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The "Point of Rest" in Three Shakespearean Tragedies

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THE "POINT OF REST" IN THREE
SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDIES

BY

EDWARD F. MALONEY, S.J.

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
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After a year at Georgetown University where he pursued the liberal arts course, he entered the Society of Jesus at St. Andrew's Novitiate, Poughkeepsie, New York. Upon completing the two years of Noviceship, he entered the Juniorate where he spent two years studying Latin, Greek, and English Literature. The Juniorate at St. Andrew's is affiliated with Fordham University in which institution the author was enrolled from August, 1944 to June, 1946. In September of that year he transferred to West Baden College, affiliated with Loyola University, and received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in June, 1947. He is now enrolled in the graduate school of Loyola University working for his Master's degree in English.

CHAPTER I

THE POINT OF REST IN ART

Books have been written about Romeo and Juliet, volumes about King Lear, and literally libraries about Hamlet. The great critics seem to vie with one another in trying to find or invent the proper adjective to describe those three masterpieces. It is not surprising that the "star-cross'd lovers," the "Mad Monarch," and the "Melancholy Dane" should be the subjects for the critics' rhapsodic effusions, while subordinate figures in the plays are treated more summarily. Yet it is disturbing to encounter time and again statements like the following: "It is with great reluctance that we pass over Horatio, beautiful character though he be," or "Lack of space does not permit us to treat of Kent, Lear's loving and devoted servant." Every now and then an article appears on one of these minor characters but that is the exception. The difficulty with these treatments usually is that the character is considered too much in himself and not in his relation to the more important figures in the play. Shakespeare wrote a play, a unit, and no single character should be taken out of his environment and held up to the light for critical appraisal.

In view of these considerations it is heartening to

happen upon an essay such as the one Coventry Patmore has written entitled, The Point of Rest in Art.¹ Patmore expounds a theory which must be conceded to be much more than just a theory after his penetrating analysis and exposition. He singles out a subordinate character in five of Shakespeare's great plays and briefly indicates that this individual performs the function of a "point of rest." Anyone who reads Shakespeare's plays with this principle in mind will not only understand this single character much more fully but will also appreciate the whole play to a greater degree because he will be aware of the vital contribution of a seemingly very unimportant character.

Patmore does not restrict the application of his principle to the drama, but extends its use to almost every form of art, as we shall see. Certainly, it is an excellent instrument for fathoming the cause of harmony and consequently the beauty of an artistic piece.

The purpose of this paper is to illustrate the applicability of Patmore's principle to three of Shakespeare's plays. It is not our purpose to defend the theory outside of the plays in question but in an effort to clarify the notion of "point of rest," we shall have recourse to illustrations that seem

1 Coventry Patmore, Principle in Art, G. Bell and Sons, London, 1912, 12-17.

analogous to our position.

The characters and the plays that we intend to treat at length are Friar Laurence in Romeo and Juliet, Kent in King Lear, and Horatio in Hamlet.

It is obvious that before we begin to examine any of Shakespeare's plays to see whether we can find a character who might be considered as the "point of rest" therein, we should first of all have a very clear idea of just what is implied by the term. Naturally our main source for this information is going to be Patmore because he seems to be the one who first formulated the theory, defining it, explaining it, and suggesting the possibility of its application to several fields of art.

Although the theory as we have it today is Patmore's, the basic principle on which the theory is built is Coleridge's. At the very start of his essay, Patmore quotes one of Coleridge's "fruitful sayings":²

All harmony is founded on a relation to rest--on relative rest. Take a metallic plate and strew sand on it, sound an harmonic chord over the sand, and the grains will whirl about in circles and other geometrical figures, all, as it were, depending on some point of sand relatively at rest. Sound a discord, and every grain will whisk about without any order at all, in no figures, and with no point of rest.³

2 Patmore, 12.

3 S.T. Coleridge, Table Talk, John Murray, London, 1851, 170.

Coleridge makes a single application of the principle to the clergy of a nation, saying that without them "there could be no order, no harmony of the whole."⁴ Even Coleridge's "fruitful saying" sprang from a feeling for harmony and unity, the building blocks of art. No one can contest the solid moorings of the "point of rest."

Patmore feels that it is worth while to call attention to the principle as enunciated by Coleridge because it was sadly lacking in the art of his day. In the National Art Gallery there are very few pictures no matter what their theme which have not this characteristic note of repose about them and which "would not add a grace of peace to the house they were hung in."⁵ He castigates the paintings of his day because he does not believe that there are very many which if "in daily and hourly sight would not constitute points of unrest."⁶ Not only is this true of painting but of the other arts as well, poetry, sculpture, and architecture. Music is not censured only because it would be impossible to have music without some reference to a point of rest or points of rest, "in keynote, fundamental strain, or reiterated refrain."⁷ Whether Patmore's criticism of contemporary art was just or not, we cannot say, but it does give us an insight into the basic

4 Ibid., 170
5 Patmore, 13.
6 Ibid., 13.
7 Ibid., 13.

nature of his principle and how it would affect several of the arts.

There is an erroneous notion that has to be corrected before Patmore proceeds to the positive matter. In painting, the eye does not focus on the "point of rest" to "bring the remainder into focal proportion."⁸ Some painters work according to the theory that

...the eye is fixed, and not roving in its regard. But this theory has never been that of the greatest times of art. Crome's, Constable's, and Gainsborough's landscapes do not fade off from a certain point on which the eye is supposed to be fixed; yet there will usually be found some point, generally quite insignificant in matter, on which, indeed, the eye does not necessarily fix itself, but to which it involuntarily returns for repose.⁹

In that paragraph Patmore gave us a hint of the positive, not to say paradoxical, aspect of the "point of rest." There is no beauty or charm about this point and yet the eye involuntarily returns to it for repose. It is "...in itself not the most but the least interesting point in the whole work" because "it is the punctum indifferens to which all that is interesting is more or less unconsciously referred."¹⁰ It is safe to conclude that the "point of rest" is something of a norm which

⁸ Patmore, 13.

⁹ Ibid., 14.

¹⁰ Ibid., 14.

only serves to make us more appreciative of what is truly beautiful.

Coventry Patmore is quite conscious that he is dealing with a principle of art that, like all principles of art, defies exact definition. As a consequence, his approach to this task of exposition is that of statement and illustration followed by statement and illustration.

His first illustrations are drawn from paintings. In one of Constable's landscapes, the "point of rest" is the sawn-off end of a branch of a tree; in one of Michael Angelo's pieces, it is a root; in the Dresden "Madonna" of Raphael, it is the heel of the Infant.¹¹ At first glance it would seem that these points of rest are mere trivialities and that the case is being overstated. Patmore suggests that the experiment of covering them over be tried. Then the true value of "these apparently insignificant points" will be seen, because "to a moderately sensitive and cultivated eye, the whole life of the picture will be found to have been lowered."¹²

The principle of the "point of rest" should not be applied woodenly but should be adapted to the art under consideration and to the different species of that art. For

¹¹ Patmore, 14.

¹² Ibid., 14.

example, the more numerous and varied the points of interest in a painting or a poem are, the greater the necessity for this "point of rest." However in a short lyric poem or a simple painting, a "point of rest" might be omitted. Were we to stop right here, there should be no great difficulty in understanding what is meant by the "point of rest." The reason for this is apparent. Up until now in our illustrations, we have been considering static points of rest, but Patmore goes a step further and says that "it is ... in the most elaborate plays of Shakespeare that we find this device in its fullest value."¹³ Patmore wants to develop the notion of relative rest of which Coleridge spoke.

However the relative "point of rest" is a much more subtle device than the other and its application to Shakespeare's plays is not immediately evident. Patmore feels that the character who may be considered as the "point of rest," the "punctum indifferens," or the "true normal" which is another synonymous expression, in King Lear is Kent, in Romeo and Juliet is Friar Laurence, in Hamlet is Horatio, in Othello is Cassio, and in The Merchant of Venice is Bassanio.¹⁴ We get another insight into the nature of this principle of art through the fact that each one of these characters is a

¹³ Patmore, 14-15.

¹⁴ Ibid., 15.

"point of vital comparison by which we measure and feel the relationships of all the other characters."¹⁵ Obviously the "point of rest" understood in this new light becomes a far more important and significant element than when it was the root of a tree in one of Michael Angelo's paintings.

In discussing the five characters in the five plays mentioned above, Patmore calls to our attention a few characteristic notes that may be predicated of each one of them:

Each of these characters stands out of the stream of the main interest, and is additionally unimpressive in itself by reason of its absolute conformity to reason and moral order, from which every other character in the play departs more or less.¹⁶

Sometimes consciously, but more often unconsciously, we measure the characters who provide the main interest in the play and around whom the action centers by these points of rest. They serve as a norm to which our intellect, if not our eye, returns, not because there is anything especially attractive in them, as we have said, but because we appreciate that we shall understand and enjoy the more interesting characters in the play by referring them to this norm. That is why we have not hesitated to call the "point of rest" when applied to plays,

15 Ibid., 15.

16 Ibid., 15.

the "true normal."

However, there is a danger attached to the use of the phrase, the "true normal." We are apt to forget that the "point of rest" is only relative, that these characters are real individuals, in some instances Shakespeare's most masterful portrayals in the line of minor characters. These people are alive, they have faults and a number of individual qualities, but they have one major common note and that lies in the function they perform in the play. They are never distracting because they are comparatively unimpressive characters,

...unimpressive on account of their facing the exciting and trying circumstances of the drama with the regard of pure reason, justice, and virtue. Each of these characters is a peaceful focus radiating the calm of moral solution throughout all the difficulties and disasters of surrounding fate: a vital centre, which, like that of a great wheel, has little motion in itself, but which at once transmits and controls the fierce revolution of the circumference.¹⁷

No "stock" character could ever perform such a function because this "point of rest" character when used properly himself manifests a development and growth throughout the play. In his own way he must keep pace with changing events and with the development of the main personalities. He is a norm in

17 Ibid., 16.

that we feel sure of what he will do, but he is an individual in that we do not know how he will do it. Therefore the purpose of the relative "point of rest" is the accentuation of the harmony of the whole without detriment to the individuality of the character in question.

Not every one of the plays used to illustrate this principle of art is a tragedy but we do find in all of them the elements of conflict and suspense. The need for a "point of rest" is much more apparent in a tragedy because of the catharsis of pity and fear which every good tragedy is supposed to effect. The audience must be more attentive and vitally experience in their own persons the fortunes and misfortunes of the protagonist. A comedy lacks the intensity of a tragedy so that we do not have the artistic necessity of a "point of rest" as much in the former as in the latter.

Sometimes, however, the principle is at work where you would least expect it. An armet, for instance, or a simple finger-ring "gives every portion of the nude figure an increase of animation, unity, and repose."¹⁸ The refrain of the ballad may find an artistic justification in this principle of the "point of rest."¹⁹ Otherwise, the "Lill lal, etc." and the

18 Ibid., 16.

19 Ibid., 16.

"Fal, lal, etc." in the well-known ballad, Hind Horn, have little meaning. The repetition of lines or phrases for no apparent reason is a poetic device that has been used over and over, and is probably linked up with this principle.²⁰ Still, it is difficult to analyze just what Edgar Allan Poe adds to his beautiful poem, Annabel Lee, for example, by repeating the line, "In a kingdom by the sea." The pathetic repetition seems to deepen the poet's melancholy at the loss of his loved one. Since the essence of the poem is the sadness of beauty, much of that would certainly be lost were the line omitted.

Coventry Patmore makes one more rather important remark concerning his theory:

...the "point of rest" will not create harmony where--as in most modern works--its elements are absent; but, where harmony exists, it will be strangely brought out and accentuated by this in itself often trifling, and sometimes, perhaps, even accidental accessory.²¹

He concludes with an unusual illustration from the human body:

The only point in the human body which is wholly without beauty, significance, or purpose in itself, which is merely the scar of its severance from the mother, is the eye of its entire loveliness, the point to which everything is referred for the key of its harmony.²²

20 Ibid., 16.

21 Ibid., 17.

22 Ibid., 17.

Though Patmore never used the novel for illustrations, it seems legitimate to make the application to that literary form also. For example, in the very popular modern novel, Kristan Lavransdatter, we can easily imagine that Simon Andresson, to whom Kristan was betrothed, fulfills the function of the "point of rest." He is the man she should have married but she chose instead a more turbulent, exciting life with the dashing Erlend Nikulausson.

Another analogous use of the principle might be seen in the knocking on the gate in Macbeth. Thomas DeQuincey's admirable essay on this insignificant point only serves to deepen our appreciation for Shakespeare's artistry. DeQuincey explains that after the Macbeths have cooperated in accomplishing their hideous crime, there must be a return from that world of darkness to the world of reality. The knocking on the gate begins the reaction and makes us conscious that the preceding action had been isolated, that time had stood still. The knocking represents the norm of reality to which the preternatural may be referred for purposes of contrast. This common, ordinary sound is insignificant but is a reassuring element to the anxious audience in the depths of that eery night. DeQuincey's closing words in the essay are reminiscent of Patmore's description of the "point of rest." He is praising Shakespeare for his attention to these little details

which add immeasurably to the total effect of a play and predicts that

...the further we press in our discoveries, the more we shall see proofs of design and self-supporting arrangement where the careless eye had seen nothing but accident!²³

Of course, this latter illustration is merely an analogous use of the "point of rest," as we mentioned, and its correspondence to the "point of rest" should not be pressed too far.

Perhaps the multiplication of illustrations of this principle has served only to confuse the reader as to the exact notion, the precise essence of the "point of rest." Patmore never attempted a strict definition of the term but was forced to be content with a description. Possibly a summary of Patmore's more important statements would clarify our ideas as to the nature and function of this principle. The following are gleanings from his essay: the "point of rest" in a play is a character who "stands out of the stream of the main interest," is a norm "by which we measure and feel the relationships of all the other characters," "is in itself not the most but the least interesting point in the whole work," "the punctum indifferens to which all that is

23 Thomas DeQuincey, Literary Criticism, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1876, Chap. XIII, "On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth," 539.

interesting is more or less unconsciously referred," "is additionally unimpressive in itself by reason of its absolute conformity to reason and moral order," whose main function is that of a "peaceful focus radiating the calm of moral solution throughout all the difficulties and disasters of surrounding fate: a vital centre, which, like that of a great wheel, has little motion in itself but which at once transmits and controls the fierce revolution of the circumference"; "where harmony exists, it will be strangely brought out and accentuated by this itself often trifling, and sometimes, perhaps, even accidental accessory."

The best single word to describe the "point of rest" is the "mean." The idea of the "mean" may be traced back as far as Aristotle's Ethics and an understanding of the implications of the term will prove very useful in our analysis of the "point of rest."

Aristotle held that both excess and defect are harmful and furnish the root cause for the destruction of anything. For instance, too much or too little exercise destroys the health. He conceived then three different dispositions, two of which were vices because they involved either deficiency or excess, and the third was a virtue, the "mean." These three are opposed to one another but the greatest opposition exists between the two extremes. The theory is not as evident

as it may seem at first glance because sometimes the "mean" lies closer to the extreme of excess and at other times to the extreme of deficiency. For example, bravery comes closer to rashness than it does to cowardice.²⁴

That all too brief summary should furnish us with a working knowledge of the Aristotelian "mean." The artistic and dramatic possibilities inherent in the notion of the three contrasted dispositions should be evident.

The first to apply the doctrine artistically was Theophrastus who produced the Characters. The "mean" is the foundation for the Characters which "are an artistic by-product of a long pre-occupation with the terms of conduct."²⁵

Humorous descriptions of the Boor, the Unpleasant Man, the Loquacious Man, etc., were the result. While the extremes were being satirized, Greek playwrights--probably unconsciously--were incorporating the "mean" into their plays in the person of the chorus, the Ideal Spectator. Any departure from the "mean" or sophrosyne, safemindness, by the protagonist, was a sure sign that he was heading for destruction.

Conventional Roman comedy borrowed its characters from

24 Aristotle, Ethica Nicomachea, 1104 a, 1108 b.

25 G.S. Gordon (ed.), English Literature and the Classics, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1912, 53.

Theophrastus. Ben Jonson in turn borrowed from Terence and Plautus, so that the Characters which were based on Aristotle's "mean" found themselves on the Elizabethan stage. The "mean" in one form or another is present on the stage today because this doctrine is a sine qua non for good character-delineation.²⁶ It provides the basis for character-contrast and "contrasts of character form one of the simplest elements of dramatic interest."²⁷ Without a "mean" or a norm, we would be unable to pass judgments on the characters because we must live in the world that the dramatist creates. All we ask is that he be consistent inside the sphere he has chosen. Inherent in the very notion of consistency is some norm. Gulliver's Travels affords a crude but concrete example of this point. The inhabitants of Lilliput are small in comparison with Captain Gulliver just as he was considered tiny in Brobdingnag. For the sake of the story we grant the author license to create such an unusual world but demand that giants act as giants and midgets as midgets. The "mean" for both physical size and intelligent behavior in this story is Captain Gulliver.

The "mean" which is a virtue lying between two extremes, two vices, is the "point of rest" in as much as the "point of

26 Gordon, 85.

27 Richard G. Moulton, Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1901, 144.

rest" character should manifest an "absolute conformity to reason and moral order." Closely linked to the "mean" and the "point of rest," and capitalizing upon the notion of character-contrast is the device called the foil. Frequently the "point of rest" character, a minor figure, will serve as a foil to the protagonist in one of two ways:

The minor figure has its own individuality, but that individuality contains one essential quality which is either the opposite of some important trait in the major character and therefore throws that trait into relief, or is a quality possessed and valued by the major character and therefore makes a bond of sympathy between the two.²⁸

A foil is a far less subtle device than the "point of rest," restricted, as it usually is, to one trait and one character; yet, in as much as it is a "point of vital comparison by which we measure and feel ... relationships," it is included in the "point of rest." Other less important dramatic devices that contribute to the efficacy of the "point of rest" will be pointed out as we analyze the natures and the functions of Friar Laurence, Kent, and Horatio in their respective plays.

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch offers us a fitting thought on the fundamental nature and necessity of the "point of rest" with which we may conclude this exposition of the theory:

28 T. B. L. Webster, Sophocles, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1936, 87.

Even in Shakespeare's most terrific and seismic inventions--when, as in Hamlet or in Lear, he seems to be breaking up the solid earth under our feet--there is always some point and standard of sanity to which all enormities and passionate errors are referred by us, albeit unconsciously, for correction; on which the agitated mind of the spectator settles back as upon its centre of gravity.²⁹

29 Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, Cambridge Lectures, J.M. Dent and Sons, London, 1943, 172.

CHAPTER II

FRIAR LAURENCE -- PEACEFUL FOCUS

The very mention of the names, Romeo and Juliet, suggests even to the least imaginative mind, a peerless moonlit night, a Venetian balcony scene, and a pair of romantic, young lovers. Romeo and Juliet are love incarnate; youthful love that knows no bounds, but tragic love that ends in death. Shakespeare's beautiful but pitiful story of the "star-cross'd lovers" has caught the fancy of the world and held it for over three hundred years. In Shakespeare's own time, it was staged with great success and its popularity has never waned. The recent motion picture of the story was acclaimed by critics who were thrilled by the poetry of the lines, as well as by those who ignored the finer points but liked a touching story.

The essence of this universal appeal lies in the fact that the play is a "eulogy of youth."¹ Coleridge speaking of Romeo and Juliet says very well:

...all is youth and spring: youth with its follies, its virtues, its precipitations; spring with its odours, its flowers, and its transiency: it is one and the same feeling that commences, goes through, and ends the play. The old men,

1 L.M. Watt, Attic and Elizabethan Tragedy, J. M. Dent and Co., London, 1908, 243.

the Capulets and the Montagues, are not common old men; they have an eagerness, a heartiness, a vehemence, the effect of spring: with Romeo, his change of passion, his sudden marriage, and his rash death, are all the effects of youth; whilst in Juliet love has all that is tender and melancholy in the nightingale, all that is voluptuous in the rose, with whatever is sweet in the freshness of spring; but it ends with a long deep sigh, like the last breeze of an Italian evening.²

Though the spirit of the play be that of the springtime, still we know that the action takes place during July in the middle of a sultry, Italian summer. The bothersome flies and sticky climate increase the irritability of the Montagues and Capulets who quarrel with one another in the streets of Verona. Old feuds break out and old animosities are enkindled. Tempers are short, and words are sharp and biting. The play becomes a veritable kaleidoscope of passions as the tempestuous Tybalt, the impatient old Capulet, the fickle, loquacious nurse, the voluble Mercutio, and servants aping their masters, speak their piece upon the stage. We find, however, that

...the prevalence of extreme hate serves of course to generate the opposite extreme; out of the most passionate and fatal enmities there naturally springs a love as passionate and fatal.³

2 H.N. Hudson, Shakespeare, Ginn and Co., Boston, 1872, Vol. II, 210.

3 Ibid., 210.

It seems that all of the passions in the play beginning with the overpowering love that Romeo and Juliet feel for one another come close to the absolute extreme. Even Juliet expresses a fear regarding the nature of their love:

It is too rash, too unadvis'd, too sudden,
Too like the lightning, which doth cease
to be
Ere one can say it lightens.⁴

Shakespeare was well aware of the "fiery-footed"⁵ and unmanageable passions that threatened to stampede his drama and turn it from an artistic piece of work into a hodgepodge of human irregularities. Improving upon his immediate source, Arthur Brooke's long narrative poem published in 1562, Shakespeare softened the character of Friar Laurence into a wise and friendly counsellor, and left no hint of the prejudiced, bigoted picture of the priest that Brooke had drawn. In Friar Laurence we find the "point of rest." We lose much of the value of the character if we do not keep vividly in our minds the seething atmosphere of love and hate in which he has been placed and in which he is forced to move.

Shakespeare painted a very clear picture of the Friar and we would do well to examine this character before looking

⁴ Romeo and Juliet, Act II, sc. 2, ll. 118-120.

⁵ Hudson, 210.

at his relations with and influence upon others. One commentator says of him that he

...is a very tower of light reared in colossal grandeur over Life's tempestuous ocean...his kindness attracted men; his wisdom retained them; his grace sent them better and braver away. He is a splendid example of calmness that moderated anxiety without partaking of its character, of strength...of sacrifice...⁶
He is a finished product of monasticism.⁶

Another eulogizes him in this way:

Calm, thoughtful, benevolent, withdrawing from the world, that he may benefit society the more for being out of it...Sympathizing quietly yet deeply with the very feelings in others which in the stillness of thought he has subdued in himself.⁷

When we hear such tributes of praise for an individual, we are apt to lose sight of the fact that he is an individual. He might appear to be the personification of good counsel, but Shakespeare's artistry is greater than that. Friar Laurence by going against one of his earlier counsels, indirectly at least, brings about the death of the lovers. The Friar has a passion of his own, "love of subtle management."⁸ When Romeo first came to him, he might have tried to persuade him

6 Cotter, Shakespeare's Art, Robert Clarke Co., Cincinnati, 1903, 75-76.

7 Hudson, 225.

8 Snider, The Shakespearian Drama, The Tragedies, Sigma Publishing Co., St. Louis, 1887, 63.

to bring the whole affair into the open by obtaining parental permission. This approach probably would have failed but he would have been acting more as the religious and less as the prudent philosopher.⁹ His use of deception in the case of Juliet's death, if it did not lead him into falsehood, at least betrayed him into dangerous ambiguity. Stricter action would have brought the issue to a head sooner and would have been more Christian though probably no more successful.

Still, Shakespeare's injection of foibles into a seemingly perfect character enables him to portray life more dramatically. Friar Laurence, who to the audience is the "true normal" or "mean" character, whose prime principle of life is the shunning of all excess, "ne quid nimis," himself falls into an excess which had a great influence on the action. The dramatic irony inherent in the situation is reminiscent of the great Greek playwrights who frequently made use of that device.

To continue to speak of the "point of rest" character in general terms alone is of no avail toward proving that he does play an important role in Romeo and Juliet, that he is truly a center of tranquillity in the midst of passionate extremes. Accordingly it would be better to examine the play,

9 Ibid., 63.

and with the atmosphere and preceding action in mind, to see the "point of rest" in a live setting.

The first time that we meet Friar Laurence is in the third scene of the second act. It might be objected that such a belated appearance of the character who is supposed to act as a norm for the other characters in the play would argue against the theory. This might be true in another play but we must consider the situation in the concrete and see whether dramatic necessity would favor the late appearance. Prior to the third scene of the second act, we have seen how the quick-tempered constituents of the Montague and Capulet households are ready to fight on the least pretext. The entrance of the Prince and his words of warning assure us that this is not their first offense and that the enmity existing between the two houses is more than surface deep. The Prince's speech is strong, and we cannot help but feel that its strength is proportionate to the mutual hate that inspired the outburst.

Following upon this action, we have a good instance of what we might call Shakespeare's dramatic parsimony. The transition from the theme of hatred to that of Romeo's love-sickness is hardly smooth. We would expect more comments upon the dueling that has just taken place, but Lady Montague breaks in abruptly with

O' Where is Romeo? Saw you him today?¹⁰

Immediately we leave the serious, tragic world of bitter hate and flashing swords to enter the mock-tragic sphere that Romeo dwells in. Our hero is lovesick and to make his situation even more ludicrous, the zenith of perfections on which he has set his fancy does not seem to be encouraging his attention in the least.

The next few scenes introduce us to more of the important characters and special emphasis of course is given to Juliet. Shakespeare seems very anxious to bring out the fact that Juliet is young, very young. She is not fourteen years old yet and that statement is made not once but several times, by her father, her mother, and, after careful reckoning, by the nurse. Juliet until now has had no suitors and is not yet thinking seriously of marriage, but the "valiant Paris" asks for her hand. Her mother encourages her to think favorably of him and consider his offer.

We see how skilfully Shakespeare has set the stage. The young, precipitant Romeo who is dominated by one passion, love, is forced by his very nature into love-bewilderment until he meets the proper object for his affections.¹¹ The

10 Act I, sc. 1, l. 122.

11 Hudson, 216.

fresh, wholesome, more youthful but more mature Juliet has been told to "think of marriage"¹² and comes to her father's feast looking for the proper object. It is a question of "love at first sight." Romeo has been smitten and exclaims:

Did my heart love till now? Forswear
it, sight!
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this
night.¹³

Juliet is the more reserved in their first meeting but subsequent conversation with the nurse reveals that she too has fallen deeply in love. The firmness and constancy of her love are established when she reflects:

My only love sprung from my only hate!
Too early seen unknown, and known too late!
Prodigious birth of love it is to me
That I must love a loathed enemy.¹⁴

Love has conquered hate.

In the familiar balcony scene of the second act, we find the lovers in an ecstasy. Deliriously happy in one another's company, they cannot help but reflect that a barrier of hate stands between their union. Yet, they hope to overleap this hurdle and, pledging their love again and again, make a pact to get married the next day. The spirit of the whole scene is on an emotional plane that has no counterpart in this world.

12 Act I, sc. 3, l. 69.

13 Act I, sc. 5, ll. 56-57.

14 Act I, sc. 5, ll. 142-145.

Still, Juliet's exits and entrances and the numerous good-nights are intensely human.

Immediately following upon this romantic scene with its protestations of love, true love, love strengthened by the thought of the sacrifices it will entail, we see a tall figure shrouded in a dull-brown religious habit walk slowly upon the stage. As he turns toward the audience, the first rays of morning light up a thin, drawn face and the sharp features but kindly eyes of a man about sixty. The dramatic effect of his entrance is striking. For the first time since the start of the play, the audience sits back in their chairs to listen to the words of wisdom which must inevitably flow from such a person.

The youth of the lovers, all the headlong passions of the play, the reckless love and the savage hate, are accentuated by having found their counterpart in the calm, thoughtful face of this old man. It can hardly be denied that Shakespeare was very much aware of the effect that Friar Laurence's venerable presence would have upon the audience. No artist could expect to sustain the high pitch of emotion that we experienced up until this scene. Shakespeare has been appealing to the heart but now he will speak to the mind. The Friar reflects through thirty lines and the very length of his soliloquy would tend to calm the movement of the play were not his words

charged with meaning for that purpose.

We have the answer to an earlier question. Not only is Shakespeare justified in delaying the entrance of Friar Laurence, the norm, but in this play the extremes are thrown into even bolder relief just because they were allowed "free play" during an act and a half before being referred to the "mean." The poet takes full advantage of the Friar's general appearance and simplicity of life to produce this dramatic effect.

Just as important as the startling contrast that we encounter in this scene, is the establishment of what we might call "character-tone." "First impressions are lasting" and the poet has been careful to make sure that we recognize the Friar for what he is, a wise, sympathetic, old priest. He is always calm, always in command of himself and the situation even when sane heads would be excused for losing their composure. We notice that Shakespeare has used a very clever device in handling this character whom we have designated the "point of rest." Though the poet does not always follow this plan in all his plays, still, in this instance he has given marvelous depth to Friar Laurence by making him his mouthpiece. The action of the play, the passions of the individuals are turbulent, as we have observed. Everyone is taken up with and

absorbed in the immediate present. But here in the midst of the material, sensible things of this world, Shakespeare introduces a character who is given to reflection, who in ordinary speech utters divine truths that are spoken for all time. The words of Friar Laurence are eminently applicable to this or that particular action in the play, but in addition, they transcend all individual actions so that even when they are out of context, they may be appreciated thoroughly. In this respect, Friar Laurence plays the role of the ancient chorus expressing as he does

...the leading idea of the piece in all its fulness, namely, that excess in any enjoyment, however pure in itself, transforms its sweet into bitterness; that devotion to any single feeling, however noble, bespeaks its ascendancy; that this ascendancy moves the man and woman out of their natural spheres; that love can only be an accompaniment to life, and that it cannot completely fill out the life and business of man especially; that in the full power of its first feeling it is a paroxysm of happiness, the very nature of which forbids its continuance in equal strength.¹⁵

These are deep, universal thoughts that win our instantaneous assent as well as our admiration for the speaker. Of course, the Friar does not utter all of them in his first soliloquy but the core is there in the lines:

15 G.G. Gervinus, Shakespeare Commentaries, Smith Elder and Co., London, 1875, 211.

Nor aught so good but strain'd from that
 fair use
 Revolts from true birth, stumbling on
 abuse:
 Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied.¹⁶

By investing the "point of rest" character with the role of mouthpiece, Shakespeare has devitalized him to an extent, but by making him a counsellor for both Romeo and Juliet and the formulator of a desperate plan as well, he has made him a real individual. The weightiest objection to the "point of rest" theory lies in this double, apparently contradictory, function that the "point of rest" must perform. He must be an individual as well as a norm. Shakespeare's handling of the character is the best reply to the difficulty and we shall call attention to significant points.

We see then that by the time Friar Laurence has arrived at the last lines of his soliloquy, the dramatist has produced two effects: he has brought us into touch with reality by contrasting the extremes represented by Romeo, Juliet, and, to varying degrees, by other characters, with the "mean"; and he has established a lasting impression upon the audience with regard to the tone of the Friar's character. Unconsciously, we mark the Friar out as a sturdy individual, one who will do nothing exciting or startling in the play but one who will

¹⁶ Act II, sc. 3, ll. 19-21.

probably be around to supply wise counsel should any one need it. He can be depended on for his sanity. In a soliloquy a character has no need for dissimulation, so that we are justified in forming our ideas about the Friar from his opening lines.

Far more interesting than the Friar's observations upon the power in plants and the "opposed camps" of "grace and rude will"¹⁷ in every man is his short interview with Romeo. The "true normal" is supposed to be the average man not only in his moral conduct but also in his reactions to different situations. Throughout this scene, the Friar "takes the words out of our mouths" time and again. For instance, we have to smile when, after calling attention to the fact that it is still very early in the morning, he greets Romeo with the lines:

...thy earliness doth me assure
 Thou art up-rous'd by some distemp'rature;
 Or if not so, then here I hit it right,
 Our Romeo hath not been in bed to-night.¹⁸

The Friar, for all his abstract wisdom, is not out of touch with the world of reality. Now we begin to understand better why a young lad like Romeo puts such great confidence in him and seeks him out first of all. Romeo cannot confide in his parents but we would expect him to reveal his secret to his best friend.

17 Act II, sc. 3, ll. 27-28.

18 Act II, sc. 3, ll. 39-42.

After Romeo tells the Friar that he wants to marry Juliet that day, Shakespeare voices the audience's reaction to all this haste as the Friar exclaims:

Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here;
 Is Rosaline, whom thou didst love so dear,
 So soon forsaken? young men's love then lies
 Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.
 Jesu Maria! what a deal of brine
 Hath wash'd thy sallow cheeks for Rosaline;
 How much salt water thrown away in waste,
 To season love, that of it did not taste!
 The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears,
 Thy old groans ring yet in my ancient
 ears...
 And art thou chang'd?¹⁹

Shakespeare lessens the audience's incredulity at Romeo's sudden shift of affections by bringing the objection into the open this way. Yet, he does not propose the objection without being able to reason it away. The Friar was accustomed to chide Romeo "For doting, not for loving."²⁰ The implication is that perhaps this is true love since Juliet "doth grace for grace and love for love allow."²¹ Then too, this marriage might be a great force for good since it may effect a happy alliance between the two warring households. The Friar has all his answers to the objection and in his contentment with the situation, we too find our satisfaction. We should remark here about the human touch in the Friar's words which helps

19 Act II, sc. 3, ll. 65-79.

20 Act II, sc. 3, l. 82.

21 Act II, sc. 3, l. 86.

to individualize his character.

The closing couplet for this scene is characteristic of the contrast between the two men, between youth and age, between acting on impulse and acting after reflection, between one who is green in the ways of life and one who is mellow with experience:

Rom: O, let us hence; I stand on sudden
haste.

Fri. L.: Wisely and slow; they stumble
that run fast.²²

Of course, many of the conclusions that we draw about the "point of rest" and its function are bits of knowledge that the audience is acquiring unconsciously. We are not aware during the enacting of a scene of all the impressions that we are receiving, but afterwards we can reflect and make those impressions explicit. It would defeat the dramatist's purpose if the "point of rest" called attention to itself because we have seen that it should heighten our appreciation of the main characters. It should not distract.

At the close of this scene, then, it must be granted that we have reacted in much this way: unconsciously we have aligned ourselves with Friar Laurence as being Romeo's sanest and best friend, and as being an individual who is concerned

with Romeo's interests much as we are; we have formed a judgment of the Friar's unimpressive but solid character that will require very little altering as subsequent events will prove; we have been more impressed by Romeo's youthful, passionate character because of the contrast that the Friar offered. The "point of rest" has run true to form so far because as the scene ends, our attention is riveted upon Romeo and we fear for his future alone. Though the Friar has won our hearts and we appreciate his siding with Romeo in this enterprise, there is not the same concern for his safety. He faces the "exciting and trying circumstances of the drama with the regard of pure reason, justice, and virtue."²³

The next appearance of Friar Laurence serves one main purpose. The marriage of the two lovers loses much of its rashness because it receives the blessing of the Church. Still, Romeo's eagerness and impetuosity have not abated, and the Friar must remind him:

These violent delights have violent ends...
Therefore love moderately.²⁴

We should reflect that Friar Laurence never had much choice in this matter. He probably learned long ago that it was useless to try to reason with Romeo and he was not free to reveal

23 Patmore, 16.

24 Act II, sc. 6, ll. 9 and 14.

an entrusted secret. Had he refused to marry them, sin or suicide would have been the result.²⁵ However he does not enter into this scheme without some trepidation:

So smile the heaven upon this holy act,
That after hours with sorrow chide us
not!²⁶

He is aware that he is taking a chance in his effort to effect a reconciliation between the warring families, the Montagues and Capulets. Under the circumstances, though, anyone would excuse him. Furthermore, we would do wrong to think that his efficiency as a "mean" is destroyed by this action. We may accuse him of a slight imprudence but his whole character and manner of deportment are such that we can still use him as a norm to measure the other characters and their more passionate excesses.

The intervening action before the Friar's next appearance is tragic. The newly-wed Romeo encounters Tybalt and refuses the latter's offer to fight. Mercutio accepts the challenge and is slain as Romeo interferes and tries to stop the duellists. Romeo loses his self-control completely when Tybalt begins to gloat over his victory. The ensuing duel sees the death of Tybalt and Romeo's flight. The Prince pronounces the decree of banishment for Romeo. When the nurse brings

25 Snider, 62.

26 Act II, sc. 6, ll. 1-2.

the doleful news to Juliet, she tells an ambiguous tale that irritates the frayed nerves of the anxious girl. Even the audience, impatient of any delay in the action, resents the procrastinations of the loquacious messenger. Juliet is on the verge of despair as the scene ends.

At the opening of the third scene of act two, we find that Romeo also is distraught. We would expect more heroism in so great a lover but Romeo has broken down under two tests so far: first, the unrequited love for Rosaline and now the lack of self-control when confronted with Mercutio's slayer.²⁷ He will not listen to reason and even makes an attempt to stab himself. What is the effect that Friar Laurence, the "point of rest," has upon this madman? Patmore had said that the "point of rest" character was

...a peaceful focus radiating the calm of moral solution throughout all the difficulties and disasters of surrounding fate: a vital centre, which like that of a great wheel, has little motion in itself, but which at once transmits and controls the fierce revolution of the circumference.²⁸

We have our best illustration of that aspect of the "point of rest" in this scene because one minute Romeo, brandishing a

27 Snider, 65.

28 Patmore, 16.

knife, cries out in torment:

O, tell me, friar, tell me,
 In what vile part of this anatomy
 Doth my name lodge? tell me, that I
 may sack
 The hateful mansion.²⁹

and shortly afterwards when his hopes have been buoyed up,
 he exclaims in an entirely different tone:

But what a joy past joy calls out on me,
 It were a grief, so brief to part with
 thee.³⁰

Only the blissful prospect of meeting Juliet can tear Romeo
 away from the soothing, comforting influence of Friar Laurence.

This scene is admirably constructed and well worth our
 consideration. We notice that as long as Romeo speaks and
 dwells upon his miserable situation, he finds no comfort. At
 first he parries every argument that Friar Laurence offers,
 obsessed with one idea, "he is banished." He accounts it no
 benefit that the sentence was not death. In fact banishment
 is worse because it is a living death. In lines twenty-nine
 to fifty-one, he waxes eloquent over his wretched fortune
 rising to an emotional climax in the lines:

'Banished!'
 O friar! the damned use that word in
 hell;
 Howlings attend it: how hast thou the
 heart,

29 Act III, sc. 3, ll. 104-107.

30 Act III, sc. 3, ll. 172-173.

Being a divine, a ghostly confessor,
 A sin-absolver, and my friend profess'd,
 To mangle me with that word 'banished?'³¹

His feeling is intense and we, the audience, experience a great deal of his soul's agitation. He scoffs at the thought of philosophizing and rails at the friar:

Thou canst not speak of that thou dost
 not feel.³²

The entrance of the nurse breaks their heated discussion for a moment but her report only deepens Romeo's misery. Finally, his attempt at suicide is the turning-point in the scene. No longer does Friar Laurence permit Romeo to speak. The situation demands strong language that will open the eyes of Romeo to his weakness and self-pity. The Friar rises to the occasion. His appeal to Romeo to "play the man" commands the boy's attention, kindles a flame of self-respect in the boy's breast, but more important, wins an uninterrupted hearing for the counsellor. He calls him a coward, in as many words, points out that his protestations of love are but "hollow perjury,"³³ and gives him motives for being happy. His plan is simple: Romeo should meet Juliet, comfort her, and then depart to Mantua where he should remain until a pardon can be obtained from the Prince. Romeo is won over and speaks a few brief

31 Act III, sc. 3, ll. 45-50.

32 Act III, sc. 3, l. 63.

33 Act III, sc. 3, l. 127.

lines before the scene closes on a note of hopefulness. .

Once again we have been witnesses to a remarkable contrast between two characters. Romeo practically ran the gamut of emotions in this scene. His gloominess, despair, wilfulness, passionateness, and in general, emotional fluctuation, are all accentuated in view of the optimism, hopefulness, reasonableness, and steadiness that characterize the Friar. We lose something of our admiration for Romeo but his great capacity for love has long since won our hearts and we retain our liking for him.

It would seem that most of the lovers' problems were solved by the Friar's careful plan. However the very next scene in which old Capulet pledges his daughter's hand to Paris forces the drama to its tragic climax. The day is Monday and Juliet will be wed on Thursday. Shakespeare now turns the spotlight from Romeo and plays it upon his fair young wife. We have forgotten her extreme youth and feel that she is a mature woman as she approaches and encounters this crisis in her life.

The nurse displays her true colors as a counsellor when she advises Juliet to go ahead with the marriage to Paris. "There are few things sadder than the sight of the fine soul

turning to the vulgar soul in moments of need."³⁴ Juliet recognizes that evil counsel for what it is and determines to see the Friar:

I'll to the friar, to know his remedy:
If all else fail, myself have power to
die.³⁵

The nurse is sharply contrasted with the Friar all through the play but here especially are her worldliness, expediency, and lack of principle most evident. As a counsellor, at least, she is a foil to Friar Laurence.

Somehow it is a comfort to us, the audience, to know that Juliet will have recourse to the priest. He was able to help Romeo, and now, he will help Juliet. In any case we are happy that this girl, who has been buffeted by misfortune and who can hardly take an objective view of the situation, is seeking help from the wise, old Friar. His cell once more is a haven of refuge for a miserable soul.

Juliet meets the priest but considers herself "past hope, past cure, past help."³⁶ We should note that hers is a more restrained, self-controlled grief than that which Romeo exhibited in the Friar's cell a few scenes earlier. She

34 John Masefield, William Shakespeare, Henry Holt and Co., New York, 1911, 74.

35 Act III, sc. 5, ll. 241-242.

36 Act IV, sc. 1, l. 45.

begs for a plan but adds:

If in thy wisdom thou canst give no help,
Do thou but call my resolution wise,
And with this knife I'll help it
presently.³⁷

The very thought of suicide takes on added heinousness in the light of the Friar's presence. His hope, his faith, his trust in God rebel at the idea and we know that he will not consider it even for a moment. Rather does he unfold his desperate plan concerning the drug which Juliet must take. After forty-two hours of apparent death, she will awaken and be re-united with Romeo. Her parting words to the Friar also reflect a rejuvenated spirit:

Love give me strength! and strength shall
help afford.
Farewell, dear father!³⁸

From the very desperateness of the Friar's plan, we can easily reason to Juliet's state of mind and to the Friar's opinion of her. Her love for Romeo is excessive and no solution may be found outside of that love. The answer lies in her love. It will give her the superhuman strength necessary to execute the plan perfectly. The Friar knows he is dealing with a determined individual who because of her maturity is probably harder to handle than the impulsive Romeo. By appealing to the heroic nature of her love, he is able to send the girl

37 Act IV, sc. 1, ll. 52-54.

38 Act IV, sc. 1, ll. 125-126.

away comforted and hopeful.

On Wednesday evening Juliet drinks the drug and appears to have died. The Friar again acts as the "point of tranquillity" when he puts a stop to the exaggerated expressions of grief uttered by the Capulets, Paris, and the nurse. He bids them think of Juliet's happiness in heaven and of her great advancement which was their prime desire. His words of consolation are well calculated to relieve the grief of the mourners presuming that they have Juliet's best interests at heart. "Our loss is heaven's gain" is his theme:

For though fond nature bids us all lament,
Yet nature's tears are reason's merriment.³⁹

Meanwhile Romeo has learned of Juliet's supposed death and returning to the tomb where her body lies, commits suicide before she wakes. Romeo fails in the third test of his self-control just as he was found wanting in the other two. Yet, he was a lover unto death and this heroic side of his character overshadows all his defects.⁴⁰

Friar Laurence arrives too late to stop Romeo's self-destruction. As Juliet wakes from her "unnatural sleep," the priest must inform her:

39 Act IV, sc. 5, ll. 82-83.

40 Snider, 74.

A greater power than we can contradict
Hath thwarted our intents...
...come, I'll dispose of thee
Among a sisterhood of holy nuns.⁴¹

Even in this black hour the Friar has counsel to offer but this time we feel sure that Juliet will not accept it because it entails separation from her love. She stabs herself and dies.

Despite Friar Laurence's wise counsel, the lovers have come to a tragic end. Were it not for his plans, for the hope he held out to them, this tragic end would have occurred long ago. Each time they were in trouble, they fled to him and received consolation but when Romeo failed to consult the Friar in the last act, he was led badly astray. Love had made the lovers one and it is inconceivable that Juliet should live on without her Romeo.

Friar Laurence, as we have seen, is an excellent example of the "point of rest" theory, perhaps the best. He fulfills the prescriptions laid down by Coventry Patmore almost to the letter. Only once do we experience any concern for the Friar's welfare and that is at the end of the play when he confesses to his share in the plot, but our fears quickly dissipate when the Prince assures us that he intends to take no action against the priest. Otherwise, the Friar "stands out of the stream

⁴¹ Act V, sc. 3, ll. 153-157.

of the main interest," is unimpressive in himself, and is a "peaceful focus radiating the calm of moral solution throughout all the difficulties and disasters of surrounding fate."

CHAPTER III

KENT -- EYE OF THE TRAGIC STORM

The tragedy of King Lear has elicited from the greatest and sanest Shakespearean critics almost contradictory estimations. For example, how can we reconcile these statements: "tremendous, awe-inspiring creation of genius," "an almost superhuman flight of genius," "grandest and noblest of his dramas," "too huge for the stage," "hastily and carelessly written," "ill-constructed," "full of improbabilities"? A.C. Bradley, however, has made an excellent distinction to solve our problem. Bradley calls Lear "Shakespeare's greatest achievement" but "not his best play."¹ The point is this: Shakespeare's Lear is big but it has its defects. In fact its defects may spring out of its "peculiar greatness," as Bradley observes:

...that which makes the peculiar greatness of King Lear,--the immense scope of the work; the mass and variety of intense experience which it contains; the interpenetration of sublime imagination, piercing pathos, and humour almost as moving as the pathos; the vastness of the convulsion both of nature and of human passion; the vagueness of the scene where the action takes place, and of the movements of the

1 A.C. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy, Macmillan and Co., London, 1932, 244.

figures which cross this scene; the strange atmosphere, cold and dark, which strikes on us as we enter this scene, enfolding these figures and magnifying their dim outlines like a winter mist; the half-realised suggestions of vast universal powers working in the world of universal fates and passions,--all this interferes with dramatic clearness even when the play is read.²

Bradley follows up these remarks by saying that while the other tragedies of Shakespeare are essentially dramatic, Lear is "imperfectly dramatic," balking at effective stage presentation, demanding rather a "purely imaginative realisation."³ Perhaps this analysis is not exact but we know that King Lear has not the popularity of Hamlet, or Othello, for instance. The reason for this hinges around the argument of those who feel that Lear should not be acted: the narrow confines of the stage fail to realize all the potential majesty, power, sublimity that the tragedy of King Lear actually contains. Very few critics will say that King Lear is not a good play when acted, and fewer will contend that Lear was not written for the stage. The bare stage of Shakespeare's day was a fitter medium for the presentation of this play which relies heavily upon the imagination of the audience to supply what is wanting in scenery and technical effects. Stage-managers and producers today in trying to do too much along

2 Ibid., 247.

3 Ibid., 248.

these lines, end by doing too little.

Another consideration might be that Shakespeare overstepped himself when he tried to crowd into the "two hours' traffic of our stage" the effective representation of two instances of filial impiety,--monstrous crimes--, the evolution of a mighty character like Lear from the heights of self-sufficiency to the lowlands of thoughtfulness of others, a whole host of well-developed characters who have major roles, the clash of two armies, and penetrating the whole piece, the roaring of a great, wild storm. In any case we must admit: Lear is big.

Now, if we grant our first principle, "All harmony is founded on a relation to rest--relative rest," we are forced to the conclusion that if ever a play had a dramatic need for a "point of rest," it is this tragedy of King Lear with its disparate and titanic elements. A single reading of the work reveals that the Earl of Kent, because of his nature and the function he performs, is the "point of rest." Coventry Patmore remarks:

The unobtrusive character of Kent is, as it were, the eye of the tragic storm which rages around it; and the departure in various directions, of every character more or less from moderation, rectitude, or sanity, is the more clearly understood or felt from

our more or less conscious reference to him.⁴

We have observed already that there is a greater demand for a "point of rest" in a tragedy than in a comedy because of the stronger appeal to the emotions. Moreover, within the tragedy itself, we should expect the "point of rest" to operate most especially during those acts or scenes in which the emotions are most agitated and are most likely to throw the whole work off-balance. In Lear, certainly, the most daring scenes are those in the midst of the storm when Lear's mind begins to unsettle, so we shall place special emphasis upon that action which may also be said to contribute immensely to the "peculiar greatness" of Lear.

Unlike Friar Laurence, who did not appear until the middle of the second act, Kent speaks the opening words in this play and has the second-last speech at the end. He occupies a central, though not prominent, position throughout. That may explain why Patmore could call him an "eye," and yet, "unobtrusive."

There is an important element that should be taken into consideration whenever Kent's character is commented upon. The setting for King Lear was supposed to be hundreds of years

⁴ Patmore, 14-15.

before the Christian era. These people have not undergone the softening influence that Christian beliefs and ideals usually exercise upon even the most barbaric tribes. They know nothing of the "passive" Christian virtues, humility, resignation, etc. Before Christ, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" was the law. Anything like submissiveness was sheer cowardice. A child of this environment can hardly be expected to manifest all the amenities of the Christian virtues. Basic natural qualities like loyalty, love, and courage, were highly respected and would constitute the backbone of the generally accepted moral code. We should not wonder then when Kent seems to carry his virtue to excess, hardly displaying an "absolute conformity to reason and the moral order," as we interpret the words. Rather we should wonder that Shakespeare dared to Christianize him as much as he did because Kent "is perhaps the nearest to perfect goodness in all Shakespeare's characters."⁵ A perfectly Christian character would have been out of place in that atmosphere.

In the first scene, therefore, Kent seems blunt and tactless in the way he rebukes the king. Yet, we feel that here is one who truly loves the king and seeks only to give him wise counsel. Kent realizes that he is running a risk

5 S.T. Coleridge, Lectures and Notes on Shakespeare and Other Dramatists, Oxford University Press, London, 1931, 168.

in opposing his wilful lord but he takes the chance and asks the king:

Think'st thou that duty shall have dread
to speak
When power to flatter bows? To plainness
honour's bound,
When majesty falls to folly.⁶

We should notice the repetition of the word, "plainness." Lear earlier had used the word when speaking of Cordelia, but now Kent echoes it as the fittest word to describe his own normal course of acting. In the second act, Kent speaking to the Duke of Cornwall says:

Sir, 'tis my occupation to be plain.⁷

Cornwall replies:

He cannot flatter, he;
An honest mind and plain, he must speak
truth!⁸

At this time Kent is in disguise, but the audience is well aware that Cornwall unconsciously has given a perfect description of Kent and his action in the first scene of the play. Kent's statement of the plain truth and of salutary counsel is contrasted with the hypocrisy of the sisters. When he praises the king, there is a true ring in his voice, a manliness and a sincerity that do not fail to impress:

Royal Lear,
Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,

6 Act I, sc. 1, ll. 149-151.

7 Act II, sc. 2, l. 98.

8 Act II, sc. 2, ll. 104-105.

Lov'd as my father, as my master follow'd,
 As my great patron thought on in my
 prayers...⁹

Even during the "impetuous outburst against Lear" which follows, Kent is "still dignified, collected, and cool."¹⁰ Though Shakespeare has had no time to reveal the nuances of Kent's character which will make us appreciate and love him the more, still his general character is established early in the play.

Lear's action in rejecting Cordelia and banishing Kent cannot but draw the disapproval of the audience which has not yet seen the suffering Lear, and so, can feel no pity for this head-strong monarch. Lear is a rash individual and

It is the character of rash passion to cause violent mental shocks without sufficient grounds. The poet knew this well, and he has, therefore, contrasted this rash passion of Lear with the just and well-founded rage of the brave Kent.¹¹

Kent dares to oppose the king, and Lear tells him in as many words that he never yet has changed his mind once he made a decision. Kent is banished for his boldness. If he does not heed the sentence, his life is forfeit. We marvel at the almost indifferent attitude of the Earl when he hears these words. He possesses a "mastery over nature and inclination" and suppressing "his indignation and sense of injury, continues

⁹ Act I, sc. 1, ll. 141-144.

¹⁰ Harley Granville-Barker, Prefaces to Shakespeare, Sidgwick and Jackson, London, 1927, First Series, 194.

¹¹ Gervinus, 624.

to serve his outcast master," as we shall see.¹² It is difficult for us to imagine anyone so calm and cool under those trying circumstances that he should take his farewell in these mild words to the king, tender words to Cordelia, and very courteous words to Goneril and Regan:

Fare thee well, king; sith thus thou
wilt appear,
Freedom lives hence, and banishment is
here.

(To Cordelia) The gods to their dear
shelter take thee, maid,
That justly think'st, and hast more
rightly said!

(To Goneril and Regan) And your large
speeches may your deeds approve,
That good effects may spring from words
of love.

Thus Kent, O princes! bids you all adieu;
He'll shape his old course in a country
new.¹³

The remainder of the scene concerns itself with the betrothal of the dowerless Cordelia to the King of France after her rejection by Burgundy. In the closing lines, Goneril and Regan plan to show a united front against the old king who indulges his whims and fits of passion. When the scene closes, we realize that unconsciously we have taken the side of Kent and Cordelia, and we suspect the "large speeches" of the sisters as being sheer flattery. Kent has been wronged

¹² Ibid., 631.

¹³ Act I, sc. 1, ll. 183-190.

and wins our sympathy. Lear has done the wronging and deserves our censure. We should not forget, as the play progresses, that Lear, though he may be "a man more sinned against than sinning," nevertheless, through his "fatal weakness, error, and wrong-doing" has merited, or at least given sufficient cause for, his final catastrophe.¹⁴

Upon reflection we find that, so far, Kent, as the "point of rest," has been in dramatic operation in two ways especially. First, his actions have been contrasted with those of other characters in the play, Lear's wilfulness, Goneril and Regan's flattery, and even the Duke of Burgundy's weakness of character in respecting a dowry more than Cordelia herself. Kent would not have acted thus; he lives by nobler principles. Secondly, we have sided with Kent and Cordelia as representing the forces of good in this play which later on will develop more sharply into a struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil.

With every scene that passes, we find one or other character making the choice between good and evil. In the second scene, Edmund shows that he intends to play the subtle villain and wrong his virtuous, unsuspecting brother, Edgar. Edmund tricks their father, Gloucester, duping him with a

14 Bradley, 280-281.

forged letter. In the third scene, the time-serving Oswald, Goneril's steward, makes his first appearance. We shall not be able to treat him at any length but commentators agree with Coleridge that he "should be placed in exact antithesis to Kent as the only character of utter irredeemable baseness in Shakespeare."¹⁵

This short third scene affords a fine contrast with the opening lines of the fourth. Goneril expresses her irritation with the unreasonableness of her father and advises the steward to treat the king disrespectfully. She will answer for it. Then, in the fourth scene, Kent enters disguised and says:

Now banish'd Kent,
If thou canst serve where thou dost stand
 condemn'd,
So may it come, thy master, whom thou
 lov'st,
Shall find thee full of labours.¹⁶

Kent has every reason to be angry with the king and seek to wrong him, while Goneril has every reason to love her father and strive to please him, but the two characters respect other motives than the most obvious ones. Goneril is selfish.

Kent is

...charitable, free; the man who is
ruled by the good, not by some wrong

¹⁵ Coleridge, Lectures on Shakespeare, 169-170.

¹⁶ Act I, sc. 4, ll. 4-7.

action of another man toward himself. Kent has no revenge for what he has suffered from the king, has not even indifference after such treatment. Injustice drives him not to requital, but to the more active charity; here he over-tops Cordelia, and places himself upon the summit of human conduct. From this altitude we can look down upon all the other characters of the drama, and behold them at various stages of the ascent. Such is, clearly, the standard of the poet, which we too must have in mind for measuring his work.¹⁷

The disguised Kent meets the king and offers his services. His self-recommendations border upon self-deprecation but he represents himself as a plain character, probably realizing that even under disguise, he cannot alter to any great extent his ordinary mode of acting. Lear accepts him into his service and we find the new servant, Caius, tripping up Oswald and being rewarded for the deed. Before the scene closes, Lear has called down his terrible curse upon Goneril for her disrespect and ingratitude. The sins of this daughter are the more unpardonable when we think of how Kent, a stranger, loves and respects his king. Lear determines to leave immediately for Regan's house where he expects a warmer welcome. Kent is sent ahead as a messenger to announce his coming.

17 Snider, 164.

Meanwhile at Gloucester's castle, Edmund succeeds in convincing his father that Edgar has designs on the old man's life. The still unsuspecting Edgar flees as a criminal.

Kent and Oswald who is carrying a message to Regan for Goneril meet in front of Gloucester's castle. Kent's reviling of the steward is excessive but it is soon apparent that he knows more about Oswald than has yet been revealed to us in the play. Kent even challenges the man to a duel and this seems very rash, but later we learn that Oswald is a coward and never would have accepted. We begin to wonder at both the sincerity and the motives of Kent's actions in this scene. When the Duke of Cornwall enters, Kent mixes bits of humor into his speech, and jesting is almost impossible for a man who is truly angry and under the sway of a strong passion. One commentator observes:

Of course, in those transports of abusive speech and of reckless retort, he is but affecting the slang-whanger as a part of his disguise; moreover he wants to raise a muss, and embroil Lear with his two daughters, and thereby draw the latter into a speedy disclosure of what he knows to be in their hearts... His tumultuous conduct is but an exaggerated outcome of his native disposition.¹⁸

In any case, Kent is set in the stocks, and again, the

¹⁸ Hudson, Vol. II, 385.

way he bears this disgrace stands in strong contrast to the way practically every other character in the play reacts under misfortune. Lear will brook no opposition; Goneril and Regan become infuriated under resistance; Cornwall will not tolerate sharp words; Gloucester rants when he even suspects filial ingratitude. Kent now discourages Gloucester's plan to entreat pardon and assures him that he will be all right:

Some time I shall sleep out, the rest
I'll whistle.

A good man's fortune may grow out at
heels.¹⁹

Kent "soliloquizing in the stocks...is himself altogether, the finer nature partly made known to us in Scene 1."²⁰ It would seem that much of Kent's rashness is a pose, and that he is not by nature as hot-headed as most authors would make him out to be. This is Stoll's view and is more consistent with subsequent development of the character.

We saw earlier in the play how Kent's selflessness was contrasted with Goneril's mean, petty spirit. In this scene Shakespeare almost goes out of his way to reveal the fierce, unfeeling nature of her sister, Regan, from another viewpoint, through contact with Kent, a character whom she will not meet

¹⁹ Act II, sc. 2, ll. 163-164.

²⁰ E.E. Stoll, From Shakespeare to Joyce, Doubleday, Doran and Co., Garden City, 1944, 106-107.

again. The dramatic effect is pathos. Cornwall calls for the stocks and appoints noon the end of Kent's punishment. Regan however interjects:

Till noon! Till night, my lord; and all
 night too.
 Kent: Why, madam, if I were you father's
 dog,
 You should not use me so.
 Reg: Sir, being his
 knave, I will.²¹

When Lear finally arrives, Regan and Cornwall act very coldly toward him though he complains bitterly of the ingratitude manifested by Goneril. Goneril herself soon appears and the two sisters proceed to buffet with their impertinences and sharp remarks the already dazed monarch. They will not hear of his request to retain his large train of followers, and finally Lear, screaming, "I shall go mad!" storms off the stage.²² Outside the thunder rolls presaging the fierce tempest that is in the offing. Into this black night walks Lear followed by the faithful Kent and the Fool. We pity the old man whose faults are being dwarfed by the heartlessness of his shameless daughters. The forces of evil are running rampant over the forces of good and as yet there has not been the slightest intimation of any power that will arise to make the combat even.

21 Act II, sc. 2, ll. 142-144.

22 Act II, sc. 4, l. 289.

Kent seems to be the only individual capable of formulating a plan and as we turn questioning toward him at the opening of the third act, we find him sending a messenger to Dover where there are sympathetic supporters of the king. He likewise sends a message to Cordelia who is now in the country with the forces of France. Even this action on Kent's part has only an informative value and by no means implies that he will undertake to restore the king to his rightful place of power.

Kent, the "point of rest," has been a "point of vital comparison by which we measure and feel the relationships of all the other characters," but now in addition, he is

...a vital centre, which, like that of a great wheel, has little motion in itself, but which at once transmits and controls the fierce revolution of the circumference.²³

We are entering upon the great storm scenes in which Lear, the humiliated and distraught monarch, battles a terrifying tempest overhead but a far more devastating and terrible storm within. Obsessed by the thought of filial ingratitude and impiety, his wits begin to unsettle, and we, the audience, watch the old man intently, certain that his mind will crack at any moment. He rails against the storm defying and taunting

23 Patmore, 15-16.

its power. His only companion at first is the Fool whose professional madness, or real madness, helps very little to comfort the audience.²⁴ Kent's entrance is reassuring. Even his plain objective statements concerning the ferocity of the storm are a welcome relief after the wild cries of Lear have rung out through the night. There on a heath in the midst of the storm

...Kent...intervenes; to keep the play's story going its more pedestrian way and to steady us against the imaginative turmoil pending. This use of Kent is masterly; and the contrasting use of the Fool, feeble, fantastic, pathetic, a foil to Lear, a foil to the storm is more than masterly.²⁵

The Fool heightens the intense emotion in the storm scenes at least for a modern audience, though for the Elizabethans, he was a familiar figure and less apt to be a point of unrest.

A short scene in Gloucester's castle breaks the presentation of the growing tempest in Lear's mind and keeps us in touch with the sub-plot. We soon return to the heath where Kent is exercising tender care for the king. He requests the king to enter a poor hovel but the king still is not accustomed to taking orders. Lear balks. Kent entreats and

24 Bradley, 312.

25 Granville-Barker, 174.

soon the inmost recesses of his heart are revealed in a line that lives long in our memories. It is beautiful in its simplicity because more than anything else, it is Kent. To Lear's "Wilt break my heart?" Kent replies, "I'd rather break mine own."²⁶

We should reflect that as yet we have not seen in the character of Lear any qualities that would make us love him. Now, we sympathize with him and perhaps like him the more because of Kent's devotion to his master. We have set Kent down as a man not apt to make mistakes in judgments of character. He saw through the flattery of Goneril and Regan, he knew Oswald for what he was, he seemed to treat Cornwall with contempt, and yet, he loves Lear.

The King is not to him old, wayward, unreasonable, piteous: he is still terrible, grand, the king of men. Through his eyes we see the Lear of Lear's prime...Kent never forgets this Lear. In the storm-scenes, even after the King becomes insane, Kent never addresses him without the old terms of respect, 'your grace', 'my lord', 'sir'.²⁷

Lear was a wise and just ruler, a good king, fair in his dealings with others, generous enough to give away his kingdom,

26 Act III, sc. 4, ll. 4-5.

27 Bradley, 307-308.

capable of great love for his daughters and friends.²⁸ This is the Lear that Shakespeare lets us see through the character of Kent. Were the king bad or prone to evil, we feel sure that Kent would never have remained his ardent follower. This other Lear, the Lear of the past, is not at once apparent in the story but the old man's whole character undergoes a gradual revelation, and he wins our admiration and respect along with our sympathy for his present, pathetic situation. We are grateful to Kent for enabling us to see the other side of a seemingly one-sided character.

In this fourth scene of the third act, we observe three different types of insanity; Lear's real madness, Edgar's feigned madness, and the partial madness of the Fool.²⁹ The contrasts between those three characters account for the powerful effectiveness of the scene while Kent's few prosaic statements keep us in contact with the world of sanity. Though we realize that Edgar is only feigning madness, still his wild speech produces an effect akin to the impression Lear's incoherent babbling creates. We should remember the bizarre costume Edgar wore and recall the bodily antics in which he must have indulged. Lear's aspect and words convince us that we are witnessing the disintegration of a great spirit. The

28 Hudson, 364.

29 Bradley, 311.

thought is a terrifying one. His mental anguish probably would have been too terrible for the audience, were not Kent there at his side.³⁰

Kent has changed, exteriorly at least. He has lain aside all the impulsiveness that characterized him formerly and just as he was most truly himself soliloquizing in the stocks, so here too, under the duress of this scene's agonies, his finer qualities appear. We notice how his brief remarks are rays of comforting and reassuring light in this dark, unsettled hour:

Good my lord, enter here...
 Give me thy hand. Who's there?...
 He hath no daughters, sir...
 How fares your Grace?...
 Good my lord, take this offer; go into
 the house...
 Good my lord, soothe him; let him take
 the fellow.³¹

The very simple way that Kent speaks to the Fool when the boy runs out of the novel after encountering the disguised Edgar is especially typical of Kent's courage:

Give me thy hand. Who's there?

"He comforts and quiets him as if he were a child."³² We expect Kent to act that way instead of expressing fear and

30 Cotter, 60.

31 Act III, sc. 4, ll. 22, 40, 68, 128, 160, 181.

32 Stoll, 107.

alarm whenever something unusual happens.

A noteworthy fact about this scene that can be reconciled with Kent's dramatic importance is the small oral role that he plays; "he could have even less to say here, and his very presence would be a strength."³³ The sane man speaks briefly and to the point while the others talk at great length about irrelevant matter. In this almost hopeless situation, deeds are more important than words and Kent's "single-minded concern for the king...is a necessary check" to the delirium of the storm scenes in general.³⁴

We have spoken of the strange conversation that took place on the heath. The following lines furnish us with a typical example of that conversation and are indicative of the various mental states of the speakers, if we remember that Edgar is only feigning madness. When Edgar, disguised as a madman, rushes out of the hovel talking foolishly, Lear asks:

Lear: What, have his daughters brought
him to this pass?

Couldst thou save nothing? Didst thou
give them all?

Fool: Nay, he reserved a blanket, else
we had been all shamed.

Lear: Now all the plagues that in the
pendulous air

Hang fated o'er men's faults light on
thy daughters!

33 Granville-Barker, 195.

34 Ibid., 195.

Kent: He hath no daughters, sir.
 Lear: Death, traitor! nothing could
 have subdu'd nature
 To such a lowness, but his unkind
 daughters.
 Is it the fashion that discarded
 fathers
 Should have thus little mercy on their
 flesh?
 Judicious punishment! 'twas this flesh
 begot
 Those pelican daughters.
 Edgar: Pillicock sat on Pillicock-hill.
 Halloo, halloo, loo, loo!³⁵

Finally, Gloucester appears and he and Kent persuade the king to enter a building attached to Gloucester's castle. Another short intervening scene reveals more of Edmund's wickedness and affords necessary emotional relief before we focus again upon the agonized king.

The sixth scene of the third act contains perhaps the most pitiful elements in the whole play. Lear insists upon having a trial to arraign his two daughters. Edgar, the Fool, and Kent are supposed to take part. When Lear bears witness against Goneril and Regan, dwelling on his torment and thereby increasing it, Kent chides him gently:

Sir, where is the patience now
 That you so oft have boasted to retain.³⁶

Kent wants to help but is baffled and hardly knows what to say

35 Act III, sc. 4, ll. 63-76.
 36 Act III, sc. 6, ll. 61-62.

or do. Somehow he manages to master and control his own deep feelings which love and pity beget. Edgar, though, breaks down and dropping his disguise for the first time, confides to the audience:

My tears begin to take his part so much,
They'll mar my counterfeiting.³⁷

Over and above what is said during these wild scenes, there is the added element of how it is said. The voices of the different characters contribute immensely to the dramatic effectiveness of the action.

The sound of the dialogue matters more than its meaning. Poor Tom (Edgar) and the Fool chant antiphonally; Kent's deep and kindly tones tell against the high agonised voice of Lear.³⁸

We saw earlier how the mere presence of Kent was a strength and support to the audience. Now we realize that even the tone of his voice would have a comforting effect since the sense of hearing sometimes equals in dramatic importance the sense of sight. Loud discordant notes can aggravate the listener intensely and produce an unpleasant emotion very quickly.

Kent has performed all the functions of the "point of

37 Act III, sc. 6, ll. 63-64.

38 Granville-Barker, 178.

rest" in these scenes. Most especially has he been a norm of sanity and has retained his composure in the face of heart-rending events. It is typical that the close of this scene should find him prescribing the best remedy for the king and making sure that Lear follows his advice. No sooner does Lear lie down on the couch, though, than Gloucester advises them all to flee for their lives because of a plot against the king's life. Kent and the Fool make haste to carry Lear to a place of safety.

In the fourth act Kent seems to fade into the background completely. It would have been almost impossible for Shakespeare to try to handle all his characters adequately, and Kent is the type that can afford to be slighted. When he does appear in the third scene, it is not for his own sake but to prepare us for the re-introduction of Cordelia into the action, and to enable us to see Lear from another viewpoint.

Kent asks the messenger whom he sent to Dover several questions about the commander of the French forces and then:

Did your letters pierce the Queen to
any demonstration of grief?³⁹

The messenger then describes at length Cordelia's reaction and, as he does, she grows in our estimation. She was moved

39 Act IV, sc. 3, l. 12.

Not to a rage; patience and sorrow
 strove
 Who should express her goodliest.⁴⁰

Kent's concern for Cordelia makes us remember the first scene of the play when he championed her cause to no avail. Although Cordelia has been off the stage so long, she has never been out of our minds entirely because Kent reminds us of her.⁴¹

Kent now undertakes the burden of the conversation and informs the messenger how Lear in his more lucid moments refuses to see Cordelia. The reason springs from the royal nature of the man:

A sovereign shame so elbows him.
 ...burning shame
 Detains him from Cordelia.⁴²

We felt that the old king's spirit was broken long ago but he still retains his pride and blushes to face one who showed herself nobler than he. She loves him in spite of his unjust treatment of herself.

In the French camp, Cordelia and Kent meet. The Queen greets the Earl warmly:

O thou good Kent! how shall I live
 and work
 To match thy goodness? My life will
 be too short,

40 Act IV, sc. 3, ll. 18-19.

41 Bradley, 307.

42 Act IV, sc. 3, ll. 44, 48-49.

And every measure fail me.⁴³

In these lines Cordelia "contrasts her conduct with that of Kent" and "seems to place Kent's action above her own; she gives him supreme recognition of worthiness which is to him the highest reward":⁴⁴

To be acknowledg'd, madam, is o'erpaid.⁴⁵

Though this is a meeting we have been longing for, still it is a foil to the far more dramatic, important, and beautiful recognition of Cordelia by Lear. The outcome of this second meeting is in doubt and we anxiously wait while Lear awakes and strives to gain the mastery over his mind. Then, the quiet tenor of his speech and his humility offer convincing proof of his sanity. Kent, meanwhile, knows his place and speaks very little but how like him it is that to Lear's question, "Am I in France?", he should reply, "In your own kingdom, sir."⁴⁶ Thanks to Kent, in the moment of Lear's greatest self-abasement (he had just volunteered to drink poison), we are reminded again of the majestic Lear of the past, Lear the King.

Shortly after this scene when the English forces have

43 Act IV, sc. 7, ll. 1-3.

44 Snider, 198.

45 Act IV, sc. 7, l. 4.

46 Stoll, 108-109.

been victorious, Kent intimates that his own death is near, if not that of the king his lord:

I am come
To bid my king and master aye good-night.
Is he not here?⁴⁷

It is appropriate that Kent should be the one to think of the king. That has been his life's work. Consequent upon his question, we experience the deepest pathos of this tragedy as Lear enters carrying the dead body of Cordelia. Kent continues to serve his king unto the end:

...recognizing that the King's hopes
and efforts to revive his daughter
are in vain, ...kneeling before him,
he offers consolation and does
homage:

O my good master!⁴⁸

Lear is too distraught to do more than partially recognize his faithful servant.⁴⁹ Even here in this last scene when Kent might be expected to receive heartfelt thanks from the king, he remains unobtrusive, so linked to the king, that we look upon him in a way as Lear's stronger, saner self. A few moments later Lear dies, and Kent, who all through the play has remained unharmed in body and mind and therefore has been no cause of concern to the audience, now excuses himself:

I have a journey, sir, shortly to go;
My master calls me, I must not say no.⁵⁰

47 Act V, sc. 3, ll. 236-238.

48 Stoll, 110.

49 Ibid., 110.

50 Act V, sc. 3, ll. 323-324.

Kent certainly does not provide the interest in the tragedy of King Lear, but when we reflect upon the play, we appreciate the importance of his role. It is possible to conceive of Lear without Kent. He is not essential. Furthermore he never appeared in the play as one who at any moment would take matters into his own hands and bring the action to a successful conclusion. As we have observed, he is a strong, noble character with high ideals who is habitually guided by reason. Unconsciously, we study the other characters especially Lear, Goneril, and Regan against the background of Kent's finer qualities. However, in this play his primary function seems to be the stabilizing influence he exercises during the enactment of those nerve-wracking storm scenes. He is the "eye of the tragic storm."

CHAPTER IV

HORATIO -- PUNCTUM INDIFFERENS

Few people enter upon a discussion of Hamlet without some misgiving because this play contains several of the most disputed problems in English drama. In this present investigation, our prime purpose is to see whether Horatio may be considered as the "point of rest." Naturally, we should like to avoid all disputatious matter but that is impossible. As soon as an interpretation of Hamlet's character is offered, there will be disagreement. However, our general policy will be to follow the analysis of Hamlet by A.C. Bradley, commonly acknowledged as one of the foremost Shakespearean critics. In this way we shall remain consistent throughout the play on all major points and our own conclusions about the "point of rest" will be based upon and follow from the general norm which we have thus established. Where there is no conflict with Bradley's interpretation, we shall feel free to use the observations of other critics.

Horatio differs quite markedly from the other two characters, Friar Laurence and Kent, whom we have examined.

Perhaps, the most notable difference lies in the end toward which their actions were directed. Friar Laurence was continually seeking by wise counsel to abate the impetuosity of Romeo and Juliet; Kent by his loving care was trying to comfort his king and settle the storm in the monarch's mind. In both of these instances, there was need for a restraining hand and that implies a certain amount of activity on the part of the "point of rest." Horatio, however, plays a passive role, because Hamlet, if anything, should be spurred on to act and not advised to moderate his deeds.¹ Only once or twice does Horatio offer advice but his low social standing prevents him from being insistent or over-familiar with the Prince. Despite his passivity, though, Horatio is not just a type but an individual who plays an important function in this tragedy.

This function may be considered under two aspects. First, Horatio is the punctum indifferens, or the "mean," against which we contrast the various characters who depart from that "mean" to a greater or less degree. Secondly, Horatio is a foil, especially accentuating the lovable elements in Hamlet's character.

Before we begin to examine extremes, we should have a

1 Note: We are attributing Hamlet's failure to act to his melancholic nature. Cf. Bradley, 122.

clear idea of the "mean" or norm that is furnishing the basis for the contrast. No one offers any criticism of Horatio on any point and that cannot be said of any other character in the play. The following is an excellent summary of his character:

Horatio is one of the noblest and most beautiful of Shakespeare's male characters. There is not a single loose stitch in his make-up: he is at all times superbly self-contained: he feels deeply, but never gushes nor runs over: as true as a diamond, as modest as a virgin, and utterly unselfish; a most manly soul, full alike of strength, tenderness, and solidity...indeed, all that comes from him marks the presence of a calm, clear head keeping touch and time perfectly with a good heart.²

Other criticisms of his character merely echo this description: "A man of perfect calmness of mind";³ "He is level-headed and open-minded...Yet, he is sensitive too";⁴ he is "the plain, loyal, honest friend, far from brilliant, quite unspectacular, utterly dependable."⁵

These remarks on Horatio seem to be a paraphrase of some of the characteristics which Patmore assigns to the

2 Hudson, vol. II, 298-299.

3 Gervinus, 562.

4 Granville-Barker, Third Series, 244.

5 M.R. Ridley, Shakespeare's Plays, E.P. Dutton and Co., New York, 1938, 138.

"point of rest" character. He

...stands out of the stream of the main interest, and is additionally unimpressive in itself by reason of its absolute conformity to reason and moral order.⁶

The qualities which Horatio possesses are rather well-defined and we have no great difficulty in properly evaluating the character. He is the "mean."

Since Horatio is the true friend, it might be well to see first of all how he is contrasted with Hamlet's false friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. We might expect Hamlet to display a coldness toward these two men from the very start to give us a hint of their character. This is not so. Hamlet shows himself very civil and courteous with these two school-fellows. Still

...how different--even before suspicion has kindled in him--the smart chop-logic of the talk from the confident refuge he took in Horatio's understanding!⁷

Hamlet does not confide in them at all and when he learns that they were sent for from Wittenburg by the King and Queen, he seems to grow especially cautious. Yet, he speaks no sharp words to them during this scene.

6 Patmore, 15.

7 Granville-Barker, Third Series, 249-250.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern try to impose upon Hamlet and he is just the type of character that resents such meddling. Horatio, unselfish and modest, is more to Hamlet's liking. The second time that the two courtiers intrude, Hamlet sends them away and calls to himself Horatio. This is the occasion for Hamlet's eulogy of his friend.

Ham: Horatio, thou art e'en as just
a man
As e'er my conversation cop'd withal.
Hor: O! my dear lord,-
Ham: Nay, do not think
I flatter;
For what advancement may I hope from thee,
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the
poor be flatter'd?
No, let the candied tongue lick absurd
pomp,
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost
thou hear?
Since my dear soul was mistress of her
choice
And could of men distinguish her election,
Hath seal'd thee for herself; for thou
hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers
nothing,
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks; and bless'd
are those
Whose blood and judgement are so well
commingled,
That they are not a pipe for fortune's
finger
To sound what stop she please. Give
me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will
wear him

In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of
heart,
As I do thee.⁸

The first part of that speech was undoubtedly inspired by the false friends who had just left the stage. We have seen in the play how the king is using Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as pawns for his own purposes. They show no aversion to intruding upon Hamlet and being used in this way. Hamlet realizes that they are flatterers, weak characters. After Hamlet asks these two to summon the players, and then calls Horatio, the contrast is heightened

...by the very look of the three;
the smiling, point-device courtiers
making their congee on the one side,
the grave, sober-suited, simple-
mannered student appearing on the
other.⁹

While Hamlet seems to put more and more trust in Horatio, his attitude toward Rosencrantz and Guildenstern becomes more and more severe. To Horatio, he confides most of his secrets and he drops the "antic disposition" when conversing with him.¹⁰ However under the useful guise of madness, his opposition towards the two courtiers becomes stronger. In the second scene of the fourth act, his contempt for Rosencrantz

⁸ Act III, sc. 2, ll. 59-79.

⁹ Granville-Barker, Third Series, 250.

¹⁰ Bradley, 121. Note: Bradley holds that Hamlet is not really mad.

is apparent:

Ros: Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

Ham: Ay, sir, that soaks up the King's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the King best service in the end: he keeps them, like an ape, in the corner of his jaw; first mouthed, to be last swallowed: when he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again.¹¹

Finally, the king sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to accompany Hamlet to England. Hamlet, as we learn later, changes the wording in the letters the two messengers are carrying and they die in place of him. Horatio expresses surprise at Hamlet's deed:

So Rosencrantz and Guildenstern go to't,
but Hamlet retorts:

Why man, they did make love to this
employment;
They are not near my conscience; their
defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow.¹²

Though we are shocked somewhat by Hamlet's callousness, yet, the active role that the two courtiers were taking in treachery made them worthy of death. One element about them probably annoyed Hamlet more than any other and that was the readiness, if not eagerness, with which they forgot Hamlet's father to fawn over this new king. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were

¹¹ Act IV, sc. 2, ll. 15-23.

¹² Act V, sc. 2, ll. 56-59.

summoned to Denmark, but Horatio came for the funeral. The two courtiers never mentioned Hamlet's father while Horatio showed a "loyal respect" for the former king:¹³

...our valiant Hamlet--
For so this side of our known world
esteem'd him.¹⁴

...he was a goodly king.¹⁵

The passing of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hardly affects us except to make us thankful that Hamlet has at his side the thoughtful, strong, faithful Horatio who will never prove false to his lord.

A second and rather different kind of contrast that finds Horatio as the "mean" between two extremes, is the character-clash between Hamlet and Laertes. It is interesting to notice the parallel in the situation that both men found themselves in, and then to see how each one acted. Laertes seeks to avenge the death of a murdered father. He

...kindles at once with passionate
ardor. Rejecting all deliberation,
his resolutions burst forth at once
into action.¹⁶

He rushes into the king's presence crying:

To hell, allegiance! vows, to the
blackest devil!

13 Granville-Barker, Third Series, 249.

14 Act I, sc. 1, ll. 84-85.

15 Act I, sc. 2, l. 186.

16 H. Ulrici, Shakespeare's Dramatic Art, Chapman Brothers, London, MDCCCLVI, 222.

Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!
 I dare damnation. To this point I stand,
 That both the worlds I give to negligence,
 Let come what comes; only I'll be reveng'd
 Most throughly for my father.¹⁷

Laertes is the man of action. Hamlet has disappointed us by his inaction but the Laertes' incident helps us to appreciate that the extreme of hasty action is more reprehensible than Hamlet's procrastinating. Laertes bends himself to furious activity but he is not even sure of the murderer. He acts upon mere rumor, not because of an "honest ghost." He is not as powerful nor as popular as Hamlet, nor is he the lawful heir to the throne; he poisons his sword to make sure of Hamlet's death, thereby sullyng his knightly honor that he may accomplish his revenge; finally, he is avenging the death of a father who would appear to be only half the man that Hamlet's father was.¹⁸ The contrast between the two characters of Hamlet and Laertes is really very striking.

Horatio does not enter into this contrast explicitly, as we read or watch the play, but upon reflection, we feel that if he had to avenge a murdered father, he would weigh the facts more deliberately than Laertes and then act more promptly than

17 Act IV, sc. 5, ll. 130-135.

18 Gervinus, 557-558.

Hamlet. Of course such characters as Horatio are not as interesting or as complex as Hamlet or even Laertes. The extremes are engaging just because they are extremes and something out of the ordinary. Yet, Horatio helps to sharpen the character-delineation in the play because he is

...the exact punctum indifferens between the opposite excesses of the characters of Hamlet and Laertes--over-reasoning inaction and unreasoning action--between which extremes the whole interest of the play vibrates.¹⁹

The first part of the play treats mainly Hamlet's inactivity, presenting in powerful fashion the struggle going on in that man's mind. The second part sweeps to a catastrophic close beginning with the return of the revenge-seeking Laertes.

Horatio's relation to other characters in the play had best be considered from an intrinsic point of view. In other words, all that Gertrude, Claudius, Polonius are and stand for, is contrasted with Horatio in one way or another. The principal reason for saying this is because Horatio "alone is without any ends of his own; he aims not at making any profit of life for himself," rather he prefers to devote himself unreservedly to the service of his friend.²⁰

19 Patmore, 15.

20 Ulrici, 223.

Contrasted first of all with Horatio's selflessness is Gertrude's selfishness. She was false to Hamlet's father while he lived, but probably was not privy to his murder. She was eager to run away from the reality of life to gratify her own pleasure. She did not like to think about fidelity, devotion, sacrifice, because these virtues were hard to attain. She

...was very dull and very shallow. She loved to be happy...it pleased her to see others happy...She never saw that drunkenness is disgusting till Hamlet told her so.²¹

She wanted her life to be one continual state of bliss and that is why she was piqued at the way Hamlet was acting. He was unhappy and was causing trouble when he should have been enjoying himself. Still, we should not consider Gertrude as a bad-hearted individual. We find it hard to be angry with her because we feel that out of a certain ignorance she was following the line of least resistance through life. She was not the type of character to wrestle with life's problems as Hamlet did. She seemed to be blind without realizing it. When Hamlet begins to rail against her, she complains:

What have I done that thou dar'st
wag thy tongue
In noise so rude against me?²²

21 Bradley, 167.

22 Act III, sc. 4, ll. 39-40.

Then Hamlet tries to open her eyes to her sin, to her shame.

Gertrude cries out:

O Hamlet, speak no more!
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very
soul,
And there I see such black and
grained spots
As will not leave their tinct.²³

Three times she asks Hamlet to stop. She does not want to face the reality of her crime though she seems remorseful and repentant before the scene closes. She does not betray Hamlet to the king but at the fencing-match in the last scene of the play, she gives the impression that she did not take Hamlet's lecture too seriously. "Things have slipped back into their groove, and she has no apprehensions."²⁴

Gertrude is a self-centered individual and in this respect is contrasted with Horatio who never seemed to think of himself. Her desire for self-gratification led her into the sin of adultery and prevented her from breaking with Claudius. She is weak and slothful but possesses some fine qualities as her warning to Hamlet about the poisoned cup would indicate. In general, though, her weakness and instability are opposed to the strength and dependability that we find in Horatio.

²³ Act III, sc. 4, ll. 88-91.

²⁴ Bradley, 168.

Claudius, the king, is of course the villain of this piece. We could never picture Gertrude stooping to murder to attain her ends, but Claudius does not hesitate to do so. He too is a selfish individual and plans to remove anything or anyone who stands in the way of his happiness. "He had a small nature" and so we do not find him capturing the crown boldly and at the head of an army, but he drops poison into the king's ear, and poisons the cup Hamlet was supposed to drink from.²⁵ The king knew how to play his role and probably impressed visitors with his courtesy and affability, as well as by his efficiency in running the state. Our first impression makes us believe that he is perfectly happy in his villainy and confident of ultimate success. His hypocrisy is so perfect that it fools everyone.

It is not at all in keeping with his character that he should rush off the stage during the enactment of the play Hamlet has arranged. We would expect him to be more calm and collected than that, but later in the prayer-scene, we learn just how greatly his conscience is torturing him. Certainly, Claudius is "passion's slave" because with greater vision than Gertrude showed, he recognizes his position and yet feels that he cannot give up

25 Bradley, 169.

My crown, mine own ambition, and my
queen.²⁶

He seeks for some solace in prayer and finds none but he
blindly hopes

All may be well.²⁷

He resembles Gertrude in that he has not the strength of
character to do what he understands is right, but prefers to
take a chance that everything will turn out all right.

Perhaps, the contrast between Claudius and Horatio is
best seen in the fifth scene of the fourth act. By this time
we can see through the mask of hypocrisy that Claudius wears.
We know the blackness of his heart, yet, we see him trying to
keep up appearances, trying to seem what we know he is not.
He has been caught in the mesh of his own wickedness. Standing
near him is Horatio, the generous-hearted, plain, open soldier.
He has nothing to hide. He could tell the world the secrets
of his life and no one would be surprised. He is what he seems.

The last character that we shall consider is Polonius.
"Polonius is Shakespeare's version, sharply individualized,
of a politician somewhat past his faculties; shrewd, careful,
conceited, meddlesome, and pedantic."²⁸ Obviously, he has

26 Act III, sc. 3, l. 55.

27 Act III, sc. 3, l. 72.

28 Hudson, Vol. II, 299.

stored away in his memory maxims of worldly prudence. Even in the well-known passage in which he gives advice to his son, Laertes, self-consideration is uppermost. In view of the context, the oft-quoted lines:

...to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the
day,
Thou canst not then be false to any
man²⁹

can hardly be anything more than "a rule of being wisely selfish."³⁰ It is not a high type of morality but good worldly wisdom.

Polonius feels that he has the answers to everything. His tactics are more revealing of his true character than anything he says. We do not esteem a man who would be so small as to use his daughter as a decoy, or who would send a messenger well-instructed in underhand methods to spy on his own son. His concern is not with his son's virtue if only the boy does not cause scandal or be dishonored.³¹ Hamlet cannot tolerate the man's meddling and lack of character. He probably had Polonius in mind when he said to Horatio:

...let the candied tongue lick absurd
pomp,
And crook the pregnant hinges of the
knee

29 Act I, sc. 3, ll. 78-80.

30 Hudson, Vol. II, 301.

31 Granville-Barker, Third Series, 255.

Where thrift may follow fawning.³²

It would be a part of Polonius' worldly wisdom to serve with all his heart whoever was in power at the time. We cannot like this man who would be your friend one minute and your enemy the next. He died as he lived, eavesdropping and meddling in other people's affairs.

Horatio is no flatterer. Besides, he had the character to take a stand and hold to his position, and the good sense not to overestimate his own virtues.

All three of the characters discussed, Gertrude, Claudius, and Polonius were selfish, self-seeking people, and the irony of the play is that Horatio, who had only Hamlet's interests at heart, profited more, even in a material way, than any of the others. Horatio undoubtedly would hold a very responsible position in the restored kingdom.³³

We have seen briefly how Horatio is contrasted with most of the major figures in the play. In this respect he was the "mean" or the norm by which we better evaluated the extremes. Yet, Horatio performs another function that probably is more important because it enables us to gain a

32 Act III, sc. 2, ll. 65-67.

33 Ulrici, 223.

deeper insight into Hamlet's character. Horatio is a foil for Hamlet, especially in this way that, because of Horatio, we become acquainted with the tender and lovable aspect of Hamlet's character. It is important that this aspect of Hamlet's character be clearly portrayed because it makes us love him more, sympathize with him more deeply, thereby heightening our pity for this tragic character.

Our final appreciation of Hamlet reveals him as being gentle, sensitive, easily hurt, capable of great love, and very lovable himself. As indications of these various qualities come to us, we begin to realize more and more the great mental suffering that Hamlet is enduring because of the circumstances in which he finds himself. Hamlet hides his feelings well and rarely complains.

Horatio, the foil who is to illumine Hamlet's character, is doubly important because we know that introspective characters, such as Hamlet, are never very true to themselves in solitude. We should not put too much trust in the soliloquies where Hamlet accuses himself of lack of virtue or dutifulness.

People like Hamlet

...find relief from the obscure and warping tyranny of self in the generousities of friendship. With their friends they can be confidently and forgetfully and transparently themselves. And while the play may seem to be but one long opportunity

for Hamlet to express himself, the simple truth about him is rather that which is reflected from the few moments' self-forgetful praise of his friend...Such moments... outweigh in their vividness many wordy apologies, protests and explanations.³⁴

The very first time that Hamlet and Horatio meet in the play, we have an instance of the lovableness in Hamlet which made him a favorite with the people. Horatio has just called himself Hamlet's "poor servant ever" but the Prince replies:

Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name with you.³⁵

Just a few minutes later, Hamlet begins to criticize his mother's hasty marriage to his uncle. Though Horatio entered with Marcellus and Bernardo, probably Hamlet and Horatio left those two for a moment and walked arm-in-arm across the stage. Usually one does not criticize other members of the family in the presence of strangers, and the fact that Hamlet speaks out to Horatio, reveals to us the esteem in which he holds his friend. If Hamlet did not love his mother, he would not say anything to Horatio. He would not care what she did, but he does love her and her inexplicable coldness in re-marrying so quickly is causing Hamlet much pain.

34 Granville-Barker, Third Series, 310.

35 Act I, sc. 2, l. 163.

With Horatio, Hamlet can be quite plain about his love for his father. With Horatio, Hamlet can reveal that every second thought concerns his dead parent:

Ham: My father, methinks I see my father.

Hor: O! where, my lord?

Ham: In my mind's eye,
Horatio.

Hor: I saw him once; he was a goodly
king.

Ham: He was a man, take him for all in
all,
I shall not look upon his like again.³⁶

By this time we know that here is a son who loved his father dearly. His reminiscences and praise of his father to Horatio are far more impressive than a soliloquy on the same theme. No one else in the play besides Horatio seems to have retained such respect for the former king.

When Hamlet speaks harshly to Ophelia in the first scene of the third act, we know that this is not the real Hamlet. We have seen him deal gently and kindly with his friend, Horatio, and his rough treatment of this girl, who is the soul of innocence and simplicity, must be prompted by some unusual motive. Perhaps Hamlet knows that Polonius and the king are listening to their conversation, or he feels that he should make a break with this girl for her own good because of his uncertain future. At any rate, we look for the motive

³⁶ Act I, sc. 2, ll. 184-188.

behind his action since ordinarily he acts with greater kindness and consideration than he displays in these words:

Get thee to a nunnery, go; farewell.
Or if thou wilt needs marry, marry
a fool; for wise men know well
enough what monsters you make of
them. To a nunnery, go; and quickly
too. Farewell.³⁷

About ten minutes later, Hamlet is praising Horatio calmly, tenderly, almost wistfully, as he mentions virtues that Horatio possesses and which he lacks. This is the real Hamlet and from the few scenes with Horatio, we get our most exact notions of Hamlet's character, discounting of course a certain amount of self-depreciation. With Horatio he is perfectly sane and always at his ease. The very smoothness and evenness of the verse-rhythm reflect his relaxful spirit.³⁸ When Hamlet is with Horatio, "the gentle spirit and the good mind shine out."³⁹ As we grow in knowledge of Hamlet's character, we may reflect that it probably hurt him exceedingly to speak to Ophelia as he did.

After the play-scene, Hamlet is jubilant and addresses Horatio, "O Damon dear."⁴⁰ This address is an indication that Horatio is not just an instrument of his, but a true friend.

37 Act III, sc. 1, ll. 144-148.

38 Granville-Barker, Third Series, 312.

39 Ibid., 237.

40 Act III, sc. 2, l. 297.

Horatio's friendship is the only outlet for Hamlet's great capacity for love. His mother had failed him. For one reason or another, he broke with Ophelia, and there is no other male character in the play whom he esteems as much as Horatio.

When Hamlet goes to his mother's chamber, we know that conflicting emotions are torturing him. She is his mother and deserves his respect. He probably recalls the great love he had for her during his younger days when the king, his father, was

so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the winds of
heaven
Visit her face too roughly

and his mother in turn

would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on.⁴¹

He does not hate his mother now but pities her exceedingly. His main purpose is to bring her to her senses in the hope that she will sincerely repent what she has done. His one fear is that in lashing out against his mother's sin, he will fail to distinguish between the sin and the sinner, and be tempted to kill her. He intends to be cruel but

cruel only to be kind.⁴²

⁴¹ Act I, sc. 2, ll. 140-145.

⁴² Act III, sc. 4, l. 178.

He hopes to win back his mother completely in this scene and to mend the differences between them.

If Hamlet were a calloused individual without feeling, if he were indifferent toward his mother, if he had even allowed her sins to break the strong bonds of instinctive love between them, we would not appreciate the pain he is suffering. We have seen Hamlet tender, loving, and lovable in his dealings with Horatio. Horatio represents the audience in a way, just as Friar Laurence and Kent did, and whenever Hamlet takes Horatio into his confidence, our pity for the gentle, warm-hearted Hamlet deepens. We have no doubt that it is a suffering Hamlet that made his mother suffer.

After Hamlet's return from England, he and Horatio are standing in a churchyard when the gravediggers uncover Yorick's skull. Hamlet recalls the king's jester, a companion of happier days:

Alas! poor Yorick. I knew him,
 Horatio; a fellow of infinite
 jest, of most excellent fancy;
 he hath borne me on his back a
 thousand times...Here hung those
 lips that I have kissed I know
 not how oft. Where be your gibes
 now? your gambols? your songs?
 your flashes of merriment?⁴³

Hamlet is disillusioned with life because so many people have

43 Act V, sc. 2, ll. 201-209.

disappointed him. This short passage about Yorick makes him remember one who was good to him and his affections well up.

Perhaps, it is in a sentimental mood that a few minutes later, Hamlet violently protests his love for Ophelia:

I lov'd Ophelia: forty thousand
 brothers
 Could not, with all their quantity
 of love
 Make up my sum.⁴⁴

At least we know that he is not hypocritical and that there is a real basis for what he says. He probably did love Ophelia sincerely, and in the normal course of events, would have married her, had not other circumstances entered in.

Though Hamlet was severe with his mother and grappled with Laertes in the grave, those actions are not in keeping with his nature. Later he repents:

...I am very sorry, good Horatio,
 That to Laertes I forgot myself;
 For by the image of my cause, I see
 The portraiture of his: I'll count
 his favours.⁴⁵

Just before the fencing-match, he publicly asks pardon of Laertes:

Give me your pardon, sir; I've done
 you wrong.⁴⁶

44 Act V, sc. 2, ll. 291-293.

45 Act V, sc. 2, ll. 75-78.

46 Act V, sc. 2, l. 240.

This line is the more effective because we know what deceit Laertes is planning against this man who has such a gentle spirit. Hamlet does not want to be at odds with anyone but everyone seems pitted against him and he cannot understand why. Perhaps, that feeling intensifies his melancholy.

When Hamlet is dying, Horatio wants to drink the remaining poison and accompany his friend and lord. Hamlet asks him to forego that pleasure for a while to clear his name. He does well to beg this favor in the name of their mutual friendship and love. As we expect, Horatio yields. His beautiful epitaph on Hamlet's death is the first of many statements that he will make in vindication of his friend:

Now cracks a noble heart. Good-night,
sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy
rest!⁴⁷

In this chapter we have attempted to show how Horatio, as the "point of rest," or the punctum indifferens, is contrasted with most of the major characters in the play. We did not treat Hamlet's procrastinating at any length because so much has been written on the subject, but we attempted to show how Horatio was the "mean" between the extremes of inactivity and activity as manifested by Hamlet and Laertes.

⁴⁷ Act V, sc. 2, ll. 373-374.

Besides, Horatio's forgetfulness of self accentuates the selfishness of the other characters, especially Gertrude, Claudius, and Polonius. Secondly, Horatio is a foil to Hamlet, heightening in particular the lovable, tender aspect of Hamlet's character.

There is a great deal more that could be said about Horatio as the "point of rest" in Hamlet. However, our main purpose was to offer sufficient proof for the contention that Horatio is the "point of rest" since he performs at least two very fundamental functions of such a character, viz., he is the "mean" and a foil as well.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Despite the preceding exposition, we must conclude that the "point of rest in art" cannot be strictly defined. If the minor character were merely a foil, or merely a "mean," or if he only performed the functions of the Greek chorus, then he would cease to merit a new, distinctive title. We have seen, though, that the "point of rest," as identified with some character, partakes of the nature and function of many of these well known devices and yet cannot be exclusively identified with any one of them.

The negative approach that Coventry Patmore adopted in explaining his theory is very important because the title, "point of rest," can be misleading. The "point of rest" is not the "purple patch" in a painting or a poem, or what we might call the "high point" in a play. Rather, it is just the opposite. It is insignificant but furnishes the basis for accentuating the harmony of the whole. Perhaps, "basis for accentuating the harmony of the whole" is the best, brief definition, despite its generality, to express the fundamental notion of the "point of rest." Though not completely adequate

in itself, it may prove a happy catch-phrase, a tag, which, when properly explained and interpreted, will lead to a fuller, more complete understanding of our thesis.

Patmore's first application of his principle was clear enough since it dealt only with the static "point of rest" as found in paintings. However in passing from the static to the relative "point of rest" as exemplified in plays, Patmore left something to be desired with regard to his explanation of the theory. Accordingly, he elaborated his original notion, adding characteristics that further defined and determined it. For example, he called the "point of rest" a "point of vital comparison." But lest we mistake Hamlet for the "point of rest" instead of Horatio, he emphasized the subordinate role and secondary character of the "point of rest" in a play; the "point of rest" character "stands out of the stream of the main interest, and is absolutely conformed to reason and the moral order." This character, a balancing pin against opposed emotions, reacts with equanimity to the disasters and overwhelming difficulties which other characters face with a passionate and unthinking impetuosity. His self-control influences and steadies the action of the play.

This self-control, this equanimity, this conformity to reason would seem to "type" the "point of rest." The

actual case proves otherwise. The "point of rest" is a real individual. In fact, in seeing or reading the play, we are first conscious of a distinct personality and only upon reflection do we become aware of his function as "point of rest," or punctum indifferens. The preceding chapters bear abundant witness to this fact.

When Patmore mentioned that the principle operates frequently where you would least expect it, we took the occasion to search out illustrations of the "point of rest" in poetry, in the novel, and even compared it to "the knocking at the gate in Macbeth." Examples provide a concrete method for conveying the true notion of just what a "point of rest" is and does.

The application of Patmore's norms to the various plays followed rather easily; we were impressed by the way Shakespeare allowed the tall, calm, dignified figure of Friar Laurence to walk "wisely and slow" through a play characterized by the heat of two strong passions, love and hate; we were quick to observe how the Friar's sympathetic heart won the confidence of Romeo and Juliet, and we were better able to appreciate the characterization of these lovers because of their conversations with him who acted as their balance staff. His prudent counsel continually moderated their recklessness until Romeo and Juliet disregarded the Friar and took their

own lives. Friar Laurence, as we remarked, is perhaps the best illustration for getting an adequate concept of the "point of rest." He is unimpressive in himself, is a norm for evaluating other characters, is conformed to reason and the moral order, and radiates "the calm of moral solution throughout all the difficulties and disasters of surrounding fate."

Kent, on the other hand, is probably the most individualized of the three we discussed, although he too performs the "point of rest" functions admirably. While his function as a "mean" is an important one because of the great variety of characters in the tragedy of King Lear, still his presence during those weird and wild storm scenes is a "necessary check" to their delirium. He is the "vital centre, which, like that of a great wheel, has little motion in itself, but which at once transmits and controls the fierce revolution of the circumference." His devotion to and care of Lear continually illumine that monarch's character and enable us to view the king from many angles.

Finally, we saw Horatio, a very self-effacing character who helped us remember that the "point of rest" definitely plays a subordinate role. Although subordinate, he appeared on the stage frequently, and we soon became aware that he was the "mean" in a play where selfishness was rife. He was,

as Patmore indicated, the punctum indifferens, that is, the subordinate but by no means insignificant balance-wheel which regulated the over-reasoning inaction of Hamlet and the unreasoning action of Laertes. Further investigation revealed Horatio as the mirror or glass through which we became acquainted with the human, suffering Hamlet, the Hamlet who loved and felt deeply. Our sympathy with him increased as this aspect of his character became more and more clear.

Such is the "point of rest." The validity of the principle in the case of the three characters we discussed seems to be beyond question. To attempt to prove, however, that the principle can and should be predicated of some single character in every great play, would be a mistake, but the possibility of extensive application in various fields of art makes the consideration of the whole notion, "the point of rest in art," an interesting study.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Edward Francis Maloney, S.J. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of English.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

May 12, 1949
Date

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THE TRIUMPH OF COLLECTIVISM
AN ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE ELECTION OF 1932

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VITA

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CHAPTER I

THE CANDIDATES

An analysis of an election in the United States demands the careful study of several elements. Perhaps the chief among these is an actual knowledge of the lives of the individual candidates, at least insofar as their lives prepared them for their bid for the Presidency. This is especially true in the United States where the two major political parties present different viewpoints rather than different basic philosophies of government for consideration by the voters. The actual candidate and his personality play an important role in the garnering of votes, which is, after all, the way to win an election. In order to understand the election of 1932, it is essential to know the candidates and what they did to qualify themselves for their bid for the Presidency.

There were many political parties with definite platforms in the depression year of 1932. For the sake of completeness, their names were: Progressive Democratic, Liberty, Farmer-Labor, Industrial, Industrialist, Jobless, Jobless Independent, Communist, Independent Communist, Socialist, Socialist Labor, Independent Socialist Labor, Prohibition, Democratic and Republican. But the only parties necessary to study in an analysis of

the election are the Republicans and Democrats. Only 1,163,181 votes out of almost 40,000,000 went to the "other" parties. Of that number 825,640 were cast for parties pledged to the nominee of the Democratic Party. Out of the entire nation, only 347,672 votes were given to the "other" candidates.

The Republican Party was incumbent in 1932. A Republican administration had occupied the White House since 1921, when the nation had swept Harding into the Presidency in the aftermath of the war. Harding had been succeeded by Calvin Coolidge, Coolidge by Herbert Clark Hoover in 1928. Hoover was completing his first term in 1932.

The election of 1932 cannot be understood without a knowledge of Hoover's background and, in particular, a knowledge of his actions during his four years as President. He had been inaugurated in an era of great prosperity. The problems he was expected to solve as President were few in number. In fact, there were only three main difficulties before the executive; the enforcement of the prohibition laws, limited tariff changes, and some relief to the farmer, who was lagging behind his prosperous countrymen in the "boom" of 1928. It was felt that Hoover was an engineering wizard who could surmount all obstacles placed in his way. In fact, he had been inaugurated "As a superman whose engineering genius would reform

and elevate the art of government."¹ There was no inkling in 1928 of the magnitude of the problems which would confront Mr. Hoover before another election occurred.

Who was this genius who would lead the United States to even greater prosperity than it was experiencing in the "roaring twenties?" Herbert Clark Hoover was born in West Branch, Iowa on August 10, 1874. He was the son of Jesse C. Hoover and Hulda Randall Minthron. He received an A. B. degree from Stanford University in California as a mining engineer in 1895, and had gone immediately to work with the United States Geological Survey in the Sierra Nevada mountains. His engineering activities took him to Australia in 1897, and two years later to China where he became Chief Engineer of the Chinese Imperial Bureau of Mines. He took part in the Boxer Rebellion while in Tientsin in 1900. The mining profession took him to many other parts of the globe as well.

Hoover's record of public service began as a representative to the Panama-Pacific Exposition in Europe in 1913 and 1914. He became famous throughout the world when sent to London as chairman of the American Relief Committee and for his work on the Belgium Relief Commission after the war broke out.

1 Roy V. Peel and Thomas C. Donnelly, The 1932 Campaign, An Analysis, Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., New York, 1935, 4.

President Wilson appointed Mr. Hoover as Food Administrator for the United States of America in 1917, a position he held until 1919.

Upon the election to the Presidency of Warren G. Harding, Herbert Hoover was appointed Secretary of Commerce in 1921, a position he held until 1928. After the war he had likewise been elected President of the American Mining Engineers Association, and had membership in other engineering groups. Mr. Hoover had officially retired from business in 1914, but he held stocks in mining corporations all over the world. He was estimated to be worth over \$4,000,000 upon his retirement. However, he had lost heavily during the depression and by 1932 was reputedly worth \$700,000.² He had been elected President of the United States over Alfred E. Smith in 1928, carrying forty states, and was inaugurated on March 4, 1929.

Mr. Hoover had three problems to face as President. The first was the enforcement of the prohibition laws. In many sections of the land police, politicians, and bootleggers worked together to evade the unpopular statute. The President formed the Wickersham Commission to investigate the problem. The eleven man group reported in favor of repealing or amending the eighteenth amendment. This was contrary to the President's views so he disowned the committee and continued the attempts at enforcement. The problem continued unsolved.

² Ibid., 237.

Hoover's attempts in his first year in office to solve the farmer's problems were no more successful. The President sought to encourage the farmers to decrease their acreage voluntarily. When this failed to produce results the administration sat back and tried to tell the farmers that it had at least tried. By this farm policy, "Hoover . . . lost the support of progressives in his own party, notable Senator Borah of Idaho."

The problem of revising some tariffs in order to benefit agriculture was the third task before the President during 1929. Mr. Hoover left it to the Congress to solve the problem with the result that the usual log-rolling process so delayed any action that it was June, 1930 before any tariff measure was enacted. This act, many months after the crash, was the famous Hawley-Smoot tariff which Mr. Hoover signed over the protests of one thousand leading American economists. As one author puts it:

For his failure to assume leadership on the tariff issue, the Democrats opened a fierce barrage upon Mr. Hoover which, rightly or wrongly, impressed the country. Even so stalwart an advocate of Republicanism as William Allen White agreed that the President had played his cards badly on the deal.⁴

Such, then, were Mr. Hoover's attempts to face

³ Ibid., 6.

⁴ Ibid., 7.

the problems before the nation between his inaugural and October 1929. Even with a Republican Senate and House, his solutions were not successful. The fact, however, that the United States was enjoying great prosperity softened criticism of the President for his lack of success. In fact, few people, except those directly concerned, were particularly interested in these matters. But before the end of October, 1929, the dream world in which Americans were living suddenly disappeared, and the people were forced to face the hard facts of depression, poverty, and hunger. Then it was that all turned to Washington for leadership, and for relief from the throttling grip of economic collapse. Then it was that the people became very interested in their government and its leaders. The government which had been enjoying the cake with them, was now looked to for the mere bread of sustenance. The government's ability to provide or not to provide aid would result in either acceptance or repudiation of its leaders. Hoover faced a giant's task. But had he not been inaugurated as a genius who could accomplish anything?

The President's actions from the stock market debacle of October 24, 1929 onward are important in the analysis of the 1932 election because he had to stand or fall in his bid for re-election on the record he had made during his first term. It is outside the scope of this study to attempt a complete history of this period, but it is essential to survey the major developments

before delineating Mr. Hoover's campaign for re-nomination, which actually overlaps the era.

After the crash, the President, along with the majority of people in the country believed that the nation had merely suffered a temporary blow, "an isolated phenomenon of no great significance to the business world in general."⁵ His policies reflected this belief that nothing particularly disastrous had occurred. Mr. Hoover urged voluntary cooperation with business, states, and cities. He felt that it was not the government's task to inaugurate new and radical measures, but rather to aid existing institutions in every way possible.

Even in 1932, Mr. Hoover remained adamant in this policy of individualism. His speech in acceptance of re-nomination contains his analysis of the depression.

Being prosperous, we became optimistic—
all of us. From optimism some of us
want to overexpansion in anticipation
of the future, and from overexpansion
to reckless speculation. In the soil
posioned by speculation grew those
ugly weeds of waste, exploitation, and
abuse of financial power. In this over-
production and speculative mania we
marched with the rest of the world.⁶

After this analysis, the President declared that

5 Ibid., 8.

6 Text-Book of the Republican Party, 1932. Issued by the
Republican National Committee, 1932, 17.

retribution came upon us by the "inevitable slump in consumption of goods, in prices, and unemployment."⁷ He stoutly maintained that the depression was the normal penalty for such a boom, and that the United States always weathered these regular periods of decline safely.

Mr. Hoover's bid for re-election was based on the assumption that he had done a good job in leading the nation through his first term. In the light of even more acute depression in 1932 than in 1929, his justification of that leadership is important. Upon what did he predicate his claim? His own words show us better than any other source the principles for which he stood, and his evaluation of his success. Mr. Hoover was essentially a conservative. His way of combatting the depression was representative of a definite philosophy of government. He expressed it thus:

Two courses were open. We might have done nothing. That would have been utter ruin. Instead we met the situation with proposals to private business and Congress of the most gigantic program of economic defense and counter attack ever evolved in the history of the Republic. We put it into action. . . . We have maintained the financial integrity of our government. We have cooperated to restore and stabilize the situation

7 Ibid., 19.

abroad. As a nation we have paid every dollar demanded of us. We have used the credit of the government to aid and protect our institutions public and private. We have provided methods and assurances that there shall be none to suffer from the cold. . . . Above all we have maintained the sanctity of the principles upon which this Republic has grown great.⁸

The federal government, in the President's estimation, had done everything within its constitutional jurisdiction to fight the depression. He, as President, had provided as much leadership as our system of government allowed. Hoover felt that "government by the people has not been defiled,"⁹ and that individual liberty and freedom had been preserved by his handling of the crisis. In fact, it seemed more important to Hoover to preserve what he considered the traditional relationship of government to individual during this period of crises than to change it for emergency needs. "It is not the function of the government to relieve individuals of their responsibilities to their neighbors, or to relieve private institutions of their responsibilities to the public or of local government to the states, or of the state governments to the federal government."¹⁰ He felt that that responsibility for the national welfare rested with the individual.

8 Ibid., 17, 18.

9 Ibid., 19.

10 Ibid.

This philosophy of government, so out of date today, was Hoover's justification for his leadership from 1929 to 1932. He felt, apparently with sincerity, that he had done his utmost, consistent with his principles of American government, to bring the nation through the perilous period. The majority of the population did not agree, and he was defeated in 1932. But he went down fighting for the individualistic theory of American government. Collectivism won out with the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Whether the people of the United States recognized this distinction is doubtful. But the distinction nonetheless existed. Mr. Hoover's noble ambition was "to keep the Presidency the same as we received it. We have not resorted to short cuts to temporary success which would ultimately undermine the system built during one hundred and fifty years."¹¹

So Herbert Hoover felt that his record justified re-nomination by the Republican Party in 1932, despite the fact that economic conditions in the country had become worse instead of better. Hoover advocated, and Congress had passed the Reconstruction Finance Corporation Act, and the Glass-Steagall Act to reform the Federal Reserve System. Both of these measures had helped somewhat to combat the recession, but the nation still was foundering, with unemployment increasing on all sides.

¹¹ Ibid., 21.

"America", in the words of one author, "demanded more heroic measures to bring back prosperity. . . . It was his (Hoover's) fate that individualism as a philosophy of government and as a system met its deathblow with the crash of the stock market in October, 1929."¹²

- This brief survey of Mr. Hoover's background and of his leadership during his term as President, bringing in as it does some mention of the national picture prior to 1932 is essential to any understanding of that election. However, before studying the other candidates, Mr. Hoover's actual bid for re-nomination must be considered.

The New York Times on Sunday, June 12, 1932, two days before the opening of the Republican Convention in Chicago, speaking of Hoover's re-nomination said, "this, of course, will be the principal business of the gathering, and it was all settled months ago."¹³ In other words, Mr. Hoover's re-nomination was assured long before the convention. But the story is not quite as simple as that. The Republican Party was far from enthusiastic about Mr. Hoover during 1931 and 1932. "A great many Republican bigwigs had never liked him personally . . . and the President did not go out of his way to win their favor."¹⁴

12 Peel and Donnelly, 14, 15.

13 New York Times, June 12, 1932.

14 Peel and Donnelly, 19, 20.

Even among the ordinary Republican voters of the nation there was apathy towards a President who was so widely blamed for the depression.

It is, though, an established tradition that a President who wants a second term should be re-nominated by his party. There are very few exceptions to this in American political history. If Mr. Hoover had expressed a desire not to run, many Republicans would have been happier over their prospects. But once he let it be known that he wanted another chance, his nomination was a certainty. The President controls the patronage and the party organization and it is next to impossible for his own party to oppose him. Then, too, there was the widespread feeling that the party would have to stand or fall in November, 1932 on the basis of its record during Hoover's administration. That record could not be repudiated if there was to be any chance of success at the polls.

The Republican factions that did express hostility to Mr. Hoover usually spoke of either Senator Dwight Morrow, of New Jersey or a return to Calvin Coolidge. Morrow's popularity had been greatly enhanced by his daughter's marriage to Charles Lindbergh, the popular hero. But upon Senator Morrow's death and Coolidge's definite refusal to run, there was no one of any prominence mentioned to supplant Hoover.

Once it was decided that Hoover wanted the 1932

nomination, he and his chief advisers set to work on the tremendous problem of building up the President's popularity before the nation. This pre-convention campaign was begun in January, 1931. Letters went out from Robert H. Lucas, executive director of the Republican National Committee, to all precinct leaders in the nation admonishing them to "defend the President."¹⁵ It was hoped that such tactics would help to counteract the widespread criticism of the President.

Mr. Hoover's relationship with the Washington correspondents had not been very friendly. Through these sources, his policies, ideas, opinions, even pictures went out to the nation. There was a "widespread public belief that Mr. Hoover was a hardboiled and coldblooded individual who was totally unmoved by the distress of the working classes. . . . Instead of radiating confidence and good cheer in the presence of the economic crisis, his portraits made one want to sell short, get the money in gold, and bury it."¹⁶ In addition, many derogatory stories were circulated about him which did much to lessen his popularity.¹⁷

Realizing the President's mounting unpopularity,

15 Ibid., 50.

16 Ibid., 51.

17 The New York Times, February 28, 1932.

positive attempts were made to change this bad impression of him. Theodore Joslin and James West went to work to build Hoover support. The former had charge of "humanizing" him, the latter was to attempt to convince the nation that the President was an effective leader. The fact that the press saw through this scheme and went to work to scuttle it, instead of cooperating, did not ¹⁸ daunt Hoover's aides.

In general their campaign failed. By promising, for example, in May that the "worst was over" and then having unemployment increase in June, they hurt the executive's chances more than they aided them. The one point upon which they enjoyed some success was their retaliation against Democratic criticism of the administration by pointing to the Democratic controlled House of Representatives. The Democrats had won a majority in the 1930 congressional elections. Under the leadership of Speaker Garner the House had not been noted for its efficiency. "'Look at the House under Democratic rule!'" was the stock reply of Republicans to critics. It was a good one, because the House ¹⁹ got entirely out of Garner's control." Undoubtedly this phase of Hoover's pre-convention campaign saved many votes for the Republicans. Yet the attempt to build confidence in the President

18 Peel and Donnelly, 53, 54.

19 Ibid., 55.

by a new publicity campaign was not in general effective in the face of continuing unemployment and depression. Hoover's popularity during the thick of this fight to "humanize" him was really at its lowest point. The country was inundated with cruel stories about him which easily balanced all attempts of his publicity chiefs. An example of one of these is recounted by F. R. Kent in Scribners. "The President asked Mr. Mellon to lend him a nickel to buy a friend a soda. Mellon answered, 'Here's a dime, treat 'em all.'²⁰"

Herbert Hoover had declared that he wanted renomination, therefore, according to political procedure, he was certain to be the candidate in November, 1932. If he had succeeded in bringing prosperity back to the nation by June 1932, when the convention assembled in Chicago, the Republicans would not have met in an atmosphere of gloom. Republican attempts to whip up enthusiasm had failed. Public apathy to the G.O.P. convention was shown by the drastic price-cutting of admission tickets two days before the convention opened.²¹

"Under the circumstances experienced political observers had no hesitation in prophesying a Democratic victory; the Democratic nomination therefore was a prize of real value,

20 Scribners, November, 1932, F. R. Kent.

21 The New York Times, June 12, 1932.

as it had been in 1912, and there were numerous contestants for it." ²² Among the most prominent of those mentioned were Alfred E. Smith, Franklin D. Roosevelt, John N. Garner, Governor Albert C. Ritchie of Maryland, and James A. Reed of Missouri. However, Roosevelt and Smith early emerged as the leading candidates, and the others were mentioned, if at all, as "dark horses." In such a study as this, which is primarily of the election, not the conventions, it is only necessary to show how Mr. Roosevelt won the nomination. To do this, however, his chief opposition, Alfred E. Smith, must be considered.

Alfred E. Smith was born in New York City on December 30, 1873. He went into politics at the age of twenty-one as Clerk of the New York City Jury Commission. Later he was elected to the State legislature where he served for twelve years. He followed that by becoming Sheriff of New York County from 1915 to 1917, and President of the Board of Aldermen during 1917 and 1918. He was Governor of New York during 1919 and 1920, and from 1923 to 1928. Mr. Smith was nominated for President by the ²³ Democratic Party in 1928, but lost the election.

Alfred E. Smith had not relinquished his nominal leadership of the party after 1928, even though he was generally

²² Ralph Volney Harlow, The Growth of the United States, Vol. II, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1947, 529.

²³ Who's Who, 1932, A. and C. Black, Ltd., London, 1932, 2979.

quoted as not wishing to run for President again. Smith had a large personal following due to his record, his lovable character and magnetic personality. And despite all official utterances, by 1931 he was thinking of the Presidency. "Smith's actions of 1931 and 1932, though under cover for the most part, revealed him as a man with his heart set on being re-nominated."²⁴

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the popular Governor of New York was the other outstanding candidate for the nomination. In fact, he was one of the few among the myriads of Democratic candidates who was definitely "available." Roosevelt had set his presidential boom in motion after his re-election as Governor of New York in 1930. He gave James A. Farley freedom to go to work to secure the nomination, when both felt that Smith really meant his 1928 withdrawal.²⁵

Franklin D. Roosevelt was the son of James Roosevelt and Sara Delano. He was educated at Groton School, Harvard, and the Columbia University law school. He married Anna Eleanor Roosevelt in 1905 and was admitted to the bar in 1907. He was of Dutch ancestry and an Episcopalian. Four sons and a daughter made up his family.

24 Peel and Donnelly, 28.

25 James A. Farley, Jim Farley's Story, The Roosevelt Years, Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., New York-Toronto, 1948, 10.

His political career began with election to the New York Senate in 1910 and 1912. During the war, President Wilson appointed him Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Mr. Roosevelt was nominated for Vice-President of the United States by the Democratic Party in 1920. He was a delegate to the Democratic National Conventions in 1920, 1924, and 1928. It was he who nominated Alfred E. Smith in 1924 and 1928. Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected Governor of New York in 1928 and re-elected in 1930. ²⁶

Mr. Roosevelt's business connections were in law and banking. He had been a member of the New York firm of Carter, Ledyard and Millium from 1907 to 1910. In 1910 he became associated with the law firm of Langdon P. Marvin and Henry S. Hooker. He became eastern manager and a vice-president of the Fidelity and Deposit Company of Maryland in 1920 and continued this connection until his election to the Presidency. In addition, he was a partner in the law firm of Roosevelt and O'Connor from 1924 to 1933.

Franklin D. Roosevelt's wealth was computed at \$300,000 in 1932. This, however, does not include the Hyde Park, New York estate nor his mother's \$500,000 estate, both of which would go to him upon her death. He had lost about \$5,000 during the depression from 1929-1932. ²⁷

26 Who's Who, 1932, 2891.

27 Peel and Donnelly, 236.

Mr. Roosevelt was the Democratic candidate for nomination with the greatest assets and fewest liabilities. The fact that Mr. Hoover had declared that "Roosevelt was his favorite candidate, the one he was told he could most easily beat,"²⁸ only showed Hoover's political judgment to be bad. Franklin D. Roosevelt's assets included his courageous battle against infantile paralysis which had won him the respect of many Americans. His placing of Smith's name in nomination in 1924 and 1928 had also built up Roosevelt's popularity. His association with Woodrow Wilson, his victories in New York State, even in Republican years nationally, had helped keep his name in the public eye. As Peel and Donnelly sum it up, the "East considered him wet and not radical, the West considered him a progressive, the South a 'reasonable wet and a Protestant.'²⁹ Mr. Roosevelt's chief liability was the antagonism of Smith who really did desire the nomination.

Roosevelt's bandwagon secured a long lead early due to the skilled work of James A. Farley and Louis McHenry Howe. Democratic leaders in every corner of the land were visited in person by Farley and told of the certainty of Roosevelt's nomination and election. Polls were taken, all of which predicted Roosevelt's success. These polls helped create public support

28 Time, July 11, 1932, 7.

29 Peel and Donnelly, 31.

for him. People who read their results climbed aboard the bandwagon to be with the winner. "Truly, no piece of strategy in the pre-convention period was more successful than these surveys. Furthermore, their use must be reckoned the most unique maneuver of the campaign."³⁰

Franklin D. Roosevelt had specifically announced his candidacy on January 23, 1932; Smith on February 6. Smith's hope, in view of the Roosevelt bandwagon, was to hold enough votes away from him to prevent the two-thirds majority required by the Democratic convention. Thus, by deadlocking the assembly he could either get himself elected or name the candidate. Smith's definite candidacy, brought out some other candidates who would not have declared themselves had he not. The "dark horses" began to gain a little hope.

The Democratic pre-convention campaign ended in doubt. Franklin D. Roosevelt had a majority of pledged delegates, but not two-thirds. Smith did not have one-third. The unpledged and the favorite son states would have to be bargained for. The story of the convention is one of political maneuvering and hard bargaining. It is the story of the success of James A. Farley.

30 Ibid., 61.

CHAPTER II

THE CONVENTIONS

The Republican National Convention of 1932 opened on June 14, in Chicago in an atmosphere of deep dissension. But that dissension was not caused by the presidential nomination task facing the delegates. As Arthur Krock, veteran political reporter for The New York Times wrote:

For the first time since 1912 a Republican Convention assembled to renominate an incumbent of the White House is reflecting deep inner dissension. The arguments are now over the prohibition question and on the renomination of Vice President Charles Curtis. . . . The gathering thus far is marked by an air of great quiet, variously explained as reflecting the serious industrial condition of the nation, the uphill fight which many believe lies before the party and the lack of personal popularity of the President and Vice President. 1

As has been shown in the first chapter, Mr. Hoover's renomination was a dead certainty. He was the President, and he desired another term. Therefore, no one could oppose him with much chance of success. It might also be added that in 1932 there were few prominent Republicans seeking the nomination. To many, the cause seemed hopeless and they did not want to be associated prominently with a losing team.

1 The New York Times, June 13, 1932.

Chicago businessmen had contributed \$150,000² to the Republican National Committee in order to play host to the convention. It was said officially that the "windy city" was selected because of its central location and hotel accommodations. But the fact that Illinois is an important state politically, coupled with the cash outlay, is not to be disregarded in studying this choice.

Newspaper and radio coverage of the convention was at an all time high. Comments on the eve of its opening reflect the general attitude towards Mr. Hoover and his party. Will Rogers wrote, "The whole town is on edge, just waiting for the Democrats to come."² Jouett Shouse, chairman of the Democratic National Executive Committee referred to the Republican Convention as a "lodge of sorrow" in which Hoover would be "grudgingly nominated."³ Elmer Davis, another correspondent, wrote: "Thirty-six hours before the great gathering is due to open Chicago is about as lively as a college town after the college has closed for the summer. . . . The only business before the convention is the heaping of praise and honor on a man most of them would like to drop into the Potomac with a millstone tied around his neck, if they could."⁴ Arthur Sears Henning:

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

"The President inspires no enthusiasm. He is going to be re-nominated because his rejection would be a confession of party failure that would be fatal to the Republican fortunes in the election."⁵

The convention was called to order by the national chairman, Senator Fess of Ohio, at eleven o'clock in the morning. It became evident early that the administration was in control of the convention, in the seating of some disputed delegates and the appointment of committees. Following the preliminaries, the keynote address was given by Senator L. H. Dickinson of Iowa, a blood and thunder orator of the bombast school. It was necessary for the Republicans to find a goat to blame for the depression which was neither Republican nor American. The Republican keynote address of 1932 was not an easy one to give. Even before the convention opened, critics were waiting expectantly for the party to "point with pride" to its record so that they could laugh such statements to scorn.

The speech is marvelous in the way it avoids all controversial issues, praises Hoover's administration and blames the Democrats for practically all the nation's evils. It failed

⁵ Chicago Sunday Tribune, June 12, 1932.

to even mention prohibition, the most debatable issue before the convention. Many leaders and one third of the delegates were absent as Dickinson began his speech. The hall was even emptier at its conclusion.⁶ The actual issues of the campaign, including the platforms of both parties, will be treated in another chapter, but it seems essential in tracing Mr. Hoover's nomination to at least scan some of the ideas in the keynote speech, which reflected the President's thought. For in the campaign to follow, Hoover's bid for the reelection would have to stand on the record of his administration. This record was recounted by Senator Dickinson.

The keynote address began by recounting the Republican record of the last four years. He showed how Mr. Hoover had done infinitely more to combat the depression than any other President "In the fourteen major economic dislocations which have gone before."⁷ The senator recounted Hoover's use of the Federal Reserve Board, prevention of wage disturbances, unemployment relief, increase of government building projects, cooperation with state highway and other construction efforts, and ending of practically all immigration. The speaker contrasted these real measures with the lack of leadership abroad. The President

6 Peel and Donnelly, 84.

7 Republican Campaign Textbook, 45.

had preserved "a stable social order, the people united in aid to their less fortunate fellows."⁸

The keynote address then took up, in order, Mr. Hoover's reconstruction plans, and Democratic obstructionists. The former were greatly hampered by the latter. Dwelling on the Democratic opposition especially since 1930, Senator Dickinson said:

For two long years they hampered the President at every turn. Through a highly subsidized press bureau, Democratic Congressmen sought to distort his every word, to belittle his effort at human and economic relief; to impugn his every motive; to frustrate his every move. Their orders were to 'smear Hoover.'⁹

After this opening blow, the keynoter went on to discuss the record in a more detailed manner, heaping more and more blame on the Democrats for the nation's evils. He accuses them of causing the agricultural evils of the entire decade because of the policies of the Wilson administration - - drastic deflation, free trade policy on farm products.¹⁰ Taking up the omnipresent tariff problem, the keynoter defended the Hawley-Smoot Act of 1930, with out which "we would long since been inundated by a flood of cheaply produced foreign products."¹¹

8 Ibid., 46.
 9 Ibid., 48.
 10 Ibid., 50.
 11 Ibid., 53.

He charged that despite their frequent denunciation of the act, the Democrats had furnished the margin of votes necessary to enact it, and despite their control of the House since 1930, not a single tariff rate had been lowered.

The address treated of many other issues, but the tenor can be seen from these examples. The Republican National Committee apparently was trying to capitalize on its most telling point, criticism of Democratic leadership. It will be remembered from the first chapter how this line of attack, planned by Mr. Hoover's boosters, had been the most successful. The keynoter had carried it into the convention.

The speech ended on the expected note of party loyalty. Senator Dickinson in a fervid burst of oratory concludes:

Today partisanship is sublimated before patriotism. And yet to my mind there is no greater patriotism than the employment of every effort towards the restoration of normal conditions. And there can be no more dependable means to this end than the re-election of Herbert Hoover as President of the United States. 12

Press reaction to the keynote address was quite consistent. Arthur Sears Henning, covering for the Chicago Tribune, noted the conservatism of the speech as indicative of the appeal President Hoover wished the Republican Party to

12 Ibid., 57.

make to the people during the campaign. "It will base its case on the record of the Hoover administration, but it will avoid so far as possible discussion of the prohibition issue. . . . The Republican Party will go to the people as the party of conservatism, warning the country of the dangers of radicalism which will be imputed to the Democrats."¹³ Even a stalwart Republican newspaper, the New York Herald Tribune, noted, in an editorial, the absence of mention of vital issues. "The people of this country are keenly interested at the moment in knowing not only what the Republican Administration and party have done but also what they propose to do."¹⁴

Most delegates were much more interested in the prohibition issue than in Hoover's renomination, the keynote address or any other convention business. A glance at the newspapers of the period will suffice to show how the great interest was centered in the platform plank on prohibition. The only real excitement of the Republican Convention of 1932 was caused by this issue. On Wednesday night, June 15, a four hour battle was begun in the presence of twenty thousand spectators, lasting until one-fifteen o'clock Thursday morning. The Republican platform had been dictated from Washington by the President and

¹³ Chicago Daily Tribune, June 15, 1932.

¹⁴ New York Herald-Tribune, June 15, 1932.

his associates. The convention sat in silence until the prohibition plank was read, little concerned with the grave economic issues facing the nation. The platform straddled the prohibition issue, promising more adequate enforcement of the liquor laws, and leaving an opening for states by passage of a new amendment to let their citizens decide for or against repeal, but always under federal control. This plank touched off a scene of turmoil in the Chicago Stadium. But despite the reading of a minority report favoring outright repeal of the eighteenth amendment, and several hours of debate, the convention decided 681 to 472 to accept the platform as read. This vote showed surprising strength among the forces of repeal, but also proved that "from the beginning to end the meeting was firmly under the control of Mr. Hoover."¹⁵

With the platform adopted, the next order of business was the nomination of President. This was done on Thursday, June 17. Mr. Hoover's name was placed in nomination by Joseph I. Scott of California. Of course this touched off a demonstration which lasted half an hour. The only other candidate nominated was former Senator Joseph I. France of Maryland who had no real support from any section of the country. Maryland was not even

¹⁵ Peel and Donnelly, 90.

for him. President Hoover was renominated on the first ballot. The vote on the nomination for President was:

Herbert Hoover Of California.	1,126 $\frac{1}{2}$	
John J. Blaine of Wisconsin.	13	
Calvin Coolidge of Massachusetts.	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	
Jospeh I. France of Maryland.	4	
Charles G. Dawes of Illinois.	1	
James W. Wadsworth of New York.	1	
Absent or not voting.	4	16

Very little time elapsed before candidates for the Vice-President's office were placed in nomination. Here a real revolt against Hoover had threatened for weeks, and broke out on the convention floor. Many Republicans desired a younger, more vigorous, and more colorful personality than Charles Curtis. On the first ballot Curtis was nineteen votes short of a majority of 578, but a switch of seventy-five votes by Pennsylvania sent him across the line. No other candidate was even close to Mr. Curtis in total votes, but twelve nominees split almost half of the votes between them. The second highest total belonged to Hanford MacNider of Iowa with 182 $\frac{3}{4}$ to the Vice-President's final 634 $\frac{1}{2}$.

So the Republican Convention came to an conclusion on the afternoon of June 16. It had been completely dominated by administration forces. The nominees, the platform, and the appointment of party officials had followed Mr. Hoover's wishes. The Republican Party had no new faces, and only a slightly modified platform with which to woo the 1932 voters. There was nothing or no one to counteract the unpopularity of the men who had run the nation during its greatest financial crisis. The Republicans had to stand on their record. They had to defend Hoover. They had to defend Prohibition. For thus their convention had decided.

"The Republicans had met in apprehension that defeat was just around the corner. In contrast, the Democrat's met with the joyous enthusiasm of crusaders."¹⁷ Thus wrote James A. Farley, a man who should know how the Democrats felt because of his inner party contacts. It is a well known fact that the Democrats assembled in Chicago on June 27, 1932 with the scent of a Presidential victory in the air. Excitement, gaiety, joy filled their gatherings. The supporters of various candidates were on hand early to cajole, implore, demand or bargain for the delegates' votes. This feud which had developed between Alfred

17 Farley, 14.

E. Smith and Franklin D. Roosevelt was simmering in the hotel room meetings and threatened to boil over at any minute and pour its torrid steam out upon the very convention floor. "Delegates arriving in Chicago found their leaders already locked in a struggle which might make or break their party."¹⁸

Some of the press comments on convention eve are illuminating. Always ready with a quip, the irrepressible Will Rogers in his regular column wrote, "If this convention stopped right now two days before it statrt, it's been a better convention than the Republican one. . . . The plan is to 'stop' Roosevelt, then everybody 'stop' each other."¹⁹ Most reporters agreed that the delegates would see some fireworks before the convention was very old. Time said, "Where Republicans smother their differences in committee, Democrats fight theirs out in public. Where Republicans represent the People, Democrats are the People - - noisy, emotional, opinionated."²⁰ Nor was the press wrong. The Convention's anticipated strife simmered under cover during the first day as National Chairman Raskob opened the proceedings, Cammander Evangeline Booth of the Salvation Army prayed, Mayor Anton J. Cermak of Chicago went from his speech of welcome into a partisan harangue, and Senator Alben Barkley

18 Time, July 4, 1932, 10.

19 New York Times, June 27, 1932.

20 Time, July 4, 1932, 10.

delivered the Keynote address. Not that these were necessarily dull or unwelcome, but because they all steered clear of the "Roosevelt versus Everybody" Presidential fight, most delegates applauded quietly and waited calmly for the beginning of hostilities.

Before going into the maneuverings of the candidates, it is necessary to take a glance at the keynote address. Perhaps the Democratic keynote speech is less important than the Republican in 1932, since the Republican speaker had to defend Mr. Hoover's administration, while Senator Barkley had merely to attack - - always the easier task. Barkley's address had been previewed by Governor Roosevelt who had been instrumental in the selection of the Kentucky Senator as the keynoter, so the speech forecast the character of Roosevelt's campaign, if
 21
 nominated.

The theme of the address was that President Hoover had woefully mismanaged the government, beguiled the country with false promises and demonstrated his unworthiness to hold his job. As might be expected he blasted the Republican tariff policy, agriculture program and relief measures. "Our house was on fire and we could not stop to dispute over the brand on the hook and
 22
 ladder." On the most popular of the issues, prohibition,

21 Ibid., 12.

22 Chicago Daily Tribune, June 27, 1932.

Mr. Barkley, himself dry, speaking for a wet candidate recommended the submission of a resolution repealing the eighteenth amendment. "A re-expression of the will of the people is advisable and justified."²³

The keynote address ended with an appeal for a "new commander." "There's nothing wrong with our people except that they have followed prophets who were false, blind and insensible."²⁴

In 1932, the Senator maintained the American people would elect the Democratic candidate who would be one to serve "the whole nation without regard to class or creed or section."²⁵ The speech took two hours to deliver, and was followed by a twelve minute marching demonstration which constituted the chief thrill of the opening session.

The second day of the convention, Tuesday, opened with the Stadium packed to its ceiling in anticipation of the first tests of strength among the various Democratic camps. "Three floor fights were in the agenda for the day, and on their outcome hinged the fate of the Roosevelt candidacy."²⁶ The first two fights affected the seating of delegates from Louisiana and Minnesota. The votes on these issues reflected quite clearly that Roosevelt supporters were in control of the convention

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Time, July 4, 1932, 12.

26 Peel and Donnelly, 95.

processes. This show of strength "caused certain Roosevelt delegations that had shown signs of weakening to stay with him." ²⁷

The third fight was over the appointment of the permanent chairman. The Roosevelt forces felt that a friendly chairman would be helpful to their cause, so they rallied behind Senator Walsh of Montana, rather than support Jouett Shouse, Smith's candidate. The vote on this issue was 626 to 528, a smaller margin of victory than in the first contests. As one authority expressed it, "The lure of the bandwagon was too strong after Roosevelt victories" ²⁸ in seating questions.

Senator Walsh, in his acceptance speech, uttered a paragraph which might really form the basis for the difference between Republicans and Democrats. It is a direct challenge to the Hoover theory of government:

The theory that national well-being is to be looked for by giving free rein to the captains of industry and magnates in the field of finance, and accommodating government to their desires, has come through the logic of events to a tragic refutation. So complete has been its failure that even from within the favored circle has been advanced the proposal that government thereafter plan and limit individual enterprise, in other words, that 'rugged individualism' of which we have heard so much be scrapped. ²⁹

27 Ibid., 96.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

The third day's session was scheduled to open in the afternoon. But Wednesday afternoon found the resolutions committee still closeted with the platform. Chairman Walsh turned the gavel over to the popular actor Eddie Dowling to keep the delegates amused until the platform was ready. For an hour the gathering was entertained by such notables as "Amos 'n' Andy", Will Rogers, Clarence Darrow, Gene Tunney, Reverend Charles Coughlin, "The Shepherd of the Air", and many others.³⁰ The delegates sat back and enjoyed this parade of talent, and after it was over Senator Walsh had to dismiss the delegates as the platform was not yet ready. The convention recessed until evening.

The Wednesday night session was called to order and Senator Gilbert Hitchcock of Nebraska, chairman of the resolutions committee began reading the platform before a hushed and expectant throng. Each plank was cheered as read. Finally the tenseness in the air became almost tangible as he reached what everybody was awaiting - - the prohibition proposal. "We favor³¹ repeal of the eighteenth amendment."

The moment Senator Hitchcock uttered these words, The Chicago Stadium was rocked to its West Madison Street depths

30 The New York Times, June 30, 1932.

31 Ibid.

by a spontaneous mob scene which overshadowed anything the convention had yet seen. As the Times put it, "The promise of beer was the touchstone."³² A parade of delegates wound its way around the convention floor as thousands of spectators stood in their places and cheered. Only a few states stayed out of the wet parade. Kansas, Delaware, Georgia and the Philippines were among those who kept their standards in place as the stadium roared for almost a quarter of an hour.

The reading of the rest of the platform came as an anti-climax. The audience, however, gave Senator Hitchcock a cheer as he finished reading and moved the report's adoption. Before the vote could be taken, it was necessary for the delegates to hear the minority prohibition report which was more conservative than the plank read by Hitchcock. Senator Cordell Hull's reading of this report was roundly booed and hissed when the assembly realized his purpose. A few other minority reports on other matters were given. These were followed by debate on the adoption of the platform. Among the speakers was Alfred E. Smith who favored the majority report on prohibition. His appearance was hailed with joy and enthusiasm by an ovation

32: Ibid.

which lasted until Mr. Smith's own strong voice quieted it. Mr. Roosevelt left his delegates free to vote as they wanted on this issue. The debate lasted so long that Chairman Walsh asked for a vote only on the prohibition issue, putting the other matters off until Thursday. A roll call vote favored the majority plank 934 $\frac{3}{4}$ to 213 $\frac{3}{4}$. The convention adjourned at 12:58 A.M. until noon Thursday.

Finally, the day of days dawned. Thursday, June 30, 1932 was the day for which the entire nation waited. Nominations for the Presidency were in order. Did Franklin Delano Roosevelt have enough pledged delegates to win? Could Alfred E. Smith stop the New York Governor's bid for nomination? Who were the "dark horses"?

After the remaining issues of the platform were settled, the completed document was adopted by a voice vote. Containing about 1500 words, it was the shortest platform in history. Then began the nominating speeches, demonstrations for each candidate, and seconding speeches. These occupied ten hours of the afternoon and evening of June 30. Those nominated were in order, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Governor of New York, John E. Garner, Speaker of the House, Alfred E. Smith, Harry F. Byrd, Governor of Virginia, Albert C. Ritchie, Governor of Maryland, Melvin A. Traylor, Chicago industrialist, James A. Read, Senator from Missouri, George White, Governor of Ohio, and William H.

Murray, Governor of Oklahoma. If quality of speeches was a deciding factor Roosevelt would have gotten the least votes and Smith would have won.³³ But such is not the case in conventions.

As each candidate's name was placed in nomination, wild demonstrations were staged. There are some who consider the length of the demonstrations related to the candidates strength, so each candidate's manager attempts to make his demonstration longer and louder than all the rest. The Roosevelt demonstration, organized by Mr. Farley, being first, had no time at which to aim, so in length it finished second to Smith's. Alfred E. Smith's nominating speech, given by Governor Ely of Massachusetts, was the best of the convention, and the thousands of Chicagoans packed into the Stadium's balconies were overwhelmingly in favor of him, so it is easy to understand why his demonstration was the longest of all. The galleries frequently booed mention of Roosevelt, and widely cheered allusion to Al Smith. Byt again, neither the oratory nor the enthusiasm of the crowds nominated the candidates for the Presidency. That is a matter of cold politics decided by the political leaders of each state's delegation in the relative quiet of the caucus room. James A. Farley had been working many months organizing Roosevelt support, selling his candidate

33 Peel and Donnelly, 101, and The New York Times, July 1, 1932.

to the Chairmen of Democratic state and county groups. Farley had taken the time and trouble to call on leaders in Oregon, Texas, Kansas and Maine, as well as in every other state. He had written thousands of letters to practically every hamlet, village and city in the United States of America. He had talked of the "magic" of the Roosevelt name the length and breadth of the country. He had promised the rewards of victory to those who would support his candidate. Every action of Roosevelt's for months had been carefully planned and plotted. Every angle of the convention had been studied and every move anticipated. There was very little guess work. Farley's indefatigable labors had paid off. Those leaders he had sold on Franklin Roosevelt in the quiet familiarity of their own living rooms or local meeting halls were now in Chicago, surrounded with unfamiliar faces begging their support for first one and then another candidate. But through all the shouting, through all the oratory through all the closed room meetings, the face of James A. Farley stood out. He was the one who had come out to Oregon or Kansas. He had ridden a bus beyond the last train stop to meet a chairman in South Dakota or Arizona. He was the one who had taken the trouble to meet the delegates "back home". He was the one they trusted. His candidate was theirs.

When all the nominations had been made, mid-night had long since come and gone. Efforts to adjourn before the ballot-

two-thirds. So an all out behind the scenes campaign was waged to get Garner's votes. Prior to this move, Farley said, "Our heaviest efforts were directed on Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio because there was considerable sentiment for Roosevelt within the delegations." ³⁸ But these states hesitated to begin the swing towards Roosevelt. Everybody likes to be with the winner and the leaders in these states were not sure Roosevelt was going to win.

Particularly true was this in the Illinois delegation. Farley had attempted to gain Illinois' mighty bloc of fifty-eight delegates before the convention opened. He had conferred with Senator J. Hamilton Lewis in March, 1932. The senator was Illinois' favorite son candidate and as such was scheduled to receive the state's votes on the first few ballots. Mr. Farley found Lewis friendly to Franklin D. Roosevelt's candidacy at that time, and he felt optimistic as to Roosevelt's chances of garnering this third largest bloc of votes after the token vote for Senator Lewis.

When two days before the convention Mr. Lewis withdrew his name from consideration, Roosevelt's, Smith's, and the others' forces stormed Illinois for votes. It was known that

38 Farley, 19.

on the winning side when the proper time came. Anyone in the Chicago Stadium during the Convention knew that there were many Chicagoans for Alfred E. Smith. The Illinois delegation must have reflected this popular feeling. But they kept their fight behind the caucus room door by nominating Traylor. The Smith managers had received many promises of votes when the delegation should be released. Even Farley admitted that only "a few of the delegates came over to our side."⁴⁰

The situation in Illinois remained thus as the balloting began. Between the first and second ballots Farley "pleaded with Mayor Tony Cermak of Chicago to use his influence to switch Illinois, knowing that Indiana would follow if that could be done. Tony was friendly, but the appeal was in vain because he insisted that the delegation had agreed not to switch without a caucus, which was impossible while the balloting was in progress"⁴¹ Illinois bided its time waiting for a break which would enable it to take a decisive step. The delegation leaders were certainly not listening to their fellow citizens in the crowded Stadium. "The forgotten men in the Stadium gallery were heart, soul, throat and hands for Al Smith."⁴² Illinois held to Melvin A. Traylor through the first three ballots. After his

40 Ibid., 121.

41 Ibid., 142.

42 Time, July 11, 1932.

early attempts with Illinois Farley turned his attention to other delegations.

Between sessions the deal was consummated. William Gibbs McAdoo, former Secretary of the Treasury was the controlling voice in the California delegation which along with Texas had voted steadily for Garner. He was, according to The New York Times, speaking for the well known publisher William Randolph Hearst.⁴³ Hearst, the article continued, feared that a convention deadlock might result in a swing to Newton D. Baker or another candidate whose international ideas were not in accord with his. Thus to prevent deadlock he sent word to support Roosevelt. "Before the convention met at nine that evening, it was generally known that Speaker Garner had traded his ninety votes to Roosevelt for the vice-presidency."⁴⁴

As the fourth ballot roll-call began, Alabama, Arizona and Arkansas, the first three states, cast their votes for Roosevelt as they had done on the first three. But when the fourth state, California, was called, Mr. McAdoo took the platform to explain a change in vote. He said that "California had not come to Chicago to deadlock the convention."⁴⁵ He explained that California and Texas would support Roosevelt. These ninety

43 The New York Times, July 2, 1932, Arthur Krock's article.

44 Peel and Donnelly, 101, 102.

45 The New York Times, July 2, 1932.

vptes assured the nomination, and one by one the rest of the states climbed on the bandwagon until the final count read 945 for Roosevelt, $190\frac{1}{2}$ for Smith, $3\frac{1}{2}$ for Ritchie, $5\frac{1}{2}$ for Baker and 3 for White. Four states stuck with Smith to the last.

The next day manager Farley executed his end of the deal when he secured Speaker Garner's nomination for the Vice-Presidency by acclamation. Then he hurried from the Stadium to the Chicago airport to meet Mr. Roosevelt on his precedent-breaking flight direct to the convention city to address the assembled delegates. It was commonly known that this flight and address were designed to prove the crippled Roosevelt a "man of action". Farley pushed his way through the crowd to have Roosevelt grasp his hand saying, "Jim, old pal - - put it right there - - you did great work."⁴⁶

CHAPTER III
THE ISSUES

The two major parties had selected their presidential candidates four months before the election. Four months remained for the Republicans to justify their continuation in office. The same length of time was given the Democrats to make a successful bid for the executive office. This rather long period is an outgrowth of earlier days when it took delegates long days to return to their homes and proclaim their nominees.¹ In the day of radio and rapid transportation there is really no need for so long a period between nomination and election. Normally, the candidate was notified by an official committee some time after his nomination, at which time he delivered a well-prepared acceptance speech.

During this period the issues are drawn. Ordinarily, the platforms drawn up at the respective conventions serve as the bases on which all candidates from President downward take their stand. But frequently only a few of the planks become matter

¹ The Saturday Evening Post, June 11, 1932, Article by Alfred E. Smith.

for real controversy between party candidates. A nominee will take his stand on the whole platform of his party, but actually he only disputes a few of the planks with his opponent. These few issues serve as indications of his policy. Few people in the United States ever actually read or know the entire party platform, but most people know the candidates' positions on several main points which are sufficient to serve as indications.

Before looking into some of the specific issues on which President Hoover and Governor Roosevelt locked horns, it is necessary to survey briefly the platforms of the two parties as necessary background for the campaign. In reality, there were only two issues which greatly concerned the people - - prohibition and the depression. But the platforms provide specific ways and means of tackling these two problems in 1932.

There is no need here to give the platforms word for word, but rather to compare them one against the other in order to show their differences.² First of all, on the important question of economy, the Republican platform urges prompt and drastic reduction of public expenditure; resistance to appropriations, national or local, not essential to government. The

² Complete texts of the platforms may be found in the Republican Campaign Textbook, 1932, as well as in the newspapers published during both conventions.

Democratic platform urges the same cuts in expenditures, but by the abolition of useless commissions, and the consolidation of departments and bureaus, to bring at least twenty-five per cent reduction. So both parties agree in the need for economy in government, the Democrats even pledging a twenty-five per cent cut.

The Republicans oppose currency inflation and demand the maintenance of government credit. They favor United States' participation in an international conference on monetary questions. The Democratic platform urges sound currency and calls for an international conference to rehabilitate silver.

On the ever-important tariff question, the Republicans advocate increases in duties necessary to equalize domestic with foreign costs of production, as well as the extension of protection to natural resources industries. The Democrats urge competitive tariff for revenue only, reciprocity by agreement with other nations, and an international conference to restore trade and credits. Here the issue was a well-defined one with each party sticking to its traditional policy.

Another real point at issue which was to have far-reaching effects was the problem of unemployment relief. On this vital issue the Republican Party favored the administration policy which regarded relief problems as ones of state and local responsibility; advocates Congress creating an emergency fund to

be loaned temporarily to the states, and opposes the federal government giving direct aid to individuals. On this point the Democratic platform is definitely opposed for it urges the extension of federal credit to the States. It also advocates the extension of federal public works to combat unemployment, the reduction of hours to spread employment, and unemployment and old age insurance under state laws.

The great agricultural problem was met by the Republicans through the promise of revision of the tariff to maintain protection for farm products; by assistance to cooperative marketing associations, and by diversion of submarginal land to other uses than crop production. The Democratic platform of 1932 urges better financing of farm mortgages through reorganized farm agencies at low rates of interest, extension and aid to cooperatives, and control of surpluses.

Veterans are promised hospital care and compensation for the incapacitated by the Republican Party, as well as provision for their dependents. The G. O. P. likewise promises to eliminate inequalities and effect better economy in the administration of veteran relief. The Democratic plank simply urges full justice for all who suffered disability or disease caused by or resulting from actual service in war, and for their dependents.

The foreign policy planks present an interesting study of the times. How out of date they appear today! The

Republicans urge acceptance by America of membership in the world court; promotion of the welfare of independent nations in the western hemisphere, and the enactment by congress of a measure authorizing our participation in international conference should the peace of the Treaty of Paris be threatened. They also go on record in favor of maintaining our national interests and policies throughout the world. They urge the elimination of war as a resort of national policy. The foreign policy plank of the Democrats urges a firm policy of peace and settlement by arbitration; no interference in the internal affairs of other nations; adherence to the world court with reservations. It advocates international agreement for armament reduction, maintenance of the Monroe Doctrine, and opposes cancellation of debts.

On the question of insular possessions the Republicans favor continuation of the status quo for Hawaii, inclusion of Porto Rico in all legislative and administrative measures enacted for the economic benefit of the mainland, and the placing of citizens of Alaska on an equality with those in the states. This Republican plank seems to be a masterpiece of double-talk. The Democrats make no mention of Hawaii or Alaska, but urge independence for the Philippines and ultimate statehood for Porto Rico.

The Prohibition question was one of the most vital

and popular issues of the 1932 election. The Republican platform urged that the party continue to stand for the constitution and against nullification of law by nonobservance by state or individuals. The plank goes on to explain how the constitution may be amended. It condemns referendums without constitutional sanction, and says that prohibition is not a partisan political question. The Republican plank holds that no member of the party should be forced to choose between party affiliation and his honest conviction upon prohibition. The people should be given an opportunity to pass upon a proposed amendment which shall allow states to deal with prohibition, subject to the power of the federal government to protect citizens from the return of the saloon. This amendment shall be submitted to state conventions by congress.

The stand of the Democrats on the prohibition question was quite opposed to this Republican attitude. Their platform urged outright repeal of the eighteenth amendment. It called for immediate action by congress to submit repeal to state conventions called to act on that sole question. The Democratic plank calls on the states to enact laws to promote temperance and prevent return of the saloon. It pledges the federal government to protect dry states from shipments, and urges the immediate action by congress to modify the Volstead Act to permit beer in order to provide revenue for the government.

On the question of national defense, the Republican platform of 1932 urges perfection of economic plans for any future war during time of peace. The party believes the army has reached an irreducible minimum. The navy should be maintained on a parity basis with that of any other nation. The Democrats merely urge an **army** and **navy** adequate for national defense, and a survey to eliminate some of the expenditures involved.

The last issue treated in common was the banking situation. The Republicans urged the revision of banking laws to protect depositors, closer supervision of affiliates of banks and broader powers for authorities supervising banks. The Democrats go into greater detail on this point. Their platform urges the filing with the government and the publication of full facts in regard to all foreign bonds offered for sale; the regulation by the government of holding companies which sell securities; the regulation of utilities companies in interstate commerce, of exchanges trading in securities and commodities. The platform advocates protection for bank depositors, closer supervision of national banks, divorce of investment banking business from commercial banking and restriction of the use of bank funds in speculation.

This concludes the platform planks which deal with identical issues. However, the Republican platform has sixteen

additional planks and the Democratic four. To finish the shorter one first, it can be noted that the Democrats inscribed planks demanding the breakup of monopolies by strict enforcement of anti-trust laws, urged an annual balanced budget, advocated reorganization of the judicial system to make justice speedy and more certain, and demanded publication of campaign contributions and expenditures to eliminate corrupt practices.

The long and detailed Republican platform which few people ever bothered to read treats of many more issues. It urges home loan financing, shorter work week and days in government and private employment, restricts immigration and approves collective bargaining in an effort to obtain the labor vote. The platform feels called upon to urge freedom of speech, press and assemblage. It urges a federal power commission to charge for electricity transmitted across state lines, appropriate regulation of railroads, equality for all common carriers, development of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway, and federal cooperation with states in building of highways. The platform promises to aid to states to stamp out gangsterism and narcotic traffic. It urges continuation of the merit system in appointments to public office, a wise use of natural resources freed from monopolistic control, and reorganization of government bureaus. Finally, the platform urges fullest protection of property rights for Indians, continuation of equal opportunity

and right for negro citizens, and the continuation of child welfare efforts. Attached to the platform is a plea for party fealty in the interest of party solidarity so that "party disintegration may not undermine the very foundations of the Republic."³

This brief analysis of the two platforms is rather sketchy in nature but it does give a comparison of the attitude of the nation's two major political parties on national problems. As the campaign progressed some of the issues were more sharply drawn, some were ignored, but both candidates had been instrumental in drawing up the platforms and agreed with their respective details.

Before proceeding to a study of the actual campaign, it might be helpful to look ahead momentarily and list here the leading issues upon which the rival candidates are to break lances before election day. For this campaign was one in which the people were very interested, and before they voted they listened to the candidates. Perhaps they were aroused to vote for a variety of reasons but the issues of the campaign figured into them. As one scholar wrote, "the campaign of 1932 . . . was marked by the intense interest aroused and the expectation

³ Platforms of the Two Great Political Parties, 1932 to 1944,
Compiled by William Grof under direction of South Trimble,
Clerk U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Government Printing
Office, Washington, 1945, 363.

of a decided shift of votes from former allegiance."⁴

Strictly speaking, the only real issues are those which rest on reasonable differences of opinion, but even the most discerning and intelligent voters are swayed by considerations which are irrelevant and immaterial. At this point an attempt is made only to analyze the relevant and material proposals of the two candidates.

Two of the leading issues of 1928 were absent - - Tammany and religion. The prosperity issue was reversed. The emphasis on the remaining issues was definitely shifted. But a large number of educated people felt that there was nothing new or original in the positions in 1932. "The masses, on the other hand, believed that the major parties really did have contrasting and opposing programs."⁵

The issues which received the most attention were the depression and the way out, with each party condemning the other for the state of affairs in 1932; the tariff question, where a difference in policy may be noted from the platform planks; the method of unemployment relief, the agricultural problem, foreign policy public utilities, taxation and currency, reduction of government expenditures, and prohibition. There were

4 Edgar E. Robinson, The Presidential Vote, 1896-1932, Stanford University Press, Stanford University, California, 1943, 24.

5 Peel and Donnelly, 124.

nine real points at issue out of the two wordy platforms.

The republican party, traditionally conservative, believed in helping those individuals in the nation who helped themselves. This attitude will be noted in the next chapter in many of Mr. Hoover's speeches - - his Madison Square Garden speech, for example. Opposed to that philosophy is Mr. Roosevelt and his party. The New York Governor, to cite one instance, said:

I am pleading for a policy that seeks to help all simultaneously, that shows an understanding for the fact that there are millions of people who cannot be helped merely by helping their employers, because they are not employees in the strict sense of the word - - the farmers, the small business man, the professional people.

The policy of the Democratic party, as declared by Mr. Roosevelt in his Jefferson Day Address of 1932, is that there is a "concert of interests,"⁷ each of which should be aided by the government. These two policies are sometimes referred to as "individualism" - - the Republican ideology, and "collectivism" - - the Democratic brand. Therein lies the basic philosophic difference between the two candidates.

On the prohibition issue the candidates' views are

6 The New York Times, April 19, 1932.

7 Franklin D. Roosevelt, The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Samuel Rosenman, Compiler, Vol., I, Random House, New York, 1938, 632.

quite clear. Hoover was torn between principle and practice. In his acceptance speech he admitted the difficulty that existed in the enforcement of the eighteenth amendment: "A spread of disrespect not only for this law but for all laws, grave dangers of practical nullification of the Constitution, a degeneration in municipal government and an increase in subsidized crime and violence."⁸ Nevertheless Mr. Hoover feels that a "return to the old saloon with its political and social corruption"⁹ is not the way out. He proposes that common ground can be found by giving each state its share of enforcement, while at all costs avoiding a "return of the saloon!"¹⁰ During the campaign, Hoover admitted the failure of prohibition and, seeing the handwriting on the wall, only demanded that the rights of dry states be protected. In reality, he took the issue out of the campaign, but the voters, continued to look upon the Republican party as the dry side. Because of the great publicity given the Democratic convention's adoption of the repeal plank, and because Governor Roosevelt and all Democratic candidates argued for repeal, the people looked to them as the wet party.

The Republicans held that the depression was due to

8 Republican Campaign Textbook, 28.

9 Ibid., 29.

10 Ibid.

foreign causes and that the administration had done everything in its power to mitigate the effects of it.¹¹ Their opponents flatly contradicted the charge and demanded drastic changes in governmental economic policies. Both parties held that unemployment should be corrected through the assistance of the federal government.

Both of the major candidates pointed the way out of the depression, but they pointed vaguely in all directions. Time and again they listed the steps to be taken to restore prosperity. No reputable economist was willing to lend his name to the clamor for a balanced budget, but all of the politicians were in favor of it. They could not agree as to what constituted a balanced budget. Nor could they agree on the details of a sound re-employment program, or on a plan for increasing revenues, or on the means of stimulating industry, objectives which all of them sponsored in theory. 12

The Republicans stood by their traditional tariff policy through the 1932 campaign. Protection of industry and protection of the farmer would promote higher prices and living standards. Roosevelt avoided mention of the tariff as much as he could, but there was at least one statement of his that the Republicans disagreed with. In his Seattle speech, Mr. Roosevelt described his policy as being based in large part

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- 11 Herbert C. Hoover and Calvin Coolidge, Campaign Speeches of 1932, Double, Doran and Co., Inc., Garden City, New York, 1933, 45.
- 12 Peel and Donnelly, 1930.

upon the simple principle of profitable exchange, arrived at through negotiated tariff, with benefit to each nation." ¹³

Here Mr. Roosevelt was taken up by his adversaries and attacked for being willing to let other nations dictate our tariff policy. This tariff issue of 1932 was a twisted, subtle one. In the actual study of the campaign it may be seen just how equivocally it was handled. The Democrats always had to get around the charge that many of them had voted for the Hawley-Smoot Act, which their candidates were condemning.

These have been the outstanding issues of the campaign. Others appeared on the scene from time to time, but were always in a subsidiary role. But the fact remains that despite candidates' stands on issues, many people vote with little knowledge of or concern for the issues. The Republicans administration had to carry the burden of discontent and dissatisfaction always to be expected in the time of financial depression and economic uncertainty. Hoover had to defend his record and the party's and the record was not a happy one. Roosevelt could take the offensive and point to the conditions in the country under Hoover's leadership. Whether Hoover was guilty or not made little difference. Emotion can easily triumph over

13 Roosevelt, 725.

reason when men are hungry and out of work. And even if they had reasoned, there is no indication that Hoover would have won. The election of 1932 "was marked by evidence of deep-seated feeling and few indications of desire for clear-cut thinking."¹⁴

14 Robinsion, The Presidential Vote, 29.

CHAPTER IV
THE CAMPAIGN

James Farley wrote that "after the epic struggle of the convention, the campaign itself was a breeze."¹ He went on to say that the Republicans were making blunders right and left, that all the Democratic leaders considered the election a foregone conclusion, and even urged Franklin D. Roosevelt to stay at home. Some even said that he could go to Europe for the next four months and still beat Hoover.

But despite Mr. Farley's words the fact remains that Hoover received 59.65% of the vote and had 742,732 more votes than Smith in 1928.² Almost forty per cent of the vote cannot be brushed aside with the remark "no contest". President Hoover received many votes and in order to see how both candidates gained and lost votes it is necessary to study their respective campaigns. Chronological order is perhaps the simplest way to recount the 1932 campaign.

Mr. Roosevelt fired the opening gun when he flew to Chicago to accept the nomination in person. In a fighting,

1 Farley, 28.

2 Robinson, The Presidential Vote, 29.

vigorous speech, written in great part by the brilliant Raymond Moley, he won his first battle - - the one with his party. Writing of an assembly containing many Democratic delegates who had remained against their nominee to the end, Farley says, "the Roosevelt charm was on full blast and captured the convention hall."³

I pledge you, I pledge myself to a
new deal for the American People. . . .
Give me your help, not to win votes
alone, but to win in this crusade to
restore America to its own people.⁴

Mr. Roosevelt's whole acceptance speech was aggressive and bespoke the man of action. At this early point in his campaign he spoke out for the collectivist theory of government which would triumph in his election. It was embodied in these words. "Popular welfare depended on the granting of what the great mass of people want and need."⁵

Needless to say, Mr. Roosevelt's acceptance speech was wildly cheered by the assembled delegates. His magnetic personality had won this crowd, almost to a man. The only sour note in the Democratic keyboard was the unfeigned disappointment of Alfred E. Smith who had left Chicago before Franklin Roosevelt arrived. There was some talk of a conservative "bolt"

3 Farley, 26.

4 Ibid.

5 Peel and Donnelly, 104.

of the party to Smith but Roosevelt's speech and Farley's activity kept the insurgents in line and even succeeded in winning over some prominent Republican leaders.

After Roosevelt's address in Chicago there was a period of relative quiet on both sides. The next few weeks saw the organizing of party machinery, the collecting of funds and other behind the scenes labor preparatory to a political campaign. Mr. Farley was named national chairman of the Democratic Party because of his success as Franklin Roosevelt's pre-convention manager. He succeeded John J. Raskob and was assisted by Louis McHenry Howe, Governor Roosevelt's confidential secretary, Arthur McMullen, Frank C. Wasker, Evans Woolen, Harry F. Byrd, Robert Jackson and Charles Michaelson. Others played more or less important roles in the campaign organization but these were most prominent. Mr. Roosevelt himself played a major part in his campaign moves, ably assisted by three of his "brain-trusters", Raymond Moley, Rexford Guy Tugwell and A. A. Berle.

The Republicans had chosen Everett Sanders of Indiana as national chairman. He had served three terms in the House and had been an adviser to Calvin Coolidge. "Political observers thought this appointment signified a bid for midwest and old Coolidge support."⁶ Among the other national officers were

6 Ibid., 108.

Ralph T. Williams of Oregon, J. Henry Rorabuck, boss of Connecticut, J. J. Burke of Pennsylvania, and Joseph R. Nutt of Ohio.

A difficulty that both parties had to face was the raising of campaign funds in a depression year. There are some interesting and enlightening tables compiled by Dr. Louise Overacker in her little book, Presidential Campaign Funds, which illustrate the size and distribution of campaign contributions. It seems sufficient here merely to record that the Democrats received \$2,139,817 in contributions, and the Republicans \$2,527,249.⁷ Both parties had their strongest financial support in the Northeast, and leaned heavily on banking interests. "More than half the larger Republican contributions came from persons who could be identified as bankers or manufactures; the Democrats received more than forty per cent of their larger contributions from this source."⁸ The party with the smaller campaign chest elected the President for the first time since 1916.

Mr. Roosevelt had accepted the presidential nomination on July 2, 1932. The Republican candidate waited, according to precedent, until late in the summer to accept formally the nomina-

7 Ibid., 118.

8 Louise Overacker, Presidential Campaign Funds, Boston, Mass., Boston University Press, 1946, 15, 16.

tion. On August 11, Mr. Hoover made his first campaign speech in which he accepted "the great honor" his party had given him. In a long and detailed oration, Mr. Hoover reviewed the years of his Presidency and propounded once again his individualistic political philosophy. He asserted that he had put into action "the most gigantic program of economic defense and counter⁹ attack ever evolved in the history of the Republic." Where Franklin Roosevelt had accepted the nomination with the statement, "Statesmanship and vision, my friends, require relief¹⁰ to all at the same time," President Hoover countered with, "It is not the function of the Government to relieve individuals¹¹ of their responsibilities."

So the real issue was laid down in the very beginning of the campaign - - individualism versus collectivism. Although few people in the United States realized it at the time, the two leading political parties were giving them a choice of political philosophies which would affect the nation to its very core. The campaign speeches cover scores of issues. Both candidates detail their arguments on agriculture, foreign policy,

9 Hoover and Coolidge, Campaign Speeches of 1932, 5.

10 Roosevelt, Public Papers and Addresses, 651.

11 Hoover and Coolidge, Campaign Speeches of 1932, 7.

banking, natural resources, and a host of other topics. But through it all the real issue dominates. Should the government stand aloof from the masses and point the way, or should it stoop down, put the masses on its broad shoulders and carry them?

Reaction to his acceptance speech was very gratifying to President Hoover. Baskets of telegrams flooded the White House the day after his speech. Among prominent signees were Henry Ford and Walter Chrysler of the automobile companies.¹² From all corners of the land poured congratulations on a speech which one ardent supporter claimed, "rivalled Lincoln at Gettysburg."¹³

Roosevelt carried his presidential drive outside of New York state for the first time since the Chicago Convention on August 20, when he journeyed to Columbus, Ohio to address thirty-thousand jubilant Democrats in the Municipal Stadium. In this speech, the candidate attacked the Republican Party's leadership whose unwise building "made the whole structure collapse."¹⁴ Here Mr. Roosevelt declared that "the major issue in the campaign is the economic situation."¹⁵ Following this, he proceeded to recount the history of the United States since

12 Time, August 22, 1932, 7.

13 Ibid.

14 Roosevelt, Public Papers and Addresses, 670a

15 Ibid.

1929 under Mr. Hoover's leadership, charging the administration with negligence, incompetence and even failure to tell the truth. He speaks of empty White House prophecies on recovery. Nominee Roosevelt summed up by declaring the Hoover Administration "encouraged speculation and overproduction . . . attempted to minimize the crash . . . forgot reform."¹⁶

Picking phrases out of Hoover's acceptance speech, Governor Roosevelt continued:

Now I believe in the intrepid soul of the American people; but I believe also in its horse-sense. . . . I, too, believe in individualism . . . but I don't believe that in the names of that sacred word a few powerful interests should be permitted to make industrial cannon-fodder of the lives of half the population of the United States. I believe in the sacredness of private property, which means that I do not believe it should be subjected to the ruthless manipulation of professional gamblers in the stockmarkets. . . . I propose an orderly, explicit and practical group of fundamental remedies. These will protect not the few but the great mass of average American men and women who, I am not ashamed to repeat, have been forgotten by those in power.¹⁷

The Democratic candidate concluded his Columbus address by listing his nine remedies for the economic trouble of the day.

16 Ibid., 677.

17 Ibid., 680, 681.

These remedies generally call for increases in federal authority in order to regulate the nation's economy - - a collectivist ideal.

The Columbus speech was a slashing attack on the G.O.P. And though the Republicans cried "Demagogue" and "Childish", many Americans swayed by the flash and fire of the speech began to swing to Franklin D. Roosevelt for national leader.

Once begun, Mr. Roosevelt continued hammering away at his opponent and stating the issues of the campaign in various speeches. Mr. Hoover, after his acceptance speech, had buried himself in the cares of the Presidency and had refused to make any campaign speeches for the present. In fact, part of the Republican strategy was to portray their candidate as a man so engrossed in leading the nation to recovery that he had no time to get out and make campaign speeches. It was only after Roosevelt's popular orations seemed to be drawing more and more support that the President took to a genuine campaign tour in October, 1932.

In truth, Mr. Hoover gave the impression at the outset of the campaign that he was pleased at Governor Roosevelt's nomination. As one periodical put it: "For months he (Hoover) had a hunch that the Democrats would pick Roosevelt to run against him. Mr. Roosevelt was his favorite candidate, the one he was told he could most easily beat."¹⁸

18 Time, July 11, 1932, 7.

Meanwhile, the New York Governor's organization was swinging into high gear. At no time did the Roosevelt group fear defeat. But this does not mean they endured no difficulties whatsoever. As Farley wrote, the troubles of the campaign were "vexations but not damaging."¹⁹ One of these was the removal proceedings against Mayor James J. Walker of New York. Roosevelt had to sit in the trial of "Tammany's darling" in the midst of his presidential campaign. The opposition of Tammany also was felt against Roosevelt's choice to succeed himself as New York Governor, Herbert Lehman. This opposition in his own state was more irritable than it was harmful to Franklin D. Roosevelt's campaign.

The only real problem facing the Democratic candidate during his campaign was built around another New Yorker. As Farley said; "Perhaps our biggest problem was Alfred Emmanuel Smith."²⁰ And James Farley should know of what he is speaking in this instance. Whispers were heard in various quarters that Al Smith considered Roosevelt "unfit, untrustworthy, and unreliable."²¹ This did not help the Democratic cause. But when Smith and Roosevelt shook hands at the New York convention when

19 Farley, 28.

20 Ibid., 29.

21 Ibid.

Lehman was nominated, the Tammany opposition melted away.

Farley, who had engineered the event, in a choice piece of under-²² statement wrote, "The reconciliation was a great help to us."

A week after the Columbus address, Governor Roosevelt, on August 27, spoke at Sea Girt, New Jersey on the important prohibition question. He called the Republican stand "high and dry" at one end and at the other end 'increasing moisture!'²³ And he said that the Democratic Party had met the issue fairly and squarely. "It adopted, by an overwhelming vote, a plank so plain and clear and honest that no one could doubt its meaning and the candidates accepted this statement one hundred per cent."²⁴

He concludes:

Here, as before, I emphasize that the deep question is one of confidence in leadership - - in leaders. The measure of the truth of what they say is what they have said; the measure of what they will do is what they have done.²⁵

After a rest of two and a half weeks, the Democratic candidate embarked upon a campaign speaking tour. Hoover's refusal to debate the issues, coupled with Franklin D. Roosevelt's extraordinary oratorical ability made the Democratic managers anxious to exhibit their nominee throughout the land as an aid

22 Farley, 30.

23 Roosevelt, Public Papers and Addresses, 684.

24 Ibid., 688.

25 Ibid., 692.

to local candidates. However, despite their confidence in the election's outcome, no details were left uncared for by Mr. Farley and his assistants. In his own words, "No trip was more carefully planned." ²⁶ The passengers on the candidates' special train were each picked for a purpose. To refute the occasional rumors of Roosevelt's radical philosophy and lack of party support such responsible leaders as Senators Walsh, Pittman and Wheeler accompanied him. To advise the candidate and write his speeches, Moley, Kennedy and Flynn; to handle the press, Stephen T. Early and Marvin H. McIntyre - - later to become White House secretaries. The official gladhander was none other than that master of inside politics, James A. Farley.

The first speech of the trip was delivered by Mr. Roosevelt on September 14, at Topeka, Kansas. As might be expected this speech was a bid for the farm vote. The candidate discussed farm relief, land use, reciprocal foreign tariff adjustments, Republican neglect of the farmer, and the Federal Farm Board. Mr. Roosevelt said he knew farm problems personally because he had lived on a New York farm for fifty years, and had run a farm in Georgia for eight years, had travelled extensively observing farms, and had been Governor of the fifth or

26 Farley, 28.

sixth ranking farm state in the nation. An important statement of this address was, "I seek to give to that portion of the crop consumed in the United States a benefit equivalent to a tariff sufficient to give you farmers an adequate price."²⁷

A collectivist note was injected into this agricultural speech in Mr. Roosevelt's conclusion:

May those of us who intend a solution and decline the defeatist attitude join tirelessly in the work of advancing to be a better ordered economic life. The time has come. The hour has struck.²⁸

Three days later on September 17, the nominee spoke at Salt Lake City, Utah on the subject of railroads. Collectivist philosophy again was urged as the candidate declared the railroad mesh to be the warp on which the nation's economic web was fashioned. He stated that railroads had made possible the rise of the West. "These are not matters of private concern. . . . The system must become, as it should be, secure, serviceable,²⁹ national in the best sense of that word."

Before President Hoover was drawn out of his silence, his opponent spoke five more times. Each of these speeches was aimed at the entire nation through the press and radio, but directed primarily to the locale in which it was delivered.

27 Roosevelt, Public Papers and Addresses, 704.

28 Ibid., 711.

29 Ibid., 722, 723.

Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke on reciprocal tariff negotiations in Seattle, a shipping town; on Public Utilities and the development of hydroelectric power in Portland, Oregon; on Progressive Government to the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco, an organization concerned with governmental methods on a non-partisan basis. The Democratic nominee also delivered another address on agriculture and the tariff on his way back east at Sioux City, Iowa, and one on social justice in Detroit, an industrial city that had felt the social collapse of the depression more keenly than many other areas. The Detroit address concluded the New York Governor's principal speaking tour. He had won many supporters by his folksy, local-directed, yet keenly shrewd political addresses. He had spoken on a variety of subjects, but through all of his orations flows the philosophy of government support of the nation's economy and social welfare. His tour had been effective. Its success was dramatically proven by the Republican Party's increased activity to present its side of the issues.

The Detroit speech had been delivered on October 2. Two days later, Mr. Hoover was speaking at Des Moines, Iowa on agriculture. After acknowledging the prostrate condition of the farmers, the President attacked his opponent with these words:

I come to you with no economic patent
medicine especially compounded for

farmers. I refuse to offer counterfeit currency or false hopes. I will not make any pledge to you which I cannot fulfill. . . . The very basis of safety to American agriculture is the protective tariff on farm products. . . . We are rapidly restoring short-term credits to agriculture. . . . I conceive that in this civilization of ours, and more particularly under our distinctive American system, there is one primary necessity to its permanent success. That is, we must build up men and women in their own homes, on their own farms, where they may find their own security and express their own individuality. ³⁰

Here is the basic issue between the two men. All the details of each one's agricultural, tariff, labor, foreign policy programs need not be set down. The details but express collectivism on the side of Franklin Roosevelt and individualism on Herbert Hoover's side. Their policies are colored by their political philosophies. To a nation stricken with the economic chaos of 1932, the promise of federal aid, price supports, extraordinary measures to promote prosperity fell on fertile ground. Mr. Roosevelt's theory was the more timely. People who were hungry, out of work, uncertain of their futures, lacking security did not care too much about the theoretical

³⁰ William S. Myers and Walter H. Newton, The Hoover Administration, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1936, 255, 258.

results of collectivist government. Roosevelt promised help here and now to a stricken nation. He held out bread for immediate consumption by a hungry people, and few were concerned about future payment to the baker. Mr. Hoover sincerely believed this to be a dangerous trend and condemned it. He felt that the people had to rebuild their economy from the bottom upward, not from the top downward. It would be a more difficult struggle this way, but the Republican candidate felt the results would be sounder.

The chief hurdle that President Hoover had to clear if he was to sound convincing was his own record. For almost three years he had been attempting to combat the depression by individualist methods and the results were not apparent to large segments of the population. If the country was to regain its prosperity through Republican measures, why after three years was it not reviving? Was individualism enough? Had it not been tested and found wanting? What was the difference if collectivism was new? In a democracy the people have the right to be governed as they want, not necessarily as they always have been.

The day after the Des Moines speech, Herbert Hoover made a brief train stop address at Fort Wayne, Indiana. In this speech he lashed out at Mr. Roosevelt for bringing personalities into the campaign, and he accused the Democratic

nominee of uttering falsehoods. Here is Mr. Hoover fighting back. He has been drawn out of his shell.

I shall say now the only harsh word that I have uttered in public office. I hope that it will be the last I shall have to say. When you are told that the President of the United States, who by the most sacred trust of our Nation is the President of all the people, a man of your own blood and upbringing, has sat in the White House for the last three years of your misfortune without troubling to know your burdens, without heartaches over your miseries and casualties, without summoning every avenue of skillful assistance irrespective of party or view, without using every ounce of his strength and straining his every nerve to protect and help, without using every possible agency of democracy that would bring aid, without putting aside personal ambition and humbling his pride of opinion, if that would serve - - then I say to you that such statements, are deliberate, intolerable falsehoods. ³¹

The next day, October 6, Mr. Roosevelt took to the air waves to address the nation on the interdependence of business interests with those of agriculture and labor. After a few paragraphs of introduction he began to take up some of Hoover's words and to develop them. Prior to this speech there had been little opportunity for this, due to the Republican's

31 William S. Myers, The State Papers and Other Public Writings of Herbert Hoover, Vol., II, Doubleday, Doran and Co., New York, 1934, 319.

silence. Roosevelt expressed himself as happy that the President finally had come to agree with him when at Des Moines Mr. Hoover had said that farmer, worker and business man were in the same boat and must come to share together. "I am glad also that he thereby admits that the farmer, the worker and the business man are now all of them very much at sea!"³²

The candidate goes on in this speech to clarify once again his policies for returning the nation to prosperity. He again refers to his program as a concert of interests - - North, South, East, West, agriculture, industry, mining, commerce and finance. "'New Deal' is plain English for a changed concept of the duty and responsibility of Government toward economic life."³³ Roosevelt expresses his tariff program once again in direct contradiction of what Mr. Hoover had uttered a few days before.

It is true that many business men have been taught the glittering generality that high tariffs are the salvation of American business. You and I today know the final absurdity of a tariff so high that it has prevented all outside Nations from purchasing American-made goods for the simple reason that because of our exclusive tariff they could not pay up in goods, and did not have the alternative of paying us in gold.³⁴

32 Roosevelt, Public Papers and Addresses, 781.

33 Ibid., 782.

34 Ibid., 784, 785.

Hoover continued his campaign in a radio address on October 7. He claimed the nation faced three tasks; recovery from depression, correcting the evils that caused it, and advancement of social welfare through out the country. Mr. Hoover also asserted that his administration had been and was yet laboring at these tasks. He went on to detail the steps that had been taken. His basic theory again was expressed in these words: "Good government is the gift of good people to themselves, for the fountain of social justice cannot rise higher than its source."³⁵

On October 12, with less than a month remaining, Hoover addressed the American Bar Association Meeting in Washington, D.C. He urged lawyers to perform the duties of citizenship. This speech was crammed full of his governmental philosophy. Roosevelt addressed the nation by radio on October 13. His subject was unemployment and social welfare.

From this point until the eve of the election the two candidates made seventeen more campaign addresses in various cities in the East and Midwest. Roosevelt made seven more, Hoover ten. There is no need to go into the details of these. The candidates attitudes on the issues should be clear

from their earlier speeches. However, a few of the highlights of this last month of campaign might be in order.

Some of Franklin D. Roosevelt's most effective speeches dealt with the subject of federal expenditures and the need for economy. He had accused the Hoover Administration, in the Sioux City speech, of being the greatest spending Administration in peace time in the history of the United States. At Pittsburgh, on October 19, Roosevelt again referred to Hoover's "inexcusable fiscal administration"³⁶ as a cause of economic disaster. The Democratic candidate promised a twenty-five per cent reduction in government expenditures. He continued: "I regard reduction in Federal spending . . . as the most direct and effective contribution that Government can make to business."³⁷

Governor Roosevelt concluded his campaign in a great Madison Square Garden rally on November 5, 1932. In a brief address he summarized his position, restating his ideas on government in the same rather general terms he had employed throughout the campaign. He stated that his program was dedicated to the conviction that "every one of our people is entitled to the opportunity to earn a living, and to develop himself to the fullest measure consistent with the rights of his fellow men."³⁸ His program, he continued, was the spontaneous

³⁶ Harlow, 520.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Roosevelt, Public Papers and Addresses, 861.

expression of the aspirations of individual men and women. "We must put behind us the idea that an uncontrolled, unbalanced economy, creating paper profits for a relatively small group means or ever can mean prosperity."³⁹

Mr. Roosevelt appealed in his speech to the women to stand behind his policies for social welfare and unemployment relief; to the men in business to cooperate for prosperity; to the laboring men to have confidence in his policies for their security; to farmers so that their harvests would be profitable in the future; to all men to join with him for their hope and safety. "It may be said, when the history of the past few months comes to be written, that this was a bitter campaign. I prefer to remember it only as a hard-fought campaign. There can be no bitterness where the sole thought is in the welfare of American"⁴⁰

Mr. Hoover wound up his campaign on his way home to vote. In St. Paul, on November 5, he presented a point by point outline of what his administration had specifically accomplished. It was masterfully ordered. He followed this with a numbered outline of what the Democratic leadership of the House of Representatives had accomplished since 1931. He complained of Roosevelt's misrepresentation of many facts. He

39 Ibid., 865.

40 Ibid.,

analyzed some of the Democratic nominee's proposals and found them vague, general and impracticable. He said of his opponents: "This refusal to recognize the facts, this attempt to mislead the people, disqualifies them for the Government of the United States. . . . They expounded here and elsewhere through their candidate a philosophy of government that would destroy the foundations of the Republic."⁴¹

On the night before the election, November 7, President Hoover made a brief radio address in which he summarized his stand. He said that he hoped the people would realize the great crises the nation had successfully passed and his Administration's measures which had protected and restored the American system of life and government. He reiterated that the United States was once again on the road to prosperity. He attacked his chief opponent by contrasting Roosevelt's "appeal to destructive emotion" with his own "truth and logic." "I have tried to dissolve the mirage of promises by the reality of facts."⁴² He went on to appeal, as Roosevelt had done in his final speech, for Divine guidance of the nation. He thanked the young people of the nation, the veterans, the women, and the men for their support and encouragement. He concluded:

41 Myers, 470.

42 Ibid., 477.

Four years ago I stated that I conceived the Presidency as more than an administrative office; it is power for leadership bringing coordination of the forces of business and cultural life in every city, town and countryside. The Presidency is more than executive responsibility. It is the symbol of America's high purpose. The President must represent the Nation's ideals, and he must also represent them to the nations of the world. After four years of experience I still regard this as a supreme obligation. 43

43 Ibid., 479.

CHAPTER V
THE ELECTION

November 8, 1932 dawned at last. It was the day for which the nation had been awaiting expectantly. Election day in the United States has an atmosphere all its own. The tension in the air can be sensed at once. Throughout the length and breadth of the land in 1932 some forty million citizens were proceeding in quiet, orderly fashion to cast their ballots. By nine o'clock that night it was obvious to even the staunchest Republicans that Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected. At nine-seventeen o'clock, President Hoover telegraphed congratulations to Democratic headquarters. Mr. Roosevelt, assured of the Presidency, told his headquarters staff; "There are two people in the United States more than any one else (sic) who are responsible for this great victory. One is my old friend and associate Colonel Louis McHenry Howe and the other is that great American, Jim Farley."¹

The results of the election almost exactly reversed. 1928. Governor Roosevelt obtained 22,815,539 votes to Hoover's 15,759,930 a plurality of 7,055,609 votes for the Democrat. Roosevelt carried forty-two states while Hoover carried only six.

¹ Time, November 14, 1932, 26.

In the electoral college the winner received 472 votes to 59 for the Republican candidate. Smith, with eight states to his credit, had 87 electoral votes in 1928 to Hoover's 444.²

Franklin Delano Roosevelt had been elected President of the United States. A casual observer might judge that therefore the people of the United States had embraced his collectivist philosophy; that they had turned their backs on individualism. But no student of American politics could make this judgment. There are many reasons for this. First of all, forty-three per cent of the voters had not supported the New York Governor in the 1932 election. (39.6 per cent had voted for Hoover, 2.9 for other candidates.) It is interesting to note that Roosevelt did not win in 1932 by as large a majority as Hoover had in 1928, although more votes were cast for him.³ Hoover in 1932 received 742,732 more votes than Smith in 1928. An additional reason that must be considered is the one of voter intelligence. How many people who voted for Roosevelt actually understood or even considered his philosophy of government? This is a question that defies answer. Certainly many voters cast their ballot against Hoover rather than for Roosevelt. "The Republican administration had to carry the

² Peel and Donnelly, 215.

³ Robinson, The Presidential Vote, 32.

the burden of discontent and dissatisfaction always to be expected in time of financial depression and economic uncertainty. Whichever party one supports he must agree that 1932 was not a year conducive to unbiased, enotional political reasoning. As one author writes: The election of 1932 "was marked by evidences of deep-seated feeling and few indications of desire for clear-cut thinking."⁵

While it is true that collectivism triumphed in 1932 due to Franklin D. Roosevelt's election, it is only true in an associated sense. Mr. Roosevelt, a collectivist, was elected and therefore his philosophy became the Administration's. There is no proof that a majority of the people subscribed to this theory merely because they cast a vote for the Democratic candidate. Novertheless, the election of 1932 can be called the triumph of collectivism because de facto the nation's policies became collectivist.

But with Roosevelt elected there yet remains one survey to be made in order to round out an analysis of the 1932 election. Who actually voted for him? What effect had his speeches had on various areas of the land? Where had Hoover derived his forty per cent of the vote? The section

4 Ibid., 29.

5 Ibid.

to follow should be read with the preceding chapter in mind. Only then can the true value of the campaign be judged.

The electoral vote had gone to the Democratic nominee by an impressive majority - - 472 to 59. There was a great discrepancy between it and the popular vote, which is an indication of close contests in many states. There is little discussion possible on the electoral vote of 1932, as all President Hoover's votes came from the Northeast with the exception of one state, Pennsylvania. He carried six states: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and Vermont. This area of the country had voted Republican in every presidential election since the Civil War.⁶ The only New England state carried by Mr. Roosevelt was Massachusetts. This electoral defeat was an overwhelming one but in the American system of choosing a President by electors there can be a great discrepancy between the percentage won in the electoral college and the percentage nationally. This occurred in 1932.

Analyzing the six states carried by President Hoover some important trends may be shown. All six states had voted

6 The New York Times, November 9, 1932.

New York and Indiana. Fourteen states - - many of them key states - - in his favor would have changed the picture considerably. In fact, these fourteen states in the Republican column would have given Hoover eleven more electoral votes than he needed for election.

Viewed in this light, the election was not as overwhelming as it appeared at first glance. Although Franklin D. Roosevelt carried his collectivism into the White House with him in triumph, it would be difficult to prove that a majority of the people actually favored it. Rather, they favored him regardless of his political philosophy. They were not really opposed to individualism. They were merely opposed to Hoover. And even at that, forty per cent of the nation voted for the Republican candidate. A great section of the American people opposed Mr. Roosevelt, even in his first election. This fact should not be overlooked. As Robinson writes: "We tend to underrate the importance of dissent."⁹ In support of the contention that Roosevelt's victory was not a mandate from the people in favor of collectivism, the same author says:

9 Edgar E. Robinson, They Voted For Roosevelt, Stanford University, Calif., 1947, 2.

. . . acceptance of this view as to the essential nature of the Roosevelt leadership forces the conclusion that in American democracy, programs and platforms, even political parties are matters of secondary importance. Group leadership, meaning thereby skill in combining diverse elements in a continental population, is the one supreme test. 10

Franklin D. Roosevelt's election resulted in, rather than from, the triumph of collectivism. The United States has become more collectivist because of the Democratic victory of 1932. But it is another thing to say that the Democratic victory of 1932 was made possible by a desire for collectivism.

In conclusion, a brief survey of the vote in states where major campaign addresses were delivered should help to illustrate the nature of this election more clearly. On his tour of the nation Governor Roosevelt gave addresses in Kansas, Utah, Washington, Oregon, California, Iowa, and Michigan. All of these states had voted Republican in 1928. Each of them was in Roosevelt's column when the ballots were counted in 1932. His speeches in Massachusetts, New Jersey, Illinois, Maryland, Missouri, Ohio and New York also helped him gain these states. The only major address given in a state that was to favor Hoover was at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Roosevelt won Pittsburgh but lost the state.

10 Ibid.

President Hoover, on the other hand, did not win a single state in which he had spoken. No campaign address had been delivered by the Republican nominee in any of the six states he did win. This method of election study - - the comparison of campaign speeches with ultimate state vote - - ends up in complete chaos and invalidity when the analyst discovers that in Wisconsin, Montana and many other ordinarily Republican states, where neither candidate made a speech, Roosevelt won an overwhelming majority. So it cannot be said conclusively that the speeches played an important role in the election. Hoover won six states in which he did not make a single campaign address. He lost every state in which he spoke. Roosevelt won in addition more than twenty-five states in which he never appeared. It seems valid to conclude that many citizens cared little for the arguments on either side. They just did not want Hoover no matter what he said. They did want Roosevelt and did not care much what he said. It must be realized, however, that the press and radio projected the candidates words far beyond the orbit of listeners in any one place. Because no address was delivered in a given state did not mean the candidate's personality was unknown to that area.

So Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected President in 1932. President Hoover claimed to have done much, but the results were small. Mr. Roosevelt capitalized on this and gave

only vague assurances of his future policies. The people elected him President without knowing how he would put his policies into effect. His methods were collectivist. Since 1932, the government of the United States has been in the control of the Democratic Party. The Democratic victory of 1948 means that no other party can control the Administration at least until 1952. These twenty years of Democratic rule will have been devoted to the furthering of the collectivist philosophy of government which Franklin D. Roosevelt brought with him to the Presidency. The effect of this concept of government on the nation has been of tremendous importance. But sixteen years of it has left a great percentage of Americans still hostile. The collectivism which triumphed in 1932 has by no means wiped out the deep strain of individualism in the American temperament. This individualism is manifest on all sides. Perhaps it will one day reassert itself.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Richard Anthony Matre has been read and approved by three members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

May 20th 1949
Date

Joseph Roubicek
Signature of Adviser