

And so the seminar continued and ended without any conversions, without any unanimous agreements, without the establishment of a world government. That is to not say that it was a failure. The purpose was to encourage free discussion among different peoples with different beliefs. It did that well. Few there were who left without being impressed at the tremendous obstacles which stand in the way of firm and friendly agreement among nations on even the most fundamental questions. But few there were, too, who did not leave with the conviction that man is pretty much the same wherever he is found, and because he has so much in common with his fellow man there is room for plenty of hope.

—DOMINIC MacDONALD '52

TIGHT SPOT

Well, there I was sitting at a table with three card sharks. We were playing poker—five dollars a chip—pretty high stakes, and I was knee deep in debt already. It seemed we were playing only a short time but I knew it was late, so I kept playing hoping to clear my debt with a few last lucky hands.

The cards were dealt for the last time. "This is it," I thought, and as I picked up the first two, I felt a queer sensation of uneasiness race through me. "These boys were playing for keeps. I had better be able to pay up or they would fix me good." Two aces! My third draw was another ace. My whole being gave off an erratic vibration and as my hand reached for the fourth card, it froze and felt clammy. Somehow I scooped up the card. A deuce! Then the final card. It was the fourth ace! My heart pounded like an African drum. Four aces!

"This has got to be it," I prayed. Confidence oozed through me and I bet everything I had on those four bits of cardboard. One of the three gamblers dropped out in the heavy betting. When the call came the big heavy bearded man opposite me laid his cards out. Four kings and a queen! I felt a tingle of joy; four aces beats four kings. Then it was time for me to lay down mine. I looked at the caller, who seemed to have an eerie smile on his face, then

I laid my cards coolly on the table. As he saw mine he laid only four of his down, the queen, ten, nine, and eight of spades. Then slowly, it seemed an eternity to me, he turned the tell-tale card over. The jack of spades! A straight flush! I had lost!

The cigarette I was smoking burned so low that my fingers stung. I was shaking like a small tree in a winter gale. The chips were tallied and I know I was under more than five thousand dollars. As I sat there and told the men I could not pay the money, I could feel their eyes penetrating right through me. They seemed to pierce my very soul. I thought I would go mad watching them standing staring at me like vultures circling for the prey. They went into a conference and when they came out of it I knew they were going to kill me.

I rose from the chair, my bones ached with stiffness, little prickly needles seemed to pierce my body. It was a miniature hell. My lips quivered and the salty taste of sweat which rolled down onto my lips only parched my mouth more. I was panting furiously and at times my heart seemed to stop beating altogether. My chest heaved and sank like a ship in rolling sea. Suddenly the big wheel whirled about and a "45" automatic was staring me right in the eyes. He spoke in sort of a mumble because all I could hear was something about being sorry for having to kill me. I gave a short hysterical laugh. He was sorry! What about me?

Then I realized that he was drawing nearer, the gun glittering beneath the light. I could hardly swallow with the lump in my throat. A thousand hammers seemed to be pounding in my head. My nose was stuffy from the strong stench of the room. The sweat rolled down my sides and I felt sick. Everything turned black for a few seconds. Then all at once my reflexes came to life. I could hear a slow familiar clicking sound. Then I felt it! It was as if a steel sledge had hit me square in the stomach. As I lay there on the floor, I saw my roommate sitting on the bed from which I had just fallen and laughing quite heartily at the agonized expression on my face.

—DAVID MacCORMACK '55

An atheist is one who has no visible means of support.

—Catholic Digest.