

PICKLE HILL

A Play in Two Acts by
PETER HOWARD



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PICKLE HILL was first performed in the theatre at Mackinac Island, Michigan, on Dr. Frank Buchman's eighty-first birthday, 4 June, 1959.

The setting of the play is State College, Pennsylvania, fifty years ago. It was at 'Penn State' that Frank Buchman made what he describes as his first 'laboratory experiment' in remaking men. The results of it are seen today in the world-wide impact of Moral Re-Armament upon the lives of nations.

The characters in *Pickle Hill* are all real people, including Bill Pickle, the bootlegger, 'strong, stockily built, with a furious walrus moustache and the looks of a roaring pirate', as Frank Buchman once described him. The incidents and conversations in the play actually happened. It is a true story.

CHARACTERS

in order of their appearance

MR. AND MRS. THOMAS A. EDISON	} <i>Old friends of Frank Buchman</i>
MR. AND MRS. HENRY FORD	
MAGGIE GILLILAND	<i>daughter of Bill 'Pickle'</i>
DEAN ALVIN AGEE	<i>Dean of State College</i>
MRS. AGEE	
BLAIR BUCK	<i>a graduate student from the South</i>
BONEHEAD AND SAM DEAN	<i>hard-drinking students</i>
JAKE JACKSON	<i>a chicken thief</i>
BILL 'PICKLE'	<i>a bootlegger and hostler</i>
FRANK BUCHMAN	
MISS MEG AND MISS KATE	<i>the Stewart sisters</i>
CHRISSIE DAVIS	<i>their housekeeper</i>
MRS. GILLILAND	<i>Bill's wife</i>
MARY HEMPHILL	<i>Frank Buchman's cook</i>
A PRIEST; A SPEAKER AT THE TORONTO CONVENTION;	
CARL J. HAMBRO; LADY ANTRIM; TOD SLOAN;	
DR. JOHNSON	

*Students of State College; a night porter;
the Pickle children; an old graduate*

ACT ONE

Prologue

- I *The study of Dean Agee at Pennsylvania State College*
- II *The Campus of the College*
- III *The Dean's study*
- IV *The Campus, one month later*
- V *The Club, later that night*
- VI *Colerain Forge, next morning*
- VII *The Campus, some time later*
- VIII *Pickle Hill, home of the Pickle clan*
- IX *Frank Buchman's apartment*

ACT TWO

- I *The Campus, some weeks later*
- II *The station, next day*
- III *Toronto, a large auditorium*
- IV *Toronto, the hotel room*
- V *State College railroad station*
- VI *The Campus, after a football game*
- VII *Dean Agee's study*

Epilogue

ACT ONE

PROLOGUE

The curtain rises on a dark stage. A light glows and fades, glows and fades, until at last it shines strongly. Bending over it are two men, Thomas Edison and Henry Ford.

EDISON There it is. My first bulb. The very first in the world.

FORD I know, Tom. It's still treasured in my laboratory at Dearborn.

EDISON I'll never forget the thrill when for the first time it really worked.

FORD Sure, I understand. Felt the same thing myself the first little motor I ever made. Clara and I took it into the kitchen and screwed it down with clamps to the kitchen sink. We started it up and Clara had to keep pouring oil into it so it wouldn't explode.

EDISON Did it?

FORD No. Clara was fine. But the machine worked itself out of the clamps and bounded on to the kitchen floor. I knew it would work all the time, but just the same it was exciting to find that it really did.

EDISON Yes. You certainly put the world on wheels, Henry. All the same, I sometimes wonder where they are heading.

FORD You certainly lit the whole place up, Tom. All the same, with all your light they don't seem to see where they are going nowadays.

(Mrs. Thomas Edison and Mrs. Henry Ford appear from over the shoulders of the two men and stand around the light.)

MRS. FORD Talk, talk, talk. Can't you two ever stop it and come and get some sleep?

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FORD It's not so late, Clara. We were just talking about old times.

MRS. EDISON Patting each other on the back for all you've done, I suppose. Here, Tom. Here's some of your favourite. Apple pie and milk. (*Hands it over.*)

EDISON Thank you, dear. (*Starts to eat.*)

MRS. EDISON (*To the Fords*) He always likes his milk and apple pie. In the old days when Frank Buchman was seeing a lot of us, they'd talk away till all hours of night. Then I'd find Tom curled up on that roll-top desk of his at two o'clock in the morning when I'd bring in apple pie and milk.

EDISON I like Frank. I used to ask him the darnedest things. Once I said to him, 'Is Heaven lighted up?'

FORD What did he say?

EDISON He said, 'Of course. You don't have to worry about that. It's been lighted up long since. You did your job lighting up the earth.'

MRS. FORD That's like him. So down to earth. And how right he was! You know, you two men have got to face the fact that Frank has done more to give folk light and get 'em on the right track than all your bulbs and engines and Model T's put together.

FORD That's all right, Clara. Don't get het up. We all agree with you. I told him long ago that what he was doing gave me hope for the future of our country and the world because of the results being achieved.

MRS. FORD That's why I sent him to Mackinac.

MRS. EDISON Did you do that, Clara?

MRS. FORD Yes, I did. And it's the best thing I ever did in my life except marrying you, Henry.

MRS. EDISON In a world broadcast, I said that Frank's idea like your light, Tom, must go into every home in the world.

PROLOGUE

EDISON Now that's coming true.

FORD Yes, a wonderful story. It's gone as far as my cars and your light. Right round the world and going stronger than ever.

EDISON Do you remember how it all began?

FORD You mean his laboratory experiment?

EDISON Yes, you remember. The place where he first learned the secret of changing people.

FORD State College. Fifty years ago. Of course I remember.

MRS. FORD Do you remember old Bill Pickle, Henry? He came from there.

FORD Who could ever forget Bill? He helped me solve a problem.

EDISON What was that?

FORD One of my top executives was drinking himself silly. He wouldn't stop. I got Bill Pickle to come out and talk one New Year's Day at the little white chapel of Martha and Mary in Greenfield Village. The executive came to listen. He took far more from Bill Pickle, the bootlegger, than he'd take from any preacher.

EDISON You're a clever one, Henry. You know men as well as motors.

FORD Oh, that wasn't my idea! It was Frank's.

MRS. FORD Yes. It all began in State College fifty years ago.

EDISON From your shed, Henry, the world was put on wheels.

FORD From your laboratory, Tom, the whole world was lit up.

MRS. FORD From State College, the world is being rebuilt.

(Fades out, to entr'acte)

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ENTR'ACTE

Pennsylvania State College students, in front of Campus backdrop, sing:

If you want to be good, good,
As they say that you should, should,
Then keep out of our way,
Keep out of our way,
Keep out of our way in State College!
Are we making you sad, sad—
'Cos we like to be bad, bad?
Well, you don't have to stay.
Keep out of our way,
Keep out of our way in State College!

We like fundamentals,
We don't give a continental
For virtue, we much prefer vice.
For duty and daring
We're far beyond caring,
We hanker for things that are not quite nice.

Chorus If you want to be good, etc.

SCENE I

The study of Dean Agee at Pennsylvania State College

Everybody loves the Dean. He is popular, easy of access, charming, hospitable. A man's man, who has worked everything out from the standpoint of his own comfort. He has a praying wife. As the scene opens, Maggie Gilliland is tidying up the place and sings merrily.

MAGGIE (*Singing*) If you want to be good, good,
As they say that you should, should,
Then keep out of our way,
Keep out of our way, keep out of our way—etc.

(As she is coming near the end of her song, the Dean and Mrs. Agee enter.)

MRS. AGEE Maggie, go and bring some coffee and cookies, will you? Bring three cups. We have somebody coming to see the Dean.

MAGGIE Yes, Ma'am.

DEAN AGEE I haven't seen you around before, have I? What's your name?

MAGGIE Maggie Pickle.

MRS. AGEE She's Maggie Gilliland, and she's been working here several days now, haven't you, Maggie?

MAGGIE Yes, Ma'am.

DEAN Is your name Gilliland or Pickle?

MAGGIE Gilliland really, Dean. But everybody calls me Pickle. I'm Bill Pickle's daughter.

MRS. AGEE You know, dear, Gilliland's girl. He's the hostler for our doctor.

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DEAN But if his name's Gilliland, why do they call him Pickle?

MAGGIE Some people think it was because Father once pinched a barrel of pickles. But we think it's because Father's pickled most of the time, Dean. There are twelve of us kids at home and everybody calls us the Pickles.

MRS. AGEE Now, Maggie, run along at once and fetch the coffee.

MAGGIE Yes, Ma'am. (*Exit, singing as she goes.*)

DEAN She really seems quite impossible. You'll have to get rid of her. We simply can't have a girl like that around here. We'll be the talk of the place.

MRS. AGEE I'll train her.

DEAN Train her? How will you do that? She'll take some training.

MRS. AGEE There's nothing that patience won't do—and prayer.

DEAN Now, please don't start talking like that to me again, my dear. You know I don't believe in that sort of thing, and I just don't like it.

MRS. AGEE Prayer settles everything. 'More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.'

DEAN Maybe. Maybe not. (*Maggie starts singing off stage.*) But train that girl any way you like so long as she keeps me comfortable and doesn't make that awful singing noise around the house—and so long as you don't ask me to start praying with you. (*Enter Maggie in a rush with tray.*)

MAGGIE Here's the coffee, Ma'am. And there's a gentleman to see you, Dean. Says he has an appointment. Not so young as some of them, but he seems awful nice.

MRS. AGEE Show him in, Maggie.

MAGGIE Yes, Ma'am.

DEAN (*As Maggie goes*) Really, dear, it's more than we can bear.

ACT I SCENE 1

You'll have to do something about that girl. You'll have to get rid of her.

(Enter Maggie, announcing Mr. Blair Buck, and exits. Blair Buck is a graduate student who possesses every physical grace and charm.)

DEAN Glad to see you, Blair. Come in and sit down. *(Mrs. Agee shows Blair his chair and the three of them sit.)*

BLAIR BUCK It's good to see you, Mrs. Agee.

DEAN Well, what news do you bring?

BLAIR Not very good, I'm afraid, Dean. There was a students' meeting today. Everybody shouted and spoke and banged the tables. They just hate authority.

DEAN Authority. I suppose that means me?

BLAIR I suppose it does.

DEAN What are they going to do?

BLAIR They voted to take action.

MRS. AGEE What action?

BLAIR They are going on strike.

DEAN What do you mean?

BLAIR They've decided not to attend classes until further notice.

DEAN I'm bound to say that for most of the students that I try to teach, whether they attend classes or not will not make the slightest difference to them. They learn nothing anyway.

MRS. AGEE What *are* you going to do, dear? A students' strike! That's terrible.

DEAN What would you suggest, dear? *(Hurriedly as she is about to speak)* No. Don't say it. I know what you have in mind. *(To Blair Buck)* The fact is, Blair, that I know as much about agriculture and forestry as most people in America. They even offered me a big job in Washington. But I don't know how to

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handle young men. Trees and animals are much easier. Mrs. Agee thinks I should pray for them. Do you believe in prayer, Blair?

BLAIR Well, not exactly in the way Mrs. Agee would, Dean. You see I'm a Confucianist.

MRS. AGEE A Confucianist. How awful! How can you say such a thing, Mr. Buck?

DEAN Why sound so shocked? I don't believe you even know what a Confucianist is.

MRS. AGEE Well, what is it?

DEAN I haven't the least idea. What is a 'Confucianist', Blair?

BLAIR I'm not all that sure myself, Dean. It means you share what you have with the people and do your best to make them happy.

DEAN Does it work?

BLAIR I don't know. I'm trying it on a man who earns his living stealing chickens. I hope he'll stop stealing.

MRS. AGEE Chicken thieving is one of the very few problems the young men in this college do not have.

BLAIR Oh, he's not a student. He's called Jake Jackson. He has a wife and two children.

DEAN You must let me know how you get on, Blair. Perhaps Confucianism is what we need on the campus. But the man they are going to send down to help us is not a Confucianist.

BLAIR Who is he? Who is sending him?

DEAN (*Takes letter out of coat pocket*) One of our trustees is Chairman of the Democratic National Committee. He says he is worried about the antagonistic attitude between the students and the faculty and he's sending down somebody to help us.

BLAIR (*Reading letter*) Who is this man Frank Buchman that he talks about?

ACT I SCENE I

DEAN I don't know much about him. But he arrives today.

MRS. AGEE Where is he going to stay?

DEAN I've arranged for a room for him in the Old Main. He should be arriving any minute now. I hope he knows what he is running into.

BLAIR If he comes along now, he'll run into the fellows back from the game. It's just about over.

DEAN Did we win?

BLAIR We were losing forty-two points to nothing at the end of the third quarter when I left to come here.

MRS. AGEE We never seem to win games nowadays.

BLAIR Perhaps it's because we are working too hard.

MRS. AGEE That's one thing I'm sure it's not.

DEAN You ought to try your Confucianism on the football squad, Blair. They certainly need something.

BLAIR Maybe this man Frank Buchman will turn out to be a good football coach.

DEAN I fancy that's hardly his line.

MRS. AGEE You never can tell.

DEAN Do go down and meet him, Blair, will you, and bring him up here?

BLAIR (*Going*) All right. I'll find him on the campus and bring him along. Thank you for the coffee, Mrs. Agee. (*He goes.*)

MRS. AGEE I hope he's a *good* man.

DEAN For heaven's sake, don't start your praying ways with him, dear, or we'll lose him before he's had time to settle down. I only hope he's got a tough hide. He'll need it.

SCENE II

The Campus of the College

Old Main buildings in the background. Enter Blair Buck from one side. Bonehead and Sam Dean from the other. These two are students and among the hard-drinking set in the college.

BONEHEAD Those guys call themselves football players.

SAM DEAN Listen, my grandmother could out-run those fellows.

BLAIR BUCK Hello, Bonehead! Is the game over?

BONEHEAD Just about over. Do you know my friend, Sam Dean—
Blair Buck?

BLAIR Hello, Sam!

SAM Glad to know you, Blair.

BLAIR How's the game?

BONEHEAD We were losing fifty-six to nothing in the last quarter.
We came to find Bill Pickle before the rush begins. Everybody
will want to buy liquor from him tonight. Have you seen him?

BLAIR Haven't seen him.

SAM They told me before I came here that this was a dry campus.
But you could float a battleship on the stuff Bill smuggles in on
a Saturday night. Thank God for Bill.

BLAIR Well, I haven't seen him.

BONEHEAD There's a seedy character looking for you. We met
him as we left the football game. Says his name's Jake Jackson.
Yes, there he is.

(Enter Jake Jackson, the Chicken Thief.)

JAKE JACKSON There you are, Mr. Buck. I've been looking
everywhere for you.

ACT I SCENE II

BLAIR What's the trouble, Jake? I hope you've not been at it again.

SAM At what again?

JAKE Just a little weakness of mine when things get tough.

BLAIR Have you been stealing any more chickens, Jake?

JAKE Now, Mr. Buck, you know I promised I wouldn't—not until I saw you. And that's what I've come to talk to you about. My wife's laid up. There's no food in the house. My sons won't do anything I tell 'em. There's so much work around the place that's piling up. So I says to the wife, 'There's no help for it. We can't be meant to starve. I'll have to go out tonight and collect a few chickens.' But she cried, Mr. Buck. And she carried on something terrible. And she made me promise to come and see you before I went after the chickens. She says it's bad for my boy to take him stealing with me.

BLAIR She's dead right. Why do you take him, Jake?

JAKE Well, you see it's this way, Mr. Buck. We creep into a hen-house at night. And we have to chloroform them before we can carry them off—otherwise they'd squawk and waken up folk. I press a sponge on their beaks until they're unconscious. My son soaks the sponge in the chloroform for me. Otherwise it would send me to sleep while I was on the job. I can't stand the stuff. Doesn't seem to have the same effect on him.

BLAIR (*Taking out his wallet*) Now, here's some money, Jake. Tell Mrs. Jackson I'll come down tomorrow and help tidy up the place. And I'll take the children out for a treat somewhere. But promise you won't go stealing.

JAKE God bless you, Mr. Buck. Sure, I promise, Mr. Buck. You'll be rewarded in heaven, Mr. Buck.

BLAIR Remember, no stealing, Jake.

JAKE No stealing, Mr. Buck. You're a real gentleman, Mr. Buck. Thank you. Thank you kindly. (*He goes.*)

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BONEHEAD I'll say you're a real gentleman, Mr. Buck. Say, what did you give that guy cash for?

BLAIR I'm trying to help him—

SAM I need that kind of help. Help me.

BLAIR You see, I'm a Confucianist. We believe in doing good.

BONEHEAD I'll become a Confucianist, too, if it means having that sort of good done me.

SAM Look out! The game's over. Here they come.

(Enter the milling mob of students. They are laughing, shouting, singing. One of them is a Negro. He says little, but is always there.)

A STUDENT Of all the lousy games this lousy college has ever played that was the lousiest.

ONE OF THE PLAYERS Thank God it's over! I couldn't run at all the last half hour.

ANOTHER PLAYER That's no surprise.

THE PLAYER What do you mean?

HIS FRIEND You can't play football on a diet of whisky and smoke.

THE PLAYER Don't you start preaching at me. *(Lights a cigarette.)*

ONE STUDENT Where's Bill Pickle?

ANOTHER Yes, we want Bill.

ANOTHER Yes, we want Bill. There'll be more parties tonight than ever before. We'll break the record.

ANOTHER He'll be here in a minute. He lives on Pickle Hill.

ANOTHER You mean Heinz Heights?

ANOTHER Why Heinz Heights?

ANOTHER Fifty-seven different varieties live up there.

(They laugh, and sing:)

ACT I SCENE II

Here's to Bill, Bill,
Of old Pickle Hill.
Here's to Bill, Bill, Bill.
Ostler by sunlight and smuggler by moon,
Bootlegger Bill will be here with us soon.
Here's to Bill, Bill,
Of old Pickle Hill.
Here's to Bill, Bill, Bill.
Horses by day and bottles by night,
He's always on hand for a bet or a fight.
So up with the glasses and down with the liquor,
For horses and whisky go quicker and quicker
With Bill, Bill,
Of old Pickle Hill,
With our Bill, Bill, Bill.

(Bill comes in and they surround him with the end of the song.)

BONEHEAD A bottle of your best for me, Bill.

SAM And me.

BILL PICKLE Very good, very good.

A STUDENT Half a dozen of your best for Staircase Nine, Bill.

BILL I'll be there. Don't you worry, gentlemen. Bill will deliver the stuff as soon as it's dark. Plenty for you all. Bill never failed to deliver yet.

(Enter Maggie Pickle, breathless and running)

MAGGIE You be careful, Father.

BILL What do you mean, Maggie? You keep out of this.

MAGGIE They're going to stop you.

BILL Who's going to stop me?

MAGGIE I heard the Dean tell Mrs. Agee. Yes, and this gentleman was there, too. *(Pointing at Blair Buck)* They've got somebody

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coming sent by the Chairman of the Democratic National Committee specially to stop you.

BLAIR It's not quite like that, Bill. All the same, they are sending someone to try and make things different around here.

BILL Make things different! I'd like to see them try. Things are all right as they are, aren't they?

EVERYBODY 'Good old Bill.' 'Everything's fine around here.' 'Except your booze, Bill. I think you put methylated spirits in it.' etc.

BLAIR Everything may be fine. But this man is coming. I've been asked by Dean Agee to bring him to his rooms. In fact, I think this must be him now.

(A silence falls as Frank Buchman enters. He is neatly dressed, carries a bag. Robust, rosy-cheeked, sparkling.)

BLAIR I think you must be Mr. Frank Buchman.

FRANK BUCHMAN I am.

BLAIR My name's Blair Buck. I was asked by Dean Agee to meet you and bring you to him. He and Mrs. Agee are waiting to welcome you.

FRANK Greetings, students of State College.

(There is complete silence as they all look at him.)

BLAIR Well, I think we'd better go and see the Dean now. Do let me take your bag for you. This is the way.

(They go out, watched by a curious and cold crowd.)

BONEHEAD *(Imitating)* Greetings, students of State College.

(All laugh and start saying to each other, 'Greetings, students of State College.')

SAM You'd better watch out, Bill. He'll run you off the campus.

ACT I SCENE II

BILL I'd eat ten of him before breakfast and not know the difference.

BONEHEAD Go on, Bill. You haven't eaten any breakfast for years. You've always got a hangover.

SAM He'll make us all as pure as driven snow, Bill. You'll see.

SOMEONE Pure John. That's what he looks like. Pure John.

BILL Pure John. That's a good name for him. To hell with him anyway. Who wants any more liquor tonight?

(They crowd around him giving orders and singing as they leave)

Oh! We're wild and woolly and full of fleas,
Never been curried below the knees.
We're out to do as we darn well please.
We're bad, bad, bad.

SCENE III

The Dean's Study

The Agees are there. Blair Buck comes in.

DEAN Where is Mr. Buchman?

BLAIR BUCK He's in his room. He's very pleased with it. Says it's one of the finest rooms he ever had. He'll be here in a minute.

MRS. AGEE What's he like?

BLAIR I like him. He's got a real sense of humour.

DEAN He'll certainly need it in this college.

BLAIR He met some of the fellows coming away from the football game.

DEAN Were they glad to see him?

BLAIR They were just curious, I think, Dean. They didn't say a word. I felt a bit embarrassed. But as we came away, all he said was, 'I'm going to like this place.'

(A knock at the door. Mrs. Agee calls Come in. Enter Frank Buchman. Blair introduces them. They sit.)

BLAIR Mr. Buchman, Mrs. Agee, Dean Agee.

DEAN I'm glad to welcome you here. I'm afraid it's not a very easy situation you come to.

FRANK BUCHMAN What is it?

MRS. AGEE I'm afraid the students are a very unruly lot, Mr. Buchman. They don't seem to want to work or do anything we tell them.

DEAN The fact is they are about to go on strike. We're really very worried.

ACT I SCENE III

FRANK They looked a fine lot of fellows to me. I'll be glad to get to know them.

DEAN I hope so. Certainly hope so. They're a thoroughly difficult bunch.

FRANK I'm quite accustomed to difficult people. I've just had an amazing experience in my dealings with them.

BLAIR Where was that?

FRANK In England, Blair. I've just come from there.

DEAN An amazing country, England. Extraordinary people. Anything can happen to you there, they say.

MRS. AGEE Do tell us of this experience, Mr. Buchman.

FRANK Well, I was in charge of a number of boys in Philadelphia. They really were a problem—little wild men.

DEAN Just like this College.

FRANK I had six directors. Money got short and these six men ordered me to cut down on the boys' food. Now these boys were hungry.

MRS. AGEE What a shame, Mr. Buchman. What did you do?

FRANK I resigned. But I felt so strongly about it all that I became ill. I consulted one of the leading New York specialists. He advised me to take a hot and a cold bath every day. So I did for six months.

DEAN Did you feel better?

FRANK Not a bit.

MRS. AGEE You should have prayed about it, Mr. Buchman.

FRANK I prayed every day, Mrs. Agee. But I felt no better because my heart was full of ill-will against these six directors. I don't find praying much use if I'm not straight myself.

DEAN Isn't that what I've always said?

MRS. AGEE No, it isn't.

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DEAN Do please tell us what happened.

FRANK In England one Sunday I went to church. It was a tiny church in the Lake District. Only seventeen people present. A woman was speaking about the Cross of Christ. She unravelled the Cross for me in a way nobody had done before. I saw the cost of my pride and my materialism. My resentment against these six men stood out like tombstones in my heart. I was the seventh wrong man.

BLAIR What did you do then?

FRANK I went back to my hotel and wrote six letters to these men. At the top of each letter I wrote:

When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Then I said:

My dear Friend,

I have nursed ill-will against you. I'm sorry. Forgive me?

Yours sincerely,

Frank.

I just signed the letters, yours sincerely—without wax. And I mailed them.

(There is a silence.)

DEAN It was a brave thing to do.

FRANK That's not the end of the story. There was a young man from Cambridge. He had come with his family and lived in the house near to where I was. They had a lot of money—but he was the problem of the family. That afternoon we went for a walk all round Lake Derwentwater. It must be fifteen miles, but we never thought of the distance. I told him what I had done—how I had said sorry first to God, then to those I had wronged. Then I told him how I had learned to listen to God

ACT I SCENE III

and accepted His commission to bring an answer to men and nations. That young Cambridge man decided to do the same. He was changed.

MRS. AGEE Listen to God? That sounds rather strange to me, Mr. Buchman.

FRANK So many of us tell God what we want Him to do, but never take time to listen and find out what He wants us to do, Mrs. Agee.

DEAN I don't know much about these things. But I hardly think that method will work in this College.

BLAIR What exactly do you think needs to happen here?

FRANK You'll know that better than I do. I've only just arrived. But if it's like most of the places I've been in, we just have to turn this University Godwards.

DEAN My dear sir, that would take a miracle.

FRANK Exactly.

BLAIR Do you really believe in miracles?

FRANK Don't you?

DEAN Of course you do, Blair. You're expecting one with that chicken thief of yours, aren't you?

BLAIR Yes, I suppose I am.

FRANK I'd like to hear about the chicken thief.

DEAN Blair, won't you show Mr. Buchman the rest of the campus, and then bring him back here to dine with us at seven o'clock, if you would like that?

FRANK I'd like it very much. I'm so glad to be here and for your welcome.

BLAIR Let's go then. We'll be back at seven.

(They leave. The Agees look at each other.)

DEAN I wonder how long he'll last. I'll give him a month. He's

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a remarkable young man. I don't think the students will listen to him, though. We'll see.

MRS. AGEE He gave me an uncomfortable sort of feeling. But I liked him.

DEAN That's strange, my dear. He had just the same effect on me.

MRS. AGEE As you say, we'll know more about him a month from now.

SCENE IV

The Campus—One month later

Late at night. It is freezing cold, a light snow falling. The Old Main building has one light shining in a window.

BILL (*Comes in carrying a number of bottles*) Is anyone there?
(*Louder*) I say, is anyone there? (*Begins to sing.*)

Here's to Bill, Bill,
Of old Pickle Hill, etc.

(*Enter Bonehead and Sam Dean.*)

BONEHEAD For heaven's sake, shut up, Bill. You'll waken everybody.

BILL Everybody's awake now, aren't they? I've spent hours carrying liquor for you gentlemen. It'll keep you awake.

SAM Keep quieter, Bill. There's still a light shining in the Old Main building.

BILL That light—to hell with it. That's that fellow Buchman, pure John they call him. It's the same night after night. People go in there and talk to him till all hours of morning.

BONEHEAD Who's there tonight?

BILL That Mr. Blair Buck. Used to be a good customer of mine. Doesn't seem to want any more of the stuff now.

SAM Give me some. It keeps out the cold.

(*They all have a swig—and Bill starts to sing again.*)

SAM Look out. Somebody's coming.

(*A group of young men arrive carrying somebody.*)

BONEHEAD Oh, that's all right! Somebody's passed out, that's all.

PICKLE HILL

BILL Carrying him back to his own rooms, I guess. Let's lend a hand.

STUDENT Stand back.

ANOTHER For God's sake, get out of our way.

BILL What's the matter with you? I've handled scores of people like that in my time. Let me get at him.

(He tries and two of the students hold him as he struggles.)

ONE OF THEM You fool. You damned fool. Leave him alone.

BILL But I'll help to carry him home. He'll be better in the morning.

A STUDENT He'll never be better.

ANOTHER We must get him to his own rooms before they find out where he's been.

A THIRD He's not passed out. He's finished.

BILL Finished? What do you mean?

A STUDENT I tell you, Bill, he's dead.

(Bill, Bonehead and Sam fall back as they carry the body off quickly into the night.)

BILL Dead?

BONEHEAD He can't be dead.

SAM He is. That was Dick Harlow with him. He's a medical. He won't make a mistake like that.

BONEHEAD My God! Dead.

BILL It's all that Buchman's fault. Blast him to hell! I'll catch up with him one dark night and stick a knife in him, as sure as my name's Bill Pickle. I've been meaning to do it for a long time and wish I'd done it sooner. Everything was fine till he came along. No trouble. No worries. Nothing. Now he's upset everything and everybody with his sneaking ways, blast him! Nothing goes right with us any more.

ACT I SCENE IV

(As Bill is shaking his fist at Old Main, the light in the building goes out.)

SAM Let's go away, Bill. Come on. Pick up the bottles, there's a good fellow. They'll be down here any minute.

BILL I'll stick a knife in him. I tell you, I'm going to knife him.

(Sam and Bill go off carrying the bottles. Bonehead remains as Frank Buchman and Blair Buck come in.)

FRANK Why, it's Bonehead. You're out late tonight.

BLAIR What's the matter, Bonehead?

BONEHEAD Oh, God, Blair, an awful thing has happened! They'd been drinking quite a lot.

BLAIR Yes. We heard them. Nothing unusual in that.

BONEHEAD No. But tonight one of them was carried out. He's dead, Blair. I tell you, he's dead.

BLAIR Where is he now?

BONEHEAD They've carried him to his rooms. I must go after them and help. *(Starts to exit)* I tell you, he's dead. *(Bonehead goes.)*

BLAIR What are we to do?

FRANK What do you think we should do, Blair?

BLAIR I can't sleep now. There's nothing I can do to help them. Let's ride to the Club, Frank.

FRANK Ride to the Club? It's snowing and freezing hard. We'll break the horses' legs.

BLAIR What if we do break the horses' legs? I've got to ride with you, Frank. I want to think. I want to talk. I've been wanting to talk over something with you for a long time. This is the night to do it.

FRANK Allright, Blair. Whatever you say. Let's go. *(They start to go.)*

BLAIR And we can stop and see Dean Agee on the way.

FRANK Yes, he may want us to stop and see the boy's parents.

SCENE V

The Club—Later that night

It is past midnight. Frank Buchman and Blair Buck come in. They have walked the horses fifteen miles. They are chilled to the bone. They sit down. The night porter brings them coffee.

BLAIR See to those horses, will you? We had to walk them every step of those fifteen miles.

PORTER My lad's looking after them already. You look as if you could do with something yourselves. Here's the coffee, anyway.

BLAIR Thanks very much. *(He pours the coffee)* Sugar? *(Frank nods)* Cream? *(Frank nods)* *(Long pause)* You know, Frank, I've wanted to talk to you for a long time. Ever since that first afternoon when you arrived on the campus and told the Agees about that experience of yours in England. I wanted to talk. But you've said nothing.

FRANK What did you want me to say?

BLAIR Oh, nothing! I've been grateful for your caution and prudence. If you'd said anything to me sooner, I wouldn't have wanted to talk to you tonight.

FRANK What do you want to talk about?

BLAIR Frank, I want to know how best to use my life. I really want to help people. Especially the Negro people of the South. I come from there. Things are so very wrong. I want to help get them right. But I don't know how to do it.

FRANK One of the things I like about you, Blair, is that you really do want to do something worthwhile. How about the Confucianism?

BLAIR It doesn't work too well. Jake Jackson's in jail and his son, too. He was caught stealing chickens. The more I gave him, the more he seemed to want.

ACT I SCENE V

FRANK That's a great truth. So many people try to solve the whole problem of social service, and try to treat the immediate surface conditions without touching the root cause.

BLAIR What's that?

FRANK Human nature.

BLAIR You can't change that.

FRANK You and I can't. But it can be changed.

BLAIR What makes you say that?

FRANK Mine was.

BLAIR How?

FRANK By the power of Jesus Christ.

BLAIR That's something I know nothing about.

FRANK It's something all of us need to know. I just needed washing, Blair. And Christ did it. The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. I was washed clean. Old habits just fell away.

BLAIR A lot of Christians I know don't seem like that to me.

FRANK A lot of us aren't. We prefer to be starched and ironed without being washed. It's not the form but the force I'm talking about.

It's J-E-S-U-S—Just Exactly Suits Us Sinners
 Just Exactly Saves Us Sinners
 Just Exactly Satisfies Us Sinners

(Blair repeats each line after him as he says it.)

BLAIR I'll be honest with you. I see it means everything to you. But it means nothing to me. Nothing at all. I'm not even sure I believe in God.

FRANK Have you ever tried listening to Him?

BLAIR How?

FRANK Just listening. Adequate, accurate, definite information

PICKLE HILL

can come from the mind of God to the mind of man. God can put thoughts in your mind. You may think they are ordinary thoughts. But be honest about them. Shall we try it?

(Blair nods. They sit. Frank writes down his thoughts. Blair does not.)

FRANK Did you get anything, Blair?

BLAIR Well, all I thought was that I'm ready to try anything. To try this if you'll help me, Frank.

FRANK Anything else?

BLAIR Nothing important.

FRANK What was it?

BLAIR To see if they can give us Southern fried chicken and beaten biscuits for breakfast. I'm famished.

FRANK I call that very important. I wrote down, 'Blair will decide to listen and obey. He will be marvellously used in the life of America.'

BLAIR Do you really think so? Anything else?

FRANK Yes, I thought we ought to go over to Colerain Forge after breakfast and see two great ladies, friends of mine. They are the Stewart sisters—both over eighty. You must tell them what you've decided, Blair.

BLAIR I'm not quite sure what it is. But I'll certainly tell them. Won't they mind us coming on a Sunday morning?

FRANK I'd forgotten. Of course, it's Sunday now. I've never called on them on a Sunday yet. They always drive miles to church on Sunday.

BLAIR They won't drive miles today. It's still snowing.

FRANK Well, guidance is guidance. If the Lord says go, we go.

BLAIR Chicken and biscuits first.

FRANK Then Colerain Forge.

SCENE VI

Colerain Forge—Next morning

The Forge was built by Mr. Davy Stewart, through whose veins coursed the blood of his Scottish Covenantor Fathers. Sallie his wife was of Irish stock. Both have gone to their reward. The reigning queens—and they are queens—are their spinster daughters, Margaret and Catherine, 'Miss Meg' and 'Miss Kate', unbent and regally unbending.

The first speeches take place in front of the curtain. Enter Miss Kate and Miss Meg wrapped in heavy shawls and buffalo robes, wearing bonnets. Chrissie Davis, the housekeeper, follows carrying hot bricks.

MISS MEG I thought we'd never get home, Kate. We've never had such drifts for years.

MISS KATE Yes, when we turned the horses I thought the sleigh would go into the ditch and we'd be buried alive.

CHRISSIE Now, you're not dead yet, Miss Kate. Though heavens knows you'd make a lovely corpse.

MISS MEG What a shocking thing to say, Chrissie!

CHRISSIE But it's true. So would you, Miss Meg, with your pretty hair and your height. You'd look like two queens. Never mind that now. Let's hurry in. You must both be nearly frozen. (*They go.*)

(Curtain rises on sitting-room.)

MISS KATE Do you suppose the Lord minds us missing Church on a Sunday, Meg?

MISS MEG Well, Kate, the Lord knows we've tried.

(As they speak Chrissie Davis comes back.)

CHRISSIE The Lord won't mind. Why, one of the elders of the Church said to me only last week, 'Isn't it a pity that the two

PICKLE HILL

ladies have to drive all that way for an hour's nap?' He watches your bonnets nodding in the pew.

MISS KATE What a thing to say, Chrissie!

MISS MEG It's far from true.

MISS KATE Sometimes I take the ear-trumpet out of my ear and shut my eyes a little so the sight and sound of the minister shall not interfere with my worship. That's all.

CHRISSIE Well, you can just as well sleep here as there, Miss Kate, but not this morning.

MISS MEG Why not?

CHRISSIE You have visitors.

MISS KATE Visitors? On the Sabbath? You must be out of your mind, Chrissie. Or rather they must be. What do you mean?

CHRISSIE It's that Mr. Buchman from State College. There's a young gentleman with him. They're on horseback and say they've come to call on you.

MISS MEG Tell them we're not at home.

MISS KATE We've never received anyone here yet on a Sunday. It would make Father turn in his grave. Surely they know better than to come calling on a Sunday!

CHRISSIE Mr. Buchman said they had something most important to tell you.

MISS KATE No. I don't think so, do you, Meg?

MISS MEG Well, I don't know. It sounds awfully interesting, Kate.

CHRISSIE They'll freeze to death outside your doorstep if I don't tell them something. What am I to say?

MISS KATE We can't have them freeze to death.

MISS MEG Especially on the Sabbath.

MISS KATE Show them in, Chrissie.

(Chrissie goes.)

ACT I SCENE VI

MISS MEG I wonder what they have to tell us.

MISS KATE We'll soon find out. I only hope it's important enough to make us break our Sabbath rule.

MISS MEG We'll soon know. Let's arrange ourselves, Kate.

(The Ladies are sitting royally as Chrissie Davis announces)

CHRISSIE Mr. Frank Buchman, Mr. Blair Buck. *(She goes.)*

FRANK Good morning, Miss Meg, good morning, Miss Kate. It's so very good of you to let us in to see you on a Sunday. You know that only something of real importance would have brought us here on a Sunday.

MISS KATE And such a Sunday, too. My sister and I had actually to turn the horses back half way to Church. We could not get through the drifts.

FRANK You ladies probably know Blair's family. His father was Supreme Court Judge. His grandfather was State Governor.

MISS KATE Of course we have heard of Governor Buck, and of the Judge.

MISS MEG Of course. It's a great pleasure to have you both here. And think no more of its being Sunday. After all, in weather like this you have to make exceptions, don't you?

MISS KATE Exactly.

MISS MEG Tell me, Mr. Buck, are you on your way to Church?

BLAIR No. Not exactly.

MISS KATE What does 'not exactly' mean?

FRANK The truth is that Blair has taken a big decision and he wanted to drive in a stake by telling you two ladies about it. Didn't you, Blair?

BLAIR Well, I suppose I did.

MISS MEG Do tell me, Mr. Buck.

MISS KATE I'm sure it will be most interesting, Mr. Buck.

PICKLE HILL

FRANK Go ahead, Blair.

BLAIR Well, it's like this. Last night something terrible happened on the campus.

MISS KATE What was that?

BLAIR A fellow was drinking at a party. He fell down and when they picked him up he was dead.

MISS MEG What a terrible, terrible thing!

MISS KATE It's a downright scandal. But I hope it'll bring that Dean to his senses. He must know it's that man Gilliland. They ought to lock him up. He's a pernicious influence on the whole college. After this I hope they'll run him out of town. A shocking thing that they go on winking at the way he smuggles liquor in to the students.

BLAIR To tell you the truth, I've sometimes had some of his liquor myself, Miss Stewart.

MISS MEG I hope this tragedy will make you stop all that, Mr. Buck.

BLAIR Oh, I've not been one of the hard-drinking lot, though drinking parties are the fashion now at the college. Whether this death will affect all that, I don't know. I doubt it. But I do know that I've wanted to help all kinds of people—people like Gilliland, or Bill Pickle as we call him—a chicken thief, and ordinary fellows like myself without an answer to drink or impurity. I've never been able to do it. Last night, or rather early this morning, I was talking with Frank here, and I decided to try something new.

MISS KATE What was that?

BLAIR I decided to give God a real chance to run the rest of my life. I don't know much about God. I'm still not sure if I really believe in Him. But I'm going to try and find out each day what He wants, and then do it if He'll show me. I feel quite different already.

ACT I SCENE VI

FRANK I'm sorry you didn't get to Church this morning. But I thought you'd want to have this news to make up for it. Blair's really decided to change. I suppose that sort of thing should happen in church quite normally and naturally every Sunday.

MISS KATE Mr. Buck didn't need to change. I can see it from the way he talks.

BLAIR Oh, I did, Miss Stewart! Really I did.

MISS MEG It's a pity you don't change someone who really needs it. Why not try to change Bill Pickle?

FRANK Well, why not?

MISS KATE I don't want to seem blasphemous, but it's almost beyond bounds to expect God to change Gilliland. The man's an influence of evil, a thoroughly bad lot—past praying for.

FRANK Surely nobody's past praying for!

BLAIR What would you do, Frank? Would you pray about Bill Pickle?

FRANK That's a great idea. And you're the one to do it, Blair. That is, if you ladies don't mind praying for a man like Gilliland.

MISS KATE I suppose one cannot object to prayer on any subject.

MISS MEG Especially on the Sabbath.

FRANK Go ahead then, Blair. Go ahead.

BLAIR I'm not much good at this. In fact, I don't think I've ever prayed before. But here goes. 'Oh God, if there be a God, help us to change Bill Pickle, Mrs. Pickle, and all the Pickles. Amen.'

MISS MEG Not a very orthodox prayer, Mr. Buck, I must say.

MISS KATE But thoroughly suitable for Gilliland.

BLAIR The one point is, will it work?

MISS KATE If it works it will be more than a miracle. It will be an intervention from the heart of Heaven.

FRANK Oh, it'll work all right! You'll see.

SCENE VII

Some time later—The Campus

Bill Pickle is in the midst of a crowd of students. They are celebrating another defeat on the playing field.

BONEHEAD Good old Bill. Never downhearted.

BILL Why should we be downhearted? We'll win next time.

STUDENT Oh, forget it, Bill. We never win.

ANOTHER STUDENT We always drown our sorrows when we lose, Bill. How shall we celebrate the day we win a game?

ANOTHER STUDENT We can't drink any more to celebrate. We'll have to drink less.

ANOTHER STUDENT Let's cut it out for a night the day we win.

ANOTHER STUDENT Then thank God we didn't win today!

ANOTHER STUDENT I wish we'd won last Saturday, then.

ANOTHER STUDENT Why?

ANOTHER STUDENT If we'd cut it out that night, that fellow would never have died.

BILL (*swinging around with a roar*) Who said that? Let me get at him. I'll murder him. (*Students grab hold of Bill, saying 'Steady on, Bill,' 'Cut it out, Bill,' 'Cool down,' and so on.*) That fellow died of a bad heart. The doctors said so. The drink had nothing to do with it. They even give drink to fellows with weak hearts as medicine. Some doctors do anyway. The next fellow I hear saying something like that, I'll knock him down as sure as my name's Bill Pickle.

STUDENT But your name's not Pickle, it's Gilliland.

(*Bill roars and dives at him, and the student dodges into the crowd.*)

ANOTHER STUDENT Come on, Bill. Forget it.

ACT I SCENE VII

BILL One man I won't forget. Pure John. That fellow Buchman. There's no room for both of us on the campus. Either he clears out or I stick a knife in him.

STUDENT Shut up, Bill. Don't talk that way.

BILL By God, I mean it!

STUDENT (*Offering a bottle*) Here, Bill. Have some of your own poison and give us a swig.

(*Bill drinks and sings:*)

BILL A drinking, fighting, sporting sort of man—you see,
Horses and the bottle, boxing is my plan—that's me.
A brawling, roaring, gaming sort of man—you see
Turn an easy dollar, lost it all again—that's me.
When the walls are swaying, I stand steady on my feet;
When others like it watered down, I gulp my whisky neat.
I've licked each guy who comes along, I've never ever
known defeat.
I'm a fighting, fighting, fighting American.

(*Enter Frank Buchman and Blair Buck.*)

BLAIR There's Bill.

FRANK I see him. He doesn't seem in much shape to see us.

BLAIR We've been praying for him. Now's the time to do something.

FRANK Maybe some other time would be better.

BLAIR Are you scared?

FRANK To be honest, I am a little. (*Pauses*) No. I have the clear thought to give him the deepest message I have.

(*He goes forward. Bill suddenly sees him. He lurches towards him, away from the students who stand back on one side, with Blair Buck back of Frank on the other. For a moment they are face to face. Then Frank steps forward, puts his hand on Bill's biceps.*)

FRANK Bill, we've been praying for you.

PICKLE HILL

(Bill stands dead still for a moment, then suddenly quietens. All the fight goes out of him.)

BILL See that church over there? I was there when the cornerstone was laid. There is a penny of mine under it.

FRANK Bill, your mother must have been a good woman.

BILL She was a great woman.

FRANK *(Bringing Blair Buck forward)* My friend's been praying for you, too.

BILL That's decent of him. He's a gentleman. I'd like to see more of you. Look here! Why don't you come and see me sometime?

FRANK Fine, Bill, when?

BILL Any time.

FRANK Fine. But any time is no time. Make it some time.

BILL Come next Thursday night at seven.

BLAIR We'll be there. *(To Frank as they go)* I'd never have believed it. I'll never say 'If there be a God' again. He's answering our prayers.

STUDENT Bill, you must have gone off your head.

ANOTHER STUDENT He'll get you changed, Bill.

ANOTHER STUDENT Thought you were going to knife him, Bill.

BONEHEAD You must have gone soft, Bill. *(Students leave)*

BILL Maybe I have. But they were decent to me. *(Sings)*

A sentimental, temperamental man—I am,
Never think to give another fellow's plan—a damn.

A most suspicious, superstitious guy—I am,
Never trust a fellow,

Always quick to see the sham.

Have I been a fool to ask those fellows to come around to call?
They're the only folk who think I'm any good at all,
It's the first time that my pickled heart and will has
ever heard the call,

To be a fighting, fighting, fighting American!

SCENE VIII

*Pickle Hill,
the home of the Pickle Clan*

MAGGIE Everybody's talking about it.

BILL Who's everybody?

MAGGIE The Dean, Mrs. Agee, Bonehead, Sam Dean, all the fellows.

BILL What do they say?

MAGGIE They say you are having Mr. Buchman here and that he's going to change you. That's why I came home early.

BILL What do you mean?

MAGGIE I want to see it happen.

BILL Look here, my girl—*(As he is making as if to give her a clout, enter Mrs. Gilliland.)*

MRS. GILLILAND If you touch her, I'll scream.

BILL You keep out of this. There's to be no screaming today. Understand?

MRS. GILLILAND Why not?

BILL I've got two friends coming.

MRS. GILLILAND If there's going to be all that drinking and swearing around here, I'll call the police. *(She moves to the door.)*

MAGGIE They're not those kind of friends.

MRS. GILLILAND What do you mean? They're the only kind of friends your father has.

MAGGIE No, they're different. Look, Ma. *(She looks closely at Bill)* Father's shaved for them.

MRS. GILLILAND So you have, Bill. Why, you only shaved three days ago!

PICKLE HILL

(Enter eleven other Pickle children in a rush.)

BILL *(Roaring)* Clear out of here. Clear out, I say. Every one of you. *(To Mrs. Gilliland)* And I want every single one of them washed and brushed and tidy, do you understand?

MRS. GILLILAND Don't be silly. They are never washed and brushed and tidy. You know that.

ALL THE PICKLES *(Crowding around Bill)* 'Let's stay, Daddy.' 'Don't send us away, Daddy.' 'We'll be good, Daddy,' etc.

BILL *(Roaring)* Shut up! I say, shut up all of you! *(They shut up)* Now, what's it all about?

ONE CHILD They say a man's coming to change you, Daddy.

ANOTHER We want to see it happen.

A THIRD I've never seen anybody change before. What's that mean, Daddy?

BILL *(To Mrs. Gilliland)* Clear them out—all of them. These friends will be here any minute. *(To the Children)* You get out. If you're very good—will you be very good?

CHILDREN 'Yes, Daddy,' 'We will,' etc.

BILL Well, if you're very good, you all can look and listen through the knot-holes to see what goes on. There's plenty of knot-holes. But not a sound, mind. My friends will be here any minute.

(The Children go. They pass through a door and in sight of the audience each goes to a knot-hole in the wall of the room they have just left and applies ear or eye to it for the rest of this scene. There is a knock on the outer door.)

BILL There they are. Let 'em in, Maggie. *(To Mrs. Gilliland)* You clear out.

MRS. GILLILAND I'll stay. I want to see these precious friends of yours.

(Maggie brings in Frank Buckman and Blair Buck.)

FRANK It's mighty good to be in your home, Bill.

ACT I SCENE VIII

BILL Nice of you gentlemen to come.

FRANK You must be Mrs. Gilliland. (*Shakes her hand*) This is my friend, Blair Buck.

BLAIR It's a pleasure to meet you, Mrs. Gilliland.

BILL Just a couple of friends of mine, dear. You've heard me speak of them.

MRS. GILLILAND No. Never.

BLAIR The truth is we haven't been friends for long, Mrs. Gilliland.

BILL We meet at the football games.

BLAIR Yes, we're all keen on football.

FRANK And horses.

BILL (*Amazed*) Do you know about horses?

FRANK Of course I do. My father is very proud of his horses. I've known about horses since I was a child.

MRS. GILLILAND I wish you could teach my husband something about them then, sir. They cost us plenty of money.

BLAIR I didn't know you kept horses, Mrs. Gilliland.

MRS. GILLILAND We don't. My husband always thinks he knows which horse will win the race. But it never wins.

BILL Why, you know I haven't bet on a horse for years and years and—(*He catches Frank's eye. Stops. Then says*) Well anyway, since last week. (*They all laugh.*)

MRS. GILLILAND That's the first time you ever admitted it, Bill.

BILL But you always know. How do you do it?

MRS. GILLILAND Well, as you've been honest with me, I'll be honest with you. I go through your pockets when you're asleep. Mr. Gilliland is a heavy sleeper, sir. And when there's no money left I have a pretty good idea where it's gone to.

BILL Well, a man must have a bit of fun. But I prefer football really.

PICKLE HILL

FRANK Do you think we've a chance of winning the game here on Saturday, Bill?

BILL Not a hope.

BLAIR Why not?

BILL The others run faster, play better, last longer. And that's true of every team the college plays. You can't find anyone bad enough for them to beat. I tell you what. I've tried to bet against the college winning the game every game they've played. But nobody will take the bet.

FRANK I'll bet you something.

BILL What is it?

FRANK I'll bet you the college will start winning their football games before the year is out.

BILL How much will you bet?

FRANK I'll bet you a good dinner.

BILL Oh, that's not much of a bet! You've lost it anyway. They haven't a hope of winning.

FRANK In that case, I'll pay up right away. When will you and Bill come to dinner with Mr. Buck and me, Mrs. Gilliland?

MRS. GILLILAND Me? Come with Bill?

BLAIR Of course, Mrs. Gilliland. That's all right, isn't it Bill?

BILL (*Taken aback*) Sure it's all right. We'd be delighted, wouldn't we?

MRS. GILLILAND I haven't been out to dinner for twenty years. And I haven't got anything to wear.

FRANK Come just as you are, Mrs. Gilliland. That'll be fine. Shall we say next Saturday?

BILL Saturday? That's a busy night for me.

BLAIR Do come, Bill.

FRANK Maggie must come too.

ACT I SCENE VIII

MAGGIE Me?

FRANK Certainly. We'll expect you all on Saturday night at seven in my apartment. You'll have to come, you know, Bill. After all, you won the bet. You'll have to let me pay up.

BILL Did I? Oh, well, if you put it that way, I'll come.

MRS. GILLILAND We'll come.

MAGGIE We'll all come.

FRANK Then goodbye, Mrs. Gilliland. It's wonderful to have been in your home. Goodbye, Bill.

BILL (*Showing them out*) Thanks for coming. I've really enjoyed your visit.

(*They go. From behind the wall all the other children come swarming out, leaping around Bill, saying:*

'Did he change you, Daddy?' 'Daddy, are you changed?' etc.)

BILL Shut up, all of you! Silence! (*They are all quiet*) That's what I like about him. He didn't try to change me. He talked about horses. He talked about football. He even made a bet and is going to pay up like a gentleman. He did not change Bill Pickle. (*To Maggie*) So just you go and tell that Dean of yours he was wrong. Bill Pickle did *not* get changed.

CURTAIN

Pickle children's song in front of curtain.

Like the hours of a clock
We are all day long
Singing an endless song.
One, two, three, four, five, six, seven,
Eight, nine, ten and then eleven,
We're twelve Pickle kids who want to know
The right way, not the wrong to go.
But whatever we want our Dad says, 'No',
So we don't know right from wrong.

PICKLE HILL

We're fond of each other but we seem to fight
And Mom gets mad at us day and night
And Dad says whatever *he* wants is right—
So we don't know right from wrong.

Today some people came to call,
We think it kind of strange.
We'd like to know the answer now—
Is Daddy gonna change?
One, two, three, four, five, six, seven,
Eight, nine, ten and then eleven,
We're twelve Pickle kids who want to know
The right way, not the wrong to go,
And so right now we're trying to guess
What change could mean if Dad said, 'Yes'.
One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight,
Nine, ten, eleven, twelve Pickle kids.

SCENE IX

Frank Buchman's Apartment

Seated at dinner are Frank, Blair Buck, the Gillilands, Sam Dean, Bonehead and an Irish Catholic priest who sits quietly taking it all in.

BILL That's the best dinner I've eaten for years and years and years.

FRANK I expect Mrs. Gilliland is a first-rate cook.

MRS. GILLILAND Once I was. But with twelve kids and never quite knowing when your husband's coming in, it's not easy. That oyster stew, though, it reminded me of the old days when I really was proud of my cooking.

BILL Cook me something like that and I'll promise to be home to eat it.

BONEHEAD Gosh, I'd love some more—that is if there is any.

FRANK Of course. Help yourself, Bonehead.

(As he does so, enter Mary Hemphill. She is deaf. She hurries to Frank's side, having seen what Bonehead is doing, and in a piercing stage whisper says:)

MARY There is a dessert tonight, Mr. Buchman *(She goes.)*

BONEHEAD *(Hurriedly putting down the oyster stew)* Gee, I'm sorry!

FRANK Go ahead, Bonehead. Don't mind Mary. She's pretty deaf. She's very proud of her dessert tonight. She was cook to the Governor of Pennsylvania and this was his favourite—Tipsy Pudding. She'll carry it in like a queen.

BILL Why did you move out of Old Main building into these new apartments?

FRANK So I could have more room for more people and have Mary Hemphill come to cook for me.

PICKLE HILL

(Enter Mary like a queen with the Topsy Pudding. As she does so Bill Pickle says:)

BILL What made her deaf?

MARY *(Stops dead in her tracks)* If you want to know, and you ought to want to know, it was too much drink that did it, Bill Pickle.

SAM I thought you were deaf.

MARY I can hear what I'm meant to hear. *(She sets the Topsy Pudding down before Frank.)*

BLAIR The oyster stew was wonderful, Mary.

BONEHEAD Thanks a lot, Mary. The dessert looks even better.

SAM If you have any room left for it, Bonehead.

BONEHEAD I do.

MRS. GILLILAND It's marvellous cooking, and I know what I'm talking about.

BILL Where did you get hold of a cook like that?

FRANK Tell them, Mary.

MARY That I will. I've been wanting to tell some of you about it for a long time, seeing the damnation and ruination and misery that some of these young fellows go through in College. I've been part of it.

BLAIR Part of what, Mary?

MARY The hell of too much drinking. I was cook to the Governor of Pennsylvania. I'd get paid once every two weeks on a Friday. I'd have to take a hansom cab home by the time I'd finished celebrating, and how I used to get up that spiral staircase to the room I lived in, I don't know.

FRANK You always made it, Mary.

MARY It was thanks to Mr. Buchman here that my sons were saved. Two of them.

ACT I SCENE IX

FRANK They're fine boys.

MARY They'd have gone to the devil because of the way I lived. Mr. Buchman used to take them to school every morning and by the time he got back the telephone would be ringing to say they had run away again. They were in rebellion against the way I was carrying on. But he stuck with us until we changed and now the boys are happy and so am I. He helped us to walk the chalk line.

BONEHEAD To be honest, I'd find it hard to walk the chalk line most Saturday nights in College.

SAM On Friday, or Thursday, or any night.

BLAIR Tell us about the chalk line, Mary.

MARY I'd like to tell you about it. (*Sings*)

Life's no bed of roses, or so I've found.
The safest way a person goes is with both feet on
the ground.
But this I know, where'er I go
Each face can glow and shine
If our hands and hearts are truly clean
And we walk the old chalk line.

Chorus Let's walk the old chalk line,
For each face can glow and shine,
If hands and hearts are truly clean
And we walk the old chalk line.

There is something I've found about sin,
That ugly business of sin,
And I'd say if you asked it's a harder task
To get out than it is to get in.
It starts with a look, just a look

PICKLE HILL

Then a thought, a mere nothing at all.
But you're soon fascinated
By the thing you should have hated,
Then, of course, comes the fall.

Chorus So walk the old chalk line, *etc.*

When you get in the grip of sin
Your heart is living in hell,
For sin quickly blinds, and deadens and binds
And multiplies as well.
But you don't need to stay in the ditch,
And I'll give my last strength to see
That folk hate sin and quit it, get honest and admit it,
Then put right what they can and are free.

Chorus So walk the old chalk line, *etc.*

(They all applaud and rise.)

MRS. GILLILAND I like the idea of that chalk line.

BONEHEAD I'd like to hear more about it. I'll never forget it,
that's for sure.

SAM Neither will I.

BLAIR I'm going to hear more about it in the next four weeks.
There are lots of things I don't understand. I don't know much
about the Bible or about praying. I don't know how to win
people as Mary Hemphill was won. So I'm going to spend the
summer with Frank and see what I can learn.

FRANK Yes, we're going to the West. We're going to Montana
where Blair's grandfather was Governor, and to a marvellous
place on the way called Mackinac Island.

BILL Does that mean we shan't be seeing you for a time?

BLAIR Don't say you're sorry, Bill.

ACT I SCENE IX

BILL I don't say I'm sorry. But I don't say I'm glad.

MRS. GILLILAND Come on home, Bill. It's getting late. (*Exit Mary. They all make their farewells, until only the Catholic priest is left with Frank.*)

PRIEST Goodnight, Mr. Buchman.

FRANK Goodnight, Father.

PRIEST I said nothing all evening.

FRANK I noticed that.

PRIEST But I understood everything.

FRANK I noticed that, too.

PRIEST Many of the students have begun to come back to Mass after meeting you. Now I realize why. They come back with a real experience. I wish I could give this experience to them.

FRANK You can and you will.

PRIEST We must talk more about it. We must work together.

FRANK That we will.

PRIEST Goodnight, Mr. Buchman. And thank you.

FRANK Goodnight, Father. And thank you.

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

SCENE I

The Campus—Some weeks later

Frank Buchman and Blair Buck are returning from their vacation. Frank wears a new beaver hat. They meet Bill Pickle, a little tight and singing his song 'Bill, Bill, Bill'.

BILL PICKLE Well, well, well! Look who's here! Did you have a good vacation?

BLAIR BUCK The best of my lifetime, Bill.

BILL I don't say it's good to have you back. I won't say that. But things have not been quite the same since you went away. Nobody to get angry with, if you understand me.

(He starts to walk silently and admiringly round Frank.)

BILL You know, I'd do almost anything for you if you'd give me that beaver hat.

FRANK Bill, that hat is yours on one condition.

BILL *(Suspiciously)* What's that?

FRANK Come with us to Toronto. There's a convention there and we'd like you to come.

BILL I'd rather go to the horse show.

FRANK When is the horse show?

BILL In the morning.

FRANK What time?

BILL Nine o'clock.

FRANK I'd like to go with you. Then we'll catch the night train.

BILL I can't go. I've nothing to put my clothes in.

ACT II SCENE I

BLAIR That means you'll come, Bill.

BILL I said I can't.

BLAIR Yes. But you're one of those fellows who say *No* and mean *Yes*.

FRANK Don't worry about a bag, Bill. We'll find something.

BILL No. I'll get a bag. They'll give me something up on the hill. I've never been to Toronto. Is the liquor good there?

FRANK I can't say, Bill.

BILL You can't say? Look here! You need someone to come along and look after you. You'll get into trouble by yourselves.

BLAIR That's your job, Bill.

BILL All right. I'll come.

FRANK Here's your hat, Bill.

(Bill puts on the beaver hat and swaggers off. Enter Dean Agee.)

DEAN You'll catch cold without a hat.

FRANK I just gave mine away.

DEAN Yes, I saw you. Tell me, wasn't that Bill Pickle you gave it to?

FRANK Yes.

DEAN Why?

BLAIR The truth is, Dean, that Bill said he'd come with us to Toronto if he had the hat. So he's coming.

DEAN Do you really mean you're going to take that man, of all men, to a Convention at Toronto where people are going to talk about a Christian faith?

FRANK Yes, we are.

DEAN Do you know what I think?

FRANK Either that I'm a fool for Christ's sake, or that I'm merely foolish.

PICKLE HILL

DEAN I think this thing's going to be a miracle. I wondered all along who was going to do something for Bill. I believe you're the fellow.

FRANK No. That's not my job. That's the job of the Living God.

DEAN But I'd like to have a part. Who's going to pay for Bill's journey?

FRANK Who's going to pay, Blair?

BLAIR We don't have the money, Dean. But I've learned to believe in these last weeks that where God guides, He provides. We'll pray for it.

DEAN (*To Frank*) I know how much you earn. You can't afford to pay for Bill Pickle. I'll pay for Bill Pickle to go myself. And all I can say is, if you change Bill Pickle, well, I'll have to reconsider my life.

FRANK Maybe reconsider your wife, too, Dean.

DEAN That's carrying things a bit too far. But maybe you're right. When do you leave?

FRANK Tomorrow.

DEAN Well, the very best of luck.

BLAIR Pray for us, Dean.

DEAN No, I'll pay. But I won't pray—yet. Goodbye. (*He goes.*)

BLAIR The Dean—paying Bill's fare. And to think that only last spring I didn't believe in miracles.

FRANK Or in prayer either! (*They laugh as they go.*)

SCENE II

The Station—Next day

Seventeen students are there including Bonehead, Sam Dean and Blair Buck. Frank Buchman and Bill Pickle make up the party. Bill wears the beaver hat, leggings, and a stock like a poodle's legs crossed. In his hand is a scuffed little imitation alligator-skin bag.

BILL Bonehead! What are you doing here?

BONEHEAD The same as you, Bill. Going to Toronto.

BILL Sam Dean, too. Why, this is going to be a real party!

BONEHEAD Yes. It's going to be the best party we ever had.

(A cry is heard 'All aboard'. Crying 'All aboard' the party heads off to the train. You hear the train start. The lights dim. You hear the sound of the whistle and the rhythm of pounding wheels. They slow down and the train stops. Lights up. We are at a platform with swinging doors. Enter Bonehead, closely followed by Bill.)

BONEHEAD We've just time for something to eat. *(Goes through the swinging doors, followed by Bill. Instantly comes out again, dragging Bill)* That's no place for us, Bill.

BILL What do you mean, no place for us?

BONEHEAD There's nothing to eat there. Only liquor.

BILL But I don't want anything to eat. I want a drink.

BONEHEAD Food's the thing for us, Bill.

BILL What's got into you? Don't you drink any more?

BONEHEAD I haven't touched a drop since that night Mary Hemphill told us her story.

BILL Not one drop?

BONEHEAD Not one drop.

PICKLE HILL

BILL How do you manage? (*Students begin to enter.*)

BONEHEAD I manage fine.

BILL What's right for you doesn't mean it's right for me.

(Ducks back through the swinging doors. Bonehead dives after him, and they come out again immediately.)

BILL Not one drop?

BONEHEAD Not one drop, Bill. It's no place for us.

STUDENT Bonehead, here a minute!

BILL (*Suddenly and fiercely*) What are you all looking at me for?

BLAIR Nobody's looking at you, Bill.

BILL Oh, yes, you were!

SAM It may be your conscience, Bill.

BILL (*Suspiciously*) What's that?

BONEHEAD Nothing to worry about, Bill. It's something good, really it is. It's like the dentist. It hurts, but it's good for you.

(‘All aboard’, and they all go back to the train which starts and stops again. This time as the lights go up they are all having a meal. There is general chatter, humour, laughter. A coloured man is serving them. Suddenly a student stands up and thanks God for the meal.)

STUDENT May God bless this food to our use and us to Thy service. For what we are receiving, may the Lord make us truly thankful. Amen.

(Bill stands up and comes away from the crowd. Frank Buchman follows him.)

FRANK What's the matter, Bill?

BILL That fellow's spoiled my meal.

FRANK Do you mean the waiter?

BILL No. That fellow who thanked the Lord for his food. My

ACT II SCENE II

mother used to do it. I didn't know people did it any more. We never thank the Lord for ours.

FRANK Well, come on, Bill. The next stop is Niagara Falls. We'll stay in a hotel there.

(After all students have passed carrying on their conversation while boarding train, Bonehead stops to tie his shoe. Student falls over him. Everything falls out of student's suitcase.)

BONEHEAD What did you bring your suitcase for?

STUDENT I thought we were going to change trains.

BONEHEAD Well, let's get this stuff in or we'll miss the train.

(Bonehead starts to pick up clothes and throw into suitcase.)

STUDENT Hi, be careful. You'll wrinkle my shirts. My mother taught me how to pack well.

BONEHEAD Your mother! For Pete's sake! *(Disgusted, walks off.)*

(Students begin to holler for the student. The train starts. He throws clothes into suitcase and runs off.)

(Train starts, whistles, slows, stops and you hear a voice calling, 'Niagara Falls, Niagara Falls'.)

(When the lights go up again Bill is in the hotel bedroom standing in his red-flannel underwear. Frank Buchman is with him.)

FRANK I didn't arrange it, Bill. Truly I did not know we would spend the night in this hotel.

BILL Me staying at a Temperance Hotel! If my friends hear I've done it, they'll never stop laughing.

FRANK Don't worry about a thing like that.

BILL Besides, how can a Temperance Hotel pay? Nobody can make a hotel pay without a bar.

FRANK That's not our problem, Bill. Why don't you have a bath before you turn in?

BILL A bath! Do you want me to catch my death of cold?

PICKLE HILL

FRANK No, Bill.

BILL Don't you know down our way we sew up in November and don't unsew again until March?

(Bill takes his nightshirt out of his scuffed alligator bag and puts it on over his red underwear.)

FRANK Well, goodnight, Bill. Sleep well.

BILL Goodnight. Temperance Hotel!

(Frank goes. Bill pulls down from the wall the folding bed in which he is to sleep. He is very suspicious of it. He turns away and the bed flies back against the wall. Bill jumps, frightened. He tries again. After which, very gingerly and as if handling some strange and dangerous animal, Bill levers himself into bed. Enter Frank Buchman.)

FRANK Bill, we've forgotten something.

BILL What's that?

FRANK We've forgotten to pray.

BILL I can't do them things.

FRANK I'll help you.

(Bill gets slowly out of bed and on to his knees.)

BILL You begin.

FRANK Our Father,

BILL Our Father,

FRANK Who art in Heaven,

BILL Who art in Heaven,

FRANK Hallowed be thy name,

BILL Hallowed be thy name. Say, I used to know that.

FRANK Of course you did. It's a prayer a great many people pray.

BILL You lead along. I'll follow.

ACT II SCENE II

FRANK Thy Kingdom come,

BILL Thy Kingdom come.

(And so they continue until the end of the Prayer.)

FRANK Well, Bill, be on good time in the morning. Train starts again at half past eight.

BILL I'll be there. Goodnight, Frank.

FRANK Goodnight, Bill.

(Frank leaves.)

BILL It sure is hard work living with these Christians.

(Curtain closes. Next morning on a street on the way to the station in front of curtain. Enter Sam, Bonehead and other students.)

SAM How'd ya sleep, Bonehead?

BONEHEAD What do you mean, how did I sleep? With my eyes closed, of course.

SAM O.K., wise guy.

STUDENT My God, it's good to get out of those Canadian trains.

(Enter other students crossing stage.)

ANOTHER STUDENT Hi, you guys, do we get breakfast on the train?

BONEHEAD No, at the station.

STUDENT Well, let's get moving then. I could eat a horse. *(Exit.)*

BLAIR *(Entering from stage left, in a state of indignation, holding up his suitcase which is covered with Temperance Hotel stickers)*
Wait a minute, you fellows. Which one of you clever characters did this? Bonehead, was it you?

SAM Bonehead hasn't the brains to think of doing anything like that, have you, Bonehead?

PICKLE HILL

BONEHEAD I'm just too intelligent to do anything so silly.

BLAIR (*As they exit*) Well, who was it?

(Curtain opens and we are on the station platform at Niagara Falls. Bill Pickle is on stage, right. Several students are on the platform. Enter Bonehead, Blair and Sam.)

BLAIR I'll bet it was you, Frank.

FRANK Well, you lose your bet, Blair. It wasn't.

BLAIR I still think it was you, Bonehead.

BONEHEAD Quit picking on me, Blair. I tell you I didn't do it.
Bill's looking pretty guilty.

BLAIR Bill, you wouldn't do that, would you, Bill?

BILL What on earth would I do a thing like that for?

BLAIR The more I look at you, the more convinced I am that it is
you.

BILL I look all right.

BLAIR Bill, it was you.

BILL No, it wasn't.

BLAIR Promise me, Bill.

BILL Yes, promise. If you really want to know, the porter did it.
It cost me twenty-five cents. I gave him a quarter to put them
stickers on.

*('All aboard! All aboard!') Lights and sound effects, then the
slowing of the train and a voice shouting, 'Toronto, Toronto'.
They cross the stage to their hotel room in Toronto.)*

FRANK Does everybody know where their room is?

STUDENT No, I don't. How do I find out?

FRANK See Bonehead, he has the lists. Well, I think we ought to
be in time for the meeting. There'll be six thousand people
there. (*Students go off*) And Bill, I'll see you there. The
Governor-General will be presiding.

ACT II SCENE II

BILL Not for me, thanks.

FRANK What are you going to do?

BILL I hear fur is cheaper in Canada than in America. I think I want to go out and look at fur overcoats to go with that beaver hat.

FRANK That's a good idea, Bill. But I think we ought to go to this meeting first.

BILL What'll happen there?

FRANK People will speak. Interesting people.

BILL I'll go on one condition.

FRANK What's that?

BILL I'll sit in the back seat if you sit with me.

FRANK It's a deal, Bill. Let's go.

(They all go.)

SCENE III

Toronto—A large auditorium

Frank Buchman and Bill Pickle are sitting together in a back seat at the meeting. There is tremendous applause as you first see them.

FRANK What did you think of that, Bill?

BILL I didn't listen to him.

FRANK Why not?

BILL I was counting.

FRANK Counting?

BILL You said there'd be six thousand here. I was counting to see. I was checking up on you.

FRANK How many are there?

BILL Don't know. I got up to about four thousand, but I can't see the galleries. Anyhow, I'll agree there's a big crowd there.

FRANK (*Pointing*) Let's listen to the next one.

(The light fades out on them and goes up on a coloured man speaking.)

COLOURED MAN I never knew my father. I was what they call a foster child. My mother brought me up. She was a wonderful mother. She took me to Church. She taught me that 'God is Love'. But all the time there was hate in my heart against the father I had never known. I grew up. I married. But I never lost my hate. And all the dirt that goes with it. My wife was a good woman, but I never treated her right. I was never honest with her. I used to swear and curse and stay out at nights drinking. I was cruel, too, when the drink was on me. We had children. I was a poor father to them. One day my eldest son left home. He left a note behind him. He said he hated me for the way I had

ACT II SCENE III

treated his mother. He never wanted to see me again. Then something in my heart broke. I realized that my son felt towards me the same way I felt towards my father. My bitterness and cruelty and selfishness had made my children disown me. For the first time in years I went on my knees and asked God to forgive me. I asked my wife to forgive me, too. She did, God bless her. And now our son has come home again and I know that God is Love. I needed a good scrubbing. God gave it me. He has cleansed me from bottom to top. Today my hands are clean. My heart is pure.

‘At the Cross, at the Cross, where I first saw the light,
And the burden of my sin rolled away,
It was there by faith I received my sight—
And now I am happy all the day.’

(Light fades out and goes up again on Frank Buchman and Bill Pickle. Bill is sitting forward listening intently as the applause for the speaker breaks out. Frank is watching Bill.)

BILL Frank, did you tell that speaker about me?

FRANK No, Bill.

BILL That story is my story.

FRANK Is it, Bill?

BILL Let's get back to the hotel. There's something I've got to say to all of you.

SCENE IV

Toronto—The hotel room

The whole party from State College is there.

FRANK Go ahead, Bill.

(Bill gets up as if he had been shot from a cannon.)

BILL I'm an old man of sixty-two. Today I've decided to change my life. I have children. I can't bear to think of their turning on their father like that foster-child. Because all my life I've been disobedient to my Heavenly Parent. Old Bill will be a different man, so help me God. That's his decision and he'll never turn back. Frank, I owe you an apology for all the lies I told about you behind your back.

FRANK Oh, they didn't hurt me.

BILL Maybe it didn't. But it hurt me, and kept many of the students from getting the answer. I'll be sorry for that as long as I live.

BONEHEAD Bill, we'll walk the old chalk line together.

BILL Bonehead, I owe a lot to you, too.

BONEHEAD Who, me?

BILL Yes, if you had had one drop, just one little drop on our journey to Toronto, I'd never have stuck it out. You laid the foundation for my new life. And that fellow who thanked the Lord for the food, he put the sides on the house. And that Coloured speaker—he put the roof on. Frank, I want your help. I want you to sit down and I want you to write to the old woman. I'm going to put things straight with her.

FRANK I'll help you, Bill. What a welcome there'll be for you when we get home!

(Scene fades out. Cries of 'All aboard', train noises, and the noise fades away as the next Scene opens on station back home. Students are there to welcome Bill.)

SCENE V

State College Railroad Station

Students are there. They are singing their songs, wrapped up well against the winter weather.

ONE STUDENT It's late again.

ANOTHER No. They say it's dead on time. They'll be here in five minutes.

ANOTHER If what they say is true, we won't recognize Bill.

ANOTHER We'd recognize those moustaches anywhere.

ANOTHER They say he really is different.

ANOTHER Nuts. He's been putting on an act to get the free trip to Toronto. Old Bill will be just the same as ever. You'll see.

ANOTHER I sure hope you're right. Where will we go for liquor without old Bill?

ANOTHER We'll soon find out if he has changed.

ANOTHER How?

ANOTHER You'll see.

ANOTHER Look out! Here come the Pickles.

(Enter all the Pickles, headed by Mrs. Gilliland.)

A STUDENT *(To Maggie)* Do you get news of your father?

MAGGIE Yes. We had a letter from him. It's the first letter we've ever had from Father in all our lives.

A STUDENT What did it say?

MAGGIE We're not telling.

ANOTHER STUDENT Now I really will believe people can change. If Maggie Gilliland knows something and won't tell, then anything can happen.

PICKLE HILL

A STUDENT Here she comes.

(Steam, noise, the train rolls in. You see Bill getting out and Frank Buchman behind him. While they are still on the steps of the train, a student steps forward and slowly and deliberately hands Bill a bottle. Bill takes it, holds it, and then opens his hand and lets it fall with a crash on to the track floor. Another student goes forward, produces a bottle and opens it, holds it under Bill's nose. Bill sniffs it and then taps the man's wrist so the second bottle crashes. There is a pause. Then Mrs. Gilliland, followed by all the Pickles, goes forward. She only says, 'Oh, Bill!' Bill takes her arm and with all the tribe and Frank around him, they move out.)

ONE STUDENT *(To the man who had offered the bottle)* Jack, that was a rotten thing to do.

STUDENT WHO OFFERED BOTTLE You go to hell. I can offer Bill a drink if I want, can't I?

BONEHEAD You do anything you like. I'll never drink with Bill again—nor will you either.

SECOND BOTTLE OFFERER Don't you start preaching at us. We'll have a whole campus of Pure Johns.

BOTTLE OFFERER You make me sick.

STUDENT Not on Saturdays.

BOTTLE OFFERER What do you mean, not on Saturdays?

STUDENT It's the whisky makes you sick on Saturdays.

(A large section of students go off with those who have made the protest against the bottle-offering. The others, a small and defiant remnant, start singing, 'Wild and woolly, and full of fleas,' as the curtain falls.)

ACT II SCENE V

ENTR'ACTE

Bill Pickle and his wife and the Pickle children sing:

BILL It's fun to walk thro' life together;
 We gaily stride out into the sun
 Leaving behind all the stormy weather,
 When one plus one is clearly one.

Chorus One and one make one.
 Life is lots of fun
 When you simply realize
 That one and one make one.

PICKLE KID I thought one and one made two, Daddy.

BILL Well, what kind of a school did you go to? You still have a
 lot to learn.

BILL What makes men and women tick?
 Why it's just a point of arithmetic—
 One and one make two they say,
 But that's the wrong way and not the right way.

Chorus One and one *etc.*

BILL You have to admit that it's bad (bad, bad)
 If you don't know the right way to add (add, add)

MRS. PICKLE But if in the home there are things to hide
 It's the easiest thing in the world to divide.

Chorus One and one *etc.*

PICKLE KID Did you ever hide anything, Daddy?

BILL Ssh!

MRS. PICKLE With daylight honesty 'twixt us two
 Our mathematical sum comes true.
 Now, let me tell you, my dear little son,
 There's no question that one and one make—

PICKLE KID . . . two! (*For encore, Pickle Kid says: 'One!'*)

Chorus One and one *etc.*

SCENE VI

The Campus—After a football game

The football squad are coming back after winning their game. The crowd are cheering and yelling. They sing a song.

ONE STUDENT Gee, it's good to win games.

ANOTHER Sixth in a row.

OLD GRADUATE Never used to happen in my day.

STUDENT (*To one of the squad*) You were terrific today.

MEMBER OF SQUAD I was fit, that's all. It's fun to run—especially the last quarter.

STUDENT We must celebrate tonight.

ANOTHER Where's Bill Pickle?

OLD GRADUATE Bill! Does he still sell you the liquor? I remember when I was here when that old Bill used to . . .

STUDENT We don't drink any more here.

OLD GRADUATE Don't drink? Why ever not?

STUDENT It's just not done any more, sir. It got so boring.

BONEHEAD The truth is we all like to have Bill at our parties—and Bill just won't come if liquor is served.

OLD GRADUATE I simply don't believe it.

STUDENT Come along and see.

SAM The Dean's giving a party tonight.

OLD GRADUATE The Dean giving a party on Saturday night?

STUDENT Sure. It's for Bill Pickle.

ANOTHER We're all asked.

ANOTHER And we're all going. Come along. (*They all go.*)

SCENE VII

Dean Agee's Study

Dean's reception. As curtain rises Bill Pickle is dancing an Irish jig to the accompaniment of someone on the violin. He ends with a flourish and there is much applause, shouts of 'Let's have more', 'Do it again', etc. etc.

BILL (*Trying to show he isn't out of breath*) No, that's enough of that. Not that I couldn't give you more if I'd a mind to. You footballers aren't the only ones who've got better wind and can last longer than in the old days.

DEAN Well, I must say it's a new day to be celebrating victories on the football field and to be doing it in my home.

MRS. AGEE You mean our home, dear.

DEAN (*Graciously*) Forgive me, my dear, our home.

BLAIR Why, Dean, I do believe you are changed too.

DEAN No, I'm afraid not. Oh, I'll admit miracles have happened and I told you, Frank, that if Bill here changed I would have to reconsider the whole of my philosophy. But that's not so easy for an old dyed-in-the-wool agnostic like me.

BILL What does that mean?

MRS. PICKLE Go on, Bill, don't show your ignorance.

BILL Well, what does it mean?

DEAN It means, I suppose, a man who just doesn't know.

STUDENT I reckon we are all that way, we none of us know how to live this life.

BILL But we can sure find out.

DEAN How?

BILL Frank says you've got two ears and one mouth and if you listen twice as much as you talk, God will show you how.

PICKLE HILL

MRS. AGEE That's what I never understood. I deluged the Lord with my words but I never listened to what He said in reply. You know, I think He must have been as bored with my prayers as you were, my dear. They never made me any different.

BILL All the same, there's something in this prayer business.

FRANK Tell them how you pray, Bill.

BILL Well, I usually get down to it like this—as in crap shooting—and me and my heavenly Parent we talk things over and we come to an agreement—His way and not the way of Bill Pickle.

DEAN You're never concerned with words, Bill. That appealed to me.

BILL Oh, no, you've got to deal with sin. You've got to get washed behind the ears. It takes good soap and water and a scrubbing brush. Because you've got to get out every speck of dirt. I know when I was first honest with Frank here, it made me feel good like a bath. The first bath in spring—makes you feel younger and lighter.

FRANK Yes, you're washed. You get honest. You take orders from God. You put right what's wrong so a new spirit comes in.

BILL That's what I did. I got honest with Frank. Then I wrote a letter to my old woman, telling her I was sorry. The only help for a fellow like me, and you all know what I was like, is to hate sin, forsake, be honest, restore. The Holy Spirit did for me what old Bill couldn't do for himself.

DEAN I've always wanted a faith, Bill. I was never quite sure it existed. Somehow it doesn't seem real to me.

MRS. AGEE That's because I have been so unreal, dear. I have been a bossy, self-righteous, bitter woman. I have wanted to run your life and I need to be different.

DEAN Well, I'm grateful, I can assure you, for all that has happened at State College since you came, Frank. Only a fool

ACT II SCENE VII

would deny that things are different—very different—but
I . . . (*Hesitates*)

BLAIR You mean you don't quite know where to begin, Dean?

DEAN Yes, that and the fact that I have been educated to doubt
everything that I can't prove—and I can't prove God.

BLAIR You could always try an experiment, Dean.

BONEHEAD Even a dyed-in-the-wool old—what you called it—
could do that.

FRANK Yes, an experiment. A simple decision to listen and obey.
No one is too wise or too simple to do that.

DEAN (*Really moved*) Yes, yes, I suppose I could try.

FRANK Which way the whole country will go depends on de-
cisions like yours, Dean.

DEAN What I've seen over this past year has convinced me. My
mind clearly tells me this is the way for all America, but—

BILL And for all those other countries, too.

DEAN Frank, do you think you can take this to the world?

FRANK I believe God means to.

BILL And it depends on men like you and me, Dean.

FRANK It means deciding to put right what is wrong. Wherever
it may be. Whatever the cost for the rest of your life.

DEAN I'll do it, Frank. Count on me one hundred per cent from
now on.

MRS. AGEE And I'll stand with you, Dean. We can let God guide
us from now on.

BILL This guidance business, Dean, is as unexpected as a liquor
party—but without the hangover.

DEAN What do you mean, Bill?

BILL Well, you never know what's going to happen next. Can I
tell them, Frank?

PICKLE HILL

FRANK (*Sits*) Go ahead, Bill.

BILL Frank here has guidance I should go with him to Switzerland of all places. There's something going on there called the League of Nations. It seems all the fellows who run the countries have some kind of a party there and things don't go too well. A fellow called Hambro has written to ask Frank and me to go over and redd things up. Though what they'd want to hear from Bill the Lord knows.

DEAN Are you going, Bill?

BILL Guidance is guidance, Dean. Guess I'll go along.

SAM Have you got your passport, Bill?

BILL They say I have got to have three people who have known me all my life to prove that I was born. I guess there's only three people alive who could do it. One of them is crazy. Another can't remember that far back, and the third, no one knows his whereabouts. But there's no need to worry. If Frank says I'm to go to Europe, I'll go.

SAM Dean Agee, a lot of us have been thinking of you and Mrs. Agee and praying for you these days.

BONEHEAD And we've got a little surprise that seems to fit in right here. Go ahead, guys.

(*Students sing:*)

The world is dirty and twisted,
We must clean it and get it straight;
The Agees have enlisted
With the students of old Penn State.
Out to the ends of the nations,
To the bounds of the uttermost sea,
We take our battle stations,
We are living to set men free.

ACT II SCENE VII

Forget yourself and go all out!
That's the simple secret life is all about,
Out of yourself! Leave the big 'I' behind you,
Lay aside the selfish ways that bind and blind you,
Forget yourself and go all out!
All the greed and bitterness are put to rout.
If you want to be where happiness can really find you,
Forget yourself, forget yourself,
Forget yourself and go all out!

(Curtain closes.)

(Students move in front of Curtain.)

There's hunger and pain and sorrow
In the hearts of a billion men.
We live that a new tomorrow
May be born in their hearts again.
Not for ourselves the decision
We take together today,
Not in our strength the vision
As we listen and change and obey.

Chorus Forget yourself etc.

EPILOGUE

All the characters of the play are there, sitting around Frank, who is in his chair, holding his stick, with his back to the audience. One Negro is placed where all can see him. He is the Negro who has been in all the college scenes. There are also some new characters who will speak and disclose themselves. They can increase or diminish in numbers according to the circumstances in which the play is performed. They all speak to Frank and are giving a party for him.

CARL HAMBRO When Bill Pickle came to Geneva I was Chairman of the League of Nations. I remember him well. He really changed people. I told you then, Frank, that you were succeeding where we had failed. You change men. Nothing else touches the heart of the problem.

LADY ANTRIM Didn't you then take a force into Norway, Mr. Hambro?

HAMBRO Yes, Lady Antrim, I did.

LADY ANTRIM I heard one of the Norwegian bishops speak in London after the war. He simply said that the coming of that force to Scandinavia was a decisive intervention of God in the history of those nations. He said it made everything different.

TOD SLOAN That it does, Lady A. Think of you, Lady-in-Waiting to two Queens of England, a friend of an old agitator like me.

LADY ANTRIM Oh, not so old, Tod! Remember we share the same birthday.

TOD Well, forget the 'old', then. But Tod Sloan's an agitator all right. Watchmaker by trade and agitator by nature. Do you realize I'd been twenty-eight times in jail when I first met Frank?

EPILOGUE

LADY ANTRIM Did you deserve it, Tod?

TOD Every bit of it. I used to smash windows and break things up. Why, people like you I used to 'ate. I 'ated 'em like 'ell. 'Ang the lot of 'em! That's what I felt about your crowd.

RAJMOHAN GANDHI How did you get the name Tod?

TOD My parents called me Ernest Augustus McCullough. But I'm Tod Sloan, just like you're Rajmohan Gandhi. Plain Tod Sloan. That's my name and I don't answer to no other.

FRANK That's what I always like about you, Tod. You're so down to earth.

TOD That's what I like about you, Frank. No frills. 'Labour led by God will lead the world.' That's what you said—and an ordinary man like me can get it. And now MRA has started a fire around the world. It's glorious. If there are any don't think it's wonderful, well, they've got no idea, that's all.

FRANK It's God, not me, Tod.

TOD That's it. Moral Re-Armament is God's property. Chaos cannot obtain if we work, live and practise Moral Re-Armament. It will bring into being a new thinking and a new social order. Frank, this is to me the only revolution that matters—the change of human nature—and it does happen. Even in the West End of London, Lady A.

LADY ANTRIM And the East End, too, Tod.

RAJMOHAN The father of my nation, Mahatma Gandhi, loved your part of London, Tod. They were good to him there when everybody else was against him.

TOD He was a friend of Frank's, Raj. Isn't that right, Frank? (*Frank Buchman nods*) Met him on the first of your nine visits to India—back in 1915. (*Frank Buchman nods again.*)

RAJMOHAN Mahatma Gandhi said MRA was the greatest thing that ever came out of the West. And his son Devadas said, 'If

PICKLE HILL

MRA fails the world fails.' His grandson Manilal said, 'MRA is building a new dimension of racial unity in South Africa.'

AN AFRICAN What do you say?

RAJMOHAN I say for India and for Asia that the choice is MRA or Communism. That's why I'm giving my life to bring an answer. What about you?

AFRICAN I speak for all Africans when I say 'MRA is doing for Africa what Abraham Lincoln did for America. It is binding up the nation's wounds and setting the people free.'

A JAPANESE (*Speaks in Japanese which is translated sentence by sentence*) That's true, too, for Asia, Frank. The Japanese have caused many wounds. You called us the lighthouse of Asia. You taught us to apologize for the past and to live for the future. Through Moral Re-Armament we have found real reconciliation with the Philippines, Viet Nam, Indonesia. Yes, even the Koreans have forgiven us.

A GERMAN (*Speaking in German and translated sentence by sentence*) We Germans were saved through your work, Frank. You took us back into the family of nations after the war. We shall never forget it. Your work reduced the Communist hold on the Ruhr from seventy-three per cent to eight per cent in four years. Our former Ambassador to Canada says you were largely responsible for a new and permanent peace between Germany and France.

A FRENCHWOMAN (*Translated*) Robert Schuman says in his introduction to your speeches: 'If this were just another theory, I should not be interested. But it is a philosophy of life applied in action which I have seen reaching the millions. It is a world-wide transformation of human society that has already begun.'

A GREEK (*Translated*) You were the people who brought an answer to Cyprus. Without MRA we should still hate the Turks, fear the British, hide on the mountains like wild beasts; but Cyprus with the answer gives hope to the whole world.

EPILOGUE

(The Negro, Dr. Johnson, a surgeon, steps into the centre of the stage and faces Frank and the audience.)

DR. JOHNSON *(He speaks slowly with deep conviction and emotion)*
My name is Johnson, a surgeon here in Washington. You don't need to tell me anything about Frank Buchman's work. I was there at State College fifty years ago. I can vividly remember that room of yours in Old Main, Frank. The light was shining until one, two, three o'clock in the morning. The students used to line up to get into that room. Each one was given the same challenge and the same chance to get honest, to say sorry to God and to those they had wronged, to accept God's commission to remake the world. Within three years the whole climate of that campus changed and the news went from end to end of America. Now, Frank, you are doing just the same thing. But you are doing today for nations what you did yesterday for individuals. *(He steps towards Frank and says very slowly)* One thing else I shall never forget. I was the only Negro on that campus fifty years ago. It was a lonely time. And you, Frank, were my friend.

FRANK Yes. And I still am. I still am.

FINALE

ALL SING Springtime comes at eight or eighty,
 Bursts in every willing heart.
 Be an I.Q. light or weighty
 We can play our part.
 End the hating of the winter,
 Get the horse before the cart.
 Springtime's waiting, waiting, waiting,
 Till we play our part.

FINALE

SOLO Dry and stony is the desert—
Yet there comes the magic hour
When the thorniest shrub and cactus blossoms
Radiant into flower.
Dry and stony hearts will blossom
In that sunshine after rain

MARY HEMPHILL For all the past we leave behind
And the world grows young again.

ALL The world grows young again,
And there's sunshine after rain,
When all the past we leave behind
And the world grows young again

So walk the old chalk line,
For each face can glow and shine,
When hands and hearts are truly clean
And we walk the old chalk line.

CURTAIN