On eleven he had overclubbed himself on his second shot and the following wind had carried the ball out of bounds behind the green. Jake had hit few really good shots but he had not hit any bad ones. His conservative game had been paying dividends. He had been scrambling for pars all day. But because of his newly acquired

skill with the wedge and also because of his steady putter he had been able to hold his own with Milt.

Jake might have been in the lead except for a bad lie his ball had found on the twelfth fairway. His short drive had nestled itself into a divot hole on the right side of the fairway. He considered declaring the ball unplayable but the penalty would have cost him the hole. Neither caddy was near Jake, and Milt was nearly fifty yards beyond him standing near his ball. For an instant Jake thought of moving the ball with his clubhead just enough to give him a clean shot at the ball. This would have been dishonest and just thinking of the covert action put an unpleasant taste in Jake's mouth. The shot came off as well as could be expected from the bad lie and the ball stopped about thirty-five yards short of the green. He chipped on and two putted for the bogey. Milt got his par and Jake was one down. He was not able to make up the deficit until Milt three putted the fifteenth green.

Now the sun was high in the heavens and beat down harshly on the two contestants. The toes of their shoes no longer kicked up water. The sun was dimly reflected off the leather of Milt's shoes where the morning dew had washed away the shoe polish which had been so diligently applied the previous night by Calhoon. Many sparrows could be heard arguing bitterly in the tops of the nearby pine trees and occasionally one or two could be seen hopping irregularly about on the soft pine needles which lay far below the distant tops of the stately trees.

The sixteenth hole was a fairly short par five. There was a rise about two hundred yards out from the back mar-

## *Club Champion*

kers which obstructed the view of the green. Both caddies stood out on the top of the rise so that they would be in position to watch the entire flight of the tee shots. Milt let out a little shaft in an effort to get into position for getting home in two on the relatively short par five. His shot duck hooked into the woods on the left. Jake's ball went down the middle and the favoring wind put him beyond the spot where Milt's ball had disappeared into the trees. As soon as Jake's shot hit the ground, Milt's caddy started walking toward the woods into which Milt's ball had disappeared. But Milt waved him off.

"That's all right. I know where it is," yelled Milt as he headed into the trees.

After sizing up his next shot for a few minutes, Jake started walking back to the place where Milt had entered the woods. As he neared the spot he heard Milt thrashing around in the thick pines. Jake's eye caught sight of a ball a few yards off the edge of the fairway. It was directly behind a thick pine.

"There it is . . ."

Jake's words stopped in his throat. As he had opened his mouth he saw Milt's foot appear from behind the tree and kick the ball a few yards away from the base of the trunk which had obstructed the ball's progress toward the green. Jake ran over to where Milt was standing.

"I saw you do that, Milt. I saw you."

Milt looked at Jake in shock.

"I saw that," repeated Jake.

“You saw what?”

“You kicked your ball from behind that tree.”

“Kicked my ball?” repeated Milt incredulously. “Don’t be stupid, Jake. What are you talking about?”

“I saw you kick your ball, Milt. Now either put it back or I’ll report you to Benny.”

“Don’t be an ass. I didn’t kick my ball.”

“I saw you, Milt.”

“I won’t move it from where it is, Jake. You’re seeing things. I think that trial yesterday was too much for you.”

“If you don’t put that ball back behind that tree, I’ll report you, Milt. I mean it.”

Milt turned his back to Jake and gazed intently at the large green which was at the base of a hill over two hundred and forty yards in the distance. He nervously fingered the grip of his driver, took a perfunctory practice swing, and then stepped back from the ball. He turned and faced Jake with a slight sneer on his face.

“I mean it, Milt,” said Jake.

Milt turned his glance from Jake to his club. He flicked a piece of grass from the face of the driver, resumed his stance, and started his backswing. When he reached the top, his right leg stiffened and the clubhead flashed down unleashing in its wide arc the tremendous power which Milt possessed in his wiry body. Jake watched the ball rise and fly majestically in a straight line dead for the pin. It landed on the front of the green, kicked to the left,

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and stopped about twenty-five feet from the flag stick. With every yard the ball covered Jake became more furious.

“That does it, Milt.”

“Just hit your ball, Jake. We’ll talk about your hallucinations later.”

“My hallucinations! I’ve got a good mind to wrap this damned club around your skinny neck.”

“Take it easy, Jake. If you want to report anything do it when we get back to the clubhouse. No need to make a scene out here where everyone on the course can hear you.”

Jake looked around and saw that a foursome on the third tee had been staring at him. Jake was furious but he did not wish to make a fool of himself. He walked up to his ball and without taking time to line up his shot he jerked his four iron from the bag and took his stance. The back of his fingers were white on the grip of the club. The clubhead shot back and as it reached the top, Jake felt himself sway slightly.

“Damn,” he thought, knowing what the swaying motion meant to the coming shot. He lashed out at the ball in white rage. The club flashed down glinting in the early afternoon sun. It dug into the turf more than an inch behind the ball. There was no sharp pain, just a dull, frustrating, maddening ache as the club twisted in his hands. The large divot rose high in the air, flew straight toward the pin, and landed about twenty yards away from Jake’s firmly planted feet. The ball squirted straight off to the right.



“That miserable ball,” said Jake.

He ran over to the white pellet and struck wildly out at it again. The club made perfect contact with the white sphere. It took off in a straight line toward the woods to the right. It climbed high and dropped into the distant tops of the pine trees. Jake heard two sharp cracks as the ball made its way into the thick trees. He listened intently as it settled into the dense briars at their base. In some spots the briars grew to a man’s waist. Walking quickly into the woods, his caddy trailing behind, Jake tried to follow the path of the ball. The briars tugged at his cuffs as he plodded through the thickening underbrush. He slammed at the grasping briars with the tightly held club, quietly cursing all the time. He did not feel the thorns digging into his arms and hands.

Milt had walked up to the green and proceeded with two deft strokes to hit his ball into the cup. As he lifted his ball from the hole he saw Jake emerge from the woods. There was blood dripping from the back of Jake’s right hand.

Milt ambled to the edge of the green and watched Jake as he grimly walked up the fairway toward him. As he neared, Milt thought he saw a wild gleam in Jake’s eyes. Milt instinctively backed away and tightened his grip on the heavy mallet type putter he held in his hand. Jake walked past Milt without turning his head. Milt hesitated a moment and then followed Jake’s path toward the clubhouse staring at the back of Jake’s neck. The bright red color was slowly fading and the tanned brown hue was again growing dominant.

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Jake walked through the bar of the clubhouse without speaking to anyone. He stomped through the recreation room and climbed the stairs to the second floor. The door before him had "Greens Committee" lettered across it. Jake burst through the door without knocking.

"Benny!"

"Hello, Jake, how did you make out?"

Benny was in his mid fifties. Deeply tanned and portly, he was quite satisfied with the cards life had dealt him. He was president of a small electrical company his father had founded. Life had been one big gift for him. His position as head of the Greens Committee, unimportant as it was, was about the only thing Benny felt he had ever earned. And even about that he felt some misgivings. He knew that without Milt Reedy's support he would never have been considered for the office.

"I want to report Milt Reedy to the Greens Committee," said Jake. "He kicked his ball from behind a tree on the sixteenth hole."

"Now wait a minute, Jake," said Benny. "That's a very serious charge. Suppose you sit down for a minute and get control of yourself."

"I don't want to sit down. He moved his ball and I want to know what you're going to do about it."

"Are you sure he moved his ball? Maybe it just looked that way from where you were standing. Sometimes the sun can play tricks out there."

"He moved his ball. I saw him kick it with his foot."

Benny was embarrassed. This was the third straight year he had been called upon to settle a dispute involving the club championship. He had lived his whole life in an effort to avoid all trying situations. Hadn't he refused to testify in that hit and run case just last month? Benny heard someone climbing the stairs and looked toward the door for salvation. Milt sauntered into the room.

"Milt, Jake has something he wants to say," said Benny.

Jake did not look at Milt.

"Benny, I saw Milt move his ball."

"Now wait a minute, Jake. Something like this can lead to an awful lot of bad publicity for the club. Suppose you settle down before you say any more," said Benny.

"Are you going to report him to the Greens Committee or aren't you, Benny?"

"Think of the other members, Jake. How are they going to feel about this? This is a very awkward situation you know."

"Rules were made to be obeyed," hammered Jake.

"Understand I'm not saying that he did move his ball, but just what difference does it make if he did? After all, it isn't a national catastrophe you know," implored Benny.

"What difference would it make if I cheated every time I got the chance? Rules are rules. They're the same as laws. If someone breaks them he should have to pay the penalty."

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"I know all that, Jake. There's no need to give a lecture."

Benny was growing more and more angry at Jake for intruding in upon and disrupting his settled little world. This affair could create a scandal that would take years to repair. Why couldn't Jake be sensible like Mr. Wilson two years ago or like Mr. Andrews last year? This scandal would be remembered for years and Benny would be remembered as being the head of the Greens Committee which had botched up the whole thing.

"That stupid Jake," thought Benny. "What difference does it make if Milt moved his ball? I move mine every so often and so do those sneaks I play with."

"Now wait a minute, Jake. Suppose you think over these wild unsupported charges you're making," said Milt entering the discussion for the first time. He knew how uncomfortable Benny was becoming.

"I've nothing to think over. You moved your ball and I saw you."

"That's another thing," interjected Benny grasping at the straw Milt had tossed him. "Jake, after all, these accusations of yours are totally unsupported."

"Totally unsupported?" asked Jake. This man was actually questioning his integrity. Jake felt his world tumbling down about him. Jake's honesty was one of the few things he had left in life in which he took sincere pride but now this man would actually question that.

"Do I have to get ten sworn witnesses?" asked Jake. "Isn't a man's word any good around here any more?"

"I'm sorry, Jake, but it's your word against Milt's. Perhaps if you had some proof you might be able to do something but you really can't expect me to take these wild, unsupportable charges before the Greens Committee. Why they'd laugh me right out of the room," said Benny.

"They'd probably take my office away from me also," he thought.

"Benny," said Jake in an even voice, "you can take your Greens Committee and this whole club—to hell with you."

"Watch what you're saying, young man. I swing a lot of weight around this community."

"Go to hell!"

Jake spit on the rug and stomped out of the room.

"Why that young . . . I'll, I'll . . ." stammered Benny.

"Relax, Benny, we ought to be thankful that we found out what kind of a person he really is," soothed Milt as he absently fondled the championship trophy which basked in the sunlight on Benny's desk. The trophy would be his to keep now.

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# *Alembic*

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Again the ALEMBIC will award cash prizes for the best contributions during the current year:

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