

The list of physicians-turned-writers is a long and honored one: Smollet, O. W. Holmes the elder, Doyle, Maugham, to name some few—in SF, David Keller and Allan Nourse among others. Dr. William Carlos Williams, in Patterson, N. J. long practiced both poetry and medicine. Dr. Leonard Tushnet, in Irvington, N. J. is a general practitioner of many years standing, and author of such articles as "Murder By Disease," "Diabetes Mellitus and Sexual Impotence," and "Health Conditions in the Ghetto of Lodz." For the past few years he has turned his pen to fiction and has had short stories printed in various literary and general magazines, and his history of the Jewish resistance movement in Warsaw will be published by Citadel Press. He writes: "[I am] at present seeking a publisher for a medical historical work . . . on starvation in the Warsaw Ghetto." Poland, peasants, and politics—this is the background for Dr. Tushnet's story of a favorite fantasy theme, to which he gives a new—and unexpected—turn.

IN THE CALENDAR OF SAINTS

by Leonard Tushnet

JANUSZ PIONTEK MET THE Devil early one cold November morning near the Brubrow Co-operative pig-sty. He greeted the black-coated gentleman in the stylishly creased homburg courteously, "Good morning, Your Worship. Would you kindly step into the rest-house? It is warmer there."

The rude shack set against the wall of the pig-sty was merely an enlarged out-house, its essential purpose hidden by a curtain. The visible remainder was white-washed and had several low stools

scattered about. "You see, Your Worship," Janusz smirked, wiping off a stool with his sleeve, "we Poles have always been a cultured people, so the Village Co-operative made a place where a working peasant could shelter himself when his necessities occurred."

The Devil twitched his nose and sat down gingerly. He said, "Well, Janusz, I've heard a lot about you and I want to do business with you."

"With me, Your Worship?" Janusz snatched off his fur-lined

cap and held it stiffly at his side. "Excuse me. I forgot. These new democratic customs—. Your Worship wants to do business with me? I am only Janusz Piontek, the Chairman of the Grubrow Co-operative."

The Devil waved a black-gloved hand. "I know all about you. This morning, for instance, you were going to take the speckled pig to sell in Nowy Brzezcz."

Janusz blanched beneath his leathery tan. He rubbed a hand over the grayish-blond stubble on his scalp, then bowed low. "Indeed, Your Worship, it was not for me that the money would be intended. The Co-operative could use a little cash for the luxuries that the working class enjoys as well as the decadent bourgeoisie —."

"Enough!" the Devil interrupted. "I've heard that speech, with variations, dozens of times before. I've got something you want and you've got something I want. So—on to business!"

So this is the Devil, Janusz thought. This remnant of ancient superstition, this straw man set up by the priests to frighten the credulous, is nothing but an ordinary businessman, an obsolete carry-over in a modern People's Republic! He said, "Your Worship, I need very little. I was born here before the First War in a poor farm-laborer's family, and now I am the Chairman of the Co-opera-

tive. I have no idea what you can offer me." The Devil looked straight at Janusz. "Well, Your Worship, there are indeed some things I want, but I do without them as any good citizen should in the interest of building Socialism for a bright and golden future."

"Spare me the speeches!" the Devil shouted. "In other times you kept quiet about your humble origin, but now you boast you were so poor your father boiled herring barrels to get salt. Your family died of typhus in 1921, so you went as an unpaid orphan servant to the landlord's house. You ran away to join the army, from which you were kicked out for stealing from your comrades. You came back and became the toady of the gentry. You were the bully-boy for the Nationalists in the town. You raided the Jews' stores and beat up the visiting Deputy from the Sejm—."

"Please, Your Worship," Janusz broke in, "speak a little more softly. What you have said is true, but please remember that a poor young fellow has a hard job to make his way in this life. The rulers of the world like others to do their dirty work for them and they pay—who else can pay? Don't forget that while the drunken gentry were clapping their hands at my patriotism I managed to hide away for myself some of the Jews' merchandise."

The Devil went on more quietly, "You hounded the refugee Ukrainian Orthodox priest, a harmless old man with a sickly wife, from the village to curry favor with the Catholic Party. When the Second War started, you were taken for the army—"

"And when the Germans won, I came home unhurt. God and the Holy Virgin of Czenstochowa watched over me," Janusz remarked, automatically crossing himself. He started, realizing his *faux-pas*.

The Devil went on, "You came home unhurt because you hid out during the fighting. During the retreat you managed to commandeer two horses for yourself in the name of the Partisans. By the way, you're a professed unbeliever, so that Sign means nothing. You denounced the Kowalskis to the Nazis as members of the underground Catholic Rescue Society. And when the Nazis were gone and the Russians came, you offered the priest to hide the gold altar chalice and the ciborium and the silver censers in your cellar and then you accused the priest of appropriating the people's property for counter-revolutionary purposes."

"Yes, so I did." Janusz shrugged. "What good would valuable sacred objects be to the godless Russians?" He stopped being on the defensive. Why excuse himself to this relic of a dark past? "Let me

tell you something, my lord. I know how to pour the milk so that I don't get flies in the bowl. What was, was. There is a new life here for workers and peasants. So if you've got something for me, don't hide it behind your back. Open the sack and let me see the hen."

The Devil spread his hands, deprecatingly. "Now, Janusz, calm down. I can give you whatever your heart desires. Just name it and it's yours—anything, that is, except immortality."

Janusz's eyes narrowed. "I'll tell you," he said at last, "just give me success in everything I put my mind or hand to."

The Devil chuckled. "You're a genius, Janusz! Most men ask for money or for women or for power, but you—you ask for everything all at once! And you're even willing to work a little for it! Agreed—you shall have what you want—success! How long do you want? Twenty years? Fifty? A hundred?"

Janusz blew his nose to hide his satisfaction. "A successful old man is still an old man. Let me stay the same age I am now."

"Agreed! But for how long?" the Devil demanded.

"I am not a pig," Janusz replied. "To be successful even for a short time is worth much. Just to St. Mlotekisierp's Day is enough for me."

"St. Mlotekisierp? I'm not familiar with that one." The Devil

regarded Janusz quizzically. "It almost sounds as though you said St. Hammer-and-Sickle in your country-Polish. No matter—I will give you success in everything you put your mind or hand to at the same age you are now until that—that Whatever-his-name-is' Saint's Day. And now—you are willing to give me your immortal soul on that day?"

Janusz quickly assented. No wonder the Devil never won over God! No wonder even ignorant priests could exorcise him!

The Devil walked toward the door, turned to say, "Until St.—St.—St. Whoever-it-is's Day, then," and vanished.

Going home, Janusz saw a hare nibbling at stubble near his garden. With an oath, he flung a stone in its general direction. It flew short but then, to his amazement, rebounded from the dark earth, flew toward the animal, and struck it squarely on the head. "Ha! That Devil was an honest man!" Janusz exclaimed, as he picked up the dead hare.

His wife was standing at the stove when he came in. He threw the hare at her feet and ordered, "Make stew tonight." He went to the cupboard, took out a bottle of vodka, and drained the ounce or two in it. The easy victory over the Devil, the prospect of the evening stew, the warmth of the vodka and the breakfast of buckwheat groats with hot milk and black bread and

butter filled him with a sense of power. Why, there was nothing he couldn't do! With sudden resolve, he said, "I'm going to town."

He hitched up the wagon and drove the six miles over the rutted, frozen roads to Nowy Brzez, right up to the inn. There, he challenged Kawalek, the innkeeper, a burly ex-blacksmith who had lost his left arm in the war, "I'll hand-wrestle you for a bottle of vodka."

Kawalek grinned. "Better get out your money now. Double—if you lose. Remember, I'm the champion." Janusz and he rested their elbows on the table, clasped hands, and started the game. It was over in five seconds. The innkeeper was astounded. "You've the strength of an ox!" With a grand manner, Janusz told him to get glasses and they drank together.

They had finished off half the bottle when the innkeeper's brother-in-law came in with a large, sealed package. Tadeusz Rybacki had been the mayor of Nowy Brzez before the People's Republic had removed him from office because of his suspected collaboration during the German occupation. He was now unemployed, living on funds sent him by relatives in Cincinnati in response to his tearful letters about how his non-existent six children were dying of hunger. He had a sideline—selling the clothing he got in the packages from America.

He made a mock bow to Janusz.

"Honored we are by your presence, *Pan*. Could I perhaps favor you with a dress for your wife?"

"Sure," Janusz answered, "if you have one fit to wear in that bundle of yours."

"And what will you pay me with, Mr. Chairman?" Rybacki twitted him. "You know, honest merchants are part of the fabric of our Socialist society and cannot be exploited by peasants."

"I'll make you a bet," Janusz replied. "If you have a blue silk dress with little white flowers in that pack, you'll give it to me. If there is no such dress, I'll pay you double what you ask for any other one."

Rybacki stared at him. What a stupid peasant to make such a silly bet! "Done!" he cried, and unwrapped the big pasteboard box. Neatly folded pinafores, girls' blouses and skirts, and several pairs of blue jeans lay on top of a blue-and-white silk print dress. Rybacki's jaw dropped. Open-mouthed, he could only point to the dress.

Janusz pulled it from the pile and draped it over his arm after stowing the bottle in a jacket pocket. He left and, outside the inn, examined the dress. In one of the little slanting side-pockets he felt paper crinkle. He pulled out an envelope with ten United States dollar bills and a note saying the mother should have something nice to wear and the ten

dollars extra was to buy whatever else she needed.

He drove to the State Bank Branch Office, where he changed the dollars for zlotys. From there he went across the street to the Bierut Tobacco Store for a dozen packs of Troikas. Then he went next door to the Dombrowski Provision Bazaar where he bought coffee, tea, strawberry preserves, Romanian black olives and juicy Crimean lemons.

On the way home he fortified himself with a few more swigs from the bottle. He began to feel sorry for himself. What was he? —a nothing at the head of a bunch of less-than-nothings! Co-operative! —a fancy name for forty families settled on the poorest part of the ex-landlord's estate! Chairman! —because no one else wanted the job! As the village came into view, he raised the bottle to his lips once more. The wagon lurched against a deep rut, spilling the vodka over him. He cursed —why couldn't his village have smooth roads, at least, like the town's?

Filled with the hot fury of alcohol and anger, he whipped the horse from his neighbor's barn into his own yard. He took a log twice the length of a man and hitched the two horses to it, one at each end, then drove them before him into the village square, using the log as a roller.

Grugrow consisted of a cluster

of houses in an irregular oval with the unused church at the upper end and Janusz's house, off to one side, at the lower end. Next to the church was the former overseer's house, now the Co-operative office and meeting hall. The late autumn rains and then the freezing weather had waved and pitted the central area like a damaged wash-board.

Shouting and beating the horses, Janusz ran after them, every now and then giving the log a kick to straighten it. The villagers came running. Janusz must have gone mad! Imagine trying to roll out the ruts with a log! The log bumped and bounced, but as it passed on the space behind it became smooth as a paved road. Janusz drove the horses around the entire area, then back toward his house and down the road for half a mile.

Home again, while he ate the steaming cabbage soup his wife put before him, he decided to take full advantage of the Devil's bargain. He was going to make the village a showplace that would put out the eyes of the townspeople.

He told his wife to unload the wagon while he went down cellar. He came up with two crusted brushes and a can half-full of thick white paint. A few bold women were in the kitchen exclaiming at the delicacies his wife was putting away. Paying no attention to them, he pushed his

way through the men standing at the door. They looked at the brushes and the paint and roared. Janusz was really crazy—to start painting in the afternoon of a cold day with dried out brushes and a cupful of paint! "Hey, Janusz!" Antoni Zukowski called out, "should I help?"

"Why not?" Janusz answered. He thrust a brush into his hand. "Here, we'll start at this side. Get ladders and boards, you loafers!" he shouted at the others. "Do something if you're too lazy to work!" Ladders and boards were quickly brought. The villagers were ready for sport. This would be something to tell about all the long winter, a good joke on the drunkard Chairman.

The painting went like magic. The paint gleamed fresh and bright; the can seemed as empty, or as full, as before. Antoni slapped his brush vigorously on the wall and cried out, "The Devil must be in this! Look, the paint just flows on!" All the villagers, even the women, ran for brushes. They wanted to see for themselves what this wonderful paint was like. They discovered that as soon as they dipped their brushes into the can they were seized with a strange energy. The paint was unlike any other they had used; it spread smoothly and covered well. Before the sun set, the whole house shone in brilliant whiteness.

Janusz clapped his hands and

shouted over the chattering of the crowd, "Go home now! Special meeting tonight! Everybody must attend!"

The hall was filled. Janusz sat at the table on the platform, beneath the red and white flag flanked by portraits of Marx and Engels. Taking notes at his right hand was Stephan Borkowski, the local head of the Union of Rural Youth; at his left was Marek, the village Communist, an ex-Partisan.

Janusz banged his gavel and shouted for order above the hubbub. "Act like cultured citizens, brothers! Shut up! I have a proposal to bring before you. Why do we live like animals in stables? Are we not as good as the townspeople? Without us, the peasants, there would be no towns, no Warsaw, no Poland! Then why do we live as we do? I propose that we paint every house in the village and clean up this filthy meeting hall and fix up the church—."

"Aha!" Marek jumped up. "That's what it is! So that's your scheme, you—you—provocateur! You make a grand speech about how we should work to make a beautiful village and all of a sudden—bang! The priest is here!"

"Sh—sh!" Angry voices silenced him. One-eyed Andrzej called out, "Shame on you, Marek! Going against the Constitution! If we're so stupid as to want a priest, we deserve to have one!" He could

not finish because of the laughter.

Stephen Borkowski got up and glowered at Janusz. "Maybe Marek's right! Nobody but a provocateur would make such an idiotic proposal! Who can paint in the dead of winter?"

"Janusz can paint!" "And a good job he made of it, too!" "And what about the smooth square?" Yells of approval called for the Chairman to continue. He said, "I promise you the supplies, I will help you, and whatever I do will be successful, I promise you that, too. I want to be proud to be the Chairman of the Grubrow Co-operative." The proposal was put to a vote and carried unanimously.

By the middle of December, his promise was fulfilled. With his help, every house in Grubrow was re-painted, every roof re-done, every yard cleaned up. Only the church was the same as before, out of deference, Janusz said, to the non-religious majority, but actually because he didn't want to antagonize the Devil unnecessarily. Peasants came from miles around to see the model village. Eventually, even the Rural District Commission heard of what was going on and sent Comrade Sophia Swiatek to investigate.

Comrade Swiatek, a vigorous, well-proportioned woman, came unannounced. She drove her jeep right up to the Co-operative office, recognizable by its flag and its freshly painted and incorrectly

spelled sign. She looked back over the square. It was as she had heard—the whole village looked like a picture in a propaganda magazine. The square was smooth with flat-packed, spotless snow; paper cut-outs adorned the windows of the houses; the sleighs were shiny with varnish and gay decorations. The church disturbed her; it stood out in its deterioration.

She went into the office, showed her credentials to the book-keeper, and asked to see the Chairman. Poor Bartłomiej, who was book-keeper because he was too weak for farm work and not because he could keep books, was terrified. He stammered that he'd get the Chairman, and off he ran to Janusz's house.

Janusz came and offered to show her around. As they walked through the village, he looked sidewise out of the corners of his eyes at her. He felt a stirring in him, something that had not happened in years. Ah, if he were only younger, he mourned, he'd—and the Devil's promise came back to him. Why not?

Comrade Swietek was impressed and puzzled by what she saw. It was inconceivable that this doltish Chairman who made eyes at her could have engineered the renovation of the village. She asked him to call a meeting that night. He agreed, and invited her to stay for supper and to sleep overnight at his house.

The crowded meeting hall was different from its past squalor. The fly-specks had been scrubbed off the pictures of Marx and Engels. From the left wall portraits of Mieckiewicz, Madame Curie, and Lenin gazed across at the red-and-white banner on the right, "Grubrow—Pride of Poland."

Comrade Swiatek introduced herself and took a sheaf of papers from her brief-case. She began, "Comrades, fellow workers and peasants, what I saw here today would gladden the heart of every Polish patriot. Your village is indeed the 'Pride of Poland'—on the surface. Your houses shine, this hall is a wonder to behold, you deserve much credit for putting on a good show. But all this improvement is on the outside. Look at this model village the way our enemies would, those dark elements who want a return to the days of oppression and ignorance. See—they say—how clean and bright the houses are and what a dingy and weather-beaten hulk the church is? Are not these peasants ground down by godless rulers who forbid them to paint the church? And then they say—all this is fakery, because the peasants hate the government so much they do not support it. Their evidence? Here—the reports of your deliveries to the State—only fifty percent of the potatoes delivered and half of them cut and rotten, only sixty percent of the grain deliv-

ered, and only twenty percent of the hogs. Sure, you make a fine show for fools, but what good is a painted house when your city brothers need food and you hold back?" She was going to continue her speech, a combination of exhortation and threat, but she felt the eyes of the Chairman on her. She finished lamely, "I propose to stay here a few days and investigate."

Janusz took advantage of the heavy quiet in the hall to rise and say, "Comrade, you are right. In our selfishness we have forgotten we have duties. I pledge myself to see to it that our quotas are fulfilled. I admit that I have not turned over all that I should have and I know others have been as thoughtless. Comrade Swiatek may think that I advised the painting out of an evil desire to bring shame on our country, but that is not so. I just didn't think first things come first. I take full responsibility."

Comrade Swiatek looked at the Chairman with frank admiration. Marek had to nudge her to get up and reply. She was no longer the forbidding political representative. She was just a woman, blushing as she tried to find words and then coming out with, "Grubrow should be congratulated on having such a fine Chairman." The meeting was evidently over. The women poked each other on the way out. "He's bewitched her, that's

what! That Janusz! What a man!"

At home, Janusz showed his visitor the room she was to sleep in, next to the kitchen. His wife had made up their own bed for her with an extra feather-filled cover. He and his wife lay down on blankets spread on the floor near the stove. After about an hour, when he thought his wife was asleep, Janusz got up quietly and opened the door to the bedroom. The moonlight shone on his guest, waiting for him. He got into bed with her. Janusz's wife was not asleep. She turned her face to the pillow and wept, then pulled the coverlet over her ears to shut out the creakings from the other room.

Comrade Swiatek stayed a whole week. During that time, she and Janusz were inseparable at night as well as during the day, when they went from house to house gathering the potatoes from the villagers. A special convoy of trucks was sent up from the town to cart away the potatoes, and then the oats and barley, and then the hogs. Somehow Janusz's neighbors were unable to resist his persuasion or the presence of the District representative. In a week the Co-operative's quota was overfulfilled. There was no longer any reason for Comrade Swiatek to stay. She kissed Janusz in full view of the villagers and wept openly as she drove away in her jeep.

A little scared by his easy successes, Janusz felt that it wouldn't hurt to have a few friends in court on the other side. Single-handedly, he nailed up the loose beams of the church, re-painted it, replaced the rotting steps and re-plastered the walls and ceiling. He went secretly to the Provincial Bishop.

Word came to Grubrow ten days later that a priest had been assigned by the diocese, with the consent of the government, to take over the cure of the village. There was a flurry of activity. Altar cloths were made, curtains hung, the pews and railings re-varnished, gilt paint used lavishly, the bare church quickly re-furnished and re-furbished.

On February twelfth, the Bishop's limousine and the car of the Chairman of the Provincial Board on Religious Affairs were met by almost the entire village at the entrance to the square. Janusz was not present, under pretext of illness. Why provoke the Devil too much? The Bishop blessed the kneeling crowd and proceeded to the church, where he presided over a Solemn Mass of re-consecration, naming the church in honor of St. Isidore the Laborer. He had brought along a large canvas showing St. Isidore in Heaven, holding a golden sickle and gazing upwards to the Sacred Heart. The Bishop stressed in his sermon that, although St. Isidore had been a Spaniard, farm work was as uni-

versal as the church and he exhorted his hearers to follow the example of the Saint, "whose hand in life was ever on the plough, his heart ever blessed with the thought of God." . .

At the end of the services, there was a feast in the Co-operative hall. After the women had set out the babka and poured the tea, they sat down with the men. The Bishop expressed his regret that the worthy Chairman was not present and suggested to Father Stanislas that he visit him the next day. Marek made a speech noting that religious worship was free in a free society and that Church and State could work together under Socialism. He added that he would join the new priest in visiting Janusz.

There was no need for the visit. Next morning, Janusz was up early, breaking up the ice in the well, where he was joined by a group of young fellows whose idol he now was. No one could excell Janusz in hunting. He had only to point the gun at a crow and the crow was down. Janusz walked cockily about, told dirty stories for the amusement of his followers, and was generally "king of the dung-hill," as Borkowski bitterly remarked, seeing his influence wane before the wiles of this corrupt old man.

Corrupt he was, there was no doubt about that. As the weeks wore on, he became more shame-

less in his misdeeds. More than one woman was beaten by her husband after coming out of Janusz's barn, straightening her skirts. Every night the kitchen of the Piontek house was filled with men getting drunk on Janusz's seemingly unlimited supply of vodka, singing ribald songs, and then ending up fighting each other. No one ever attacked Janusz himself after they saw the way he laid out Big Maciej with one punch.

The whole winter passed by in this manner. Grubrow became known throughout the District for its debauchery and again the Rural District Commission felt it necessary to investigate. This time, however, they sent out a man, Comrade Witold.

Forewarned by his ex-mistress, Janusz stole a march on Comrade Witold. The day he arrived the village was almost deserted. Informed that Janusz had organized a peat-cutting expedition, Witold exploded. "Peat cutting! In the middle of March! The ground is frozen yet! The tools will be broken!" He examined the Co-operative's books, saw they were in hopeless disorder, inspected the communal milk-collecting station, saw it was filthy, looked in at the church, saw its gleaming decorations with disapproval, walked around the yards, noted the carelessly-piled mounds of manure. The stories of the scandalous goings on under Piontek's maleficent

guidance were confirmed by the old women and the priest. It was still early afternoon when he heard singing in the distance. A dozen broad-tired wagons drove through the square, laden with neatly cut blocks of peat. Janusz marched behind the last wagon, surrounded by his sweating, exhausted neighbors.

Comrade Witold, the wind taken out of his sails, was polite to the Chairman. His failings had to be winked at; obviously a lifetime of vices learned under capitalism could not be wiped out in a few years. He congratulated him on an early start, diffidently made a few recommendations, and left.

Janusz had no fondness for inspections. He became more circumspect. The carousing went on, but so did the farm work. The April plowing and fertilizing was finished, the seeding was done, long before the time limit set by the Agricultural Board. No other Co-operative in the District, no private farmer, no State farm, could equal the record set by Grubrow. Nor could they equal the amount of vodka and plum brandy consumed there, either.

Janusz was troubled, nevertheless. Things were going a little too good to be true. He thought over the contract with the Devil and could find no flaw in it, but—the Devil couldn't have lasted so long if he were always such a ninny in bargaining. Maybe there *was* a

stone mixed in with the basket of eggs.

Janusz never went to church, but on May tenth, the feast day of St. Isidore the Laborer, he accompanied his wife. Father Stanislas hastily added a few words to his prepared talk, mentioning in generalities the glories in Heaven awaiting the secular leaders of the people when they led Christian lives. Father Stanislas thought that he had made an impression on the Chairman, his gaze was so intent. It was, however, fixed rather on the picture of St. Isidore, now in a great gilded frame directly over the lectern.

The very next day, Janusz visited the priest. Father Stanislas hurried to greet him, almost tripping over his cassock in his haste. He invited him into the study, gave him a comfortable chair, and brought out a decanter of Hungarian wine. Janusz took a fistful of zlotys from his pocket and said, "Here, Father." The priest started to thank him, but Janusz interrupted, "I've come to ask you about that picture of St. Isidore in the church. Why is he holding a sickle?"

Father Stanislas told him the story of the sainted farm laborer of Madrid and how the sickle was chosen as his emblem. Janusz heard him through and then asked, "Is the hammer one of his emblems, too?" The priest looked at him wonderingly. "No, it

isn't." Janusz asked, "Is there by any chance a saint with a hammer and sickle for his emblem?" Father Stanislas' face reddened. Was the Chairman trying to bait him? His reply was stiff. "I don't think so." "Make sure, Father. This is a very important matter."

Father Stanislas recognized that the Chairman was in earnest. Maybe there was some political matter here that the Church might be concerned with. He took out a volume on hagiology. No, no saint had both hammer and sickle as his emblem. St. Marinus had a hammer, but no sickle. Janusz urged him, "Look again, Father. Is there perhaps a St. Mlotekisierp?" No, there was no St. Hammer-and-Sickle. There were two saints named Meletius and a St. Miltiades—that was the closest.

Janusz looked relieved. He took a deep breath, drank down the wine in his glass, and stood up. "Thank you, Father. You've been a big help to me."

Father Stanislas hoped that St. Isidore would lead Janusz back to the church. Already there was an improvement in his personal life. There were no more drunken parties at his house, less obvious lechery, and Janusz was beginning to act like a sober citizen. Alas! The reform was part of Janusz's new plans. Assured now he had nothing to fear from the Devil, he was no longer satisfied to be run after by Rybacki and civilly sa-

luted by the town officials. With the Devil's help, there was no reason why he could not become Rural Commissioner, and then Deputy, and then—why, there was no limit.

He knew that he could not rely on the Devil alone, however. He had to start the ball rolling himself. He began to dress more neatly, as befitted a potential Rural Commissioner. He scraped all the dung from his boots before he entered a house. He bought handkerchiefs to use instead of his fingers for blowing his nose. He said "please" instead of cursing while directing the weeding in the fields. He told the young men horrendous tales of the hard life of a landless peasant under the old regime. He called meetings of the Co-operative Executive Committee to discuss the work quotas instead of setting them up himself.

The Devil did his share also, Janusz agreed. That year there was a great drought all over Eastern Europe. The government tried cloud-seeding devices and the peasants paraded in the fields with sacred images, to no avail. Only over Grubrow and its immediate vicinity did it rain. The Meteorologic Group from the University of Krakow came to study the phenomenon. They sent up weather balloons, took geological specimens and interviewed the farmers. In due time, long after most of the crops in the rest of Poland

had been burned out, it reported that the rains came because certain local peculiarities of the terrain, as yet undetermined, caused precipitation.

The crop yield in Grubrow was fantastically high. There was enough corn for fodder for the entire District. The oats and barley quotas were over-fulfilled. The watermelons and cucumbers, the potatoes, turnips, onions and beets were the boast of the Province. The cabbages were enormous and in such quantity that truckloads were taken to other areas.

Throughout the harvesting, Janusz was indefatigable. Borkowski became his right hand man. Marek approached him with a request to join the Communist Party. The villagers praised him for his efficient labor-saving organization of the work. The women forgot his past transgressions when they saw how he helped with the chopping of the cabbages for sauerkraut and how he wangled extra crocks from the town supply house for the pickles. The District Rural Commission sent a team of carpenters and masons to build a large new smoke-house. In return, Janusz pledged to triple the amount of ham and sausage produced for the urban population.

The last move led to a visit from Comrade Wladislaw Michalski, the political leader of the Province, who let drop a few hints that the Rural District Commis-

sion to be elected in November could benefit by the presence of Janusz Piontek. Janusz received the news quietly. He enjoyed his new role as he had never enjoyed anything before. Pushed into the background were the short-lived pleasures of drunkenness and fornication. Better it was to have power, to be honored by men. The secondary enjoyments followed as a matter of course, he calculated, all in due time.

The hay was all in and the September plowing finished two weeks before the first frost. Janusz started his electioneering. He made journeys to the nearby villages, to the state farms, and to the private farmers in the area. Everywhere he was humble but dignified, gave a few suggestions and asked for support for his nomination to the Rural District Commission. Needless to say, his visits aroused enthusiasm—here was no college professor, no mechanic, no school teacher, but a plain, hard-working peasant who liked a drink or two now and then and who was a little too fond of women, but who knew, too, where the horse was going and how to keep from stepping on the droppings.

The peak of the campaign came on October twenty-seventh. The local Communist Party of Nowy Brzez joined with the Peasant Party in placing the name of Janusz Piontek at the head of the United List of candidates. There

was a gala meeting in the Town Council Hall that night, with the candidates sitting at the table of honor. The Town Magistrate read off the list of candidates and asked for objections. Several of the nominees were criticized, but not Janusz. Then Comrade Michalski asked for the floor.

"Fellow workers," he began, "I come here tonight as an official representative of the Provincial Bureau to honor the man who heads your list, Janusz Piontek. (*Loud applause.*) We in the Bureau have followed the career of Comrade Piontek with great interest this past year. Janusz Piontek was slow in starting his brilliant work as Chairman of the Grubrow Co-operative. (*Murmurs.*) But his slowness was not stupidity! It was the slow natural fermentation of ideas. When the fermentation was over and the ideas matured in his mind, the dull mash, distilled by our democratic society, became the sparkling spirits that invigorate and freshen us all. (*Laughter.*) Look at what he has done this past year! He has made the broken-down village of Grubrow the Pride of Poland! He has succeeded in everything he has put his mind and hand to! Why? Because he is no bureaucrat sitting in an office issuing directives—he is right out in the field, working. (*Applause.*) And now, my fellow workers, I have an announcement. (*Stirrings.*) The Provincial Political

Bureau, to show its appreciation of Comrade Piontek's efforts on behalf of the building of a Socialist Poland, has given him—a jeep! (*Exclamations.*) It is a symbol of the New Poland to come when every farm Co-operative will have a score of jeeps, yes, and pleasure cars!" (*Loud applause. Stamping of feet. General Commotion.*)

The Political Bureau provided a chauffeur until Janusz learned to drive himself. In one day he became as accomplished as his teacher. The next few days he spent driving around from village to village, showing off, praising the government, and lapping up the semi-envious congratulations. He stopped on the evening of the thirty-first at the Nowy Brzez inn for a drink.

The innkeeper, exceptionally respectful, asked for a favor. "My brother-in-law, Rybacki, has been arrested on a charge of smuggling foreign currency and failing to pay duty on goods imported for sale. It's true he's nothing but a lowdown crook, but my wife is crying her eyes out. You are a man of influence—" Janusz's chest expanded—"and if you would drop a word in the right quarter, I'm sure his sentence would be lightened."

"Nonsense!" Janusz tossed his head. "I will do more. I will have Rybacki freed and I will make him my secretary."

He drove home, sure now that, with Rybacki's help, he would avoid the errors his poor education might lead to. He drove into the yard, lovingly covered the radiator with an old blanket, and relieved himself at the side of the house. As he turned around, he saw the Devil. A spasm of fear shook him for just a moment. He demanded wrathfully, "What are you doing here?"

The Devil raised his eyebrows in surprise. "Why, Janusz, it's October thirty-first."

"And yesterday was October thirtieth and tomorrow is the first of November," Janusz retorted. "What have the days of the year to do with me? Get out of here—and don't come around again! A bargain is a bargain and if you're a fool, you pay the consequences."

"So?" The Devil was very calm. "You are right. I shall return at the proper time." He vanished.

Janusz went into the house, sat down by the stove, and thought over the encounter with the Devil. Resentment rose in him. What, did that Devil think he was a booby who could be frightened into cancelling the contract? He had another think coming. Janusz would hold him to the very letter of the agreement as long as he pleased—and that was forever, he smiled to himself.

"Good, Janusz, you're smiling. That's better." The Devil stood before him. "How have things been

this past year? Everything went as you wished, didn't it?"

Janutz jumped from his chair. "Yes, it went well. If that's all you want to know, clear out!"

"Now, now, Janusz," the Devil's voice was teasing. "A bargain's a bargain, and I've come to collect. It is now November first."

Janusz peered at him in disbelief. What the devil was the Devil talking about? "Collect? You don't know yet?" He began to laugh out loud. "You fool, you thick-skulled Devil, there is no St. Mlotekisierp, no St. Hammer-and-

Sickle, and you must live up to your part of the deal until there is one, which is not likely ever to be!"

The Devil shook his head. "Ai, Janusz, Janusz! Trying to cheat an old-timer like me. Today is St. Hammer-and-Sickle's Day, St. Nobody's Day, St. Bread-and-Sausage's Day. It is All Saints' Day. It is the day dedicated to every saint, known or unknown, past or present or future, no matter by what name he goes. This is the day for payment. This is the day I collect."

Watch for our OCTOBER ALL-STAR ISSUE

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