

# The Mercury Literary Issue

Glenville State College — Spring 1964

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## The Irony of Knowledge

By DOROTHY DRAKE

The lawn mower growling, struggling under her window. The tractor in the distance turning over the rich good soil. The odor of cool dirt rising on the air—the promise of fertility. The occasional car passing on the highway. The birds calling, boasting. The children laughing, shouting. The evening sun blotted out by the curtains but the sounds and smells of spring wafting gently through the window, enveloping her who sits, pondering in deep thought. She's only 21, young, the blood flowing swiftly through her veins. Outside, the world is immersed in activity while she sits in a reverie, thinking, thinking and writing nonsensical verses which hold meaning only for her.

"I sing—and yet—I know not for whom,

I cry—and yet—I know not why,

I pray—and yet—I know not to whom,

I live—and yet—I know not why."

Verses reflecting her confusion and thoughts too deep at times for her to fully understand.

"I am aware and I wonder why—why do I possess this awareness? Understanding is what I seek—an understanding which I shall never receive, which shall always elude me because I am aware. Why is man the only animal which possesses this awareness? Is it his damnation or his salvation? And why are there only a few who are aware? Am I alone? Are we alone? There must be others; else the only hope of infinity is gone. Mankind—a freak? What a lonely place—this vast universe—if there are no others to care."

Evening passes into night. Parting the curtains and stepping into the cool air filled with the sweet odors of spring, she gazes with unseeing eyes upon the scene before her, her nostrils closed to the scents surrounding her, her ears deaf to the sounds of activity, obsessed by thoughts, oblivious to life.

"Mankind alone on this earth, in this universe is but a speck hurtling across the sky. A brief moment of recognition, of existence, of proclaiming to infinity, 'I exist.' and then disappears, gone forever. That part which says I am aware finds darkness; the body, eternity. My ashes float through space, fuses and refuses with matter, lives on and on. My soul, my ego, my awareness swallowed, consumed, destroyed in the dark, empty spaces of infinity. Grasping, I hope. Hope for others in infinity who will say in their vainness, in their pride, with boastfulness, 'I exist. Sun, I exist! Stars, sky, grass, trees, I exist, and I revel in my knowledge.'"

He beats on his chest, vainfully, boastfully to the unanswerable unattainable fathoms of the deepest regions of infinity, and in his paltriness he says, "I am man!"

Alternating smells of spring and the odorous garbage and filth drifted into her nostrils. Filled her with repulsiveness and beauty. She too was like this, both repulsive and beautiful. Repulsive in her vanity, beautiful in her knowledge, her sensitivity to the wisdom of the ages and the awareness of it. The night was creeping slowly around her, enclosing her and yet opening the vistas of heaven to her vision and the many pathways of thought to her intricate, sensitive brain.

"The myriads of stars sparkle like pinpoints against the background of black or perhaps the splashes of black upon the white background reveals only touches of light penetrating through the darkness. Radio waves, light waves penetrating the enveloping blackness, penetrating it in its weaknesses. Beyond the black, pure unadulterated light. But no, those are stars like our own sun, gaseous bodies emitting radio and light waves. Our scientists have penetrated infinity and now they understand. That star over there is our closest neighbor, Proxima Centauri, only four light years away. "Hey, Proxima. Anyone home?"

Silence. Stillness. The implacable stillness greeted her plea.

"On and on! Forever and ever. The atom with its protons and neutrons to the solar system with its planets and revolving stars to the galaxies with its spinning spirals to the clusters with their spinning galaxies and infinitum. No end to the greatness and vastness and yet no end to the smallness. I am a galaxy and my atoms are solar systems and my neutrons are suns and my protons are planets. I am a revolving, ever-expanding universe. I am a part of the greater whole. I am infinity."

Seeking for an answer she feels the futility of her words, of her plea.

"Again my vainness reasserts itself. Always struggling for a reason for existence. Seeking a soothing answer to my ego. Man is superior to all animals. Man is intelligent. Man speaks. Man writes. Man is a miracle

and man performs miracles. Man is great. Always seeking to justify his greatness, to sooth his vain ego. His ego? And whence did the ego come? And whence did awareness come?"

Again the questions rack her brain and again she turns to the heavens for an answer.

"The universe unfolds, unceasing. A cloud of gaseous H<sub>2</sub> clutters, collides, combines, forms a spark. New life is created. Gas compresses and then expands with increasing velocity outward, brighter, hotter, clinging to life, and then decreases. Nothing but a black cinder, a black dwarf, drifting through space, to be used again as fuel for a new fire. Now lost, swallowed in the vastness as all new life is and shall be swallowed in the vastness. No identity; yet in its nothingness, infinity."

She stands there, lonely, isolated. Only a young girl is she. A new spark. Recognition for an instant, seeking in this instant recognition from her own kind, mankind. All hope from the Gods have fled. She cannot accept the facts she has gathered.

"Man in this vast universe—nothing but a mere animal, a mere collection of atoms arranged so that he thinks he is the center of the universe. And when he realizes he is not the center but only a very small, dispensable part of the whole, he is destroyed. The universe—infinity, vast, extending, unceasing. Man, mortal; the universe, immortal. My only hope—others who exist in infinity and who are aware of their existence. And then this thing called the ego, the soul, the awareness, mankind shall find immortality and, in a sense, when this gaseous body which provides us light, warmth, life ceases to exist and becomes nothing but a cold body floating aimlessly through space, when our earth shall perish with it; somewhere in infinity mankind will continue if only one animal, regardless of form, looks out into the universe and proclaims to it, "Universe, I exist!"

She, a dark silhouette against the night sky blends with it, becomes one. She, a sensitive creature, is unaware of the process; refuses to accept the syntheses. In her blind vanity and pride, she seeks to become an identity while sinking into nothingness she attains infinity without the awareness of it.

A cool, night breeze rustles the fresh, young leaves beside her, caresses her cheek, sighs softly, sadly through the trees. A lonely whip-poor-will calls. Still she stands there lost in her reverie, lost in life. Seeking unattainable answers when around her lies all that's beautiful, all that's real, all that's truth and in her probing thoughts the meaning of life is lost upon her.





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## Fourth Annual Literary Issue

Elizabeth McLaughlin, Editor



### A Million Years Ago

By MICHAEL BUSH

A million years ago it rose from the swamps  
and picked up a rock, and bound it to a  
stick.

It rose from the swamps and shook its fist.  
"Beware," it said, "for I am man."

The wind makes love to the broken stones  
that were the hearth of its first fire.  
It tickles the ribs of the rotten stones  
where he found his first god.

It whispers an ave around the headstones  
of his moldering dead.

Now he stands proud, erect on his hind legs,  
and taunts creation with his power.  
He stands astride the world and cries,  
"Beware, for I am God."

The wind plays about him as he grows from  
childhood,  
and lends its coolness to his sweating brow.

It races him through the sea,  
and carries death for him through the sky.  
It sings to him by night,  
and pushes him higher and higher by day.

A million years from now, it lies in the  
swamps,  
and through the green skull bone  
Goes a stick bound with a rock. And the  
skull says,

"Take me back. Once I was a man."

The wind sits weeping on the stones  
that were his mighty cities.

It coughs in the dust of a billion powdered  
bones  
stirred by its sighing.

And it cries in loneliness,  
for Nowhere . . . nowhere is a man.

### A Life of Veils

By BONNIE VINEYARD

I am the enemy of secret places,  
Hidden by a thousand veils, ten fold  
The hue of the rainbow. Look to the sky  
and to the earth.

Pass by webbed veils as men pass by a leper,  
Else sink with me.

Veils that cover the moves of men like webs,  
and lies,  
All choking and dragging away precious life.

Could as well be make-believe,  
For this strange glass cannot be troubled  
With worldly things,  
Its tasks are finished as it stands  
In darkness, and in light.

How welcome indeed this escape,  
But of little help,  
This selfish thing.

### On Looking In

By BONNIE VINEYARD

What marvels this dividing brings,  
One thin glass,  
Yet a life is gone.

Stronger than the strongest chains,  
It holds all power within,  
Though on the face, when looking in,  
All troubles come up.

A rain drop at a time,  
Or dig a well and overflow it  
To the briny sea.  
I can fill a well at will,  
The choice is up to me.

### The Builders

By JESSE WELCH

Taunted by jealous heavens, it vaults its lifeless  
Arms toward monopolistic stars, and boasts with  
Lifeless jeers, as did Babylon. Iron men with rugged,  
grimy hands and sweaty bodies,  
Cling to its majestic uplifted arms, with magic scepters  
in calloused blistered hands.

Exalted men of steel worship their idol,  
And toil in its shadows, praising line, form, and contour  
With awe filled eyes, and proud hearts.  
When the night is golden above, tiny figures toiling  
clinging to arms of steel,  
Clinging to the promise of tomorrow.

Biting frost permeates the bone and muscle of the iron men,  
The sun boils down, yet they toil on. Stout, gaunt figures  
With tomorrow's destiny written across sunburned, wind-worn faces.  
Proud, magnificent creators with God-like grace,  
A grace for creating, exalting all that man is.  
Creators today, building tomorrows, for tomorrow's creators.

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# As Gravity Pulls

By WILMA STANLEY

The big, yellow school bus lumbered up the dusty, dirt road. Ten-year-old Cindy Johnson bounced on the back seat as the bus struggled through the ruts it had cut in last winter's mud. "I am sure glad spring is here—no more mud. Oops, that one slipped up on me!" Cindy thought as the bus lurched again. "Sure would be nice to be grown up enough to have feet that reached the floor." Little did Cindy realize it, but in exactly fifteen minutes, at 4:32 p.m., she would begin to grow up, to realize that the world can be harsh and cruel but that it must be faced.

The bus crawled on, making infrequent stops, and Cindy continued to think, "Boy, am I ever hungry! Oatmeal cookies and milk—that's what I want. Even if Barbara Brown does get a new dress almost every week, I bet her mother doesn't make oatmeal cookies as good as mine. Sure hope ole' Mabel is feelin' better—I don't want to milk the cow and feed the pigs. Pigs, ugh! I hate dirty ole' pigs. Only good pig is a pork chop."

The next stop was hers, "Oh, no! A blue car! Mae and her husband are here and that's like havin' two sets of parents. Not much I can do about it though—she is my sister."

The bus creaked to a stop, and Cindy ran toward the house—and the cookie jar. Mae met her at the door. "Come upstairs with me," she said. "I've got something to show you."

"Can't it wait until I get a cookie?" Cindy inquired irritably.

"No, Come on." Mae replied.

Cindy followed Mae up the stairs and into Mabel's room. Her sister lay on the bed; beside her was an ugly, red, little baby. Cindy looked bewildered.

"It must be yours," she said to Mae, "cause it can't be hers—she's not married."

"Honey, I wish it were mine," Mae replied.

Later Cindy remembered going downstairs and eating oatmeal cookies—oatmeal cookies that tasted more like cement than oatmeal cookies.

Cindy was quiet, reflective, withdrawn that evening as she was to be for many days. She went to bed early—not to sleep, but to toss and turn, worry and wonder. "Something is strange—where did that baby come from? Did the Angel of

God visit my sister as he did Mary? No, that isn't it," she thought; "If it were Daddy would be proud, but he's silent, withdrawn, and hurt. He didn't even ask about our school picnic."

Cindy heard voices; her parents were talking. "Why, why, why?" her father questioned. "We did our best to raise our children right." Her mother's voice drifted up the stairs. "What's done is done—we've got to accept it." "Poor Cindy," her father mused. "She'll bear the brunt of it—kids can be awful cruel."

Before long Cindy knew that her father was right. Climbing the steps of the bus the next morning, Cindy was greeted with "Hear you have a new baby at your house." Cindy looked to see who her accoster was, and she looked into the eyes of snobby Barbara Brown. Glaring at Barbara, Cindy murmured reluctantly, "Yes." "How'd that happen?" Barbara questioned. "I don't know," Cindy admitted. The teenagers beat their seats and howled with laughter, and imitations by the younger children increased the volume. Cindy stumbled blindly through the sea of laughing faces to an empty seat. She pressed her nose against the window, trying to shut out the laughing faces. She felt alone, utterly, miserably alone.

The bus lurched down the road and finally stopped in front of Ann's house. "Ann is my best friend," Cindy thought. "She'll understand." But Ann's face was strange, and she announced: "Mom said to tell you I can't stay all night with you next week. I have to help with the chores 'cause Mike's arm is broken," Cindy muttered, "O.K." But she mused inwardly: Mike's arm was broken on Monday when Ann's mother gave her permission. It had something to do with that little, red, ugly, wrinkled baby. But he's so ugly to make so much difference—he couldn't weigh more than six pounds."

The day passed slowly. Cindy thought: "I can't wait to get home. But home is no refuge—there is no refuge. That crying baby is at home, and here, here, are the cruel faces. There isn't any escape!" Cindy bit her lip to keep from crying.

The bus creaked to a stop in front of her house again, but Cindy walked listlessly. No thought of

oatmeal cookies and milk crossed her mind. She threw her books on the desk and yelled, "Hey, Mom! I'm going for a walk."

The hot afternoon sun beat down upon her back as she climbed the steep, winding path up the hill. Cindy walked slowly, rebelliously scuffing her red tennis shoes in the dirt. Ignoring the chirping birds and startled rabbits, she kept climbing, climbing. "Don't cry—not yet." Up, up, up she climbed—past the grazing cows, past the dead tree which had been struck by lightning, past the berry patch; finally she reached the top. Cindy threw her tense body on the ground, and then the storm broke—the tears which she had courageously held back flowed freely as she beat the ground with her fists. Eternal minutes passed and the storm subsided. She lay limp, exhausted, relieved; the tension was gone.

Raising her head, she surveyed the valley below through a bamboo curtain of grass blades. The peacefulness of the scene always produced crept through her whole body. Everything seemed ordered, in its place, operating as a whole. The immenseness of the valley created a feeling of insignificance, of isolation within her; yet she felt as if she were a part of the world below, just as the fat, yellow-and-black bumble bee gathering nectar from the wild geranium was a part of nature.

Viewed from the mountain top, the components of the valley fit together like the pieces of a puzzle. Bright yellows, purples, and reds covered the orderly-looking flower garden, but Cindy knew that there were as many weeds as flowers in it. Green shutters adorned the big, white house—from this distance the peeling paint could not be detected. The rock road looked like a solid, gray ribbon flung carelessly down upon the green meadows, but a passing car sent a huge cloud of dust upward.

The willow trees stood like sentinels guarding the little muddy creek which rushed on, trying to escape the confinements of its banks. Little did the creek realize that it was rushing into a more complex society, the river, and from the river into the ocean. Gravity pulled the water onward, as life pulled Cindy onward. There was no turning back for either. Cindy rose and turned to enter the world below.

well off and never cause any trouble." However fate had other plans for Henry James. As he neared adulthood he became aware of a desire to improve his conditions and those of his people.

Following his graduation from Carlyle's Negro high school he was accepted as a freshman at Locksley and granted an N.D.E.A. scholarship. While at Locksley he also became a member of "Core." Although some of the students considered this a radical organization, Henry was ambitious and he found in the membership those who shared his enthusiasm.

At the end of his freshman year Henry James came home determined to help his people. He was aware of the lack of organization and ashamed of the apathy of the older leaders. "It's no use boy," they told him; so he directed his call to the youth. His challenge was accepted and in two weeks he led his group to the offices of the Board of Education.

The superintendent was a prominent member of the Knights, and also an ardent segregationist. It almost seemed as if he derived his greatest pleasure in refusing to comply with the dozens of injunctions issued from the frustrated

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# Jewell's Heritage

By CAROLYN REIP

Her hands clutched her handbag tightly as she watched the countryside sweep past the window. The early morning was damp and gray. The valleys, blanketed in fog, had not yet awakened. Soon the fog would lift and the sun would send forth its irritating, glaring, hot rays.

The girl, who had been so intently gazing out the window, consulted her watch. She had been travelling an hour now, she discovered, and would be on the train eight, nine, ten more hours before she reached the big city. A moment of anxiety filled her with doubt. What if Sally didn't meet her? She had never been there before, and thoughts of facing the city alone frightened her. Resolutely, she pushed the doubts out of her mind, for Sally had promised in her letter that she would meet her, and Sally had always kept her promises.

She studied her reflection in the window disinterestedly. Her black hair, which fell softly around her shoulders, framed an oval face set with large, dark eyes and an unsmiling, full, red mouth. Her skin appeared to be lightly tanned. Her light skin, that's what she must pride herself in now.

Jewell Jordan. That was her name. Why had her mother given her such an ironic name, she thought bitterly. She certainly was no gem, nothing for her mother to be proud of. Her family was all dark, but she was white, the oldest of six children, and white. She had been snubbed by both races in her small home town. Sally, her best white friend, had told her that she could pass as white, so Jewell was running away. From now on she would be white; she had resolved to forget that Negro blood also flowed through her veins.

However, she recalled painfully the first day of her high school career. Since the rest of her family was dark-skinned, she was also considered a Negro by most people, but this had not mattered during grade school. There, playing and working with children as white as she, she had been treated as an equal. Her young classmates had not cared that she was part Negro. For eight years she had continually been with two inseparable friends, Lorraine and Vicky. They had eagerly looked forward to high school together. However, despite her mother's hints, she was to be quite surprised. That first day of school, her so-called friends had coldly turned their backs on her. She had run blindly home, and locking her door and throwing herself on her bed, she had allowed the pent-up tears to flow.

Although the pain had been great, she had held her head up proudly and plunged into her high school work. She had made good grades; in fact, she was salutatorian of her graduating class. She had been an outstanding member of both the Commercial Club and Glee Club. Her abilities, friendliness, and determination won her several friends and general acceptance, but she always had the feeling she did not belong.

Her family did not have the money to send her to college, so after graduation, she had secured a secretarial job for the leading industrial company in the neighboring town. After working a year, she had learned that white girls with less training and capabilities were receiving the promotions and increases in income. She was satisfied with her work, but she realized she here would never have an opportunity to advance or to save the money she needed to continue her education.

Gradually in the back of her mind, developed the idea of leaving her family and friends and

seeking a position in the North where she could pose as a white girl. There no one would ever know her heritage. At first the thought was merely an absurd idea which she liked to think about, but the idea kept returning until it had become something real. Her conscience shamed her for daring to deny her own blood, but her ambitious nature and desire for a college education finally won the battle, and now she was on the way to making her dream a reality.

It was now two hours since she had boarded the train. Her mother by this time had probably found her note and the small sum of money she had left. This thought troubled her. She knew well how her family would take her passing, as it was termed. The scene was painted vividly across her mind. Her mother would not be angry, but she would be upset for days. Perhaps she was crying this minute. Her little brothers and sisters, who had loved and respected her, would cry also. A fine example I am, she told herself. Her face burned, and she had to force back her own tears.

Jewell was still trying to reason with her conscience when the train made its first stop. Presently she noticed a tall, well-dressed Negro step into the aisle. He attempted to seat himself beside a middle-aged man, but his would-be companion coldly told him that the seat had been taken. Indignation welled up in her breast. Forgetting that she had renounced his race, she slid over in her own seat to make room for him. He smiled his thanks as he accepted the vacant position beside her.

Suddenly she thought, what have I done? No one would expect a white woman from the South to make room for a nigger. She cringed at the word, that word which so often had been unthoughtfully flung at her, her colored friends, and family. But why had she done what she had? People who had seen her actions would know that she was one of his kind. Why had she done it? She must never forget that she was now a white girl. She was on her way to join Sally and the white race permanently.

She glanced at his profile. His eyes under the frowning thick eyebrows seemed to portray scorn. He knows, she thought. He knows that I am like him. He must know, too, what I am doing, that I am running away from my family, that I am escaping from his race. I must be trying to flee from myself, too; but, no, I won't accept that. She abhorred him for his insolent behavior, sitting there condemning her silently, perhaps even hating her. I don't care, she thought angrily. I don't care what he thinks. I am white, and this is a white man's world!

"Are you travelling far?" The deep voice jolted her out of her thoughts.

If he wants to make polite conversation, I'll oblige him. "Yes," she answered aloud, "I'm going to Washington to get a job."

"Fine," he said brightly, "I'm headed there myself on a business trip for the NAACP."

Is he trying to slam me? Of course, he is or why would he mention the NAACP to a white person? But anyone can tell he's colored, so he has to stand by his race. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Just what has been done toward their advancement. Not much, or I would have received fair treatment in my job, and could have been loyal to my race. Maybe, the thought suddenly struck her, too many, like myself, are unwilling to stand up for their race and strive for their

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# The Carlyle Story

By MICHAEL SAKOLE

Several road signs inform the traveler that he has entered Carlyle. He is welcomed by the churches, urged to stay at the local motels, and informed by the Chamber of Commerce that this is a wonderful city in which to work, live, and raise a family. Carlyle is a growing part of the new southern industrial movement, and the people are proud of it. But for a Negro traveling this same road there is only one direction, North. That is not to say that there are no Negroes in Carlyle, in fact, the Negro population accounts for two-fifths of the population of Chipago county with Carlyle as its county seat. But the majority of both city and county leaders are members of the Knights of Southern Brotherhood and they are determined that the percentage will not increase.

The court house is situated on a level tract of land near the center of town. A glistening white structure resembling a Roman temple, or ironically, the Lincoln Memorial. Inside this temple with its motto "Equal Justice Under Law" inscribed above the row of tall, artificial columns the courts reach their verdicts and the clerks slave over the vast record books.

Records of births, deaths, sales,

taxes. All of these pass under the watchful eye of Custis Lee Mahew, County Clerk, Democrat, and Imperial Grand Prytanis of the Knights. Hidden away in these files is one certificate of great interest. It is well known that if any outsider inquires about it he will be greeted with a suspicious stare and informed that through some error the object of his search has been misplaced. This document is a death certificate, and it reads "Henry Carver James, 1017 River Street, City, Negro, Cause of Death, Cerebral hemorrhage caused by the infliction of a shotgun wound by person or persons unknown."

This document is truly an impersonal thing. On its black and white eleven by fifteen inch surface nothing is told of the individual. His hopes, his fears, his dreams and tears are gone. Replaced now by a few well chosen type written lines. Nothing remains but a few statistics.

Henry Carver James was born March 28, 1945 in a shack behind the row of dilapidated cotton warehouses. Just another "nigger" who would be expected to learn his place, and keep it. And this was almost a certainty for "the niggers in Chipago know when they're



# The Bear Facts

By WALTER J. CAIN

As editor of *Sportlight*, I am always interested in a good sports story. My close friends all know this and are quite as happy as I am when they discover a lead concerning one. David Huskins is no exception. In fact, Dave has supplied the leads for feature articles several times. Now, as an editor, I try to be honest and stay away from unbelievable tall tales that have become so representative of the hunting and fishing world.

It was in the October issue that I ran some routine material concerning bears. Most of it, I am sorry to say, I obtained from the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Dave and I were having a coffee break over at Daisy's Diner a couple of days after the issue was released, when he said to me, "That junk about bears made me sick."

I said sharply, "And I suppose you know how to hunt bears."

"Yes," he replied and I swear he looked as sincere as a sinner on the judgment day. He went on, "I have a friend who went bear hunting last year." I plied him for details and he courteously acquiesced. The fellow's name was Jeff Jayarr. He lived at 3147 East Harrison Avenue and was always home in the evening. As we started back to separate offices across Vine Street, Dave concluded with the clinching remark, "I bet this fellow has been closer to bears than even those guides you know up in Maine."

Now I am gullible and I admit it. So five o'clock found me starting across town. At six-fifteen I turned off of Vine onto Harrison.

"Hell," I said, "I could have taken Interstate 75 to Dayton and back again by now."

I finally arrived at a large colonial style house which from the aging brick was about forty years old. Now Harrison Avenue is a pretty expensive habitat and I suspected I would run into some wealthy idiot who could throw down hard cash every year for a new Cadillac just to be in the right social set. Hunters from this class are more disgusting than those sophisticated biddies who go around hugging French Poodles. They never go out with less than a couple hundred dollars of hunting clothing, and they buy guns with stocks so carved that they resemble baroque antiques.

I slid from under the wheel of my Lincoln and started up the walk. A gray squirrel scampered across the walk and up a maple. I almost followed as an Imperial screeched at a terrifying angle across the driveway behind my Lincoln and skidded about seventy-five feet on or maybe I should say through a previously well-kept turf.

"One hell of a way to get started meeting a stranger. Maybe I had better make up some fictitious name and get the devil out of here," I thought to myself.

The young man at the wheel just started up again, and expertly maneuvering among flower beds, bird baths, and other unnatural regalia arrived at a spot in the driveway just ahead of my roadblock.

"What kind of a fool is this?" I thought to myself as he strode across the lawn grinning from ear to ear. Already I sensed an admiration developing for him. There was an air of indifference and yet a sense of determination about his actions. I concluded that here was a man who differed from the crowd, but in a pleasant way. After a brief introduction as to who I was and the purpose of my mission, I launched into some questions concerning his hunting success the previous year. Surprised, but nevertheless flattered, he told me to come in.

I was curious to see the animal

which he had shot. I asked if he had had the head mounted or if he had just taken pictures of it. When he informed me that he had never killed a bear in his life, I began to suspect that Dave had been up to some mischief.

I dejectedly asked, "Have you ever been bear hunting?"

"Once," was the curt replay. I groaned within, "One whole god-damned evening wasted." But I politely asked aloud, "Would you care to tell me all about it?" I thought to myself, you sound just like one of those television psychiatrists.

He had paused for so long that my mind was beginning to wander. Now he began talking and I tried hard to listen in an interested way.

"Last November I decided I would go bear hunting," he started. "Now I have seen a lot of bears here in the zoological gardens and I assumed I would know one in the mountains. I had heard of tracking so I looked in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* for a picture of a bear track."

"Good Lord," I muttered aloud. "What did you say?", he asked politely.

I answered with a rising sensation of heat in my ears and cheeks, "I said a good source."

"Oh," he said, "I thought so, too."

"Well," he continued, "since there are no wild bears here, I got some hunting gear together and motored over into West Virginia to an area about forty miles beyond Elkins."

"Now all of the junk they sold me at Harry's Sports Center would have equipped a caravan. I sorted out what I thought was necessary: a Savage .300, a water canteen, some bread and two cans of beans, a flashlight, and a hunting knife. The fellow at the Durbin service station told me I needed to get the aid of some fellow with some dogs. I thought this was unnecessary as in all the stories of Davy Crockett it was never once mentioned that he had to use a dog."

"Lord, help me," I muttered to myself, this time softly enough as not to disturb young Daniel Boone.

"Well, I started walking down an old log trail and it was a rather lonesome place. It reminded me of walking down Vine Street on a Sunday morning. I



didn't see anything but a few wild birds and in Cincy I would have seen just a few pigeons," he said.

"I walked from about two until seven-thirty. I really missed those street lights when it got dark. A storm was moving in and it became ominously foreboding out there alone. I didn't believe I had the energy to return to the car, so I recalled the Indian stories of how they slept in rock caves. I looked and looked, but I didn't find a cave anywhere," he added plaintively.

"What did you do?" I asked with all the sincerity I could dredge from my almost exhausted supply.

"Well," he said, "I found this rock under which, when I curled up and squeezed under it as far as possible I was only half exposed. I cut some pine for a windbreak and placed the boughs around the rock. It was after ten before I had finished my shelter and because of exhaustion I went to bed without eating."

His tone changed as he said, "Now, you know, I'm not afraid of animals, but since I had never slept out before I was a little uneasy. I kept thinking about Goldilocks and the three bears. They had surprised her when she was asleep. I lay awake for awhile and heard in the distance what sounded like a truck grinding up and down steep inclines. I was thankful for this little semblance of hometown noise and promptly dropped off to sleep."

The wind had picked up and it was flinging occasional droplets of water through my pine screen. I wanted to shiver but couldn't move. I wasn't numbed from the



cold wind but from fright. Every part of me was paralyzed. My mouth was stiff and my eyelids seemed to be of lead. The sensation of cold sweat running down my temples toward my ears and being pushed by each gust of hot, stagnant breath which came in regular but slow intervals directly into my face was horrifying. A bear! A bear! My mind screamed in complete silence. I opened one eye with great effort and the numbed hand which held the flashlight let one icy finger press the flasher button on. The flashlight had been in my hand even during my sleep. The sudden glare revealed a long dark face, a black nose and two gleaming eyes. It was a dog, just someone's stray hound. I hissed between clenched teeth, "Get out of here!"

"That hound," he said when he stopped laughing, "turned a double somersault backwards and I bet he is still running. Well, I went back to sleep after I turned over with my face very close to the rock. The next morning I discovered I was half buried in snow, quite cold, not from fright, but from the frigid weather. By then I had decided that I needed a guide with dogs and started back the way I had come. Every muscle ached and those cold beans gave me cramps."

Walking along the edge of the river, I came upon tracks which I expertly recognized as being those of a bear. I turned happily in their direction and about two hundred yards later discovered three additional sets of tracks joining the first. Sore muscles and aching limbs were quite forgotten as I hurried through the freshly fallen snow. After three hours of walking I came to a high cliff. It looked about half as high as those buildings downtown," he said, looking at me as if I were going to dispute his word. He continued, "The tracks led right up that cliff. Now it wasn't straight up, but it took an hour of climbing to cover about three hundred yards."

I sat dumbfounded, I had never been so thoroughly astonished

# "Man Cannot Serve Two Masters..."

By ESTHER PITTS

So then because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. (Revelation 3:16)

The boss at the restaurant also says I must choose a definite shift of work—the morning, noon, or evening. I am well acquainted with all three.

The morning shift starts when the Lunch House is opened at 5:30 by intelligent, twenty-year-old Ruth who is neat and very much interested in her work and associates. The place is reasonably clean and fresh that early: the cigarette-scarred floor is swept and things are freshly filled and in place around the big room lighted by bright, morning sun. The closed coolness, quiet, and antiseptic smell of three or four hours are soon blended with the individual personalities of the regular morning patrons, the majority of whom are drillers and contractors eating breakfast and purchasing packed lunches. The newly percolated coffee, light and serious discussions, dull ring of silver on the plates, toast crumbs to wipe, fresh juices, and generous tips help the spinning juke box create and hold the wholesome mood of the morning. This work is hard and continuous, but things seem fresh and rewarding. Ruth could use help and I might choose this shift.

But about the middle of the day, the scene is becoming sloppy. The sun is trying very hard to shine through the closed, falsely bright curtains which, on closer inspection, are soiled.

The cooks are complaining of being rushed without the cleansing support of a dishwasher and confusion, meaningless talk, and particular women mingle with the hazy smells. The rusted ash trays are filled, the slyly carved booths are more often cluttered with partially filled dishes, and it's time for help from an additional waitress and tip-stealer.

Zelma, who suits the mediocre customers she'll serve, is a fat spy for the absent boss. No one lingers now for the second "nervous cup of coffee". There is just the hot hurry, clanging motors, and fish odors from the French fryer. Things are now becoming definitely messy and empty with no time or nobody to repair them. The dull customers rarely take time for a smile or reflection. They gulp down their food and hurry out to their waiting Lincolns, leaving tables surrounded by unsteady, unplanned chairs and dust that now only stirs occasionally. The few stragglers complain about the ash trays, difficult-to-read menus, and the slow service from

with any person I had ever interviewed.

He continued with the same unwavering effort as if he were the ancient mariner and to tell his story was a must.

"I found an entrance to a cave on a very narrow ledge. I decided to get down on all fours and look in. It was pitch black. I tossed a small pebble which I scratched from the snow. Nothing came out and nothing roared within. With flashlight in the one hand and rifle in the other, I crawled in, half-way expecting to be either devoured head first or at least to be clawed into oblivion. Once inside, I discovered a stinking but spacious natural room. In fact, so high was its clearance that I stood erect and my six-foot height still allowed room for a top hat if I had had one," he said.

"It was a bear den; I will swear to it. I decided that if they had been using this place in the past, they would use it again. (Continued on page 6)

their eye level of the soiled apron. The late afternoon drags on and between clangs of the old cash register, Zelma compromises between lazy gossip and attempts at extra cleaning of the blackened shelves of potent medicines and rechargeable flashlight batteries. Preparations are made for the few tired workers who grimace at the afternoon old coffee and dizzy juke box. Zelma has smiled her last false smile hours ago. She's ready to go home to the telephone and report to the boss. This shift is not demanding, but it requires so little initiative that the boss thinks that I would be bored after a while. I do like it though.

The joint is louder now with the bailed-out kids and a very few girls, respectable and otherwise. Judy fits into this crowd. A dark-eyed junior, Judy is poor and neglectful about small personal details. She conveys the tray along with a sweet, conjuring smile and a swinging walk that completes the invitation. She's the known conquest and conqueror of many of the evening bums. She makes her contacts for the evenings she can get off work early.

There is much loafing on the part of the new shift cooks now. They also watch for some smile which brightens their powdered, masked faces as they smoke their uninterrupted cigarette. They discuss the town ogler, the roaches on the floor, and the health inspector.

The slow rotation of the booth holders does not change the heavy, enveloping atmosphere. There are husbands of bitching or bowling wives and bachelors who are either pathetic or persuading. There is the editor of the weekly newspaper who casually offers a crumpled list of jokes to Judy, the phone call made for the illiterate cook, a hamburger with mustard and a waitress to go, a matched quarter that goes into the melting juke box, and the contact for next Saturday night.

Now, "Boss time" comes about 11:30 and frightens the slow moments into attempted clean-up. The cooks are seen leaving the cups in bleach water the whole three minutes, the tips are collected by the correct person, the wadded napkins on the floor—misaimed at someone's coffee cup—were not added to—yet, the sticky coke rings are promptly disappearing in a soiled sponge, and from the bus driver Judy slyly accepts a box of table napkins with jokes on the "Sexual Misbehavior of the Human Female."

The dance over, the Pennsboro boys' verbal fight becomes a physical challenge. The joint clears while the town cop is called from bed by the boss. Now the noise from the street is halted, the uncalled-for hotdog is thrown in the full garbage, and some lofty observers come back in for wise discussions and predictions of further conflict. The local beer joint is closed by now and the drunks can come down for the temporary relief of black coffee and food.

Judy is now limping from a newly acquired blister and a boy is watching her streak mop the floor while waiting to take her home and try to fast talk a little. The place is open until everyone decides to leave. All "cleaning" is done between customers. As the juke box whirs to a stop, Judy picks up the Sunday School literature someone left her and starts home. This shift has entertaining customers and jokes, but I don't know if I'd like all the evening cleaning to be done. I have to choose. Man cannot serve two masters.



# January

By MICHAEL BUSH

They called him many things. It was always that poor old man, or that wretched old man, or that obscene old man. They called him many things, but they always called him old man. It seemed to him that old man had a million possible adjectives.

It was true. He was old; and though he tried to hide it, his age was painfully apparent. The great rocky crag of his nose and brow told of fifty years. The baldness of his gums told of another twenty, and the crumpled paper of his scalp begged the nose and gums to stop telling secrets.

His eyes seemed ill suited to such a face. They were vivid with the glory of life; curious and eager. They were eyes of a Lotherio; adventuresome and secretive.

But youthful eyes could not shield him from the afflictions of the aged. He was homeless (he knew); he was without friends (he knew); and he was without family (he prayed). This total absence of ties didn't trouble him. In fact, it pleased him greatly. With family comes responsibility, and he had never taken responsibility willingly. Being without home and friends didn't worry him. He had always been a wayfarer, a vulture that soared through desert skies.

If he had ever had a name, he had long since forgotten it. His mind was much to full of business details—the price of poppies in Harat and Mecca, the distance from Bagdad to Melgish—to be bothered with such trivialities as names.

He thought of himself as January because he liked the month. Then, the sun was gentle, the sand was cool to his feet, and he had rainwater to bathe in. He liked to bathe, but he seldom allowed himself the luxury.

He fully realized that he had lived too long, but he enjoyed life, and had no intention of giving it up. The credit for his long life fell to the way he lived it. He walked. Not just to the corner drugstore—for there were none—or to the friendly grocery—for these too, were lacking—but for miles across the desert, being beaten by wind, sun, and sand.

One July day found him on such a walk. He doddered boldly toward Melgish, his sack of poppies, re-

rather long walk ahead of us."

January followed. Death spoke with a power that even he was unable to resist. As they walked across the desert, January began seeking diversions to occupy his idle mind. His eye caught a bit of greasy string, a most incongru-



ous string, which bound Death's flowing hair. He studied it. Finally, his curiosity overcame him.

"Sir. You are perhaps the most infamous, hated gentleman in the world. Although I have tried, I cannot equal your infamy. You have great power, and good taste. So tell me—why in the name of the Prince of Hell do you bind your hair with a greasy string?"

Death chuckled.

"It's a trophy. This string once hung a ham in the butchery of Abub sen Sid in Harat. It seemed that he was determined to live forever, or at least, to outlive Methuselah. No divine aid here mind you, just plain cussedness! Well, I planted this string on the floor at the top of some stairs. Just to help things along, you understand. He slid on it and bounced down three flights of stairs."

"Then you are defied. Once in a while," said January.

"Once in a lifetime," Death retorted. "You have defied me for years."

January mused. "Then why should I stop now?"

"What!"

"I've thumbed my nose to the laws of God and man. Why shouldn't I thumb my nose at you, you law of nature?"

"Why! I mean—I don't know what to say! This is most irregular."

January pulled himself to his full five feet, enjoying his defiance. "Then let it be irregular."

"Well, No one's talked back to me in over a thousand years."

"Well," mocked January, "come around in another thousand and I'll talk back to you again. I can be just as cussed as any butcher." He turned on his heel and almost strode away.

"Well, Brother Lucifer," said Death to the sand, "He seems determined to live forever. Who can say? He just might."

## Jewell's Heritage

(Continued from page 3)

advancement through fair means. No, no, she told herself vigorously, I have disowned the blood of that race and I won't back down now.

"I imagine your family was sorry to see you leave," her companion commented.

She felt the hot rush of blood to her cheeks. He seemed, however, not to notice her embarrassment, so she gained her composure enough to answer, "I guess they did hate to see me go, but at the same time it must be gratifying for parents to see their children step out into the world."

Does this grinning ape think he has to act as my conscience? Why does he make me think of all these things? Poor Mother. She didn't know I was going until she found the note. She won't be able to believe I've done this. It will break her heart, break it right in two after all she's tried to do for me. I know she will always welcome me home, but I

Fred Givin was the Kinsey Report, Stanley Kowalski, and Errol Flynn—in reverse. Fred was not morally degenerate. He did not suffer from sexual aberrations. He was not a passionate play-boy. Fred Givin was, in fact, Jefferson City's least promising bachelor. Even Sallie Howard, Jefferson City High School's librarian, had, after fourteen years of shared lunches in the school cafeteria, finally, with more than moderate pangs of regret, given Givin up. After their association had remained on a strictly Platonic level for such a very long time, she had recognized the futility of her efforts.

Fred was in poor spirits. It was early March and spring's prelude, a tinkling tune of icy rain resounding on a snow-covered sidewalk against a background of intermittent, low-pitched blasts from the wind, only further dampened his morale. His head was throbbing; his eyes were watering; his throat was burning; and his nose was dripping. Fred had fallen victim to the common cold and Mother was not at home to fix hot broth, fruit juice, or a mustard plaster. She had gone to visit Aunt Martha in Toledo. For the first time in all of his thirty-six years, Fred was entirely alone.

The day had gotten started all wrong. Since Mother was not at home to prepare his usual breakfast of milk toast and hot tea, Fred was forced to rely on himself. After a rather unpleasant meal of burned toast and tea too weak for even Fred's taste, he wearily left for school. His day at Jefferson City High was a chaotic hodge-podge of nose-blowing, lecturing, and coughing. Even his giving an impossible test to his General Biology I class, had not comforted Fred at all. Now, after school he sought professional help from one Joseph Adams M.D.

"Open wide and stick out your tongue. Hmm. Throat hurt much?" the doctor questioned as he looked at Fred's inflamed, swollen tonsils.

"Yeth," Fred lisped in answer since the doctor held his tongue firmly with a wooden tongue depressor.

"Headaches, runny nose, watery eyes, coughing?" Fred nodded agreement to each symptom.

"Hmm. Common cold, gives us more trouble than most serious diseases put together. Take two of these every four hours," he said handing Fred a small, white envelope, "and some of this

cough syrup whenever you need it. It wouldn't hurt if you would mix a little whiskey with it." Doctor Adams was definitely of the old school of medicine. "Get plenty of bed rest and drink lots of liquids. That will be six dollars."

Whiskey? Fred thought as he left the office. I guess I'd better ask Mother about it. And then he remembered, Mother was not there; he would have to decide for himself. Mother always said, Fred remembered, if you can't trust your doctor...

He stepped into the liquor store after furtively looking up and down the street. After all, one engaged in such a noble profession as teaching could hardly risk the disgrace of being seen entering there.

"Yes, sir, may I help you?" the clerk asked in a rather condescending manner. Fred's inexperience was easily detected through the worldly exterior he had attempted to assume for the purchase.

In front of Fred the bottles, labels, colors swam. How could he choose? What would he say?



His eyes ran down the first row. "There," he said rather breathlessly, "I'd like a bottle of that." "That" proved to be a rather costly choice. "6.65," said the clerk.

Rather than reveal further insecurity, Fred hastily paid the sum and withdrew with the same air of caution that had marked his entrance.

Once home, he examined his purchase more carefully. Bottled in bond, he read, 100 proof, Kentucky's finest bourbon whiskey. He put the bottle on the kitchen cabinet beside that containing the cough syrup. A full bottle of

cough syrup—a full bottle of whiskey—mix them the doctor had said.

Fred took a glass from the shelf and began to pour from the larger bottle. He watched in fascination as the brownish-burgundy color flowed from one vessel to the other. Suddenly, the glass was full; he hadn't left room to mix in the cough syrup. What to do? Drink some of it, of course.

This was Fred's initial experience with alcohol, but it cannot be said that he began timidly. He took a large gulp. It went down pleasantly enough. But then with his first breath, came a split-second nausea followed by a warm sensation in his stomach that seemed to radiate to the most distant points of his limbs. His fingers and toes fairly tingled. The second drink went down easier; with the third, his feelings were all warmth, pleasantness, and happiness.

A little tipsy now, he sauntered up to the kitchen counter and assumed what was, to the best of his knowledge a quite worldly stance. He addressed his reflection in the kitchen window, "I think I'll have another of the same." He poured simultaneously from both bottles this time and again filled the glass.

A mixed drink, he thought as he quaffed the second glassful 'mid visions of headlines: FRED GIVIN, BIG GAME HUNTER, VISITS HOME TOWN. . . LOCAL BOY MAKES KILLING ON STOCK MARKET. . . GIVIN DEFEATS CLAY IN TITLE BOUT. He saw the gleaming lights of the theatre marquee spelling out FRED GIVIN stars as "Laurence of Arabia". . . "Cleopatra" starring FRED GIVIN and Elizabeth Taylor. He could almost hear the applause.

He excused himself from his adoring public for a moment to order another drink. Suddenly, the telephone caught his eye, with a somewhat unsteady finger, he dialed two letters and five numerals.

"Hello," said the voice at the other end of the line.

"Hello, Sallie, would you mind coming over? There's something I've been meaning to discuss with you."

## The Carlyle Story

(Continued from page 3)

federal judge at the state capitol, "Mr. Ashley is very busy, you all will have to come back later." drawled the secretary. About five hundred years later, thought Henry, and thus began the first "sit in" in the history of Chicago County. Promptly at five o'clock, twelve burly deputies from the sheriff's office arrived to evict the demonstrators. During the eviction one girl suffered a severe concussion when she "slipped" from the grasp of one of the officers who were descending the long flight of marble stairs.

The following day was a repetition, except that thirty more people had joined in the demonstration. This continued, and at the end of one week the Sheriff informed Henry that if he knew what was good for him he would take his "rabble" home, and not bother to return the following Monday.

Talk of more demonstrations, and boycotts of the white merchants brought about an emergency session of the Knights of Southern Brotherhood. "It's all the work of the Punk; it'll blow over don't worry about it," counseled an older member of the group. "By God it didn't blow over in Birmingham!" replied another. "Yes, but we don't want any U.S. marshals prowling around here either," was the answer he received. "I still say let's make an ex-

ample of this little bastard that those coons will never forget; let's take a vote!" A show of hands on the part of the membership indicated that strong measures must be taken. The six hooded officers nodded their approval, and the meeting was adjourned.

All of these proceedings were unknown to the young crusader who now walked slowly home from the rally. There had been a good crowd there tonight he thought. Even some of the older people were starting to attend. Maybe something can be done after all.

As Henry rounded the corner and started up the alley that led to his home he came face to face with a single blast from a twelve gauge shotgun.

The demonstrations have continued, but now they are on a larger scale. Prominent members of the white population are now taking part. Now they are shocked that this could happen in their town. "The hypocrisy of it all," declared one observer.

It is hard to say just how much will be achieved as the long, hot Mississippi summer drags on. The Knights are determined to destroy all gains that have been made, but they are no longer facing an apathetic public. The question now remains whether or not these people will ever learn the simple lesson of brotherhood? The answer is known but to God alone.



fined opium, and seed upon his back. He held his head bent, to shield his face from the blazing sun. For this reason, he did not see his fellow traveler until the shadow stabbed into his daydreams. January started back, and would have fled had his aged bones permitted, for he knew the stranger well. He knew him, though he had never met him before. He knew him the instant he saw the honey toes beneath the long, velvet robe.

"Well, well January. We meet at last!"

"Oh, damn!" January replied forcefully.

"Now really! Is that any way to address me?"

"I would rather not address you at all."

"As surly as ever, hey! Well. Where you're going, that will be taken care of, Peddler of Dreams."

"It's just. . ." January began, "well, I didn't expect to see you today."

"Death is always an unexpected caller. Now, Follow me. We've a



# Sweet Smell of Mother Earth

By MACK SAMPLES

The grass was still wet with the morning dew when Corley Malone left his cabin. The sun was just over the hill and there was still a slight chill in the air. His five-foot-ten-inch frame was covered with faded khaki pants and shirt. He wore moccasins on his feet along with light socks. Corley never wore a hat when he was going for a jaunt in the woods because he got tired of picking it up after the brush and briars had torn it from his head. He carried about three days provisions on his back plus a blanket. The load was evenly distributed and he carried it easily. It would grow heavier as the day progressed but Corley didn't mind. In his right hand he carried a double-barreled shotgun which he had sawed off to suit his own fancy. He carried it only for protection. He was always a bit afraid of a rogue bear or something when he penetrated deep into the mountains.

As he was climbing up the first hill, he was thinking about his wife. He was glad that she understood how he needed to get out in the mountains for a few days each year. Some wives would worry, but not his. She knew that he could take care of himself.

As he entered the woods he was greeted by that symphony which the birds play every morning free of charge. Each bird sang an individual song but it all seemed to blend together, and, after all, that's about what a symphony amounted to anyway. Some of the contemporary ones didn't even blend as far as he was concerned. He turned and looked back at the river below to see if he could spot anyone fishing. He saw none. He moved on and enjoyed the singing of the birds because he knew that the bird population would diminish as he pressed on into the mountains.

He came to an old open field which he remembered as the old Cummings place. Things had really changed since he was a boy. In his boyhood, he used to come back here and talk to old man Cummings for hours at a time. Old men could tell you a lot if you asked them the right kind of questions. Old Bail Cummings was gone now and so was everyone else who had lived in these economically worthless old mountains. He stopped and looked at the old house for a moment, then moved on. The daisies were waist high in the far end of the field. He picked one and played that silly game that everyone played with daisies. He thought that pulling petals out of a flower was a hell of a funny thing for a thirty-five year old man to be doing, but since no one could see him, it didn't matter. He figured that a man would do a lot of funny things if society wasn't always watching with a critical eye. "She loves you not," said the daisy. "To hell with you daisy," said Corley, and he pushed on.

It was nearing noon now and Corley made his first stop. He set down all of his gear and had a couple of sandwiches. Afterwards he lit a Marlboro and lay down under a big white oak tree. He looked up through the tree at the structure of the limbs. A big tree had always fascinated him. In fact just about all that nature had to offer fascinated him. That was why he had made this trip. That was one reason anyway. The other reason was that he wanted to prove to himself that he was still a man. He wanted to prove to himself that the world of law books and soft living had not taken away his manhood and his love for mother earth. Mother earth sure smelled good this morning, he thought.

He lay under the tree for about an hour. He wasn't in any hur-

ry; he had three days to kill out here. Then he got up and saddled up his gear. He had a spot in mind where he would spend the night and he figured it would take him about four hours to reach it. There was water there as he remembered and it would be an ideal camp site. He moved at a slow pace, stopping occasionally to observe an animal or sometimes to take a closer look at a flower. This was a world that man had not yet corrupted and for Corley, all the commercial entertainment in the world could never take its place.

As he walked into a little clearing in the forest, he noticed bits of flesh and hair mingled in the leaves with an abundant amount of blood. A fox or maybe a wildcat had caught a rabbit unaware and had satisfied his hunger. He almost pitied the rabbit, but then he figured that the rabbit should not have been careless. He moved on and put the incident out of his mind.

He arrived at his first objective about 7 P.M. He cleared the undergrowth out for about twenty square feet and commenced to gather firewood. When the fire was going good, he started to prepare his supper. He had pork and beans which he warmed in an old army messkit, a sandwich that he had made that morning, and some good strong black coffee that he had made on the hot coals of the fire. After supper he got a good blaze going and settled back against a tree to watch it burn. He lit himself a smoke and gazed into the open flame for a long while. The flame stirred thoughts that he hadn't thought about for years. "By God, this is the way to live," Corley said aloud. He hadn't felt so good in years. The feeling was not only physical either. The natural environment had stirred his soul. He spread his bedroll out and slept as he hadn't slept for years. He was up early the next morning and was soon ready to move on.

The day was going to be hot. Big thunderheads were building up in the sky. He figured that he should find a rock cliff to sleep under for the coming night. He knew of one not far and figured that he could reach it by about four that evening. He would head that way and enjoy himself in the meantime.

It was about one o'clock in the afternoon when Corley topped a steep peak. It was very rocky along the ridge so he decided to move on down into the next hollow before he stopped to eat. He was sweating heavily from the climb up the mountain and he could feel his heart beating in the temples of his head. Just then he heard a noise in the brush and as he turned around he saw two deer glide into the undergrowth. They were directly below him, down a steep incline. He decided to move down for a closer look. It was a steep grade and he was holding onto bushes with his free hand so that he wouldn't slip. He was looking out ahead of himself for a sight of the deer and not watching where he placed his feet. The rattler struck without warning, out from under a rock. It hit him just above the ankle and the fangs penetrated deep into the flesh. Corley swung the sawed-off shotgun around and squeezed both triggers. Little bits of the snake flew in every direction. It had been a big one, every bit of four feet long. Corley had evened the score, but he looked at the bite with horror.

The first thought that entered his mind was the distance between himself and help. Must be at least five miles, he thought. "Damn, damn, damn," he cursed himself aloud. He was in a hell

of a mess now. He thought about all of the old remedies that he had heard of when he was a boy. A plug of tobacco would sometimes draw the poison out, but this he didn't have. Then, he had heard of cutting out the flesh around the bite before the poison spread, but he didn't have a knife, only a pole ax. His strongest thought was the five miles. He was still pretty young and plenty strong. Maybe he could make it. He decided to try. He quickly stripped himself of all his gear. He left everything behind except his water and shoved off. The pain wasn't bad, but he noticed that little streaks were already running away from the bite.

The sun was gone now, covered and concealed with black clouds. He saw lightning off to his left and soon the gentle roll of thunder echoed about the sky. Corley set a fast pace and he had covered half a mile before the rain first hit his face. His mouth was dry and the rain tasted good. He could feel his strength fading and when he stopped, the wounded leg trembled. The rain grew worse. Blinding lightning flashed across the sky and one keen crack of thunder followed another. He had always been told to get under a rock if an electric storm caught him in the woods, but he certainly couldn't stop now. He saw the creek that he had camped by last night just ahead. He was making good time. The pain grew worse now but he was feeling confident. He could picture himself behind the wheel of his car heading for that little town not more than two miles from his cabin. There would be a doctor there who would fix him up.

He started to cross the creek. It was a small stream and was already starting to swell from the effects of the heavy downpour. He picked out the rocks that he would step on for the crossing. When he stepped on the first rock, the slick moccasin failed to get traction and Corley went down hard. The wounded leg hit hard and square on the rock that he had slipped on. Agonizing pain shot through his body. He pulled himself to the other side of the stream. He could not move the leg and he correctly assumed that it was broken.

He knew that he couldn't stop; he must move on. He figured that his best bet now would be to follow the creek to its mouth. He knew the country and he knew that the creek came out about two miles below his cabin, but it was probably two miles to the mouth of the creek. The other way would be only about three miles in all. The creek route would be farther but he knew he could never pull up the mountain trails now. He started off down the creek bed, aiding himself with a dead limb he had picked up.

The poison was well distributed through his blood stream now and he was growing weaker by the minute. About five hundred yards from where he had broken his leg, he got himself tangled in some briars. The briars tore at his face and neck and the blood flowed freely. About ten yards farther he pitched and fell. His mouth and nose plowed into the dirt and leaves. Mother earth sure didn't taste as good as she smelled this morning. He rolled over on his back and tried to spit out the dirt but it was ground into his teeth and gums. He reached for his water but it had been torn off his side somewhere along the way. He tried to raise up three or four times, but he didn't have the strength. His body trembled all over now and he couldn't think straight. The cold rain beating down on his

# "33"

By FRANK BEALL

"Oh God! They've got another one. You'd think two up here would be enough. Look at that crowd! Scream, yeah that's right, it's just like a holiday, everybody's happy, you're all glad it's not you. I wonder what he did. I wonder if he has anyone to cry for him—I wonder how long it will take me to die? It doesn't hurt as much now. The town looks different from up here—little boxes—some close together—there's one off all by itself. Hey there! Anyone home? No! Of course not! You're down there being happy—I'm up here watching. God it's hot up here. The sweat itches—one thing's sure—I'm not going to scratch. It will be cold tonight—I may be even colder. I don't want to die. Damn! Damn! Damn!"

I still can't see who it is they're bringing up here. The poor bastard—all those people hounding him, screaming at him—you'd think he was an animal. The people—from up here they look like a pan of worms. Vermin! If I were down there I'd—be as they are; for are they not as I? Except for one thing—I'm up here. I wish I could sleep. We'll all sleep in the same bed. Me, them, the dirt,

the worms. I ate a worm in an apple once—I guess now they'll get a chance at me—I hope I can't feel it. The earth looks dead from up here. Nothing grows but these crossed trees. Two now, soon there will be three. Oh! They're making him bear his own. It will hurt for a while, but soon the fire nubs all the hurt. I tried not to scream—I wonder if he will. He looks bad. Grimy, bruised, sweaty—some of it spit—Oh they love to spit. Would they spit if it were blood. I wonder what they do on their days off? I wonder how many brought their lunch?

He has friends. Some are crying. His mother is probably there—mine wasn't—nobody cried. Everyone knows his name—Oh, how they scream his name. He has an unusual name; I've never heard it before; I wonder where he's from. They screamed thief at me—They didn't know my name—Thief! Thief!

Still they scream your name. Now it hurts, tomorrow you'll be dead, soon everyone will forget Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. God it's hot up here. I wish I could sleep."

## The Bear Facts

(Continued from page 4)

Now the darkness was not as deep as at first and I forgot the experience of the night before. Being a city-bred boy and thoroughly exhausted from the cold, I dropped into a weary sleep from my labors. Later that same day or should I say that night I awoke stiff and miserable. With the aid of the luminous dial of my watch, I discovered that it was the bewitching hour of midnight. I sat up and realized that not only did the cave stink, but not only did the cave stink, but I stunk, too. "Well, this time," I said to myself, "I awoke alone." It was only a matter of minutes, however, until I heard approaching noises. I had earlier concluded that I was in a most advantageous location to shoot a bear. I would just flash the light in the bear's face and shoot him with the rifle. Now it was a new rifle and had never been fired, but I assumed that there would be no problems. I groped for the flashlight, and a faint pink glow emanated from the bulb as I picked it up from beneath my legs. All the time I slept I had been lying on it and the weight of my body had kept the button depressed. It was useless. I turned my attention to the pawing, scraping noises which came ever nearer. I released the safety and faced the entrance. Every direction looked the same. Nothing but an impenetrable blackness. But the noises penetrated it and seemed as if it were almost touching me. I sat still with my back against a rock wall that was growing harder and harder. It seemed as if it were pushing me toward the sound. Gun poised, I decided that I would shoot straight out the entrance way. They were coming in I thought as I jerked the trigger. It seemed as if my ears were open; my nose burned from gunpowder, and I leaped to my feet as ma-

terial flew in all directions. One thought possessed me—get out, and get I did, but right square into a stone wall. Somehow during my sleep, I had become confused and had been facing a corner rather than the entrance. I hurriedly found the entrance and overestimated the width of the ledge crawled right off the cliff. I told you before that it wasn't straight down, but it was steep enough that I went tree scaling from the top to bottom. I was sure I felt the same as Milton's Satan did when he landed in the burning pitch. Scratches, bruises, and abrasions was the comment of a physician the next day. But before I could see another day, I had to crawl back up the slope without a light. About half the night was spent in this and once inside the cave my light was retrieved.

"It had regained one of its adventured seven lives. Though of a lower reincarnation, it enabled me to survey the torture room. I had fired point blank at a solid stone wall, not four feet from the end of the gun. The bullet and flying stone had been the objects which had sent me flying head first into the wall. My new rifle upon being retrieved showed all the signs of being one used in the battle of the Bulge."

"What about the bears?" I asked with such sincerity that even I was amazed at myself.

"I never saw them, and they never came close the rest of the night," he answered.

I looked at this tall, medium-built young man dressed in a very fashionable gray suit and began to think of what he must have looked like going over that cliff and what he must have looked like facing that hound. I started to smile, then began to laugh, and finally to roar and shake uncontrollably at my own imaginations. He was laughing, too, so much that tears streamed down his cheeks.

I stood up and said, "That's the damndest story I have ever heard, but it's been worth the listening. I have to get on home, but whenever you are downtown, stop in and see me. Here is my card." He thanked me for dropping in, and I left.

Now as an editor, I would like to print this story, but as I said before I have never printed tall tales, not even true ones.

face kept him from passing out for awhile, but soon Corley Malone lost all sense of reality. He would never spit that dirt out of his mouth, nor would he ever get up from where he lay. Corley Malone was dead.

Up the hill and around the ridge from where he lay, the rain beat down savagely on the sparse remains of the rabbit. A few more rains and a few windy days and no one would ever know that the rabbit ever existed.