



A Whetstone is No Kerbing Instrument,
And Yet it Maketh Sharpe Kerbing-Tolis

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The Thief

O Night, you have stolen my heart.
 You, with your breath-taking beauty,
 Bring sighs to my lips.
 You with your goblet of moon-crystal
 Have poured on my soul
 The night beauty—your beauty.

Bound in a cloud-robe,
 Diamonds of stars at your breast,
 You have bent low over me
 And kissed me with your soft lips,
 And ruffled my hair with your wind-fingers;
 You who shed rain-tears on my face;
 You, with your moods, your changes,
 Your intangible loveliness,
 Have thrown your enchantment
 Over my soul.
 You with your witchery
 Have stolen my heart.

—RICHARD A. THOMAS, JR.

The Black Crucifix

WILLIAM McCASKILL

It was Saturday night at the Jenkins Lumber Mill commissary. The big rush was over, and most of the gang had already begun to gather outside on the board walk. Some of them sat with their chairs leaning peg-legged against the wall of the store, fanning themselves with newspapers and pieces of card-board boxes. The others, mostly the younger ones, lounged along the edge of the raised plank walk, letting their feet hang down. The heat was stifling. Even the slow breeze which usually came from the bayou about the time the moon began to rise, had somehow forgotten its appointment, leaving nothing to break the monotony. The air hung thick, heavy—almost sticky, and from the bayou in front of the long row of mill buildings, came the incessant moan of insects and frogs. Occasionally the men shifted uneasily, striking at the mosquitoes or unbuttoning their wet shirts. They did not talk, but every now and then would mumble unintelligible monosyllables from swollen hot lips. It was too hot to talk, too hot to sleep, too hot to do anything but lull there in a semi-coma and fight Arkansas mosquitoes.

Inside the store, old man Gregory, the clerk, was wiping off the greasy oak counter with a wet cloth. He was trying to get out some of the filth before he closed up the place until Monday morning. And after the big rush on Saturday night, a mill commissary isn't the cleanest place in the world. Half eaten crackers, sardine cans, and peanut hulls littered the floor and counters. The place smelt foully of sweat, vinegar, and soured vegetables. Now and then Gregory would shake the perspiration from his heavy red neck and lumber over to the doorway by the men, where he would stand looking out at the dark line of the bayou, until some straggler came in to buy something. He hated hot weather. It wasn't intended that fat people should have to endure such. He wished folks would stop coming in. Why couldn't they buy their stuff earlier? He wished he were in Memphis. There were shows there where a man could keep cool, and he knew a woman on Vance . . .

A tall dark form mounted the steps of the raised board walk. The men did not look up, but held their noses for a moment while the sweat-reeking body of the black passed between them. Gregory backed into the store and stood wiping his chubby wet hands on his apron. The bare feet of the giant negro made no noise on the squeaky planks as he strode through the doorway. He stood there for a moment fumbling in his overall pocket—until he extracted a crumpled bill.

"I wants fo' pounds of side meat and a sack of flour, Mr. Jim." The voice of the black was deep, resounding, and some of the loafers outside inclined their faces to look through the door. Gregory didn't reply. He walked back to the meat block and sliced off the desired amount. The negro watched him, resting one bulging forearm on the counter. The cotton shirt he wore was torn down the front and hung loosely from his powerful shoulders. As Gregory tied up the purchase in a package of slick brown paper, his small beady eyes contemplated the man before him. Deliberately he scanned the figure and stared curiously for a moment at something which hung black and sparkling from the negro's neck.

"Where did you get the crucifix, Dan?" The storekeeper's voice was without accent: he might have been asking about a new hat or pair of shoes. The negro's face remained immobile. For a second, Gregory thought he wasn't going to reply. Then carefully putting the torn garment together, the black man sullenly answered, "From m' brother in New Or-leens."

Gregory lifted the flour and pushed it together with the meat across the table. He opened his mouth as though he were going to say something, but evidently changed his mind. The negro paid, then without a word went out through the door.

Outside, a soft mumble came from the loafers as they watched the swinging shoulders of the tall figure disappear through the darkness.

Will Silcox, the saw filer, who was sitting nearest the door, let his chair fall back on its four legs. Stretching his long thin arms, he looked down the line of loafers, who by this time had increased their number. "Ain't that the nigger who bluffed Bob Jenkins at the mill today?" he asked.

Someone lounging on the walk looked up. "Yeah, that's him."

Old man Gregory came out carrying a heavy cane-backed rocking chair in one hand and a pitcher of ice water in the other. He sat them both down quite deliberately in front of the door.

"Ain't nobody ever bluffed Bob Jenkins; ain't nobody 'round here done that," came a voice from the darkness.

"Wall, someon' did anyway do it," said Nils, the Swede, who ran the dummy engine into the swamp for timber. He was a big man with a thick neck and a touseled shock of blonde hair.

"I don't believe it," the persistent voice continued.

"Do you call me lie?" The Swede leaned forward in his chair looking at the man who had spoken.

"Naw, but I know no man 'round these parts ever bluffed Bob Jenkins. Ain't I seen him go into that "Honky-tonk" right through a room full of half drunk swamp niggers, get the one who'd been cuttin' up, and drag him out again. Why, hell, you seen him yourself right here in this store whip them Jones brothers, and them a-totin' knives, too. The boss he may give us a pretty raw deal once in a while, but he ain't afraid of nothin', not even the devil hisself."

From the bayou came the faint sound of 'gars flapping their bellies against the water; and off somewhere to the right, the long deep note of a hound's baying sounded wistful and clear. The men began to shuffle again, shifting to a more comfortable position and fanning themselves. They were glad something had started to take their minds off the heat. Maybe there would be a fight. Anything would be better than just sitting there and sweating.

Gregory sat there watching, his big head resting between his hands. Clerking in a mill commissary for more than thirty years, one hears a lot of things, and sees a lot. Jim Gregory hadn't missed his share. They said of him that he knew the life history of every man on the place, but no one could ever have proven that, because he never talked. He was a listener. In all his years of working for Jenkins' Mill he had never been heard to tell a tale or get into an argument. All of them came to him for counsel; all of them borrowed little sums of money from him. He inspired confidence, but never gave it. Sometimes, however, this big lovable old man acted as a peacemaker. He hated fights because they made men do things they didn't want to do. They did not give the truth, and Jim Gregory liked the truth, not from any moral standpoint, but from purely a philosophical one. Now, he thought, it was time for him to intervene. He knew something about the occurrence that had taken place that morning at the mill; Bill, the negro cook, had told him. But there was always the chance of learning something more, and fighting never proved anything. Pouring out a big dipper of ice water from the pitcher he addressed himself to a small squat man with a red nose, seated across from him.

"McLarthy, you were there. What's this thing all about, anyway? There ain't no sense in you boys gettin' all het over nothin'. I've heard something, but . . ."

"Yeah, I was there."

"You know I ban tal'in trut' den . . . about Bob Yenkins gettin' bluffed, I mean?" inquired the Swede, rubbing his wet face with his left hand.

"Well . . . yeah, and again, no. It happened so damn quick I couldn't tell just what did go on. There was something mighty queer about it, though."

"Queer?"

"Yeah, you see I was standin' by them when it happened. That nigger Dan, they said, kicked Jenkins' bird dog the other day and when the boss heard about it, he got his whip and went after the nigger."

"I thought it was 'bout some meetings they had been havin' on Tuesday night at the 'Honky-Tonk,'" said Silcox.

"No, it was about that bitch dog. Anyhow, Jenkins caught the nigger at the tool house as he was coming back with a crowbar Lewis had sent him after. He told him to take off his shirt and come into the mill. That long whip he uses was in his hand then. Dan just stood there for a minute when Bob told him that.

"You ain't gonna whip me, Mr. Bob," he said. The nigger still had that crowbar, too. Jenkins grabbed him by the collar and raised the whip.

"'Like hell I ain't,' he says . . . But that's where the funny part of it came in . . . he never let the whip fall."

"I told you!" yelled the Swede, "I told you . . . dot nigger god 'im bluffed."

"Ain't nobody ever bluffed Bob Jenkins," came the voice of the man from the edge of the store.

But McLarthy continued unruffled. "But that ain't all. That's where the thing gets all mixed up, and there just ain't no sense in it. Jenkins wasn't looking at the nigger when he dropped the whip. It was that little trinket Dan's got 'round his neck, that he was . . ."

"A black crucifix?" volunteered Gregory.

"Yeah, that's it. When he dropped the whip, he just stood there a-starin' at that crucifix a minute, like he was seein' a ghost. Then he turned on his heel and walked away without sayin' a word. A few minutes later I had to go to get a drink, and when I came up behind the well, Jenkins was sitting there on the bench by the bucket. He had his head all bent over, and looked like he wanted to be sick. When I got close, I heard him mumbling somethin' to himself. But . . ."

"Vot de hell's a black crucifix god to doo vid it?" interrupted the Swede. "Yenkins vas scared, dot's all. Dot nigger would 'ave bashed 'is 'ead in vid de crowbar. I seen him lick plenty guys, too, but dot's vun time he yust lost his nerve. Lotsa guys do dot. I seen 'em in France . . ."

"Don't be so damn sure of that," a new voice broke in.

Old man Gregory raised his eyebrows and quietly observed the speaker. Brooks, like himself, was a man who never talked much. He was older than Gregory, a thin-faced, grey-haired little man, who sat behind the big desk in the mill office all day without ever seeming to be affected by anything, heat, cold, bad niggers or jumbled accounts. In his own words he had quit a'worryin' about anything after his wife died twenty years ago. He was a regular "one-horse" bookkeeper, that is, he wasn't capable of tackling a big set of books, but just knocked about from place to place helping out. Most of the time, as he had told Gregory once, had been spent on big plantations throughout the South, working on small accounts. It didn't take much for him to live on. He had no people to depend on him. People trusted old Brooks—even the mill hands, although he had been educated a little.

Gregory poured himself out another dipper of ice water and mopped his bald head with a blue bandanna handkerchief. This was going to be good.

But the Swede, forgetting himself for a moment, turned on Brooks. "Vot de 'ell you know about it?" he asked.

The bookkeeper ignored the tone of the big blond's voice. There was silence for a moment, and he reached deliberately into the breast pocket of his shirt, and selected a toothpick from a tin case, placed it between his lips, and leaned back against the wall of the store.

"I know nobody ever bluffed Bob Jenkins," came the voice from the darkness.

"Well," said Brooks, ignoring the loafers and addressing himself to Gregory, "this thing may be a little more mixed up than you think, about that black crucifix, I mean. Before we get down to the point, though, I'm gonna tell you a story." His voice seemed to drift off, as though he were trying to remember something very far back.

"You see," he continued, "I've been knocking about this old world nigh on to thirty years. I've been pretty near everywhere, I guess—except Australia. I never got there. A fellow hears some mighty strange stories, too, knocking around like that.

Course, I ain't scarry, that is, I don't take no stock in hants nor nothin'. But there's some mighty queer things—things that just don't figure up. And, maybe, this story will kinda show you what I'm talkin' about.

"Many years ago, long before the Civil War, a shipload of niggers were being brought from somewhere on the west coast of Africa to New Orleans. The skipper of this here boat was a Frenchman, and he had with him besides the crew, a Jesuit Priest, who was comin' to teach the Indians. This Frenchman must have been a bad sort, for he chained the slaves in the bottom of the boat with almost nothin' to eat.

"Well, when they were about half way out to sea, this Frenchman got into an argument with the Priest, and it ended by the skipper getting his throat cut. Then the cure' got scared the crew would have him shot and turned the slaves loose. All the crew were killed except enough to run the ship, and the Priest made himself boss. Now, as this legend goes, which was told to me by an old Creole in Baton Rouge, the vessel never went to New Orleans as it aimed to, but on further down the coast to what is known as Barataria Land. There the niggers settled, led by this damned little shaved head. The niggers were Voodoos. For a long time they lived in this swampy country, and somehow invented a kind of religion all their own. It was half Catholic and half Voodoo. Now, before the Priest died, he seemed to have gone kind of looney himself, and believed part of the Voodoo stuff. When he did kick off, he gave each of the niggers a black cross with two gold bands around the bottom of it. These crucifixes, he said, would keep them from harm and would put a curse on any man who injured them as long as they kept it close to 'em. Well, after awhile the niggers were found by some hunter and taken to New Orleans and sold. And it 'pears like, as this story goes, that most of them were bought by three big planters—Jacquese, Banton, and a German named Metz. It wasn't long after this, that Jacquese ups and shoots one of these niggers that he'd bought . . . for something—I forgot what. About a week later this same Jacquese was thrown from his horse and killed. Nobody thought much about it then, but about a month later Banton kills another one of them Voodoos, and be-dad-gum if he don't take sick and die of smallpox hisself. Then folks 'round there began to talk, and somehow this yarn that I'm tellin' you about—about this crucifix, you know, leaked out. Then some more of these niggers get kicked off, too, and all of their masters die—one way or another. It got so bad after awhile that nobody would buy one of these slaves—if they knew about, I mean. Well, it seems that these black crosses was handed down from old man to son for a long time, and the story kept poppin' up again and again."

Brooks paused a moment and asked Gregory to hand him the pitcher of ice water.

"But vod's dot got to do vit Bob Yenkins?" inquired the Swede, with cruel persistence.

Brooks sat down again and fanned himself a little with a piece of newspaper. Again he apparently ignored the interruption of the loafer, and addressed himself to Gregory.

"Now, 'course I ain't a man to take no stock in all the tall tales I've heard, but this special one I've seen carried out. I reckon it's just a case of 'happen-so', but . . ."

"You've seen it carried out?" old man Gregory asked encouragingly.

"Yes, down at Whitehall Landing, where I kept books for awhile. That was a bad country in those days—full of white trash and mean niggers. There wasn't much law either. It was a kind of no-man's land. The Sheriff wouldn't come into the country unless there had been a murder or something. Whitehall Plantation—that's where I was working in them days—was one of the richest in Arkansas. Old man Crenshaw—stingy John—owned it. At the place I stayed were about three hundred niggers and only three white men: Jake Garken, the storekeeper; Rodney Menken, and myself. Rodney Menken was the overseer—the best one I've ever saw. He could get more work out'er those 'coons in one month than most men could in a year. By 4 o'clock every morning he would have them all up and startin' toward the fields, and would work them to black dark. But he never tried to beat them out of nothin', like most of those fellows do. And the niggers knew it, too, and liked him. They ain't so dumb. They know when they

are being treated square . . . That didn't keep 'em from being scared of him, though. Just his name would throw a scare into any plantation nigger along the river.

"They said he'd killed more men than he could keep track of. That was a lie, I guess, but it sure put a scare into these coons on Whitehall plantation. Menken use to ride around on that big black horse of his, carrying two guns: one in his hip pocket and the other under his left armpit. He was a cold one all right. Once we got into an argument over something, and I started to sock him in the jaw—even though we were pretty good friends. The next day when he meets me he says, 'Brooks, you and me been good pals, but let me tell you this: If ever we get into a scrap over somethin' or other, you get your gun and shoot me first, because I don't fight with my fists'. And from the way he said it, I knew what he meant.

"Well, anyway, one Saturday night after the big rush, a night just about as hot as this, I remember." Brooks wiped his face again with a handkerchief from his hip pocket, and fixed his eyes on something out on the bayou.

"Jake Garken," he continued, "the storekeeper, and me was sittin' out on the little front porch of the store. We lived in the back part, behind where we kept the groceries and feed . . . Jake was a good talker and I liked to listen to him. He had been around quite a lot, too, so we had plenty of places, like Java and Paris, we could talk about. It was about 10 o'clock, and hot as hell. Menken had left us, said he was going to try to snatch some sleep. He had been riding all day.

"All of a sudden, when Jake was just in the middle of a good yarn, we heard two pistol shots fired in quick succession. At first I thought it was Johnny, the stable boy, shooting a mule that had broken his leg that day. But then I remembered that he had carried the critter to the river.

"We both jumped up and started through the store. As we opened the door, into the back hallway—the part of the house where we lived—there in the middle of his room stood Menken calmly loading his big .45.

"I guess you better get some of the boys to carry him in," he said, just as though he was telling me to order a load of oats.

"Carry who in?" asked Jake, looking kind of weak around the gills.

"That nigger I just killed," he said, pointing out of the window toward the well, at the back of the store. Jake rushed over, and looked out. His face turned sort of pale, and he motioned to me.

"Well, sir, a big black nigger was layin' out there, face down in the dust. Niggers all look alike to me, except for their size, and though the moon was pretty bright, I couldn't tell who it was 'til we got him inside. Then right away I recognized him as Joe, the blacksmith. I'd heard that he was a bad nigger, but he'd never cut up much in the store, like some others.

"We carried him in and laid him down on a wood box in the hall. He was stone dead, shot square between the eyes—the two holes were so close together they looked like one. Menken was still standing there playing with that gun when we came in with the body. Then he stepped over and felt the nigger's hip pocket.

"Well, I'll be damned," he says, giving a funny sort of laugh.

"Damned what?" I asked.

"That nigger didn't have no gun after all'.

"What do you mean?" I asked again.

"Well," he said, "you see this nigger here has been stealing hogs for a long time. The other night he got another one. I've been looking for him all day. So when he comes to get that bucket of water I told him he would have to bring that hog back, or I was going to take it out of his wages. Well, he started arguing, said he didn't steal the hog; in fact, he called me a damned liar, and reached for his hip pocket . . . I thought he was going for a gun, so I just plugged him . . . But, you know, I'll be damned if I don't believe he was going to get his handkerchief . . . Too bad . . . He was a tough egg, though. I would 'av had to do it sooner or later anyhow'. Menken gave another one of those queer little laughs of his, that make goose-bumps crawl up your spine, and stalked off to his room.

"Well, you know how news travels on a plantation. In half an hour there were over a hundred niggers gathered around the place, and by twelve it looked like the whole works, men, women and children, was there." Brooks cleared his throat and went on.

"Gregory, you know I ain't one to get rattled over nothin', but that night I sure was scared . . . no telephones . . . a mob of mumbling negroes outside the store . . . hot as hell . . . Jake bolted the door and windows, and brought out a couple of Winchester

"If they storms the place,' he says, 'we might be able to scare them off for awhile.' I offered to ride to Jefferson to get the sheriff, but Jake said I'd be a fool to try to get out. They'd think it was me who had done the shooting."

"Aw, vod de hell 'as dis to do wit de black croozfix you was talkin' about, and Bob Yenkins?" asked the Swede, impatiently scraping his feet and unbuttoning his cotton shirt.

"Bob Jenkins ain't never been bluffed," said the voice from the edge of the walk.

Brooks continued unruffled. "Well, anyway, we was both scared stiff. It didn't seem to bother Menken none, though, 'cause he went to sleep and told us not to wake him up. Just as if anybody could sleep with all that hub-bub going on outside.

"Finally, though, they started knocking at the door. I thought sure the end had come, and cocked that Winchester. Jake went back and got Menken. He said we were scared about nothing. But when the knocking kept on getting louder he got a table from behind the counter and put it in the middle of the floor. Then he emptied about two boxes of .45's on it and laid both his guns side by side. Menken wasn't a bit nervous, though. He sat down there just like he was gettin ready to eat a big meal at the Gayoso—or something.

"Now, open the door,' he says, 'and let them come. You all watch the windows. I can kill all the niggers on Whitehall plantation if I have to.' And from the way he said it, I knew he meant business. I got the door open and stood back. A very old negro man stood there holding his hat in his hand. He said he was Joe's father, and would like permission to take the body. Maybe I didn't feel good!

"All right,' said Menken, 'but if you try any monkey business, you'll go the same way he did,' motioning toward the back part of the store. There wasn't no use in him sayin' that, though, 'cause the old man looked more like he wanted to cry than to fight.

"We let two of them come in and carry the corpse out. Menken stood there with both his .45's cocked. Just as they were gettin' the dead nigger through the door something fell from around his neck and hit on the floor at Jenkins' feet. It was a small black cross.

"After we closed the bolt down again, I turned around and looked at Menken. He was still standing there, but his guns was sorta droopin' from his fingers, and he was staring at the thing he had just picked up off the floor. If ever a man's face looked sick and green his sure did. I thought he was going to faint. When I asked him what was the matter, he didn't answer, but just stood there looking at that trinket in his hand. I didn't think about the legend of the 'black crucifix' then, but when I went into his room a few minutes later, I did.

"For a long time he sat there on that little bed in his room without seeming to see anything, his face as green as a gourd. He looked at me for a long time before he even saw me, and when he did, he reached over and grabbed my hand so hard I thought he was crazy.

"Don't let them do anything to me,' he said "they'll get me sure."

"Who'll get you?' I asks. 'The niggers done got the body. That's all they wanted.'

"It's the spirits of that damn crucifix!' he says. 'They killed my father, they killed my brother, and they'll kill me! They'll kill me, I tell you!' He clutched my hand again, and I thought he was going to have a fit.

"Well, about two o'clock in the morning those damn 'coons started moaning and chanting. God knows why they didn't leave when we gave them the corpse. They all

gathered around the well outside, where Joe had been shot, and of all the carryin' on, you never heard. Lord, I thought Menken would go crazy.

"You've got to get me out of here,' he kept on begging, 'you've got to.' By three o'clock he was a foam in' at the mouth like a mad dog, and his color was something terrible. Early that morning, just as things were beginning to get sorta grey, Jake and me put him in the spring wagon and started to Whitehall landin', about four miles away. Well, sir, as we began to get further away from the store Menken seemed to get better, and when I put him on the mail boat, he looked plumb all right again. He waved to us from the lower deck as the old side-wheeler shoved off.

"Tell the sheriff,' he yelled, 'that the damn nigger wasn't no good anyhow!'"

Brooks finished the toothpick he was chewing on and flipped it into the darkness.

"He'l," drawled the Swede, "dot don't prove nuddin!' Vod happen to dot fellah, anyway?"

Brooks looked coolly at the big blond, and for a minute Gregory thought he wasn't going to say any more, but presently he went on: "Well," he said "you know it's damned funny about that fellow Menken. I don't know as I ever rightly heard what did happen to him. He never came back to Whitehall plantation any more—that's sure. It's always been sorta a mystery down there. Somebody told me not long after it happened that he was bossin' an another big farm—way down in Louisiana. And maybe he's still down there—I don't know. Last year, though, I saw Sleepy Johnny, the nigger boy who used to tend the stock at Whitehall when I was there—he said that the 'Big Boss' had gone nuts and was in some kind of a bughouse in Alabama.

"But you know, down there on the plantation, them coons still tell the story that Menken never even got to Kellard's Point, where he was headin' that morning. Somethin' got him . . . jus' swallowed him up . . . voodooed . . . that's what they say . . . and, by God, he ain't been seen since . . . anywhere. But hell, that's nigger stuff . . . still, it sure was mighty queer . . ."

The old bookkeeper lapsed into silence. After a few minutes, the loafer sitting in the shadows near the steps of the board walk, spat loudly in the darkness, and gazed over his shoulder at the wet faces of the other men.

"They ain't nobody in this country can lick Bob Jenkins," he said, "ain't nobody can do that."



We shall rise bodiless at the Resurrection,
Some people say.
I often wonder how many friends and neighbors
Will recognize each other's naked souls. —H. O.

At sunset the world is a newly converted flapper.
She wipes off the lip stick and the rouge,
And replaces her inviting look
With one of extreme probity. —H. O.

Ten and Out

CLARK PORTEOUS.

"What's the matter, Tony? You look kinda low."

Tony Martello, a dark Italian with a small black mustache, blue scar on his neck, and immaculate clothes, growled sullenly:

"That damned Irishman took me in again today. I lost five grand on the football game. Who'd a thought Pitt would beat Notre Dame?"

"Well, O'Rourke must have," said Pete, one of Tony's henchmen.

"I'll get even on the 'Runt' Wilson—'Kayo' Metz' scrap next week. He thinks Wilson's a cinch. Well, I intend to see that Metz cops that fight. Pete, you know that palooka? Tell him there's five hundred bucks in it for him if he flops. Better have him make it the third round. Just tell him to stick his chin out and catch one of Metz' rights. We won't even have to let 'Kayo' in on the deal. Hell, I'll bet O'Rourke ten grand. He thinks Wilson's that good and he's already 'in' me for half that much."

"Okay, Boss. Think Wilson'll be willing?"

"I know damn well he'll be willin'. The Lyceum outfit ain't paying him but \$500 to fight Metz. He's on the downgrade and won't get another chance at the champ anyhow. Sure, he'll flop. Times is hard, man."

"Hello, chief."

"Hi there, Casey. Have a cigar."

"Well, don't care if I do, Mr. O'Rourke."

Pat O'Rourke was a big-bellied Irishman who was left off the police force by some chance or other. Except for a crafty look in his cold-blue eyes, he looked like a "Copper" on a holiday.

"Casey, I cleaned up on the game yesterday. I took that darn 'Dago' Martello for \$5,000. Pure luck, too. I just had a hunch Pitt was due for a break."

"You were lucky, chief."

"Yeah, I know. I'm going back to the sure things, though. Luck changes, but you always win if you're smart. Martello thinks 'Kayo' Metz is a cinch to lick Wilson Saturday. He said he'd bet plenty on Metz."

"Aw, 'Kayo' can't whip 'Runt' Wilson. 'Runt's' the best middleweight in the game, besides the champ."

"I don't know, Casey. Runt's getting old at the racket. I want to be sure of this. Metz ain't making much out of this fight. Suppose you tell him the postman'll leave him five crisp \$100 bills if he takes one on the chin from 'Runt.' Tell him to fold up in the third round. Just have him stick his chin out and let 'Runt' tap him one on the button."

"Chief, I don't like the idea. Metz may double-cross us."

"Not Metz. He's worked for me before and he needs the money. Fix things. I stand to make a lot on this."

"Sure, chief. I gotcha."

The giant floodlight cast a whitish glare on the canvas-covered ring. Two muscular men were hopping around trading punches and growls in a half-hearted manner, making a good pretense at fighting for the sake of the cash customers. The referee, in dirty white, was doing his best to keep them from clinching and stalling. Racy voices filled the smoky air.

"Kill him, 'Runt!' He can't take it."

Come on, Metz. Knock his damn block off!"

Stolidly the two pugs kept at it, methodically punching, jabbing, ducking, feinting

their chins tucked behind their shoulders, rolling with the blows. Now and then one would land solidly, to the delight of the fans. Blood streamed from Metz' nose. Wilson had a badly swollen eye.

At the end of the second round, Wilson, who held a slight edge, raised both hands above his head, shaking hands with himself in reply to the yells of his friends. Metz glowered and scowled.

As the third round began, both men sparred cautiously in the center of the ring.

Metz suddenly decided it was about time to quit. "Guess I'll just stick my chin out for a second and let him pop me one," he thought. Just as he did this Wilson's chin came out from behind his shoulder momentarily, forming a perfect target. Instinctively Metz drove his right at the sweaty face before him.

There was a sickening crunch of wet, soggy leather meeting bone as each fist met the opposing chin at the same split second. The two fighters fell in crumpled heaps on the rosin-smearred canvas.

The referee was bewildered, and paused for a second. Boos filled the air.

"Fake! Fake!" yelled the fans, as the referee began slowly lifting his arm and counting.

"Ten-and-out!" he finally bawled out. "No contest. It's a draw."

Both boxers remained prostrate as the angry fans continued to boo and give cat-calls. The seconds picked the men up and carried them to their dressing rooms.

"Damn," said O'Rourke. "Something must of gone haywire. Go and see what happened, Casey. If that son of a gun double-crossed me, I'll break his fool neck."

Casey returned, red with excitement.

"Chief," he whispered hoarsely. "Both them punks was out cold. Yeah, out like a light. They threw two buckets of water on Wilson 'fore he came to, and Metz is still out."

Song of the City Editor

(A Trivia Bit.)

By WILLIAM McCASKILL

My day is a world of sounds—sounds which echo with useless clickings and the staccato of moratoriums, inflations, city shortages, Nazi atrocities, abductions, seductions, earthquakes, and assassinations . . . socialism, and beer three-two. My world is full of hate and pathos, crime and injustice, laughter and ballyhoo; so that the silver threads of light which stream through my window in the evening are not beautiful, but clutch at my throat like talons of steel.

And when at last, under oppressive clouds I hurry home—yearning uselessly, my brother-in-law asks my expert opinion on the Japanese Foreign Relation question. Then I look out into the night, the steel-blue night, I thought at least was mine, and say—"damn."

Episode . . . 1931

MARGARET TALLICHET

Dr. Landon B. Elder descended the steps of the City Water Co. building very slowly and painfully, and waited for his daughter Lois to swing the little coupe over to the curb and open the door for him. Then he climbed in carefully and settled himself for the ride out to the apartment.

"Lo, daddy," said Lois; "how was everything at the office today?"

It was the customary afternoon greeting, and he replied as usual.

"Just about the same, Lois."

Yes, just about the same, he thought bitterly. He couldn't bring himself to tell the girl what had really happened. Perhaps he had only imagined it; but, no, he could still hear the manager's voice saying stumbingly, in tones of too-thick kindness and geniality, "Well, Elder, old man, I'm afraid we'll have to do without you for awhile. The city's cutting down the budget and we're having to double up on our employees. I sure hate to see you go. You've been with us a long time; but then you know how it is. We've had to just about cut the force in half already. It won't be for long, though; and I'll give you a ring as soon as there's a place for you again. So long, old man; and good luck to you."

That was the way life was, as soon as a man was down, he began getting all the hard knocks. He'd seen it coming for a long time, but some how he'd been afraid to face it. Manager Newsom wasn't to blame. Keeping the job as long as he had, he had been lucky enough, what with the hundreds of able-bodied young men just out of college, all walking the streets looking for something to do. No wonder they got rid of an elderly man, half crippled by paralysis, who was slow and feeble at his work.

Yes, that stroke three years ago had finished him. Who in these times would want an old man with a dragging right leg and a slow, thick speech? Only his many years as head city chemist had saved him so far. And now he was through. No job, no hope of a job. How would he and Jane and Lois live?

"Say, dad," Lois' strident young voice broke into his reverie, "Can I have a new evening dress? There's gonna be a big dance a week from next Saturday night, and I haven't got a thing to wear. Mother said she thought I needed a new one, too. Come on, please let me get one."

"I don't know, child; I'm afraid not."

"Aw, please. All the girls will have new fall models except me. I don't wanta have to wear my old one any more. Please let me!"

"Well, we'll see," he groaned weakly.

Of course he knew it was impossible. What little money they had must be saved to buy groceries. But then, neither he nor Jane had ever been able to refuse Lois anything. Maybe that was why she had turned out as she had, wild and uncontrollable. That was the trouble about adopting orphans: it was too big a gamble. He would never forget the day they had picked her out, chosen her from all the others because her hair was red like Jane's.

He looked at Lois as she dodged the car recklessly through gaps in the heavy six o'clock traffic. There was something monkey-like about the child's face. Perhaps it was her eyes, large brown eyes that could sparkle with impish glee or have a queer, uncanny mournfulness about them. Her thin, wiry little body was almost as agile as a monkey's. Lois had been a bad investment, all right. He had known, and Jane had known, that even as a child there was something strange about her, something different from the other children; but they had never spoken of it to each other and always boasted loyally to other parents about "our Lois." At seventeen she was in only the second year of high school, and ran around until all hours of the night with a crowd he didn't approve.

Dr. Elder sighed heavily. "I'm a failure," he thought. "I've been a failure in everything I've ever tried to do. I couldn't raise a daughter and now I can't even support my family. How can I ever tell Jane? Is there anything I can do now?"

It seemed that the very ground under his feet had dissolved and was slowly falling away beneath him. He saw his whole everyday life disintegrating. They would lose the car, probably, first of all, and then have to move out of the apartment. It was terrible not to have something solid to hold on to, some firm possession that could not be taken away. He could foresee nothing but days of endless job seeking, only to receive endless refusals. Nights—but he would not even think of the nights. Where would they stay? What did people do when they had absolutely nothing, and no chance of getting anything? Charity or the Salvation Army, he supposed, but for educated, once prosperous people to receive help from those sources was almost past imagining. Charity, to him, had always meant a bowl of soup to a gaunt, unshaven tramp, or a basket of provisions to some mill worker's family of six or eight tow-headed children.

"Let's go home down Beverly," he said to Lois, and she turned the car obediently to the right.

Soon he would see their old home, the one which had been theirs for fourteen years, but which he had to sell when his losses in the stock market had almost ruined them. Now they were passing it. He stared hungrily at the house. It was too big and fresh and comfortable looking, with its clean white stucco and green tiled roof. The lawn was so smooth, and the shrubs that he and Jane had planted were still green. There was the rose garden, and far back in one corner of the back yard, which was surrounded by a dainty white lattice fence, he could see the doll's house that they had given Lois for Christmas when she was five years old. As they turned the corner, he strained to get one last look, and saw two little boys come romping out the front door, shouting and playing with a terrier. The sight of them was like a sudden blow. It made the loss of the house seem so much more definite and irretrievable, to see someone else come out with the casual air of ownership.

Yes, those were the days, he thought. Memories came piling back . . . the big car, the cook, the long summer evenings that he had spent sprinkling the flowers, or sitting comfortably on the porch chatting with friends that happened to drop in. He remembered the gay children's parties they had given for Lois on birthdays, or Easter, or Hallowe'en. Jane had always had such good taste in clothes, and she had always dressed Lois so charmingly in little hand-made French frocks. He could recall how he used to fuss about the bills, not that he ever really minded, but because it was some way the thing for a husband to do. Those good old times when everything was rosy and assured, and he never thought particularly about the future except to wonder if he and Jane would be lonely when Lois should go away to school and then eventually marry. He was Dr. Landon B. Elder then, and could have a pleasant glow of health and strength and ownership when he woke in the mornings and looked out across the lawn.

He stirred restlessly and lit a cigar. He wished now that he hadn't told Lois to drive by the house. It had only brought up the past too vividly and made the future seem all the darker.

"How can I ever tell Jane?" he asked himself frantically.

Poor Jane, she had been so brave that other time when he had told her that their home and everything must go. It had been a hard wrench for her to give up the things she loved so much, all the little pleasures and luxuries that had been so much a part of her life. Odd, though, how much better her health had been since they had been living in the apartment. In the old days she was always ailing, always finding something the matter with her that would put her to bed on some kind of rest cure.

"Stop by the drug store," he ordered Lois, suddenly.

He climbed out of the car carefully, entered the store and slowly selected a box of chocolate covered caramels. Chocolate covered caramels, Jane's favorite candy. How natural it was for him to buy some of them on his way home in the evenings. It was

a ridiculous piece of extravagance, he knew, but it was to be the last gesture that connected him with the past. If he had to go under, he would at least do it with a flourish. Then, too, it put off the awful moment when he must face his wife and break the news to her.

Now they had reached the apartment. He could see Jane sitting on the little porch that stuck out so abruptly from the front of the house. Suddenly he realized how much she had aged in the last year. Fine wrinkles covered her face, and her hair was distinctly grey. As the car stopped, she waved to them gaily. With an effort he managed to wave feebly in return.

Dr. Elder got out of the car and started doggedly up the walk, the package of candy tucked securely under his arm.



The Plane

Skyward it ranged,
A powerful dragon-fly;
As one estranged
From earth, in love with the sky.

It soared upon
The elements, quite beneath
The white dawn,
The ragged, flying sheath

Of cloud; I heard
Its faint-sounding, throbbing hum;
Like a large bird
Nearer it had slowly come.

It soared in the white and blue
Straight overhead;
As on it sped
My thoughts with the white plane flew.

—RICHARD A. THOMAS, JR.

In Defense of Insanity

RODNEY BAINE

In his brilliant preface to *Madness in Shakespearean Tragedy*, Wyndham Lewis makes the following rather disconcerting remark:

What is most generally meant, no doubt, when the average man employs the word "mad," is something that could most accurately be applied to himself: for if to be the victim of a constantly indestructible delusion is to be insane, then certainly we are all fairly insane: and further than that, the most "normal" are the most mad.

But it is not the greater part of men and women whose defense I wish to undertake, but that unbelievably numerous race of men, of geniuses rather, who are incarcerated and isolated as criminals. This is truly a lamentable state of affairs; for there is no doubt but that our present political, economical, and social unrest, and literary and artistic stagnation and retrogression are due, in part at least, to the fact that we are in this way depriving ourselves of our natural leaders. If we are making some progress in science, it is only because scientists, although expected to be madmen, are thought of as such a harmless lot that they are completely overlooked by the state psychopathological department.

And if anyone objects to this explanation as *a priori* and unfounded, he has only to look to history for his proof. For all our present-day science we have eventually to thank the madman, the deformed and demented jester. It was he who, becoming bored with entertaining his senile monarch, conceived the idea of transmuting some one of the baser metals into gold, and with alchemy laid the basis for modern chemistry. And we wise men are just now realizing that the jester's dream was no hallucination, but the prophecy of a reality.

Then, too, madmen have had their part in the making of every great nation. Henry VIII had a disease that made him necessarily somewhat insane, and if Elizabeth didn't inherit a trace of his madness, it wasn't because, according to all the laws of heredity, she shouldn't have done so. The only trouble is, we aren't so sure about her heredity. Mary was surely Henry's daughter; at least she was insane enough. Spain in its flower was ruled by a dynasty of kings hereditarily insane; and when this line died out, the greatness of Spain came to its close. And in Muscovy, brooding over the white vastnesses of its snow-fields, were the mad tsars—then Peter on his mad tour of Europe with his insane troop of deformed jesters. And yet out of that mad tour there came modern Russia.

Indeed, it is not sane men who are subjects for history and tragedy, but the insane. In the already quoted *Madness in Shakespearean Tragedy*, Dr. H. Somerville, member of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association, writes:

In all events, in the fifth act of any Shakespearean tragedy all the characters, were I called in, would be sent straight to Colney Hatch. Most have the seeds of madness long before their entrance in Act I.

The list of Shakespeare's insane characters is really staggering—Lear, Ophelia, Lady Macbeth, Constance, Hamlet. Macbeth was a paranoiac; Timon, a megalomaniac. Othello went temporarily insane, and Brutus' mind eventually became unbalanced. Goneril was nothing more or less than a "mental monstrosity." It is in and with this mad world that Shakespeare moved. And it is into the mouths of fools that Shakespeare puts his most pregnant utterances. In *King Lear* the only wise men are the madmen, and only when Lear goes mad does he become sane. Such facts as these, together with some of the lines in Shakespeare's later plays, would almost permit one to venture hope-

fully that the writer was himself slightly insane. In fact, several recent critics—among them, John Cooper Powys—have taken and defended this point of view.

* * * * *

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet,
Are of imagination all compact.

At least, so said one of the greatest of poets. But the classification is arbitrarily made; and though I can see no reason for the lover's considering his dignity lowered by the comparison, the lunatic certainly has grounds for complaint. Of imagination they are far from being "all compact." The poet may be privileged enough to attain sometimes to the heights of lunacy, but when he begins to identify himself with the lover, he at once enters on a lower intellectual plane. The lover may have madness enough of a sort—but take the two, for instance, in light of epistolary art. The lover writes page upon page of inane nonsense, it is true, but then can do no better than tack on a couple of hearts pierced by a Cupid's arrow, or a row of curious-looking X's. Contrast with this the story Clifford W. Beers tells us in his recent mental autobiography, fallaciously called *A Mind That Found Itself*. While he was in one of his many asylums, and denied communication with the outside world, he managed to save up some thirty or forty sheet of drawing paper—at least, enough to write a note to the governor of his state. Now in this note he told the governor all about the mentally unsanitary conditions at the asylums. The trouble of it all was that he had a page or so left. So with a truly enviable sense of proportion he adorned these with pencilled illustrations, added a few cartoons to the margins of the "text," felt duly satisfied, and sent the communication on to the governor. According to Beers, Beers was at that time mentally normal, but surely no ordinarily sane man could have been so admirably perspicacious. And such men are shut up in insane asylums!

But there is hope for the future. The present popularity of such writers as Eugene O'Neill and William Faulkner, whose neurotic characters are just beginning to be appreciated, is an indication that conditions may be remedied. When pictures of the type of *Strange Interlude*, *Mourning Becomes Electra* and *Sanctuary* begin to replace the sentimentality of those patterned on *Over the Hill* and *Smiling Through*, there is reason to think that the time is not far off. There is no doubt that the madman is beginning to replace the lover in popular taste. There has been a trend in that direction for a long time; Lon Chaney and Emil Jannings were at its beginning. And now, with the phenomenal rise to popularity of Charles Laughton, it has come to its full force.

Who knows but that some day soon, instead of going to the theatre to weep over the romance of two moon-sick lovers, we may see enacted the saner lives of madmen. Nay, we may even journey to the nearest madhouse, now thrown open to the public, there to partake of cleaner and healthier diversion and learning—just as the rakes of the eighteenth century London used to take their dates down to Bedlam. The pity of it is that instead of going there to sit at the feet of geniuses, they went to be amused by what they thought were the antics of lunatics!

* * * * *

And now, as I glance back over my vindication of the insane, may I not be permitted to express the hope that it will be influential enough to start others on the road to right thinking. If we will only begin to realize that these are the facts in the case, we may soon have an end of our economic and artistic deterioration—for what better answer is there to the problem than to hand it over for solution to those geniuses whom we now keep in mental prisons!

An Exciting Episode In the Life of Miss Miranda Jacobson

CHLOE BURCH.

Miss Miranda was one of the oldest inhabitants of Sleepy Valley. She was the great-granddaughter of Eli Jacobson, who had been the founder of the town. The other inhabitants had always looked up to the Jacobsons as leaders in all matters.

Now Miss Miranda was fully acquainted with the position her family held. She was well aware that it had been, and so of course to her still was, the leading family of the town, and Miss Miranda considered herself the leading member of that leading family. We are sorry to state here that no other member of the family would acknowledge Miss Miranda's leadership; consequently a quarrel resulted.

This lady had two brothers who were continually made to obey her every whim. They put up with her almighty attitude for some time, but seeing that no end of it was in sight they decided to move out. A little later we find them happily married, and living at the opposite end of town from where their sister resided. This was now the new and fashionable section of Sleepy Valley, and many people were leaving their homes in the old part to settle there.

When the two brothers separated from their sister, they gave up their share in the family house. They left all the old servants at Miss Miranda's disposal, but the servants did not care to work for Miss Miranda, and also departed. The only person who had remained with the mistress of the Jacobson homestead was a poor half-witted girl whose mother had served Miss Miranda as maid when that lady was the "blossoming belle" of Sleepy Valley. So we really do not find Miss Miranda with a great deal of company. Nevertheless, Polly was as loyal as she could be.

She declared that all the other servants had no gratitude for Miss Miranda's kindness, and vowed with tears streaming down her face that she would never leave her beloved mistress. If all Sleepy Valley had been as devoted as Polly, without a doubt, it would shortly have become an oriental monarchy. Miss Miranda had only to say what she wanted, and immediately it was before her. Although it often took much explanation on her part to make Polly understand what she wanted, the girl was always willing to try to get it.

Miss Miranda had abandoned the upstairs of the house, and had fixed two downstairs rooms into bedrooms. She declared she could sleep ever so much better on the first floor than on the second. The real reason for this was that on the second floor the rats could be heard running about in the attic. However, Miss Miranda did not state their reason to anyone, not even to Polly.

Living all alone in that half vacant house with only a half-witted girl and an attic full of rats did not bother Miss Miranda at all, for she was most nobly guarded by her courageous cat, Thomas.

We find Miss Miranda one night in March preparing to retire somewhat earlier than usual. "Come, Polly, I feel quite sleepy tonight, and no doubt you do, too. If you don't, you should." Polly replied that she was sleepy, and that her mistress could do nothing more to suit her than to go to bed. So off they went.

The next morning at breakfast, Miss Miranda appeared slightly alarmed. "Polly, did you hear any peculiar sound last night? I am sure someone was pounding about the house. Although it was windy last night, I feel quite sure it was not the wind I heard."

Polly said she did not know whether she had heard anything or not, but if any burglars ever broke in at night, she hoped Miss Miranda would wake her up, and let her see them. She had always wanted to see burglars.

"Of course, you know I will wake you up," replied Miss Miranda. "You are a very

good girl, and if that is your wish I will certainly gratify it. I believe in rewarding people for their efforts, and, no doubt, you have done many things for me."

Polly said nothing. Miss Miranda went on with her breakfast; suddenly she stopped. "Polly, how is your surprise getting along that you are making for me? I am really quite eager to see it."

A slow, pleased grin widened to reveal big irregular teeth. "Ah—it ain't somethin' you make; it's somethin' . . . but now I'm tellin'. It's gonna be ready purty soon. I'm workin' turribly hard on it."

It was several days before Miss Miranda heard the noise again. She was seated by the fire one night knitting, when she heard it again. She pulled her jacket around her shoulders, and knitted as hard as she could. The noise continued. She stopped knitting, and looked around her. Where was Thomas?

She called to Polly, who was in another room. "Polly, I wish you would bring Thomas here." Soon Polly appeared with the long cat looped awkwardly over her right fore arm, down which she slid Thomas into his mistress' lap. Miss Miranda asked her if she had heard any noises. Polly assured her that she had heard no sound of any kind.

"Very well, you may go back to your work if you wish. I suppose it is only my imagination." As soon as the house was quiet again, Miss Miranda began listening. At first she did not hear anything. She kept on listening. Presently it began again.

"Polly, you will have to come here, and sit by me. This noise is really becoming serious." A slow, heavy dragging tread came nearer; the girl's sloppy body pushed through the door, and let it bang behind her. She offered to look through the house, and see what was causing the noise.

"Indeed you will not," answered Miss Miranda. "The second floor is so large that a band of outlaws could hide there without ever being seen. Besides, if anybody is after me, they can come to the library to get me."

This reply did not satisfy Polly. She was really in earnest about wanting to find the burglars. She continued to talk in spite of all her mistress did to quiet her. "Really, Polly, there is no use trying to hear that noise if you won't keep still long enough for me to hear it. I told you it was very faint. We might as well go on to bed."

The next night Miss Miranda told Polly that she need not come into the library, as she intended to find out what was making the noise. "I will never discover anything as long as you keep up your mumbling."

Miss Miranda took her usual chair, and waited for the noise. Soon it began. Tonight she was determined that she would listen until it stopped. One hour passed. The sound continued with only a few pauses. Miss Miranda listened closely. At times it sounded like a song.

"Of course it is not a song," she comforted herself; "not even the wind could go like that." Another hour passed. The sound had not stopped, and no strange person had come to the room. She decided she would call her servant.

"Polly, come here, and sit in this chair, and don't say a word." Polly did as she was bade. Miss Miranda listened closely for the noise. She listened more closely, but heard nothing. She listened most closely; the result was as before.

"Probably it is my brothers trying to scare me out of this house, but as they have not any grudge against you, Polly, they go away when you are around."

"Of c'ose that's what it is! How could Miss be so smart?" asked Polly, looking at her mistress in expressionless arrangement that in anyone else might have corresponded to profound reverence and awe.

The noise had definitely stopped; so again they retired for the night. The next day Miss Miranda would not let Polly out of her sight. She was convinced it was her brothers who would not harm her while Polly was around.

As Miss Miranda was completely worn out the next night, instead of keeping watch, she went to bed and commanded Polly to do likewise.

She had hardly fallen asleep when she woke up with a start. She heard that noise. It was very distinct now. It sounded closer than it ever had been before.

"Polly!" she screamed.

The called-for person came running in arrayed in a voluminous night gown and a ruffled sleeping cap. She peered in dumb, open-mouthed surprise at the bolt upright figure in the bed. "What's the matter, Miss? That noise?"

"Oh, yes—it is getting nearer every time I hear it. Wait—no, it has stopped. But I tell you someone is after me. Oh, Polly, thank your stars that nobody is trying to kidnap you or run you out of house and home."

"Aw, Miss, I wouldn't worry so much. I'll make up for these bad times you've had by lettin' you see what my surprise is tomorrow."

This did not ease Miss Miranda's anxiety any, but at least it aroused her curiosity. Presently she fell asleep.

The next afternoon just before time to light the lamps, Polly proudly came in the library. She told her mistress to shut her eyes, and she would soon find out what the surprise was.

Miss Miranda closed her eyes and waited for Polly to tell her to open them. She waited and waited. Suddenly she jumped up. She heard that buzzing noise. She was afraid to open her eyes because she knew someone was standing in that very room to kill her, and they would probably kill Polly, too.

Thinking of Polly made her remember the surprise which she had forgotten in her fear. She decided to sit down calmly, and wait for the surprise, no matter if someone did catch her. The noise continued. She decided to open her eyes, and see what it was. She knew it was going to be good, as Polly had spent almost a month on it. And the girl really could do some things quite nicely if she tried hard enough.

She clenched her fists, and bravely opened her eyes, and there sat that half-witted girl swinging her feet and strumming on a Jew's harp, blissfully ignorant that she had ever caused her dear mistress so much anxiety.



Night has come on, and the breeze
Blows softly through the darkened tree-tops,
Repeating in soft minor keys
Stories long forgotten, and then drops
Off to a whisper.

Night has come on, and once more
I am lonely.
Will each future night bring only
Memories? Will all that I longed for
Be never attained?

—R. M. B.

The Hero

It is not given to every boy to be a hero, but every one of them, deep down in his heart, longs for a chance to become one. And that is why Andy Houser, the freckled-face shortstop of Adams High baseball team, dashed with such alacrity to the rescue of Miss Jane Clymer.

It all happened on an April day. The spirit of spring was in the air, and the first signs of a chronic spring malady were just becoming noticeable in some of Adams' younger citizens. They were pathetic, the faces of these stricken ones; eyes gazed vacantly across the room, as if the owner were in a trance, and the sad lines of the face spoke of deep suffering. And of all these pitiable cases, certainly the most pitiable was Andy Houser. He sighed in the classroom; he sighed on the baseball field. He went to see Gaynor and Farrel whenever they were shown within twenty miles of Adams, and sighed when the picture was over. And yet no one knew of his misery. Whenever he failed to answer a question in class, or threw the ball over the first baseman's head, people did not say, "Poor old Andy! He's having a hard time." Instead the teacher kept him in and the coach gave him a blessing out. Life was very hard.

Even the cause of all this misery, the author of these deep woes and troubles, was totally unaware of what she had done. She sat at her desk and looked neither to the right nor to the left, as only the prettiest girl in school can afford to do. Little did she know that behind one worshipful face that gazed at her, there was a bleeding heart, ready to beat wildly for a single smile, or to throb painfully and slow because of a single frown. And so Andy pinned all his hopes on mental telepathy, not knowing that the solemn opinion of psychologists had long ago made his case hopeless.

For he could not speak to her. In his mind he could frame thousands of witty speeches, but when the time came, all he could say was, "What did you make on Math?"—or, "Are you coming to the game tomorrow?" And she rightfully came to believe him dumb and bashful. Poor Andy! She did not know the reason.

Gradually Andy came to see that she regarded him as dumb, and the knowledge made him even more shy and helpless. He would go out of his way to avoid meeting her, and changed his seat in English, which he had picked in order to be beside her. And as he sighed and kicked himself mentally, he became of the opinion that only being a hero would do him any good. If he could be a hero, then it wouldn't be any trouble; he wouldn't appear shy and bashful and dumb. But the question was: how to become a hero. Charley Farrel didn't seem to have any trouble, but around Adams there weren't many chances. And Jane Clymer wasn't a Parisian waif, or an orphan, or a poor little Scotch girl. Any one but Andy would have shivered at the thought of attempting to rescue that poised, capable young lady, and even Andy realized the difficulty.

But it was April, and in April people will attempt anything. Andy was walking along Main Street. He was going to a baseball game, but his thoughts were not on baseball. For weeks he had dreamed of situations in which he might save Jane, and have her cling to him, weeping and afraid, but always he had been forced to admit to himself that such a situation could never occur. It looked hopeless.

Suddenly he saw coming out of a drug store and starting to cross the street, the young lady of his thoughts. She did not notice him. And apparently she did not notice a huge motor truck which was bearing down upon her. In a moment she would be run over. She would be killed! Andy thought fast. "Jane!" he screamed. He ran as fast as he could and pulled her back to the curb.

She pushed him off. "What do you think you're doing?" she said. "Cave man stuff? You might try some other place besides Main Street!"

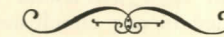
He was aghast; she didn't appreciate it. "That truck!" he gasped; "it was about to run over you."

"Oh!" she started giggling, and seemed as if she would never stop.

He was even more surprised. What was she laughing about? Then he looked at the truck, which had stopped, and at a small rubber marker on the street, on which was printed in bold red letters, STOP.

She looked at him and started laughing harder than ever. "They put it up yesterday," she said.

—H. O.



Hobo

I've led the life of a dirty hobo;
I've caught trains both fast and slow,
I'm no new one at the game,
And I've found the country all the same:
Just a lot of telephone posts
Flashing by like hurrying ghosts.

—CLARK PORTEOUS.

New Moon

The new moon is an embryo of light
In the midnight womb of the sky;
Soon the travail
And the restless turnings will cease,
And a full moon will be born.

—RICHARD A. THOMAS, JR.

Stone Mountain

JOHN CONE.

Before we reach Stone Mountain on the highway north of Atlanta we will take an oath that the accursed block of granite is nothing more than a will-o'-the-wisp, a phantom that plays tricks with our eyes. We will swear it is a recurrent illusion, and to all outward appearances be justified in our conclusions. For the mountain may be seen from the winding road through a gap in the wooded knolls of central Georgia, only to disappear a few seconds later and then jump up unexpectedly in an entirely different direction. And so we play tag with it until within a mile of the base, wondering if in its elusiveness it is nothing more than a rapidly moving lantern slide.

Then through a screen of pines around a curve it looms with an appalling immensity. Every one of its eight billion cubic feet of solid stone literally jumps at us from out of nowhere. Rising abruptly from a high plateau, the thousand feet of sheer, treeless face frowns down at us, and our playful game of hide-and-seek is at an end. We are startled, a bit amazed: it is as if some gigantic playfellow had suddenly seen a Gorgon's head and fallen in a grotesque position to be turned to stone.

Indeed, Stone Mountain bears a slight resemblance to a recumbent, tubby fellow lying on his side, his back toward us, his feet stretched out stiffly to their full length. Our curiosity is aroused: why should we Lilliputians not climb upon and examine this petrified Gulliver? Far up, near his wrist, are others doing so. Why not we?

A trail leads from his toe, along the crest of his leg, across what seems to be the scar caused by a removed appendix, up the tremendous chest, on until we reach the pinnacle on top of a rather rounded shoulder. From there we are supposed to make out in the blue haze of the horizon five or six states and enjoy the monotonously beautiful scenery of pine-clad hills and patch-work farms. But in spite of the height and its accompanying sense of superiority and extensive view we somehow feel more interest in the mountain for itself than as a mere means to scenic or geographical ends.

Our Gulliver is more than a mile from head to foot: made not of flesh and blood, but, according to geologists, of one huge mass of gray, glittering granite. From our position on his shoulder we can see the rather stubby neck terminating in a secondary wooded knob of stone that has all the attributes, a strange similarity, to a head, even to the—queer thought—green, uncombed hair.

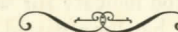
Descending, we notice that he is quite an immodest traveler, for the only clothing he seems to wear is a disreputable, much rent pair of green trousers that clothe his lower limbs very sketchily with a cloth that is more warp than woof. Otherwise he is quite naked, and, with such a physique, very becomingly so. Down we clamber, jump off a toe, and walk around to look at his sturdy back.

There we see a number of fellow Lilliputians putting an elaborate design deep into his skin with drills and powder. It appears to be a glorified type of tattooing: a long line of mounted men—the Confederate great—embedded deep into Gulliver's back, making, as it were, a spinal column worthy of so mighty a creature.

Down to us below comes a dull, ear-throbbing explosion of dynamite. The mountain twitches unconsciously, then continues his sleep. The tattooers, pricking painfully and tearing savagely at his mutilated back, try repeatedly to awaken this American Gibraltar, but in vain. Our Gulliver seems to be a son of Father Time: eternally at rest, majestic in his repose.

Perhaps Stone Mountain is a New World counterpart of Pelion in ancient Greece. Ovid, in his version, has it that "the Omnipotent Father with his thunder made Olympus tremble and from Ossa hurled Pelion." From where and how came this Pelion to

Georgia, this Gulliver to Atlanta, this Gibraltar to the South? There is no duplicate within hundreds of miles, no reason for its being where it is. Perhaps it is a second Pelion, a human Pelion stunned after being hurled from some Ossa. Perhaps the tattooers will arouse him in their attempts to endow him with a belated birthmark. But what is the saying about the eternity of mountains? And the one, "who can speak of eternity without a solecism?"



Trenches : 1932

Long years have passed and once more in the fields
We see the waving wheat and autumn flowers;
As though no war had ever wreaked its ruin,
The tall trees raise their branches to the sky,
In whose light azure heights the soft white clouds
Float on serene in quiet and stately peace.
No sign of war is here; each trench is filled,
And from the blackened ruins new towns arise
Which breathe with hope, peace, and new beauty.
Only in man do the scars remain,
Hidden, perhaps, by the passing years,
But not forgotten. In man they linger yet,
Those trenches in the soul, those sorrows
And that madness caused by war; each nation
Knows them and each man who lived and grieved.
You can not fill those trenches for an age;
Forever in the mind of man they gape
In bleak reality. What though the flowers
Bloom over them, the deep marked scar is there
And rankles eternal in a mind
That strives to find forgetfulness of all.
Even the young are scarred; to them are left
The heritage of hate and a world
To build anew. Opposing trenches yet
Wind through the lands, as age old prides and hatreds
War with new friendship for dominion.

—H. O.

Four Poems

Here on this lovers' seat,
 Underneath this old tree,
 Many a romance has had its beginning.
 No wonder—things are so quiet.
 I, too, have my memories—
 Memories too delicate for winter.
 But winter has long passed.
*The ivy is climbing again on Palmer,
 And the oaks are growing green round Robb and Calvin,
 And the twilight is sweetened again
 with silence and softening colours.*

That saffron-pink cloud above Palmer,
 A wisp of colour in the last rays of the sun,
 Now turning darker—darker—
 Till it becomes but a splash of dark brown
 Above the green ivy and purple-blue slate.
 May my life-day and love be so coloured
 With the soft hues of twilight,
 Till discolouring death comes to paint me
 With the darkness of never-ending night.

Those chimney sweeps flying above Palmer,
 Waiting to settle through the dusk to rest.
 One night I climbed where they're circling—
 I and four more companions—
 To see the stars through a telescope.
 What I saw there I have long forgotten,
 But the memories of those who were with me—
 For some are with me no longer—
 Will always remain.

Those two snarling cats above Ashner Gateway,
 Facing forever outward,
 With ridged backs, bared fangs, and sharp claws,
 Warning off the intruder;
 Forbidding all save lovers to tear a pink bud
 From the roses that bloom underneath them.
 They also protect me from evil;
 And though when I am here no longer,
 Twilight will not descend so softly,
 Nor will those two snarling lynx-cats
 Be near to guard me—
 Yet I shall have memories of days of peace and beauty,
*Of green ivy climbing again on Palmer,
 And oaks growing green round Robb and Calvin.*

—R. M. B.