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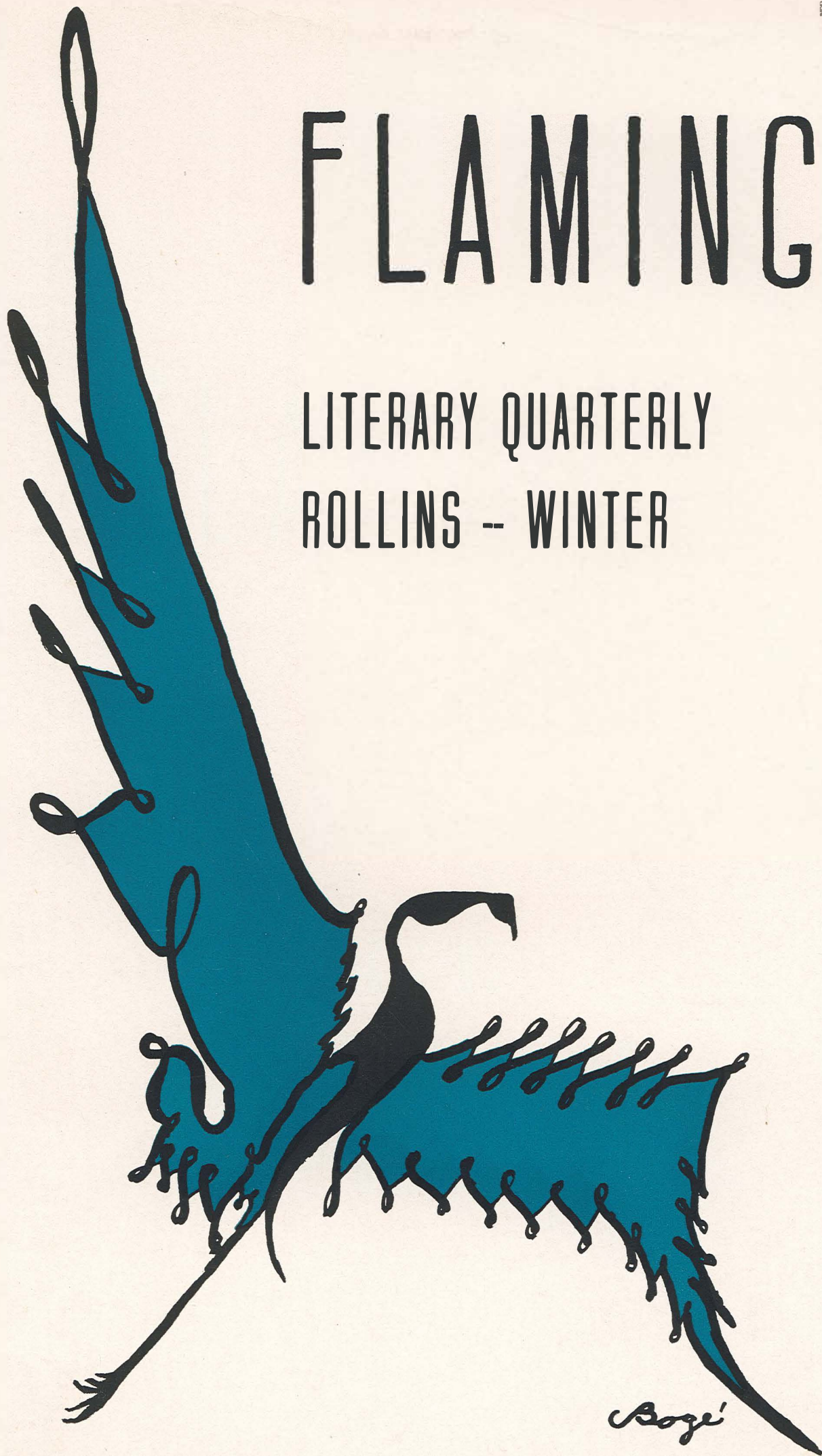


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FLAMINGO

LITERARY QUARTERLY
ROLLINS -- WINTER



VOL. 29, NO. 2, 1953

FLAMINGO

ROLLINS
LITERARY QUARTERLY
WINTER

THE FLAMINGO

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THE FLAMINGO

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial	6
Renaissance	7
Charlotte Colby	
Poem	7
Alex Johnson	
Poem	8
Carmen Navascues	
But Where	9
Jay Peterson	
Eight Questions	9
Marty Birenbaum	
Thoughts in Martial Music	10
Mary Grace Howe	
Fragments	11
Anthony Perkins	
George	12
James Graaskamp	
Love Unsolicited	13
Peter Larkin	
One Way—The Old Way	16
Peter Albert Sturtevant	
The Messiah	21
Ethel Deikman	

EDITORIAL

"Bigger and Better" is our slogan and we think, with perhaps unpardonable editorial pride, that we are living up to it. We would very much appreciate knowing what our readers think. The editor wishes to thank those who submitted material and to apologize, if, unwittingly, she seemed supercritical in her rejections. What appears in the *Flamingo* is the best the campus has to offer, and speaking of bests, it does not seem amiss to mention the method of choosing the best prose and the best poetry in each issue: the choice lies with three members of our faculty. The task is given to them because their opinions are mature and unbiased.

Editing this magazine is, for the editor, a labor of love, but she is never so enamored or thin-skinned as to repulse criticism. She hopes most fervently that you will criticize her love—but to her face, in sweet mercy's name, to her face, or nothing can be gained.

RENAISSANCE

By C. COLBY

Oh, Nature, shake from the core of me the
relentless passions: fear, love, hate, greed. Loosen
them with the wind as thy instrument—caressing,
then lashing me, whipping, then recoiling, leaving
me as fresh unmoulded putty in thy hands, so that
I again might start life anew as the thrush with
powerful lungs and graceful ascent to the heavens;
as the clod in the earth eternally there in some
form; as the stone feeling no hatred for the things
that crush it but adapting itself to eternity; as
the tumbleweed swaying to the music of the prairie
with every fiber of its being. Tear me from
the web of stark reality, and heal my wounds with
thy herbs and fill my brain with the wonder of
thy beauty. Oh, Nature, give me freedom and
eternity!

POEM

By ALEX JOHNSON

When I was in a grammar grade
I double stayed each dime I paid
In boyish worship of a queen
That graced a flickering movie screen;
My tender mind sought to discover
Some bit of science that would cover
The span of years that lay between
Myself and my adored queen;
I read each piece of literature
About this maiden fair and pure
And with a sad and aching heart
I marked our age ten years apart.
Now that I'm older, wiser too,
My thoughts on science rise anew;
This girl of whom I was so fond
Seems touched by fiction's magic wand;
The years that once between us lay
Now seem to lie the other way;
The answers rests, it seems to me,
In Einstein's relativity;
Here I'm a battered forty-two
And she is still an ingenue.

THE FLAMINGO

POEM

BY CARMEN NAVASCUES

Twenty of five in the morning.
I am alone and I love you.
The rain beats outside the window,
Each drop drenching me in heart-break
with its dull effortless thud.
The ticks of the clock, the raindrops
insist with maddening rhythm
I love you, I love you, I love you,
like an inanely cracked record.
All alone in the cold, unfriendly dark,
Waiting, waiting for something,
wanting to be near you.
Inexplicably fierce, wonderfully awful,
this love.
I look up, and you are here beside me:
We talk.
I love everything about you:
The clean strong cut of your face,
The magical curl of every black lash,
The way your brows grow together
over your nose. Your voice, the things
you say and think, The way you try
to be so tough and not care, and pretend
even to yourself that nothing matters,
yet know that it really does, inside. The
crazy twist of your cowlick, black like
gleaming coal. But most of all your
smile, beautifully unconscious, as I
catch it once in a while. When I see
your smile I know that I love you.
I am happy. We are happy together.
I wake. You are gone. A dream. I am
alone again, and the night is black and
utterly empty, void of anything but
dreams and memories.
I knew it could not be, yet I hoped, wished,
loved desperately.
I hear the laughter of the gods, mysterious,
and horrible.
Five in the morning, and at last I sleep.

THE FLAMINGO

BUT WHERE

BY JAY PETERSON

I seem to reach fingerless arms
for grasping what?
I seem to look from eyeless lids
for seeing what?
Where is life: in flowing ink, in swaying moss,
in hollow wind, in pounding feet, in crashing surf?
I see it not, feel it not, I know it's there.
but where
I seem to walk where no ground is,
down paths unknown!
I seem to find myself empty,
knowingly full.
Where is wisdom: in the open hours on a howling
hill,
in strangest thoughts down tunnels, in neverend-
ing arches?
I see it not, I feel it not, I know it's there.
But Where
I seem to live on emotion:
breathing someplace . . .
I seem to beat in haunted time:
with rhythm unfound . . .
Where is melody: in silvered paths rippling from
stars and moon,
in liquid, sighing wheat canopied by Time's setting
suns?
I see it not, I feel it not, I know it's there.
BUT WHERE
oh, my
living
god
where

EIGHT QUESTIONS

BY MARTY BIRENBAUM

Would I lie fore'er neath a cool sheet?
Would I with a smile, sweet Morpheus greet?
Have I enough strength to hold fast to life?
Have I enough will to withstand the strife?
Shall heartbreak and terror dwell deep in my
soul?
Shall death, (ah, peace), be my only goal?
Should I be as the squirrel racing, grim, in his
cage?
Should I struggle to live to a ripe old age?
No genius I, no answers inspired,
I know but one thing . . .
I am very tired.

THOUGHTS IN MARTIAL MUSIC

BY MARY GRACE HOWE

I.

Martial music—pounding reality home to the
mind;
Martial music—taut, unrelenting, tense;
Cadence counted in clipped, impersonal tones,
Orders confused and interrupted.
A play war, removed from real.
Color without horror, thrill without danger.
The parade ground war, designed for pattern and
effect;
Movements precise and quick, alignment care-
fully checked,
Neatness observed, all is correct.
Platoons separate into squads, turn back into pla-
toons again, efficiently, officiously.
Showy, clever, exact movements, shiny with
polish.
But in their place another scene comes to mind,
Another scene, grim and not in pattern, but chaos
No alignment or drums here, only
Confusion, wounds, last thoughts, and death.

II.

Early morning on a bare, bleak beachhead,
Traveling craft are coming in, welcomed by
The joyful, booming, murderous guns, laughing
Shells, chattering machine guns, and impulsive
bombs.
No flags wave, no bugles sound, no martial music
Heard, time is kept in the static beat of
Men's confused, nervous minds. There are the
Terse commands of frightened men.
This is a battlefield.

III.

The men swarm up the beach, trying to
Suppress their fears, remembering last
Important things; not their orders, for they
Are formally engraved on their minds;
They think of warm, familiar scenes,

Last long looks, last words, letters;
All is last to them, for each fears and
Believes that he will die. Perhaps it is better
To enter the battle that way, for maybe it
Stimulates their courage, as it freezes heart
And mind into stiff submission.
Maybe they ought not to think at all,
But blindly crawl forward as mechanical
Soldiers do, fearless and foolish, brave,
Yet automatic? But these needless, these trivial
Thoughts are unimportant now.
Ask them if they do not believe the world
Will be safe for democracy, after this war is
fought;
And ask them if that will not be wonderful.
They will reply that if, in ten minutes, they
Are still alive, and can spend them with
Us, that too will be wonderful. These are
Their thoughts; and plans are made for events
As far ahead as an hour.

IV.

The battle is over now, tired men, those who
Are still alive, can rest. They want to sleep,
But some cannot. Their dreams would be
Too real. Soon telegrams will be speeding
To relatives, with easy, over-worn expressions
Of sympathy, futile words in praise.
"Died gallantly in action." Does that help
Those who loved him? Useless, uneasy wishes
for forgetfulness.

V.

Drums beat, jarring me back to reality.
Drums beat, yes, but they no longer quicken my
mind
In sheer pleasure of sound and glory, as
They once did; they are now the beat of fate,
Resonant, fearful, hastening along in the strict
cadence,
A pattern of doom.

FRAGMENTS

BY ANTHONY PERKINS

When I was younger I went to a small prep school in Massachusetts, near Andover. There was always an Indian Summer the first weeks of the fall term and then the cold, clear days would come, and the trees would turn red and yellow and on free afternoons we would climb Cow Hill in our oxford greys and tweed sportcoats and run the hill to the road on the other side, which led to the town of Boxford. There was fresh cider to be bought at roadside stands along the way, and walnuts and small tomatoes and there was just one store in the town which sold cookies and the other things we wanted.

And on the way back, our arms heavy with the cider jugs, the dusk darkened and enriched the air, and when we stood again on the top of the hill under the first star, we could see the boys on the football fields, just dots moving silently, swiftly, through the greyness. And when the lights in Old Whitney would turn on, one by one, and the last echoes of shouts would reach us, we could hear the bell that called the boys in from sports, and see the figures moving behind the lights in the dormitories. It was like some vast play; the scenery was the buildings and halls we passed through every day and the actors, the boys we knew and liked and disliked—but from our vantage point they were different entirely. We felt like travelers pausing on an unfamiliar road to look upon the foreign scene, curious and awed, in another country.

* * * *

Every year in mid-April we started drilling for the Memorial Day parade, evenings after dinner. The light would be beginning to fail as we formed in squads on the football fields to march, and soon the gloom would envelop us and muffled shouts of orders coming from other

groups were our only way of knowing that we were not alone there. Finally, by twos and threes we were dismissed but the poor marchers were left behind. Each squad was bound to have a few that just couldn't grasp the thing at all and these would be the last to go, released only when the darkness made it impossible for the cruel upper-school boys to see their mistakes. In our rooms, bent unwillingly over our books, we could hear them come in. Ashamed and tired they would climb the stairs.

"A shame to keep you so long!"

"Oh, that Duncan—I'm glad I'm in another!"

The day would come at last, cold and dry, with a tattered, ragged sky above. We marched to Boxford, then to West Look and back, stopping at all the small cemeteries along the way. The towns were very grateful and all the little children and old people gathered along the road to watch and wave tiny flags on sticks. It seemed strange to blow taps at noon, and the flags would flutter on the grey stones. Afterwards we all said we were so tired, but now, thinking back, it seems very little to have done.

One Memorial Day it rained. In the early morning a special meeting was called by the Head which all masters and prefects attended and we were left unwatched, a rare treat. The younger boys strutted through the halls saying they were going to march regardless, while we others smiled secretly at them and felt very old indeed. It turned out that we did not march after all and had a free day instead. Later that day we felt that in some way we had been cheated and denied and it was voted by the students that we would march the next year, rain or not.



GEORGE

By JIM GRAASKAMP

Once upon a time many years ago, lived a little fellow named George. To look at George one would never guess that he had the makings of a first-class scientist, but then most people think that caterpillars can't even talk. Well, most Eastern Tent Caterpillars can't talk, but George was different. His grandpa had had a worm's eye view of Galileo's study and took part in the ol' boy's experiments in gravity and stuff. Anyway, to make a long story worse, George was a very avid little aphid when it came to science, so grandpa clued him in on the mysteries of physics. But a hell of a lot of good it did him, with nobody to talk to. So George kept his mouth shut and quietly took up the old family trade of boring and eating apples.

One day as George was chomping his way through a choice bit of fruit, he forgot to look where he was going and chewed his way right through the stem of the apple so that he found himself and the apple suddenly losing altitude.

"Plop" went the apple.

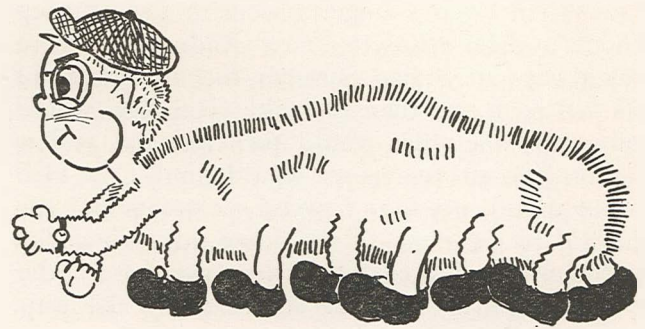
"Ouch!" said someone.

"Damn" said George.

George tumbled out of the apple, landing smack dab on his little pygidium, and failed to recognize the man sitting under the tree; and I guess you wouldn't know who it was either, if I didn't tell you. If you must know, It was Sir Isaac Newton. Really it was! "What happened?" said Sir whitzisname dazedly.

"Well, it's like this, guv'nor," piped up George, who was a cocky little devil and way ahead of his time. "I switched on the automatic pilot, and my when sonar failed, I plowed right through the stem. Careless, wot?"

"I'll be damned," said Isaac. "There's always some smart blastoid in every group." Now since the supply of talking caterpillars was pretty low, and the demand at a peak, Sir Isaac picked George up and took him home. At first poor little George was pretty homesick and ill, but our boy Newton gave him a nice fresh apple every day; and pretty soon George was as hale and hearty as anyone of the Lasiecampidae Family can get.



George and Isaac hit it off together right from the start, and when the old man would remark "What could be worse than finding a worm in an apple?", George would quip right back, "Finding half a worm!" which somehow amused them terribly. (It just goes to show how old that joke really is. Sometimes I wonder why people tell it anymore.) Of course, when they weren't quoting from the works of Joe Miller, George and Isaac talked all about forces and accelerations and things.

The first time George mentioned such words as mass and velocity, Sir Isaac had to ask him what he was talking about. George chuckled nastily and remarked disdainfully. "Just like I thought, you scientists don't know your mass from a hole in space." The Englishman thought that sally a jolly good one, and in way of a rejoinder, playfully dropped a brick on George's head which would have knocked him flat if he hadn't been pretty flat to begin with.

"You . . . you worm!" said George.

"Ha! Look who's talking." said Sir Isaac, whereupon they both went in opposite corners and sulked. George climbed in a big Winesap apple and boozed for three days. Eventually, however, all their little misunderstandings were cleared up; and George patiently explained all about $F=ma$ and $Fa=\frac{1}{2}mv^2$. . . but then heh-heh, you know all about that so there's no need to go into it just now, is there? Sir Isaac gave George a little orchard to put-put around in and then began to prepare his findings for publication. Now Sir Isaac had a weakness for apple schnapps, so George used to pick out just the right apples for cider and

then you-know-who would put them through the little cider press in his room. One day as the two of them were whipping up a little brew, Sir Isaac told George he was going to publish his book and call George's theorems, *Newton's Laws*. "Not without making me co-author, you ain't," said George.

"George, you're real George all the way! What a sense of humor!" laughed the would-be plagiarist.

"I'm not kidding," said George, stubbornly planting all twelve feet.

"Now listen here, pal, in the first place, you don't have a full name; and secondly who would believe anything an apple worm said?"

"You believed me," said George sweetly. "And besides I am the smartest invertebrate in these parts so you can call me King George I."

"Can't! It's already been done!" screamed the frustrated and furious man.

"No namee, no printee!" said George in a dialect he had learned from a cousin who was a silkworm; and imperturbably he crawled into a nearby apple. No one knows for sure just what happened from this point on because George mysteriously disappeared from the face of the earth. A policeman who was passing Newton's quarters at the time of the disappearance reported that he had investigated a cry of "Help! He's squeezing me to death!" which apparently came from Sir Isaac's room. However, the officer found no damsel in distress when he entered the lodgings of the scientist, who was alone, feverishly making apple cider. The report in the file goes on to state that the officer tried the apple cider which was very bitter and probably made from wormy apples. These are the facts as we know them today, and it is interesting to note that about a month later in 1687 Sir Isaac Newton's greatest work, *Principia*, was published.

LOVE UNSOLICITED

BY PETE LARKIN

"So that's the big present this year," Gerry thought to himself as he saw Tom, his younger brother, and Mark below, carrying a white new basketball backstop into the yard. From the second story window of his room where Gerry was looking out, the overcast sky was a shifting, gray indeterminate. Gerry's aimless thoughts, which seemed to be formed of the same sterile, misty substance as the clouds, had mesmerized him into such an inactivity that he stood completely still, his hand frozen to the top of his phonograph. A symphony dramatically resonant and rich, resounded in every part of the room. "But presents aren't birthdays; people never seem to realize how important birthdays really are. They're dividers between years, especially at twelve. Twelve years means junior high school pretty soon, means I'll be a Boy Scout, not just a Cub, and I have to pay sixty cents to get in a movie. . . . I wonder how many other guys turn twelve and never think a thing about it. It's important." The music swelled again, and Gerry tightened his lips in determination as he thought of the critical point of the

twelfth year. He felt a twinge of destiny shiver down his spine.

Outside, Gerry's brother and the neighbor boy had set the backstop down halfway across the yard to rest. Only an hour remained before six o'clock, the approximate time of Gerry's birth as closely as his mother could recollect. He had determined to stay here listening to the music until that time. It was fitting, he felt, that he should do so. Two hours seemed a short enough time, indeed, to give to the evaluation of twelve years. "Twelve years! How impossible it seems to have existed for twelve whole years. For me those years are all, are the length of history, the world, life, but to everyone else they must seem terribly little and unimportant. It's all so complicated. People give you presents and money on your birthday, and Mom always has a big dinner for me. It's not that I don't appreciate everything, but it seems like a birthday is much more serious than that. It's more of a responsibility to have a birthday."

A series of knocks sounded softly on the

door, and Gerry's mother came into the slowly darkening room. The resounding music drowned the sounds of her entrance.

"Gerry." Gerry wheeled around half-frightened. "Gerry, I thought I told you—"

"What?" he answered loudly, trying to hear over the racing violins. Suddenly he realized how deafeningly loud the music was and fumbled in a kind of embarrassment for the volume control knob.

"I said I thought I told you to start getting ready for dinner," she repeated.

"O.K., Mom, as soon as this record is over."

"Is something the matter, Gerry? You've been up in your room alone all afternoon." She softened and hugged him a little, afterwards running her hands through the young boy's blond hair and pushing it away from his forehead. "Did you see your present in the back yard?" she said smiling. "Tom and Mark brought it over."

"Yeh, Mom." His voice was sincere but without enthusiasm.

"Don't you like it?"

"Oh, yes, I like it. Thanks a lot." He suddenly realized how unappreciative he had been and he didn't mean to hurt his mother's feelings, but he was thinking. As he turned toward the window again, his eyes were shiny wet.

"Well, hurry up and get your shower and dress. Grandmother will be here soon, and we're having everything you like for dinner." She left before Gerry could think of what to say, leaving him with a guilty pit in his stomach. He felt that he had insulted her, and yet she had been so cheerful and nice. He began to unbutton his shirt.

The hot shower water slid down his backbone and curled at his spine, giving him a warm liquid feeling, a luxurious sensation which could only be increased by turning the water hotter and hotter. Gerry stood still with his eyes closed, letting the water splash on his shoulders and run down his chest. He soaped hurriedly and stepped back into the water. He watched the soap streaks run down his thin smooth legs. As he rubbed the remaining soap off with his hands, he could feel how soft and clean his skin was. He ducked his head under the water and listened to the strong sprav thunder down on his head like rain on a rooftop. Then he lay stomach-down on the bottom of the tub, closed his eyes, and imagined he was lying alone on some faraway mountaintop, letting warm, torrential rains fall on him. After

a while he stood up, and suddenly, impulsively, turned off the shower—it was the only way he could make himself leave the warm comfort. He stepped over the tub, trailing water and putting big wet feet marks on the bathmat. As he grabbed his towel and wiped his face and hair, he was only a blurred pink form in the steamed-up mirror, but the condensation slowly evaporated and he found himself looking into his own green, deep-set eyes. This was a face twelve years old. He stood hypnotized by his own eyes. He smiled frankly at his own image. He noticed his body; he had never looked at it like this before. In the bony, square shoulders, thin chest with the ribs showing slightly, slender arms with sharp elbows, little stomach and spindly legs, he could see the beginnings of development. In a sudden blaze of ambition he determined to lift weights and before long he would have a body sheathed in rippling muscle. He assumed the characteristic Charles Atlas pose which he always saw on the back covers of comic books. There was no self-consciousness or embarrassment on his face, only a dauntless hope which a child's imagination can conjure. The abrupt jangling of the doorbell stunned him out of his meditation, and he finished drying himself and went to dress.

As he stood at the head of the stairs, he rubbed his neck where the starched collar was scratching. He put one leg over the long, serpentine bannister railing and slid noiselessly down to the bottom. He paused a minute there to listen. He could hear the high-pitched voice of his grandmother mingling with the soft tinkle of ice cubes in glasses, and he heard a newspaper rattle—that must be Dad. He stepped off the bannister, took a deep breath, and turned the corner into the living room.

"Why there's the birthday boy now!" Grandmother Denning exclaimed as soon as she saw him enter the room. "Come right over here and let your grandmother give you a big birthday kiss." She seemed enthusiastically in earnest, so Gerry was obliged to dutifully endure the kiss.

"Hi, Dad."

"Happy birthday, son." Gerry shook his father's hand in as manly a fashion as he could. "Have you had a good birthday?"

"Oh, yes." Out of the corner of his eye, Gerry could see his mother smiling indulgently over on the sofa with young Tom beside her.

"Twelve years old! My lands! How they do shoot up—they're just like little plants. Oh,

"I almost forgot your present, Gerry." Grandmother said this with a twinkle in her eye and winked at Gerry's mother. "Run out and get my purse on the hall table." Gerry quickly returned with the purse and handed it to her. Everyone was quiet as he stood waiting before her. Grandmother Denning, seeming to sense the drama of the moment, delved in the black bag perhaps longer than was actually necessary before bringing out a small cylindrical package wrapped in red paper with a yellow ribbon. She handed it to her grandson. Gerry seemed rather disappointed with the size of the package, but fell to opening it immediately. All eyes were on him as his small fingers fumbled with the knotted ribbon.

"Be careful when you take off the paper," warned grandmother.

"Can't get the doggone ribbon off," Gerry muttered. Suddenly he snapped the ribbon off, and silver dollars hit the floor, rolling in every direction and finally clattering to a standstill. Everyone laughed except the perplexed Gerry, who quickly knelt to begin picking them up. Tommy jumped down excitedly from the sofa and began to help scavenge the silver dollars.

"Well, what do you say, Gerry?" prodded his mother gently.

"Are they real silver dollars, Grandmother?"

"Of course. Twelve of them—one for each year you are old."

"Oh, thanks a lot, thanks a lot."

"There is only one condition attached to this gift. I want you to open a savings account with this money, and then everytime you get money or earn any you can put it in the bank with this. If you are thrifty and wise with your money, perhaps someday you will be a millionaire." Outwardly Gerry nodded his head and seemed pleased.

"Isn't that just like grandmother?" he thought to himself. "She always gives me something wonderful, but something which I can't use until I get older. Last Christmas she gave me a set of expensive cuff links and studs which used to be grandad's. But I can't use them until I get older . . . How many have you found, Tom? I've got six of them."

"Five," answered Tom, putting the coins into Gerry's hands.

"There must be one more — what's that you're putting in your pocket?"

"Nuthin."

"Nuthin heck! Hey, that's one of my dollars. Give it back." Gerry lunged at his little brother, knocking the dollar from his hand onto

the floor, but Tom clenched his little fingers into a fist and jabbed Gerry in the face. Gerry was taken back and much too stunned to cry.

"Why, Tom!" said his mother. "What do you mean trying to take one of Gerry's dollars?"

"Well, I ought to get something for helping him pick them all up, and besides, he gets everything and I don't get anything." Tom was screaming defiantly, and the tears had started. "He gets a big terrific basket and basketball to play with and he doesn't even care . . . all he does is sit up in his ole room and listen to loud music. I should get it if he doesn't want—"

"I do *too* care," yelled Gerry in his face. "I do too, I do too."

"Well, then why don't you play with it and you don't even say you like it. You just sit up in your room all day." Tom had stopped crying now that he felt he had an argument.

"Oh, shut up you little brat." Gerry was crying now, and he ran from the room. His tear drops burned his cheeks, and made dark spots on his clean white shirt as he ran down the dark hall to his room. He flopped on his bed. The pains of miserableness came in spasms. His sobs were trembling and hard. Somewhere he felt that he was wrong, but so were they. He caught his breath for a minute and lay perfectly still, trying to hear if someone had followed him and was coming up to find him, but there was no sound. He felt twice as miserable now that he knew no one cared whether he was crying or not. "They're all against me; they're all on Tom's side; they hate me," he murmured aloud.

He cried awhile longer until he heard the reassuring footsteps in the hall and the soft knock on the door. The dull light of the hallway briefly silhouetted his mother as she entered, and then she was seated beside him on the bed. He didn't look up, even though he heard her half whisper his name as only a mother can, and he felt her hand rest softly on his back.

"Gerry?"

"What?"

"Dinner's almost ready."

"I'm not hungry."

"But we're having steak and mashed potatoes and cherry pie for dessert and everything you like. Besides you haven't eaten hardly anything all day." Suddenly in the silence Gerry's stomach growled loudly. They both smiled unknown to each other in the semi-darkness.

"Not hungry, eh?"

"Mom," said Gerry, changing the subject, "I've been feeling real funny all day—it's not that I don't like the basketball stuff; I really do, but I've been thinking a lot today and . . ."

"Oh, of course. I understand. Don't you worry about anything." Gerry was on his back, braced on one arm, facing her now. She felt his forehead with her cool hand, brushed his tousled hair back afterwards. "Now come on down and eat your birthday dinner."

"But Mom, what will they—"

"Oh, don't worry about that; just pretend that nothing ever happened. Show them that it

didn't really matter to you. Now come on."

"O.K., Mom." She kissed him lightly on the forehead and left the room.

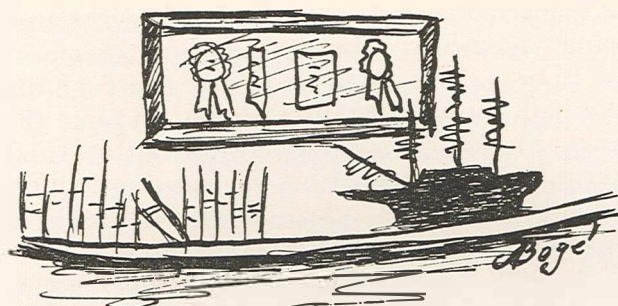
As she reached the end of the hall and started down the stairway, she could see her husband waiting at the foot of the stairs to go in to dinner.

"How'd it go?" he asked.

"He'll be down in a minute." Her expression was brave, but as their eyes met, her lips broke and quivered uncontrollably. Her gaze fell. "It's so hard to give love unsolicited like the psychiatrist said—I only hope I can last until his next appointment."

ONE WAY --- THE OLD WAY

BY PETER ALBERT STURTEVANT



"Ernest—close the shades, will you?" The bloody light seemed particularly offensive as it had not risen to the height it generally attained when Kemp Mackell sent out his first tremulous feeler to begin each afternoon.

"Am I late?"

"No, Missuh Kemp; Ah wake you on time."

"Thank you, Ernest." Kemp glanced around his little chamber, filled with ship models and the shell jewelry he used to make; at the far wall hung with framed blue ribbons—the remains of his kennels and of autumn field trials; at the ten foot windows hung with faded damask from Persia; at his bookshelves groaning partly with age and partly with the weight of his complete set of "English Poets"—some their original green

and others brown where the sun had struck them; at his Tintoretto and at the painting next to it that he had begun himself; at the plaster of paris ear he had moulded; at his closet which exhibited the scarlet of his hunting jacket even though the stables were sold for a residence to some people named Douglas; and finally at the chipped corner of the Venetian blind from which poured that damnable ray of sun.

"Well, I best get up."

"Suh—what you car foh beakfast?"

"Ernest, I shall have two eggs turned over just briefly, no salt, and some coffee, my special coffee today."

He very carefully removed his pajamas as they were very thin and had been his father's. He hung them on a hook projecting from the five-inch-thick bathroom door. He felt his bath to be sure it was correctly drawn. He took a towel from the locker and flung it over a convenient rack. The threadbare corner touched the floor and made weird patterns in the light dust. He covered one bath mat with a scatter rug to make the step into the tub softer. He lit a black German cigarette with a big wooden kitchen match that lay next to his toothbrush on top of the laundry hamper, and eased himself into the mist-steam-ing water.

"Lorelei," he thought. He took a deep breath and settled his neck against the back rim of the tub so that the heat enveloped all but his mouth, eyes, ears and hair. "Damn." The soap was lying on the window sill.

"Ernest." He was downstairs, far back in the kitchen, sweating over the huge coal stove.

"Damn." As he got out, the coolness made him shudder and goose-pimples pocked him from head to knee. Steam rose off his legs and shoulders. He grabbed the soap and slid back into the water.

"Damn." The bath did not feel as good as it had at first. Nothing is good if it is not new.

He finished his washing faster than he usually cared to. He marched up and down in front of the full-length mirror that made up a door of the linen locker, drying his back with graceful strokes and casting appreciative glances at his heavy body. Then he sat down and began to move a long finger in the trough of his jewel box, searching for cuff-links and a stick-pin. He knew that people thought the old-fashioned stick-pin an affectation and probably the way his clothes were cut, but he knew that the clothes were good and that if he were to buy new ones that their quality would be less good—besides fluctuating fashions had already returned to his tattersalls and round collars; he could wait until social conformity corresponded with what they now condemned as odd.

He began to dress slowly, making sure to fit perfectly into the lavishly pitiful atmosphere of his home. First the silk under-drawers, an under-shirt a little tight so as to flatten the slight hollow of his back, grey lyle socks with faint red clocks, a gray shirt, pin-striped with red, a black tie with red dots Grandfather had bought from Yamamoto's in Yokohama when he and Mrs. Mackell had taken the "Albacore" around the world—different from the damned "Grand Tour" the old man had said. He reached back to button the back of his collar, he stood up and bent backwards to tighten his shirt as he tucked it into a dark pair of gray dacs, he pulled buckles tight so as to admit no slipping, he stepped into some blue house slippers, picked up his brown oxford shoes, pushed his diamond into the lapel of his brown tweed sport jacket, flung this over one shoulder and picking up his cuff-links went down the circular stair to the breakfast room.

"Good-morning, Mr. Kemp."

"Good-morning, Ernest."

Kemp realized the weakness of the subter-

fuge that he and the old colored man carried on, but still, only a man's valet should see the master asleep or undressed and Ernest at this time of day had assumed the role of butler—a job which in more flourishing days had required ten men for the morning cleaning alone.

Kemp allowed that the eggs were not cooked in the best tradition and Ernest sulked and allowed that the stove had got too hot due to the time taken by Mr. Kemp in his toilet. Smiles were restored as the coffee received just praise from Kemp who lingered over four cups, yesterday's "Times" and a black German cigarette.

"Thank you, Ernest." A smile and the rattle of dishes and butler pushing through the pantry door.

Kemp walked through the carpeted hall, through the front hall and into the music room.

"Damn." He had left his shoes in the breakfast room.

"Ernest." He was upstairs, far in the north wing, with his stocking cap on his head, dusting the unmarred surfaces of some twin Seventeenth Century tea-tables in the upstairs sitting room.

"Damn." He got up and walked through the front hall, through the carpeted hall and into the breakfast room. He secured his brown oxfords and returned to the music room. He sat down stiffly on a period sofa and kicked off his slippers. He put on his shoes and pulled the laces tight.

"Damn." The left lace parted at the top eye.

"Ernest." He was still upstairs making Mr. Kemp's bed and picking his towel off the bathroom floor and wiping dry the wash basin and the big tub. "Damn." Kemp tied the bloody thing together and stood up in front of a big gilded mirror so as to put his diamond through his tie just at the crease below the small knot. He did thus, fastened his cuff-links and drew on his sport coat.

"You looks fine, Mr. Kemp. Shall zi git da cah?"

"Good, Ernest. Thank you."

"Damn." No handkerchief.

"Ernest."

"Yes suh—Mr. Kemp—I brung you a hangerchief foh you label pocket."

"Thank you, Ernest." He took the handkerchief. "Get the car now."

"Ernest, the car looks fine" Takes a shine bloody well better than these new ones.

"Thank you, Mr. Kemp!" The colored man opened the ponderous black back door.

"Thank you, Ernest." Heavy to drive though.

"You're welcome, Suh." Ah hopes my poh ol' ahms holds up pushing this heah to and fro the station.

"Shall we?" The big car crawled slowly through the narrow carriage gates and onto the highway.

The condition of the estate had reached a point where it appeared something must be done. Even the bloody sundial has blown down. My bloody assets seem to be nothing but youth, veneer, and an aura of tradition. So, like my illustrious forebears, I shall use what I have to resurrect what was and should be. Still—my father wouldn't have let her past the vestibule—except as an entertainer. She is attractive; less nymph than animal. Still: she will die as flesh does, even as I shall; and her son will be my son—William Kemp Mackell and North Rock flourishing. Ernest will have the help he needs. Poor nigger! No—Ernest too shall die—although he doesn't seem subject to mortal laws. Again the polished tower, and yet —Father?

"Ernest, how old are you?" He'll say fifty.

"Fifty-one, Mistuh Kemp."

He was fifty when I was born and nobody believed him. Well—he's aged a year.

"Station, Mr. Kemp."

"Yes." The train hasn't arrived. What a bore. It's so bloody hot my shirt will be soaked through.

"Shall I pull the car into the shade?"

"Yes, Ernest."

Kemp had just completed the intricacy of smoking and ejecting a cigarette from the car—carefully so that it did not land and smoulder on the running-board, but equally sure that those who loitered against the pillars of the station didn't think that he threw the butt with any deliberation: for such are the foibles of aristocratic penury—when, with the dramatic heavings of a replaced machine, the steaming local pulled in from Richmond. Breathing a last sigh, the locomotive lurched backwards a yard and then stood quietly hissing.

There issued forth from the red-orange Pullman cars, of which there were two, an immediate scrambling group of smiling travelers; one with a suitcase tied together with clothes line, another with a wicker basket much lightened by the removal of fondly prepared sandwiches, but still rattling with the half-empty catsup bottle and salt shaker: and some who had traveled farther

than "to town for the day," but still untutored enough not to over-feign the exhaustion a trip caused which after all exposed once more to their fond gaze the triumvirate of wooden church spire, school, and library. Lastly, there paused hesitatingly on the top-most step a young woman of striking looks and stylish dress. She rested her hand lightly on the porter's proffered arm as she dismounted, and seeing Mackell who had by this time left his car and, trailed by Ernest, was walking toward her, waved effusively.

"Dafi, don't be so amorous in the station."

"Oh, darling, don't be so straight-laced: and that hat makes you look like my father," Daphne said.

"This hat," Kemp let the word "hat" drag across his tongue to distinguish it from all other hats, "came from Bond Street and is extraordinarily smart."

"Looks like father."

"Nevertheless, I shall take it off when we reach North Rock. Drive us home, Ernest."

Kemp thought of co-relative action. The tires whirled, like an oiled roulette wheel. He could hear the negro grunt as he forced the heavy car around the necessary wide-arc'd and sharp corner that led through the carriage gates. Sampson in a grist mill. Listen to that bloody woman talk.

"Darling; what are you thinking of?"

Kemp knew that as a man he must be thinking of something. He couldn't say "nothing"; yet "nothing" was what he was thinking.

"I was thinking how wonderful it is to have you here, Daph, and how lucky we were to have found the one person in the world." Look at those pig eyes sparkle!

"Kemp; how beautiful. Kemp — shouldn't we move those gate posts farther apart? When people drop in, they might scrape a fender or—Kemp?"

Move my gates? Increase the width of my family's gates? Damn! Then he said,

"We'll look into that."

The car shuddered to a stop with a heavy lurch.

"I'm sorry, Mistuh Kemp. I didn't git dah clutch in all de way."

"Of course. Here we are, Dafi. Ernest, take Miss Frazier's bag to the north-east suite." Kemp looked at his place with the over-looking look of an overseer.

"How does the old place look, dear?" he said.

"Old," said Daphne Frazier.

Kemp thought about "old." He hummed secretly to the tune of "Yes, said Anthony Rolly."

"Let's go in!"

"Kemp; I hurt your feelings: but it is old, yet it's quaint and huge. It's a beautiful relic and I'll—we'll rebuild it and be so happy. Our children will be barons."

The big glass vestibule door was cracked like a safety auto windshield.

"We'll get a big piece of glass and fix that," Daphne said.

"Crystal," said Kemp, closing the heavy door with exertion, swinging it on rusty hinges.

Kemp smelled the pervading strength of tradition exuding from the faded red velvet covers of the carved couches in the front hall.

"We've got to get some heat in here to get rid of this mildew." Then she was off into the music room before he could lead her.

"Kemp!"

"Don't yell, I'm right here," he answered.

"Kemp, these tapestries must be re-backed; that is, all but that blue one there. It's too far gone for any resurrection."

"The blue one—there?"

"Yes."

The blue one "there" had hung in Maximilian's palace in Mexico City; though battered, its ragged, ripped and soiled eagle filled the room with Imperial Majesty. Kemp came here to hold up his head. He had grown to stand with his back to the blue one "there" and stare haughtily at the others.

"I shall move it to my dressing room."

Kemp Mackell had just begun to feel that the piece-meal evaluation of his treasure would continue long into darkness; or, until he snuffed it out; when the celestial, comforting, white-coated, candle-bearing Ernest appeared in the doorway.

"Dinnuh is served."

"Thank you, Ernest," Kemp said warmly.

Daphne Frazier was perceptive enough to note the disgruntled air of her affianced host, and clever enough to strike upon a woman's solution. She made no distinction of caste when dealing with men—and, as she had treated her economically absorbed progenitor, she turned to Kemp, melted and submissive, and asked him to talk.

"Kemp—tell me a hunting story?"

Kemp was highly conscious of the rules of table and felt it obligatory to satiate the lady's de-

sire to be amused, even politely refraining from questioning the sincerity of her request; and so set down his thin-stemmed glass of Rose d'Anjou and dug into his wealth of hunting yarns which made up the majority of his small talk.

"Here is one which interests me. It deals with semantics." He ignored her bright-eyed stare of attentive incomprehension. "I was hunting birds down in the James River delta one day when some old darkies passed me, after rabbits. They were working with a mangy bunch of houn' dogs, but like all hunters, were calling them in so as to keep up close enough to shoot when game was flushed. They kept yelling, 'Yoik, Yoik!' Can you imagine those old delta darkies who couldn't read or write calling in their rabbit hounds with the traditional yell of English fox-hunters?"

"Why Kemp—how interesting. I wonder how they ever learned that cry?"

"Probably one of their grand-daddies was hunting master for one of the plantations in the tide-water and it passed down by word of mouth from father to son." His effort completed, Kemp Mackell up-ended the glass of wine he had stared at during his tale, and replenished it with the napkin-wrapped bottle at his elbow.

Daphne, too, lapsed into a pleasant silence, a wine-cheeks-burning silence of full spinning dreams of the great white columns of this farm, repainted; and Daphne Frazier Mackell—the Circe her father created—curtsying on the front porch to aristocratic guests who no longer thought of her as a millionaire shop girl.

"Early to bed and early to rise," said Kemp. He rose and helped Daphne from her chair, turned on his heel and walked up the wide-carpeted staircase.

"Goodnight, darling," she called.

"Goodnight, Daphne; I'll wake you early."

Kemp got into his pajamas, his dressing gown; he lit a black German cigarette; he picked a volume of British Poets from the sagging shelf; he said, "Ah, Dryden" to himself; he turned on his bed-lamp; he put out the overhead light; he propped himself on two pillows and put the counterpane over his feet; "Ah, Dryden," he said to himself.

Daphne walked into the music room. She sat down in an enveloping, swimming-cushioned chair and couldn't hear the subway.

"Miss Frazier!"

"Uh—well, Ernest?"

"Pardon, Ma'am, but ah jest thought you

might want to go to bed. It's past eleven."

"Oh, yes. I will."

"Miss Frazier, I has to go into town to meet the freight. Mistuh Kemp has some dawgs coming in and I should git 'um as soon as possible."

"All right. Goodnight." What a miserable way to be wakened up. I must tell Kemp we need some younger servants. The inside of her mouth tasted fermented.

Dahpne felt she had barely dozed off when a knock came at her door. She slept uneasily in a strange bed so she flung open her eyes and sat up.

"Yes?"

The door seemed to drift open. A negro in full uniform and powdered wig stood, bearing a candle.

"Mr. and Mrs. Mackell will see you, Miss Frazier."

"Ernest, I thought you went to town?"

"He did."

"Who are you?" she asked, dreading an answer.

"Wilbur, ma'am; Mr. and Mrs. Mackell will see you now."

"Mr. and Mrs. Mackell? They're dead."

"No, ma'am," Wilbur answered. He retreated from the doorway. Daphne could see the glow of the candle as he waited for her in the hall.

She got up, locked the door, got back in bed, and pulled the covers over her head.

She slept little for she kept looking to see the light oozing under the bedroom door. She was gone early in the morning, leaving a note as to where to ship her luggage.

"Strange she left with no explanation," said Kemp. "Maybe North Rock doesn't want to be rebuilt that way."

"Oh, Ernest—by the way. Did you get the dogs?"

"I went down dere, Mistuh Kemp, but they didn't come in yet."

Kemp started to speak when the telephone echoed through the great halls. He touched the old negro's elbow so much as to say, "I'll get it."

"I'm going to have that God-damn phone torn out!" he said.





MESSIAH

BY ETHEL DEIKMAN

Once upon a time there was a very rich and very peaceful country whose people lacked for nothing. They were blessed with an inventor who made life simple for them. For instance, he invented a bookshelf which always handed its owner the right book for his mood, and if he wanted a book which hadn't been written yet, even that was no problem. There was a view screen which showed the past, the present, and the future, in four dimensional Technicolor. One had only to say, "The burning of Rome," or "England now," or "Our country a thousand years from now," and one had, in one's own living room, scenes so real one was tempted to join in the pageant.

Everyone had a mechanical valet which bathed and dressed one to perfection. Cars ran safely over the highways because mechanical robots drove the cars with far more singleness of purpose than any human had ever been able to achieve. Doors opened as soon as one thought of going through them. If one felt like reading the newspaper at the breakfast table, automatic hands turned to just the right page and propped the paper up at just the right angle. Everyone could have a new suit of clothes every day merely by putting a nickel in a machine, and least of

all was there any trouble in getting nickels. Everyone had his own private mint. The old worrisome problem of supply and demand was neatly solved through the benevolent offices of the Inventor. Whatever one wanted, one had only to ask him for. That he never requested any pay puzzled many people at first, but they finally reasoned that he was the last of the great altruists.

His greatest invention, all the newspapers agreed, was the knowledge packaging machine. It did away with thinking. If one felt an inherent urge to explore, one said into the machine, "Teach me something." Swiftly and painlessly the machine placed a chunk of learning inside one's head, all ready to use. Soon the most fashionable thing to own was a knowledge packaging machine. People talked for hours about the machine's voice, which, as Nede's poet laureate said, was as soft as a pillow under a weary head and as compelling as a magnet.

Nede's party bosses confessed to their wives over the breakfast coffee, "I used the knowledge packaging machine last night and it told me that the Inventor would be just the man Nede needs for president. I intend to start the machinery moving at the party's next meeting."

"Gee," a small boy said breathlessly to his companion, "I asked the machine who does all the good in the world, and it said the Inventor does."

"That's nothing," his companion responded. "I asked it who the greatest men in all Nede's history were, and it said the Inventor was the only great man and besides him there were no others."

"The knowledge packaging machine," a pale political scientist told his class, "teaches us that it is our duty to support the Inventor in all things. The highest aim of every citizen should be the performance of his duty."

So, slowly, the Inventor became the first thought in everyone's mind. It was no surprise to anyone when he was nominated by both political parties as their candidate for the presidency. In spite of the lack of opposition, the Inventor waged one of the most intensive campaigns in Nede's history. Loudspeakers strategically placed throughout the country spoke unforgettably of a life without problems if the Inventor were elected. The Inventor himself visited every town large or small in an effort to make himself known to the people. His coming was a day of great festivities. The mayor made a speech which was, of necessity, less persuasive than the Inventor's, but still intensely moving. Bands played, flags waved, and hoarse voices shouted approval. Then

the great man stepped forward and said something soft and compelling.

After he had gone, one man said to his neighbor, "Wonderful speech, but for the life of me I can't remember what he looks like. I have the insane notion that he looks like my father."

"I should not want it generally known," said his neighbor, "but to me he looks like God."

The Inventor was elected by 99.9 per cent of the people, the dissenting .1 per cent being forced into retirement, and after the election he gave a huge celebration banquet. All the nation's wisest men were there. Innumerable toasts were drunk to the success of the new president. An old man with piercing blue eyes and a long white beard struggled to his feet for the last toast. "Just as many toasts as have been drunk," he said, "so many years of unquestioned power will be yours, oh Inventor, but one day a young man will come out of the wilderness to sit in your place. As you have lived so will you die." Before he had even finished his glass of wine, the old man was seized from behind and dragged away, protesting loudly.

The Inventor was duly installed the next day in a magnificent new palace built especially for him. The landscaper had designed a garden of exotic flowers and plants from all over the universe which served not only as beautifiers but as bodyguards. Anyone ignorant of the right garden paths would be wrapped in a flowery shroud. The architect had planned a vast castle with watchful, never-sleeping walls. Anyone passing within twenty feet of the walls was automatically frozen to the spot until released by the Inventor himself. The most unusual chamber in the palace was the Room of the Living Flame. The room was always kept in total darkness, relieved only by the flickering sheen cast by an unconfined fire in the center of the room. When questioned, a voice answered from the flames. In this mansion, servants were unnecessary. The Inventor shut himself up in his wondrous dwelling and was only made known to his people through directives emanating from a gigantic broadcasting booth. No one could shut out the purring voice, and the only way to stop the flow of words was to obey.

Fifty years passed quickly. The Inventor was hardly aware of their passage so absorbed was he in the ordering of national affairs. The people had to be convinced of the desirability of an eighteen hour day, seven days a week. They had to be convinced that the machines he had created for their pleasure were now unspeakably

harmful and must be abandoned, the better to serve the state. Only a superior being deserved wealth and comfort, according to the Inventor. The people of Nede soon realized that the Inventor was the only superior being. Every aspect of life, from the eating of food to the bearing of children, was supervised by the state. The people, stripped of personal ambition, were scarcely better than the animals they herded or the crops they hoed. They lived and worked, and when their task had been accomplished, they vanished.

The Inventor knew his power to be unchallenged, but every morning he went to the Room of the Living Flame and asked, "What man lives who threatens my life?"

On the fiftieth anniversary of his election to the presidency, the Flame answered, "Today a woman who calls herself Miriam gave birth alone and in great pain to a son. All your directives have not influenced her, for she is protected by someone greater than you, and her son, if he lives, will cause your death."

"Where is the woman?" the Inventor asked.

"Far to the north, in Meheletheb."

The Inventor walked swiftly to the broadcasting room and spoke into a tube. "A woman who calls herself Miriam has just given birth to a son. Find them and kill them. It is your duty to the state."

In Meheletheb, people stopped work to listen. The voice, soft as a pillow under a weary head and as compelling as a magnet, gave them no peace. Wherever they went and no matter what they tried to think, they heard, "Find and kill Miriam and her son. It is your duty." Automatically they picked up guns, knives, pitchforks, anything handy and went hunting for a woman and a newborn baby.

Miriam lay weakly on her couch, holding her son, unable to shut out the voice which was softly pushing back her self control. She realized, terror-stricken, that if she had to listen very much longer, she would be compelled to take her own life. She put her hands over her ears and wept.

"My daughter, why do you weep?" a stern voice asked.

"I never thought it would be like this," she sobbed. "If I had known, I would never have consented. I shall surely die and the pain will have been for nothing. I am afraid."

"Look at me and stop crying," the voice ordered sharply.

She looked and saw an old man with piercing blue eyes and a flowing white beard.

"Why you are . . ." she began.

"Never mind," he said. "I have come to take you away."

He touched her eyelids gently with his fingertips and Miriam fell into a deep sleep. When she awoke, she found herself in a wondrous cave whose walls were lined with books and furnished with all the necessities of a lifetime. The old man was uncomfortably shifting the baby from one arm to the other in an effort to hush its hungry mewings. "This is a woman's work," he said testily. "Take your son, call him David, and teach him to live as a man should. Everything you will need you have here. Your only limitation will be your inability to leave this place until something angers David; then he must go alone to the Inventor's castle and demand an audience."

"The Inventor will not rest until he sees our mutilated bodies before him," Miriam said.

"He will rest. Even now he gloats over the corpses of an innocent woman and her newborn son. He cannot know the difference and even if he should think to ask the Living Flame, he would not be able to come after you. You are in one of the caves in Sanctuary Forest. Only you and David will ever be able to tell which one. The Inventor has no power over you here. Farewell."

Miriam reared her child and he grew from an even-tempered infant into a lithe, blond young man who soaked up knowledge like a dry sponge. Farmers from nearby Meheletheb who occasionally surprised him in a clearing went home to tell their wives of the strange youth who held in his hands a thing with pages and who spoke to them enthusiastically about something called Shakespeare. Their wonder grew, and groups of twos and threes came to see him, not so much to hear him speak as to look with awe upon his clean straight limbs and depthless blue eyes. Every day David went to the clearing to read, and every day he had more of an audience.

One morning the Inventor stepped before the Living Flame and asked, "What goes on in my realm that I should know about?"

The Flame answered, "A young man is telling the peasants of Meheletheb about deductive reasoning."

The Inventor's echoing laughter rang through the silent corridors. "Is he a successful teacher, this young man?"

"His voice is as soft as a spring breeze and as compelling as beauty," the Flame said. "Soon he will be able to convince the people of anything."

"Who is he and where does he live?"

"He is David who will cause your death. He was not hunted down as you thought but lives in Sanctuary Forest where you may not enter. Soon he will come to challenge you. His weapon, truth, is more potent than anything you possess."

"What can I do to make myself supreme?" the Inventor asked.

"The course of Fate cannot be altered. You will die, not by his hand, but by the just wrath of the people."

"I will raise up an army against him. I will forbid the people to go to him."

"An army will not save you from him and the people will go to marvel in spite of you."

"We'll see," the Inventor said. "You are only a household convenience installed by the architect. You are bound to be fallible."

The Inventor built and trained an army of glassy-eyed, fervent disciples. He demanded and received from the Living Flame names of those who had gone to David. The army was given orders to torture them and their families to death. The screams of the dying even penetrated Sanctuary Forest.

David, knowing of evil only what he had read in his books, was horrified. "Why," he asked Miriam, "are they dying?"

"They are dying because the Inventor fears you," Miriam said. "They are being tortured because they looked at you and listened to you, and, really, they didn't even understand you."

The young man's eyes sparked. "But that's wanton slaughter."

"Are you truly angry, David?"

"I want to see this monster who kills innocent men out of fear and spite."

"You are free to leave the forest now, my son," Miriam said. "Go to the Inventor and demand to talk with him."

David walked slowly out of the forest, past the smoking remains of peaceful homes, past the smell of burning, past broken bodies, past mourners who rocked back and forth in silent misery, on to the Inventor's palace. Fifty feet from the walls he stopped and raised cupped hands to his mouth. "Ho there, Inventor. I request an audience."

No answer.

"I want to speak to you, Inventor," he repeated. "Let me in or I will come in uninvited."

His only answer was mocking laughter, which seemed to come from the walls themselves.

The young man took a deep breath and marched resolutely forward. Twenty feet from the

walls he felt an icy, invisible barrier. "I will talk with the Inventor. I must keep him from harming any more people," he muttered and kept right on walking. There was a thunderous roar like that of a great ice field breaking up, and a section of the wall crumbled. He climbed over the rubble and entered a luxuriant garden. Hungry tendrils reached out for him, touched his skin, quivered, and recoiled. "I will tell him that I am here as Nede's champion," thought David as he entered the castle.

Heavily armed figures attempted to block his way, but the young man smiled at them. His smile illuminated the grey hall with a radiance like that of the sun breaking through clouds at the end of a dark day. The figures wavered and stepped back, allowing him to pass. David walked on until he came to a door which opened at his touch. The room on the other side of the door was dark, except for the fitful blaze in the center of the room.

A man stood before the fire talking to it wildly. "Who is David that he should threaten me?" he raged. "Had I him here, I would throw him to you. A boy, that's all he is. I do not believe him as wise or as good as you say. Flesh and blood . . . he'll burn like all the others. If only I had him in my two hands." He trembled with anger.

"Here I am," David said. The Inventor spun around to face him. They stared at one another. "You are even uglier than I believed," David began.

The Inventor rushed at the young man, who calmly moved aside. The Inventor fell to his knees. David stretched out his hand to help the old man to his feet, but the old man struck him viciously. His fist was like an iron club. "You are younger and faster than I," he snarled, "but I do not need your help. Before we are through you will be begging for mercy."

"You who are so powerful can afford to wait," David said. "Aren't you even curious to know how I got in and why I came? Let us go to some more comfortable spot where we can talk before you execute me."

The Inventor led the way to the throne room. He seated himself on the velvet padded, jewel-studded throne and motioned to David to sit on the steps. "Well then, you impertinent young man, how is it that you were not stopped by the walls, the garden, or the guards?" he demanded.

"The walls crumbled as I walked forward. Your plants only touched my skin, and I smiled

at your guards. I came to ask why you are torturing innocent men who have committed no crime."

"They came to look at me and I spoke to them of that which I found interesting. Is that treason?" David asked.

"They were neglecting their work."

"They were devoting the little leisure they had to listening to me. Are you afraid that they might have understood what I said?"

"Nonsense."

"Then why the butchery?"

"I will not share my power and my people's allegiance with another man."

"He who knows himself to be right has no need of violence," David said. "I will offer you a sporting proposition. Let me talk to the people all I please; don't try to keep them from listening to me. We will see then which of us is truly right."

"Bah! I have you in my power. I could kill you now and end the contest before it starts."

"You won't," David said, "because you can't resist an opportunity to prove yourself, and secretly you aren't sure which one of us is the most powerful."

"Get out of here," shrieked the Inventor. "Never fall asleep, for when you do, I will kill you."

"But you will stop killing your people?"

"On the contrary, those who follow you will find life unbearable. Get out!"

David smiled at the hard old man and his smile was as warm as youth and love. The Inventor shivered and looked at the young man's retreating figure with something very like hunger in his eyes.

David retraced his steps, down the long corridor where puzzled shadows lay down their arms to watch him pass, out into the garden whose plants could only threaten, through the gap in the wall, back to smoking ruins, the smell of burning, and the silently despairing mourners. "Why have your neighbors been killed?" he asked them.

One old woman, in whose face sorrow had been etched with the acid of incomprehension, said, "We do not know. That is what is so terrible. There is one called David. My neighbor went to look at him and for that he died. They said when they killed my neighbor that David was a traitor and a monster."

"I am David. Do I look like a monster?"

"No," the old woman sighed. "You are hand-

somer than any man I have ever seen and I am very old."

"He may be a traitor," said a young man.

"How can I be a traitor?" David replied. "I have said or done nothing to harm Nede. I have only talked about the inherent dignity in every human being."

A small group of men and women had clustered around him. "We do not understand you," they said.

"Are you at least curious?" he asked.

The men and women began to murmur among themselves, and David, encouraged, started to speak. "All men are born free and equal in dignity and rights," he began.

Suddenly a voice as soft as a pillow under a weary head and as compelling as a magnet said, "Don't listen to him. If you do, you too will be traitors and you will be punished. Don't listen. Don't listen. Don't listen . . ."

"You must make a choice," said David, his voice as soft as a spring breeze and as compelling as beauty. "If what I have said stirred your minds and hearts, come with me to Sanctuary Forest, where the Inventor's voice cannot penetrate."

"You will be punished," the voice repeated.

"Come with me," David said and started for home.

Five men followed him. They stayed in the forest for two hours and when they emerged they were talking eagerly among themselves. The next morning the army came and beat the five men until their backs were raw flesh and they were left for dead. David came with healing salve for their backs and took the men with him into Sanctuary Forest.

The Inventor's voice filled the air day and night, warning against David. The army came to stand guard at the edge of the forest and the workday was extended to twenty hours. This lasted until the people were so exhausted they neither remembered nor cared that David had spoken about men born free and equal. The voice stopped, the army withdrew, the workday became again eighteen hours.

David waited until he knew the Inventor thought himself secure, and then he and his five new comrades went out into the Meheletheb to talk with the people. The people marvelled greatly that their neighbors had survived the beating and they asked for a description of life in Sanctuary Forest. Four men and one woman went back with David. In the forest he talked to them freely and when they left he told them that they

could shut out the Inventor's voice merely by saying, "I don't believe him and I don't want to listen."

In Meheletheb the voice was again exhorting the people not to listen to David, but the four men and one woman used their newfound weapon of disbelief and discovered that it was entirely successful. The army shot them the next day but the woman, before she died, imparted the secret to her oldest brother. While the Inventor was broadcasting the oldest brother said to himself, "I don't believe him and I don't want to listen." He found relief from the voice's omnipresence and was so cheerful that others demanded the secret.

David sent his five friends to neighboring towns and went out alone among the people. Wherever he went now, people followed him and begged him to remain with them. He built a little house such as people lived in and worked as they worked, but he never slept, for a voice constantly reminded him, "Never fall asleep; when you do I will kill you."

The Inventor permanently increased the workday to twenty hours and no one was allowed more than two hours sleep a night nor more food than necessary to sustain life, but no one complained, for David was with them.

Word came to David that the men he had sent out to neighboring towns were beginning to be successful, and he was so satisfied that eleven months and twenty-nine days after the start of his contest with the Inventor, he allowed himself to fall asleep. As he lay sleeping a man crept into his house and cut him to pieces. Those who had been his closest friends were smothered in their sleep.

The next morning the Inventor heard a swelling moan of horror and despair rise from Meheletheb. Exulting, he went to the Room of the Living Flame. Meanwhile, Miriam sat with all that remained of David and lamented. As she wept she heard a voice as soft as a spring breeze and as compelling as beauty say, "Go to the center of Meheletheb, Mother. Call the people together and tell them about Messiah."

Miriam dried her tears and went to stand in the marketplace. Men who saw her whispered, "David's mother," and stopped to comfort her.

"Do not pity me," Miriam said. "My son's voice has told me to tell you about Messiah. Listen to me for my son's sake. One day a man will arise who will lead you in your most difficult

hour. He will have no weapon but the truth . . ."

As Miriam spoke, the Inventor stood before the Living Flame. "What man can oppose me now?" he gloated.

"Miriam, David's mother, is telling the people about Messiah," the Flame said.

"No!" the Inventor cried. "She must not. I am their only savior. I must go and talk to them in person."

He rushed out of the room and he did not hear the Living Flame say, "You are doomed."

"So you see," Miriam was saying, "one day when we need him, Messiah will come."

"He is here already," said a voice at the edge of the crowd. "I, the Inventor, am Messiah. Did I not save you the pain of decision and thought?"

"Is he Messiah?" asked a voice soft as a spring breeze and as compelling as beauty.

"David!" The one word went up from the crowd like a prayer of thanksgiving. All eyes turned to behold David alive and more beautiful than ever before.

"Has he told you the truth and allowed you to live like men? Let the Inventor come up here with me so that all of you may see him. He tried to kill me because I would have taken you away from him."

"But you are alive, David," they murmured.

"I cannot be killed so easily," David said. "There now, look at the Inventor."

They looked and saw a wizened old man whose face was contorted with hatred and fear.

"Do you see him as he really is?" David asked.

Yes!" the people shouted.

"This is the man who robbed you of the fruits of your labor. This is the man to whom you willingly surrendered your heritage as men."

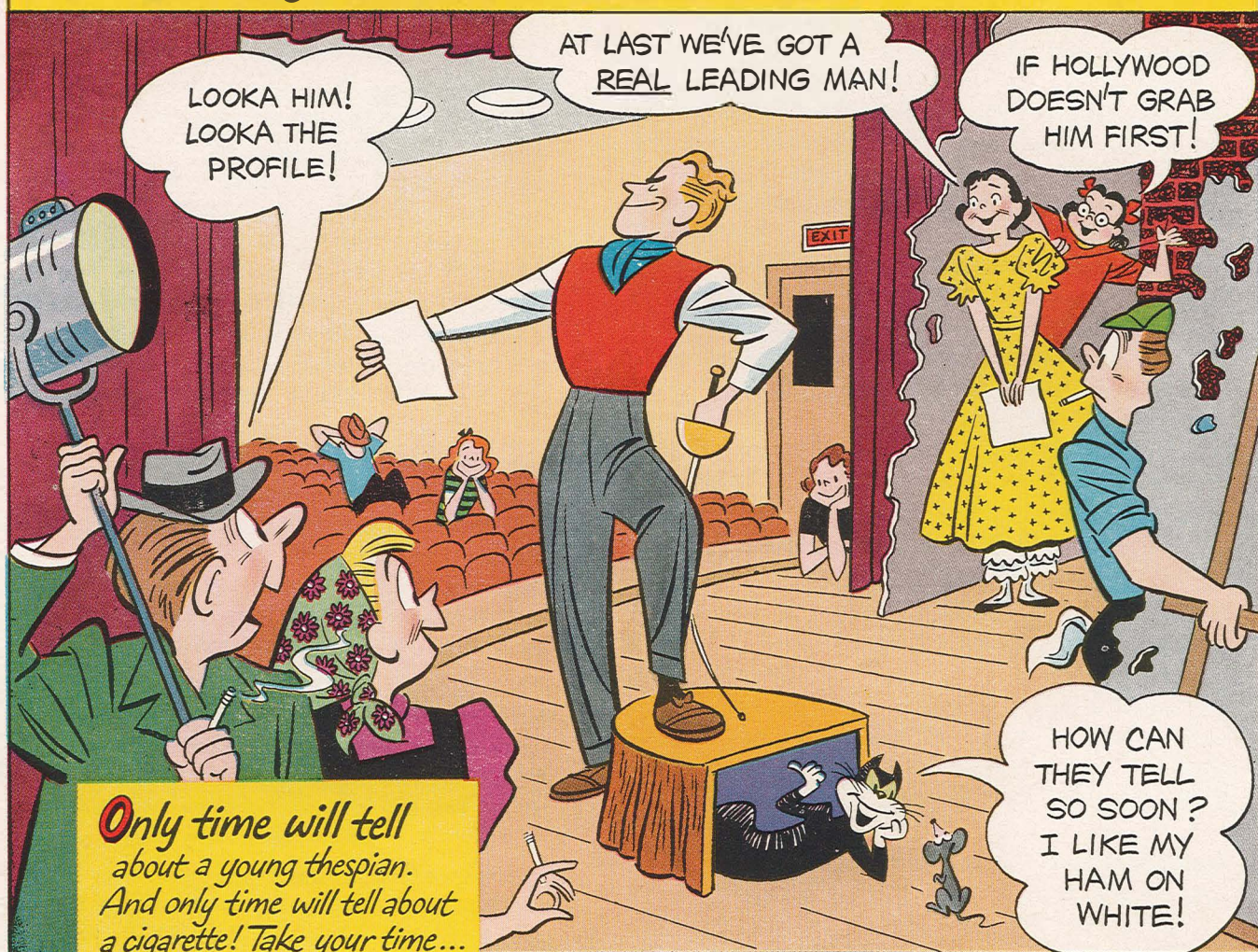
The people looked at the Inventor and their contempt was like a blast furnace, before which the iron fisted, hard old man melted into nothingness.

"This was not Messiah," David said. "When he appears, you will know him."

"Yes, David, we know you," they said. "Lead us and teach us, Messiah, for our need is great."

The people knelt in homage before the young man and it was as if a great burden had been lifted from their souls. So happy were they that they didn't even hear the thunder of the Inventor's castle as it crumbled.

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