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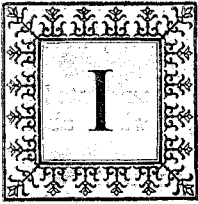
NO. 3

Bachelors of Arts

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REMEMBER Paley dropping the newspaper and stretching his arms over his head in one of those enormous yawns of his ending with a sort of gratified groan; and

this parable:

"They are just like ants! Something happens, like stumping your toe, and you turn up the ant-hill—and notice 'em for the first time. You haven't even thought of 'em before, but there they are all the time busy as the deuce, working like—like ants."

Paley isn't very good at parables; his verbal forte is explicitness. The idea thus shabbily clothed was that the progress of science was for the greater part of the time unnoticed by all the Roger Paleys, an unoriginal and irrefutable truth.

"Remember Jenkins?" he inquired.

I did. For two years he had lived on the same staircase in a college dormitory with Paley and me.

"Well, wasn't he just like an ant?"

I admitted I saw the point. That is one of the charms of Roger Paley. Any point he makes is invariably visible.

"Now look at him," continued Paley, "just look at him!" he entreated.

He stirred the newspaper which had fallen to floor with the toe of his shoe. The name was spelt in headlines in that paper: "Professor Thomas W. Jenkins." He was about to receive his fourth degree that very June, and a Frenchman with innumerable degrees was crossing the At-

lantic Ocean to confer on him a sensational scrap of red-ribbon.

"Just look at him," repeated Paley.

"You ought to be ashamed to look at him," I observed.

"Why?" said Paley, "I got a ribbon too, haven't I?"

That was true; he had. But then Roger got his ribbon for not being afraid, and it was about as difficult for him not to be afraid as for a wolf to be hungry; while it must have been unimaginably difficult for even Jenkins's industry to have spied out so thoroughly that a tiny fraction of an atom of lead that got him his ribbon; industry and patience and intellect and courage too. There was really no comparison fairly to be made between the two ribbons.

I pointed this out to Paley. We were having lunch together down-town at Piatt's, and being habit-bound animals were waiting for a particular table in that little front room at Piatt's that afore-time was the bar.

"There is no comparison possible," I pointed, "and besides, you oughtn't to brag about it."

"I didn't say there was any comparison." Roger flushed up like a little boy. "And I wasn't bragging either, and you know it." All I said was he was like an ant.

"Bug!" I retorted. "That's just it. He's an insect, and a great hulking thing like you who never had an idea in his life—what do you suppose a fellow like you figures as compared to a man of genius in the eyes of the Supreme Intellect?"

"In the eye of the what?" asked Paley.

"The Supreme Intellect," I repeated.

"Good Lord," said Paley, "Now you've got me all balled up. I meant ant as a sort of compliment."

"You should be more careful about your flattery," I warned him, "when you talk of men of genius."

He had got up, at a signal from a waiter, and stood looking down at me—very far down. "You are awfully personal about men of genius to-day. Supreme Intellecks! You haven't started any particular brain waves yourself, have you, recently? What do you want me to do with the fellow? Go down there and black his boots or kiss him, or something!"

"You might," I suggested, "invite him up here to dinner."

"Really?" He stood looking down at me with his thumbs in his waistcoat pockets.

I nodded.

"Why he probably wouldn't even remember who I am," he objected.

Remember him! I remembered Jenkins, the shabby, timid little figure climbing past our door on that old college staircase, up, up to his own room at the very topmost height. I remembered the quivering eagerness, the sudden illumination of that sad little face when, as I saw happen once or twice, it had a nod to respond to from that other, that swift gaily clad triumphant figure bounding up or down that same staircase. Roger Paley will always have a certain radiance about him, no humanly possible number of years will ever quite dim it, but he will never again shine with the same pure effulgence of those years. Perhaps it is only the hot breath of youth, breathed forth in hero-worship, that can kindle it. Later, cooler, more judicial approbation can't blow any metal to such incandescence.

"Forget you!" I cried to Roger Paley in Piatt's little front room that aforetime was the bar; "he'll forget his atoms first."

Perhaps I was so sure because I had not been entirely unlike Thomas W. Jenkins in those days. Even then I looked upon Roger Paley with a sort of pride. After all there is something in wearing one's virtues easily. Roger's may not have been rare or difficult of acquirement,

but as they were they sat upon him as gracefully as antlers on a stag.

"If you mean it," he said, "I'll do it."

Piatt's little front room has in its very darkest corner a writing-table. In fact it is officially a writing-room. I pointed to the almost invisible desk.

"But what are you going to call him?" I asked.

"What did we use to call him?" said Roger.

The truth slowly dawned that we had never called him anything.

"Lived in the same entry with him for years, in the same class, in the same college," Roger recounted slowly, "and never spoke to him. Oh damn, weren't we little rotters!"

"How about Tommy?" I suggested.

"Punk," said Roger, "what about Jenks?"

Beneath contempt I thought it.

Then Paley suffered what he is fond of describing as a brain wave. His pen scratched paper. "I'll call him," he announced, "'Professor.' But," he added over his shoulder, "quotation marks. Do you see?"

It seemed only a casual proceeding, the despatching of that letter from Piatt's little front room, one time the bar. In reality it was a ceremony. I did not recognize this at the time. True ceremonies are generally difficult to recognize; that's why they have to be emphasized so much. This not being emphasized at all, I missed its significance completely, failed quite to see that it was the christening of Thomas W. Jenkins by Roger, the establishing of one of the most mystic and powerful relations between the Vanity of Man and the Diversity of Things. To be sure, Paley did not invent Thomas W. or even discover him, but he named him. So Vespuccius was probably the hottest one hundred per center of us all—far more than Columbus, who seems always to have been slightly pro-Indian. So doubtless many of Thomas W. Jenkins's fellows feel in their hearts for some fragment of the world's foundations. So baptism meets us at the threshold of all cults and creeds and mysteries. And so when Paley wrote down "Professor" in quotation-marks he assumed a sort of inward and spiritual guardianship for that eminent

scientist that lives in his honest heart even to this day.

"See," he pointed out gleefully when he showed me the answer, "I hit the bulls-eye." The letter was signed "sincerely your old classmate the Professor."

"Pretty good, don't you think?" he asked.

"Splendid," I agreed. Paley had come to my office and was wasting what I endeavored to believe was my valuable time.

He sat down on the corner of the desk and put his feet on my chair-arm. To Paley no time was valuable.

"But why does he talk about academic duties?" he asked doubtfully. The Professor had regretted that just at that time his academic duties kept him at home. "Isn't that sort of laying it on a bit thick, don't you think?"

I thought it was not. I told him that to the mind of Professor Jenkins, academic duties were not distinctions. American universities, I explained, in my editorial manner, were still unfortunately subject to the needs and perversities of boys. In time, it was fondly believed, we might have universities without any boys in them. But that Elysian state was still in the future and meantime great scholars were still degraded by examinations and the punishment of sophomores for sticking pins in one another's trousers. Such were the Professor's academic duties; and certainly there was no laying it on thick in referring to them, was there?

Paley dropped his feet and agreed there was not, that it seemed to him more or less of a damn shame. "We will have to get hold of him later," he said firmly, and the baptismal spirit sounded in his voice as he said it.

It was there I first noticed it, and was a little alarmed. Paley is difficult to stop. He was called the greatest halfback of a decade, and it is the supreme virtue of a halfback to be difficult to stop. So I spoke to Elsie, Roger's wife, about it. I found her enthusiastic. Oh yes, she hoped that Roger would do it. She said the association was what he needed. It was speeches like that which illuminated the vast extent of Elsie's happiness.

"Good for whom?" I asked.

"For Roger, of course," she answered.

That had not been my idea at all, but I thought it best not to say so. In fact, like most meddlers, I was only too glad to get out of the affair by that time. Let her have my place and be grateful.

As a matter of fact she would have pushed me out, anyway. I verily believe she would not even have asked me to what was properly my own dinner. I recognized that only on the night of the third of June, when the dinner did, after two postponements, finally take place, and I found that I was assigned to Mrs. Thomas W. Jenkins.

Mrs. Jenkins wore black and it was the third of June and hot for that date. In addition she carried a lorgnette, a thing no woman can manage successfully on less than fifty thousand a year. She lifted the thing to her nose when I was introduced and said calmly, "You are the only person in the room I never heard of."

"Really?" said Elsie, with delight. "Why, he's a newspaper reporter and a great friend of Roger's."

I braced up to meet the glasses, confident of their fundamental sham, and met, flowing softly through them, the kindest, simplest glance any mortal ever encountered through so horrid an aperture. I instantly decided the lorgnette was a wedding present. Later in the evening, when we had become confidential, she told me the guess was correct. She had been married in Wakefield, Mississippi, where she and her husband had been born, and the glasses had been the graceful tribute from an uncle in Toledo, who apparently remembered nothing of the niece except that she was nearsighted. But by that time I would have forgiven her even if she had bought the machine expressly to look at me with.

The others, the ones whom Mrs. Jenkins had heard of, were solid proof of Elsie's authority: the president of the university, with that air of bland dignity all American presidents of things assume; two of the trustees, whose wives could have worn any number of lorgnettes but forbore; Professor Mielle, who had just crossed the Atlantic Ocean carrying Tom Jenkins's new ribbon, and a Mrs. McCarter, who was put next him because she once got a divorce in Paris and was supposed to speak French fluently in con-

sequence. The extra man gave just that little touch of negligence which so distinguished a gathering needed. It was as perfect as Elsie could make it.

I turned to my neighbor in black. The lorgnette was down now in her lap. Her bare eyes were peering at the melon in front of her. When I made some comment on the people, she merely lifted her glasses and looked at the people thoroughly. She had beautiful brown eyes. They were incapable doubtless, as the uncle in Toledo remembered, but perhaps it was just this incapacity that made them so tremendously appealing. They were the prettiest eyes at the table, I thought, and I had a sudden desire to tell her so, I was so sure it was such a long time since Professor Jenkins had. It is one of my few philanthropic instincts. If I had to go around doing good, which God forbid, I should choose the job of paying compliments to women like Mrs. Jenkins. And I should make an awful mess of it too, if my experience with her should be typical.

"They make me feel so small," she had said, ending her scrutiny.

"They shouldn't," I replied; "you have the prettiest eyes and the most distinguished husband at the table."

She went on with her melon in silence. I thought I was snubbed and then she said quietly: "Even if it's true it doesn't do either of us much good. I can hardly see out of the eyes, and Tom . . ."

She paused.

"Yes," I urged. "And Tom! What about Tom?"

"Poor Tom," she said softly—so softly that I was not sure I was meant to hear. I thought it better to look at Tom intently. I did not remember him, but I had no difficulty in identifying the figure of the savant with the shabby little figure of the undergraduate who used to climb our staircase to the very topmost room. Elsie was being very attentive to him at that moment, and he reminded me somehow of a conscientious missionary being wooed by a cannibal princess. His collar was a great deal too large for him and inside it I could see his throat contracting and enlarging as if a great pulse-beat in it and his head nodded time to his hostess's observations.

"You are a great friend of Mr. Paley's, aren't you?" asked the little woman in black.

"That," I explained, "is my only reason for being here."

She put up her glasses and stared in her soft kind way at the silver centrepiece. "I used to hate him," she said suddenly.

"But," I exclaimed, "I never knew you knew him before."

"Know him," she repeated, "I have known him ever since his freshman year. I used to know the color of the socks he wore, the kind of cigarettes he smoked, the way he brushed his hair."

She went through the catalogue with her eyes still fixed on the centrepiece. When she had finished, and it was a good deal longer catalogue than this, she brought her eyes back to me and added gravely, "Poor Tom."

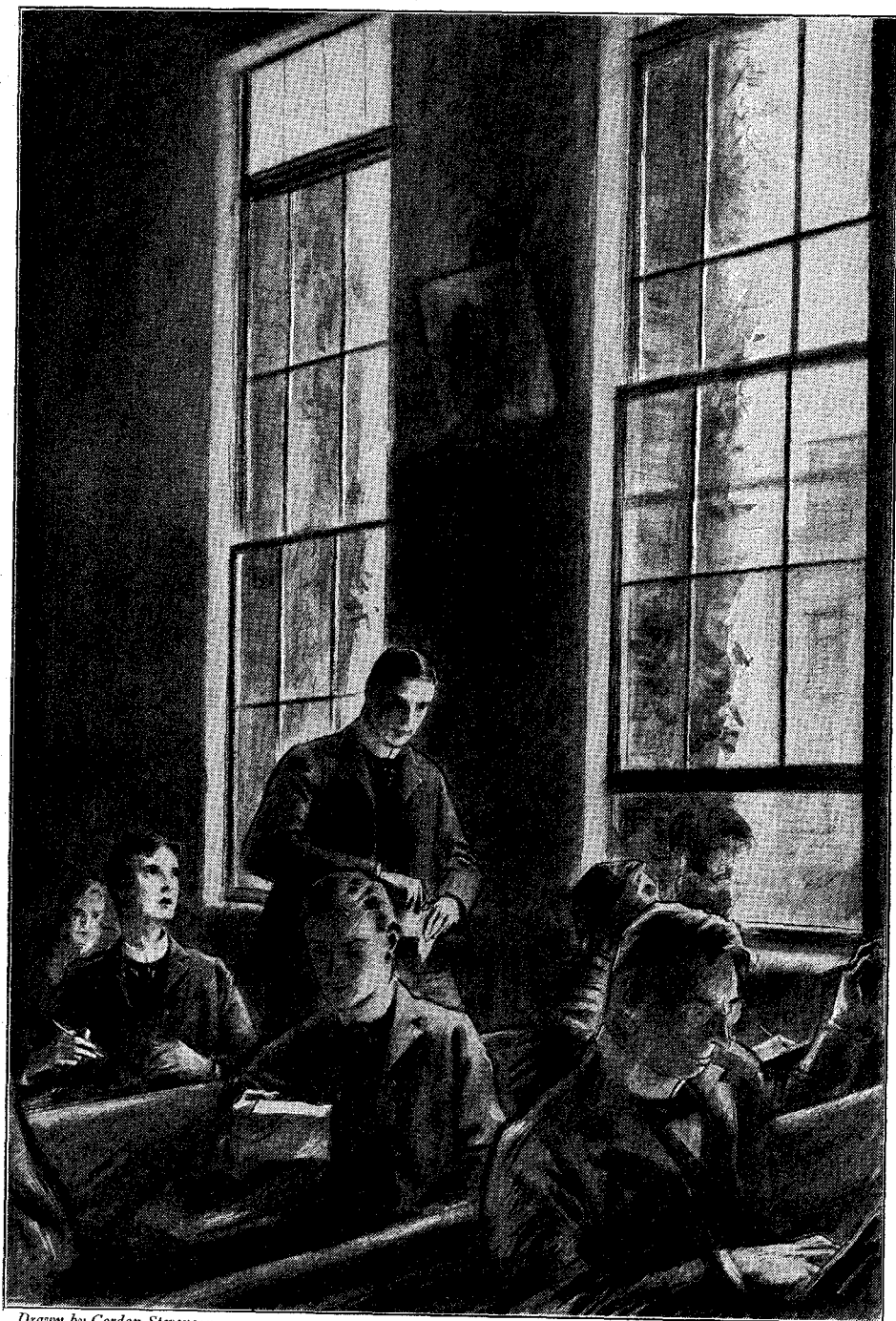
"I see," I answered.

I did see. I had even caught a glimpse of part of it before—his part of it—the little figure on the staircase. I had never an inkling of the other figure in Wakefield, Mississippi. I wondered, as I looked at her, how those eyes looked when they read the letters full of socks and cigarettes and the rest of the catalogue. When she glanced down the table at her host a moment I watched them and they were not—no, distinctly they were not—so altogether gentle as I had seen them. For the first time in my life a woman's eyes turned more softly to me than to Roger Paley.

I stifled my gratification with an aphorism, "None of us," I observed safely, "can have everything."

"No," she agreed, as I expected. She paused. Then she added, as I certainly did not expect: "But some of us can seem to."

The more I think of it, the more certain I become that just there she touched the heart of the matter. The true pathos of Tom Jenkins's fate was an invincible sincerity. He could never, however ardently he might aspire, appear other than what he was. A fair day's wage, in the economist's phrase, for a fair day's work, would probably always be his—an adequately filled pay envelope at the end of the week, but no sweetly unexpected dividends, no luscious unearned increment.



Drawn by Gordon Stevenson.

Then he read the paper of questions and just tore it up and threw it on the floor and walked out again.—Page 252.

When she had pointed it out, this destiny seemed visibly stamped upon him in that company. Two feet away sat one of the richest trustees in the world, Fortescue Lloyd, with his nobly filled shirt front, his immaculate skin, his pure white hair and mustache and eyebrows which seventy years of stiff brushing had moulded to the consistency of fine wax, with his string of honorary degrees and directorships and presidencies—what a magnificent philanthropic old brigand he was, how gloriously he had looted life!

But the little black witch at my side waved her broomstick, and the immoral vision passed. "It really doesn't matter," she was saying, "except with the boys."

She had turned away to struggle with an immense fish the servant had thrust under her elbow.

"You mean his classes?" I asked.

She was silent, absorbed in her struggle, striving to draw out Leviathan with a spoon.

"They give him a great deal of trouble," she explained presently.

I supposed they would; I have long believed that turning over men of thought as teachers to boys was the last survival of the gladiatorial games.

"He simply can't manage them," she said severely.

"It's more difficult," I explained, "to—to just *seem* to boys."

"Is it?" she appeared doubtful. "I don't know; mine are all girls. And I am very glad of it."

I hastily agreed: "I loathe boys."

"Beasts!"

The word seemed to form on her lips and float out, a soft butterfly of sound, by itself over the table. It seemed to touch with strange emphasis the foreign ear of Dr. Mielle.

"Be-yeasts," he repeated vaguely, "What is it a be-yeasts?"

Mrs. Jenkins bowed her head over her plate, so I answered for her.

"Boys," I explained.

"Une espèce d'animal," translated the fluent Mrs. McCarter, and the savant's eyeglasses glittered as he bowed his head again before her fluency.

"I didn't know they were listening," whispered Mrs. Jenkins.

"They aren't any more," I assured her.

"It might be serious, you know," she explained, "if the president heard—. They are so particular about it—discipline, influence." She raised her eyes frankly to mine, and her voice rose too, "it's his weakness, you see—Tom's—influence, discipline. He hasn't any."

"What does it matter," I argued, "if he has everything else?"

She sighed. "That's just the way Tom talks," she said.

Strangely I did not feel flattered by the comparison as she made it.

"Now *he*," she said, and, though she did not stir a finger, the pronoun struck Roger Paley as unmistakably as if she had thrown a potato at him. "Now he would do all that so splendidly."

I was silent. I was quite as ready to throw Paley to the wolves for her as Paley was to do so to me for that perfectly commonplace woman he married, but I didn't care to betray him at his own dinner-table. So I was silent.

"And yet," continued Mrs. Jenkins serenely, "he couldn't even graduate."

"Oh," I interrupted.

"No," she insisted, "He never really got any degree."

When I met her glance I knew better than to insist. Instead I asked, "Tell me about it."

Ten days later I retold her story at the alumni luncheon, but I did not tell all of it. I only repeated the scandalous part of it. That audience was not fit to hear it all. It was an immense gathering in the university gymnasium and a great part of that dinner company was there: The president and the same two trustees, and Roger and Professor Mielle, the guest of honor on both occasions; and when I finished there was a roar of applause that made even the undergraduates outside jealous for their favorite sport. But when she told it there was at the end only a soft rustle of murmur from chairs and skirts, for the telling lasted from that big fish to the end of the ices.

"We weren't engaged until later," she began.

I nodded.

"So those first two years at college were awfully lonely for Tom. Oh, you know, I sometimes think he has never got over how lonely he was. He some-

times shows me places he still remembers being lonely in. He had a room very high up in one of the older dormitories, over Mr. Paley's, and he told me he used to like to sit at the window there just because he could see the railroad tracks that led back home."

What a splendid audience she had! How much better than mine I could remember that dormitory. I could remember those rails, though I had never looked at them very much.

"Later," she went on, "things were a little better. But it happened just at the end of them. Tom, you know, was awfully poor. His people in Wakefield were even poorer than mine. His father was a minister and awfully strict. And I don't suppose Tom could afford much fun even if you all had asked him to—so he just went around by himself and studied terribly hard."

I could have told her all of this as well as she told it to me, and she seemed suddenly to remember this because she said: "probably you know all this, anyway."

"A little," I had to admit.

She frowned and looked away and just for an instant her glance rested on Paley.

"It was then, I suppose," she went on, "he got so silly about your friend Mr. Paley. He was captain of something or other, wasn't he?"

"He was about everything," I said, "that we all wanted to be then."

"Well, Tom thought he was, anyway. I suppose you all despised him and I don't blame you. I even did myself, though I understood it better. He had always been an awfully lonely boy. His father was so strict with him. There wasn't very much to do in Wakefield, but what little there was Tom did less than anybody else. So when he got up there among all those strangers I suppose he just naturally took a back seat."

Quite unconsciously she had drifted back in her narrative to Mississippi, I could see. It was "up there" and "among all those strangers," though she had lived up there among them now more than half her life. It is the first half as well as the first step that costs. There was even a dash of her old accent when she spoke of Roger.

"I suppose maybe I was jealous of him.

Almost anybody would have been in my place. And I used to hate him. I don't any more. I don't admiah Mr. Paley, but I don't dislike him."

"You might even admire him," I ventured, "if you knew him better."

"Maybe," she answered; "certainly Tom did. He wrote more about him than anything else. And I have always thought maybe it was the only thing Tom wasn't quite truthful about—I mean seeing a good deal of him. Did he?"

"Oh, yes," I answered, "they used to see each other nearly every day at one time, I imagine."

"Where?" she asked.

"Oh, just around," I answered.

"Perhaps," was her reply but I knew from the word that I had wasted breath.

For the first time I saw her look across the table at her husband. It was not a particularly tender glance. "Sometimes," she said, "when I think of his doing it I could shake him."

I was not the only one who detected that glance. Fortescue Lloyd, who rarely missed anything that was close to him, nodded to her with a laugh. "Why didn't you shake him, then, Mrs. Jenkins?" he called out. "That is what I am always urging, you know, shaking up these great scientists. That's my métier."

The little woman in black actually quivered. I thought for an instant she would collapse quite into stammering embarrassment at so direct a shot from so great a gun. I imagine it was the most public moment of her life. Never before had so direct a beam from so great a light fallen upon her. And at the signal every other countenance at the table turned upon her too. She was centred as fairly by the whole cluster as any prima donna of comic opera in the first act. Our whispered tête-à-tête was thus suddenly lifted up into a great dramatic dialogue. It was a close thing. For a moment I thought the wedding present of the uncle in Toledo was snapped, she grasped it so in both hands. Then she rose fairly steadily, evenly to the levels of her occasion.

"Shall I, Tom?" she asked.

By Jove, she was the prima donna of that table. And it was her first act—the first of all her life. Nobody heard



Drawn by Gordon Stevenson.

"By Jove," he cried, "that was the finest piece of nerve I ever heard of."—Page 252.

what Tom said. Probably he said nothing, merely gulped and got red.

"It was just something awfully silly Tom did when he was in college. I didn't know anybody else could hear—I didn't believe anybody else ever did hear of it except us."

It did not occur to me then, but since I have puzzled over the disingenuousness of that speech. Had she meant nobody except me to hear? Or was it all—? It is only these simple, sincere timid women that arouse suspicions like that.

"Maybe," she ventured, "some of you won't think he did right. I know his father wouldn't if he had ever heard of it." She turned her glance full upon the president. "Maybe you won't either."

The president, muttering something about the statute of limitations, shrank visibly in his chair—just as if he had been singled out from the stage by a real prima donna of musical comedy.

"Tom, you know, was a great friend of Mr. Paley's. They were classmates and they had rooms near together. Didn't you, Mr. Paley?"

Paley only nodded and emptied his glass nervously, but on the whole held his ground much more firmly than the president had done.

She turned to Professor Mielle. It was rather like watching an expert billiard player. I wondered what pocket she was going to put him in. "Mr. Paley," she explained, "was a great athlete, a very great athlete, but perhaps you don't understand what a great athlete is, Professor?"

Then I saw exactly what pocket she was going to put him in. He answered explosively, "Ah, yes, truly, magnificent, splendid."

"Well," she paused as if carefully considering this definition an instant, "then that's what Mr. Paley was, and Tom wasn't an athlete at all. He studied all the time."

She held the great Frenchman's eye.

"Splendid," he ejaculated, "a combined American. Together they dominated the college."

The thought of Tom Jenkins dominating made me look thoughtfully at Paley. He was pink and twitchy and looked away.

"I never heard Tom say that," she answered, "but that's perhaps what they did. You see, Mr. Paley didn't have time to study much. We have so many games in our colleges. Almost every month we have a different one, and some of the very great athletes play all of them. Tom used to write me how worried he was about Mr. Paley, he was so afraid he wouldn't pass all his examinations—I mean enough of them to keep on playing all the games he knew how to play. You see, they went to the same lectures, so Tom knew that Mr. Paley wasn't as well prepared as he should have been. He used to write me all about it."

She paused to glance across at her husband. She wasn't in the least afraid of looking any one in the face then—any men, that is. Except myself, I don't think there was a happy male at that table, nor an unhappy woman. Elsie was openly smiling down the whole length of the table at Roger.

"Yes," she said brightly, "Roger used to write me about it."

"Well," continued Mrs. Jenkins, "it got Tom really upset, so that he could hardly do his work. They get terribly excited over these games, Professor, even those who can't play them, like Tom. He used to go over to the dean's office and look up Mr. Paley's marks, and when they weren't as high as they ought to be he would worry himself almost sick. Indeed, he did worry himself sick about it, because that summer, after what I am going to tell you happened, he was awfully sick and he could not go back to college until after Christmas holidays."

So that was when Jenkins dropped completely out of sight. I saw Roger start and look at her then. Certainly we could not have said we had missed Jenkins, but now, looking, we could remember not seeing him.

"It was in June, you see, it happened, and it was awfully hot. Tom told me about it in August when he was so sick and he thought he was going to die. He was afraid to confess to his father. I told him not to unless he got a great deal worse."

There was a laugh and I heard somebody say admiringly, "I'll bet you did," and there was another laugh.

Mrs. Jenkins laughed too. "Well, he would have died if he had told him," she insisted. "There was one examination—I can't remember which one, there are so many of them—and Tom wrote me he just knew Mr. Paley couldn't pass. It was physics, I think. Wasn't it physics, Tom?"

"I don't know." It was the first time I had heard Jenkins speak. "I don't know," he said. "I am afraid I don't remember very much about it any more."

"Oh, yes," she said brightly, "it was physics, I know it was, and Mr. Paley came in late. Tom said he had almost finished his paper when Mr. Paley came in. He came in and sat down in the seat next to Tom. Then he read the paper of questions and just tore it up and threw it on the floor and walked out again."

"Oh, Paley, Paley," sighed Mr. Lloyd, "what trouble you used to give us in those days!" But Roger didn't answer.

"Tom told me afterward," her voice went on, "I mean that summer when he was so ill, that he didn't intend to do anything at all at first—that he just sat on and finished his work, but I believed he unconsciously meant to do it all along, but he wouldn't admit it to himself. He was afraid, you see, he had been raised so strictly and those examinations meant so much to him—why, they meant everything to him."

"Yes," commented the president, "they meant a good deal."

"So I don't believe," she declared, "that he forgot to sign his paper; I think he just deliberately didn't sign it. He told me that summer that he forgot all about it until the afternoon, when he was by himself in his room. He said he had been thinking all day about what they were going to do to Mr. Paley for throwing away his paper like that, and how much he was going to miss him next year, if they didn't let him come back to college. Then when he did remember his own paper it was almost dinner-time. He went right over to Professor Thorley's house—he was professor of physics then, before Tom—and the maid who answered the door told him the professor was at dinner but he could wait in his study and see him right afterward."

"When Tom told me about it that sum-

mer when he was so ill he said he believed that the devil did that—arranged it just that way. He thought he was not going to get well then—he had some horrible ideas."

I saw the big Frenchman raise his eyebrows and glance down at his confrère, but he said nothing.

"You see," she continued, "it all happened so easily then. When Tom went into the study intending just to explain his mistake, he says, there were all the papers of the examination piled up on the desk, waiting for Professor Thorley to go over them, and Tom was all alone with them for fifteen minutes. He told me he picked out his own paper just so as to have it ready to show Professor Thorley when he came in. He held it in his hand all finished but no name on it—just as he had thought, so he took out his pencil and on the top across the paper, in the space where he should have written 'Thomas W. Jenkins' he wrote instead 'Roger Paley.'"

She made a gesture with her fingers on the table-cloth of one scrawling a signature. But, like even experienced *prima donnas* at the very end, the strain showed and the tip of her finger which finished the gesture was nervous, uncertain, and struck the water-glass and tipped it over, spilling the water on to the cloth.

It was, I thought, the only flaw in an otherwise perfect performance. I have never known, even pretended to know, what her purposes were, but it was easy to see they were accomplished. Even the upset tumbler did not disturb her. Without righting it and without a pause she added:

"Then he crept out of the house before Professor Thorley came in, and so of course nobody ever knew he had been there."

There were a great many supposedly clever people at that table. Perhaps the only one of the whole company who was not supposedly clever was Paley. It is a curious thing that in that pause it was he, Paley, who found and spoke just the right word.

"By Jove," he cried, "that was the finest piece of nerve I ever heard of."

It seemed as if little Jenkins at the word almost sprang from his chair. His very collar seemed to tighten, his voice

rang as it never could ring, I know, in any lecture-room, to any audience.

"Do you think so, Roger? By Jove, I am glad of that."

For an instant the rest of us, presidents, trustees, savants, prima donnas, had fallen away and left the ring of the table to those two.

It was the great Frenchman's voice which put an end to the instant, pronouncing as it were its benediction, "The charming friendships of youth."

Paley choked awkwardly, looked at his

wife, and rose. Later he complained bitterly of the great Frenchman. "He is an ant," he insisted. He had kept me to arrange that I should tell the story, as I finally had to, ten days later, in the gymnasium of the university. And that was a great success, just as Paley said it would be, but of the two endings I shall always prefer the one where the great scientist, so naively imitating Roger's oath just as he would have done twenty years ago, cried:

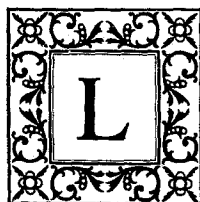
"By Jove, Roger, I am glad of that."

The West as I Saw Her

BY SHAW DESMOND

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This article is based upon the writer's experiences gathered during three visits to America, in which he spent nearly a year, lecturing in the chief cities and covering some fifty thousand miles.



LIKE a true Irishman, I will begin my West in the East.

Before I was catapulted across the Continent from New York, I was solemnly assured by every New

Yorker that "the Middle West was the hub of America," and that the farther West I got, and, presumably the greater the mileage I managed to put between myself and what a friend of mine calls "The City of Jews governed by Irishmen," the better, the bigger, the breezier, and the more bountiful and beautiful would I find it. They should really have said "the better would I find *her*," for the West is a woman—and a splendid creature at that.

In this lightning survey of the main-spring of God's own country, I, unlike nearly every other writer who has essayed to write upon her (America to me is not "Uncle Sam," but a beautiful young woman—Miss Columbia to wit), lay no implicit claim to omniscience. The honest to God is that I know nothing about

America—I just love her and leave it at that, and no man knows anything about the woman he loves . . . until after he has married her, when he only thinks he knows.

I had on my road to the West, tamed and untamed, been vomited by a leviathan Pullman into a place called "Terry Hut" (at least that is how the Terry Hutters pronounced it), much as Jonah was vomited by the whale. The thermometer that morning had registered the lowest temperature ever recorded in that town of overturned biscuit boxes and desperate Sundays, and I believed I had reached the limit of mortal endurance.

But I did not know Chicago.

Three times have I been in the City by the Lake, three times have I been frozen to death, and three times have I returned to life. Lake Michigan in February . . . ough!

Chicago is not only the City of Winds but the City of Adventure. Anything can happen to a man, or, for that matter, to a woman, in Chicago. Anything, in fact, *does* happen.

I know a club in Chicago in which the