other considerations at the moment are secondary to newsstand sales."

This strategy also failed, and by the time I was invited aboard *Collier's* as "talent," the board of directors, struggling to squeeze money and profit out of the balance sheet, had given all authority to one man as new president, editor in chief, chairman of the board, and chief executive officer—Paul Smith.

Paul Smith was a good, if cocky, person. He had been recommended to the motley group of financial interests that sat on the board by none other than Herbert Hoover. Smith had once been a first-class reporter; then the San Francisco *Chronicle*'s financial editor; then, a boy genius, he became editor of the paper at the age of twenty-seven. He had given up that post on Pearl Harbor Day to join the Navy; quit the Navy to enlist as a combat marine; had hit the beaches, gun in hand, and was thrice decorated. He knew war, finance, publishing, great men, and how to use reporters. From Smith descended operational authority over the three magazines—*Collier's, Woman's Home Companion* and the *American*—which made up the magazine division (and biggest money-losers) of the Crowell-Collier Corporation.

Whether Smith meant to do so or not, his administration of the magazines defined for me the "cluster" theory of politics: that dominant groups tend to find each other by accident of kinship, schooling or nearness. When I first came aboard, I found the accents on the *Collier's* editorial floor oddly familiar: they were all Bostonian! Dakin came from Gloucester; his deputy, Gordon Manning, was from Boston University's School of Journalism; so was Manning's deputy, David Maness, who also came from Blue Hill Avenue. Jerry Korn, Homer Jenks and our queen bee, Diana Hirsh, were also Bostonians. This was the cluster Smith had inherited to edit and direct a magazine that sold best in the calico and chewing tobacco belt and outsold all others in Arkansas and Tennessee!

Over this Boston cluster Smith had now installed a new cluster of Californians: Kenneth McArdle, Ted Strauss, Dick Trezevant. The Californians and Bostonians together reached out to other names, and so there developed a group of younger writers who, over the years, became a recognizable "*Collier's*" cluster of talent of their own. A pensive and diffident Harvard boy came aboard on the strength of one superlative piece he had written on kite-flying in Thailand. His name was George Goodman; later, as "Adam Smith," he achieved fame as the author of *The Money Game* and other works that changed American financial reporting. Another contemporary youngster was

Peter Maas; he felt a calling to go after the Mafia, and in his *The Valachi Papers,* opened up another genre of American investigative reporting. Then there was a Rhodes scholar out of Yale and Oxford named Robert Massie, who was interested at once in good writing and in Russia; he later wrote *Nicholas and Alexandra.* A fellow youngster from Yale never developed his by-line, which was Ray Price, because Price even then normally wrote as ghost for his superiors—the chief of whom was later Richard Nixon, whose best speeches, including both inaugurals, came of Ray Price's drafting. As important as or more so than any other youngster was Pierre Salinger, whose assignment was to investigate the Teamsters Union. Salinger insisted there were two men we must expose—Dave Beck of Seattle and Jimmy Hoffa of Detroit. We turned him loose, but his superb cross-country investigation was completed only the month the magazine died on the stone. Salinger was then urged to carry his data down to Washington. There he enlisted with Robert F. Kennedy, younger brother of the junior senator from Massachusetts, John F. Kennedy, who then aspired to a larger career; and Salinger followed that career upward. Salinger's best book was *With Kennedy;* Price's book, later, was called *With Nixon.*

The strangers from California, subordinate to the finance men of the board, directors of the new talent and the old staff, were open, decent, even-handed. While the youngsters—Salinger, Maas, Goodman, Massie, Price—were hassling over office space, page space, story assignments, the older-brother group of senior writers were given equal opportunity to show their talent. Vance Packard, then a minor writer, was encouraged to try what he wanted—and with *The Hidden Persuaders,* in 1957, rubbed open American consumer consciousness before Ralph Nader was even heard of. Editors such as Ted Strauss or Eugene Rachlis at *Woman's Home Companion* were encouraged to explore the New Woman. The unrecognized star of the older-brother group was the late Cornelius Ryan. Ryan had, for years, signed *Collier's* stories on outer space; as poet laureate of the space-cadet brigade, he had been mocked for his extravagant predictions that Americans were on their way to the moon. He was persuaded by the new leadership to try his hand at a different style of narrative, the episode-by-episode re-creation of large events. This style served *Collier's* well in its closing months as Ryan perfected it and brought to his reporting the quality that later produced his memorable books *The Longest Day* and *A Bridge Too Far.*

It was a pleasure working with men one respected, and though at *Life,* and later at CBS, I was to work with men who engaged my

comradeship and respect as much as those at *Collier's,* none surpassed the *Collier's* team in talent. Alas, none were more misused. No one could tell us where we were going, or what we were to do, except to write well, which we did. No one harnessed us together, or gave us the beat, as was given at *Time* and *The Reporter.* We were a band of happy men, almost oblivious of the advent of television except as a horn on a far hill. So must the singers of Zion have intoned their cantillations in the temple after the legions of Rome had already arrived in Galilee.

And I was never happier than in this period. I was the political correspondent of *Collier's.* Whether *Collier's* knew what it wanted or not, whether the editors gave me the rhythm or not, I was where I wished to be—in the middle of the 1950s, in the age of Eisenhower, with a readership of fifteen to twenty millions, and a free pass into politics.

I cannot now deny my recognition that Eisenhower's years in Washington, from 1954 through 1960, were the most pleasant of our time. Once McCarthy had been eliminated, a placid quality probably never to be seen again slowly settled over Washington. Political fashion, of course, prevented me from saying that Eisenhower was an outstanding President during those years of his benign rule. Praise for any sitting figure of power had gone out of intellectual style years earlier, with the end of the war. Though Eisenhower was a holdover from that age of heroes, now that he was in politics as President, political writers had to write of him as political journalism required; and convention required us to disdain him as an inert, good-willed but ineffective President. This presented me with a problem: how to write about the incumbent without seeming slavishly flattering or nastily picky.

There were two story streams, as there always are for a political writer: On the one hand were the challengers, the Democratic Party, that corrupt, civilizing and Americanizing force, the oldest continuing organized party in the entire world. Even at their worst, Democrats are not boring, and among the quarreling Democrats I was, of course, as happy as a dog loose in a meat market. But on the other hand, there was Eisenhower and his Republicans. Once Eisenhower had insisted on the condemnation of Joe McCarthy in 1954, he had stilled for a decade, until 1964, the permanent civil war in the Republican Party. Thereafter Eisenhower "presided." Like all Republicans since Theodore Roosevelt, Eisenhower was "managerial" rather than propellant,

and of the seven "managerial" Republican Presidents who have sat in the White House since Theodore Roosevelt, only Eisenhower had any claim to greatness. Since I could not, then, see the great virtues in clean management, I missed the history lesson that Eisenhower was giving the nation.

Eisenhower's history lesson was quite simple: The Chief Executive, he felt, should do absolutely nothing new unless something new was absolutely inescapable. Then he did it quickly and very well.

The Republican story stream thus required a good deal of invention and imagination to make it interesting. Somehow, the personal excitement that once ran from the conqueror of the Nazis and the Commander in Chief of NATO had evaporated. Scribbled on memory is one visit I made to the Oval Office which seemed to sum up Eisenhower as President. Eisenhower was out when I arrived. The sun streamed in through the bulletproof glass panes behind his desk; the desk was immaculate except for one neat closed folder in its center; and on the closed folder lay his horn-rimmed glasses, askew, as if he had just stepped out to the men's room for a moment and would soon be back. Only he was out playing golf. The room drowsed. The entire administration seemed to drowse. My impression was of course a mistaken one; this room, as always, was the center of power. The man who was out playing golf was simply using its power in a way unacceptable to historians and reporters; he was letting slip the restraints of Presidential power on lesser power systems and letting them jostle each other down the road to their clashing or interlocking futures. He acted, as I have said, only when it was inescapable. And when he acted, it was usually as the master regulator.

It is the fashion these days to denounce bureaucrats, which is as silly as to denounce soldiers or professors. But it is not demeaning Eisenhower to say that he was not only a great commander and a great President, but a great bureaucrat. He knew the difference between bureaucratic nonsense and bureaucratic truths, and he could strain out of the alleged facts the dynamics that mattered. His ascent through the military bureaucracy had shaped him; and he liked to have complicated problems approach him properly, sorted and simplified, with supporting papers and options, through appropriate channels. He knew how to use government, and how government worked, and as a supreme bureaucrat, he let the lesser bureaucracies within the systems incubate in the 1950s those developments that seemed to him reasonable and manageable. These developments would, in the 1960s, change America unmanageably; but Eisenhower presided over their genesis with minimal drama. As, for example:

Item: The judicial bureaucracy had already been swaying under the force of black protest for almost twenty years when, in 1954, Earl Warren, the Chief Justice whom Eisenhower had appointed, led the Supreme Court to its decision on color and race in American schools. Warren masqueraded as a judicial character, but he was, more realistically, a frustrated executive, a man of politics and also a moralist. When Warren and his Supreme Court forbade all states to segregate black and white children in separate school systems, Warren was setting history on the march—if only the President and the Executive branch would march, full-heartedly, with him. Eisenhower's own feeling about black and white has not come down to us; but for him, the Supreme Court *was* supreme, and when it came to exerting the absolute clutch of authority, it was Eisenhower who sent the 101st Airborne Division to Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957. The Supreme Court had outlawed segregation, which was the appropriate way the matter should come before government. Though he had offered no leadership, Eisenhower as Executive enforced the judicial decision.

Item: As far back as the mid thirties, the engineers of the Bureau of Public Roads, as it was called then, had cranked up and sent to Franklin Roosevelt a plan for a national grid of highways. Highway bureaucrats exert one of the most irresistible forces in American government, second only to the revenue service bureaucrats. An elected Executive can say either yes or no to his highway bureaucracy—but their designs cannot be changed. For one reason or another, mostly the effort of the Great War, its dislocating aftermath, then the Korean War, Roosevelt and Truman both had stalled the highway bureaucrats' proposal for a national highway system. But now, in Eisenhower's time, the moment had arrived when a federal interstate highway system seemed inescapably necessary. Such projects come working their way to a President's personal attention in a cocoon of analyses and statistics, with a train of attendant advocates and denouncers. No President ever has time to unpeel all the layers of figures and interests in so monumental a problem as highways or energy, so he must go with the best advice that fits his own preconceptions. Eisenhower's instincts ran to good roads; as a country boy and military commander he loved roads; thus he leaned on Congress to give the nation its national highway system; and so America was on the march to the Suburban Society.

I make Eisenhower seem almost a tool of the bureaucracies; but as a managerial President, he was no one's tool and where he felt most certain, in military and foreign affairs, had not a moment's hesitation

in overruling any bureaucracy. He demonstrated this virtue best against the chief diplomatic idealogue of the cold war, his own Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles. Dulles might play at brinkmanship—but Eisenhower would have none of it. Neither at the first Berlin uprising, in June of 1953, nor at the conjunction of the Suez and Hungarian crises of 1956, nor at any time, would Eisenhower risk war. When Dulles, Radford and Nixon wanted the United States to save the French at Dienbienphu in 1954, Eisenhower said no. Some urged an atomic strike. Eisenhower said no. When it came to "unleashing" Chiang K'ai-shek to hit the Communist mainland, Eisenhower said no. Eisenhower understood military matters as no President since George Washington, and no cheaper military-diplomatic stroke has been directed by any President of modern times than Eisenhower's personal stroke in Lebanon in July of 1958. A Communist coup seemed possible there. Resistance to the Communists required support. Eisenhower responded with seventy warships of the Sixth Fleet and nine thousand marines and paratroopers to establish a beachhead just outside Beirut. Not a man was killed. The Communist coup was averted, and within weeks all Americans were out—safe. Chief Diplomat Eisenhower was superb. Except for his one great blunder in the Suez crisis of 1956, when he sacrificed American interests for American pieties, he knew well the difference between pieties and interests.

Where Eisenhower was weakest was as a politician. Caustic biographers may make his political naïveté comic—but it was part of his strength. He must be remembered as a figure in a fading America, decent and tough, with the virtues, the hypocrisies, the hero images, as guides. He vibrated to an older American rhythm, as if he had grown up reading McGuffey's Readers and his reading tastes had never changed. As a boy he had undoubtedly been thrilled by the relief of Cawnpore and the message to Garcia, and as President he read Zane Grey Westerns. He liked money; he apparently dallied with women but above all he felt he must do what was right. His view of the Presidency was simple: Congress passed the laws, the Supreme Court judged the laws, the President did his best to execute the laws. Apart from Eisenhower's belated outrage at Joe McCarthy, he never gave any show of understanding the manipulative political power and responsibility of the Presidency.

His blind spot for politics had struck me when I met him first in Europe, and twelve years later it was still there. In Europe I had once asked his opinion of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Roosevelt was a great President, he said, Roosevelt loved maps and ships, but Roosevelt

simply could not understand the way organizations should work. For example, Ike continued, take the Casablanca conference of 1943. On his arrival there, FDR had drawn Ike aside and told him to do something which, Ike knew, the British would vigorously object to. Ike explained to Roosevelt that even though he wore the American uniform, his was an Allied command; that he, Ike, represented all the Allies, so that all directives must be transmitted to him via the Combined Chiefs of Staff, in which the British had an equal voice with the Americans. Ike related that the President then nodded agreement. But the next day, after meeting with Churchill again, FDR once more asked Eisenhower to end-run the British; and again Eisenhower explained. The same thing happened yet again the next day. Then, finally, as the summit conference was breaking up, the President once more summoned Eisenhower, and once more Eisenhower explained why he could not follow his own President's orders. As Ike told it, it was a long story, full of repetitions, but it made his point: "No matter how much you explained to FDR, he never understood that in matters that big you just have to go through channels."

It was this insistence on "going through channels," bred into him as a soldier, that made Ike so poor a politician. At the Republican convention in San Francisco in 1964, the morning after Goldwater's nomination, the ex-President invited two reporters to breakfast—Felix Belair of *The New York Times* and myself.

All three of us had been up very late, and at least two of us—Belair and I—were slightly hung over. Ike, ever the Commander in Chief, had ordered toast, scrambled eggs and sausages for three. When we entered, the food was already on the table. And Ike greeted us by saying, "Do you guys feel as lousy as I do this morning?"

Then he said that the Goldwater nomination was a disaster for the Republican Party. But what could he, Eisenhower, have done to stop Goldwater? Should he have tried harder to intervene? Would it have been right for him, the ex-President, to try to dictate the nominee? Had he let Scranton down? Both of us, Belair and I, knowing how meticulously the Cow Palace coup had been put together by its craftmaster, Clifton White, assured the old chief that nothing could possibly have been done at the convention to stop it. Reassured, Eisenhower went on to a marvelous passage of introspection—as valid as it was naïve. "What's a conservative?" Eisenhower mused. "What's a liberal? I kept reading those papers, talking about inflation and deflation, and all I could make out was that if you let the budget float,

prices went up, and if you pulled the budget tight, prices went up less, and if prices went up four or five percent a year, somehow you were a liberal, but if prices were kept under two percent, you were a conservative." Eisenhower did not think of himself as either conservative or liberal; nor was it Goldwater's conservatism that troubled him. Rather, he simply did not think Goldwater could win an election, and he was trying to explain to two acquaintances why he had taken no action to stop Goldwater—and at the same time was wondering why to himself.

Given a hard problem clearly defined, like the survey of a rough terrain or the conciliation of a major ally, Eisenhower could perform superbly—as, for example, landing more than 200,000 troops on one day under the guns of the Wehrmacht in Normandy; or landing nine thousand American troops on the beaches of Beirut; or landing one thousand paratroopers in Little Rock, Arkansas. Given a sense of what should be done, Eisenhower could usually figure out how to do it. And then he would *do* it expertly.

But from this charming personality followed a Presidential record that will puzzle historians who seek to thread arguments through facts. The Eisenhower legislative record offers, at first glance, one of the lowest achievement scores made by any major President. But when he was President, the American people were never happier, or, at least, never more convinced of the opportunity to be happy.

The Eisenhower record, when squeezed down, tells of a superb foreign policy—a matchless record of clean decisions, starting with Korea, blemished chiefly by the flinching from resolution in the Suez crisis.

At home, the record of Eisenhower as a propulsive President is meager. He tried to reorganize the Post Office and mail service, as every President in modern times has done; he succeeded only in changing the olive-drab mailboxes and trucks to a decorative red, white and blue which ornamented city blocks and village greens with gay splotches of color. Benignly, he invited and presided over the passage of the first Civil Rights Act of the century, calling for a Civil Rights Commission and Civil Rights Division in the Department of Justice which would protect the right of black people to vote. It was a moral and high-minded act—but almost as completely ornamental in effect as the new red-white-and-blue postal boxes.

The major structural change Eisenhower made in government was in strengthening that push to centralization against which he had so vehemently protested as a candidate in Paris. That change was embodied in the creation of the Department of Health, Education and

Welfare, HEW. This monster agency has since come to rival its sister gorgon, the Department of Defense, or DOD, in every way—as the central target of the most aggressive lobbies in Washington; as the richest spoils system, over whose parts Congressional committees war for jurisdiction; as the darling or villain of the most animated, high-minded and do-good groups. In Eisenhower's time, in the 1959 "normal" budget, HEW spent only one fourteenth ($3 billion) as much as the Department of Defense ($42.2 billion). By the 1977 budget, DOD expenditures had little more than doubled (to $101.6 billion), while HEW "pure" social service costs had jumped by more than ten times (to $42 billion). And when one included in the HEW budget new and expanded direct aid benefits, HEW's budget ran to $147.45 billion. And its margin of spending was rising.

Eisenhower's purpose in setting up a Department of Health-Education-Welfare was logical, simple and impressive. The President wanted to get a handle on what was going on in the areas of social demand, the pressures coming at the government from every angle, anticipated and unanticipated. On paper, it seemed logical to channel the demands of health, education, welfare in one stream which would flow through one cabinet spokesman. But the new department provoked the axiom that any department with a hyphen in its name simply does not know what it is supposed to do; and HEW never has known, then or now.

One may leave the history of the Eisenhower administration with the creation of HEW its crest. But one cannot leave the history of the Eisenhower Presidency there, for HEW was symbolic. HEW was an earnest government effort to cope, to give reasonable response to the new social problems the country was thrusting to attention as it throbbed with change. And Eisenhower, believing he could divorce politics from government, thought that simple clean administration could answer the political questions simmering, and about to burst, under the rubrics of "Health," "Education," "Welfare."

The 1960s were to prove Eisenhower's approach politically naïve—but it did not seem so at the time. Most of the stirrings about to pound their way into politics were obscure. But whether it was television that incubated action in the streets or action in the streets that drew television to it, none of these stirrings would be seen without drama. Drama brought their impact to politics, and thus on the making of Presidents. But back then in the 1950s one had to leave Washington to get firsthand the sense of movement "out there," the sense of what was happening in the country.

Fortunately, at *Collier's*, the concept of politics was broad

enough, and the Eisenhower regime in Washington so apparently unexciting, as to keep me out, almost constantly, on the road looking for stories, for it was outside Washington that politics in America were changing. Combined with what I had learned at *The Reporter*, my assignment at *Collier's* exposed me to the critical ingredients that were going into American politics before they reached the manipulation and voting level.

An unworded but happy compromise governed my reporting at *Collier's*. I could choose most of my own assignments in agreement with Ken McArdle, the editor. But when necessary, McArdle could impose on me those stories dictated to him by the magazine's desperate need for advertising. My own choices were starkly political: the northward migration of blacks from field to ghetto, the contest for the Democratic Party's nomination, the feuds and wars of the California Republican Party. But the stories forced on us by advertising needs, like the advent of the jet, or the building of the national highway system, paradoxically enlarged my political understanding most. Such advertising stories led me closest to the appetite systems and social pressures that worked on politics, and whose rhythm in the fifties began to rock America.

The story of the jet airplane, for example, was among a number of assignments I accepted with reluctance, and then came to find fascinating, as instructive in politics as a political convention. McArdle had made no attempt to coat the aviation assignment with honey. For years, *Collier's* had granted a nationally famous *Collier's* aviation trophy. But now it was losing travel and aviation advertising and it needed an aviation story. McArdle did not care how or when or at what point I began my aviation story—so long as I wrote it well, with the history accurate, and alerted the aviation industry to *Collier's* welcome for the big jets. Unaware when I accepted the assignment that new jets were even on the way, I was to learn more about the rhythm of the fifties from the jet than I could have had "The Rhythm of the Fifties" been the title of the assignment.

The jet was an artifact—an airplane. So, too, in the early fifties was television an artifact; so, too, was the new birth-control pill; so, too, was the hydrogen bomb. The political as well as the journalistic problem of the fifties was to grasp these artifacts, stamped out mechanically by technology, and fit them into a system of ideas which controlled a system of government.

The specific artifact with which I started the aviation assignment

was the plane that was provoking the anticipation—the Boeing 707. Its first prototype sat there on the runway outside the Boeing plant in Seattle, its wings swept back like a hawk's, its nose parallel to the ground, its padded interior stuffed with instrumentation. It had passed all tests; was now on order; would be coming off the production stream within months; and its pilot, "Tex" Johnson, kept telling me it handled like a baby, so smooth, so simple, so easy to fly. For Johnson, Boeing's chief test pilot, the plane and its beauty was the end purpose. Of what it would do to air travel he had no concept.

But the jet was arriving on the scene when American travelers, without recognizing it, had become tired of traveling at the speed plateau of the old propeller-pulled planes. They wanted to travel faster, and more and more they wanted to travel by plane. In the previous five years, the number of Americans flying on scheduled airlines had, actually, doubled—to 41,623,000. In the next twenty years that figure would grow to 220,000,000. Planes had already crippled train service; by 1955, more than three times as many passengers were traveling between our cities by airplane as by train. Moreover, that year, 1955, had seen the old four-engine prop plane finally overtake the even more cumbersome and obsolete ocean liners; for the first time more travelers had *flown* out of New York (432,692) than had *sailed* out (418,487). Now this new Boeing 707 was going to put Los Angeles within five hours of New York instead of eight, New York within six and a half hours of London instead of twelve, and rub its nose smack up against the barrier of sound. There, said the 707 designers, at an average cruising speed of 545 miles per hour compared to the prop planes' maximum speed of 340, air travel would rest for some time—until the appetite for speed grew again, and designers found a way to build a Supersonic that could also make money.

The plane, like a chariot unearthed by archaeologists, led forward and backward. It led forward to a country that had not yet learned to design air terminals for the outgoing generation of planes but was now hurtling into the jet age. It led forward to the linking of continents and the crowding of hotels. It led forward to mazes of finance and huge profits.

But it was even more fascinating to trace the jet backward.

The jet had begun in private imagination; had been built by private enterprise; it was being placed in service by private companies. The airline pioneers thought of themselves as great individual adventurers, historic gamblers. Yet, however vehemently they protested their independence from government, they all wished to *use* the

government, milk the government and be free of it at the same time.

The pioneers were still alive when I wrote their story. And as they talked to me, beneath their daring and the heroism and the adventure of flight, one heard the recurring theme of alternate dependence on and fear of government. As you reached backward, you discovered that at the very beginning of their good fortune lay a forgotten law called the Kelly Act of 1925. The Kelly Act had set out Contract Air Mail Routes—CAMs—to assist the flying freaks with post office subsidies. All modern major airlines have sprouted from such Contract Air Mail routes. CAM 1 had been the Boston-New York run; its contractor was Colonial Air Transport, run by a recent Yale graduate named Juan Trippe, who abandoned that line to take up a contract to fly mail from Florida to Havana under a rubric called Pan American Airways. CAM 5 was a contract to fly mail over the Rockies, which a young San Francisco banker, William A. Patterson, linked to CAM 8 (Los Angeles–Seattle), then to CAM 18 (Chicago–San Francisco) and the New York–Chicago leg of National Air Transport, to make United Airlines. CAM 9 (Chicago–Minneapolis) had grown into Northwest Airlines, which soon, with the jet, would reach from New York to Tokyo. The men I spoke with were proud of themselves. "This," said one, "is the industry of hashish-eaters. Nothing will ever seem as crazy a dream, nothing will seem as high or dark, as night-crossing the Alleghenies seemed in 1928."

It was C. R. Smith, then president of American Airlines, later the Secretary of Commerce, who could best make the story come together. Smith had the gift of making one see both private enterprise and government at work; aviation was the weaving together of private and public imaginations at once. For Smith, the marvel of aviation history was not the coming jet, but the old and obsolete DC-3. So many things had come together on time way back in 1935: A 900-horsepower engine, perfected by Curtiss-Wright in New Jersey just two years earlier! An automatic pilot, designed by the Sperry plant on Long Island, which meshed all panel instruments together so that the pilot could lock the plane on course and let it fly by itself! A rubber boot on the leading edge of each wing, just designed, which could flex back and forth, and break the grip of the ice demon! A Douglas designer's idea that, on takeoff, the undercarriage of the plane could be drawn up into its fuselage! Each innovation had a history of metallurgy, rubber, instrumentation, of its own. But what counted, what counted then *finally*, was the creation of a plane that could carry twenty-one passengers, or a payload of six thousand pounds, through the air at 185

miles an hour. "It was the first airplane," said Smith, "where, if you sold all the seats, you actually made a little money."

And with the DC-3 the airlines were off on that alternating sequence of triumph and corruption that locked them as partners to the government forevermore. The plane had freed airlines from direct out-of-pocket dependence on post office subsidies. But the government had still to support them. Flight had doubled, then tripled, then quadrupled before the war, so air traffic required traffic controls—and only government could pay for those invisible crisscross points and spiral electronic gateways in the sky. Government provided the radio beacons that replaced farmers' smudge pots. When the airlines learned to fly the Atlantic, and profit soared, profit depended on the safety of flight, and the presence below of ten "ocean station" beacon ships and air-rescue service provided by government. Government monitored instrumentation, safety, pilot licensing. What the government could give, the government could take away, and the dynamics of the industry thus pressed it into Washington politics, the airlines courting, bribing, stealing routes one from the other, leveraging out any favor, legal or illegal, they possible could.

I remember closing out my story for *Collier's* by standing on a ramp outside a Boeing test shed in Seattle. It was long before the days when environment had become a Sacred Cause, and pollution the Curse of Mankind. Boeing engineers were testing the raw jet engines that would power the 707 once in flight. The sound of the engine was barbarous; at full throttle it was as if someone were drilling away with a corkscrew in one ear, blowing a whistle up the tube of the other, while at the same time someone else was thumping my chest, *thud-thud-thud,* with a baseball bat. The Boeing engineers assured me they could solve the problem—and showed me a fitting, looking like a tube with rusty iron petals, which, they said, would cut the noise by half. They had to, they explained. If they didn't cut down the noise, they were sure that government would step in, and they hoped to slip this plane into American life without provoking government to intervene more than it already did.

There was, I agreed after six weeks on the story, nothing that could stop the jet. What it would do, what it would cost, how it would change life, no one could say. "We're buying planes," said C. R. Smith, "that haven't yet been fully designed, with millions of dollars we don't have, and we're going to operate them from airports that aren't ready, in a traffic-control system that can't handle them, and we have to fill them with more passengers than we know how to service."

But he was going ahead. That was the mood of the 1950s. Movement was of the essence, and the faster the better.

I had known Smith during the war when he was deputy commander of the Air Transport Command flying the Hump. He was a superb raconteur and so I knew some of his stories. He could recall how as a boy in Whitney, Texas, he would make the wagon trip to Hillsboro, the market town fourteen miles away, and it was a dawn-to-dusk trip. Now he was gambling $135 million as president of American Airlines on planes that would do the round trip New York–Los Angeles–New York in less than eleven hours, or the same time as the old round trip to market in Hillsboro.

Not all the stories I did for *Collier's* were as clear in perspective as the story of the jets. But all events that one could report, as they flowed together in families of development, flowed on to the junction in Washington.

I was assigned, for example, again because we needed advertising, to do a major story on the proposed new national highway system. Highways had up until then been largely a statehouse, not a federal, story. But I was no more than days into this story when I realized that these proposed new highways meant not only life or death for scores of small cities and towns which would be zoned in or out of the mainstream by the planning, but that the plan as a whole was going to change America. At the center of all planning were the engineers in Washington and the Congress which would tax and pay for the roads; and there, in Washington, I learned about lobbies from the men who manufactured cement and the men who manufactured asphalt. Both groups supported the highway system, but each wanted roads built of its own paving materials. The asphalt and cement lobbies were feuding across Washington and the Capitol like the Hatfields and McCoys in the hills of Appalachia. Simultaneous with their war was the war of the truckmen versus the railroads; and the railroads, having lost one war—for passengers—to the airlines, were now losing another war—for freight—to the truckmen's lobby. Washington correspondents took such lobby wars for granted and were bored by them. I was only dimly aware of corruption in those days, but it was my sense that I could smell money burning like autumn leaves as the great National Highway Act passed in 1956.

The true significance of the act became crushing only many years later—when the nation realized that it had been placed on wheels, that Arab oil turned those wheels, that the entire civilization of the

supermarket and the green lawn was subject to Arab blackmail. Even more importantly, the act promised a degree of painlessness that was politically narcotic, an anodyne provision that the new roads would be paid for by raising the tax on gasoline from two cents to three cents a gallon, the tax on tires from five cents to eight cents per pound, and the excise tax on buses, trailers and trucks from eight percent to ten percent; these taxes would accumulate automatically in a "trust fund" in Washington. Which "trust fund" continued thereafter for almost twenty years, untouchable either by the Executive or by Congress, to bend out of shape by its sheer swollen weight every reasonable plan for a national transport system to meet the needs of the seventies or eighties. But the lobbyists of the winners—the truckmen, the asphalt men, the cement men—all knew what they were doing: they were building into their fostering bureaucracy such powers, such resources, such legislative impregnability that only a national upheaval could wipe out the powers that later came to be lodged in such "iron triangles" of Washington. They were doing, I learned, what every lobby was doing—the schoolteachers with theirs, the bankers with theirs, the oil companies with theirs, the farmers of every variety with theirs.

Every single story I wrote for *Collier's*, political or not, led to Washington. I sought—and McArdle enthusiastically agreed—to do a story on the black vote in the big cities. Blacks in the big city had not even been a statehouse story before the Supreme Court's 1954 decision; if anything, they were barely emerging from the crime pages in the white newspapers. But, I found, black leadership had a clearer and sharper view of Washington than any other movement, large or small, across the country: Washington wrote the laws, the President then made the laws work. Blacks were still largely outlawed from the polling places in the South; but in the Northern cities, their votes were swelling to critical importance. Indeed, it was not too difficult to show that the vital margin of Truman's victory in 1948 had come from the black vote in three states—Ohio, Illinois, California. We would write and publish a story on the black vote.

In those days of the 1950s the black migration from the South was reaching its flood peak, the tide in some years exceeding a quarter of a million. Neither local, state nor federal government had made any preparation to receive the wandering blacks in the big cities; the cities were physically, politically, socially, ethnically and industrially totally unready to receive this flood. Only the black leaders, who still, in those innocent days, spoke of their people as Negroes, knew that the

migration must end up in the streets, or else be channeled by Washington. My story lay in the slums, in the ghettos, in the clubhouses of men like Congressman William Dawson of Chicago, in the mechanics of getting black voters to the polls, in the grisly drama of a future nation where one race (black) dominated its big cities, and another, hostile race (white) surrounded them in suburbs and countryside. But the black leaders were ahead of me in perspective: they were then becoming, and have since become, the most powerful lobby in Washington. They had just proposed to Congress a bill to force the federal government to guarantee black registration and voting rights in the South; it was to be a decade before they got that bill passed by Congress, but they had a clear idea where the power lay. It lay in Washington, and they meant to increase that power of Washington again, and again, and again. Of all the forces urging power into Washington during the past twenty years, none has been stronger, more persistent, more long-lasting, than that of black protest.

All those who had a special claim to press on Washington were beginning to move in the 1950s—which meant schoolteachers, and peanut farmers, and sugar planters, and Zionists, and Croatian irredentists, and blacks, and university presidents, and research scientists, and fortune-hungry TV proprietors. Which left all the rest of the country with the conviction that Dwight D. Eisenhower was their proper President because he kept Washington from interfering in their lives as the Democrats had done—by conscripting boys for war, raising taxes or plaguing them with more forms to fill out. They, the vast majority, knew that Eisenhower not only knew nothing about the Sunday traffic jam on Highway 99 snaking over the hills into California's San Joaquin valley, but couldn't care less; knew nothing about arson in the South Bronx, which was just beginning, and couldn't care less. But that, vaguely, Eisenhower was for a good new highway program, as were they, and for giving the Negroes an even break, as were they. How the contending forces would work out from the happy "now" of the 1950s to the violence-torn 1960s neither he, nor they, nor the Democrats, could have foreseen.

The search for history implies, above all, a search for a center of control, for the pennant-ringed yurt of the nomad chief from which the order to ride goes out, for the contest of authority in and around the court which when resolved points the direction all must tramp. But the search for history, in the Eisenhower years, lay entirely outside these classic models. No one seemed to control. The search broadened

out into a philosopher's puzzle of a society in full vigor—rushing where? The United States Government had inherited so much military power it need fear no one. It had so much confidence in American industrial supremacy that it felt it could tolerate any foreign economic penetration or commercial assault, fair or unfair. Government could posture as placid, and chuff up to its seat on the grandstand above the parade, and see the floats, the banners, the acrobats, the whirling dervishes, all pass by—while the beat and the throb of the band music grew faster and faster.

Figures and statistics trace the acceleration in black-and-white terms. One could take the figures for the gross national product, the GNP—which shot up from 286 billion to 506 billion dollars from 1950 to 1960! One could take the stock market's Dow-Jones industrial index—which shot up from 216 to 618 during the same decade. It took genius to lose money in the stock market in those years, and individual share-owners who sought a piece of the action rose in number from 6,490,000 in 1952 to 17,010,000 ten years later!

What was happening was the uncontrollable acceleration of American ingenuity, achievement and reward, as Americans found the world open to them. Established American industries, which before World War II had made their foreign investments chiefly in England, or in automobile plants in Europe, or oil wells in Arabia, were joined by new American companies ambitious to become multinationals. Americans now canned fruits and vegetables in France, made vacuum cleaners and undershirts in Formosa, Korea and Hong Kong. My old friend Theo was caught in this acceleration. Now he told me, with liquid gestures, how he had worked out a deal for General Electric to buy up the entire French computer industry, Machines Bull. Alas for both Theo and General Electric, Machines Bull turned out to be a poor investment, because French technology was so far behind American technology in computers and cybernetics that General Electric had to get rid of it. But Theo's adventure in buying up the French computer industry was only a detail in the exuberance.

It would be entirely misleading to recapture the American exuberance of the 1950s only in episodes of high finance or international wheel-and-deal. The exuberance was there, for example, in the outburst of color—in clothes, in shops, in architecture, in supermarkets, even in the design of giant refineries. The Athenians, Romans and Chinese, at their power peaks, had reveled in public colors, too. Now the Americans outdid them. The exuberance was there on Broadway; in the new music; above all in Hollywood, where, freed of

block booking, independent producers were about to open the movie circuits for anything their imaginations could conceive and their hustlers market. The fifties began with many odd departures. But how could one predict where a departure like the Diners Club would end? The Diners Club gave you a "credit card." By the end of the decade, everyone had a credit card, issued either from America's largest bank, the Bank of America, or its smallest shopping center. The credit card liberated America from the old doctrine of "cash and carry."

Technology moved equally fast. The transistor, a tiny device invented at Bell Laboratories in 1947, shriveled to fingernail size; then to microdot size; then was combined in circuitry wafers which defied the measures of weight and size. Those lucky enough to understand the exuberance in technology in the fifties grew rich by buying Xerox, IBM, Polaroid or a score of lesser companies sprouting along Silicon Gulch in California or Route 128 in Boston.

But the ultimate exuberance was just beginning—the exuberance later to be celebrated as freedom to choose one's "life-style." Physiologically effective oral contraceptives were unknown in 1950. By the end of the decade oral contraceptives and intrauterine devices were freely used by coeds and matrons alike. Alfred Kinsey's report on *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* appeared in 1953, indicating that 26 percent of all middle-class women had committed adultery by age forty, while nearly 50 percent had experienced premarital intercourse. This simple report on such old realities probably undermined the resolution of more cautious women than any new code of seduction and acquiescence could have achieved. *Peyton Place* became a best-selling novel because it still had shock value; *Lolita,* only two years later, was a best seller because its artistic mastery obscured a sexual nastiness most critics ignored. Everybody was now supposed to be "with it"—but what being "with it" was, no one defined. "Beats" and "Beatniks" were coming in, as were rock-'n'-roll and Elvis Presley, all blended culturally in the huge new masticator of television. It was television, first sounding in the fifties, that would blare its way into the manners of the sixties and then trumpet into the streets the politics of a new America.

Television belongs in that family of mechanical devices that change civilization, of the order of magnitude of the printed book. As soon as people learned to use it, its use would change their lives. The men who took over the television tubes sensed, almost at once, this potency. The new masters were like Napoleon and his marshals when they first learned how to mass artillery on the battlefield and, defining

their targets with an accuracy and weight never before possible, went on to annihilate their enemies.

The men who took over television came of every political persuasion, and spanned the human range from the utterly greedy to the doggedly noble. But what harnessed best and worst together was their common perception of the target. Audience was the target. And in shelling their rivals for American attention, the masters of television, without any malice whatsoever, sent fleeing bigots, babbits, fundamentalists, as well as old-fashioned politicians, most thoughtful men and women, and most of the poetry in public life. Television delivered instant excitement; television could excavate or carve such excitement out of public affairs. In the contest for mass audience, television routed all others. Among those others sent fleeing in the rout were the mass magazines; and of these the first and frailest was *Collier's*, my home when the rout began, and to whose command staff I rose just before the end.

There was no doubt that I was there, at the center, at the opening of a chapter of American history, and *Collier's* was a magnificent, if withering, perch from which to watch the action unfold. The history of *Collier's* magazine was woven into the history of the mass magazines; and for sixty years the history of such magazines had been central to the history of American politics. The collapse of *Collier's* was, thus, more than a commercial bankruptcy. It was a political and social event, the first in a train of such events which led to the domination of American politics by television. And since I moved from junction to junction, I would like to linger at some length over the history that binds together American politics and American communications—and on how the crack-up came at *Collier's* as the 1950s speeded the American pulse.

Of the great mass magazines, *Collier's*, in its prime, might well have been classed in Category One of importance. Certainly not the most important magazine in that category, but nonetheless of major significance. It died when its time came to die as the time came for mastodons to die when the climate of America changed. Like a mastodon, *Collier's* knew it was dying but could not understand why.

All magazines have a life-and-death cycle; few last for half a century, and I can think of only six that have survived for a hundred years in America. The cycle usually depends on the vitality of one man or a succession of men who manage to capture and hold for a number of years the attention and mood of their time. To understand how very

important the mood of the time is in the life cycle of magazines, one must distinguish between the different ancestors of the book and the magazine, for they are linked only by their use of printed words on paper pages. The ancestry of the book goes back to Greece and Rome and beyond; the book writer addresses himself to a reader, an audience of one. The magazine comes of entirely different ancestry—the ancient and medieval fairs, the Forum in Rome and the courtyard of the Temple in Jerusalem. A magazine is a fair, where merchants and peasants, townsmen and jugglers, bear-baiters and preachers, sex peddlers and elixir dispensers, offer their wares or entertainment. Long before there was a printed word, or even paper, in the Western world, there was a gathering on the fairgrounds, usually once, sometimes twice, a week, where men and women swapped news of weather, crops, kings, queens, assassinations, along with politics, gossip and ideas. The French Revolution was fermented by the talk at village fairs, the First Crusade was launched by the preachings of Peter the Hermit at the fairs of France, Caesar made his moves in politics coming up through the Forum and, according to legend, posting on its walls the world's first news organ, the *Acta Diurna*, an open account of the hitherto secret proceedings of the Senate.

Nowhere, however, did the magazine form reach so high a peak of national influence as in America—and hold it for more than a half a century, starting in the 1890s. Special circumstances gave it that opportunity here. America was, for one thing, huge. No local newspaper could reach from Maine to California; no New York or Washington newspaper could reach, as did Paris and London papers, half the country's reading population. But starting in the 1890s, any number of devices combined to give new mass magazines explosive impact on national life. The halftone photoengraving process permitted inexpensive photographic reproduction for a national population, which, though literate, was for the most part repelled by unbroken blocks of type on the printed page. The high-speed rotary press, another device, was perfected—presses which could spit out millions of copies a day. And most effectively, by the 1890s that giant device the national railway net was completed from coast to coast, border to border. A manufacturer could deliver stoves, pianos, beds, furniture and, soon, automobiles to one national market—if only a way could be found to reach the entire national market.

But to advertise to a national market meant to find a national audience—and with that imperative, there appeared not only the national magazine but the folklore figure known as a "national

editor." The publisher knew he could buy the paper, build the presses, speed the run, physically deliver bound copies in millions, to satisfy the advertisers. But he needed an editor to assemble readers, and the impact of the national editor, or the national reporter for the national magazine, on American politics was prodigious.

This period of political breakthrough is remembered for the muckrakers who gave their name to an era. Yet the advent of the national magazine meant much more than the simple exposure of oil monopolies, sugar trusts, municipal corruption and packing-house filth. It meant that whoever was responsible for a *national* magazine had to think *nationally*. The Civil War had become inevitable as local newspaper editors inflamed sectional passions and pressed regional politicians sent to Washington to do their bidding. The new breed of national editor was different. Men like Edward Bok, Frank Munsey, Peter Collier, George Horace Lorimer and their peers were the only people outside the White House who, professionally, had to think of the concerns shared by people who lived in states as diverse as Minnesota, Oregon, Florida and Maine. Women's magazine editors, of course, could focus on cooking, child-rearing, feminine complaints, husbands and other problems that women shared. General mass magazine editors had it harder, but once they learned that every big city had a machine and the machine had a boss, a Lincoln Steffens could be turned loose; once they learned that everyone ate the meat of Chicago's packing houses, an Upton Sinclair could be turned loose; once they learned that every small town had a businessman or small manufactory or refinery in danger of being gobbled up by outsiders, you could turn the trust-busters loose. Collectively, national editors could command national attention; and once attention had been focused on a national problem by a vigorous editor and a vigorous writer, politics responded.

No political force in America can resist the cry for virtue—and the national mass magazines shrieked virtue. In its name they demanded a big navy (under the first Roosevelt), antitrust action, direct election of senators, the restriction of immigration in the twenties. They were *for* prohibition in the first quarter of the century and then, led by *Collier's, against* prohibition when the madness of that act of virtue became apparent.

These magazines were different from newspapers of their day, and more important. Newspapers, then, simply told what had happened yesterday. But magazine stories had to look fresh for a week or a month, the time it took for delivery to California or Seattle. They

could not pause over what had happened yesterday; they had to write about what was going to continue to happen next week and next month. Their political power, nationally, thus was prodigious; and remained so for almost half a century. By 1940, if one has to fix a date, the magazines had become the dominant political medium of the nation. No greater demonstration of media authority has been exhibited in our time than when three East Coast magazine publishers forced the nomination of Wendell Willkie on the Republican Party in 1940—the publishers of *Life* and *Time*, *Look* and the *Saturday Evening Post*. (The fourth mass giant, *Collier's*, supported Franklin D. Roosevelt, in its idiosyncratic course of shrieking patriotism and erratic liberalism.)

The platform from which politicians preach is almost always the same as that from which merchants huckster their wares; by the end of the war, radio had begun to challenge the mass magazines; but radio could not deliver pictures, so its challenge was not deadly. But when, at the beginning of the 1950s, television came on the scene, then the magazines knew they were confronted by a force, a magnetic distortion, that would change the world in which they lived. And in 1955, when I joined *Collier's*, I was coming on board a vessel not only threatened by television but also riddled by years of corporate infighting, owned by widows and other heirs, by bank-managed estates and by Wall Street raiders, and now turned over to a group of delightful California amateurs who were expected to turn history around and make *Collier's* profitable.

The new team controlled three magazines (*Collier's*, *Woman's Home Companion* and the *American*) with a combined circulation of ten million copies and a readership audience of perhaps forty million—which even in the days of television is substantial. What none of us in the editorial leadership understood was the implacable logic of corporate life and the guillotine judgment of balance sheets. We were a division of a large corporation called "the magazines division," to distinguish our "profit" center from "the book division" and the "records, radio division." But our group, the magazines, was dragging the entire corporation down in red ink. All the corporation wanted was that the magazine group make money. And none of us on the editorial floor could explain to the corporation that paper processing in the magazine business is different from paper processing in the toilet-paper business, or the carton-folding, waxed-paper and disposable-diaper businesses. In the magazine business, to make money requires an ingredient of spirit and imagination which the readers, advertisers,

and the writers can identify. And this spirit and imagination had already spoiled at *Collier's*. Earlier mismanagement had befuddled the staff and the heat of television had enfevered them. We were unsteady when I joined, and even shakier a year later, when I was called to the executive colors.

I was, at that moment in 1956, at play in the field of my choice—politics—reveling in the sights, sound and smells of the first national convention I ever attended, the Democratic convention at Chicago, when the call came. It was a message from McArdle telling me that our base was, apparently, crumbling; the *American* magazine was shutting down, the other two magazines were in danger, our chieftain and leader, Paul Smith, had to leave Chicago immediately for New York to face the financial crisis. But no one must know we were in trouble. Smith had reserved the corner table in the most fashionable Chicago restaurant, the Pump Room, for the duration of the convention; it must not remain unoccupied. Those who remained at the convention for Crowell-Collier must occupy that table and keep it filled with celebrities to refute all rumors of our financial troubles; let the wine flow, the steaks pass, the parties be jovial. I did my best, with some gusto, to make the *Collier's* table at the Pump Room seem the place to be; but then flew back to New York to hear McArdle deliver another, more personal message.

The message was simple: I must now stop reporting the campaign and American politics, for which purpose I had enlisted with *Collier's*. Since I had analyzed for *Collier's* the problems of Germany, of California, of the highway system, I was now to analyze *Collier's* for *Collier's*. What was happening to us? Why? Nor did I have a choice. McArdle was gently but stubbornly insistent. I must. And so, in mid campaign, wishing to follow the contest of Eisenhower and Stevenson to its November conclusion and write a story, for which I had chosen in my mind the title "The Making of the President—1956," I was called off. I was called away to examine the condition of *Collier's*, specifically, but more generally: How does one excite the American people? How does one reach them? How does one make a profit by entertaining, informing or educating them?

All the questions fitted together into what I called the "Audience Game." I had come across the Game while at the *New Republic* just after the war, when the Audience Game seemed exclusively a Manhattan sport. Trying to remake America with Henry Wallace and the *New Republic* I had become fascinated by "Audience": What makes

people listen? What ping of editorial initiative draws what pong of reader response? What makes them pay to read?

By a variety of mechanical stratagems, we had tripled circulation at the *New Republic* to almost 100,000 in the one year 1947. When its publisher stopped flogging circulation on its upward course and a year later let the *New Republic* drop to its natural audience, its readership fell to almost exactly what it had been before Henry Wallace came. At *The Reporter,* which I had recently left, I had learned about paper costs, direct-mail costs, subscription-renewal figures—and begun to sense the connection of Audience to politics, but only vaguely. At *Collier's* on the editorial floor I had been amused by accumulated circulation folklore. Why was it, for example, that the picture of a dog, even the most appealing puppy, on the cover of our magazines sent sales down? While, whenever *Woman's Home Companion* needed a hypodermic, the picture of a pussycat sent sales shooting up at newsstands? Who stopped at newsstands to look at pussycats? Why did dog-lovers not buy magazines? Or: why did a picture of a sports hero, either football or baseball, increase our sales so much in Boston and New England, while elsewhere a sports cover turned readers aside? And why did all the mass mainstream magazines experience the same phenomenon at the same unpredictable week each spring—when newsstand sales would drop by ten or twenty percent as spring fever swept the country like an overnight disease and the nation yawned? And why was Easter the worst time to send out a direct-mail reach for subscriptions and October the best?

Now, from August 1956 on, I sat in my Manhattan office, as a consultant to executives, invited to play *Collier's'* hand in the Audience Game, and discovered that neither folklore nor instinct was enough. The purpose of this game, in commerce as in politics, was to command attention. Attention could be sold. I was playing in a game crowded with experts who commanded more data and figures than I—yet the experts who had staffed or guided *Collier's* had been beaten by rival teams of experts and brought us to the edge of disaster.

I could look down from my windows and see the yellow taxis, the black limousines, and the buglike people scuttling across Fifth Avenue between them. But I could not guess what these people wanted to read when they got home. I could see out sometimes, from the other side of the building, to the soft gray hills of New Jersey. But how could we reach out beyond those hills and find the audience we needed in the great midvalley? At night, several times, I visited the home of our publisher, Paul Smith. From his high apartment I could see the

automobile stream of golden lights on New York's East River Drive endlessly pouring onto the Triborough Bridge. What impulses, what purpose, carried them? How many would cross the Triborough Bridge, how many would stay in Manhattan? How many after crossing the bridge would fork south to Long Island or north to the mainland? And how many more would there be at six than at ten in the evening? And how many more leaving for a Fourth of July or a Labor Day weekend than on an ordinary winter weekend? Engineers who designed the bridge had had to make just those guesses. Then they built the answers in concrete. But the guesses we had to make were even more difficult, and would be countered by competitive experts, trying to outwit or destroy us.

It was a few weeks after taking up the new executive assignment that I realized that I, so confident in the world of politics, was in a world entirely new and strange. It was the world of the mass marketeer, the animal trainer. For the marketeer, all America was a collection of markets through which stalked, or slouched, or sauntered, the animal called "Them." The game was to prick or prod the animal, whistle, shriek or coo at it, but somehow tease the beast to pay attention. For the marketeer, all media—billboards and radio, junk mail and television, newspapers and magazines—were instruments to lure or club or tweak attention out of "Them." *Collier's* was only one dart in the marketeers' quiver called periodicals; if they chose to rent our pages to advertise, we might make money. If they did not, we would perish.

A parochial course in American history lay behind this science of markets, which set the rules of the game of Audience. Some historians say scientific marketing began with the orange growers of Southern California, who, at the beginning of the century, formed their Sunkist Orange cooperative and did the first real survey of the American market for oranges. Such historians believe that the orange growers of the Southland founded that school of opinion manipulation which came to its fullest expression in the promotions of Hollywood and the Nixon triumph of 1972. Others say that scientific marketing began in the middle twenties when the advertising genius William Benton, trying to snare a coffee account, canvassed, with his wife, Helen, door to door in New York, trying to establish what it was that people liked about coffee. But whether invented in Manhattan, Southern California or Vienna, the science of social measurements and ratings, the demographics of mass marketing, was a science well advanced by the time I came to my emergency post at *Collier's*. Amazingly, in retrospect, I

had learned nothing of this science in covering politics, because politicians then were only at the very beginning of their experience in the mass manipulation of public opinion.

Gradually it dawned on me as an executive consultant that there was no longer any "Them" that we could reach. To make money, mass magazines like *Collier's* had to give up on "Them," leaving "Them" to television. Magazines would have to slim down and concentrate on the audiences defined as "upper-educated," "lower-educated," garden lovers, gourmets, housewives, mechanics, porno-lovers; or tribal, regional, professional or "cause" audiences. Except for such pocket giants as *TV Guide* and *Reader's Digest*, all other magazines had to choose which specific packs and tribes they wished to cut out of the shuffling horde called Audience, and then sell that specific slice of Audience to someone who sought that market. One of our intelligent advertising salesmen explained to me: "The idea is to tell your customer that you can do for him exactly what he wants you to do. All he can do for himself is lean out the window of his skyscraper and yell to the people down below. But how far will his voice carry? We tell him. We show him how to make his voice reach exactly the kind of people he wants to reach." Only we could not.

For this purpose, I massed columns of figures and statistics. But the competitive figures of other magazines gave me the outline of our problem best. One sheet placed on my desk said that in the first six months of 1954, the single most dramatic eruption in magazine publishing was the phenomenon of the new magazine called *TV Guide*. In one year *TV Guide* had gained 98 percent in circulation—from 815,000 copies to 1,647,000 sold each week at newsstands, as files of "Them" passed by the stands and each new purchaser of a television set purchased also the magazine that was its handmaiden. In that six-month period, *Life* magazine, the undisputed mass-culture giant of its time, had lost 21 percent of its circulation at newsstands! *Life*'s still pictures could no longer compete with the moving images on the tube. The leader of the general magazines at the newsstands was still the *Saturday Evening Post*, with its familiar illustrations. But the figures of its newsstand sales over the previous two years traced a gradual, graceful, persistent downtrend, as if it were a sailing vessel that had sprung a leak and was serenely but slowly settling into water. And *Collier's*—*Collier's* plunged and swooped, bobbed up and down erratically on graphs, charts and newsstands alike.

The reader must forgive me for lingering over such technical details as "newsstand" figures. But more than anything else that came

over my desk, they caught my attention. Subscription sales can be engineered by any good circulation manager; newsstand sales, however, are impulse sales, the instant response of the passer-by to the editors' judgment of what will catch his attention. In the early postwar years, all the mass mainstream magazines had sold commonly between 1,500,000 and 2,000,000 copies a week at newsstands. In the dreary two years previous to my new troubleshooting assignment, I found *Collier's* had only twice sold more than 1,200,000 newsstand copies. One was an issue whose cover bannered the story of the Kinsey report on American women's sex habits. The other bore a scare cover, showing sinister doctors in surgical dress, with the bold statement: "Why Some Doctors Should Be in Jail." From there, our newsstand sales had gone steadily downhill until, at the end of April 1956, spring fever had caught the nation, with its invitation to May dalliance. People had stopped reading; and our newsstand sales had slipped to something under 500,000; 492,000 was the final bookkeeping tally!

So there was a crisis which we could conceal neither from ourselves, our rivals, our advertisers, nor—most important of all—from the corporate board of directors upstairs. The shrinkage in our newsstand sales had come so fast, the shrinkage in our advertising had followed it down so sharply, that the balance sheet was hemorrhaging red ink. I groped for solutions, exasperated that I could no longer report politics—but the figures on my desk rubbed my nose in what underlay politics.

The shrinking newsstand figures, which perplexed me so, told the clearest story. There were many reasons for the fall-off of newsstand sales, but the one we shared with most mass magazines was simple: the people, in all their packs and tribes, were on the move in the 1950s; they were leaving the cities; they were no longer stopping at the commuter station, the subway kiosk or the neighborhood variety store to buy either the evening newspaper or the weekly magazine. More and more they were driving home from work; they could not read and drive at the same time. Neighborhoods were slowly changing—and in the new suburbs, no newsboys yodeled the evening headlines. In suburbia, the headlines were smoothly delivered each evening by television, and television was learning to package the headlines with pictures in a developing American art form with which we could not vie.

Our problem at *Collier's*, both editorial and commercial as well as in advertising, was how to reach suburbia. And as I absorbed the

conventional wisdom of our wise men in marketing, there rose on the imaginary horizon of the America whose politics I had just ceased reporting, the Symbolic Supermarket. If the 1920s had added the gas station and the movie marquee as entirely new features to the landscape of America, so the 1950s was adding to the same landscape two distinctive features of its decade—the supermarket and the television antenna. The two were symbiotically linked; between them they shaped and formed, as they continue to shape and form, the culture of the suburbs where, for almost thirty years, the growth of America has taken place while its cities decay.

For us, at *Collier's*, it was vital to show large advertisers that our magazines reached the people who shopped in suburbia, at supermarkets. The supermarkets in suburbia were the intersection not only of the highways and the television but also of the invisible computer. The computer was beginning to control inventories; it told the giant distributors what merchandise moved and what did not move off the shelves; it was beginning to measure the force of each advertising dollar spent—and all America was on a shopping spree.

If any decade could be called the decade of the consumer, it was the fifties: the money rolled in, the living was easy, appetites expanded, and television nightly tickled greed. Twice in that decade the Bureau of Labor Statistics revised the consumer price index to make it reflect the changes in what the average American bought with his pay—an ever smaller percentage, it turned out, for food. Likewise for clothing. But more and more on housing, more and more for leisure, more and more for doctors and medicines. All essentials were easily met by the rising economy, but luxuries and indulgences, what the economists call "discretionary purchasing power," were themselves becoming an essential to the growing national economy, the growing national market. We at *Collier's* wanted our share of this growing market, but we were being shouldered away from the trough.

I would sometimes, after extended briefings, wonder what I was doing in this world, and at other times marvel at the insights it yielded into social politics. Our advertising salesmen proved most illuminating. I learned from them that thirty years earlier, toothpaste was something heavily advertised in upper-class magazines because poor people, nonreaders, generally used no toothpaste at all; and now, "every workingman son of a bitch and his wife brush their teeth in the morning." So toothpaste-makers now relied on television and the supermarket to move toothpaste because "both the doctor's wife and the plumber's wife get their Wheaties at the same place." Thus TV

claimed the advertising dollar not only of the toothpaste-maker, but of the butcher, baker and candlestick-maker. I was told by *Woman's Home Companion* advertising salesmen that thirteen big national corporations controlled 70 percent of all grocery business in the United States. No family grocer any longer advised the housewife across the counter on her choice of flour or coffee; the TV set sold such goods. Television had changed merchandising forever. The big chains built and leased the supermarkets which would eventually in the seventies become the shopping malls. They structured them like warehouses, stacked the shelves with goods, arranged the filing lines so that the sheep trudged in proper sequence through the carefully planned maze. Then, if the advertising was done right, television simply blew the cans, packages and bottles off the shelves into the shopping carts, as an autumn wind blows leaves off the trees.

Since I had been so abruptly lifted out of political reporting to the status of troubleshooter, my new learning could not help but sharpen my political perceptions. Reaching the suburbs was not only the essence of *Collier's* problem; it was the essence of that decade in American politics; and the real supermarket candidate, I suddenly realized, was none other than Dwight D. Eisenhower. He was a nationally known, recognizable brand product: West Point-crafted, money back if it fails to please, tested in war, tested in peace, reliable, honest, safe, and look, it makes you smile. The election of 1956, which I had been covering with zest and delight until a few weeks before, was all over. I could recognize Adlai Stevenson for what he was: what our salesmen would call an upper-end-of-the spectrum product. The Stevenson package, like *Collier's*, would not sell in the supermarkets or suburbs.

One of our advertising salesmen summed up our dilemma for me in a quick conference on what is now called the "demographics of the audience." Our problem, he explained, was that *Collier's* held the "tail end of the upper end of the socioeconomic stratum"; therefore, he went on, we were the most vulnerable of the big magazines to television. He did not use the metaphor of the shark, but *The Old Man and the Sea* had been favorite reading on Madison Avenue for several years, and the shark was television. It was gobbling up everything that moved, everything that glittered, everything that competed for attention. We, who were being nibbled off by television at the "tail end" of the spectrum of mass magazines, were victims of the shark, feeding higher and higher in the socioeconomic stratum once thought of as middle middle class. Television sets in the late 1940s and early 1950s

had been bought largely from the bottom up—by the culturally illiterate, the lip-readers, people who could not sit down to read a book or magazine because their eyes formed the words too slowly to pass a message to the mind. These people, who enjoyed wrestling, baseball, Uncle Miltie, contests and the sight of characters they had previously only imagined from the sound of radio soap opera were television's original audience. From that base, in the early 1950s, television began reaching upward, engaging the literate and illiterate alike as it moved its cameras in on the real and imaginary dramas of American life.

There was no doubt that politics enlarged the television audience. Each convention and election year—1948, 1952, 1956, 1960—recorded a surge in sales. And so, too, did the spontaneous dramas of investigation as senators found they could play the role of gangbusters more effectively on television than in real life. With the Kefauver-Mafia hearings of 1951, a pattern was set. With the Army-McCarthy hearings of 1954, televised hearings were certified as a permanent ingredient of political drama. By the time of the Ervin-Watergate hearings in 1973, television was the place where it actually happened. When to such excitements were added the creative dramas of what is now called the "Golden Age of Television," television began to reach from the very bottom of American life to its top, from ghetto to gold coast, from slum to suburb. Only the national mass magazines had previously claimed such a national audience; television now delivered in reality what the magazines had once claimed as their inflated boast.

It was a hopeless contest. No mainstream magazine with any sense of decency could reach down to the cultural level of the slack-jawed audience that television assembled effortlessly every night. No newspaper could deliver the news more quickly, morning or evening, than the television news systems. No alarm could concentrate national attention more swiftly at one time and in one place more effectively than television. It would take over fifteen years to squeeze out all the mass mainstream magazines—*Collier's, Look, Life, Post*—but the great fair had passed away from the grounds where they pitched their tents, and *Collier's* was the first to close, the inevitable being the inevitable.

Henry Adams, in his *Education,* regards the death of the great quarterlies of the nineteenth century as a transition point in the cultural and political life of the republic—the end of the reflective, sober consideration of public life by an educated elite, the beginning of an intolerable speed-up of public affairs. The coming of television removed, almost unbearably, the filter of the time between the news

event and its absorption. The nation and all its most urgent drive forces were in a hurry; and television could make one hear, see and feel the chant of "Freedom, Now!" better than anything anyone could write for *Collier's*.

We tried. We stressed again the one advantage words have over television: the ability to recapture the past, to structure a narrative, tell a story and reach the bottom of it. We began to draw back readers. By fall *Collier's* was well on the way back to its long-gone pre-eminence in straight narrative reporting—a tradition that had begun with Richard Harding Davis's coverage of the Russo-Japanese War and continued through Hemingway's reporting of World War II. That form of narrative reporting, the stringing together of episode upon episode of reality to make a driving drama, is a peculiarly American literary form, and *Collier's* had once pioneered the field. Triggered by a superlative story by Cornelius Ryan, on the sinking of the *Andrea Doria*, the magazine briefly, in September 1956, broke into a commanding newsstand lead over *Look*. From a low of 500,000 at newsstands in April it had reached over 900,000 in September, and the editorial command glowed.

The final weeks at *Collier's*, as our newsstand sales surged, were weeks of delusive self-congratulation, boyish gloating and a euphoria that grew more and more unrealistic as we approached disaster's edge and then tipped over the edge to oblivion.

Two very large lessons are legacies of the last few months at *Collier's*.

The first and most important lesson was freshman simple, and remains as true of politics as it does of communications: There are only two ways of gaining public attention in America. The attention-seeker must either buy attention with money or command it by a clear message. In the age of television, the former is easier—the most certain way of getting attention is by buying time on the tube; with enough money, a mass audience of any size can, briefly, be bought. The other way of getting public attention is to offer either identity or a message—which is more difficult. Magazine publishing can thrive only by offering a point of view. Only a sharp identity will cluster together random "people" who want to see what the magazine's editors see. Whether it be in woodworking, baby raising, fire fighting, personalities, foreign affairs or health foods, there is always a subtribe or a community among "Them" waiting for a voice to gather them. We, at *Collier's*, had no sharp identity, no point of view, and feared to

carve out such an identity; we offered numbers to our advertisers and anthologies to our readers. Television could do both better. As we approached the cliff's edge, we also offered what I thought was the best collection of stories, mysteries, self-improvement pieces and narrative reporting of any mass magazine—but no particular vision of the world. And so we were doomed to perish.

The second lesson was one of the more memorable courses I have ever taken in life on the subject of money. I had first seen "money" as a tale of copper and paper, ending in the tragedy of inflation, critical to the larger story of China. I had seen money as the underlying story of the Marshall Plan, and described the billions of dollars mobilized in Congress as armies of the dawn sent to revive Europe. It had been easier for me to write of a billion dollars in politics then than to understand a million dollars while trying to save *Collier's*. At *Collier's*, a million dollars was a *true* million dollars—not a governmental "million," which is only an inflationary comma. At *Collier's*, a million dollars was real money meaning the same thing to poor boys hoping to get rich as to rich men fearful of growing poor.

The corporate money lesson, stripped of its larger dimensions, can be simplified thus: Money, not purpose, measures the metabolism of corporations. When money runs out and a corporation cannot pay its debts, its creditors take over, and its investors are wiped out, which terrifies all men who save. But no one cares what happens to its employees. *Collier's*, as a corporation, had been in debt. It hoped that its two magazines, *Collier's* and *Woman's Home Companion*, could win back an audience to attract advertisers who would fertilize the balance sheet with their advertising at $22,000 a page. We of the editorial departments were told to win back the lost audience; and we did. What we did not realize was that each new subscriber we won back, each new purchaser who bought either *Collier's* or the *Companion* at the newsstand, cost the corporation money.

This course in money thus ended with a grand demonstration of how pennies make dollars: To print *Collier's* required some twenty or twenty-five cents of paper, ink and production time for each copy. To express the physical product, the glossy, color-flecked, story-packed ten-to-twelve-ounce perishable magazine, from our printing plant, in Ohio, to our most distant delivery point, in Seattle, cost twenty cents more. Anyone buying the magazine at a newsstand in Seattle was thus buying for fifteen cents what cost the corporation forty or forty-five cents. Except that the corporation did not get back the full fifteen

cents paid for the copy. After the wholesaler and newsstand distributor had taken their shavings, the company received only nine cents. Which meant each additional copy that our editorial efforts attracted to circulation increased the loss by twenty or thirty cents—or, as one multiplied pennies to dollars, a half-million circulation gain at newsstands brought a loss of some $100,000 an issue, or $2.5 million a year.

All this was predictable and inevitable but for the great *unless*—unless the large corporations who sought to reach the supermarkets chose to buy pages in the magazines. But they did not. The entire editorial reorganization, the consequent upward thrust of circulation, had been premised on the belief that the advertisers would return to make the company rich. *Collier's* had been consistently losing advertising to television for five years—down from 1,718 pages of advertising in 1951 to 1,008 pages in 1955. The downslide accelerated in 1956, even as circulation went up. The better we did on the editorial floor, unless advertising matched our growing audience, the more we added to corporate loss. By mid November, we in editorial were flush with confidence. I was proud of my share in this surge. Upstairs, where the board met, our success wrote our doom.

There is a rhythm to the financial year which I have since learned as a board member myself. The peak of the rhythm comes in late fall of the fiscal year, when accounts are reviewed and projections are made for the following year. Most publishing houses are run on a calendar year of accounting; and so, shortly before or after Thanksgiving, the board must decide what it will do for the coming year, starting January. Thus, at the beginning of the festive season, while the writers, peasants and editors are bringing in the sheaves and preparing Thanksgiving, the board sits to decide what to do the next year. In the case of a dying magazine, the board almost inevitably decides to harvest the Christmas advertising pages, which will show a profit—and close out the magazine as soon as the Christmas advertisers disappear, a week or ten days before the actual holiday itself. This is what colors the death of great magazines and publications with sentiment: they die usually just before Christmas, a time of rejoicing and wassail. And the employees of the dying magazine trudge home to tell their wives and children of short rations at a season when the survivors tell their wives and children of the size of the Christmas bonus.

So it was at *Collier's*. At their November meeting the board recognized that their investment in a better editorial "product" had

not impressed the advertisers; that the better we, of the writing and editorial staff, did in assembling Audience, the more it cost them as a corporation.

The magazines must die.

The news of impending death reached me only two weeks before it became public. I had hoped that once I had helped the recovery of the magazine's circulation, I could go back to do what I wanted—write of politics. So I was at the United Nations, beginning work on the story of the 1956 Arab-Israeli war, when I was called back across Manhattan to be told by McArdle that the magazines were probably going to die. We were losing too much money.

There is little I can remember of the last two weeks of *Collier's* and the *Companion.* I do recall trying to pull together a staff group that would seek new millions to buy the magazines, which we would then publish ourselves. I remember my rounds, which now seem so funny, among the New York rich, who regard money-seekers for arts-and-letters projects as a private parlor troupe of in-house entertainers; of coming to hate the hereditary rich, who usually fund such gambles in arts and letters, as much as the new and grasping rich, who were scuttling the magazines. And then, finally, in a spasm of indignation, a sudden change of role at the end. From my vision of myself as entrepreneur, buying the magazines, I was transformed into what I had imagined myself as a boy—a leader of the workers! With a few companions, we organized the staff in protest to demand severance pay. Some, who were about to be dismissed penniless at Christmas season, had worked for thirty years for this organization that I had joined only eighteen months before. This seemed unjust, and the staff committee I had organized made the board see that their coldness was not only unjust but very dangerous. The staff committee of reporters and writers had political connections and knew the leverage of blackmail in a good cause. We won severance pay for all, but after the magazines were dead.

The most lasting of memories was a surprising recognition: the sense of affection that binds people to their working companions. Most people make believe they despise their jobs, their bosses, their corporate purpose, the people they meet every day. Only in Japan do workers openly demonstrate an affection for the corporate communities in which they work. At *Collier's* most of us discovered only in the last few days how much we genuinely liked each other. The prospect of not coming into the office the next day, not nodding to one's friends

down the line, not poking one's head into the art-layout room, not waiting for the story conference, not flirting with the women at the water cooler, was devastating. This comradeship I had taken for granted at *Time* and *Life* magazines; had enjoyed again at the *New Republic,* at the Overseas News Agency and at *The Reporter.* But I had left those families of work always at my own desire or my own provocation. Perhaps my affection for *Collier's* remains longest because I did not want to go. I wanted to stay. Only after *Collier's* had vanished under me did I realize how much of an organization man I really was—either because of my rootless heritage, or the enjoyment I took in simple daily companionship. All through the next twenty years, many news people would have to make that choice: to cling to organization at any cost or strike out alone, at great risk. Fewer and fewer in those twenty years would stand alone.

I did not know these were my choices at the time. It would have been easy to join the liquidation group at the corporate summit, who would make millions out of ending the magazines. But it was so much more exciting and pleasing to my conscience to become a leader of the workers.

From what few jottings remain in my journal, these scenes protrude through the haze:

• The crying of grown men and women who knew on Friday evening, December 14, 1956, that they would never work together again, recognizing for the first time how much they liked each other.

• The sign on the bulletin board that read: "We regret to inform you that there is no Santa Claus."

• My hatred of the cameras and crews of television, which had destroyed us. They came onto our floors trying to get pictures of the people who were crying, tears on their faces.

• All of us getting drunker and drunker as we boozed, and cartoons and designs of death heads appearing from the art department.

Then, finally, it was all over. I, as the spokesman of the dismissed workers, faced the television cameras in the lobby of the office building, and after that wandered out into the night. It was drizzling that Friday evening, and the *Collier's* offices were cater-corner from Saks Fifth Avenue, where the Christmas decorations had just been hung. The tinned music from the store's loudspeakers blared up and down the street, caroling "Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men." Through the rain I spied a taxicab with its lights welcoming, and ran across the street to hail it. I got in, and went home, and made up a

little comforting story to tell Nancy, who was, as usual, unworried and undisturbed, regarding the whole adventure as a great lark; as she regarded all crises.

But I would never again be employed by anyone. I would never again have corporate shelter—neither the staff secretary and office; nor the simple medical insurance; nor the vitally important badge of accreditation that would pass me through police lines, or through war zones, or in and out of the White House and the Pentagon; nor the efficient travel office to make my reservations. I was, at this point, forty-one years old. At that age, in America, one should leave corporate shelter with great caution. One is, actuarially, a poor risk for employment. But I would, in the years to come, be both more alone and better rewarded than I had any reason to expect.

THE OUTSIDER

The roller-coaster of fortune had alternately swept him up and swung him down for almost twenty years. He should have grown used to the swoop-and-soar cycles by now. But it would take him months to realize how sharp this new dip was to be; how close to the end of his resources it would bring him, and how far away it would take him from any connection with the world of public affairs before finally, three years later, he would be able to return to politics.

There was, first, the *Collier's* matter to close. The leave-taking had been so unnatural, the friendships there so emotionally fused in the last few days of despair, that he clung to his old office for weeks after being sacked. As one of the co-chairmen of the staff committee, he found the struggle with management pretext enough to linger on the empty floor at his desk. By Wednesday after the Friday collapse he was meeting with the victorious liquidators of the magazines, demanding severance pay for all—and by ingenious use of publicity, political leverage and discreet blackmail, his committee was in the next few months to wring almost a million dollars for the casualties from the old Crowell-Collier corporation, which then went on to prosper mightily. For the first month he enjoyed the fight; it distracted him from his own problems; and then one man surprisingly revealed himself as a hero: Paul Smith. Up to the end White had thought of Smith only as a buccaneer. In defeat, however, Smith turned out to be far better a man than at peak power as bombastic editor and publisher. Smith made a private deal: If the staff committee did not trigger creditors to press immediate bankruptcy on the corporation, he, Smith, with or without the consent of the board, would sign as chief executive officer a severance pay agreement for all employees. Smith kept his commitment with impeccable honor;

so the board then fired Smith. And finally, after trying his hand at several other New York jobs, his spirit broken and his savings gone, Smith returned to San Francisco. There, life carried him by a descending spiral, down, down and down until several years later he was carried off to a veterans hospital. Old friends remembered him; one bequeathed enough money to allow him to end his days in a decent convalescent home.

Not many suffered the same destruction of spirit and evisceration of drive that Smith did. Most of the younger men, between thirty and forty, prospered, as if the unpotting from *Collier's* had caused their overcrowded roots to thrive. Those pressing into their upper forties were unfortunate—they had to scurry to seek shelter in other institutions and accept whatever accident or contact brought them. One swashbuckling executive could not abide the demotion forced on him and founded a typing service which rented out typists by the hour to advertising agencies with whom he had once done business in the millions. Another, in Chicago, committed suicide, in the delusion that his failure to sell enough advertising had contributed significantly to *Collier's* death. And the rest, particularly those over fifty, simply withered away; when one met them later, reminiscence or recollection was embarrassing.

It was not until several months after the collapse that the pain of being separated from *Collier's* began to ache, as a cut begins to ache long slow minutes after the slash. It was when severance pay for the *Collier's* staff had been settled in principle, and the lawyers had begun to fuss over written detail, that White awoke one morning and realized that there was no office to go to, no meeting to attend, no interview scheduled. He was forty-one years old, without a job, and with no skill except as a reporter. He had nothing to do all that February day, the next day, or any day after that unless he himself made something happen, or found an organization that wanted him.

He had expected, almost daily, after the weekend of *Collier's* collapse, that he would be called with job offers. He was, after all, by then the winner of many awards, the author of two best sellers, a fringe roundsman of the East Side Establishment, and, in his exaggerated appreciation of his own importance, had felt certain that editors and publishers up and down New York would rush to acquire his talent.

But only two men called, and he had brushed them aside because their calls came so swiftly after the collapse that he did not foresee that such calls would be rare.

One call came, unsurprisingly, from Edward R. Murrow, then at the height of his power within CBS. Murrow offered him one of the reporters' places in CBS's Washington bureau. But television had not yet made its Washington correspondents important, and ninety-second snatches of radio or television reportage seemed impossibly concise to a man like White, who recognized himself as impossibly long-winded. TV news thrived on journalistic pemmican and White preferred fresh meat.

The other call came from Henry Luce, and that call was a surprise. The proprietor of *Time, Life* and *Fortune* had done as much to torpedo White ten years earlier as any single individual could have done. But now there came the familiar gruff, halting voice over the telephone, stammering an invitation to dinner at the University Club. Any invitation from Luce sounded like a command, but White was already lonesome. So he accepted. Dinner passed off excitingly, for they found themselves in agreement on almost everything but Eisenhower and China—particularly China, over which they argued violently, furiously and enjoyably. Then they went to White's house, and when White tried to resume the argument, Luce cut him off at once. It was time, said Luce, for Teddy to come home—to come home to the magazines where he had begun, whether it be *Time* or *Life* or *Fortune.* It was an act of generosity and peace-making, which laid the ground for a renewed friendship that would go on until Luce's death in 1967. But White could explain neither to himself nor to Luce why, sitting there together in warmth, under his own roof with his children sleeping upstairs, and knowing he must support a family—why he could not accept Luce's invitation to be safe. He said to Luce that he never again wanted to be caught on Christmas Eve without a job; he wanted to live outside an organization. Luce shook his head and said White could come back to the *Time-Life* magazines whenever he wanted. But what White wanted Luce could not give. He wanted both security and freedom. He wanted to go where and when he wished and to rest where and when he chose—and yet to command the weight and support of an organization, too. White could never recall afterward whether that was the night Luce first described him as an impossible combination of born organization man and born malcontent. But that in truth was what he was.

Had either Luce or Murrow made White such an offer three months later, White would probably have opted for safety in an organization. He had by spring explored the market for the kind of

free-lance stories of public affairs or current history he had so much enjoyed writing at *The Reporter* and at *Collier's.* But such stories are jealously guarded privileges for the men who make their careers within publishing or broadcasting houses, and outsiders are unwelcome. He had, by spring, also explored the foundations and executive publishing structures, where he had some talent to offer. But he discovered that even his best friends, where he had entry, now regarded him warily. When he explained what he wanted to do, both they and he recognized that he would inevitably be a competitor for their jobs on his way up.

The next solution—what seemed to him the most desirable solution—was that he become a columnist. He thought that writing a good column was the highest form of journalism. It is a jeweler's showcase of the reporter's art, and American columnists at their best can rank with or surpass the greatest *feuilletonists* of European journalism, where the column has, for a century, been considered not only an art but a sparklet of history.

He was soberly warned off this adventure by none other than America's master columnist, Walter Lippmann. In public a high-minded, remote, Olympian figure, Lippmann was in private conversation as sharp, hard-headed and responsive as he was visionary and oracular in his published writings. Talking to White as older friend to younger, Lippmann was at his most pragmatic. It was useless, he said, to try to be a major, national columnist unless you had an assured outlet in either New York or Washington. Unless you appeared in print in one, preferably both, of those two cities, the power centers did not know you existed. You were thus chopped off at the news source because you could neither help nor harm those you met on the power circuits in Washington. Moreover, said Lippmann, no one got rich from a column. Outside the big cities, the take from a column averaged three to five dollars per week per paper; the economics would not work for a beginning columnist unless he was underwritten by some major newspaper as he, Lippmann, was by the New York *Herald Tribune,* which both underwrote him and picked up most of his expenses. Lippmann went on to analyze the economics of being a columnist with the same cool logic he was then publicly applying to the national budget. Yet he had a further point: White could not be a columnist unless White had the knack for it. Lippmann had seen only White's books and articles; was White sure he could do the column?

And there Lippmann scored. White had been practicing col-

umns as a form of finger exercise for weeks since *Collier's* died. He believed that writing is like any other skill—if unused, it becomes rusty. Like an actor or singer without a role, he had thus been practicing at home, which had now become his office. White had discovered, doing such finger exercises, that a good column runs between eight hundred and twelve hundred words—and that he could scarcely clear his throat in eight hundred to twelve hundred words. White had grown up and lived too long in other schools of rhetoric. He could write books; he could write articles; he could write newspaper stories. He was like a runner who could do any distance from the one-thousand- to the ten-thousand-meter run, but was useless at the hundred-meter dash.

It was as he sat upstairs, hoping his wife would hear his typewriter clacking and be comforted by the belief that he was beginning a column, that the typewriter began to draw him to an idea, which he followed, thus stumbling, accidentally, onto the novel.

It is so difficult to say when an idea is born. Being unemployed, White was putting his papers in order—filing old notes, old stories, old clippings, in their proper places. Among them were wads of penciled notes on China; and not only notes, but private writings, efforts to recapture and put together what the jotted notes recalled. Unconsciously, his present fears ran together and merged with the memories reawakened by old notes of the war. He himself was now alone and on the outside, and had two children, a wife and responsibility. What caught him in the papers he turned was how completely he had been gripped by the great retreat from East China in 1944—first by the technology of explosive demolitions, then, next, by the refugee procession over a hundred miles of snow and desolation. These were all abandoned people, with no protection. How did a refugee decide when to abandon wife and children? If he himself could save only one of two children—which one?

While he bustled about and told friends of the column he was about to launch, he puttered privately at a story that he sensed must be there, somewhere, buried under the notes and the nightmares that kept him up, or awakened him, yelling, from sleep.

Since literature has become so elaborate an industry today, monitored and measured by professionals and distributors, White's barefoot view of literature then must seem impossibly old-fashioned. For White, literature divided into two parts: learning books and story

books, books that taught lessons and books that entertained. He had never dreamed of being anything else but a reporter, and writing novels was so far from personal ambition as to be unthinkable. Yet he suffered from the exasperation of most reporters—the exasperation of being pinned to facts, when the facts cannot tell the story. Rare is the reporter who has not over and over again come home, having written the day's story, wishing he could have rearranged the facts so as to tell the true story. Then he tosses his notes in his drawer, or trash basket, or hopechest, and goes on to write the next day's story. Except that sometimes some happening—a battle, a riot, a convention, a crime, a breakdown in an interview—cannot be forgotten. Rereading his notes, the reporter finds his imagination and memory returning again and again to that episode, trying to rearrange the facts as they should have arranged themselves for the true story, though reality arranged them otherwise. Out of such rearrangements was born that respectable art form the American reportorial novel.

White's first novel came about because he was bored; he was unemployed; he detested job-seeking; he was haunted by fears; and his nightmares were disturbing him. He had learned during the war that whenever he was particularly terrified, the best way of wiping out a bad time was to write it down in the morning. Then it was pinned like a butterfly on mounting paper, never to flap again. He had done this with a reporter's story of the East China retreat long ago. But now, as he sorted out the old notes, those memories had begun to flap again and he was trying to pin them down once more. This time, at the age of forty-one, he was trying to recapture what it was that had disturbed him in his twenties, in the explosions, the fires, the blastings, the shootings, with which his countrymen, the Americans, laid waste a belt of China from the rice paddies and orange groves of Kwangsi to the snow-covered plateau of Kweichou. So thus, finger-exercising, trying to put the notes of the China retreat together in a coherent sequence, he found himself gliding into a story at the typewriter. He would never have given up reporting to become a novelist; the fiction that each reporter carries in his knapsack a dream of being a novelist had seemed just that to him: a romantic fiction. Yet here he was spending the mornings typing away at notes that seemed to run together in quite different fashion than the facts they recorded; he was writing rather than going out to lunch, or going out to do the interviews required of the serious job-hunter or earnest free-lancer.

It was an indulgence, he told himself at first. But the memories kept insisting on rearranging themselves. And his wife urged him to go on with it; she had seen him put yellow paper in a typewriter several times before, type page one, and emerge a year later with a best seller. She was sure he could write a novel; all their friends did. He pointed out that they had only enough money saved to carry them for another year; their brownstone house on the East Side was preposterously expensive; the children were in private school; there was a maid, who had to be paid weekly. Just to make it through the year, he would have to cash in all his insurance. It was so chancy. But the story kept growing, and Nancy urged him to gamble.

By March, he found himself alone, chilled to the bone, in front of a fireplace in a cottage on New York's Fire Island, typing away at what was definitely a novel while the family finished the school year in Manhattan.

It was odd, camping as a bachelor on a sandbar in the Atlantic during a cold and rainy late spring, with no reading matter but jottings and war diaries of a lost China. He had no texts or documents with him except an army field manual on demolitions; and he was rewriting history from fragments which he, as a novelist, was now licensed to put together as he wished. The story he was writing began simply enough: with the Japanese ICHIGO offensive of 1944, when the front in East China had collapsed. White had followed that collapse and the retreat back to the highlands, and been especially impressed by the cool technical skill with which a rear-guard American demolition unit had achieved total destruction of highways, bridges, installations, ammunition dumps. Now, as he built the action again from the fragments in his notes, he could see it more clearly. When, finally, the novel built to its climax—the destruction of the highway and great ammunition dumps of Tu-shan—the characters seemed to be acting on their own. In his imagination Americans were doing what he had never seen them do in reality. Yet what they did in the novel was, somehow, more true than what they had done in fact years before—and, to his own numb astonishment, it would become true in deed, in Vietnam, years later, when the adventure of America in Asia miscarried. In his story, his imaginary Americans were burning and ravaging hundreds of miles of China at reckless personal risk and in total good will, to protect the Chinese from the Japanese. While the Chinese, beading the landscape in refugee knots and huddles, fled the Japanese and the Americans alike.

He called the story *The Mountain Road* and it raced up the road in one of those marvelous spurts that make a writer feel his typewriter has taken off on its own. He reached the climax of an almost finished book, with only one chapter left to write, when the typewriter stalled. The novel had climaxed with an imagined berserk act of rage by the Americans, goaded beyond restraint—a massacre that might have been a foretaste of My Lai had Americans known that a My Lai was in their future. It had taken only three months to write all but the last chapter; it took almost three months more to carpenter together an unsatisfactory ending, for White had no solutions which would bridge the truths that a novel required to the realities he then perceived.

White insisted for years that it was a good novel, except for the last chapter. The novel could not find an authentic ending and White never understood why until several years later, when he sneaked into a theater to see for perhaps the tenth time the movie version of his book. This time it was on a Saturday afternoon in a run-down theater on New York's Forty-second Street and a file of teen-agers occupied the row behind him. They cheered whenever the crescendo of explosions reached a high point, as his movie-version demolition unit blew the screen apart more and more vividly. Then came the technical climax White had written into his novel: the blowing of the ammunition dumps at Tushan, and the mad American destruction of the next village. The explosions on screen were magnificent. After that would come White's "message," the artificially carpentered last chapter now translated to film. But with the sound of the last explosion still echoing from the screen, the leader of the pack of teen-agers, who had obviously seen the film before, rose and said to his gang, "The hell with it. That's the best part of the picture. The rest of it's crap." They rose and left, and, as he watched the ending, the author had to acknowledge that the verdict was correct. The reportorial White had written the ending, refusing to acknowledge guilt in Asia. Fiction, however, required another ending—the art form required an act or statement of conscience, a recognition of guilt. The reality of the twenty-five-year-long American record in Asia was that of genuine good will exercised in mass killing, a grisly irony which White could master in neither film nor book. Asia was a bloody place; we had no business there; both novel and movie should have said just that at whatever risk.

White saw the film for the last time in 1960, when he was back in public affairs; he regretted he could not reissue the novel with a

new last chapter of appropriate bitterness and irony. But of all his books, *The Mountain Road* remained his favorite. It had brought him a success at the lowest point of his life as a man on the outside; it was taken by a book club almost simultaneously with its sale to Hollywood. The two sales had released him from debt; had permitted him to pay his children's school tuition bills rather than beg for scholarships. It had let him plan a personal strategy with larger perspectives than immediate or twelve-month survival.

Having survived on the outside for a year, and with eating money now assured for at least another two years, White decided he would buy his re-entry into the story of American public affairs as a businessman—a publisher. No one, except a prosperous farmer, is more independent than a prosperous publisher.

In a frenzy of activity, White conceived and marshaled proposals and prospectuses.

• He floated a prospectus for a new publishing house to be called Contemporary Books. It would publish news books. One of the suggestions was that every four years such a publishing house would publish, quickly and first, a "Making of the President Series" which he would write. He found several interested investors in the East Side parlor cells of money. But the long trail he would have to crawl to raise enough money from the gambling rich to start such a publishing house appalled him. He let the scheme drop.

• He decided that he would start a Russian-American publishing house. This was before the days of Solzhenitsyn. The only worthwhile Russian writing at the time was science fiction, which was of superlative quality. White wanted to establish a publishing house to translate Russian science fiction in New York. But dealing with the Russian government was far worse than dealing with the New York rich.

• White's most pedestrian idea turned out to be the only one that was at all profitable. He reasoned thus: What is the only book that everyone must buy every single year? Answer: a new desk diary. He thus organized, quickly, a small publishing enterprise to publish each year a new kind of diary, spacing each full week on two open-spread pages, to be called an "Executive Desk Diary," of the kind now common. The idea took root, became a company which still exists. But what appalled White was the exertion a business person had to put into the execution of even the simplest idea, like diary publishing. He had to find the right kind of paper at

the right price; the paper had to be erasable, for people constantly erase and rescratch diary notes. Then the paper must be moved to the printer, from printer to bindery, from bindery to warehousing, from warehousing to sales people.

White came away from a year of exploring such publishing with an increased respect for the small entrepreneur who creates a business where none existed before. Businessmen brought things together: steel to construction sites, coal to ore, oil to port, books to bookstores. If they did it well, businessmen could make two and two add up not to four, but to five, six or even more. This quirk of the business system, he decided, is what irritates most intellectuals, who believe that always and invariably two and two must be four, as four and four must become eight, and if they do not, then someone is cheated.

• If diary publishing was White's simplest and only profitable business venture, by far the most instructive was his profitless introduction to the business of broadcasting—which taught him he was an amateur in a business that he should have known better than any other: news delivery.

He had been peddling news for many years, from the streets of Boston on. People needed news; they thirsted for news as they thirsted for water. And at this point, in 1958, the owners of broadcasting stations were beginning to realize, just as did the masters of the national networks, that it was the news, the instantaneous delivery of news, that bound the stations to the networks. The money-making programs of entertainment, comedy and drama could be produced by anyone and bought from the syndicates; but a station, if it was to get news from the world and its capitals instantly, while it was still news, had to tie into a network. It was inevitable that station owners would begin surreptitiously to explore whether they could throw off their servitude to the broadcast networks by creating their own cooperative news network. They wished to explore this possibility first with delivery of radio news, which was cheaper than television. And in spring of 1958 White was invited to become the consultant to an intermediate group of promoters, dealing with fourteen of the most important radio stations in the country, who wished to undo the national networks while there was still time.

The conspiratorial challenge to network news delivery was brought to White by a very intelligent businessman named Alfred Stanford, who published a boating magazine in Connecticut. Stanford was the "disintermediary." He could be repudiated. But the

thought that Stanford carried from the principals to White was that if they—Stanford and White—could design a news-delivery system even partially as effective as the networks, then the station owners could unstaple themselves from dependence on the three national networks—first in radio news, then in television news.

White enlisted the help of a friend of Paris days, Blair Clark. Clark was a man of extraordinary vigor and imagination and would go on later to become a vice president of CBS, author of many of its news innovations, and campaign manager for Eugene McCarthy in 1968. As a lark, White and Clark put together a budget, a plan, a structure for creating a radio news-delivery system that would deliver two full hours of air-time news each day from all around the world, at a cost of only $1,500,000 a year. If the fourteen restless stations could find enough other stations to join them in revolt against the networks, it would cost each of fifty radio stations only thirty thousand a year. The arithmetical exercise in translating programming ideas, salaries and wire-lease costs into such a figure verged on the metaphysical.

White unveiled the proposed new network to the station manager at a secret meeting at the New York Yacht Club. It was the first time he had ever entered those raftered halls, the walls cased with the models of every winner of the America's Cup. He had never spoken to a more skeptical audience; he was overwhelmed by the importance of the call letters of the men gathered there—WGY (Schenectady) meant ownership by General Electric; WTIC (Hartford) meant ownership by Travelers Insurance Company; the initials of WJR (Detroit), KFI (Los Angeles), WHAS (Louisville) and all the others meant equal clout. Such radio stations, each dominating its own region, needed news-delivery systems of their own to make money; their bondage to the networks came from the inability of money alone to summon up news. White explained about news—about the sounds of Sputnik beeping from outer space; about the then undeveloped gold mine of information in the Department of Justice; about how much cheaper it was to pump all Europe's news out of Paris rather than London; about what it would cost to have good reporters provide simple reporting, with or without frills, from anywhere in the world. Then he tossed in the ideas he and Clark had worked out about the commercial potential in providing garden news, bridge news, business news, movie news, book news, as well as news of law, medicine and taxes, all addressed to "you."

He was thoroughly surprised by the success of his promotion

pitch. None of these men listening knew anything about news. Only that money could be made out of it, and the money the networks demanded of them for delivery of the news was exorbitant.

Weeks, then months, went by while a response was awaited. When, finally, the Columbia Broadcasting System became aware of the rustling and disturbance among its affiliate stations, it cracked down. When it cracked down, the restless stations decided that they would indeed finance a new news network—provided Stanford, White and Clark could give them a firm budget in two weeks, and firm commitment of news delivery in a few months.

A ridiculous scene followed. There were both Clark and White, proffered millions of dollars by sober businessmen for an idea they had conceived as a lark. One question remained: With whom were the conspirators dealing? With Clark or with White? White had assumed that once the idea was sold, Clark would be the executive, White would be the well-paid philosopher-guide. Clark had entertained a similar but opposite thought: White would be the executive, and Clark would tell White what to do. They bounced a ball back and forth across the room, catching and throwing. What had begun as a frivolity had been taken seriously. Did either one of them dare to challenge the established networks? Neither really wanted that burden and responsibility. Sheepishly, they telephoned Stanford and said neither one wanted to be the chief. They gave away their work, their prospectus and their programmed ideas to the promoter to do with as he wished. Stanford was furious, as he had good reason to be; he could promote but not produce. It was probably the silliest financial decision White ever made; the big networks were then still vulnerable as news gatherers. Fortunes might be made in organizing the news-delivery system against them.

It was probably also the closest White ever came to being rich. News was an ingredient of commerce; he knew both the raw stuff and how it was sold. He knew how money was made out of news. But he was more interested in how news originated. As a matter of fact, he was writing a book about that subject, a second novel.

He had usually come home each day from his business ventures to do more of the finger exercising at the typewriter which keeps the word skills from rusting. And again, as earlier with *The Mountain Road,* his typewriter had begun to take over from him. This time the story was about what he had learned in publishing, fictionalized from his experience at *Collier's,* in a novel to be called *The View*

from the Fortieth Floor. It seemed more important to get said what he wanted to say about the news system in a novel, however melodramatic, than to shake the news system by organizing a radio news net.

White was another year writing this second novel and while he was so doing several recognitions came to him.

Recognitions are clearings in the jungle of life where space opens enough to let the mind turn.

In writing this second novel, he came across and passed through several such recognitions. He could never line them up in the precise sequence that led him back to public affairs. But later, when he attempted to cloak the accidents with an apparent logic of decisions, he thought the recognitions that came to him in writing the novels followed thus:

First was the recognition of how beautiful was the novel as a form and how satisfying it would be to do it well. Somewhere beyond the reach of his own typewriter, he recognized, was an art he could never master; a novel was even more demanding as a craft than writing a column. In France he had become an amateur painter and one of his paintings had won a local prize; what he learned most from being a bad painter, however, had been to appreciate good painting. Novels were like that, too. He learned from writing his own novels to appreciate the art of others. The great novelist sits as a creator, and people rise from his imagination, then wander across that stage of imagination, and in the world the novelist makes, they speak, or cry, or dance, or laugh, or avenge themselves on their enemies. There is no more masterful or lasting achievement of the human imagination than a great novel.

But White learned, from writing novels, that he could not dream of writing a great one. That lay beyond him. He had begun both novels as a form of therapy, as finger exercises. Both were successful in the sense that book clubs chose them, paperback publishers reprinted them, movie-makers purchased them, hundreds of thousands of copies were bought. Many people must have found them good reading—but White knew they were no more than entertainments, to be read quickly, then cast away and forgotten.

And with this recognition the reportorial half of his mind told the romantic half that the world of the novelist was not for him. The world of the novel in America was, he discovered, surveyed, staked out and parceled. Critics patrolled this storyteller's world like

guards, penning novelists into designated corrals. There was the literary corral, patrolled from the universities, inhabited by writers who could not tell a story or make the reader turn a page, but who spun their shimmering sentences, as silkworms spin threads, in endless spirals into closed cocoons. A vast distance away was the world of schlock artists. A fist hit a mouth on the first page of their novels, a girl's nipple was rudely flicked on page two, and so on to the end. You could instantly tell these books by their covers—a high-bosomed heroine silhouetted against a moonlit castle, or plantation gates, or a shiny car, above a cutline which read: "Soon to be a Twentieth Century-Fox Production."

White's chosen corral of the novelists' world embraced the storyteller's patch, dominated at that time by men like Herman Wouk, James Michener, John Hersey. Hersey had, alas, just left the storyteller's patch to move over to the literary corral, writing novels appreciated more by academic critics than by his former readers. But Hersey had been followed in the novel, as in journalism, by a host of imitators and practitioners of what can be called the modern American novel of realities. From Herman Melville on down through Mark Twain and Stephen Crane to Hemingway and Hersey, a disproportionate number of America's best novelists have been essentially reportorial. Such novels were becoming more popular, reaching wider audiences in the 1950s; it was in that field White felt he was working; but even in this field he recognized he was very far from the best.

White might have continued with trying his hand at the novel, making money as he learned the sales tricks, but he could not quite bring himself to respect the world into which novels led him. It was a world that reeked of culture, was choked with pretensions. The more he met other novelists and spoke with them, the more appalled he grew at their self-importance; they took themselves seriously because critics took them seriously; the symbiosis between novelist and critic was more unhealthy than that between sports star and sportswriter. White was used to the companionship of reporters, the men of the press camp, the press bus, the late-night vigil, where the work was serious but the people involved refused to be solemn. In that world, every person was both writer and critic, and the greatest praise was the rare, curt comment from a rival: "Good lead yesterday, you son of a bitch." So to White it seemed a happier life to be a good reporter than a minor novelist, even though a minor novelist who sold to Hollywood and the paperbacks was two, five or ten times

more prosperous than the best-paid reporter in China, Paris or Washington.

The writing of novels finally brought White to one final recognition that was absolutely critical for the next twenty years of his work: the nature of a story. He had never read a textbook on how to write a novel, but in the exhausting rewritings of his own two novels he had learned to strain out of the blur of clichés that surrounds the art of the novel those particular clichés he now recognized as truth. The first was: The novelist must, above all, make the reader want to turn the page. There followed in order: He must put his hero in trouble immediately; next he must get the hero out of that trouble only to plunge him into worse. Then, if the novel is working well, the characters move off by themselves almost as if they have come alive—and all the writer has to do is report how they behave when at night they disturb his dreams.

This recognition of the nature of a story was critical because it explained to White what he had been doing unconsciously for the previous twenty years in reporting politics. From the first bombing of Chungking to the closeout at *Collier's,* he had seen and written about men in trouble. Now, if he ever got back to writing politics, he could encode what he wanted to do in a simple formulation that was to last for a good ten years of writing before he discarded it:

As follows:

History is Story. Politics, in the process of becoming History, is the story of a handful of men reaching for the levers of power. Therefore one must seek out the leaders as men. Leaders must act under pressure, in circumstances they may or may not be able to define. Their imperfect information describes forces, thrusts, opportunities, menaces, real or imaginary, that require decision. It was the intersection of the forces in the personalities of the leaders that made both politics and history so exciting. After writing two novels and making his heroes act under imaginary troubles, he wanted to report public affairs—real men in real trouble—as he had learned to do from writing novels.

Public affairs is an infection of the spirit that is probably incurable. And White, after three years of seclusion with novels, was aching to be back in the arena, when he was invited to return in the happiest possible way—with money.

He had been aware for several weeks that the Literary Guild

was interested in his new manuscript. He was also aware that several Hollywood studios were interested. If either led to a happy result, he felt he must waste no more time or money trying to become a publisher. If once again he had enough money he would use that money simply to buy the time to do what he wanted most to do.

The desire was there. But the decision when it came was perhaps the swiftest major decision he ever made. It took him precisely four days, and was to govern the next twenty years of his life.

The episode opened pleasantly. It was New Members' Night at New York's Century Club, Thursday, October 15, 1959. He was paged to the telephone and over the phone came the staccato voice of his Hollywood agent, Irving Lazar. Lazar was a folklore character in the Hollywood menagerie—charming on social occasions, but snap-jawed and surgical at business. Lazar wanted a quick yes or no, right then. He, in Hollywood, had to make an instant call-back to Gary Cooper, a star who was one of White's favorites. Cooper had personally offered eighty thousand for the film rights to the new novel, plus escalator bonuses, if the Literary Guild (which did choose it) or another book club made it a selection. Cooper was tired of the "yup" and "nope" parts other producers offered him. The hero of White's new novel was loquacious, eloquent, almost incontinent of mouth; and Cooper wanted to buy and personally star in this image. Yes or no? Quick. For eighty thousand dollars plus escalators.

White, without consulting his wife, said yes.

The next day he drove out with Nancy and her closest friend, Muriel Grymes, to Fire Island. It was cold, blowy, rain-swept, and the fireplace blazed. Muriel Grymes was a beauty and a woman of courage; but she was a political innocent of the kind that would disrupt the coming decade. She was, for one thing, more involved in politics than White had ever been; she had been one of the band of heroes and heroines who had launched the reform movement of politics in New York just after the war, when to oppose Tammany was to find your mouth full of your own teeth, or to pick yourself up out of the gutter not knowing who had slugged you. Like all reformers, she confused her own pure conscience with the laws of nature. Adlai Stevenson was the captain of her conscience, and she quivered when Stevenson spoke. It always amused White to tease this good, beautiful and effective woman; she was so vigorously

capable of organizing a single election district and so incapable of understanding how all 175,000 election districts in America must be fitted together by compromises that appear sordid to reformers. So, once again, he was retelling for her the story he had never written—the story of Stevenson against Eisenhower in 1956, and why Stevenson, for whom she had spent her energies to exhaustion, never had a chance from the start. He had been stopped from writing that story only because he had been summoned in midcampaign to help save *Collier's.* The articles he might have written had been, by some magic, stored up in his battery of memories and there they had fused.

He was relaxed, flush with the expected eighty thousand dollars of movie money, telling the story of 1956 and why Adlai should have waited for 1960 when he was promised serious support from Republicans who felt they could not abide Nixon. He was also teasing his high-minded friend with the sordid and mechanical details of a Presidential race which she chose to overlook; he did not realize that such moralists would tear the next decade of American politics apart. But, as he tried to explain to her the greeds and temptations of politics, he was talking as a novelist: with the conviction that the way to tell a story is to locate a hero in the middle of trouble; then to increase the trouble; complicate the trouble; bewilder the hero; and have him emerge with the stroke of decision or direction that resolved all. The weekend was all at once familial, celebratory and political. The idea thus formed: the best way to spend the Gary Cooper money was to use the time it bought to write public affairs again—but differently.

On Monday morning he was driving back from Fire Island to Manhattan with Nancy and Muriel, when he announced a decision. He would use the money to take the next two years to write a book about how a President is made. The Presidency is the center of politics. The President's decisions make the weather, and if he is great enough, change the climate, too. But White had seen enough of politics to know that the decisions of state are always, inevitably, whether in China, France, England or America, prefigured by the politics that brought the leadership to power. He would write a book about the coming 1960 campaign—as a story. Muriel, who always thought of him as a cynic and possibly a closet reactionary, applauded immediately. She was all but sure he would be writing of her hero, Adlai Stevenson, in 1960. Nancy was far more dubious, having

lived so long on the ups and downs of his book gambles. She said, "It's probably a good book if Kennedy wins. But if Nixon wins, it's a dog." And with that encouragement from his wife, the writer set off.

The idea was to follow a campaign from beginning to end. It would be written as a novel is written, with anticipated surprises as, one by one, early candidates vanish in the primaries until only two final jousters struggle for the prize in November. Moreover, it should be written as a story of a man in trouble, of the leader under the pressures of circumstances.

The leader—and the circumstances. That was where the story lay.

The writer knew he would never again be better positioned to do such a book. Reporting Presidential campaigns is very expensive, but he now had the money for two years of travel and writing. He had the knowledge of circumstances, from ghetto to suburbs, from missiles to inflation, from China to Germany. He had covered the circumstances from which the pressures would converge, for *Collier's,* for *Life,* for *Time,* for *The Reporter,* for *The New York Times Magazine.* The Democratic contenders were John F. Kennedy, whom he liked; Adlai Stevenson, whom he cherished; Averell Harriman, whom he had known for so long; Stuart Symington and Lyndon Johnson, whose counselors included some of his most ambitious friends; and Hubert Humphrey, the evangelist of benevolence. On the Republican side were Nelson Rockefeller, whom he had come to know and admire; Dwight D. Eisenhower, the great presence; and Richard Nixon, whom White disliked, but who was essential. They were all colorful, virile, exciting men, but Nixon was critical to the story—White had cast Nixon as the villain, as in a novel.

All this White knew as a reporter.

What he did not know was even more important. He did not foresee, for example, that the new book was to come at the right time. It was to come after fifteen postwar years when education had created an audience for such books—a literate reading class of men and women who were developing an interest in stories that explained what was happening to them. Politics were about to pass from the control of specialists in mobilizing illiterates to the control of specialists in mobilizing the symbols that move the newly educated to move their illiterate cousins.

Nor did he know that what would emerge from the year-long

adventure was an enchanting man who, like White, believed that the hero is a man who masters the circumstances. If ever a man was made to illustrate White's thesis of history as the intersection of impersonal forces at personality points, it was John F. Kennedy. Kennedy was the first postwar American leader who could see how changed were the circumstances in the country which he had left for war twenty years earlier. Moreover, and just as importantly in terms of a popular story, Kennedy was young, rich, heroic, witty, well read—and handsome.

White felt that 1960 was a good year in which to watch matters change. Eisenhower was leaving. Except for Harriman, there were none left of the high command of his war to challenge for the Presidency. If he meant to explore how men behave under the stress of circumstances, here would be new leadership behaving under the stress of temptation. Most political stress rises from disaster. The new stresses in the United States were the torques of appetite and hope. Eight years of prosperity had supercharged the country with the energy about to erupt in the sixties. The United States still held total missile superiority over the Soviet Union; its navy was still unchallenged; it overmatched the Russians in ground troops on the line in Europe. Its security was close to absolute. Behind this security, forces were beginning to move. Millions of youngsters were graduating from college—and millions more were entering. More and more women were enjoying the same education and moving into the same jobs as men. Millions of blacks were moving into the big cities, and their leaders were beginning to teach the newcomers to flex muscle. All sorts of groups were about to burst from traditional enclaves; the old forms could not contain them.

White peddled the idea of a book on the Presidential campaign from publisher to publisher for several weeks. His original publishers, William Sloane Associates, were as decent as they could be. They had made so much money on his other books, they said, that they owed it to him to publish a book on this dreary subject of a Presidential campaign, too. It would not sell, but it was their obligation. Two other publishers were willing to lose money on a book about politics if White would vouchsafe that they could also publish his money-making commercial novels. And then White's old friend Mike Bessie, contemporary of John Kennedy, burst in enthusiasm for the idea. Bessie was founding his own new publishing house; wanted fresh manuscripts and ideas; thought there might, indeed, be an audience for books about politics, and was willing to

publish this book about where the power comes from, how it is collected, how it is used.

Both author and publisher were lucky. They were walking unwittingly into the political awakening of the 1960s. Speaker Sam Rayburn had once told the writer, talking of one of his rich but lucky Texas oil friends, "He was playing the bass tuba the day it rained gold." So was White. He was entering a campaign which would not again be matched as a turning in American history until the campaign of 1976. Kennedy was the last of the candidates who played the game by the old rules; then, having won, he exercised the President's magisterial prerogative to change the rules. So that by the time he was killed, American politics were conducted as much in the streets as in Congress, as much in academia as in the cabinet, as much on television as at party caucuses. When John F. Kennedy was killed, America irrevocably left behind the America of Dwight D. Eisenhower. It was on the way to becoming the America of Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon and, ultimately, James Earl Carter.

But the exercise of 1960, for the writer, then rested entirely on personalities. And it began, after much preliminary research and reporting in Washington, with the writer waiting in snow-coated Wisconsin for a plane bearing John F. Kennedy.

And the senator, coming off, was saying, "Hi. Hi, Teddy, I heard you were writing a book about the campaign. Is Pierre treating you all right?"

CHAPTER TEN

JOHN F. KENNEDY: OPENING THE GATES

I still have difficulty seeing John F. Kennedy clear.

The image of him that comes back to me, as to most who knew him, is so clean and graceful—almost as if I can still see him skip up the steps of his airplane in that half lope, and then turn, flinging out his arm in farewell to the crowd, before disappearing inside. It was a ballet movement. The remembered pleasures of travel with him clutter the outline of history.

It is quite obvious now, of course, that he was the man who broke up the old pattern of American politics. All the sophisticated technology of election campaigning and analysis that has come since then has been just that—technology. He was the man who ruptured the silent understanding that had governed American politics for two centuries—that this was a country of white Protestant gentry and yeomen who offered newer Americans a choice for leadership only within their clashing rivalries. He made us look at ourselves afresh. Kennedy ended many other myths and fossil assumptions, and with him, an old world of politics and government came to a close.

But how the new world that he ushered in will take shape remains yet to be seen—and thus we cannot finally measure him.

Kennedy was, whether for good or bad, an enormously large figure. Historically, he was a gatekeeper. He unlatched the door, and through the door marched not only Catholics, but blacks, and Jews, and ethnics, women, youth, academics, newspersons and an entirely new breed of young politicians who did not think of themselves as politicians—all demanding their share of the action and the power in what is now called participatory democracy.

Kennedy was a substantially more conservative figure than either of the two Democratic Presidents who succeeded him, and he had a

healthy suspicion of the Democratic liberals who now enshrine his memory. Even after he became President, he would growl about Adlai Stevenson and "the liberals," and he bet me once after he became President that in any contest between himself and Stevenson in Madison, Wisconsin, or Cambridge, Massachusetts, or Berkeley, California, Adlai would take him three out of three. Liberals, generally, could not see the weight and dignity in Kennedy until well on into the campaign year of 1960; with such outstanding exceptions as Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., they considered him a lightweight who had bought his Senate seat with his father's money. Practical politicians saw him more clearly. John Bailey, the "boss" of Connecticut, a veteran of the regular ranks of old politics, once described to me his movement in four years from Stevenson to Kennedy. He had supported Stevenson in both 1952 and 1956, said Bailey, because Stevenson had "heft," and that's what voters wanted in their Presidents. Bailey had probably never heard of the Roman civic phrase *gravitas,* the weightiness that is so becoming to a man of public affairs. But by 1958 Bailey could feel the "heft" he wanted in John F. Kennedy and was mobilizing for him. And by the time he was killed, John Kennedy was accepted fully for his *gravitas* by liberals, just as much as by politicians and common people who had elected him chiefly because he was elegant, gay, witty, young and attractive. It was this image that won him the election; that plus his superlative gamesman's skill at the game of politics; that plus the underswell of the times, with old prejudices breaking up and new forms of politics just beginning.

I had no feeling for Kennedy in the beginning except that he was one of the few men in the Senate who made literate copy and read books. His brother and I had been classmates at Harvard in 1938—classmates totally without contact, for Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr., and I were at opposite ends of the social spectrum; John F. Kennedy was two years behind, in the class of '40. I had first heard of him when John Hersey, whom I so admired, made Kennedy a national hero in a magnificent *New Yorker* story of the exploits of PT-109 during the war. But even though Hersey praised him, and Kennedy was a Harvard man, I could not accept the son of Ambassador Joe Kennedy as admirable; there must be some taint. Moreover, I had found his stand on Joe McCarthy weak.

What first intrigued me about Kennedy, however, was his gamesman's sense of politics. He seemed to see American politics cynically, yet hopefully, partly as amusement, more so as sport. Our first meeting was so casually conversational that I did not even make notes.

It was early 1955; he was senator. As *Collier's* political correspondent, I had called him and he, astonishingly, said he had a date to lunch with his wife and would I come along.* Senators, and all other busy men, so rarely have time to date their wives at lunch that I accepted at once. We enjoyed ourselves, although I have no recollection of what the lunch was about. My lasting impression was of his grace: he was handsomer than his photos; still retained then, in 1955, an open, boyish countenance; and must have spent a good deal of time at the beach that summer, for with his bronzed face, his chestnut hair bleached almost to gold, he was picture-book handsome. It was the restlessness and grace of his movement, even at table, that I remember best—and the easy slurring of consonants that marks most upper-class Northeasterners.

Shortly thereafter, I find him in my notes talking of hard politics. I was writing a story for *Collier's* of the early jostling for the Democratic nomination of 1956. Kennedy made no bones: He liked Stevenson for '56, with open, unfeigned admiration. He was indifferent to Averell Harriman. He did not like Estes Kefauver: Kefauver was a loner, he said, had no friends either in the House or in the Senate; when he shook hands with you he was looking over your shoulder to see whether he should be with someone more important. The story that the bosses had "screwed" him in the 1952 convention was just untrue, said Kennedy; it was simply that Kefauver was a man without friends.

As for himself, he was quite aware that Stevenson was scouting for a Catholic running mate, and both he and Bob Wagner, then mayor of New York City, were being talked of. Kennedy appeared unenthusiastic; he didn't like to think of himself as a Vice President, going to banquets, not much power, rushing out to airports to greet people, a "hell of a job," he said. But he supposed if it came his way he wouldn't turn it down. He said I should talk with Albert Gore of Tennessee, implying that Gore really wanted the Vice Presidential slot.

He looked at himself quite impersonally. What was going against

*An axiom for young political writers should be to find out the relationship between a politician and his wife before accepting an invitation to lunch with both. A busy man who loves his wife is most responsive to interrogation in her presence. He sees her so rarely that when questioned about major matters of state, he seeks to impress her rather than the reporter. If a governor or senator does not like his wife, then the interview is worse than useless. She will interrupt constantly; explain what her husband really meant; contradict him; sometimes remind him to remember he is talking to a reporter. In the case of the Kennedys, his wife seemed to bask in his presence. She was as docile as Chiang Ch'ing seemed with Mao—an impression I later learned was deceptive in both cases.

Stevenson? he asked, and answered: Take the Massachusetts delegation—they disliked Stevenson because of his divorce, because of his eggheadry, because of Arthur Schlesinger. What Stevenson needed, he continued, was someone with a strong war record, a Catholic, someone who was married.

From that personal description of himself he went on to other personalities, then into Massachusetts politics, which he made fascinating in his description of chaos, anarchy and rival factions—McCormack's, Burke's, Kennedy's, Dever's, Hynes's, others, with the Republican *Herald Traveler* (then Boston's dominant newspaper) muddying the waters, usually supporting the least organization-loyal Democrat. (Kennedy was to bring the brawling Massachusetts party under his own personal and family control the following year, but with wry amusement he now described its customs as Margaret Mead might describe potlatch season among the Aleuts.)

Of Kennedy on the issues there is no reflection in my notes except for a fleeting reference as he talked of the game of party politics. The party had no objectives, he said. He, for example, sat on the Senate Labor Committee, and was surprised that no one was left on "the left" any longer. He was for taking a party position for a minimum $1.25-an-hour wage. At this high noon of Eisenhower's decade, he knew Congress would pass no higher minimum wage than one dollar. Even Paul Douglas wouldn't fight to get that wage up to a buck and a quarter. But the way Kennedy saw the game of politics, you have to lose a few now and then "before you can begin to hope to win a few in the end."

Aside from that remark, all our conversation was about personalities; as most of our conversations were to be until the campaign of 1960. Kennedy had an almost insatiable appetite for high- or low-level gossip, and he must have dealt with others as he dealt with me—with an amused, almost pickpocketlike skill of filching impressions or memories. Had I met Ray Jones? he asked. Ray Jones, the "Fox of Harlem," was one of the first respectable black leaders in New York politics, and I had written a piece about him. What was Jones like? Was he with LBJ? Was he available? Could he be trusted? (When I said yes, and Kennedy met with Jones privately, and Jones promptly leaked the meeting, Kennedy was furious with both me and Jones.) Had I met Chou En-lai? What was Chou really like? Did I really know Jean Monnet? What was Monnet really like? How did Monnet make the Plan work?

This, then, was my first impression of John Kennedy: that he was

interested chiefly in personalities, that he saw politics as a game.

But personality led on to style, and this was where the image, radiating out through his circle of admiring staffmen and entranced newsmen, became the public persona—the dashing, impeccably tailored, handsome Boston Irishman with the Harvard gloss. He was by nature stylish, by twist of mind ironic, by taste a connoisseur of good prose. These qualities combined to convert the newsmen who followed him from reporters to a claque, of whom, I admit, I must be counted one. He read very carefully what newsmen wrote about him. If he liked what you wrote, he might tell you that it was a "classy" story and could even quote from it. He was also all those things newsmen wish to be but are not: he was always immaculate, changing suits and shirts as many times a day as the wrinkles of travel required. He was humorous at every level, in every idiom, with a twist of wry and a slight bite to his wit. His style was particularly attractive to women, to whom he applied the old British maxim "Treat a whore like a duchess, treat a duchess like a whore." One day early in the primaries, when he was still unprotected by guards, I saw him accosted in Wisconsin by a recognizable paranoid of the "patriot" school, a harridan, demanding why he did not support some local bill requiring loyalty oaths of students. After an interchange with his staff, who were trying to drag her away, Kennedy leaned over with immense courtliness and explained, as if he were explaining to his own mother, "But you see, when I enlisted in the Navy, they didn't ask me to take a loyalty oath, and when I entered Congress, they didn't ask me to take a loyalty oath. Everyone *should* take a loyalty oath, but we shouldn't ask only special groups to do it." The lady huffed and humphed down and disappeared, smiling and soothed.

He had a precise sense of his own style. One day, on his plane, the *Caroline*, he insisted I rewrite the dreary text for a Kennedy pamphlet to be put on the seat of every delegate at the Democratic convention. "You're the only professional writer on the plane," he said, "and you're getting free booze." I protested; I was a reporter, paid my own fare, was not part of his staff. I said I didn't know him well enough, but he insisted, so I did my best. And then he came back and said, "You're right. This would be good copy for Adlai. But it's not my style. It's too soft. My style is harder."

This sense of his own style made him a very self-confident human being. In Los Angeles, several months later, as he entered the final drive against Nixon, he made a speech containing a passage I considered superb political rhetoric. He said: "Mr. Nixon and I, and the

Republican and Democratic parties, are not suddenly frozen in ice or collected in amber since the two conventions. We are like two rivers which flow back through history, and you can judge the force, the power and the direction of the rivers by studying where they rose and where they ran throughout their long course. . . ." I immediately tried to find out who had ghostwritten that lifting passage for him and I guessed that it was either his man Ted Sorensen or his man Dick Goodwin. I asked the question repeatedly and indiscreetly, and finally received from one of the Irish Mafia this message: "Tell Teddy White that no one wrote that for me; that bit about history collected in amber or frozen in ice is mine." It seemed, as the message was relayed back to me, that he must have spoken in stronger language, but the sense of pride in his own words and style was unmistakable.

Style, to Kennedy, was very relevant to politics. Indeed, style was the essence of personality; personality determined the quality of leadership; leadership was what the country needed and what he offered in the campaign of 1960. All these thoughts were put together in the opening speech of his 1960 campaign, an address at the National Press Club, where he defined the issue of his candidacy. "That central issue," he said, ". . . is not the farm problem or defense. . . . It is the Presidency itself. . . . in the challenging revolutionary sixties, the American Presidency will . . . demand that the President place himself in the very thick of the fight, that he care passionately about the fate of the people he leads . . . reopen the channels of communication between the world of thought and the seat of power."

There could be no better man, thus, to follow in a campaign for the Presidency, a campaign for the conquest of power, than someone who believed as strongly as John F. Kennedy did in the ascendancy of man's will over man's fate—and the ascendancy of a leader over the circumstances of his time.

Moreover, the man was a joy to be with, one of the most attractive politicians of his era. Recall of Kennedy mixes laughter with pain, truth with nostalgia, the language of the street with the language of thinking people. He was realistic and romantic at once—and thus more difficult to see plainly in history than almost any other American President of our time. Those who knew him well loved him too much. Those who hated him did not know him at all. Between the conflicting memories was the man, and the man I followed wrapped me in such affection that I have never been able completely to escape.

It was the gamesman's attitude to politics that I found, at the beginning, Kennedy's most attractive quality, making him the most

suitable candidate for the purposes of the book I was writing—the behavior of a man under political pressure.

One could pick up the gamesman almost anywhere, but he might like it best if I picked up the story at St. Patrick's Day, 1960, during the Wisconsin primary.

The game in Wisconsin was to knock Hubert Humphrey out cold. To do that, by Kennedy rules, meant to carry all Wisconsin's ten Congressional districts, of which the most Protestant and most hostile to him was the now abolished Tenth Congressional, a district of Lutheran dairy farmers, cut-over timberlands and iron mines where the ore was running out. If he could take all ten districts in this first primary, it would so impress other politicians that the convention itself might become no contest. It would be like running back the opening kickoff for a touchdown on the first play of the game.

Thus the stakes in Wisconsin as Kennedy saw them. But he had added a fillip: he would campaign through the cold Tenth Congressional District on St. Patrick's Day. It was the same Irish insouciance that later, when he was President, caused him to rename the Presidential yacht *Honey Fitz*, in honor of his grandfather, one of the more colorful rogues to be mayor of old Boston. Primaries were not then the media event they later became; the trailing press was thin to nonexistent by later standards; and *Life* magazine was, in those days, to a campaign what television coverage later became. *Life* had decided, coarsely but quite correctly, that the story of the Wisconsin test was Kennedy as a Catholic among the Protestants. Whether they wanted to or not, the photographers were going to have to get Kennedy visually in a Catholic setting to show him as the Catholic candidate. A picture of Kennedy conferring with the Pope would, of course, have suited *Life* best, but the editors would take what they could get. And there, down the road, as we drove along through the chilly day toward the town of Ladysmith, was a knot of black-robed nuns wearing green silk ribbons—about fifteen of the sisters from the Convent of Our Lady of Sorrows and the Servite High School of the Order of Sisters of Mary. It was a perfect picture, and several photographers were already there to see if the "Catholic" candidate would stop. Kennedy must have seen the trap instantly and known that the picture would run in every newspaper of the Protestant Tenth Congressional, as well as in all Wisconsin, and in *Life*. Then, as if reflecting his instant decision to take the challenge, the little caravan came screeching to a halt. As he got out, the photographers clicked away, the nuns pinned a bright-green ribbon on the candidate, and he entered the convent. The mother superior, a rotund, bespectacled lady, came out; she was so

flustered that she thanked everyone, drivers, staffmen, newsmen, saying, "Now isn't that wonderful of him to come all this way to drop in to see us."

And off we drove. I liked the style and the way he played the game. I liked it a few stops later when it seemed that the grim, cold countryside had turned its back on him, and the rally at the town of Mellen consisted of five people. The rally's leader was obviously the town drunk; obviously Irish; obviously someone who had begun to celebrate St. Patrick's Day early. Since the toper did not see why we should stand in the cold, he invited Jack into the bar to have a drink. So Jack, and the toper, with Kenny O'Donnell and me following, all went into the bar. There Jack hoisted a quick Irish whiskey, expressed the hope this audience of one would vote for him in the primary, and made his way out. I have amused myself for years with the thought of the convivial drunk in some imaginary conversation saying, "Kennedy? Jack Kennedy and me? I knew him like this. Why, on St. Patrick's Day in 1960, he and I got drunk together in Mellen." And no one, of course, believing the old drunk, with the only eyewitness now left, White, too far away to testify.

It was a bad day, and at the end of it I joined Kennedy in his car. He was moody as he explained the larger dimensions of the game he was playing. This was cold country, he admitted. The Tenth Wisconsin Congressional was more than half the size of the state of Massachusetts, with fewer people in it than South Boston and Dorchester. But if he could carry this hard-rock Protestant place, he could carry anything; he could not see how the back-room bosses at the Democratic convention in Los Angeles could hold out against him, on what grounds, if he swept Wisconsin. He ran through some big names—all of them Catholics—and what their problems were. There was Albert Rosellini running for governor again in the state of Washington; practically every other name on his state Democratic ticket was Catholic, too, so Rosellini wanted a Protestant to head the *national* ticket. And David Lawrence, Catholic governor of Pennsylvania—he needed to carry four state senatorial districts, all of them Protestant, for control of the state Senate; naturally, Dave Lawrence wanted a Protestant Presidential candidate to balance the ticket. Then there was the governor of Colorado, also a Catholic, and he, too, needed a Protestant. So he, Kennedy, needed to win this Tenth Congressional (which he later lost) to prove to other Catholics at the power joints that he was a viable candidate. If he did sweep Wisconsin, and carry the other primaries, then: "If they turn me down, the primary system is

finished for good." After that we went on to talk about campaign money. He was angered by a story Sander Vanocur had written, which carried the phrase: "How much money Kennedy had spent no one will ever know." Kennedy went into a detailed description of his finances and the financing of his campaign and wound up by saying that it had cost him and "his friends" only $260,000 to get this far down the road. As it turned out in later years, Vanocur was right—no one will ever know what was spent on the Kennedy campaigns. John F. Kennedy probably did not then know himself. Later I learned that even Robert Kennedy did not know. Perhaps only Joseph Kennedy knew. But so far as the candidate himself was concerned that evening, he was playing it within the rules of the game. Kennedy's particular sportsmanship led him to accept the rules of any state, or any arena, whether national or international, high or low, clean or dirty—but he liked to win.

The gamelike quality he brought to politics occurs to me again and again, in images, flashes, recollections. It comes back pictorially, for example, from one afternoon on a bus in West Virginia—and John F. Kennedy is playing quarterback. He is going to make a speech at a factory. He gets off the bus and discovers the advance work is zero. I remember his eye sweeping the scene seeing the workers already coming off their shift. Then: Kennedy snapping his fingers at Kenny O'Donnell and Larry O'Brien, deploying them as if he were the football captain—Kenny to the back gate, Larry to the front gate, here's the literature, move them up to where I want to speak. And O'Donnell and O'Brien taking off at signal, like flanking guards, to cover the entrances and point the working men to the speaker. Gamesmanship in the West Virginia campaign ran all the way from the highest to the lowest level. One particularly happy afternoon, when everything seemed to be moving for Kennedy against Humphrey, we climbed aboard his plane at the end of day and I found him glowering. I asked what the trouble was. And he said it had been a perfect day, everything had gone well, but at the end of every perfect day something always went wrong. He'd just gotten word that Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr. (who was stumping for him), had denounced Hubert Humphrey as a draft dodger. Kennedy was furious; West Virginia, like Tennessee, is a rifleman's, infantryman's state, where folk culture holds courage priceless, and so this was clearly a low blow. He'd told Roosevelt he did not want Hubert's war record brought into the campaign. It was dirty; he was browned off. It was not the way Kennedy played the game.

In West Virginia both Humphrey and Kennedy knew they were

playing politics in one of the states where it was played at its worst. Kennedy's vote-buyers were evenly matched with Humphrey's; but others, too, were involved. Lyndon Johnson's friends were moving money into West Virginia to buy slates to support Humphrey against Kennedy; Adlai Stevenson's Ivy League friends were also moving money in, using Humphrey to stop Kennedy and deadlock the convention. At this degraded level, all were evenly matched, and thus, with his instinctive sense of the game, Kennedy decided that the wedge in his parameter of play must be the issue of Catholic against Protestant. Here he had Humphrey hobbled. No voter could prove his tolerance by voting for Hubert Humphrey, but any voter could prove to his own conscience in this state of ninety percent white Protestants that he voted without prejudice by voting for Kennedy. To this, finally, on the Sunday before the Tuesday primary, Kennedy addressed himself on local television, looking directly into the camera eye and the West Virginian audience.

". . . so when any man stands on the steps of the Capitol and takes the oath of office of President, he is swearing to support the separation of church and state; he puts one hand on the Bible and raises the other hand to God as he takes the oath. And if he breaks his oath, he is not only committing a crime against the Constitution, for which the Congress can impeach him—and should impeach him—but he is committing a sin against God."

Here, Kennedy raised his hand from an imaginary Bible, as if lifting it to God, and repeating softly, said, "A sin against God, for he has sworn on the Bible." It was nicely done—deft gamesmanship at a level where he had his opponent, Humphrey, checkmated; but also a stroke where history was the shaft, and the cutting edge was a truth that neither prejudice nor common sense could resist; John F. Kennedy was not the agent of the Pope, and one could not either see him or hear him and believe the old nonsense of prejudice.

Kennedy and Nixon both played their game on the new power field of modern communications; but whereas Nixon felt the publishers and station owners controlled the field, Kennedy concentrated on the players in the game—reporters, commentators, news personalities. He was certainly, as much as Nixon, among the first to understand the reach of television in politics, but he had also a sensitivity to the pride and prickliness of the vagabonds in the writing press which Nixon never even approached. Kennedy was interested in the politics of the media—its personalities, internal rivalries, best sellers, coming stars, fading giants, publishers' favorites, outcasts. He was interested in the

newsmagazines like *Time* and *Newsweek*. Their internal politics of editor versus editor and putative replacements interested him as much as the politics, say, of Maryland and Delaware. On occasion, to a favorite of his, like Benjamin Bradlee, he would deliver an absolute scoop; or when William Lawrence later transferred from *The New York Times* to become Washington correspondent of ABC, he instructed Kenneth O'Donnell to give Lawrence, in his first few competitive weeks, any possible break in the news he could. Kennedy enjoyed the thought that he could, by a word or a story, make a man's reputation. To me, when I later won the Pulitzer Prize for my book on the campaign of 1960, he wrote a quick note of congratulation, saying: ". . . it pleases me that I could at least provide a little of the scenario." Like almost all the Kennedys, he had a particular irreverence for *The New York Times*, and enjoyed diddling it. I remember one comic occasion when he was toying with the *Times*, which began a passage of personal interchange that led to our friendship.

The occasion was the evening of June 27, the close of the Montana State Democratic Convention, the last stop on the preconvention route of 1960. Kennedy's private plane was just about to take off for the East from Helena, when someone told him of a story a news agency had just put out about him. He was incensed. It concerned a job offer he had purportedly made to Robert Meyner, then governor of New Jersey. Snapping the team to attention, clanging dimes into pay booths at the airport, he soon had Charles Roche on one phone, Kenny O'Donnell on another, himself on a third, all trying to reach New York with denials. He got the desk at *The New York Times*, switching as he spoke from his normal high Boston tenor to an imitation of the deep Burgundian voice of his press chief, Pierre Salinger. Salinger was off politicking elsewhere, and so, purporting to be Salinger, the candidate himself was dictating the denial to *The New York Times*. Now and then some stranger would pass by the open phone booth, recognize Kennedy, greet him, and Kennedy would stick out his hand, say, "How are yuh, good to see yuh," and go on with his imitation of Salinger to the *Times*.

It was a long way back from Montana to Cape Cod, whither Kennedy was flying home that night, and he talked until we crossed over the Missouri into Iowa. Blair Clark, who had been Kennedy's classmate at Harvard, was then reporting for CBS, and the three of us made convivial company as the plane winged home through the moonlight. Clark and I were drinking, but Kennedy wanted only tomato soup, into which he stirred great gobbets of sour cream. He was

still annoyed by the story of his promise of a federal job to Meyner in return for support at the convention; it is a federal crime to make such an offer. Not only was the story untrue, he said, it was amateurish. "It's surprising," he went on, "how people in politics *don't* ask you for a job. No politician asks you directly for a job; they always do it through other people." What had happened was simple: one of Meyner's aides had asked Kennedy what, if he was elected, he had in mind for Meyner, and all Kennedy had said was that he couldn't conceive of any Democratic President of the United States not using Bob Meyner. As we unwound, the talk opened up into one of those rambling conversations which are the best nourishment of friendship, and that night, somehow, he won me.

I mentioned that Clark and I had been checking the lone bookstore in Helena for best sellers while he was politicking in the back rooms. How had his own book, *Profiles in Courage,* done there? he asked. We told him it was sold out. This annoyed him and he summoned the dozing O'Donnell from his seat and snapped that Harper's, his publishers, must be sure to stock a supply of his book wherever he traveled, particularly in Los Angeles during the convention.

Then we were into books. Clark asked when Kennedy would write another. Kennedy said he couldn't compete with professional writers. His problem was to get an idea *important* enough to sell a book, for it wouldn't sell on his writing. Then he asked Clark, why didn't Clark write a book about his great-great-grandfather Simon Cameron, Lincoln's first Secretary of War? Clark recalled that Lincoln had said of his Secretary of War that Cameron would steal anything except a red-hot stove—if the stove was nailed down. Astonishingly, Kennedy picked Clark up on the political detail and corrected him. The slur had come from Thaddeus Stevens, the radical Pennsylvania abolitionist, but Lincoln had enjoyed repeating it, always carefully attributing the slur to Stevens. Clark riposted neatly and said that the corruption was not the story of his great-great-grandfather. The real story in Simon Cameron was that he was the first man to mobilize the industry of a modern democracy for war.

Kennedy was interested in reputations and went on. He pointed out that Churchill had written the life of his great ancestor Marlborough, and observed that men of tarnished reputation could rely only on their descendants for rehabilitation. So might Clark do for Simon Cameron. After all, said Kennedy, quoting, it was Churchill himself who wrote of his ancestor that "In his youth he prized money more

than passion, in his age money more than fame." From there we went on to what makes good historical writing. Kennedy cited a letter of Theodore Roosevelt's on the funeral of Edward VII as fine historical writing, better than Roosevelt's formal histories, which he thought "low-grade." At this point, he began to reel off a list of names of American historians which I found simply astonishing. I had thought of him simply as a games-player; he was not now trying to impress either Clark or me, but obviously his knowledge of history went far back beyond the roots of today's politics, and his reading had a range far beyond the needs of the gamesman. He said, winding up our talk about history, that if he ever wrote another book it would be about a politician dealing with events—exactly what I was trying to do!

We went on to current politics after a short while, as the plane rocked in the night stream, and began to discuss Kennedy's Vice Presidential options. He offered Stuart Symington's name first, then asked one of us to check the Constitution in the plane's little library to see whether Symington's birth in Massachusetts disqualified them from running on the same ticket. Then he brought up Lyndon Johnson. Six months ago he would have thought that LBJ was the best man outside of himself to be President; he still thought so, but now he also thought Johnson was an egomaniac. We were gossiping politics now. Take Adlai, he said—why is it you couldn't get the little old Irish ladies to vote for him? At another point he ran off the differences between Jews and Irishmen, then the differences between American Jews and Israeli Jews. We then went on to "ethnics" in American politics. And I observed that "ethnicity" was a quality difficult to measure. For example: his father, the ambassador, who had graduated from both the Boston Latin School and Harvard, was still thought to be a Boston Irishman, while he himself, Jack, was thought to be a Harvard man. Why? said Kennedy. I said, The way you say "How are yuh?"—that sounds second-generation Harvard. Everyone else in Boston says, "How are you." Kennedy protested: "I do not. I say 'How are you,' not 'How are yuh,' " enunciating the syllables precisely as he spoke.

It was perhaps at this point that I think I moved or was drawn across the line of reporting to friendship. Somehow, being exhausted and slack-tongued with drink, I blurted out that no matter what he said, I just didn't like his father, old Joe Kennedy, and explained why. This saddened him. He leaned forward and said, "Teddy, you must meet my father someday; he's not like that at all." But he made no further attempt to persuade me to like his father, the old ambassador.

Then I said that another thing I didn't like was what he had said about my teacher John Fairbank. In his first term as congressman, Kennedy had joined the pack and proclaimed that both John Fairbank and Owen Lattimore, another friend of mine, had been part of the Communist influence in the State Department which lost China to the Reds. Kennedy had no answer to that. But he put his head down in his hands, shook it, then said, as I recall, "Don't beat up on me. I was wrong. I know I was wrong. I didn't know anything then—you know what a kid congressman is like with no researchers, no staff, nothing. I made a mistake." His remorse was so real I could not press the matter; and then realized that inside myself I wanted to like this man, could find no reason for not liking him, and gave myself over to the loyalty of friendship.

We drifted on through the night, finally arriving in the early morning at Cape Cod, where I began to assemble some notes on Kennedy and history. It was on this trip that I learned the futility of trying to talk to a candidate about history. I had asked Kennedy if he could give me just a feel of where he wanted the American people to be after eight years of his Presidency—how far down the road he thought he could take them. At which he became annoyed, and considering me a friend but being nibbled to death by too many such questions, he said, "Jesus Christ, Teddy, you ought to have more sense than to ask me that kind of question now. There's the convention to get through first, then the election, then Congress. Ask me later."

So I was left to my own writer's measure of where the campaign of 1960 fit into history. I had read enough of previous campaigns and done enough reporting in the 1956 campaign to know that the "today" story, the morning and evening lead, is vital only to newspapers and television. The "today" story in any campaign runs an erratic course of slips of tongue, errors of scheduling, secret meetings, contrived statements, back-room deals, synthetic issues that flourish for a day or a week and then disappear. In 1960, there was the imaginary and nonexistent "missile gap"; Kennedy proclaimed (quite ignorantly) that the Russians were leading us in kill power at a moment when our superiority over the Russians was never greater; there was also the heated gas bubble of controversy that rose over Quemoy and Matsu, twin rock outcroppings off the coast of China, which Kennedy proclaimed (quite rightly) to be without significance. There were other such trivia and one-day flashes, but two episodes now seem to rise out of receding memory like great ridges leading directly to history. One was the Martin Luther King affair. The other was

Kennedy's homecoming to Boston. Both were episodes in which concealed emotion erupted and hardened into visible landmarks of history.

The Martin Luther King affair, as I reported it then, was another Kennedy gamesman's move, a ploy to win black votes, while Richard Nixon, timid and cautious, could not bring himself to voice concern for a black leader whose life was in peril in a South Georgia jail. I wrote of it as a contest in gamesmanship on the part of two political gamesmen. But there was more to it, as I know now.

Kennedy had already tried to enlist Martin Luther King, Jr., the Lenin of the Black Revolt, in June of the campaign year. They had met at Kennedy's New York apartment, but had not quite vibrated to the same wavelength. King was more stubborn and messianic than was generally recognized at the time. The two had met once more, after Kennedy's nomination, in a hilarious French-farce misscheduling of black leaders in Kennedy's town house in Washington, in late August. By absolutely unpredictable mismanagement, Kennedy had been scheduled for two meetings at his home at once—one with Roy Wilkins and Robert Weaver of the NAACP, the other with their rival for black leadership, Martin Luther King, Jr. Lest it appear like "Negro Night at the Kennedys," said one of those present, they were separated into two parlors, unaware of each other. When Kennedy arrived, he ate dinner in one room with Wilkins and Weaver before sending them off directly to the airport with one of his aides.

He then sat down to confer with King. In the tight national race, black votes were vital, and King was the key man to sway them. But King had taken a nonpartisan stance and would not now be swayed to a commitment unless Kennedy came to the Deep South, to Atlanta, and there met publicly with King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Kennedy agreed in principle to a meeting, but wanted time to work out place, date, subject matter. King left disappointed. For the next few weeks negotiations hung fire. Nashville was discussed as a place to meet; so was Miami. But King wanted Atlanta. Talks continued, and then Kennedy's hand was forced by events.

It was impossible to conduct the campaign without taking serious note of Martin Luther King's public action. As the campaign wore on, among the many unorchestrated themes of concern making the usual blare, the "lunch-counter theme" rose loud and clear. It was a theme destined to swell later, but it first sounded in 1960 and it sounded because Martin Luther King made it ring nationwide. It is perhaps

difficult to recall now that twenty years ago in large stretches of America it was legally forbidden for a black to eat a sandwich or sip a Coke at the same sit-down counter as a white. But on Wednesday, October 19, 1960, in the Magnolia Room of Rich's department store in Atlanta, a number of young black students had sat down in protest to order sandwiches at the same counter with whites. Martin Luther King had joined them and they were all arrested for violating Georgia's trespassing law. At which point, what had been considered normal background sound in an American campaign became a question pointed directly to two candidates—a symbolic question, which is the most important kind of question in politics.

The question ran thus: What does one say when a Martin Luther King is arrested for sitting down at a lunch counter, quietly insisting on his rights? Is this a civil right, a human right or a legal right? What does one say or do when all other protesters but Martin Luther King are released within five days yet he, on a technicality, is carted off in handcuffs to a jail in deep cracker country, where his life may be in danger? When his six-months-pregnant wife, who has always feared that white men will eventually kill King, believes he will be lynched now—how does one comfort her? Or more importantly, help her? This is one man's life, a black man, held in a state prison less than 150 miles from Plains, Georgia.

The moving spirit in all this now becomes the civil rights expert of the Kennedy campaign staff, Harris Wofford, Professor of Law at Notre Dame, an ardent humanitarian, a positive man. Wofford *insists* that Kennedy must act lest this black leader be murdered in jail by racists. On Wednesday, October 26, Wofford gets to Sargent Shriver, Kennedy's brother-in-law, who, in turn, reaches the candidate himself at O'Hare Airport in Chicago. Kennedy telephones from the airport directly to Mrs. King, expressing his concern and saying he is going to do all he can to make sure her husband is safe. He moves by impulse, not calculation, because no man of good will in his position can stand aside when a black leader is imprisoned on a technicality* and exposed to a possible prison knifing in a racist jail. But—and this is significant—Kennedy is upset, when he arrives in New York from Chicago, to find that his intervention has been made public. When questioned in New York, however, he says, yes, he has promised to do everything he can to see that Martin Luther King gets out of jail safely. Not knowing whether he would lose more Southern white votes than he

*The technical charge was that the terms of a previous twelve-month suspended sentence—for driving with an expired license—had been violated by King's arrest at Rich's.

would gain black Northern votes, unbriefed on the election balance, he must take a stand on instinct. It was a moment when gamesmanship ran concurrently with something stronger—with a sense of history, with a sense of the tide that was carrying America to far shores.

I had seen Kennedy play his stroke, during the campaign, from afar, for I was with Richard Nixon, his rival, that week. Through the crisis of King's transfer to the Reidsville state prison, I had sat on Nixon's campaign train in the Midwest, with Nixon unable to make up his mind how he wanted to play the game. Nixon was the Vice President; the machinery of the Department of Justice was his to use for intervention. But finally, unable to make up his mind in time, Nixon had passed, and thus lost. I like to think that Kennedy *wanted* King out of jail for humane reasons—and was on the way to that crest of his politics which later became the civil rights bill of 1963–1964.

The memory of Kennedy's action that week ranks with the memory of the last weekend of his campaign as occasions when campaign politics freeze a moment of history passing.

Kennedy need never have come back to New England in the last three days of the campaign; the game did not require it. His polls, as did Nixon's, told him how close were such crucial states as Illinois, Missouri and California. And New England was so safe for John F. Kennedy that time spent campaigning there was superfluous. Had he been an absolute gamesman he would have ended his campaign on the Pacific coast, fighting for the California vote, and then flown home to vote himself in Boston. But he wanted, out of style, to come home.

He had been changing during the campaign and my notes mark it in several ways: that he had become more sure of himself; that he was less shrill; that he spoke more slowly, not with the staccato of the primaries but letting the high pitch of the Kennedy voice take on a more tenor, singing quality. The rhythm of the campaign had been translating to the crowds as, in the cities, the surge came through the streets as candidates dream. I wrote: "One remembers being in a Kennedy crowd and suddenly sensing far off on the edge of it a ripple of pressure beginning, and the ripple, which always started at the back, would grow like a wave, surging forward as it gathered strength, until it would squeeze the front rank of the crowd against the wooden barricade, and the barricade would begin to splinter; then the police would rush to reinforce the barricade, shove back, start a counter-ripple, and thousands of bodies would, helplessly but ecstatically, be

locked in the rhythmic back-and-forth rocking. One remembers the groans and the moans; and . . . the noise and the clamor." In the last two days he decided to bring all this back to southern New England, the most Catholic enclave of the nation, where all three states had, by then, in 1960, a Catholic majority and were thus safe. Yet he would close the campaign with them.

The final two days of the campaign began at half-past midnight in the dark morning of Sunday, November 6, as the Kennedy campaign caravan descended at the Bridgeport airport to give Boss John Bailey his promised day for Connecticut. Bailey's "day" for his state was to last only from midnight to midmorning Monday, but Kennedy meant to give this senior among his allies a full run for the effort Bailey had put in. Bailey, Irish Catholic, a Harvard Law School graduate, had grown up in ward politics, but his mind had a national reach that made him a transition character in New England political history. His Connecticut Democratic machine, whose control he shared with Governor Abraham Ribicoff, then purred with power from the smallest township in the Litchfield hills to the clotted wards of industrial Bridgeport, Waterbury, Hartford and the Naugatuck valley. Only Dick Daley of Chicago in his prime could call out such partisan troops as Bailey could put into the street, or pour into the polls, when he exerted himself. But at this point, Bailey was doing what he did that dark night as much out of artistry as out of loyalty and devotion, as a charioteer makes his horses prance when he wishes to impress.

It was for me, who had left New England twenty-two years earlier, a strange and throat-choking night. I had grown up contemptuous of the Irish-Catholic bosses of Boston's wards. But I had come to know and respect John Bailey on the national scene, and to embrace as friends the entire Kennedy entourage, once I had made my emotional peace with the candidate personally. And now John Bailey was showing Kennedy, and those of us on the press bus, what an old-fashioned machine could really do. There on the twenty-seven-mile route between Bridgeport, which made all kinds of steelware from ammunition to sewing machines, and Waterbury, which made all kinds of brassware from clocks to buttons, Bailey had turned out every Democratic mayor, first selectman, ordinary selectman, town committeeman, town treasurer, and their wives, husbands, children, along with citizen New Englanders who wanted Kennedy elected. Everywhere the machine had mustered the fire engines with their blinkers winking, the police cars with their red beacons revolving, the ambu-

lances with sirens howling, to announce Kennedy's arrival. From bridges and overpasses and little buildings hung the signs, placards and banners hailing their homecoming Catholic prince.

The upheaval had begun here more than thirty years before, when politicians noticed in the Hoover sweep of 1928 that three Connecticut industrial towns—Bridgeport, Hartford and New Haven, all of them Catholic—had given Smith a majority. The three towns stood out like Catholic islands in the tide that washed over solid Yankee, Protestant, Republican Connecticut. If anyone had pressed further into the census figures of 1930, they would have discovered that more than two thirds of Connecticut citizens were foreign born or the children of foreign born—and these children would shortly be a voting majority. The foreign born, in those days, were largely Catholic, with a bit of Jewish for flavoring. Bailey had come to power by harnessing together a coalition of groups in his native Hartford, which held three distinct Democratic districts, one Irish, one Italian, one Jewish. He had then built a statewide machine on his ability to put together Irish, Italians, Poles, French Canadians, Jews and a frosting of Yankee Democrats, for the tightest control of his state of any politician in the East in November 1960. Now he had them all out, every single group, on the industrial belt; but it was not only discipline that had done it; it was yearning. In later years the Catholics of Connecticut would split allegiances, as they did everywhere, and share their votes with Republicans, too. But that night, in 1960, they were coming into their own, and as the cavalcade swept on with its Jewish governor, Ribicoff, and its Irish boss, Bailey, and the hero, all silhouetted at the head of the procession in the night, the reception was more than political or ceremonial. It was tribal, roaring with atavisms and seething with old repressions, until at three in the morning, on the green of Waterbury, the mayor pleaded with Kennedy to send the crowd home to bed. They had to work in the morning, he said, and Kennedy tried to send them home after his speech, but they would not go, grown men joining with women, yelling, "We love you, Jack, we love you, Jack."

After which, in the last day of the campaign, the tour flipped up to Maine, stopped back in Manchester, New Hampshire (to denounce William Loeb, publisher of the most biased paper in the nation, then and now), touched down in Rhode Island, the most Catholic state of the union, and came back to Boston, late at night. But I remember best one vignette early that Monday morning, as our cavalcade took off from Waterbury through northern Connecticut. There, on a leaf-

strewn autumn lawn, in a street choked with cheering Kennedy-lovers, stood a Yankee family, brave, isolated, unafraid. The placard on their lawn read "Henry Cabot Lodge for Vice President." Every member of the family—father, mother, children—had orange Lodge bumper strips pinned over their chests, like the sash of the French Legion of Honor, and they stood there, like a tableau of the Spirit of '76, all at attention, their thumbs on their noses, giving the full thumb salute to the Catholic candidate!

If Connecticut's reception had been tribal, Boston's was savage. I can remember the beating of the hands and the banging on the sides of the cavalcade's cars and buses. I can remember the inching of the press bus through the crowds, and clinically wondering whether we would have to run people down, because the candidate had a date with a nationally televised program from Faneuil Hall, the Cradle of Liberty. But as we came out of the grimy Sumner tunnel, up into central Boston, my scribbled notes as far as I can decipher them read: "Mounted police . . . white helmets . . . wild mobs . . . confetti . . . can't move . . . drum majorettes, shakos . . . men, navy pea jackets, army field jackets . . . more police, white helmets bobbing . . . choked . . . people screaming, mad . . . now two files of 20 cops, white helmets . . ." We managed to break through the screaming Celtic mob and get onto Washington Street, the narrowest main street in America, and the notes read: "People crowding into store windows . . . look like manikins . . . storms of confetti . . . total breakdown . . ."

From there we moved to the Statler Hotel, where the candidate changed clothes and with no other pause was off to two rendezvous: the first with his old Boston constituency at the Boston Garden, the second with his national constituency via a telecast from Faneuil Hall.

The Boston Garden rally was the kind of rally that political reporters, who see too many rallies, attend but ignore, which I did. But my notes now make it far more important than the Faneuil Hall speech. At Faneuil Hall, where Paul Revere had organized the Sons of Liberty, Kennedy spoke from a text drafted by his speechwriters; spoke to the nation. But at the Garden, in the sweaty hall of wrestlers, hockey players and sportsmen, next to the Old North Church of the revolutionary conspirators, he spoke to his own. He could look out over the audience and see it as it was: overwhelmingly political hacks, stalwarts, ward heelers, the pink-eyed predatory machine politicians down front; then the shawled Irish ladies of Boston, who used to go to any political rally if they were sure it wouldn't break up in a fight; and

this time, a rather heavy sprinkling of Harvard and other students, who were the wave of the future.

What he had to do, he had to do fast, because he was due before television cameras and the nation in a very short time. But here, in this old tribal gathering in Boston, where the Celts and Gaels had finally, totally, overwhelmed the Anglos and the Saxons, he lingered. The chairman gave up on the introduction because the mob simply wanted to cheer. Outside, the police were clubbing latecomers (Boston police in those days used the club as an instrument of dialogue), and when they clanged down the corrugated iron gates on the Garden and the press tried to move through the mob, the police clubbed the press, too. But inside, Kennedy, oblivious to this, was doing a grace act, keenly conscious of the time and his rendezvous with television.

He ran through the list of Democratic candidates in Massachusetts, a necessary courtesy in American politics in any state, endorsing each and every one of them. The transcript records the list: ". . . my distinguished running mates of this state, Tom O'Connor . . . we need a Democratic senator from Massachusetts who will vote for progressive legislation . . . Joe Ward, who I am hopeful will be elected governor of Massachusetts . . . Edward MacLaughlin . . . the nephew of our beloved friend John McCormack . . . Tom Buckley . . . John Driscoll . . . Kevin White."

It was a totally Irish slate—what, in my boyhood, I had heard referred to as an "All-Green Ticket." John F. Kennedy gave them all his benison. Then he was moving out, trying to take the audience off home base: "I come here to Boston to this Garden which is located in the Eleventh Congressional District of the State of Massachusetts, which my grandfather represented sixty years ago, and which I had the honor of representing fourteen years ago when I was first elected to the House of Representatives . . ."

He went on. But this time he was not playing the game of "remember," or what cynics used to call the game of "Irish Tag." "Irish Tag" was the contest among the Hibernians to pin one or another candidate as the candidate of "Beacon Hill," the man the Yankees had put into the race or backed. To tag someone with that label was once as effective as to tag someone today with the label of "racist." But John F. Kennedy was so far beyond that that he would have had to crumple his mind to recapture the rhetoric of his grandfather. The rhythms which had pitted the Fitzgeralds, the Walshes and Big Jim Curley against the Calvin Coolidges, Henry

Cabot Lodges, Senior and Junior, and all the Saltonstalls, were burned away. He did not take this crowd in the Hall seriously; if he had come out for abortion, sodomy and divorce, this crowd would still have voted for him. But he loved them, as they loved him, and so, with his mind in free-gear association, he was piecing phrases together from the patches of all the speeches and rallies of the campaign of 1960, into what he wanted his father's, his mother's, his grandfather's people to see with him. Then, just as he had done in Los Angeles when he had reeled off his metaphor of the rivers of history, he now, in the presence of his own, pulled off the spool of inner rhetoric in his mind what I thought then, and think now, is perhaps the best explanation of why any man runs for the Presidency of the United States.

". . . I do not run for the office of the Presidency," he said, "after fourteen years in the Congress with any expectation that it is an empty or an easy job. I run for the Presidency of the United States because it is the center of action." He paused. Then, poking his forefinger at them from the platform, timing every word, gravely and slowly he went on: "and in a free society the chief responsibility of the President is to set before the American people the unfinished public business of our country. . . ."

The crowd rose and cheered, and he slipped away to Faneuil Hall to appear on national television, talking from a stiff text. The next morning he voted from a polling place at the old West End branch of the Boston Public Library, in what had once been the Jewish ghetto; and then he was off to Hyannisport. By the following morning he had been elected President.

For a man in search of history, the election of 1960 should have been a climax. And yet, for all the many words and pages I wrote of it, it was a passage that clarified itself only as time went by.

The two candidates, if they debated anything, debated foreign policy, and from their rhetoric it was difficult to decide which was the bolder or more dedicated cold warrior. Kennedy insisted "the country must move again," Nixon insisted he knew best how to "keep the peace without surrender." They ran off the same laundry list of partisan promises and denunciations that Democrats and Republicans had soiled by overuse since 1946. Both claimed they were speaking for tomorrow's decade, the 1960s, yet of the great civil rights battle that was to mark the decade, of the war in Vietnam, of the surge of female consciousness, of the eruption of youth, of the changes in life-styles, of abortion, of drugs, of the vast revolution in the tax system—not a

single memorable speech or text comes down to me, either in recollection or in my notes.

The election of 1960 was apparently, and on the face of it, totally devoid of cause or issue. Yet it was devoid of cause only if one measured it against what came later—the election of 1964 with Goldwater's cause trenchant, the election of 1968 with bloodshed in the streets, the election of 1972 with McGovern's liberal pieties making him a stark target, the election of 1976 with Carter's managerial morality so crisp against the fresh memories of Watergate.

The election of 1960 was devoid of cause only if one failed to recognize that the man himself, John F. Kennedy, embodied the cause; and the cause was not borne by his tongue, his grace, his proposals. The cause lay in his birth: he was a Catholic, an ethnic from outside the mainstream of American leadership. To elect John F. Kennedy President was to make clear that this was a different kind of country from what history taught of it, that it was rapidly becoming, and would become in the next twenty years, so much more different in its racial and ethnic patterns as to make life in some of America's greatest cities completely unrecognizable.

Fundamentally, the politics of 1960 vented a demographic upheaval. Perhaps not since the time of the Gracchi had any eighty-year period seen so great a social and racial change in a political system as did America between 1880 and 1960. Between the time of the Gracchi (133 B.C.) and Caesar's thrust across the Rubicon (49 B.C.), the Roman Republic of farmers, yeomen, citizen soldiers and patrician leaders, which Polybius described as self-governing and eternal, vanished. Its own triumphs and laws had made its capital a gathering place at once of the powerful and the dispossessed, had enfranchised Sicilians, Alpine Italians, Spaniards, Jews, Gauls. Since Roman law made Rome the only legal place of voting, the new strangers exercised an entirely disproportionate influence as they filed through the *ovile* to cast their ballots and help choose Rome's leaders. Caesar put an end to the system because the Republic's old laws would not stretch over its new population, and rather than become a victim of those who manipulated the votes, he chose to drive the manipulators from Rome.

No such event is likely in the near future in America; but the demographic developments of the eighty years prior to Kennedy had changed America so profoundly that the significance of his election is incomprehensible if one does not try to measure the ethnic upheaval that transformed the America of John F. Kennedy's grandfather to the America of John F. Kennedy.

In 1894, the year that old John F. ("Honey Fitz") Fitzgerald first went to Congress from Boston, the United States Census had just made a first tentative but official guess at the religions of Americans. It estimated that a then startling thirteen percent of America's 64,361,000 population was Catholic—8,227,000. But these were people submerged in a Protestant culture, working-class folk, speaking bad English (some of the coastal Irish, fleeing hunger to reach Boston in the 1850s, still spoke only Gaelic); the few Catholic congressmen in Washington had less group influence than the Black Caucus today; and the Catholics were almost overwhelmingly Irish and German immigrants, with a sprinkle of French-speaking Catholics (in Louisiana), and Hispanic Catholics (on the Mexican border). Most of them were underclass—and most were suspect.

With the turn of the century, as the immigration figures record, another migration of Catholics to the United States began to flow from Italy, from Poland, from Bohemia, from French Canada. The United States was on its way to the modern torment between its principles and its prejudices, on the way to the yet unmade decision whether it is a place or a nation, an idea or a state. By the 1920s, Irish Catholics had gained leadership over most immigrant groups in the big cities—Boston, Buffalo, Hartford, New York, Chicago, all the way west to Omaha and St. Paul. Only hubris, however, could have explained Al Smith's adventure of 1928; with Catholics still estimated at only sixteen percent of the national population, and few yet accepted in leadership positions in education, journalism, industry or finance, Smith's campaign was hopeless. But cultures shape family life; and as the Catholic birth rate rose, while the general birth rate dropped, estimates held that the count of Catholics in the United States was 21 million in 1940, by 1950 was over 27 million, by 1960 had reached 43 million, or more than a quarter of the population. A Catholic scholar, Dr. Donald Barrett of the University of Notre Dame, estimated that in the decade before Kennedy was elected, the Catholic population of the country increased by 35.8 percent, the general population by 16.6 percent, or in other words, as he put it, "forty-one percent of the total United States growth in 1950–1959 was derived from the Catholic sector of the population."

This, then, was the demographic surge that John F. Kennedy rode. But although statistics help define such surges for both politicians and scholars, it is not until the statistics are broken down into their segments that politicians can begin to plan strategies. In 1928, the statistics had broken *against* Alfred E. Smith, Catholic. In 1960, they

now broke *for* John F. Kennedy. Four years earlier, Kennedy's in-house thinker, Ted Sorensen, and Kennedy's back-room friend, John Bailey, had prepared and circulated a broad-brush political/religious analysis of the fourteen states of the Union where Catholics were supposed to represent twenty percent or more of the voting population. They were trying to demonstrate that Catholic John F. Kennedy would, as Vice Presidential candidate, help rather than hurt the Democratic ticket in states that carried 261 of the 269 electoral votes needed to elect. By 1960, the demographics had raised Catholic voting proportions in every state in the Union, and in at least three states—Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut—Catholics were an absolute majority. In Massachusetts, the Democratic ticket that Kennedy hailed on election eve was Catholic from top to bottom; in Rhode Island the Catholics overbalanced Protestants until some reacted like Huguenots in Richelieu's France. In Rhode Island in 1960, governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, speaker of its House and president of its Senate, majority leaders of both houses, chief justice and three of the four associate justices of its supreme court—all were Catholic.* In the sixty-two counties of New York, then the largest state in the Union, the Democratic county committeemen in fifty-seven were Catholic; of the other five, two were Jewish and only three Protestant. In state after state, in a geographical pattern that no logic could comprehend, Catholics had become governors. From the far Northwest, staked on the map by Washington, where Rosellini was governor, down the coast to California, where "Pat" Brown had recently been elected, across the Mississippi to Ohio, where Mike DiSalle was now governor—Catholic governors were becoming commonplace everywhere except in the Deep South.

An illuminating set of figures traced the breaking demographic waves as they rolled into Congress. In 1960, among the 434 members of the House of Representatives, Roman Catholics outnumbered congressmen of any other single denomination—98 Catholics as against 94 Methodists, 72 Presbyterians, 67 Episcopalians, 66 Baptists, and so forth down to 12 Jews. But in the Senate, matters were different—there, Catholics fell far short of their proportionate number in the electorate. Senators who listed themselves as Methodists came first (with 19); then came Episcopalians and Baptists, with 14 each; then came Catholics, with only 12. Such contrasting figures of House

*It should be noted how time has erased the sharp edge of confrontation. Rhode Island is now so thoroughly Catholic, and its Catholics so unafraid, that it is the only New England state that now boasts two old-stock Protestant senators, Claiborne Pell and John Chafee.

and Senate read as if, at the lower level of Congressional districts, Americans did trust Catholic congressmen to speak well and truly for them. But at the higher level of the Senate, where war and peace were made, where treaties and foreign policy were decided, where Supreme Court Justices were confirmed, Americans still preferred Protestants of the old tradition as custodians of national purpose. The House, which constitutionally has sole right to initiate taxation, responded to what the voters wanted; the Senate responded to what the nation needed.

The flavor of history in 1960, and the old Protestant-Catholic perceptions of their roles in American politics up to then, comes back to me best by a reflection on the intertwined careers of John Bailey and Chester Bowles, both of Connecticut's Democratic Party. The party boss, Bailey, Catholic, was promised and received, once Kennedy was elected, the chairmanship of the National Democratic Party, symbolic patronage and favor dispenser. But Bowles, Unitarian, former governor of the state, was charged by Kennedy to direct the task force which would seek out the names of those who would conduct foreign policy and national defense. Evidently the Bowles appointment did not sit well with Bailey, for some time later, in a reminiscent mood, he told me the following story, echoing of the past: It was he, Bailey, as boss of the state Democratic machine, who had delivered to Bowles the nomination for governor of Connecticut in 1948. In a tight race, Bowles had won. The next year, Connecticut's Senator Raymond Baldwin had resigned, leaving a seat in the United States Senate to be filled by new Governor Bowles. Bailey wanted for himself the seat which was Bowles's to give; but Bowles turned him down. Bowles had decided to appoint his old friend William Benton as senator instead, because, so remembered Bailey, Bowles said that Benton was better qualified to deal with foreign affairs, war and peace, the United Nations and nuclear weapons, than a local Hartford politician. So it was that Benton became a United States Senator, and Bailey was left behind as the cigar-smoking boss of Connecticut. Thereafter the wheel of fortune turned: Bowles lost his run for reelection in 1950; served as Ambassador to India until 1953; and in 1954 Bailey was still boss, but Bowles was again applicant for the Democratic nomination for governor. Bailey, according to the story as he told it—and he told it with savor, punctuating it with his cigar smoke—received Bowles in the family house on Main Street, where he made his office in what was once the bedroom in which he had been born. Bailey listened to Bowles make his plea for support for the nomination. And then, again according to Bailey, he had replied, "Chet, five years ago when you

were governor and I sat across the desk from you, you decided I wasn't fit to be a senator of the United States, it needed someone like Benton. Well, I've decided you aren't fit to be governor, and I'm going to support a Jew for governor, Chet, I'm going to support Abe Ribicoff for governor, a Jew, because I think he understands this state better than you do . . . and maybe I don't understand foreign affairs."

Thus, then, a very large degree of social prejudice, both of Protestant against Catholic and Catholic against Protestant, still hung over the election of 1960. But there was an issue involved in the religious face-off which never did surface in the campaign, an issue of two world views, of two contending philosophies, both of them changing, both letting slip from control cultures they once dominated.

American politics had derived from the Protestant ethic—the credo that man is responsible directly before God for his conscience and his acts, without the intervention or intercession of priests. That ethic had been translated into both government and daily life; men and women were responsible for their lives, and must strive to make them rewarding. No space of geography had ever been more inviting to such an ethic than America, with its endless, open, free and fertile land. There, if a man worked hard, plowed deep, neither slacked nor slothed, and took care of his wife and children, then either fortune or God would reward his efforts.

This American Protestant culture dominated politics until 1932—when all of it broke down in the marketplace, where hunger and unemployment mocked the Emersonian philosophy of self-reliance and independence. And it was Roosevelt, moving through this ravaged political culture, who saved it. He gave the Democratic Party its lasting political truth: in a modern industrial system, all individual effort must be braced by a government that guarantees opportunity for those who want to work, food for those who would otherwise starve, and pensions for the old.

Few analysts could perceive in Roosevelt, a High Church Episcopalian, any great intellectual appreciation of either Protestant or Catholic theology as applied to politics. Nor could those who voted. But the Roosevelt philosophy of government echoed far more of the Catholic than the Protestant tradition in government. The Church had always, historically, allied itself to the State—to maintain the discipline of morality, to give mercy, feed the poor, teach the young, to instruct family life. Catholic cultures, historically, shared with governments authority over life-styles, manners, rituals, ceremonies—as far, in some cases, as the reach of the rack or customs of the bed. For

centuries in Europe, the Church and State had between them embraced all life—while the American Protestant tradition had tried since the beginning of this Republic to separate the two in their responsibilities. For millions of American Catholics the Roosevelt way of government supplemented, in a way they could not explain even to themselves, the family tradition where Church and State were jointly the givers of alms, the keepers of hospitals, the comforters of the aged and the orphan. This requirement of mercy seemed imperative to millions of Protestants, too. Thus, while politically cementing the Catholics to the Democratic Party, Roosevelt split the Protestants into workingmen and entrepreneurs, into rich and poor, into liberals and conservatives. The religious forms remained; the bigotries remained; but catch phrases like "welfare," "death penalty," "birth control," teased different reactions out of different communities.

It was in Roosevelt's time that the cultures of the country, both Protestant and Catholic, began to change; the war speeded the change. By 1960, John Kennedy and Richard Nixon dueled on this shifting ground—the one, Kennedy, vaguely for enlarging the embrace and solicitude of government, the other, Nixon, extolling the Emersonian virtues of independence and self-reliance.

I reported the campaign of 1960 as it unrolled in no such philosophical manner. Had I done so, no one would have printed or read a paragraph of it. Nor did I have to—I was reporting for a book. For that book about 1960, the imperative was to concentrate first on the men, next on the game, then, lastly, on the religious issue. The reach of ideas in American politics I found totally unmanageable.

I had to report the religious issue with the few facts that surfaced: the Arkansas Baptist State Convention came out against a Catholic for President. So did "Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State." So did a handful of others, including the Reverend Norman Vincent Peale. I had to supplement hard fact with vignettes, like the unforgettable memory of the two elderly ladies I had met in the rain in the West Virginia primary. Under a dripping umbrella I had huddled with Mary McGrory, another Bostonian, of the Girls Latin School, and heard the two mountain ladies explain why they were voting for Humphrey against Kennedy: "If our fathers had wanted a Catholic to be President," one said, "they would have said so in the Constitution." Millions of simple bigots thought that way. So did the Ku Klux Klan. So did slow-minded people.

What I left out of my reporting of the campaign of 1960 was the

"nonevent." The most difficult problem for any reporter is to report what Conan Doyle caused Sherlock Holmes to describe as the importance of the "curious incident" of the dog that did not bark. What does not happen is, sometimes, more significant than what does. The largest thing that did not happen in 1960 was an orgy of prejudice. The organized Protestant churches refused to take a stand against John F. Kennedy. Every national conference of religion in the United States—Baptist, Episcopalian, Methodist, Jewish, Presbyterian, Congregational—declared its neutrality, and withdrew itself from political commitment.

I could, of course, writing irregularly, pay attention to whatever I wanted, when I wanted. And so generally I continued to consider the religious issue as part of the game, played largely on the court of communications, on schedules set by editorial "futures" calendars. The "futures" calendar of any editor lists the various rendezvous with events he may plan in advance to report. In 1960, Reformation Sunday would fall on October 30. On that day, traditionally, Protestant divines of the old school tell of the martyrs in the struggle for conscience against the dogmas of the priests. It is an occasion worth remembering. And with so many editors and reporters marking the date on calendars as a dramatic climax to the campaign, second only to the scheduled Great Debates on television, the Kennedy people knew they must move quickly to lance the religious issue before press and television heated it to a boil. They moved with great speed; they recognized that they required an event; they knew the best way to handle any tricky issue is to get it out in the open fast, where it can be cauterized by attention. Their problem was to separate Protestants into those whose ears were stopped and those whose ears absorbed new phrases. Roosevelt had divided the Protestant base by concern for livelihood; Kennedy had to cleave at a higher level.

The event that Kennedy strategy chose very early on was, of course, the well-remembered confrontation of Kennedy with the Greater Houston Ministerial Association in Texas on Monday, September 12, 1960.

His remarks were certainly the best of Kennedy's campaign statements:

> . . . because I am a Catholic, and no Catholic has ever been elected President, the real issues in this campaign have been obscured. . . . So it is apparently necessary for me to state once again—not what kind of church I believe in . . . but what kind of America I believe in.
>
> I believe in an America where the separation of church and state is

absolute—where no Catholic prelate would tell the President (should he be a Catholic) how to act and no Protestant minister would tell his parishioners for whom to vote. . . .

I believe in a President whose views on religion are his own private affair, neither imposed by him upon the nation or imposed by the nation upon him as a condition to holding that office. . . .

This is the kind of America I believe in—and this is the kind of America I fought for in the South Pacific and the kind my brother died for in Europe. No one suggested then that we might have a "divided loyalty." . . . and when they fought at the shrine I visited today, the Alamo . . . side by side with Bowie and Crockett died Fuentes and McCafferty and Bailey and Bedillio and Carey—but no one knows whether they were Catholics or not. For there was no religious test there. . . .

I am not the Catholic candidate for President. I am the Democratic Party's candidate for President, who happens also to be a Catholic. I do not speak for my church on public matters—and the church does not speak for me. . . .

But if the time should ever come . . . when my office would require me to either violate my conscience, or violate the national interest, then I would resign the office, and I hope any other conscientious public servant would do likewise. . . .

. . . if this election is decided on the basis that 40,000,000 Americans lost their chance of being President on the day they were baptized, then it is the whole nation that will be the loser in the eyes of Catholics and non-Catholics around the world, in the eyes of history, and in the eyes of our own people.

. . . without reservation, I can, and I quote, "solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution, so help me God."

The Houston statement ranks with Lincoln's "House Divided" speech and Bryan's "Cross of Gold" as one of the great speeches of American political campaigns—a moment when politics reach up and touch history. What it did was to invite intelligent Protestants to forsake a tradition that had become cramping. And with the victory it forecast, it also released millions of Catholics from the cohesion that had bound them together against Protestants. Catholics were about to dissolve into their constituent groups—city people against suburban people, businessmen against union men, rich against poor, Irish, Germans, Italians, Poles, French and Spanish-speaking into what in the next twenty years would become known as "ethnics," contesting in politics for spoils and honors.

Politics are built on myths, and an old American myth was about to break up. The United States had no official religion. Yet a

formidable if unofficial agreement underlay all politics: that America was not only a Christian country but a Protestant country. Inherited myth and political consensus both held that only men of the Protestant tradition and ethic could be entrusted with the sacred office of the Presidency. With Kennedy, the old myth was to be shattered—but a new ethic and a new consensus would have to take the place of the old.

The next twenty years of American politics and life would be spun around that search for a new consensus and a new ethic.

We will come to that story later down the road.

For the moment, the dissolution of the old consensus is the central story of the election of 1960.

Technically, as well as politically, the election of 1960 was a close-run thing, its story told by many people.

But as it fades now, one can see that second in importance only to the outcome was the total size of the vote. In the election of John F. Kennedy, 63.8 percent of all Americans eligible to vote actually cast their ballots! That percentage of turnout of eligibles had not been reached since Taft defeated Bryan in 1908; and, after Kennedy, has not happened again since.

No crisis, no disaster, no depression, no war, stirred Americans in 1960—nothing but the personalities of the candidates and the religion of one of them. Yet the national vote bulged upward over the 1956 total by more than six million votes, or eleven percent. Only once in the half century had there been so remarkable an increase in national turnout—when, in 1928, the national total jumped by an unbelievable 25 percent over the turnout in 1924. That election of 1928 also pitted a Catholic (Al Smith) against a Protestant (Hoover), and the Catholic had lost. This time the huge total and the even more remarkable percentage of eligibles who did vote buried the oldest religious rift in the oldest nonreligious republic in history.

Political scientists and historians often read into election returns the lessons and portents that become visible only years later. My own bewildered attempt to sift immediate meaning from the figures that rolled in on election night in 1960 convinced me that election figures speak only of the past—of what has already happened in the minds and divisions of Americans. They tell nothing of the future.

To me reading the election returns of 1960 thus, with an eye to the past, the close returns and the staggering totals concealed interesting crosscurrents. The most heavily Catholic states took the election in stride. New York, with its polyglot population and large Catholic

minority, increased its total vote by only three percent as against the national jump of eleven percent. The predominantly Catholic states—Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut—also jumped their vote by less than the national average—by five percent, four percent, nine percent, respectively. In Texas, however, which Johnson and Kennedy carried, the vote went up by eighteen percent. In California by nineteen percent. Brushing with a broad stroke across the continent, it was apparent that Catholics, who in the 1950s had more and more split their vote to favor Eisenhower and the Republicans, had now come back with a bang to the Democrats; while Protestants, pouring out in huge numbers, seemed to split their vote between the two candidates.

Only when one broke the macropolitical national figures down to their micropolitical districts, wards and precincts did it become clear how much prejudice influenced voting. In Nelson County, Kentucky, for instance, four predominantly Baptist precincts gave Kennedy thirty-five percent of their vote against sixty-five percent for Nixon. But five predominantly Catholic precincts gave Kennedy eighty-eight percent and Nixon only twelve percent! There were three key precincts to be followed in 1960 in Philadelphia—precincts with a registration fifty-three percent Republican, but overwhelmingly Catholic. They switched to Kennedy in 1960 by seventy percent! And then there was the incredible performance of Aroostook County in Maine, where the best potatoes in the United States were once grown by some of the hardest-rock Protestants in New England. Aroostook County's vote went up by fifty-one percent and went anti-Kennedy, anti-Catholic by 55.8 percent, while Maine was carried by Richard Nixon by only 59,449 votes.

But on the other hand, when one lifted to the macropolitical level of national politics, one could not escape the overwhelming fact that the Protestants had, in this faith-founded Republic, cast the votes that made Kennedy President. The gross figures, insofar as the analysts could separate them, read that blacks had given Kennedy seventy percent of their votes (although he was the least favorite Democrat among blacks in the primaries) and that his own Catholics had given him between seventy-eight percent of their votes (according to Gallup) and sixty-one percent (according to CBS-IBM figures). What was most significant, however, in the macropolitical picture of the country was the Protestant vote. Kennedy received a minority of the Protestant vote—by estimates running from 46 percent to 38 percent. But that number was so large as to make it the major constituency of the new Presidency. Whether one took the low estimate or the high estimate, of

his 34 million votes, something between 22.5 million and 18.6 million were Protestant votes. He had campaigned in the suburbs, campaigned in the South, campaigned in the supermarkets, campaigned in the schools; his themes and his voice, added to his tactical skills, had penetrated the Protestant conscience of the nation; and so he was President.

None of this was at all clear on election night 1960 at Hyannisport, Massachusetts. The Kennedy command post was in Bobby Kennedy's house in the family compound; the press headquarters was at the nearby Hyannis Armory, festooned with bunting and wired up for television. All through that night, as the booze ran out in the armory, and the returns stuttered to the deadlock that was apparent first in the command center, then across the nation, the election result became more and more obscure, and the only apparent certainty was that whoever won would have won by the accident of counting and not by a national mandate of purpose.

At about ten o'clock in the morning after Election Day, with the result still unknown, I joined a small group of friends, the Massachusetts core cluster of the Kennedy drive, in the back room of the armory, where the news tickers were chattering away with the cascade of figures that commentators and reporters were desperately trying to compress in paragraphic wisdoms. By now, every newscast on the air voiced a different reading of the incomplete returns; but in this group of professionals it was accepted that the election hung on the results in California and Illinois. Missouri, Texas, Hawaii, were all still too close to call, but California (thirty-two electoral votes) and Illinois (twenty-seven electoral votes) were the prizes.

All of us in the room were hypnotized by the news tickers, as if they were talking to us, with the clackety-clack of the old-fashioned machines that makes melody in memory for men who grew up with them. There were in the room, as I recall, Larry O'Brien, Kenny O'Donnell and Dick Donahue; I was pleased to be in this professional company, watching them read the figures not for history, as I was, but for real. There were countless precincts "out" in Illinois, as the professional politicians in the "Land of Lincoln," Republicans and Democrats alike, played games with the vote totals of the missing precincts they held in closed hands.

Even in the most corrupt states of the Union one cannot steal more than one or two percent of the vote; an authentic election landslide is irrefutable. But in an election like that of 1960 (or 1968 or

1976), minuscule percentages of theft, vote fraud and corruption may carry with them the Presidency of the United States. So it had been all through the previous night; and in Illinois, as the Associated Press news ticker now choked out late results, the power of the Presidency turned. The AP was pressing its reporters for returns, and the reporters were trying to gouge out of the Republican and Democratic machines their vote-stealing, precinct-by-precinct totals. The tickers read, in a sequence I cannot possibly reconstruct from my notes, something like this:

". . . With so-and-so many precincts still unreported, Nixon leads in Illinois by 11,000 votes." Then: "Four hundred precincts in Cook County have just reported and with 712 precincts still out, Kennedy now leads by 7,000 votes." Then: "New returns from downstate give Nixon a lead of 5,000 votes, with Cook County precincts still unreported."

The vote kept seesawing; it was the first time I had read precincts with professional politicians; and these professional politicians understood the game. It was downstate (Republican) versus Cook County (Democratic), and the bosses, holding back totals from key precincts, were playing out their concealed cards under pressure of publicity as in a giant game of blackjack. There was nothing anyone could do in Hyannisport except hope that Boss Daley of Chicago could do it for them. Daley was a master at this kind of election-night blackjack game. So were the men I was with in the back room—all of them tense until the AP ticker chattered its keys once more and reported: "With all downstate precincts now reported in, and only Cook County precincts unreported, Richard Nixon has surged into the lead by 3,000 votes." I was dismayed, for if Nixon really carried Illinois, the game was all but over. And at this point I was jabbed from dismay by the outburst of jubilation from young Dick Donahue, who yelped, "He's got them! Daley made them go first! He's still holding back—watch him play his hand now." I was baffled, they were elated. But they knew the counting game better than I, and as if in response to Donahue's yelp, the ticker, having stuttered along for several minutes with other results, announced: "With the last precincts of Cook County now in, Senator Kennedy has won a lead of 8,000 votes to carry Illinois's 27 electoral votes." Kennedy, I learned afterward, had been assured of the result of the game in Illinois several hours before. Later that evening, Kennedy told his friend Ben Bradlee of an early call from Daley, when all seemed in doubt. "With a little bit of luck and the help of a few close friends," Daley had assured Kennedy

before the AP had pushed out the count, "you're going to carry Illinois."

The Senator and President-designate appeared shortly thereafter in the Hyannis Armory in Republican Barnstable County, Cape Cod. Barnstable Township had voted its Protestant prejudice the previous day, preferring Nixon over John F. Kennedy by 4,515 to 2,783.

He strode up on the platform, with all the cameras ranging for focus. He was puffy-eyed, but still handsome. He had insisted that his father now appear with him in public, and also his pregnant wife. It was noticed that the elegant and controlled John F. Kennedy had tears in his eyes. (I have observed that most men, when elected President and first sensing that they have it all in their hands, break down and wipe tears from their eyes.)

He spoke briefly, gracefully, composed as the camera held on his face; but his hands below camera level quivered and shook as he tried to hold his papers. He stepped down from the platform and, suddenly, we all noticed that there was an elastic membrane of Secret Service men separating us from him. Through such a guard all of us would now have to pass, but they had been well briefed in recognition of key personnel. He spoke first as he descended to the old Massachusetts guard—O'Donnell, O'Brien, Donahue. He had special words of greeting for all within touch distance; for myself a taunting "O.K., Teddy, now you can go ahead and write that book of yours." And somewhere in that ten minutes he uttered a phrase which has scored itself on my memory, although I can find it neither in my notes nor in any transcript.

It remains in my memory thus: "The margin is thin, but the responsibility is clear." The echo has returned to me on every election night in America, however thin or large the margin. Politics, in the United States, beget power; and when the votes are counted, however thin the margin, the man who has that margin cannot escape the responsibility of power.

John F. Kennedy had no slightest intent of cringing from the power his politics had brought him. His politics had been based on proving that his Catholic descent was no breach with the continuity of the American past, that he would defend the purposes of America at home and abroad. No candidate I have followed in twenty years tried more eloquently (and successfully) to pin his campaign to the American past. He ran the thread back to the beginning of the Republic, and the Connecticut legislature of 1789, where a Colonel Davenport, its

speaker, refused to suspend session for an eclipse of the sun. "The day of judgment is either approaching or it is not," said Davenport. "If it is not, there is no cause for adjournment. But if it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I wish, therefore, that candles may be brought." He told that story from coast to coast, to great applause. In Montana he quoted Thoreau: "Eastward I go only by force. Westward I go free." In Kentucky he told his audience of Henry Clay. Everywhere he could make people laugh over the Jefferson-Madison butterfly-and-delegate-hunting expedition up the Hudson valley; or call them to reflection with his stories of Lincoln. His campaign, it sometimes seemed, was a transcontinental lecture in American history; the stories not only entertained but gave a lift to his audiences, making them see their connection with America's past.

Even down to the first night after his election, he was trying to prove that he was in the continuity of history as taught in Civics courses. Clark Clifford, one of the *genro* of Washington, had earlier urged him to reappoint several key Washington officials as public servants above politics. So, also, had urged political scientist Richard Neustadt of Columbia. Two such public servants were J. Edgar Hoover and Allen Dulles, masters respectively of American internal and external intelligence services. No one, at that time, had any idea how far out of political control these two services had run, but that first night after his election, Kennedy dined with friends, the Benjamin Bradlees and William Walton, with whom he could relax, and who, presumably, knew little or nothing of intelligence practices. Walton and Bradlee, iconoclasts both, argued that night that the first thing Kennedy ought to do as President was to get rid of J. Edgar Hoover; the second, to get rid of Allen Dulles. None were more surprised than these closest of social friends when the first two appointments announced by Kennedy were, nonetheless, Hoover and Dulles. The fact that amateurs Walton and Bradlee were right and President Kennedy wrong would not be apparent until at least fifteen years later. But Kennedy was seeking, I think, to prove that he would not violate the older American tradition of *pro patria*—that, indeed, he would use the power instruments as responsibly and as unpolitically as any of his predecessors. And for the next five months Kennedy remained with this conviction—until the Bay of Pigs, when he learned that power has its own politics, which have nothing to do with electoral politics.

I doubt whether Kennedy himself sensed the hinge he turned in American history. For he turned it not as a Catholic but as the

spokesman of his generation in American leadership. His religion sat as comfortably and unconstrictingly on him as their religions had rested on Roosevelt and Churchill. I doubt whether Kennedy ever read St. Thomas Aquinas or St. Augustine. The demands on him of his faith and his God were, unlike Jimmy Carter's, easy to live with. The hinge Kennedy turned was, above all, the hinge of time, which moves by quanta, not by tick-tock. In his inaugural address he would say it as he felt it. At the age of forty-three, he was of a new generation of Americans, who saw the world differently from their fathers.

". . . Let the word go forth," he said in the snow of his inaugural, "from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans, born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage, and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed. . . ."

It was, indeed, a new generation of Americans. Across the board, and up and down through the Kennedy cabinet and ranks, were the colonels, the majors, the captains and enlisted men who had staffed, manned, bombed, stormed and conquered in the outburst of power that was America's entry into world leadership in World War II. They were men brought up to believe, either at home or abroad, that whatever Americans wished to make happen would happen. They were men not only of unprecedented vigor and combat experience. They were also men who wanted to explore new ideas. Kennedy was as much the symbol of their leadership as the actual director. Many were men of new stock, and a whole generation of new Americans was about to follow them to political command and influence—men whose fathers had never felled a tree, guided a plow or broken the sod of the plains.

But for all that these men thought of themselves as a new generation, they, too, would have to grapple with enduring American problems: Black and White, War and Peace, Bread and Butter. The election of 1960 had settled only one matter: religion. Kennedy had defined that matter well enough to remove it from politics. Religion might become, and did, a personal motivation in many politicians over the next twenty years. But it was no longer a political cleavage at the electoral base. Other cleavages, just as emotional, would soon be opening—and the Kennedy administration would drive some of the entering wedges.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CAMELOT

No American prejudice faded, I think, more quickly than the religious prejudice that vexed and underlay the election of 1960. It began to fade within weeks after Kennedy's election, even before his inauguration, as it became clear that what he wanted to do with power was connected neither to Papal nor to Protestant purpose.

Exactly what he did want to do with power was not clear immediately—either to the public or to him. But his relish of the power was so apparent that one is tempted to think he used the spectacle to amuse and entertain the suspicious and the adoring alike. Quite simply: Kennedy made millions of Americans realize, as only highborn Establishmentarians and professional politicians had realized before, how much fun and frolic attend life in politics and government. For the first time since Roosevelt, the White House had the quality of a court. At this court a young queen danced at dazzling balls, handsome children held birthday parties, people laughed, and the great seemed human. One could not possibly imagine Papal legates in black garb lurking in dark corners. That old issue religion, which had cost so many thousands of lives in the history of the Anglo-American tradition, vanished in the light.

For me, watching a transition in administration for the first time, this relish of power, this light-heartedness, remains best captured in a memory of my first visit to Washington after the election, in early December 1960. Hurrying to write my book about the campaign, I needed essential documents and facts and so I went to see two friends in their temporary adjacent offices—Robert Kennedy and his Harvard football teammate Kenneth O'Donnell.

I had expected some new sense of gravity and austerity would have come to rest on them since the election, for it was obvious that

Bobby was closest to the new power and Kenny was of the inner circle.

But not so. I walked into this new center of power, where, supposedly, they were scrutinizing the names of those who would make up the new Kennedy cabinet and government, and there they were, both in shirtsleeves. But Bobby was wearing a new black homburg hat atilt on his head, strutting in a cakewalk, while O'Donnell applauded. I laughed at the Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Shean scene. Bobby was a fine mimic, better than his brother, the President, though not as good as his younger brother, Teddy, who would become senator. Bobby explained: Alex Rose, chief of the hatters' union, had sent the homburg. Rose was also boss of New York's Liberal Party, which had supported Kennedy to the full reach of Rose's critical exertion in the campaign just over; Kennedy had carried New York State by the margin of Rose's Liberal votes. Now Rose had sent the hat with a plea that both Bobby and the President, for God's sake, wear hats in the inauguration ceremonies. Appearing hatless so often during the campaign, they had imperiled the jobs of thousands of hatworkers. The black homburg, which Rose thought fitting for Bobby, made him look like a minor thug and so both Bobby and Kenny were laughing at the favors politics demanded. But Rose was a friend, the hatters union needed work, the President and his entourage must set an example.*

When they got through playing, I spent an hour asking questions for my book, and then, when O'Donnell had left, Bobby wanted to ask *me* for advice.

Bobby's problem was serious: Jack wanted to name *him*, Bobby, Attorney General. What should he do? Was it proper for the President to name his brother Attorney General? I have no clear recollection of my own advice to Bobby. I have notes only of Bobby's reaction to his brother's suggestion: Bobby ran through the power structure as he saw it. He would have liked to be in the Pentagon. If someone like Gates had been held over as Defense Secretary, he might have been useful there as part of the action. But Jack had chosen McNamara, and McNamara would want to run his own show. No point, either, in his running for the Senate—they'd call him his brother's mouthpiece. Then there was the governorship of Massachusetts. Ethel, his wife, was

* Neither Bobby nor the President, it should be noted, liked the image of the homburg. When informed that the two Kennedys preferred to wear silk toppers at the inaugural, Rose stretched his union to the utmost once more. The Kennedy brothers had extremely large heads and required size 7¾ hats, of which none were in stock. Rose finally found an aging hatmaker who could still customize silk hats to rush order, and shipped off three to Washington, the extra being for Larry O'Brien.

in favor of that. The state was so corrupt, there was so much to be done—but what could you do to keep yourself busy between now and 1962, when the governorship came up again? Now Jack had asked him to be Attorney General. He had already consulted with Clark Clifford on this, and Clifford had said: Take it. Then Bobby repeated that he didn't think the President should appoint his own brother to the post. He added, "I told him, 'If you announce me as Attorney General, they'll kick our balls off.' " "Well, what did Jack say to that?" I asked, and Bobby replied, "You know what he said? He said, 'You hold on to your balls and I'll make the announcement.' " Which, of course, two days later, the new President-elect did.

John F. Kennedy enjoyed such use of power. To acquire power was the purpose of politics, the goal of the game. He had appointed Robert McNamara as Secretary of Defense, and McNamara had gone to visit outgoing Secretary of Defense Thomas Gates the same day that Kennedy had gone to visit outgoing President Eisenhower. McNamara telephoned Kennedy and said, "Say, I've just spent the afternoon with Gates, and I think I can do his job." To which Kennedy replied, "I've just spent the afternoon with Eisenhower, and I think I can do his job, too." Much later, I talked with James Tobin, who had been invited to join the Council of Economic Advisers. Tobin told me that he had not wanted to be on the council and thought of himself (then Sterling Professor of Economics at Yale) as a scholar. According to Tobin, he had responded to Kennedy's invitation to join the council by saying, "I think you've got the wrong man—I'm an ivory tower economist." To which Kennedy had said, "That's the best kind. I'm going to be an ivory tower President."

It was all gay in the first few weeks, all aglitter, all bravado.

Yet it comes to me now that underneath the bravado, he, like all new Presidents, was groping. They all do as they try to reach for control of the levers and pedals in their first few months—as a buyer gingerly tests the brakes and gas pedals of the new car he has driven off from the dealer's. Kennedy, however, was groping not only for control of unfamiliar instruments; he was pushing out into an unknown stream, guiding the power around the bend into a new country, new times, and the unexplored landscape of the 1960s.

Foreign policy was then, surprisingly, the most clearly defined of the problems he must encounter on that landscape. After the instant disaster of the Bay of Pigs and the taut confrontation with the Russians on access to Berlin, by his first autumn in office he had brought his

instruments well in hand and, then, gradually, moved to the mastery of the missile crisis and the test-ban treaty.

Domestic policy was far more difficult. But that, too, he learned to master after some groping. It had been easy to speak in the campaign of what must be done, or *should* be done, to make America a better place to live in. And Kennedy had understood, as Eisenhower had not, what particularities of scholarship, learning, expertise and science must be gathered in to define what was happening to the changing American people, let alone prescribe remedies. As senator from Massachusetts, he had also been the senator from Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, whose relationship to American learning at that time was that of the Ruhr to German heavy industry. He had, naturally, used his Harvard and MIT scholars to recruit other scholars and learned men from across the country to help in his campaign—and more importantly, to staff his new government. Of the many departures that began in the brief Kennedy Presidency, none, probably, outranks in importance his elevation of the traditional American scholar from brilliant eccentric (like a Joseph Henry or a Robert Oppenheimer) to the status of a Chinese mandarin—a wise man who does more than advise, a wise man who jostles in the court for control of the action. Under Kennedy, the kind of men whom Roosevelt had gathered to guide the New Deal's economics and devise arms for the war were subtly but irrevocably brought together in a phantom corps of mandarins who would later achieve dominant power as the New Governing Class under Jimmy Carter. Kennedy knew how to use such people; they were valuable; they could tell him what was happening at home even better than abroad. He was the first to recognize that no modern President can govern without such mandarins—and also to recognize that such men, in turn, must be governed by the President with an iron hand.

There remained, then, his major problem: the Congress of the United States. He had spent fourteen years in that Congress, but as President his groping would be most conspicuous in his relations with it. Congress reflects all the splits and divisions in the American people, by color, status, ethnic origins, regions, constituencies; as it should. But the President reflects the unity of Americans, what is best for all. Thus, from the beginning of American political history, the war between Congress and President has been a constant war over direction. Unless both President and Congress choose to do nothing—which is sometimes, as in the 1950s, a wise policy.

I did not understand this struggle over directions, except from books, when six weeks after Kennedy had been elected, I first went to see him in the White House. I found him strangely uncertain of himself, quite unlike the self-confident man of the campaign; I realize now that he was giving me a privilege in letting me see him grope. But I wanted a page of his thinking for my book; and on his mind that day was his problem with Congress. Had I listened more closely rather than pushing my own questions on him, I might have recorded a better bench mark from which to measure the pace and the controls by which, more than two years later, he learned to master the Presidency.

This first talk was peculiar. As I entered the Oval Office, the President rose from behind his desk, shook hands, then promptly unbuckled his belt, zipped open his pants and stripped to his underwear. He must have seen the shock on my face, for he laughed and explained that his tailors had come down from New York to measure him for a new suit and had been waiting all afternoon to get in. Since I was the only one on his appointment list that day whom he knew well enough to undress before, he assumed I wouldn't mind if they fitted and measured him while I was there. The door opened on the other side of the Oval Office and three tailors entered, who pinned, chalked, measured for five or six minutes as we talked.

It was casual talk while the tailors were present. We talked about his election and he called the victory a "miracle," insisting that the historic comparison had to be with Al Smith. Had I noticed the change in Philadelphia? Smith losing by 150,000 in 1928, and himself carrying the city by 300,000? He asked if I had read the newly published official transcripts of the outdoor campaign rallies—his and Nixon's. "Did you ever read such shit?" asked Kennedy, commenting on Nixon's off-the-cuff stumping. Queer man, Nixon, said Kennedy. In direct conversation Nixon was smart, very smart. But his mistake in the campaign had been talking "down" to the American people; in a Presidential campaign you have to talk "up," over their heads.

Finally, the tailors left and he began to talk almost as he used to. The Congress of the United States, it appeared from his mood, had replaced Stevenson, Humphrey and Nixon as contenders in his competitive gamesmanship. He had just carried off the first successful move by a President against the House Rules Committee in years. He had forced Congressman Howard Smith, the committee's Virginia chairman, to accept a congressman of Kennedy loyalty on the commit-

tee. The dictatorial Virginian had until then decided alone on the blocking and unbottling of national legislation. Kennedy wanted the right to get the President's proposals considered; and had won. But Congress, he said, was still "one hell of a problem." Look at the narrowness of the vote on the feed-grain bill that very day—a margin of only seven. I was aware that Kennedy knew as little as I did about feedgrains, corn, wheat, pigs, beef, or from which side of a cow you take the milk. But I was surprised by the intensity of his emotion and of his commitment to this feed-grain bill. I have no idea to this day whether that bill was good, bad, practical or chimerical. The best agricultural mandarins had devised it; therefore as President he must move the bill by skill, stealth, seduction or pressure through to a Congressional majority. In an exception to the rules of American Presidential elections, he had won the Presidency while his party was simultaneously *losing* twenty-one House seats and two in the Senate. This left him in trouble, vote by vote,* which he would, I am sure, have detailed to me as neatly as he had detailed conventioneering a year earlier.

But he must have seen the distress on my face as he talked of his game rival, Congress. I wanted to close my book with an interview of great loftiness, and he, with a sense of the reporter's craft, interrupted himself and asked, "Am I saying what you want? Was there any particular kind of question you wanted to ask?"

I said yes, about foreign policy. And he began to pull foreign-policy issues out of his head. He was saying what he felt I needed for a toga-clad portrait of the President, and we went through Laos, the Congo, Russia, South America, in great haste. Then, when we came to personalities, with Lumumba in the Congo, and Wang Ping-nan in Warsaw, he came alive, as he always did when talking personalities. Suddenly he asked me whether he should write a letter directly to Mao

* I spent several hours the next day with Kennedy's vote-counters and gamesmen in the Congressional contest. Larry O'Brien was captain for persuading Congress, and each bill was a fight. Religion, said O'Brien, had cost them their normal Presidential majority; they were short ten or twenty votes on every critical issue. The Chicago and Philadelphia congressmen said the hell with the feed-grain bill, that's for farmers; what's for us? And trying to keep the New York delegation in line! And after that, I had the picture from O'Brien's deputy, Dick Donahue, who marveled at the political blindness of Kennedy's nonpolitical appointees. The President, for example, had appointed Bob McNamara simply for quality. Thus McNamara had insisted on quality, not political, appointees as his deputies. So that up and down the line, said Donahue, who was in charge of patronage, every other appointee also insisted on quality deputies. Arthur Goldberg, for example, wanted to get his minimum-wage bill through Congress—but at the same time, he wanted quality appointees in his department. Donahue ran on about the afflatus that comes to all appointees to national office: "Even the hacks we appointed refuse to accept other political hacks in their departments. But how do you get high-grade bills through without paying off in low-grade appointments?"

Tse-tung and Chou En-lai and settle the Laos matter with them directly. I ducked and said I needed more than thirty seconds to think that one over; later, I did agree, wrongly, with his State Department advisers that the time was unpropitious for him to make the direct approach to Mao which his instinct told him was necessary.

Kennedy had, by this time, relaxed, his legs hooked over the wastebasket; but I sensed O'Donnell outside trying to hurry me out of the room, because Lyndon Johnson, the Vice President, was waiting. Kennedy urged me to stay, but I, like almost anyone else who visits a President and wants to be able to come back, knew I must break off; I had run through my time and he was simply dodging a session with Johnson. He walked me to the door, and there ended with what was on his mind at the beginning: Congress. He said, "The trouble with the Eisenhower years was that nothing moved. Inertia. How can you get things going? Congress is unused to thinking in national terms because it hasn't been summoned to think in national terms . . . every man worries about keeping his seat safe. All of them got used to the deflationary psychology of Ike's regime. Now they *have* to learn to think in national terms. . . ."

I ducked away, quickly making mental notes on the change of scenery in the office, scarcely hearing him as I left, for I knew his staff had trusted me to be in and out in my allotted time. But I should have stayed and let him ramble on about what really bothered him—which was his relationship with Congress.

A President and his wise men can only propose; but Congress disposes. It is when President and Congress agree that American history marches forward, but I did not grasp the simplicity of that theorem then. I made the mistake of letting myself be bored by the game of Congress versus Kennedy for the next two years, well on into the spring of 1963, when I could finally sense that Kennedy, the gatekeeper, had learned the President's trade, and begun to shake matters out of their mold.

Until that spring of 1963 the Kennedy legislation is of little excitement and, in retrospect, is most interesting only when matched against the legislation of the Eisenhower administration. Then what becomes fascinating is how little turning showed in the passage from eight years of Republican government to a new Democratic regime. It is as if, until the beginning of 1963, the tides of the postwar world had been carrying Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy in the same direction, to the same ends, sometimes a bit faster, sometimes a bit slower. Initiatives seemed born far outside politics, and only partisans could