DECEMBER 1948

25th Year of Publication

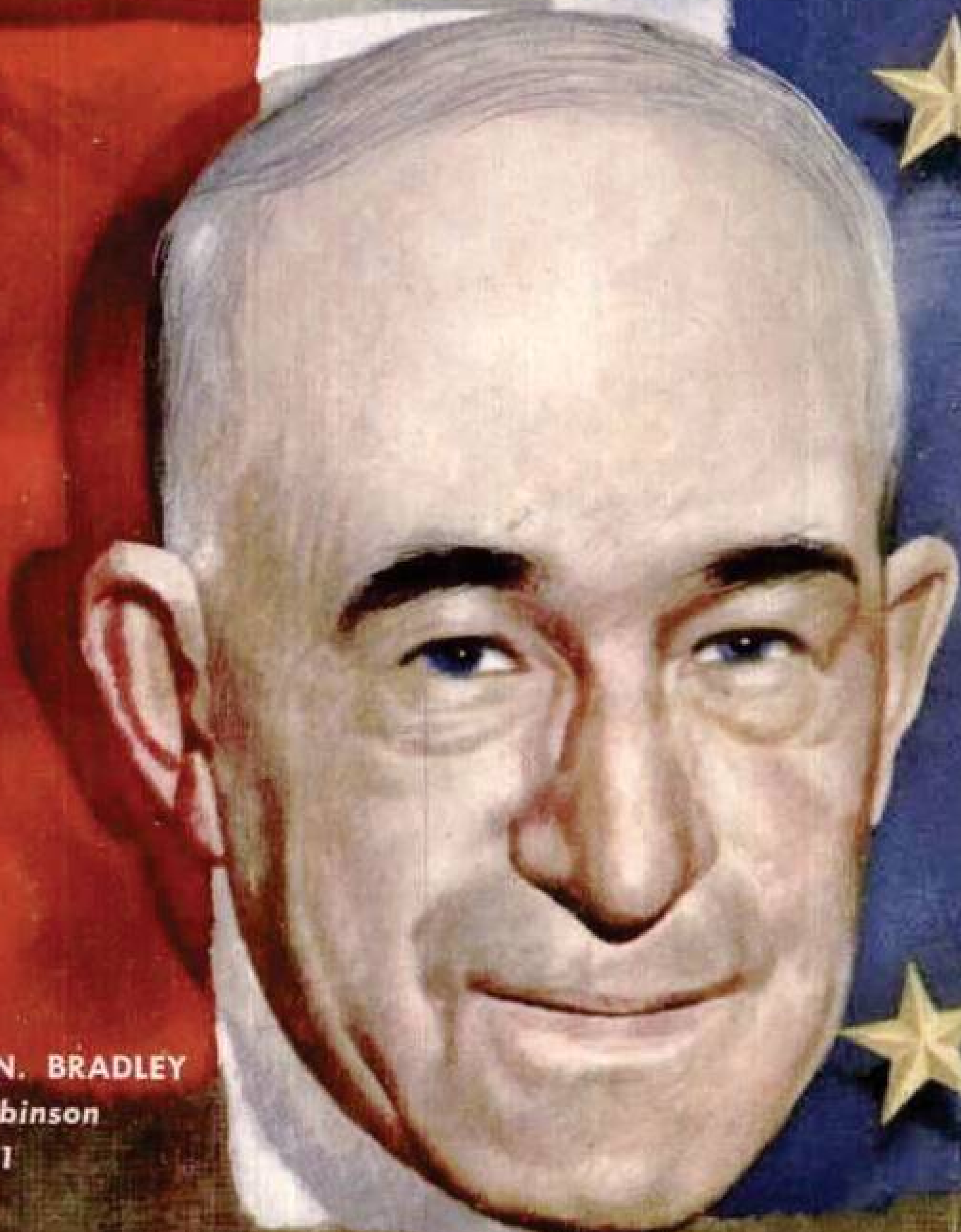
The American Mercury

RFC—A CRITICAL ANALYSIS *Sam Shulsky*

MEBODY HOLD MY COAT *Billy Rose*

RCH AND STATE IN AMERICA *Irving Brant*

EPTOMYCIN AND TUBERCULOSIS *W. E. Craft*



ENERAL OMAR N. BRADLEY
by Donald Robinson
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25th Year of Publication

The American Mercury

with which is combined the magazine, COMMON SENSE

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The telephone keeps right on being a big bargain. Even in these days of higher prices, a few pennies still buy a telephone call. Increases in telephone rates are much less than the increases in the cost of telephone materials and wages . . . and much less than the increases in other things you buy.

BELL TELEPHONE SYSTEM

The American Mercury for January

will contain, among other things

MARY MARGARET McBRIDE, by Allen Churchill. *A penetrating, full-size portrait of one of the most amazing radio personalities of our time, written by the author of the much-talked-about profile of "Ross of the New Yorker."*

GUEST OF THE COUNTY, by Anonymous. *A first-person account of the horrible conditions in most county prisons. Filled with truly shocking disclosures.*

AMERICA'S C-MEN, by Fredric Sondern, Jr. *A lively and fact-freighted article about the mysterious special agents of the Commerce Department's Office of International Trade. The author's intimate close-ups of some of these agents, and his report on the cases in which they have been involved, make fascinating reading.*

HAYES: THE FORGOTTEN PRESIDENT, by Wenzell Brown. *One of the best and most illuminating in the Mercury Reappraisal series. Much of what Mr. Brown has to say will be news to students as well as to general readers.*

PLIGHT OF THE SMALL TOWN MINISTER, by One of Them. *An amazingly frank discussion of the problems of the average preacher, with some remarks, not all complimentary, on the average group of parishioners. The article will doubtless startle a great many people — and especially women — active in church work.*

THE VOICE TEACHING RACKET, by R. G. McDodd. *There are probably more frauds among voice teachers than honest, competent instructors; and the frauds swindle many innocent people. Mr. McDodd discusses their racket in detail.*

In addition there will be the usual departments: The Theatre, The Skeptics' Corner, The Library, The Soap Box, Down to Earth, The Open Forum, and The Check List.

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An Announcement

» For the past several years we have made every effort to maintain the price of 25 cents for THE AMERICAN MERCURY. Now we are forced to change our price to 35 cents a copy, $4 a year.

» We are making the change most reluctantly, and we are doing so only because of the great increase in production costs. Paper alone has more than doubled in the past few years, and the general expense of printing, binding and handling the magazine has gone up almost as much.

» Many other magazines have transferred at least part of the greater cost to their readers; we have been absorbing it as long as we possibly could. We can do it no longer.

» The January issue, which marks the beginning of the twenty-sixth year of continuous publication of THE AMERICAN MERCURY, will also appear in a somewhat new dress, which, we believe, will find favor in the eyes of our readers.

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VOLUME LXVII DECEMBER 1948 NUMBER 300

The American
Mercury

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

AN EDITORIAL

This issue of THE AMERICAN MERCURY marks the completion of 25 years of continuous publication. Even in these times of ominous national and international tension, we believe that our readers will indulge us a few words of reminiscence and rededication of purpose.

THE AMERICAN MERCURY has spanned an era of momentous historic importance. The nation has moved from the complacency of the Coolidge administration to the tremendous socio-political changes of the Roosevelt-Truman administrations. The world as a whole has moved from the somewhat naïve and placid mood of the disarmament conference of 1927 to World War II, and now, again, to what must be called a new war crisis. In the cultural realm, in this country, there has been a corollary shift, from fluff to sobriety.

As an organ of critical, interpretive opinion, THE AMERICAN MERCURY has from its very beginning attempted to be above all cliques, factions and political parties. It has clung to its independence as one of its most cherished possessions, and submitted only to the restrictions imposed by considerations of truth and the immemorial decencies.

The MERCURY has, of course, made its mistakes, but in taking a broad view of its past, the editors find, to their frank satisfaction, that they have been right much more often than wrong, and, more than once, years ahead of the prevailing erroneous popular opinion. We never succumbed to the delusion that Mr.

Coolidge was a great philosopher or that the country he presided over was a paradise on earth. Nor were we taken in by all the promises made by the New Deal statesmen.

We were also probably the first general magazine to declare war on prohibition. Month in and month out we hammered at it, and we've been told that we probably had much to do with its final repeal. Now that prohibition is again raising its head, the MERCURY is warning the country to beware lest it happen again.

As for the spectre of totalitarianism, red, black or brown, we believe we are stating a simple fact when we say that no other periodical of our class has devoted so much space to exposing it, and we began long before the menace was clear to most. THE AMERICAN MERCURY was the first general quality magazine to be banned from Germany by Dr. Goebbels, Hitler's Minister of Propaganda and Enlightenment. What roused his ire was a prophetical article entitled "Germany Sinks into Slavery," printed as early as May 1934. Fascist Italy was another country to find the magazine dangerous reading.

The rulers of Soviet Russia, of course, have continuously barred us from their land. About two years ago no less a person than Andrei Vishinsky, Deputy Foreign Minister of the USSR, while addressing the United Nations Assembly in New York, took special pains to brand THE AMERICAN MERCURY as a warmonger because for years it has told the simple truth about his country.

Officials of Franco's and Perón's governments have also found a great deal to complain of in our pages, and only the other day the dictatorial government of Iraq banned us because we printed an article that questioned some of the dubious activities of the Arab League. This record — and we could document it at considerably greater length — is one that we are very proud of.

Domestically we have also several things to point out in our past that give us a pleasant feeling. We have already mentioned our war on prohibition. We might add our long battle in behalf of air power. We discovered Major de Seversky and alone among national magazines threw our pages open to him for him to expound his new, vital ideas about the need for more and more air power if American armed strength is to have meaning in a world where the forces of totalitarian aggression constantly imperil the forces of democracy. Major de Seversky was first sneered at and later vigorously attacked by people high in the government and in our armed services, but he reaped his reward when President Truman bestowed upon him the Medal of Merit, and

commended him for "presenting to the public an appeal for support of a vigorous air arm which ultimately made an inestimable contribution to the final victory. . . . [His] aggressive presentation of the beliefs he entertained were of great assistance in the successful prosecution of the war."

As for the international crisis that is mounting by the hour at the United Nations, we recall with pleasure the fact that two years before anyone in office propounded the conception of a Western Union of democracies, we printed an article suggesting precisely that idea. It was entitled "For A Western Democratic Bloc," by Sir Norman Angell. This article was truly prophetic.

II

THE AMERICAN MERCURY, it is true, has shifted its center of interest from what it was in the twenties and thirties, namely the arts and general culture. More of its pages are now devoted to political and economic discussions. The reason for the shift is the obvious one, to wit, that the center of national and international interest has undergone a similar shift.

Nevertheless, THE AMERICAN MERCURY has never failed to give its readers sound and solid fare of a general cultural nature — articles on the arts and sciences, articles on outstanding newspapers and magazines and their editors, short stories, poems, general essays, sketches, literary, dramatic and music criticism, and a group of departments unique in periodical journalism: "The Skeptics' Corner," "The Soap Box," "The Open Forum," "Down to Earth," "The Library" and "The Check List."

In the realm of the arts THE AMERICAN MERCURY has exercised the same critical independence as elsewhere. It has not been taken in by any passing fad and always kept its flag firmly planted on good sense and intelligibility. Even as it never succumbed to the hocus-pocus of technocracy or Communism, it saw through the pretensions of proletarian literature, dadaism, the stream-of-consciousness sham, and the pointless adolescent pornography and equally pointless superrealism in what passed for manly fiction.

In looking across the past we take great pride in the writers whom we did publish, despite the strong winds of bizarre doctrine that temporarily hovered about them: Vachel Lindsay, Carl Sandburg, Jesse Stuart, Ruth Suckow, George Milburn, William Faulkner, Herbert Asbury, Joel Sayre, Thomas Wolfe, William Saroyan, Eugene O'Neill, Sherwood Anderson, Sinclair Lewis, Lloyd Lewis, Theodore Dreiser, and hundreds of others of the same general stature.

With regard to the arts we adhere now, as always, to the principle laid down in the editorial in the very first issue: "to welcome sound and honest work, whatever its form or lack of form, and to carry on steady artillery practice against every variety of artistic pedant and mountebank."

Perhaps a special word should be said about our medical and journalistic articles, both of which have made a distinct place for themselves in the periodical world. THE AMERICAN MERCURY was the first magazine in its class to print medical articles. Other magazines have paid us the compliment of imitation, but MERCURY medical articles remain unique. They cover the broadest range possible in human ailments, they are completely authoritative, they present the relevant history of the illness involved, the most up-to-date treatment and, wherever possible, tell the reader what to do in the way of prevention. Some of our medical articles, indeed, have scooped the medical journals.

As for our journalistic articles, THE AMERICAN MERCURY is perhaps the only magazine in its class that has persistently, over a quarter of a century, looked upon the press as a subject of interest, not only to professionals but also to all men and women to whom the democratic process is a vital thing. We have dealt with periodicals ranging all the way from the colorful *Variety* of Broadway to that jewel of little literary magazines, *Reedy's Mirror*, which presented to the world Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology*, and from that strange mid-western newspaper, the Chicago *Tribune*, to the old New York *World*, even in death a model of what a truly great liberal newspaper should be.

III

Yes, we have changed with the times, as, indeed, the whole world has. But, to paraphrase a celebrated French proverb, the more we have changed, the more we have remained the same. THE AMERICAN MERCURY is still wholly different from all other magazines of its class, because THE AMERICAN MERCURY point of view is something special and, we like to believe, of peculiar value to the realm of American journalism, and therefore to the intellectual health and wealth of the more intelligent group among our citizenry.

THE AMERICAN MERCURY point of view is an amalgam of a special form of treatment and a special type of editorial content. The MERCURY is always trenchant and well-mannered, but never belligerent or offensive; it has little regard for sacred cows, but in discussing them realistically it clings closely to the canons of good literary manners; it considers nothing beneath or above its range of interest, hewing to the principle that nothing

that has color, importance, and general appeal to intelligent men and women should be alien to the editorial desk.

"The editors," to quote the very first editorial, "are committed to nothing save this: to keep to common sense as fast as they can, to belabor sham as agreeably as possible, to give a civilized entertainment. The reader they have in their eye, whose prejudices they share and whose woes they hope to soothe, is what William Graham Sumner called the Forgotten Man — that is, the normal, educated, well-disposed, unfrenzied, enlightened citizen of the middle minority."

There is hardly anything that we can add to this dedication of purpose save that we shall try to be true to it during the years ahead, which we hope will bring to the world a long overdue period of peace, good will and human decency.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Beginning with the next issue, the price of THE AMERICAN MERCURY *will be 35 cents a copy, $4.00 a year. We are virtually the last of the major national publications to be forced, by the pressure of mounting production costs, to go to a higher price. For years we absorbed the additional expense ourselves, but it is not possible to do this any longer. The January issue will also see the inauguration of certain physical changes, which we trust will appeal to our readers.*

THE RFC—A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

BY *SAM SHULSKY*

THE Reconstruction Finance Corporation, organized by the United States government in 1932 to rescue business from the depths of the worst depression in history, is still throwing its considerable weight around. The RFC was originally thought of as a temporary agency, designed to help solve a temporary problem. And yet, seventeen years after its founding, its end is not in sight. Despite administration protests that credit expansion has contributed to the inflation, this Federal agency for lending money continues to enjoy a charmed existence.

Last spring, facing extinction on June 30, it went before a hostile, Republican-controlled Congress. Much to the surprise of its friends and enemies alike, this highly effective New Deal weapon came through with flying colors. The Grand Old Party of free enterprise and private capitalism evidently has come to see no harm in government playing private banker. After asking only a few embarrassing questions in committee hearings, our congressmen granted RFC a new six-year lease on life. And so, until 1954 at least, more billions of our tax money will continue to be "invested" in a manner which may or may not have the slightest relationship to the rules of business controlling the rest of the financial world; in a manner which may, in fact, jeopardize the entire American private enterprise system.

The RFC, according to its patron saint, Jesse Jones, has "the power to do anything." This statement is not far from the truth. Strengthened by powers readily handed it during depression and war, the RFC now stands directly astride the country's economy. It wields enormous authority over individual businesses and entire industries — aluminum and steel, railroads, banks and insurance companies, all the way down to the quick lunch at the corner. It has lent hundreds of millions for irrigation and $25 to a sharecropper. In both cases it acted as it alone saw fit.

Its effect is felt even by those who never come to it for loans. Through its power to grant or withhold low-interest money, the RFC can decide which businesses may prosper and which must wither away under the pressure of fiscal disadvantage. It goes

SAM SHULSKY, *whose article on "America's Traffic Headaches" appeared in the* MERCURY *last February, is assistant financial editor of the International News Service.*

even further. Its charter declares that it should lend to those who cannot borrow privately at "reasonable terms," but that it *must deny* help to those who can make their own way. Thus it gives an advantage to the weak and places a handicap on the efficient and successful. Finally, it puts government into business.

Those who stake their economic lives on the private enterprise system blanched when England's socialist government gobbled up the Bank of England and nationalized the mines. But nowhere in the world is there financial power, in or out of government, to compare with the RFC's hold on private business. Seventeen years after it was created to combat an emergency, it still has hundreds of corporations — insurance companies, railroads, manufacturers and banks — indebted to it for hundreds of millions of dollars. It still casts its shadow on every transfer of credit.

II

No appreciation of RFC's might is possible without an understanding of its hold on credit — the life-blood of industry.

When former President Hoover set up the agency in January 1932, its primary purpose was to save business and jobs. It was admittedly a depression measure, created in an attempt to avert chaos. As such it could not abide by the ordinary rules of money management any more than a lifeguard can observe the social amenities while dragging a drowning man from the surf. That it did the job for which it was set up is granted. In World War II it became a convenient channel for government spending. Again there was no time for normal considerations of rates of interest, safety of investment or probability of repayment. But with the coming of victory, the RFC showed no inclination to cease operations. With an eye to its political welfare, it now emerged as the white knight of "small business."

This is a sacrosanct subject on which the practical politician will permit no debate. The RFC began with the premise that nothing is too good for our small businessman and has progressed naturally to the conclusion that if, in addition to being small, he is also a poor risk, then he is exactly the man to be lent the public's money, and at interest rates which would make General Motors' finance committee drool. As the chief benefactor of "small business," it regarded no loan as too small for its consideration.

The RFC does not regularly report its loans. But by chance the small loans of March and April 1947 found their way into the economic files of some libraries. (An RFC official who was asked to comment could only venture: "They must have gotten hold of them somehow.")

Taken as a spot check of what the RFC has been doing with our money, these figures must cause many a prudent man to shake his head. Why, he might ask, was it necessary for the

government to lend $2500 to a shoe repair shop in Birmingham, and $3500 to a dry cleaning store in Wylam, Alabama? Couldn't the Newport, Arkansas, grocer borrow $1679.94 anywhere but from the public till? Wouldn't the bank at the corner lend the Bremen, Georgia, shoe man $3000? Didn't Little Rock credit sources think enough of a diaper service there to lend $6000 to it? Wasn't there enough money in all New York to provide $100,000 for a Brooklyn laundry? Or $45,000 for a paint and varnish maker? Isn't the auto business good enough in the Bronx to merit a private loan of $13,000?

The answer "Apparently not!" has only its slickness to recommend it. In the first place, there was plenty of bank credit available in March and April of 1947 for all business risks which could meet accepted standards. (As a matter of fact, the same government which made these loans from public funds was then warning private bankers to go slow on lending in order to check inflation.)

In the second place, investable funds in the hands of the general public were at an all-time high. (Many a business venture which — it later developed — should never have been launched, was able to sell stock at fancy prices.)

In the third place, private rentals for money were low. Thanks to the government's arbitrary depressing of interest rates, the country's bankers and insurance companies were putting money out at just about the lowest rentals in history. And even at these low rates they were actively seeking to make loans.

Why, then, did the Arkansas grocer and the Alabama dry cleaner get RFC money?

Simply because they were able to prove to a government district manager that the private credit open to them was at "unreasonable rates." This phrase defies definition. It is about as vague an expression as "a hot day" or "a tall woman." In the 1947 congressional hearings which resulted in the RFC's extension until June 1948, Chairman John D. Goodloe several times parried demands for a concrete definition of the phrase. But he finally admitted that the government could, and did, take more risks than the private banker, that terms a would-be borrower might call "unreasonable" might seem to be good business judgment to a private banker. The latter, after all, is directly answerable to the people who deposited money with him for safekeeping.

III

The RFC, however, is answerable to no one, doing business with unlimited government funds, and admittedly not interested in earning a profit. Since it requires neither congressional nor Executive approval of its loans, it can set its own standards of reasonableness. In the words of one RFC official: "Sometimes we do have to play God."

Thus while the RFC's original

raison d'être was the saving of existing businesses, with special emphasis on the salvaging of jobs, actual practice down through the years has established precedents for it to lend wherever it sees fit. For that matter, it may even help create a business where none operated before. A man who decides he is tired of working for someone else, and believes his knowledge of dispensing gasoline would bring a stream of motorists honking to his station, will find nothing in the RFC rules to bar his asking the government to furnish up to 50 per cent of the money he needs to set himself up in business. The only provisos are that he first ask local banks for aid, and that these turn him down or else quote rates which he can get the RFC to admit are "unreasonable." (Under a participation agreement the RFC has with thousands of banks, it is actually to the advantage of the local banker to turn down clients when they first ask for a loan, because later he may be able to make the loan under RFC sponsorship, with the government guaranteeing up to 70 per cent of the total.)

The borrower's next stop is at the nearest of the 31 district offices the RFC maintains across the country. There he talks over his proposal with an RFC loan executive. If the response is not negative, he fills out a four-page application, giving pertinent data on his experience, assets, money requirements, etc. If the loan is for less than $100,000 it can be granted at the local level; otherwise it must be approved in Washington. If it is turned down, the borrower can appeal to national headquarters. In either event, the RFC alone decides: shall this man be set up in business with our money at 4 per cent, or shall he remain a wage earner? There is wide latitude here, and if the decision is influenced by political considerations no one need ever know; certainly no one ever will be able to prove it.

Just the same, a perusal of the loans extended in March 1947, one of the months for which figures accidentally became available, should raise the brows over even politically-untrained eyes. With a total of about 225 loans that month, the Democratic, friendly South (this was long before the States Righters had put a slate in the field) showed no signs of its traditional lethargy. Against a national average of four to five loans per state, Georgia got 13, Arkansas 11, Kentucky 12, Oklahoma 16, Florida 28 and Texas, the native state of Jesse Jones (admittedly an up-and-doing commonwealth) no less than 45! The northern state of Washington, where administration friends also held forth, didn't do so badly with 15, though Governor Warren's California got only 5. No loans went to Vermont or Maine. The figures for April 1947 followed similar lines. And a count of all the 52,463 loans granted by the RFC, from its inception on February 2, 1932 to June 30, 1947, likewise revealed that the Southern states were pretty consistently favored.

IV

The RFC has not, of course, limited itself to small business. With the same disregard for the laws of free competition, it has dispensed millions as easily as it hands out hundreds and thousands.

Several years ago, the Great Northern Railroad sought to sell a $100 million mortgage. Bankers decided the road's credit rating entitled it to loans at 5 per cent. Jesse Jones, who was then RFC chairman, got the bankers together and tried to pound them down to 4.5 per cent. They refused. Jones, it was reported at the time, had a bad toothache and was in none too good a humor. He warned that if the bankers didn't come down to 4.5 by the next morning he would advance RFC money at 4. They didn't and he did. He could have made it 3 or even 2 per cent money, if he'd wanted to. As he explained it: "I can underbid and put any financial house out of business I want to."

At another time he advanced money to a railroad only on condition that it move its headquarters out of New York. (One of the New Dealers' more consistent campaigns was aimed at breaking up and dispersing the New York money center; they succeeded only in moving it to Washington.)

Probably the most controversial of the RFC's many railroad loans was the $86 million given to the Baltimore & Ohio in the early years of the depression. RFC officials contend that this operation was legal to begin with and has remained legal; critics answer that the government continued the loan in order to maintain friends in good jobs; in fact, that it forced the road into fraudulent bankruptcy as late as 1945 in order to retain its influence. Senator Tobey of New Hampshire, the last time the matter came up at the RFC extension hearings, branded the agency's relations with the road as "tainted" with "skulduggery" and "thimbleriggery."

On whichever side the truth may be, these facts remain to be accounted for: (1) After fourteen years, including some of the most profitable railroad years in history, the road still owes the government $80 million of the original $86 million, and the maturity date for the balance has now been advanced to 1965. (2) The B. & O. has, in the meanwhile, spent $60 million paying off other debts, some not due until the year 2000, and held by persons who were *voluntary* investors to start with. (3) Between 1939, when the loan was first extended, and 1945, the line showed $110 million in net profits after taxes. (4) High B. & O. positions *did* go to several RFC friends, including Stewart McDonald, formerly deputy Federal Loan Administrator, who later became chairman of the road; Russell L. Snodgrass, former assistant general counsel of the RFC, who became vice-president in charge of finance; F. L. Baukhages, also an ex-RFC official, who became executive assistant to Snodgrass and later gen-

eral solicitor; and Cassius Marcellus Clay, also of the RFC, who became the road's general solicitor but later quit, calling the loan "a gigantic steal" and a "frame-up," and the 1945 bankruptcy an RFC "conspiracy."

It seems only fair to ask whether the Congress which created the RFC in 1932 ever intended that the people of the United States should become 30-year investors in a railroad, and should keep $80 million tied up in a private corporation all through war years when children were urged to turn in quarters to help buy munitions.

The agency was also created to help insurance companies. In April 1947 it used this power again, and at the same time furnished an example of how its original purpose — to combat a national emergency — had by now been re-interpreted to mean that government funds should be used to save any company facing an emergency, *even though that emergency be a direct result of its own mismanagement.*

Preferred Accident Insurance Co., a New York casualty company, was in financial trouble. At a time when more cautious companies were treading lightly in the auto insurance field (because of heavy losses due to the resumption of unlimited motoring), Preferred had continued "writing its head off." The New York State Insurance Department stepped into the picture and declared the company needed more capital immediately. Several groups were interested, for the problem was mainly one of securing additional capital and time. There seemed to be no question that, given these, the company could pull through. However, to quote Insurance Superintendent Robert E. Dineen: "The securing of this money through private channels was explored. A number of proposals were considered but none was found to be acceptable."

These proposals, of course, were never made public, nor were the objections to them. But, again "playing God," the RFC stepped in and invested $3 million. The interest rate was not made public, not immediately in any case. But it later turned out to have been 3.5 per cent — a rate which would have looked good to U. S. Steel, DuPont or any other top grade enterprise without a cloud on its horizon. Is it any wonder that none of the private proposals seemed "acceptable"?

But the whole story was not yet out:

"Due to the poor bookkeeping they had," Joseph A. Whelan, associate counsel for the Senate subcommittee on Banking and Currency, testified last December, "there was some $2 million of new policies written in October and November [1946] and these were not reported to the home office until January and February [1947], so that by the time the RFC money was paid to the insurance company [in April 1947] they were in just as bad shape as they were before. However, that was caused by the

fact that they did not know how bad a shape they were in in the first place." (Nor, evidently, did the RFC know.)

In exchange for its loan the RFC had taken preferred stock. But, it soon developed, the company had no money to pay dividends on this stock, so a second loan of $2 million was made. All of which led Senator Capehart to ask:

"They not only loaned them the money, but loaned them the money to pay the interest on the money they first loaned them?"

Mr. Whelan: "That is right. That is what it amounted to."

At which point Senator Buck asked: "What is the reason for the RFC going in to help a company like that?"

Mr. Whelan explained the RFC felt that to let it fail "at this time" might have very serious repercussions on other insurance companies.

Senator Buck: "Is there a better time for one to fail?"

There was no answer.

V

A clue as to what may happen if business adopted the theory that it should turn to government for help whenever the going gets tough was provided by last year's Transcontinental Western Air crisis, in which the RFC did *not* make a loan.

In the spring of 1947, virtually all the country's airlines were in trouble because of a bad winter season. TWA, in which Howard Hughes owns about half the stock, had suffered additionally from a pilots' strike. Further complicating matters was an internal feud between Hughes and Jack Frye, the company's president. The RFC sized up the situation and indicated it would advance money if Hughes would abandon voting control of his stock. In this the RFC was joined by another government agency, the Civil Aeronautics Board, which also urged a TWA loan on condition that Hughes relinquish his control and, presumably, allow Frye — a New Deal favorite — to become top man. Hughes, never a man to run from a fight, said no to the proposition. Instead, he turned to the Equitable Life Assurance Society and to his own Hughes Tool Co. He raised the money, presumably at rates which he regarded as "reasonable." (The question of how the RFC had become involved before all private sources of credit were exhausted was never made clear.)

The upshot of the financing was that Frye left TWA and, although he had been a flying man all his life, suddenly turned up as president of General Aniline & Film, the giant chemical company controlled by the Alien Property Custodian.

If the government's financial policeman, the Securities and Exchange Commission, had watched such goings on in a Wall Street setting it would most certainly have pointed out that the RFC, the CAB and the APC were all "emotional affiliates," and their actions therefore suspect.

Most government agencies tend to

outlive their original purposes. But the RFC has one signal advantage. In 1941, as a matter of convenience, Congress gave it the unusual right to charter corporations directly without asking the leave of any state. Jesse Jones admitted that the agency could create — and was creating — corporations which might outlive the RFC itself, and which possessed powers exceeding those granted the RFC.

Originally, the RFC had lending powers for one year — to February 2, 1933 — but these powers were extended time and again until June 30, 1948, when the latest six-year reprieve was voted. The most recent extensions were granted with the understanding that they would provide time for congressional committees to "conduct full hearings with respect to its operations and powers." This line has a hollow, if familiar, ring. When unfriendly congressmen's questions proved embarrassing this last time, RFC protagonists were themselves quick to admit that perhaps some tempering of the agency's powers might be in order. This breast-beating fooled no one who had been reading the papers. As far back as the mid-thirties, Washington dispatches were headed: "Limits Asked on RFC Powers"; "RFC's Future at Stake"; "Reduction to Emergency Basis Seen for RFC"; "Permanent RFC is Frowned upon." More than three years ago, the man who was then administrator, John W. Snyder, setting out to consolidate the rambling corporation, said: "The proposed consolidation may be a tentative step toward liquidation."

Even George Allen, a New Deal stalwart, and another ex-RFC boss, told the President in 1946 that its "hodgepodge of emergency wartime powers and unnecessary peacetime powers" should be cut, that a general "overhauling" was needed. But nothing has been done. Like the namby-pamby policemen in the *Pirates of Penzance*, politicians talk "but they don't go." To borrow further from the same comedy: "Through some singular coincidence — I shouldn't be surprised if it were owing to the agency of an ill-natured fairy" — criticism of the RFC in Congress is almost always unfavorable, but the final vote never is.

Authorized loans, according to the June 1947 report — the last issued as of this writing — now stand at $427 million, which is more than they have been at any time during the past ten years. Unpaid balances are near the $200 million mark (also a ten-year record), and annual repayments are running at about one fourth of this figure. Losses are not reported, but it is known that they have been low, which is not surprising considering that the RFC began to lend at a time when the only direction in which the business indices could move was upward. How great the defaults will be when the boom-inspired businesses spawned in the postwar years run into trouble is anybody's guess.

The RFC, give or take a few ciphers on its balance sheet, is just about as

powerful and as arbitrary today as it ever was. And so it will remain until a Congress proves that it actually believes in private enterprise by demanding straightforward answers to some basic questions:

By what right has the Federal government injected itself into the very heart of the American private enterprise system, taking the money it has taxed away from the successful and the efficient, and lending it to the unsuccessful and inefficient?

Should government underwrite the normal business losses which are the price of a free system?

By what right does government, whose function is to police business, become a creditor or part-owner of one business and the competitor of another?

What can be the ultimate results of unrestricted financial power in the hands of any administration bent on advancing one political philosophy as against another?

PHRASE ORIGINS—41

BUNK: *This is merely a shortened form of "buncombe," which (with a capital B) is the name of a county in North Carolina. Buncombe's representative in the Sixteenth Congress (1819–21) was one Felix Walker, a gentleman celebrated for his long and tedious flights of bombast on the floor of the House of Representatives. On one occasion, after one of his interminable orations, a colleague demanded to know his reasons for subjecting his fellow-legislators to such an ordeal. Walker's classic reply was: "I was not speaking to the House, but to Buncombe!" "Buncombe" (or bunkum) immediately caught on as an expression for congressional oratory intended chiefly for the benefit of constituents; and the abbreviated form, "bunk," seems to have found secure lodgment in the language as a derogatory term for pretentiousness of whatever sort. A quarter of a century ago, it was even raised to the dignity of a book-title —* Bunk, *by William E. Woodward, who is also credited with the ingenious coinage, "to debunk."*

LOUIS JAY HERMAN

SOMEBODY HOLD MY COAT

BY *BILLY ROSE*

EVERY now and then I write a serious column.

When I do, a baby blizzard of letters hits my office, and in angry words my correspondents inform me that serious questions should not be discussed by a Broadway clown with breakaway suspenders and a nose that lights up.

Well, maybe the letter-writers are right, and then again maybe they're wrong. Perhaps I ought to confine my writings to razzle-dazzle and razzmatazz, and let the Thinkers do the thinking — but I'm not so sure. Where does it say you have to take fencing lessons before you can stick pins in balloons? Where does it say you have to have an FBI badge before you can holler, "Stop thief"?

Of course I know how easy it is for a fellow with a syndicated column to become deafened by the thunder of his own thoughts. I've seen it happen to several gents I know, and I'm not saying it can't happen to me. However, I don't think it will. Nine columns out of ten, I expect to be peddling that ever-lovin' popcorn and doing my old soft-shoe dance. But now and occasionally, when I feel like hollering I'm going to stand up on my hind legs and holler.

I'm not saying that my palaverings rate being carved on the pyramids. But I am saying that I have as much equipment for palavering as most of the practicing experts: a typewriter, a byline, and a hell of a nerve.

Will somebody please hold my coat?

For openers, let me tell you about a letter with a Brooklyn postmark which I recently got in the mail. The envelope contained a sheet of ruled yellow paper — the kind that sells for a nickel a pad. Across the sheet an unprintable racial crack was lettered in red crayon. There was, of course, no signature.

When I was younger, I used to get mad at these anonymous attacks on Jews, Catholics, Negroes and Protestants. But no more — I've boned up on the hate hucksters and I know what's bothering them. I know that they're sick, that they've got big miseries in the head, and that when they write their little murder notes

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BILLY ROSE *is the celebrated theatrical producer, restaurateur, songwriter and man-about-town, whose column, "Pitching Horseshoes," appears daily in the New York* Herald Tribune. *This article is based on material in his newly published book,* Wine, Women and Words.

they're looking for relief, much as you do when you reach for an aspirin.

Another reason I can't get mad at an anonymous correspondent is that I've known him all my life. When I was a kid on the East Side, his name was Albie. He was a frustrated little cuss — not very bright in his studies and not enough of an athlete to make any of the teams. And to add to his miseries, his old man drank a lot and sometimes would kick him around for fun. He started getting even with the world by beating up kids smaller than he was. I was one of those kids, and he gave me a rough time until I attached a hunk of iron to a sewing-machine strap and belted him on the head.

A few years later I changed schools, but Albie was still in my class, except this time his name was George. Once he threw a rock at my grandfather. I remember the old gent coming home with blood on his cheek and protesting it was just a scratch. When I started out to avenge the family honor with my trusty strap, he stopped me. He said George was suffering from an old sickness, and that I couldn't cure it by hitting him over the head with a hunk of iron.

When I went to high school, George went right along with me, but this time he had still another name — Otto. One day, in front of other kids, Otto tried to pin a murder rap on me. I told him I had an airtight alibi: I wasn't anywhere in the neighborhood when He was killed, and I had witnesses to prove it.

Otto was calling himself Frank when I met him five years later. He was wrapping bundles in a downtown wholesale house, and he told me the reason he couldn't get a decent job was that the bosses were all Catholics or Jews. When I offered to introduce him to a Presbyterian boss, Frank said they were the worst of all — slave drivers.

During my first twenty years in show business, Frank wrote me once a month. But to keep me guessing, he used different names and different styles of penmanship. Sometimes he made it even more complicated by mailing his letters from cities like Boston, Detroit and Scottsboro, Alabama.

I didn't see Frank again until we met in Germany in 1945. His name now was Vic, and he was a Special Services officer. He told me how much he was impressed with the cleanliness and good manners of the Nazis, and confided that we had fought the war on the wrong side. When I asked him about Dachau, Buchenwald and Auschwitz, he assured me it was a lot of propaganda.

Since he got out of the Army, Vic has stopped signing his letters. This worries me. It means that my old buddy is sicker than ever, and that in addition to thinking like a rat, he's now hiding out like one. Poor little spiritual numskull — when his head fills up with more hate than it can hold, the only way he can stop the pain is to get out his red crayon and nickel pad of paper.

Sometimes he mails his bile and bilge to a priest. Sometimes the address is the home of a colored family. Sometimes it's me. . . .

The other day, as I was about to toss his latest letter into the wastebasket, I happened to notice the stamp on the envelope. It was a stamp I hadn't seen before — one that the Post Office Department had just put out. It showed four men, their arms linked, standing on the deck of a sinking vessel. It commemorated one of the great war stories — the four chaplains aboard the troopship *Dorchester* which was torpedoed in the North Atlantic in 1943.

Two were Protestant ministers, one was a Jewish rabbi, the fourth a Catholic priest. When they found there weren't enough preservers to go around, these men of God handed over their life-belts to soldiers. And when last seen, they were knee-deep in water on the sinking ship, each praying in his own language and according to his own faith:

"Our Father, Who art in Heaven . . ."

"*Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam* . . ."

"*Shma Yisroel Adonoy Elohenu Adonoy Echod* . . ."

As I sat there looking at the scrawl in red crayon and the canceled stamp, I felt like the mathematics teacher who, discouraged by a pupil's inability to add two and two, suddenly remembered that the human race also produced Einstein.

II

It's a good thing for my friend in Brooklyn that he didn't send along his name and address. Had he done so, I would have mailed him a story about Flatbush which might have confused him even more. . . .

Last summer while driving past a church on St. Felix Street, I heard a set of chimes that did nice things to my ears. They were unusually good chimes, and figured to have cost a lot of money. Naturally, I wondered how they happened to be in the belfry of a modest church in a modest neighborhood.

"What's the church with the chimes?" I asked a newsstand proprietor.

"Methodist," he said. "Hanson Place Central Church."

"Have they had those chimes long?"

"No," said the newsie. "They put 'em in last spring."

Next day I did some telephoning, and I liked what I found out.

When Rev. John Emerson Zeiter heard about a new type of electrically-controlled chimes called Carillonic bells, he told his congregation about them and said it would be a nice thing for the neighborhood if people going to work in the morning and coming home at night could hear those beautiful chimes. He told his flock the bells cost a lot of money, and suggested they contribute a little something from time to time. Maybe in a year or so, the church could afford the bells.

Next day a member of his parish phoned. "I've been discussing the bells with my partner," said the parishioner, "and we'd each like to donate a third of the cost. But there's a hitch."

"What is it?" asked the Reverend.

"Well, my partner is Jewish," said the businessman, "and we were wondering if that would make any difference."

Reverend Zeiter said it wouldn't make any difference at all.

"We think," continued the businessman, "that it would be a good idea to find a Catholic to put up the other third. After all, people of all faiths are going to enjoy these bells."

Next day a Catholic in the neighborhood offered to put up his third, and the bells were ordered. At the dedication ceremony a couple of months later, a plaque was put up on the wall of this Methodist church, and inscribed on it were the names of the Catholic, the Protestant and the Jew. . . .

Do I think that the story of the Carillonic bells would have straightened out the twisted mind of my anonymous friend? Of course not. Do I think the people in Flatbush who hear the chimes are going to be kinder and more tolerant? Again, of course not.

Why, then, do I bother mentioning the bells? Well, I guess it's because I'm chump enough to think that even one drop of clean water falling on a dusty street is important. It may clean up an inch of ground and give somebody else an idea. One of these days — and I don't expect to be around to see it — a lot of drops of clean water may fall and a lot of dust may be washed away.

III

Speaking of dusty streets, let me tell you about a very famous one that could use a little clean water — Broadway.

Ninety-nine times out of a hundred when a Negro goes up to the box office of a legitimate theatre and asks for a good ticket, he's told, "Sorry, we're all sold out." If he waits around, however, the colored man may be treated to the exquisite humiliation of seeing the next fellow in line buy the ticket he was told wasn't in the rack. The Negro can see the show, but only if he's willing to settle for something high in the balcony, a row or two below the level where you start receiving spirit messages.

What happens when he presents a ticket he bought through the mails? They let him in, but only because there's a state law which makes the operators liable to prosecution if they don't. Can the Negro buy orchestra seats to our flop shows? Sure — but so can anybody without a scarlet-fever sign on his chest.

Am I accusing our high-minded playwrights and producers of setting up a color bar at their box offices? I am not. However, I am accusing them of doing nothing to lower the bar that has always existed. I'm accusing them of failing to instruct their

box-office employees to look only at the color of a man's money, and not at that of his skin. Such instructions — and a little watching — are all that is necessary to get our New York theatres in line with the Thirteenth Amendment.

If the lads I'm leveling a finger at tell me that this comes as a surprise to them, I'm going to be suspicious. Surely they are aware of the widespread discrimination practiced by Manhattan headwaiters, room clerks, cocktail-lounge hostesses and rental agents. Surely they can't be naïve enough to think ticket-sellers are functioning on a higher level.

I have no quarrel with the box-office boys themselves. They're doing what they're doing because it's been handled that way for years, and because they think it will please the boss. But once the boss tells them different, that'll be the end of it.

When we've straightened out the Jim Crow situation in the New York theatre, we can tackle some of the other cities in the glorious free states of the North — Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit and Chicago. Before we start pointing fingers at the South, let's make sure our own fingernails are clean. . . .

Another thing about intolerance in New York that worries me is the hold it has on kids. I get a little sick whenever I read about grade-school youngsters defacing synagogues and ganging up on classmates of a different color. It means that these children are learning the *five* Rs, with Race and Religion as the added starters.

And I'm not blaming their teachers. I know that these poor devils are doing the best they can with the little they have to work with. But I *am* blaming the politicos and public who keep pigeon-holing the complaints about outmoded textbooks and overcrowded schools.

Not long ago a kid offered to bet me a quarter that the population of New York City was 4 million. I told the tot it was closer to 8 million, and asked him where he got his information. He told me in his geography book.

When I asked the child some questions about American history, he knew all the answers up to Teddy Roosevelt and Admiral Dewey. That was as far as his history book went, he said.

I went around the next day and took a look at his school. The walls hadn't been painted in twenty years. Only a few rooms were equipped with electrical outlets. For 600 kids, there was one faucet for drinking and washing. The paper-towel container was empty and there wasn't any soap. When I asked how come, one of the teachers told me the city budget didn't provide for such luxuries.

As I walked home I remembered a line about kids in the Constitution of the United Nations: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed."

When I got home, I phoned the

Public Education Association, a voluntary group trying to improve the New York school system, and asked for some facts and figures. Well, I almost wished I hadn't. They made me ashamed of the town I'm always bragging about. . . .

There's a building up in Harlem that used to be a prison. Twenty-five years ago the Police Department decided it was unsafe and abandoned it. Today it's called P.S. 125. The school kids eat their lunches in the cells. The wealthiest metropolis in the world hasn't even bothered to remove the iron bars.

P.S. 86, erected in 1889, has a seating capacity of 2059. It's a 6-B school — kids five to twelve. To get to a lavatory, the youngsters have to go down to the basement through an unheated passage. These lavatories have no flushing facilities, and there isn't a sink in the entire building.

P.S. 16 in Brooklyn has its toilets in the yard. Ditto for P.S. 127 in Manhattan. And for 26 other schools.

By modern standards, 287 New York schools, attended by 150,000 children, are firetraps. P.S. 58 has exits on only one side of the building. And if that side caught fire, it would be just too bad.

According to education experts, New York needs 9000 more classrooms and 10,000 more teachers, plus 600 assorted doctors, nurses and dental hygienists. Not to mention modern textbooks, workshops, gyms, musical instruments and some decent furniture. . . .

If this condition exists in a $50 billion town like New York, it's reasonable to assume that it's a lot worse in a lot of other places.

The English are skipping plenty of meals these days, but they're spending twice as much of their national income on education as we are. And the Russians are spending six times as much, proportionately. Next time you stand up and sing *The Star-Spangled Banner*, remember we're spending 6 per cent of our national income for booze and smokes — but only 1.5 per cent to teach our kids to think straight.

IV

While we're on the subject of kids, you might be interested in a letter I wrote recently:

The President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C.
Dear Mr. President:

It isn't often a fellow gets a chance to do something nice on a big scale. Well, you've got that chance.

As you probably know, there's an awful lot of kid-hungry people in this country. One out of every nine marriages is childless, and there just aren't enough kids up for adoption to go around.

I got a dramatic reminder of this not long ago when some papers around the country printed that my wife and I were planning to bring over 25 European orphans.

For days, the postman laid stacks of letters on my desk from couples in every one of the 48 states. They told me how lonesome they were, and how much it would mean to them to have one of these children. They even mailed in snapshots of the spare rooms where the kiddies could sleep and the toys they could play with.

Of course, Mr. President, your State Department wouldn't let me bring the 25 tots in, but if I had brought in 25,000, I could have placed every one of them in a fine home. Evidently a lot of would-be pops and moms want something around the house that makes noise besides the radio.

Well, I know where there are enough kids to go around twice — and you do too. They're the war orphans in the DP camps of Europe — kids of many different religions and nationalities. And I think you'll agree that they're the thing most worth salvaging out of the scrapheap that used to be Europe.

I got a close-up of these small fry a few winters back when I was in Germany, and I particularly remember some I saw at Landsberg. A full-scale Bavarian blizzard was doing its stuff as I trudged past the shacks in which 6500 DPs were waiting for the world to make up its mind what to do with them.

Off in a corner of the camp, I heard laughter coming from one of the shanties. I walked in, found myself in a makeshift laundry and ducked under some wet clothes hanging over a dirt floor. Near the washtub, a bunch of kids were playing with a doll they had made out of knotted rags. And they were laughing — laughing like kids anywhere laugh. As I stood and watched them, I'm afraid I wept a little, because I couldn't think of any set of kids in the world who had less to laugh about.

Under our present quota system, it takes up to eight years for such youngsters to get visas — years when they should have somebody to wipe their noses, dab Mercurochrome on their knees and buy them red wagons for Christmas.

These kids wouldn't compete for anybody's job, and they wouldn't know a foreign ideology if it came up and bit them. There are organizations standing by to pay their passage, post the necessary bonds, and arrange for legal adoptions. And the whole program could be so administered that the children wouldn't be dropped into our congested cities.

There it is, Mr. President. Thousands of people hungry for kids, thousands of kids hungry for people. Surely there must be some way to get these two lumps of loneliness together.

Respectfully,
BILLY ROSE

Of course I never got an answer to this letter. President Truman had

more important things to think about — like building an extra porch on which to sun himself.

V

Around that time I sent an open letter to another busy gentleman, but unlike Mr. Truman, this chap didn't neglect his mail. My letter was promptly answered on the front pages of *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, and the answer was full of words like "provocateur," "white slaver," and "yellow journalist." Here's the letter which inspired these compliments:

Premier Joseph Stalin
The Kremlin
Moscow, USSR
Dear Mr. Stalin:

Every now and then, you throw knuckles at the American press and say it ought to be muzzled. On your drop-dead list are certain newspaper and magazine publishers, including, of course, Henry Luce, bossman of *Time* and *Life* magazines.

If you can spare the time, I'd like to tell you a story about this Luce gent. It involves Henry, me, *Time*, a kidney-shaped desk, and what the fancy-adjective boys call "the freedom of the press."

Some time back I wrote a column about an old lady whose corpse got mixed up with the corpse of a two-star general. Shortly after it appeared, one of *Time's* research girls phoned me. "Is it true," she asked in a station-wagon voice, "that the desk in your office is kidney-shaped?"

"What's it to you," I asked, "whether my desk is shaped like a small intestine or a big toe?"

"Oh, we just wanted to know," said Miss Station Wagon. "We're doing a piece about that switched-corpse story you wrote. It's been around for quite a while, you know."

"I get it," I said. "Your magazine is going to hang me out to dry again. This will make the third time in as many months that you've used me for the back end of a shooting gallery. Well, I know a juicy item about one of your editors, and I wonder how he would like it if I spit in his eye all the way from the Mexico City *Herald* to the Paris *Herald Tribune*?"

"I don't think he'd like it at all," said the *Time* tot. "Let me call you back after I've talked to the head of my department."

When an hour went by without my phone ringing, I called a Park Avenue hotel and got Henry Luce. "Mr. Luce," I said, "it's about time your gang stopped using me for target practice. I understand that *Time* is going to run a piece about my pitching chestnuts instead of horseshoes, and I'd appreciate it if you'd tell them to lay off."

Mr. Luce said he'd look into the matter, and ten minutes later my phone rang. It was T. S. Matthews, managing editor of *Time*.

"Mr. Luce called me," he said,

"and told me about your request. The story you're sore about isn't much of a story, but if I kill it, I might as well put on my hat and walk out of this office. I'm either editor of this magazine or I'm a trained seal."

And that's all there is to this yarn, Mr. Stalin. *Time* printed the story the following week, and when the boys at Lindy's kidded me about it, I took refuge in Ben Hecht's old line — "Never mind what they say about you in a newspaper. Tomorrow someone will wrap a herring in it."

Why do I bore you with this trivial tale, Mr. Stalin? Well, I guess it's because it may have something to do with the freedom of the press around here as compared with what it is in your country. It's a safe bet that if the Russian equivalent of Henry Luce were to tell one of the hired help at *Pravda* to kill a story, there wouldn't be any back-talk about putting on hats and walking out of offices.

Am I trying to say that stories never get slanted or killed in the American press? Certainly not. There will be different slants as long as there are different publishers, and there will be pressure to slant and kill stories as long as there are readers and advertisers.

But around here it's not just one big pressure — it's a lot of little pressures working in different directions. The results may not be perfect, but, kidding aside, don't you think our newspapers are a lot better than they are in countries where the blue pencils are all in one pocket?

Sincerely,
BILLY ROSE

The Russian reaction to my letter to Joe Stalin wasn't any more violent than my own reaction the other day when I read an article by a man who said he was in favor of slavery, and was willing to start the ball rolling by becoming a slave himself.

No, this piece wasn't written a hundred years ago. It appeared in a recent issue of *Commentary* magazine, and its author is Pinchas Goldfeder, who has been a DP in a German camp for the past three years. His proposition is simple. He will sell his sinews and soul to any American who will pay his passage, and provide him with a roof and three squares a day. He says he has nothing to lose by such an arrangement — not even hope. That disappeared long ago.

In addition to several hundred thousand DPs, Mr. Goldfeder says there are 50 million Frenchmen, Dutchmen, Englishmen, Italians and Central Europeans who would be interested in a similar arrangement. These people, he claims, would rather live as 1500-calorie-a-day slaves than die as 600-calorie-a-day freemen.

Mr. Goldfeder estimates that at least 15 million could be comfortably enslaved in the United States, with benefit to all concerned. To begin with, 5 million could be used

to do the dirty jobs the average red-blooded American doesn't relish — street-cleaning, janitoring, ditch-digging, coal-mining and the like. Another 5 million could be used as domestics, so that in addition to two cars in every garage, we could have two slaves in every garret.

American industrialists, says the author, could put the remaining 5 million to work as laborers and agriculturists in the various undeveloped areas of the world. What's more, they could be carried as assets on company books and, of course, depreciated yearly.

But most important, the cost would be low — probably no more than $200 per slave, f.o.b. New York or San Francisco. And by using low-grade foods, the cost of maintenance per head would be little more than the upkeep of a six-cylinder car.

Mr. Goldfeder says he's fed up with slogans about freedom, equality, brotherhood and humanity. Slaves, he points out, could be brought in without changing our immigration quotas, and without our having to use the dirty word, "immigrant." He maintains that all this would be thoroughly in the American tradition, since we once carried on a brisk traffic in white indentured servants and Negro slaves.

Mr. Goldfeder calls his scheme "A Practical Plan to Settle the DP Problem, with Malice to None, with Profit to All. . . ."

All right, gentle reader, you can relax now and unclench your fists. I've taken you in, just as *Commentary* magazine took me in. You see, when I got to the end of this article, I found that the author was not a foreigner at all, but an eminently respectable Pennsylvania Quaker named Herrymon Maurer, who says he chose to write in this vein about the DP problem because "sometimes you are faced with an injustice so monumental as to make ordinary arguments seem useless."

His piece reminds me of one written by Jonathan Swift back in 1729, which he called "A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People from Being a Burden to Their Parents or the Country, by Fattening and Eating Them."

Shortly after Swift's satire appeared, an eminent English writer reviewed it and said it made him ashamed of his country. I don't know about you, but Mr. Maurer's piece affects me the same way.

GENERAL OMAR N. BRADLEY

BY *DONALD ROBINSON*

As Chief of Staff of the United States Army, General Omar Nelson Bradley is quite possibly the most important soldier in the Western world. Right now he is in charge of the organization of this country's land forces. If war does come, he will almost certainly be the Supreme Commander of the combined Western Armies. He will get the post partly, of course, because American troops, rather than European, will form the backbone of these Armies, and because Bradley is the top American military man. But his appointment will not be merely a triumph of expediency. Bradley is ideally equipped for the job, and military men here and in Europe know it.

Bradley has the reputation of being a realist. The reputation is well merited. He is always cool, logical, completely imperturbable; it is virtually impossible to jolt him out of his calm self-assurance. During the Battle of the Bulge, for example, Bradley was commanding the Twelfth Army Group. At the height of the battle some of the correspondents attached to his headquarters became jittery over the prospect that the *Wehrmacht* would overrun Luxembourg City, where they were stationed. Although the Germans were only a few miles away, Bradley assured them that this would be impossible; he had, he explained, assigned three crack divisions to hold the line. "And suppose the Krauts break through those divisions?" the correspondents inquired nervously. "They can't," Bradley said placidly. "I know how those outfits fight." And the Germans couldn't.

A man who refuses to be panicked is a valuable asset in Washington nowadays. Last spring a high Army commander in Germany cabled the Pentagon a frenzied warning that the USSR would begin a shooting war in a matter of days. All Washington, the White House not excluded, was gripped by hysteria. Bradley quietly arranged a meeting of his intelligence officers, and with them reviewed the available information on Soviet troop movements, Red Army supply dumps, and the disposition of the Soviet Air Force. On the basis of these data, he

DONALD ROBINSON, *who was a lieutenant colonel attached to SHAEF during the war, has contributed many articles on military subjects to* THE AMERICAN MERCURY. *His profiles of Forrestal, Eisenhower and Marshall have been published in recent issues.*

quickly concluded that the American commander in Germany was wrong; that the Russians had no intention of starting hostilities then. He told the President that there was no immediate cause for alarm — and the "war crisis" passed.

This is not to suggest that Bradley is unconcerned about the threat of war. He regards war as a distinct possibility, and he has very definite ideas about the need to keep strong. He has fought against those government officials who urge withdrawing American forces from Berlin as a means of easing the international tension. He believes that appeasement of the Kremlin will hasten, rather than defer, a war. For similar reasons he has gone on record emphatically in favor of Universal Military Training and the draft. On one occasion when UMT was up before Congress, Bradley's aides prepared a statement for him that gave a sanguine picture of the educational and other benefits accruing to the trainees. It was designed to appease public opinion, but Bradley would have no part of it. He scratched out one section of the statement and inserted this blunt sentiment:

> It is time the American people were told there is no cheap and easy way to national security. It cannot be made painless — why try to? Security means sacrifice, and the people are going to have to determine if that sacrifice is worth their while.

Bradley does not believe that the atomic bomb has diminished the need for a large trained army. In attacking what he calls "wishful thinking" about the bomb, he has insisted that it is just another weapon in our arsenal, an unusually potent one to be sure, but not necessarily decisive. "It is worth noting," he has told this writer, "that the equivalent in explosive power of several hundred atomic bombs was dropped on Germany in World War II, and still the German factories continued to produce huge quantities of munitions and German troops continued to fight."

II

Bradley is tall and lanky, with a pleasant, weatherbeaten face topped by thinning silver hair. Although he can be a strict disciplinarian, he gives off an impression of easy affability. Few other Army commanders in World War II were less rank-conscious. In England he practiced skeet-shooting with the GIs under him, and whenever time permitted he used to kick a football around with his jeep driver, Sergeant Alex Stout. "Don't let the brass get you down," he once advised a young captain he had invited to a private party at his quarters, "cut in on any of them." The young man, whose name was Gordon Gray — he later became Assistant Secretary of the Army — took Bradley at his word and cut in on the general himself. Bradley grinned, turned over the Red Cross girl with whom he had been dancing, and instructed his subordinate to have a good time. On the day he landed

in Normandy, Bradley spotted a drenched soldier, standing on the beach shivering. He took off his own braided field jacket and gave it to the boy. "Here, son," he remarked, "I can get another one of these. You can't."

But the universal esteem in which Bradley is held is due less to his geniality than to his intellect. His mind, as the saying has it, is like a steel trap. It is impossible to buffalo him with rhetorical effusions or with charm. Bradley has a clarity of thought which enables him to take the most complex problems and reduce them to their simplest and most comprehensible terms. His aide, Lieutenant Colonel C. B. Hansen, says that "if you think Bradley is wrong, you have to prove it to him logically. There isn't any other way."

Bradley refuses to be impressed by protestations that "the Army has always done it this way," and he has ordered several major innovations since he took over as Chief of Staff. He recommended to the General Staff that "the Army establish an intelligence corps in which personnel can specialize in intelligence just as artillery men concentrate on guns and armored corps men on tanks." This policy, which might appear to be a simple matter of common sense, is actually a revolutionary change. Thus far the Army has never had real specialists in intelligence. Men have been assigned to G-2 with no particular training in the field, and as soon as they have acquired experience they have been transferred — the idea being that an officer in the American Army must be a jack-of-all-trades, rather than a specialist. The result is that our military intelligence has always been a pretty dismal affair. At present, Bradley is considering a plan which would extend the new policy even further, and allow many other officers to concentrate exclusively on their specialties.

Bradley has been in office less than a year, but he has already done much to revitalize the American military organization. He has slashed vast swathes out of the Army's ubiquitous red tape. He has rebuilt the top-heavy Army Ground Forces (now the Army Field Forces) into a streamlined, smoothly-functioning unit. He has instituted a new system to improve the Army's personnel methods, to make sure that the right officer and the right enlisted man are placed in the right jobs. Some of Bradley's policies toward enlisted men have not gone off well with the powerful brass hats. However, he has continued to insist that "the soldier of today is a thinking man and his nature balks at lack of understanding, unnecessary or harsh discipline, and at inconsiderate assumption of privileges by his seniors."

His record as Chief of Staff is open to criticism on only one important score. He has failed, thus far at least, to improve conditions in the Army's Organized Reserve Corps. The 1.1 million reserve officers and enlisted men in the Corps have got little or no

training, money or attention from the Army, and their morale is low. In this instance Bradley appears to have let himself be guided by some of his West Point-trained staff officers, who are congenitally hostile to civilian-soldiers. For this he has been severely criticized by the Reserve Officers Association.

But this seems to have been his only serious mistake. Otherwise, his record has lived up to the Pentagon predictions that he would be the best Chief of Staff in the history of the Army. He has been an especially valuable man to have in the job at a time when internecine warfare among the Armed Forces is a perpetual problem. Bradley has not sought any special prestige for the Army, as opposed to the Navy and Air Force. His comment on the subject was: "If there is a job to do, and if someone else can do it better than the Army, then it's up to them to do it and take the job over from us. And if we can help them in any way, that's what we're here for."

III

General Eisenhower worked out the main strategic concepts that won the war in the West. But, in large measure, it was Bradley's tactical genius that made Eisenhower's planning pay dividends.

Bradley's talents first became manifest in North Africa, after the débâcle at Kasserine Pass. A defeated American army was sadly in need of leadership. Eisenhower selected Bradley for the job, awarding him command of the pivotal Second Corps. Bradley came to the conclusion that the disaster had been caused by the frontal attacks employed by his predecessor. In place of these he adopted unorthodox infiltration and encirclement movements, coupled with a *blitzkrieg* use of armor — a tactic that was new to the American Army. Rommel's troops were unable to stand up against this, and with the German retreat an ultimate victory in North Africa became certain.

But Bradley's greatest triumph was the battle that turned the tide in Normandy — the break-through at St. Lo. This was the battle that cost the Germans 250,000 men and the control of France. At the time he attacked, the British and American invading forces had been hemmed in, for a month and a half, near the Normandy coast. Before the battle Bradley had spent weeks under fire studying the terrain; he had even flown over it in a Piper Cub. On July 25, 1944, with his plans finally drawn up, he launched the attack. He had concentrated enough infantry in one spot to punch a hole through the German lines; and when the gap was opened he sent his tanks crashing through to the German rear. Bradley, who has always been air-minded, arranged for the attack to commence with what was the greatest aerial assault ever undertaken in support of ground troops. Some 1800 Allied planes took part in it.

He has also shown a talent for improvisation, for altering plans quickly to take advantage of enemy mistakes

and other unexpected opportunities. When a few of his men, through sheer good luck, succeeded in capturing intact the Rhine bridge at Remagen, Bradley changed his whole schedule of operations and somehow maneuvered an entire corps across the river inside of 24 hours. The result was an enormous saving in time and Allied lives.

When the Germans counter-attacked in the Ardennes Forest, on December 16, 1944, Bradley was caught napping. Despite all the statements to the contrary, his intelligence officers were taken entirely off guard by the offensive. Bradley himself has admitted that "we all guessed wrong." From the beginning of the attack, however, he regarded it as a German blunder. Long before the middle of December he had expressed to Eisenhower a wish that the *Wehrmacht* would expend its reserves in a pitched battle. As it turned out, he was correct on this point. The Germans were so weakened by the Ardennes campaign that they were unable to put up any serious resistance when the Americans moved across the Rohr River — an operation that might otherwise have entailed enormous casualties.

Bradley was born on February 12, 1893, in Clark, Missouri, the son of a schoolteacher. He was named Omar for an editor friend of the family and Nelson for a local doctor. When his father died in 1908, young Bradley and his mother moved to Moberly, Missouri, where he was obliged to work after school hours and during vacations. In 1911 he got a congressional appointment to West Point. He finished forty-fourth in the famous class of 1915, a class which produced more World War II generals than any other. Eisenhower graduated one hundredth in this class.

From the time of his graduation until 1941, Bradley was an inconspicuous career officer. But in the latter year he was suddenly boosted from lieutenant colonel to brigadier general, and given command of the Infantry Training School at Fort Benning. Since then his rise has been rapid. In 1942 he was made a division commander in the States. A year later, he had a corps in Africa and Sicily. Then he was given command of the entire First Army for the invasion of Normandy. On V-E Day he was leading three armies, comprising 47 divisions.

Shortly after the war ended, President Truman made him head of the $8 billion Veterans Administration. The appointment was universally popular, except that Bradley himself had some misgivings. He finally accepted the position, remarking, "There is no job I would rather not have; none in which I would want to do better." At the time the VA was almost on the verge of collapse. The "old guard" bureaucrats who were running it had got the organization horribly enmeshed in red tape; there was no *esprit de corps* or feeling for the veterans. Frequently it would take months to get an answer to a letter.

Bradley began his administration of

the VA with an announcement to the staff:

> We've got to look on the veterans as individuals with individual problems, not as numbers in a file. Our job is to give the veterans service and we must not forget that the service we give them they have earned by sweat and blood. It is a service they paid for. We must realize that it is not a charity service.

Despite a good deal of active resistance from the bureaucrats, Bradley succeeded in getting these ideas translated into action. In the two and a half years he ran the VA the organization was completely transformed. Its operations were decentralized, its paper work cut down, its distribution of GI benefits accelerated, and its medical practices revolutionized. But Bradley's greatest achievement, perhaps, was his success in warding off the politicians. One congressman, for example, insisted that the VA build a hospital in his district. Bradley told the man, emphatically, that this would be impossible; that a hospital in that location would be quite useless to veterans. The congressman pleaded, with rare candor, that he needed the hospital for his re-election. "Well," Bradley told him, "you can go home and tell your constituents that I spiked your plans; tell them it's all my fault. After all, I'm not running for election."

IV

When Eisenhower announced his intention of accepting the presidency of Columbia University, there was no question in anyone's mind that Bradley would succeed him as Chief of Staff. He was sworn into the new job on February 6, 1948.

Bradley is one of the few officers who has consistently been able to save money on his Army pay. He and his wife — the daughter of his old Sunday School teacher — live very simply at Fort Myers. On Sunday evenings the general usually takes upon himself the assignment of preparing supper for both of them. Their only child is a girl who married an Air Force captain not long ago.

The general does not smoke, but he is fond of an occasional shot of bourbon. Aside from hunting and fishing, he gets most of his exercise from golf, in which he has become something of an expert. (He shoots in the middle seventies.) He used to spend a good deal of his spare time in poker games, but the press of duties in his present job has left him little time for this sort of relaxation. Recently he has been spending most of his evenings, as well as all his days, at his desk in the Pentagon. By nature Bradley is a sociable, extroverted man. He tends to call people by their first names, and an enormous number of Army people call him "Brad." Solitary diversions, like reading, have never had much appeal for him; aside from an occasional mystery story he does no reading except what his work requires.

Bradley is not a very good illustration of what is popularly called "the military mind." Despite his 33 years in the Army, his views on current politi-

cal issues are largely at variance with those of the reactionary nationalists often found among the brass hats. Most liberals would accept his views on Communism, which he regards as "the abnegation of freedom, the repudiation of rights, the gallows on which freedom hangs." And they would probably agree with his formula for combating Stalin:

> We cannot fight Communism only with anti-Communism. To be anti-Communist, we must be consistently and courageously pro-democratic in our preachments and our practices throughout the world. We must stand ready to champion human rights whenever they come in conflict with property, privilege or prejudice — as readily as we would defend those rights from aggression and oppression.

The general has also been outspoken in condemning undemocratic tendencies in the United States. He has criticized those Americans who "emulate totalitarian governments in the curtailment of liberties to our minority groups," and observed that there is frequently "a tragic disparity between what we practice and what we preach."

He has been eloquent on the subject of appeasement:

> If we cringe from the necessity of meeting issues boldly with principle, resolution and strength, then we shall simply hurdle along from crisis to crisis, improvising with expedients, seeking inoffensive solutions, drugging the nation with an illusion of security which under those conditions cannot exist. If we are to scamper from crisis to crisis, fixing principles and policies to the change of each day, we shall place ourselves supinely and helplessly at the mercy of any aggressor who might play on our public opinion and decimate our forces at will.

What especially irritates him is the congressional propensity for what he calls "stooping to the checkbook plan for defense," *i.e.*, voting money but not men for national defense. We sometimes seem to have forgotten, he once observed, "that democracy — like all good things — requires men to serve it if they are to benefit by it." He does not accept the thesis that a push-button era of warfare has arrived, that mass armies are old-fashioned. Nor is he sympathetic to the extreme proponents of airpower. "Naturally," he says, "I recognize the great value of airpower and the fact that it is gaining each year in range and size. But I do not believe that it alone will prove the decisive factor in any war within the foreseeable future. It does not have the long-range continuing power to force a decision."

Bradley believes that the three services will have to coordinate their activities more than they ever have in the past. If war should come, his strategy would assign these rôles to the services: the Air Force would have to disrupt enemy communications and production; the Navy would have to keep open our lines of communication; and the Army would have the assignment of fighting through to the sources of the enemy's power.

In the early stages of a war, Bradley believes, the Army would have two jobs. First, it would have to capture and hold the bases — in Greenland,

Iceland, Spitzbergen and the Azores — from which an enemy might bomb the United States. "All the Air Forces and anti-aircraft artilleries in the world," he once said, "could not prevent an enemy from seizing these bases. Only troops in occupation could give us the protection we would need." The Army's second job would be to seize and hold bases from which our own Air Force could operate. He concurs here with General Carl Spaatz, former chief of the AAF, who says that anyone who believes "we can fight a future war with bombers based on the North American continent is suffering a delusion." Later in the war, he thinks, the Army would be needed to evict enemy forces from Western Europe and probably much of China. He anticipates a great deal of warfare between mass land armies.

How big an Army will all of this require? Bradley cannot yet answer this question explicitly. But he does say that we must have a minimum of eighteen divisions today if the Army is to carry out its occupational duties, garrison this country and provide for at least "a one-shot seizure of an air base from which we can retaliate against an enemy attack." Seven more divisions would be needed within six months of the outbreak of war. After that, he says, the Army's requirements would depend on circumstances that cannot be foreseen now.

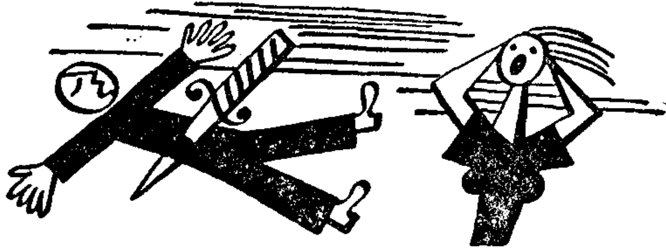
In arguing for preparedness, Bradley has been sensitive to attacks on the Army for warmongering. "I hope you will not accuse me of jingoism in standing up here and trying to scare you about war," he told a group of radio broadcasters. "You wouldn't accuse a fire chief of wanting fire. You would want him to tell you what you need in the way of equipment in preventing fires. Therefore, you should look to us to tell you what you need for adequate national defense."

He does not advocate a preventive war, and he does not think an attack on us is imminent. But, he says,

> . . . as long as groups of nations have capabilities such as they have with the attitudes they have, it would be difficult to say that there is no danger of war. For there is.

THE THEATRE

by GEORGE JEAN NATHAN



CLINICAL NOTES, SOMEWHAT SAUCY

Playwrights as Characters. How many of our conspicuous living American playwrights would be interesting as characters in plays? Not more, I believe, than three or four at most. Eugene O'Neill, for example, would not serve as even a character in one of his own dramas, despite the fact that it is known the latter are often at least in part autobiographical. In a very minor rôle possibly, but otherwise he personally is so painstakingly deliberate and slow in his meditations and speech that, were he to figure in any more important one, the show would run longer than even his *Strange Interlude*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, or *The Iceman Cometh.* Maxwell Anderson's periodic wholesale indignations would disqualify him as a character in anything but old-time blood and thunder melodrama, and his tendency to expatiate on them at great length would ruin even that species of entertainment.

Robert Sherwood is so taciturn that he would serve only in pantomime, and since his facial expression seldom alters he would not, unfortunately, be too accommodating in such dumb show. His excessive height, furthermore, would, even were his histrionic gifts more ample, condemn him either to conventional lanky farm hand or Abraham Lincoln rôles, surely a not too thrilling prospect. Lillian Hellman's eccentric political convictions and persistent devotion to all kinds of committees to reform society and the cosmos would seem to fit her solely for propaganda plays of a violent melodramatic nature, a histrionic prospect even less thrilling. Tennessee Williams' Southern drawl would prove a little difficult for his auditors and would relegate him to rôles in plays laid in Dixie, nine tenths of which are the sort that Salvini himself, even if he had put on blackface, could not have made interesting. And Elmer Rice, if someone didn't write a play about Morris Ernst, would experience an awful time finding a rôle that might reflect him.

Sidney Kingsley once played the

part of a tough kid in *Subway Express* and greatly, 'tis said, esteemed his art in creating the character, which had just two lines of dialogue. But since he naturally has aged in the intervening years, he obviously no longer would be right for any such rôle and it isn't easy to think of him in connection with the acting stage save possibly as a playwright seated at a table in a night-club scene smoking an enormous cigar and expounding to his fair companion the details of his homeric research on the play he says he is currently working on, which would be scarcely conducive to an overstimulation of the audience's libido. Moss Hart might conceivably suffice as a character in a revue sketch lambasting the critics and might at least impress the audience with the producer's aptitude in type casting. But of the rank and file I can think of only Saroyan, John van Druten and Russel Crouse who in their own persons would prove engaging as dramatic characters.

Saroyan, indeed, has already figured in several plays — *Jason*, *Five Alarm Waltz*, etc. — and has emerged as an authentic and lively character. Van Druten would fit nicely into polite, witty British comedy. And Crouse's puckish air and humor would readily transfer themselves and Crouse with them to an American comedy. There may be others, but at the moment I can't name them, save perhaps Clare Boothe, who might be sensational if she put herself into a play about herself by herself.

Criticism. In *Ego 9*, the book completed just before his recent untimely death, that often acute and always very readable critic, James Agate, makes this observation in connection with a visit to Sean O'Casey's *Red Roses for Me:* "Now I just don't believe in an Irish navvy who says, 'Time's a perjured jade, an' ever he moans a man must die.' . . . The trouble is that the characters talk O'Casey's poetry and not theirs." Whether the criticism is sound or not, may we not allege the same thing about any number of Shakespeare's characters, yet what matter?

Confidential Memo. Several months ago in this very magazine, my old and valued friend, Walter Prichard Eaton, published an appeal for the decentralization of our theatre, now confined largely to Broadway, and for the institution of independent municipal and state theatres in other parts of the country. Only by such means, he aptly reasoned, is the future of our drama, presently threatened, to be safeguarded. In support of his contention, he specified the necessity for wide opportunity of production if young playwrights are to be encouraged, which so often is closed to them under the current restricted theatre dispensation. And in support and proof of the opportunities which they once enjoyed when the theatre was far-flung he offered several arguments. I record them, with comment.

(*1*) "If Eugene O'Neill had not had the Provincetown Players to

put on his early dramas of the sea, he might have waited indefinitely for recognition."

The fact is that the very first play O'Neill ever submitted to a Broadway producer, *Beyond the Horizon*, was snapped up instantly and produced not long afterwards. The producer in question, incidentally, had not seen any of the short sea plays done by the Provincetowners.

(*2*) "Recognition of Shaw came in America because a young actor, Arnold Daly, could afford to experiment with *Candida* in a tiny theatre."

The fact is that recognition of Shaw came in America because an older, established Broadway actor, Richard Mansfield, sometime before had produced *The Devil's Disciple* in a large theatre.

(*3*) "There must be an equivalent of the old-time road companies and the old-time stock companies . . . where playwrights can see their work produced."

The fact is that the old-time road companies and the old-time stock companies stuck for the most part to plays and playwrights already well-known, established, and popularly successful. Seldom did they afford an unknown playwright an opportunity and, on the rare occasions when they did, the plays were the kind that even the shabbiest producer on Broadway today would hesitate to produce. I lived through years of those early stock companies and if ever they put on a play by a new playwright that was worth looking at, I must have been down with the mumps when they did it. The plays I did see were mostly such tried and true old stuff as *All the Comforts of Home*, *Jim the Penman*, *Richelieu*, *East Lynne*, *Sweet Lavender*, *Captain Swift*, and the like, with maybe an occasional production of *The Rivals*, or one of Pinero's so-called problem plays, or perhaps Robertson's *Caste*. The old-time road companies, when they did not merchant popular Broadway plays, went in mainly for such standbys as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Sis Hopkins*, *Way Down East*, etc. An O'Neill, Kelly, Hellman, Williams, Anderson, or any other new playwright like any one of them wouldn't have stood a chance for a hearing in that period.

(*4*) "When [Prof. G. P.] Baker began [his playwriting course at Harvard] in 1907, there were two hundred plays a year produced in New York."

The fact is that in 1907 the productions in the English-speaking New York theatre, aside from programs of Arnold Daly one-acters and Ben Greet classical repertory, numbered not two hundred but a meagre 97, all of 37 of which were musical shows.

(*5*) "There were [in the same year] hundreds of road companies."

The fact is that there were considerably less than "hundreds," and that many of those there were duplicated the same Broadway play.

(*6*) "A theatre which does not present a constant body of new plays, reflecting the age, is only half alive."

The fact is that in 1907, that golden year in Brother Eaton's view, only twenty of the 97 productions could by any stretch of the imagination have been said to fit into his stipulated catalogue, and most of the twenty were without any critical merit. Forty years later, in the allegedly sterile year 1947, 29 plays out of a total production, dramatic and musical, of 68, exclusive, as in the first instance, of revivals of the classics, fitted into his catalogue, though, also as in the first instance, merit in the majority of them was lacking.

I am by no means reflecting on the worth of my esteemed colleague's main contention, but only on some of the proofs with which, among others equally debatable, he has sought to substantiate it.

Histrionic Advice. It has long been one of the more peculiar eccentricities of the theatre to discourage from an acting career those many young women in all parts of the country who have ambitions in that direction. No year passes without its numerous published messages to the young 'uns warning them of the pitfalls and hardships ahead and dissuading them from further pursuit of their dream. That some of the warnings are well taken is to be allowed, but that some others are open to question is not lost upon anyone who knows the theatre and is not unduly affected by prejudice.

The most recent caveat issues from Mr. Thomas Weatherly, who has been professionally associated with the theatre for more than twenty years. Seeking to dishearten the girls, he lists a dozen questions and says that if they can answer all of them honestly in the affirmative, then and only then should they even begin to consider the stage as a career. Mr. Weatherly's twelve questions are as follows:

(*1*) Is my physical allure definitely above the average? I mean your worst enemy's opinion, not yours. (*2*) Have I that indefinable, magnetic something known as "personality" which draws people to me in spite of myself? (*3*) Can I project that "personality" across the footlights? (*4*) Have I a good memory? (*5*) Am I forever observing people, watching facial expressions, physical mannerisms and oral colorings? (*6*) Am I a good mimic? (*7*) Have I a sense of "chic?" (*8*) Do I, at all times, on and off the stage, dramatize my speech and movements? Only very great performers can afford to stop acting when they're off the stage, and, with the exception of Helen Hayes, I never met one who did. (*9*) Am I vain, egotistical and self-centered to the nth degree? (*10*) Can I stand disappointment and failure for a long time without getting bitter and morbid? (*11*) Am I prepared to accept any job, no matter how humble, to get experience and a foothold? (*12*) And, above all, am I prepared to sacrifice everything in the way of home, children and a normal life, for success in the theatre?

Let us consider the questions in order.

(*1*) Physical allure is, of course,

always a help, but it isn't at all vital to acting success. Many successful actresses of the past lacked it, as, for only a few examples, Ada Rehan, Madge Kendal, Lena Ashwell, Rose Coghlan, Mary Shaw, Henrietta Crosman, Mrs. Fiske, Kathryn Kidder, Amelia Bingham, Beverly Sitgreaves, Olga Nethersole, May Robson, Sarah Cowell Le Moyne, Helena Modjeska, Alison Skipworth and Nance O'Neil. And at least five of the most successful actresses on the American stage today have a minimum of it.

(*2 and 3*) Personality, as it is called, is also a great help, but personality in the theatre is sometimes the result and achievement of expert press-agentry and need not necessarily be naturally born in one. Various actresses with very little personality of their own have succeeded as personalities through the stratagems of cunning publicity guidance. Cora Urquhart (Mrs. James Brown Potter), Bertha Galland, Edith Wynne Matthison, Carlotta Nillson, Marie Booth Russell, and all kinds of lesser girls like Ruth Maycliffe, *et al.*, are examples.

(*4*) An actress must be able to remember her lines, but the celebrated Mrs. Fiske, among others, had a memory not always what it should have been. And, when it comes to the men, John Barrymore frequently had a devil of a time recalling his lines and had to take refuge in copious ad libbing. There are at least three successful actresses on the present stage whose memory is so poor that they have to be cued frequently.

(*5*) Forever observing people, watching facial expressions, physical mannerisms, etc., is more a suitable training for a police detective than an actress.

(*6*) A good mimic's place is in vaudeville, not in the dramatic theatre. Actresses who are merely good mimics will not get far.

(*7*) If you haven't a sense of chic, don't worry. The majority of the leading actresses on our stage today dress like frumps in their private lives.

(*8*) Most good actresses do nothing of the kind. For one Mrs. Pat Campbell or Tallulah Bankhead whose superior performances have been conducted off stage, there are any number of prosperous actresses, aside from Helen Hayes, who reserve theirs solely for the stage. For instance, Edith Evans, Katharine Cornell, Judith Anderson, Jessica Tandy, Pamela Brown, Ethel Barrymore, Ingrid Bergman, Margaret Sullavan, etc., etc. And what of Maude Adams, Eleanor Robson, and a lot of bygone others?

(*9*) To be vain, egotistical and self-centered to the nth degree is to be doomed before you start. Even if you get the start, you will not last long with impatient producers.

(*10 and 11*) O. K.

(*12*) It is not at all necessary to sacrifice everything in the way of home, children, and a normal life for success in the theatre. All kinds of women who have succeeded have

combined such things with their careers. Many of the failures, on the other hand, have chosen to remain unmarried and theoretically self-sufficient. The contrary idea is pulp fiction. Study the lives of the leading actresses in the present theatre and verify for yourselves.

THE HANDS

BY JOSEPH JOEL KEITH

"How do you tell time?" the child inquired.

"See the round face, hear the chime;
see the two hands: they tell time."

The truth's not easy as a lie.
That's not the right way. Time goes by
one hundred ways before we die.

By hands of love, by hands of hate —
few men ever guess their fate.

By hands that drop a seed in soil,
hands that make a prayer of toil.

By hands that know a child must learn
to walk alone, and not return.

By the warm good hands that move through night
till the child of fear's a child in light.

"How do you tell time?" the child inquired.

"See the round face, hear the chime;
see the two hands: they tell time."

I have no right word, but one day
perhaps you'll tell what I can't say.

CHURCH AND STATE IN AMERICA

BY *IRVING BRANT*

IN RELIGION, there is no such thing as the average American. An American may be a Protestant, a Roman Catholic, an Eastern Catholic, a Jew, a Mohammedan, a worshiper of Manitou, or no worshiper at all. He may be any of these because the First Amendment to the Constitution makes religion a matter of each individual's conscience, and no business of the government. In the eyes of the law, all kinds of believers — and non-believers — are on a parity, not because the law specifies the equal validity of their creeds, but because the American people, by means of their Constitution, have forbidden either state or Federal government to interfere in matters of religion.

For most of us, these things have been regarded as settled for so long a time that we haven't thought about them. Now we are realizing with a jolt that they are not so firmly settled after all. Freedom of religion, the separation of church and State, have suddenly become major issues.

A few years ago the question came up, for a handful of people, when an attempt was made to force Jehovah's Witnesses to salute the flag, and to prevent them from distributing religious handbills in violation of city ordinances. These matters were quickly settled in the courts. A person is no more compelled to salute the American flag, if that is contrary to his principles, than to lift his hand to the ghost of Adolf Hitler. And any man, it was ruled, may hand a religious circular to his neighbor, though a hundred bishops cannot force his neighbor to read it.

More recently, another aspect of religious freedom became an issue in two hotly-contested cases before the United States Supreme Court. In February 1947 the Court upheld the right of a New Jersey school board to pay the bus fares of children going to Roman Catholic parochial schools. In March 1948 it ruled that the teaching of religious classes in the public schools of Springfield, Illinois, was unconstitutional.

The first case was almost ignored at the time of decision. The second attracted national interest, partly because the complainant in the case, Mrs. Vashti McCollum, was believed

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to be an atheist firebrand (actually she calls herself a Humanist), and partly because of rapidly rising tension between Protestants and Catholics growing out of the effort to secure tax support for parochial schools. The Constitutional question was the same in both cases — the meaning and scope of the religious clause of the First Amendment.

These are the words of the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

For three quarters of a century, that prohibition applied only to the Federal government. Then, in 1868, the Fourteenth Amendment forbade the states to pass laws abridging the privileges or immunities of citizens. Since freedom of religion is classed by the Supreme Court as one of those privileges or immunities, the Fourteenth Amendment makes the First Amendment binding on the states. It was an easy development, because all the established churches had already been shorn of their secular powers by the states, and because the public school system had arisen to supplant church schools as the basis for education.

However, the mere extension of the First Amendment to state law did not settle its meaning. What is a law "respecting an establishment of religion"? Do those words merely forbid the establishment of a state church? Or do they prohibit any government aid, such as the appropriation of money, for religious institutions and services?

Obviously the First Amendment does prohibit a state church. Every American whose reading goes beyond comic strips is acquainted with the history of churches which attained political power. He thinks of the driving of Roger Williams out of Massachusetts, or of the Inquisition in Spain. The guarantee of religious freedom, he is certain, was intended to prevent that sort of thing. But is that all?

What did "establishment of religion" mean to the people who put the words in the Constitution? What were they fighting against? At the time the question came before the Supreme Court in 1947, one small-sized church could (but probably wouldn't) have held all the lawyers who knew the answer to that question.

II

In fact, even the lawyers in the New Jersey bus case didn't seem to know it. Counsel for Arch Everson, who was trying to eliminate the payment of bus fares for parochial school children, raised the formal point of religious freedom but did not follow through on it. Their main argument was that payment of the fares constituted a private use of public funds. The basic issue of religious freedom was, however, raised by the National Council of Catholic Men and National Council of Catholic Women. These organizations, who were not

directly involved in the case, filed as *amici curiae*, or "friends of the court."

The words "an establishment of religion," said the Catholic lawyers, are "technically associated with the creation and maintenance of a formal State Church." They were taken from "the English State Church System which then was known and still is known as The Establishment." The First Amendment, these lawyers argued, was designed only to prohibit "an establishment of religion on the style of The Establishment." In other words, it prevented the setting up of a Catholic, Episcopalian, Methodist, Unitarian or Holy Roller State church — but did nothing else. Which interpretation, as we shall see, would have come as a shock to James Madison, author of the Amendment.

If the real issue in the case had been school transportation, it would have been wiser for the Catholic church not to take this extreme position. The New Jersey case could have been won easily enough by rebutting the appellant on private use of public funds and emphasizing the non-religious nature of a bus ride. But the church had a very important reason for presenting the question in terms of "an establishment of religion." For if the Supreme Court would accept the interpretation offered by the Catholic lawyers, and use it in a majority opinion, then the gates would be opened to complete public support of the Catholic school system.

And in fact the lawyers for the National Catholic Councils made it perfectly plain to the court that this was their real purpose. "In the Federal perspective," said their brief in the Everson Case,

> the non-profit private schools and the public schools may be regarded as branches of an over-all prevailing system of general education. . . . For the State to aid one branch of the system as well as the other cannot but serve the public welfare, health, morality, good order and best interests of the community.

The Catholic lawyers argued that the State is the *parens patriae* of all children, wherefore it "may provide a flow of State aid to all children regardless of their religion."

This was in exact accord with Roman Catholic policy as laid down by Pope Pius XI in his 1929 encyclical on *Christian Education of Youth.* In Catholic countries, according to the encyclical, Church and family should take the initiative in education, the State encouraging and assisting their work, or even supplementing it, if necessary, "by means of its own schools and institutions."

"In a nation where there are different religious beliefs," the pontiff continued, "it becomes the duty of the State . . . to leave free scope to the initiative of the Church and the family, while giving them such assistance as justice demands." In seeking financial aid, Roman Catholics "are not mixing in party politics, but are engaged in a religious enterprise demanded by conscience."

III

To judge from the oral arguments in the Everson Case, the Supreme Court did not realize until the justices were actually in conference that it had this issue of "an establishment of religion" before it. The Court was in a difficult position. Nineteen states have arrangements, of various kinds, for public transportation of parochial school children. The attorneys-general of New York, Massachusetts, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Louisiana had filed briefs supporting the New Jersey law in order to uphold their own laws.

Moreover, the Court had decided, only a few years previously, that it was lawful for Louisiana to furnish free text-books for parochial school children. It had been held at the time that this was a service to the children, not to the schools, and it had been further pointed out that the books were lent, not given outright. Nevertheless, this decision now made it difficult to upset the New Jersey law. But how could the Court uphold the law after the issue of the First Amendment had been formally raised, and after the brief of the Catholic lawyers had construed the amendment to bar only a State church?

The court finally voted, five to four, to uphold the bus-fare payments. Justice Black, writing for the majority, justified the decision in two ways. First, he minimized the implications of the ruling by arguing that public payment for transportation of parochial school pupils on public bus lines was part of a general service to all children, regardless of religion. It was on a par with fire department protection of all buildings and police protection of street crossings. To which Justice Rutledge, speaking for the minority, replied that the issue of safety was not involved, since the children would ride on the buses anyway. The payment, he said, was a use of tax money to cut the cost of education in religious schools.

Justice Black also limited the effect of the decision by citing a number of historical precedents tending to restrain the states from any interference with or aid to religion. At one point he referred to Madison's dramatic victory over Patrick Henry, when the latter attempted to restore government aid to religion by introducing a bill "establishing a provision for teachers of the Christian religion." Furthermore, though the Justice did not specifically mention the fact, *all through this battle in 1784-85, tax support of teachers was referred to as "an establishment of religion."*

The Madison forces speedily followed up their victory by pulling Jefferson's Bill for Religious Liberty out of a pigeonhole and passing it. This act prohibited public support of "any religious worship, place or ministry whatsoever." It stipulated that nobody could be forced to support even a "teacher of his own religious persuasion."

That was the background against

which Madison drafted the First Amendment. Never did he consider it as limited to the banning of a State church. He made his interpretation of it perfectly plain when, as President, he vetoed an appropriation for public land to be given a Baptist church in Mississippi. It would, he said, have been a law "respecting an establishment of religion," and it was therefore unconstitutional.

The dispute over bus fares was not important in itself. Confined to that one issue, it didn't make much difference who won the case. But what lay beyond? Could every non-religious aspect of education in parochial schools be paid for by the State, as part of a general welfare service to children? Could the State go still farther and pay all the expenses of church schools, as the Catholic lawyers contended, because the First Amendment bans only an established church?

All nine justices agreed that government aid could not go that far. The majority opinion said in effect: "This far and no farther." The minority said: "Not even as far as this."

From the history of the fight for religious freedom, and from a chain of court decisions, the Supreme Court concluded that the "establishment of religion" clause means at least this:

> Neither a state nor the Federal government can set up a church.
>
> Neither can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another.
>
> Neither can force nor influence a person to go to or to remain away from church against his will or force him to profess a belief or disbelief in any religion.
>
> No person can be punished for entertaining or professing religious beliefs or disbeliefs, for church attendance or non-attendance.
>
> No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support any religious activities or institutions, whatever they may be called, or whatever form they may adopt to teach or practice religion.
>
> Neither a state nor the Federal government can, openly or secretly, participate in the affairs of any religious organizations or groups and *vice versa*. In the words of Jefferson, the clause against establishment of religion by law was intended to erect "a wall of separation between Church and State."

The four dissenting justices, of course, had no quarrel with that. They maintained, as a matter of fact, that these very principles made the bus-fare payments unconstitutional. Madison's Remonstrance was set forth at length to support their contention. Such payments, as they saw it, constituted just the sort of thing the author of the First Amendment warned against most strongly — small beginnings which "would pave the way for oppressive levies."

IV

Speaking for Justices Frankfurter, Jackson and Burton as well as for himself, Justice Rutledge gave this description of the forces at work against the First Amendment:

> Two great drives are constantly in motion to abridge, in the name of education, the

complete division of religion and civil authority which our forefathers made. One is to introduce religious education and observances into the public schools. The other, to obtain public funds for the aid and support of various private religious schools.

While Catholics seek tax support for their private schools, it has been chiefly Protestants who try to push religion into the public schools. Their efforts in this direction were temporarily halted by the Supreme Court early this year, in a case originating in Springfield, Illinois. Mrs. Vashti McCollum of that city attacked the system of "released time" under which clergymen were conducting religious classes in the school rooms, during school hours. The classes were not compulsory, but parents were solicited to have their children attend. Mrs. McCollum refused to give her consent, and in consequence, she said, her son suffered coercion, humiliation and ostracism.

The Court held, eight to one, that this was an incorporation of religion into the school system, and was unconstitutional. The decision has brought a good deal of complaint from some of the larger Protestant sects, and from some Catholic sources. The Catholic magazine *Commonweal* called it an "establishment of atheism." This was not entirely a dig at Mrs. McCollum. It reflects also the Catholic belief that the church should bear the main responsibility for education.

The Court decision was a heavy blow to many Protestants. The "released time" system had begun in Gary, Indiana, in 1914, and had been spreading ever since. Whether the system is now on the way out is hard to say. Most "released time" religious classes are held outside of school grounds (though within school hours and with school sponsorship). The court did not rule on such arrangements.

On the other hand, Protestant support of "released time" is by no means unanimous. Small denominations tend not to like it. Many religious leaders are worried about the bitterness that has been developing between churches offering rival classes, or striving for control of interdenominational teaching. They are also concerned over the tendency of children to become unduly conscious of sectarian differences.

The Catholic church has a stake, though a lesser one, in "released time." For one thing, it is used in large cities to reach Catholic children who attend public schools. But there is a special reason why the McCollum decision aroused Catholic protests. This reason is connected with the strange manner in which this case was presented to the Supreme Court.

In a brief of 168 pages — one of the longest ever submitted — the lawyers for Springfield put only moderate emphasis on the issues which might have won the case for them. Their main argument was an assault upon the unanimous feature of the Everson Case, where the Court had found that "an establishment of religion"

means more than an established church. They formally asked for a reversal of that opinion. Instead, with only one member dissenting (and with Catholic Justice Murphy included in the majority), the earlier declaration was reaffirmed. Again it was asserted that the First Amendment erects "a wall of separation between Church and State," that the government can give no financial aid to churches or church schools.

Had the McCollum Case gone the other way, on the main issue presented by the lawyers, it would have opened the way to complete support, by taxation, of the Catholic school system. It may be, of course, that the Springfield lawyers did not realize this. But it does seem strange that the brilliant corps of newspaper correspondents in Washington, as well as the Protestant clergymen who "panned" the court for its decision, should have been equally unobservant.

V

The issue of aid to parochial schools has been before the country for a long time. President Grant spoke for the militant opponents of it when he said to a Des Moines convention of the Army of the Tennessee in 1875:

> Encourage free schools and resolve that not one dollar appropriated for their support shall be appropriated for the support of any sectarian schools. . . . Leave the matter of religion to the family altar, the church and the private school, supported entirely by private contributions. Keep the church and State forever separated.

That speech had a long echo. One of the briefs filed in the Everson Case, against bus-fare payments, came from the Junior Order of United American Mechanics, a New Jersey fraternal order founded in 1875 "to defend the public school system."

To Roman Catholics, State aid to church schools is not only natural, it is something for which increasing need is felt. Parochial school costs have gone up along with the costs of shoes and butter. Schools cost more to build, more to equip and more to operate. Tuition has had to be raised. And right down the block there is a public school, where Catholic children can be educated at no cost to their parents.

The result of all this is a tremendous pressure upon Catholic parents to send their children to public schools. Those who resist this pressure feel aggrieved that they must help to support two school systems — one by payment of tuition, the other by taxation. The Catholic church is apprehensive that the basic source of its continued strength — control of children in their formative years — will be undermined.

The battle over distribution of government funds will soon become intensified. Federal aid to local schools is coming. More than a billion dollars a year will undoubtedly be spent for that purpose, as soon as Congress concludes that education for citizenship is worth spending money on. The Catholic church wants to have a share of that money.

Nor is the issue confined to grade and high schools. One year ago the President's Commission for Higher Education proposed a grant of $265 million a year to schools on the college level. All of this, said the commission, should go to institutions under public control. Two Catholic members, Msgr. Frederick G. Hochwalt and Dr. Martin R. P. McGuire, wrote a dissent. They argued that aid should be extended to private schools, including, as a matter of course, religious institutions.

Professor J. M. O'Neill of Brooklyn College has offered his fellow-Catholics a suggestion which might point to a way out of the church's financial difficulties. He suggests that the *non-religious education* of Catholic children be turned entirely over to the public schools. "The millions of dollars and thousands of devoted lives" now spent in general classwork, he says, could then be more efficiently expended in religious, moral and social training outside the public school system. In this way the church "would produce better Catholics and better citizens."

Unfortunately, the resurrection of the issue of the church's relation to the State has brought about an increase in religious disharmony. Protestant protection societies are springing up, some of them with bad tempers. Catholic clergy and laymen are also beginning to use strong language. On the national level, an organization called Protestants and Other Americans United for the Separation of Church and State issued a violent manifesto in defense of the First Amendment. The Knights of Columbus, in reply, denounced both the intolerance of the Protestant body and its "biased and incorrect interpretation" of the Amendment.

Jealousy, intolerance, fear and hatred are cropping out again as a direct result of the two drives mentioned by Justice Rutledge — the (Protestant) drive to bring religion into the public schools, and the (Catholic) drive to get tax money for religious schools. By an eight-to-one vote on the first issue, and by unanimous agreement on the second, the court has held that both of these courses violate the Constitution.

There is no hostility to religion implied in these conclusions. In the McCollum case the Court virtually duplicated the words of Madison, who said in 1785 that religion flourishes best when it is not supported by human laws.

Religious peace and a revival of religion came to Virginia after the smashing of religious assessments and adoption of the Statute of Religious Liberty. Whether religion can gain new life today is not easy to say. But it is probable that nothing would do more to bring about religious peace, and establish a new American unity, than wholehearted acceptance of that total separation of church and State required by the First and Fourteenth Amendments, and now re-asserted by the Supreme Court.

THE MISER

A STORY

BY *MARGARET CHRISTOWE*

UP HERE in the Green Mountains it's an old saying that a pig and a miser aren't any good to anybody until they're dead. Homer Gilfeather, our village miser, died last week. He had no kin, neither chick nor child, nothing but a lean tiger cat that traveled between his place and the town dump.

I've been sitting here remembering all the people who were nice to Homer. Someone or other was always getting it into her head that Homer would leave her something if she were nice to him. There was Roxana, his aunt. They say she never in the world would have given up her place in the store to come and keep house for Homer if she hadn't expected to inherit some of his money. Roxana was an old lady whose head shook with the palsy when my husband came here to the village church. My boy was small then. We lived here at the parsonage and I used to walk down Gilfeather's road on the way to school to meet him. The minute the school bell rang old Roxana was out in the dooryard waiting for me to come along and reach up on top of the outdoor woodpile to get her a stick of wood. Homer would have stacked the parlor chunks on the bottom and the stove lengths high on top to keep her from helping herself when he wasn't at home.

Now there were many stories told in the post office about Homer — that he wore old rubbers in summer to save shoe leather (at our house he didn't even wear shoes), that he had oceans of money and carried it in "that sack" on his back wherever he went. When the government called in all the gold Homer turned up at the bank with $4800 in the sack. People who had boarded Homer said he couldn't taste anything. When I asked Roxana about this she said it was so. "No usen feeden Homer choice vittles. Can't taste his food no-how. Folks always give him plenty of 'tatoes. Taste the same to him as meat. Some folks are color blind, you know; Homer, he's food blind."

About the story that Homer had

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made a will and in it had left his money to a hospital to care for our village sick Roxana told me, "He ain't leaven it to nabuddy. All he's doen with it is squirrelen it. Some folks take all their pleasure runnen the roads. Some pleasure theirselves eaten. Homer, he takes his pleasure squirrelen. Homer'd walk a mile to pick up a piece a bag-string. Heired a flivver from his uncle once but was too stingy to buy gas and left it standen till it rusted out. Stingiest man in this here county. Nabuddy knows how much he's got, least of all me. All I know is he heired four farms. Works every day of the year for wages, even Sundays, and never spends a penny. Comes by his saven ways natural. Father was saven. Grandfather was so saven he never wore underwear and when he got too old to work and couldn't squirrel away any more he went out and shot hisself. Hinny Gilfeather was my own sister-in-law and she was the tightest woman ever lived. Painted the kitchen floor before Homer was born and kept him in a box aside the stove till long after he could walk so's to keep him from crawlen 'raound and wearen out the paint. That's why Homer's elbows stick out so — from leanen on the box sides."

Homer's elbows did stick out. He walked down the village street at post office time like a lively crab, stooped, with his elbows out as if he were hauling the hump on his back like a crab his shell. With his long jaws, sweeping sandy mustache and a lick of hair combed down over his bald top, Homer always reminded me of a tintype of a crusty Yankee. His face was set as a piece of granite. When he laughed only his thin mouth and his chest laughed. His beady blue eyes stayed fixed like fish eyes.

II

It was while Roxana was still alive that a young widow took it into her head to be nice to Homer. Her name was Rheba Eaton. Roxana told me that she had buried a "real" husband and the one she was "housekeeper for."

When Rheba knew Homer was home she would hike two miles over the mountain to the store and not having walked enough she'd go out of her way up the Gilfeather road. "Just stretchen my legs," she'd say to Roxana, walking slowly by the piazza.

If Homer were sitting there she'd stop and take on about the view. I heard her myself. "My, I should think you'd want to be to home all the time with all that to look out on. Look at the river curlen 'raound them purply mountains. My!"

When Roxana passed away in her sleep one night and Homer woke up and found her he didn't call a doctor or a near neighbor but hurried over the mountain to Rheba Eaton's.

Rheba herself would have nothing to do with the dead but once the funeral was over and done with Rheba was mending Homer's rags and baking him pies. The women folk said that Sunday after Sunday when Homer

was going to Rheba's house you could smell roasting chicken and apple sauce made with maple syrup for miles around on her side of the mountain. She planted posies in his dooryard and a grape vine to climb his woodshed and made him a vest piped with black braid.

No one ever knew just what did happen to part Rheba and Homer. But by summer Rheba was taking in city boarders and Homer was away haying for a farmer. Down in the post office people told that Homer turned up to spend an evening with Rheba and Rheba went in to her bedroom and started dressing. She fixed herself up, came outside and said to Homer: "There's a dance over to Haddon Town Hall tonight. Tickets cost forty cents apiece. Would you like to go?" Homer said no, that he guessed he wasn't much of a hand for dancing. He put his hat on and left and that was that.

The next one was the wife of the road construction boss. Not that she needed to part Homer from any money. Bertha Bolte had everything a woman could want — electric ice box, sewing machine, washing machine, permanent — everything. But she was one, people said, that "loved to turn a dollar." Never satisfied. She kept books for the road, helped people with income tax, was auditor on the town books, sold a line of greeting cards and even charged a high school boy for writing love letters.

Henry Bolte hired Homer for the pick and shovel and Bertha boarded him all summer. And even after the road job was over and Homer had gone back to his house under the elms for the winter he was bringing his socks and underwear and such things down to Bertha's to be mended. Every fourth Saturday she cut his hair.

I met Homer on Bertha's road one late winter day carrying a basket of wrinkled apples.

"Cold, Homer."

"Ehyah."

"Taking a walk?"

"No. Just fetchen some apples down to Bertha Bolte for a pie. No usen wasten 'em."

"Waste not, want not," I said hypocritically, thinking to myself that it would be less waste to have those apples fertilize the earth than to ferment in somebody's stomach.

Then it came my turn.

III

Besides hiring out to do barn chores or any other thing to earn wages Homer was the town "water deeviner." That was his real trade — finding water. When the church voted to install a bathroom in the parsonage, first thing before laying pipe they had to have a spring divined.

At seven on a Saturday morning I drove the Ford to the Gilfeather house to fetch Homer up to perform the divining. It had also been agreed that he would stay and help "dig ditch" if we would board him.

Homer's house is one of the finest in the village. It sits on a little hill be-

hind a pair of elms that makes you think of tall, lovely women with hands to their hair. But these elms and the soft hills are outdoors. Once the front door was opened and you stepped over some rags stuffed under the door crack and into Homer's sitting room you walked into real ugliness. Ceiling, wallpaper, walls had been held up for years by sticks nailed on every which way. The rug — it had once been a rug — clung in shreds to the splintered spruce floor, and over it, at the doorways, were strips of worn linoleum. Behind the parlor stove stood a sheet of crooked tin. The couch, made up for a bed, was covered with the same thick, leathery material as the britches and vest Homer always wore. Roxana had told me once that he made these garments himself from discarded wool matting that the paper mills use to strain the pulp through.

Hardly an inch of wall space was clear, for calendars hung everywhere. One was dated 1892. Crowded on window sills and lined up on shelves were empty bottles of Sal Hepatica, milk of magnesia, castor oil, liver pills, gall bladder medicines. All empty. I stared at the bottles and back at Homer. He did look thin and scrawny. Later when I saw how he ate I felt worried for fear he was ruining his digestion. But whether or not Homer had taken all those medicines in his sixty years of life no one will ever know. He may only have been interested in the bottles. Folks say his two "buttrys" are just as crowded with junk picked out of trash boxes and that down in his cellar he "squirreled" away hundreds of feed bags full of empty tins and fancy bottles.

Soon after he arrived at our house that first morning with his five gunny sacks of belongings, Homer immediately got into two pair of overalls, one ragged pair over a less ragged pair, rubber boots and a straw hat that looked as if it had been chewed by a horse. His sweater hung on to him by safety pins.

Now divining a spring is no everyday occurrence. It is a ceremony that calls out friends and neighbors. My husband, of course, doesn't believe in it. The church committee wanted it done and it was their money, but I was curious about it myself.

First comes the walk around the fields to examine the apple trees for a forked branch.

Homer was in the lead flanked by the church elder and my husband, with the elder's wife and myself next. Behind us trooped the little group of neighbors all twittering about the merits of other "water witches" and citing the times when this or that spring in the neighborhood had been "deevined."

"Now pipen the water from a spring to the house will flow your water in by gravity," the elder was explaining to my husband as we walked along. "Otherwise you would have to pump it up by motor power. Cost the church a mint a money. This way won't cost a thing. No taxes nor nathen. Old lady nature'll flow it in

for you and she'll not ask you a penny payment."

Homer said nothing. He likes talk but is just as thrifty with words as with everything else.

Homer could have found a branch in any one of the twenty trees he examined but he turned them all down until he came to the Blue Pearmain. Here he was very serious, rubbing his chin, studying the branches.

"Here's one," cried a neighbor.

"How 'bout this one?"

But Homer just nodded. Walking around the tree suddenly he sighted a branch he wanted and hoisting himself up from the crotch he clutched at an apple that we had left in the picking weeks before and dropped it in his pocket.

When finally he had found a branch to his liking with a foot and a half between the forks and had snapped it off the tree we climbed the hill to the spring.

With all of us circling him he stood above the little pool rubbing his chin, studying its depth. He walked around it, scraped the earth away from the ledge and ran his hand around in the water, feeling and scraping. He pulled up one end of an ancient lead pipe and with everyone lending a hand we pulled up the length of it to where it emptied into an old barrel below.

I thought this was all part of an act for my benefit because Homer couldn't help but see how I watched his every move. My husband said that I looked as if any minute I expected some saintly vision to emerge from the rock.

When Homer had satisfied himself about the condition of the pipe he laid it aside. Straddling the spring he exercised his wrists like a tennis player, flexed his arms and pulled up his raggy sleeves. Then he grasped the forks of the apple branch.

Everybody watched, silent. I don't know what I expected but nothing happened. My foot began to ache.

"There! There!" someone shouted.

"What? What is it?"

"There it goes!"

"What?" I yelled impatiently.

"The stick moved! Didn't you see it?"

My good husband stroked his chin, smiling.

The elder flapped his hands. "Do it again, Homer. You'll have to do it again. Now girl, this time you keep your eyes on the branch in Homer's hands."

Homer straddled the spring again, holding the forked branch, the stick straight out. Again we stood for a long time. A frog, all green and gold, hopped up to the rock and watched. Then slowly — it took all of three minutes — the branch moved upward, turned sharply and came down to hit Homer's chest.

"See it!"

"There's a plenty a water here, that's sure!"

"It moved," I said. "The stick moved."

"It did."

"Is that divining? That means

there's water in there?" I questioned.

"That's right," said the elder.

"You believe that?" I asked, looking from one to the other. "You don't turn the stick yourself, Homer?"

"Maybe you could do it. Some people have the gift without knowen it," said the elder.

So I took the stick and straddled the spring, gripping the forks. Nothing happened. The forks lay quite still in my hands.

"Take a holt of her hands, Homer, and see if you can pass a little power into her," the elder urged.

Homer stood behind me and clasped his horny claws around my fists. Suddenly the forks began to stir against my palms like something alive. The stick turned up and completely around and came to rest at the top button of my coat.

"Gosh!" I said. "Gosh! It really does do it and of itself."

"Sho," said the elder.

"But look, Homer, why does the apple stick turning mean there's water here?" I asked.

"Why does the sun come out mean it's a nice day?" Homer asked. He picked up one end of the mouldy lead pipe and turned to the elder. "You got no use for this here now?"

"Why no, guess not," answered the elder without thinking.

"Think I'll just take it along then. I got a barrel I could use it with to pipe water into my sink room."

Homer slept in the attic and rose when light showed in the eastern sky. He washed outside the kitchen door and then barefooted he walked to the woodlot and sawed wood till breakfast. I thought his industry a fine thing until a neighbor explained to me that was Homer's way of working up an appetite.

Homer never heated water for washing or shaving. After breakfast he filled a pail from the pump and left it in the sun. "Letten the Lord warm my water," he explained.

At the end of each day he washed the dirt off his tools, scraped his shovel and his pick. The pick handle he had had for forty years. He didn't know how old the pick was. He had "heired" that from his grandfather. When he had finished he hung his tools high up in the open woodshed. "Porcupines might chew up the handles in the night," he told me.

Homer and I got along. He spent most of his spare time with me in the kitchen sitting on the stool beside the ironing board, waiting with my boy to lick the cake bowls or the frosting pans. Homer was no hand at men talk — politics, cattle or horse talk. He gossiped like a woman — about people and ailments and deaths and births.

I began to think that Homer liked me and that made me think about his money. He had no kin and I was young enough to be his daughter. Every night that I went into my son's room to cover him I thought and thought how wonderful it would be to have a rich uncle like Homer leave us a hundred thousand dollars.

IV

Just like the other women I started to be nice to Homer, making him extra things to eat, mending his clothes, having him underfoot in the kitchen. I guess if it hadn't been for thinking about Homer's money I wouldn't have been able to sit at table with him. It's strange what a woman can put up with when she sees the shadow of a dollar mark all around her.

Watching Homer I knew that the story about his not being able to taste was true. Food to Homer was fuel. Whatever you placed on the table he heaped on to his plate before anyone else was served. First from one bowl, then from another. He stirred and mixed until the mess on his plate looked like wet chicken mash.

At breakfast he'd take two strips of salt pork and two eggs and lay them on top of his oatmeal, pour coffee over all and stir. At dinner he would help himself to meat, potatoes and vegetable, pour the salad over that and stir. He poured his coffee over his dessert and stirred that. If there was so much as a fleck of food on the rim of his plate, that called for a slice of dry bread — Homer never ate butter— soaked with coffee. With his fork he wiped the bread around like a sponge. Then after licking knife and fork back and front he was through. I had been through when he started.

After each chicken mash meal in the evening Homer stepped across the room to the hardbacked chair by the window to sit for a time looking straight ahead, his palms on his knees. Then he would pick up the paper.

At first I switched on the lamp but he immediately put down his paper and went upstairs to bed. Thereafter I left him alone and he leaned closer and closer to the window to read until the last of the light dimmed out of the sky. That meant time to go to bed.

No one thing finished me with Homer. I think, like the other women, I just got sick of him. You couldn't leave a thing around but what he wasn't after you for it. He'd happen to sight an empty tobacco tin in the trash. "You got any use for this here?" he would ask.

One morning I woke up and glanced out the window and there he was behind the chicken house going through a pile of bottles I had left out there thinking I might need one for something some day.

Another morning while the men were eating breakfast I was cleaning out an old sewing box. I held out some empty spools and asked, "Wonder what spools are good for?"

"The fire," my husband said.

"I'll take that there big one," Homer spoke up, and explained that he had a "mess" of string which he had saved from the grain bags at the farm where he had worked all summer. "Same as boughten thread," said Homer. "Sews the same."

Then my chickens began to lay fewer eggs. It might have been the usual fall slacking off but I was growing so mean tempered I resented it

every time I saw Homer step in the chicken house to pick up the eggs.

By the time the ditch was dug and Homer had been with us for a month I had lost five pounds and his money figured less and less in my dreams. It was all I could do to speak civilly to him. Lying in bed at night I shuddered for Rheba Eaton remembering that she might have married him. My heart ached for old Roxana. In my prayers I thanked the Lord for sending me the man He had.

The day the ditch was finished and Homer left I laid my table with the lace cloth, used my best china and our wedding silver. It was like a holiday to have Homer gone and just the three of us there together again eating quietly and enjoying one another. I noticed that my boy's manners had improved.

That was in October. At our school Christmas party I saw that the old maid schoolteacher was being nice to Homer. Then with the January thaws there was talk that Homer was ailing. Down in the post office they said he would have no doctor. By the time my husband took it into his own hands to call the doctor, Homer was too far gone with pneumonia. He died, as I say, last week, during that big snowstorm.

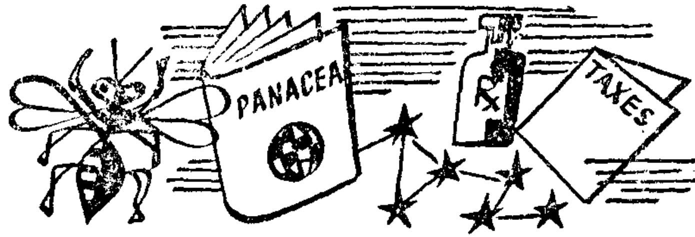
I didn't go to his funeral. I didn't care anything about him in life — the way he grabbed everything and gave nothing. So I stayed home and darned, looking out at the snow on the spruces, wondering about Homer's money.

The day was so bitter that no one else came to the funeral either. I guess the schoolteacher thought there was no point wasting any more effort now that he was gone. My husband read the services and then called our boy to help carry the coffin to the pump room where it will stay till the ground thaws and he can be interred in a proper grave.

No one even bothered to drive over to the Town Clerk's office to hear Lawyer Howe read the will. My husband, of course, went for appearance's sake and the Town Clerk and his wife were there.

Homer didn't mention a soul in his will. He left his house and his land and $37,000 in the bank to be divided among the people "who saw fit" to attend his funeral.

THE SOAP BOX



EDITORIAL NOTES

Shop Talk. For the past five years a portly, middle-aged man has been attempting to sell us an article on handwriting analysis. His contention has been that the scientific reading of handwriting can reveal character and general state of health, and can foretell the future "in rough and broad outline." Of a skeptical turn of mind, we have told him over the years that we didn't think his article was quite right for our pages, but he has persisted, writing to us or calling upon us every few months. A short while ago he visited us again, and again we did not encourage him. For the first time, he became a bit angry. He informed us that he was a graduate in philosophy from the University of Vienna — ("I used to see Sigmund Freud there quite often, talked to him, oh, yes, I knew him well") — and had almost obtained an M.D. from Charles University in Prague. He added, "Ah, you Americans! You're so unbelieving, such slaves to measuring, testing, so unseeing about spiritual values, deep mystical knowledge." He admitted that he had had no better luck with other magazines. "I may be forced to become a practicing psychologist or psychoanalyst," he finally said. "But I really like research best." . . . One short story writer and poet informs us that he has been sending us material, almost every month, since the very first issue of the MERCURY appeared on the stands in January 1924. Unfortunately, we have been unable to avail ourselves of any of his manuscripts. But he is not bitter, ill-tempered, or even impolite. "I guess I still have to learn, and I have plenty of time. My wife sometimes gets a little discouraged about my writing, but I never do. Where would civilization be if people got discouraged easily?" . . . Not long ago we commented in this space upon the huge number of poems about the atomic bomb which we have been getting, most of them quite poor. Strangely enough, the United Nations has failed to make much impression upon American poets. During the past two years we have received less than a dozen verses, in praise of, or in denunciation of, the UN.

Whether or not this means anything we leave to those experts who claim to know the inner workings of poets' minds. . . . Beginning writers who think that "big names" on manuscripts "sell" them at once will take heart from the following information: at present editorial offices are being flooded with articles and stories signed by some of the most eminent names in current American and English literature, and a few signed by two Frenchmen, some of whose books, not so long ago, were best sellers. Why are the scripts being rejected? For the simplest of all reasons: they're no good. . . . Many readers of the MERCURY have been pressing us to print "The Check List" and "The Open Forum" in a larger type size. With this issue we are acceding to their requests. Both departments are now going from eight points to nine, with, we believe, a tremendous improvement in readability. The rest of the magazine, with a few exceptions, will continue to be printed in eleven-point type.

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In the journalism series we still are in need of articles on various newspapers and magazines, and we call upon writers to query us. There is the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* that we would like to have discussed in our pages; there is the Boston *Herald-Traveler;* there are the New York *Times* and *Herald Tribune;* there are the Washington *Star* and *Post;* there are the three major press services, the Associated Press, the United Press and the International News Service; there are the men's and women's magazines and trade journals; and there are the "little" magazines. As in all our articles, we do not want hymns of praise or denunciations, but careful, documented analyses that present the characters of these journals, and also give some notion of the editors who guide them.

~

There has been an obvious change in social manners during the past two decades. Older folks incline to think that the change represents a deterioration, while younger folks claim that the change on the whole has been healthy. We would like to print an article on the subject by someone who knows the difference between "good" and "bad" manners, and who has a sense of historical perspective. We would also like to have the writing in the article well-mannered.

~

It has come to our attention that, of late, many otherwise intelligent people have been going to chiropractors, osteopaths, naturopaths, and the various cliques of faith healers; and that some men and women claim they have been "cured" of ailments that orthodox medicine allegedly was unable to deal with. We would like to print an article on the whole subject, one that is quiet in tone and in every way fair, which delves into the reasons that drive certain folk to seek aid

from the aforementioned practitioners of the healing art, and which also analyzes the various "cures."

THE STATE OF WYOMING

I often wonder whether the rest of the country really knows anything about the state of Wyoming. I've been traveling here for a brand new book concern, trying to drum up some trade. I've been to every important city and town in the state. Here's what I've learned: not one person I saw has heard of T. S. Eliot; not one man or woman has read *The Magic Mountain;* the *Nation* and the *Saturday Review of Literature* and the *Yale Review* are so little known that some neighborhood libraries have decided to stop subscribing to them because no one asks for them; as far as I can make out not one person in the whole state subscribes to an English newspaper or magazine; and the sale of comic books is simply fantastic. What a state! Why don't we cede it to Canada, in exchange for Quebec or Toronto — or just give it away for nothing?

HORATIO

Cheyenne, Wyo.

TIP TO PRESIDENT EISENHOWER

I've had to re-read several volumes of speeches by the late Nicholas Murray Butler. They are very sad, pompous and embarrassing affairs. Dr. Butler no doubt had to talk, very often, the way he did; for the benefit of Columbia he often came out in favor of love and world peace and against typhoid. But what ever induced him to collect that stuff between book covers? A president of Columbia should make sure that most of what he says is quickly forgotten.

COLUMBIA, '12

New York City

FOUR-LETTER WORDS

It has always seemed a great pity to me that our dictionaries — even the so-called "unabridged" editions — rigorously exclude nearly all the obscene and blasphemous words. These words, which form an important part of every child's education, can only be learned by our young folks out of the gutter.

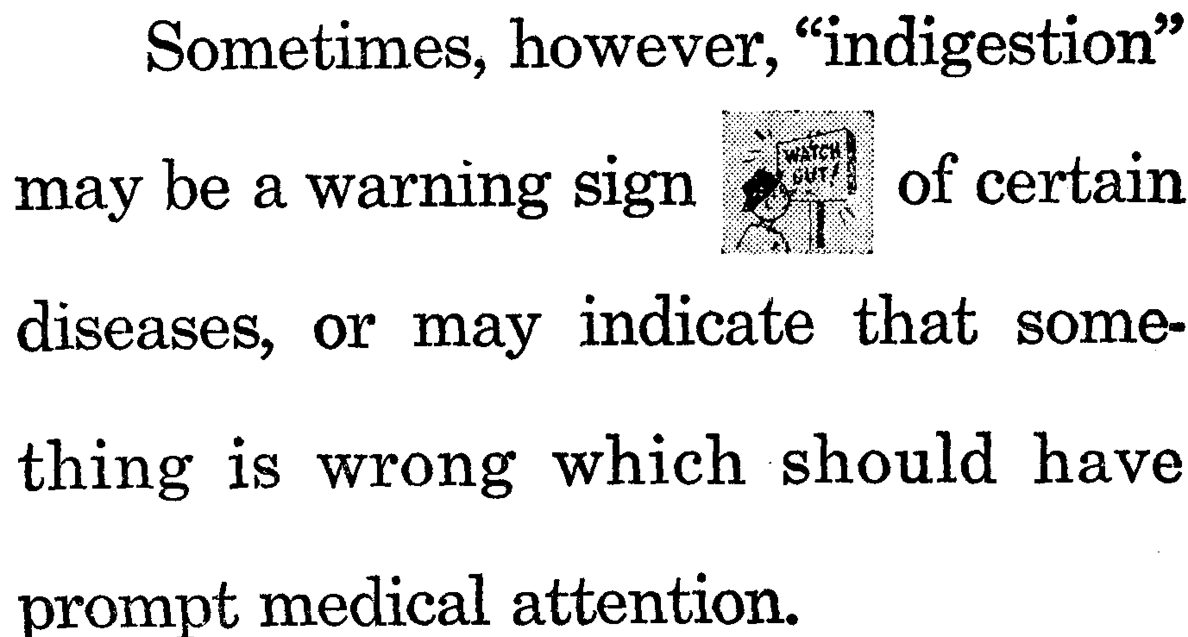
If you skim through an unabridged dictionary you can find a vast number of utterly useless words — words that are Scottish, archaic, obsolete, obsolescent, and dialectical. But other words, which every young person will find indispensable, are not there. So that a young man who persistently confines himself to good books and sanitary society might find, when he enters the Army, that he is unable to comprehend what his buddies are talking about. And if he has the misfortune to serve under such a commander as the late General Patton, he might even misconstrue an important military directive.

JESSE F. X. O'MALLEY

Bayonne, N. J.

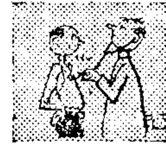
"Indigestion"

often is only a minor discomfort due to improper habits of eating and drinking, nervousness, fatigue and emotional strain.



Sometimes, however, "indigestion" may be a warning sign of certain diseases, or may indicate that something is wrong which should have prompt medical attention.

If you have "indigestion" frequently,

you should see your doctor.  His diagnosis of the cause, and prompt treatment, may help you escape a serious illness. Remember... *better digestion is a step toward better health!*

Good living habits can be an aid to good digestion

The digestive system has been likened to a chemical factory. Here, innumerable gland cells manufacture juices which act chemically upon the food we eat, so that it can be absorbed and used by the body.

When the system fails to function properly, "indigestion" usually results. Fortunately, this condition can generally be corrected by following a few common sense rules, under the guidance of your physician. He may suggest changes in your diet, eating moderately and at regular times, and chewing your food thoroughly. He will advise keeping in good physical condition, and avoiding mental or emotional tensions.

Whatever may be the cause of your "indigestion," prompt diagnosis and any necessary treatment offer the best chance for cure.

If you have frequent attacks of "indigestion," don't try to be your own doctor. The continued use of home remedies may do more harm than good, and may delay the start of proper medical care.

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TO VETERANS—IF YOU HAVE NATIONAL SERVICE LIFE INSURANCE—KEEP IT!

THE OTHER SIDE OF FEAR

BY *GERTRUDE H. THOMPSON*

WHAT would you do if, today, someone told you that you probably had only a short time to live, that you were incurably ill with cancer?

One day in October, over a year ago, I was told just that.

"Why do you try to come to work?" my employer asked. "You've been away eight days this time, so now you can start drawing sickness insurance again."

The late afternoon sun caught the porch rails and glinted on the bright autumn foliage. As we sat there, my mother, my employer and I, my mother added her pleadings that I should give up trying to work. But some inner drive would not let me yield.

A short time later, when we were alone and busy about the supper, I turned to mother.

"I think I'll make an appointment with Dr. P — and find out if I'm neurotic. Maybe that's the reason I can't seem to keep working."

After a pause mother's quiet voice came to me. "Dear, I think it is time you knew. The doctors found more wrong with you last June when they operated than you were told. You are not going to get well."

"Cancer?" It was half question and half statement. "How long have I got?"

"I now think you have somewhat more time than they gave you then. They said not more than six months."

It took some gentle questioning before I learned all that mother could tell me about what had happened that June day.

The story that I pieced together from mother's words as expanded later in conference with the doctor, can be briefly told. X-ray pictures late in May had revealed a stomach cancer almost closing the pylorus. Operation revealed that the growth could not be removed. Other organs were involved and there were numerous metastases. The surgeon provided a new opening for my stomach and tied off the blood supply of the main tumor. Because of the rapidity of development since an earlier X-ray, when a diagnosis of ulcer had been made, I was given but six months to live.

Emotions seemed to be in abeyance during this talk with mother,

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GERTRUDE H. THOMPSON'S *background and present occupations are pretty much described in her article. This essay is the first piece of writing she has had published.*

and I was able to maintain an objective attitude. It takes time after a severe shock, physical or mental, for the full impact to be felt.

Afterwards, unsleeping in the darkness, I groped for equilibrium as full realization came to me.

As I have tried to relive those first few hours, I have come to realize that my adjustment to death as it related to me began in the hospital while I awaited the operation. The fear that I would die on the operating table was insistent. The fear-relieving thought that came was: "I trust my surgeon implicitly to do for me all that is humanly possible; should I not, as implicitly, trust God, the Creator, for the rest?" My reaction pattern was set.

When I faced imminent death as a certainty instead of a possibility, I discovered that the most grievous impact would be upon my family. This new evaluation of my importance in the home brought me, in addition to sorrow and concern, an assuagement of deep-seated inferiority feelings.

Moreover, my unshakable belief that in some form somewhere, the essential me will continue to exist, sustained me. A certain feeling of relief may have been a part of my rather complex emotional state, relief from the puzzled worry over my continued ill-health and from the struggle of trying to work in spite of it.

Then too, back there in the hospital ward, I had watched life turn its last page for a fellow-sufferer. She alone of all of us in that tight little world was unaware of the approach of death. As with mingled compassion and admiration, I observed her suffering, the words of Browning in "Prospice" came to me.

> I would hate that death bandaged my
> eyes and forbore
> And bade me creep past.

I decided then that when my time came, I didn't want to meet it, thus, unknowingly. In fact, it was my comment to that effect that gave mother the courage to disregard the doctor's advice and to tell me the truth when, in her understanding love, she sensed that the appropriate occasion had come.

Now I was face to face with the final adventure of this earth-life. Again Browning spoke for me.

> I was ever a fighter, so — one fight more,
> The best and the last!

Here was a challenge.

II

Fear of suffering was and is a different matter. It is there still, deep beneath the surface consciousness waiting to sneak up on me at moments when the faith that is in me wavers. I think I found comfort at first in the very shortness of the time left to me. Whatever was coming it could not last so very long and I had confidence that I could endure anything I had to. That I have had so little real suffering so far is a matter for profound gratitude to Providence.

Compassion and dismay at the dis-

ruption my death would cause my family were the predominant emotions in my heart and mind as I faced the days ahead after my night of adjustment.

Poor mother! It was only four years ago that father died. After that wrenching bereavement, she gave up her home and came to share mine. Two years later, my sister's death brought her more grief. Now at nearly eighty, it seemed that she must face another loss and another uprooting. It would be hard for her to bear.

To my unmarried sister, also, would come both grief and uprooting. She is a teacher in an institution. When mother's home was broken up, my home became hers for as much of the year as she was able to spend in it. Besides, we had always planned, when my children were established in their own homes and we were both retired, to share a little home in the country. Maybe she would raise dogs, while I served as cook and housekeeper.

An especially poignant loss would befall my twenty-two-year-old daughter. She must lose what she had so recently found, for her motherless years ended but a few years ago, since she is mine by adoption. To be sure her greatest need for mothering is over; but she is working her way through college and I had hoped to give her more than moral assistance in her struggle toward her dream.

But the one to whom my continued life seemed to me to be most important was my fifteen-year-old son. He is a child of divorce. His high IQ had made more difficult his adjustment to the lack of a father in his world and to the consequent insecurities. The stresses of adolescence added to his unresolved conflicts had resulted in a serious neurosis. Last October, a happier response to his environment was just beginning to be apparent. Beyond the need of support that would exist for several more years, my companionship and understanding were and are vital to his satisfactory development.

The magnificent self-forgetfulness of this family of mine in the face of their grief was a challenge and an inspiration. My son was not in on the secret, but the others gave me not the slightest reason to discover that the prognosis was not as favorable as I believed. Who could wallow in self-pity in the face of such unselfish fortitude?

Even during that first sleepless night, I began to think and to plan about the things I could do, the things I had to do, to make my exit from life as easy as possible for these, my dear ones.

There was the small disability retirement annuity to which I was entitled. I had to find out about the beneficiary provisions of that, and make decisions and sign papers. I decided I should make a will. For a document that involved such a small estate, it took much consideration. My lawyer was determined that as little as possible of the totally inadequate provision I could make for my

son should go into expensive legal red-tape.

It seemed urgent to talk to the psychiatrist at the child guidance clinic about when, how and by whom my son should be told the truth. After the psychiatrist had somewhat prepared the way, it was I that told him.

I felt I had an obligation to the library where I had worked for several years. With so short a span of life left, working the few days I might muster strength for seemed unimportant; but I could and did spend some time putting my work in order so that someone else could go on with it with less trouble.

III

As day followed day, I grew more accustomed to a life without a future. I continued to find in reading the incitement to courage that I needed. Those October days, I happened to be reading *The Self You Have to Live with*, by Winfred Rhoades. There was much help for me in its pages. A recent rereading of this book has convinced me that Mr. Rhoades had a great deal to do with my ability to face my fate with credit. His counsel against adopting the tones of voice and attitudes of invalidism were especially pertinent.

Almost every day, I discovered a new poem that had a message for me; or an old familiar stanza revealed a new significance to my need. I used certain lines from Sidney Lanier's "The Marshes of Glynn" as a prayer at bedtime. It helped to bring repose to my spirit.

Then there came the night when I discovered the Twenty-third Psalm. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." I had repeated these words ever since I was a little child; but only in that hour was their full meaning revealed.

For very good reasons my acceptance of my fate became a fighting acceptance. Sickness insurance would provide an income for a year if I could manage to live that long and avoid hospitalization. I knew my mother's strength was hardly adequate to the routine duties of the household without the care of a bed patient. My deceased sister had been able by Christian faith to keep from being bedridden during her long illness. So in the spirit of trying the power of mind over matter, I decided to extend my viability to the utmost and to keep on my feet as long as possible.

So time passed. A few weeks after my day of enlightenment, I began to be aware of a change in my spiritual life. To put into understandable words something that has occurred within one's spirit is a staggeringly difficult feat. However, to make my story complete and comprehensible, I must attempt it. Imagine that a warrior of old set out for battle wrapped in a lion's skin and armed with a club, but arrived at the encounter wearing a full suit of mail and carrying a spear. I felt somewhat as such a warrior

would have felt. I entered upon my moral struggle with only a mind and a will for weapons and found that it was as if I were possessed of a Presence, whose truth was indeed my shield and buckler. What had been difficult became easy. A deep, abiding joy filled me, the joy that Jesus meant when he said:

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." (John 15: 11.)

I have been a member of a Protestant church since my teens. As the years have passed I have drifted away from the somewhat narrow tenets of the church I grew up in. There have been in my life periods of religious fervor and periods of skepticism.

During the summer and fall of 1947, at the urging of a friend, I had been doing a certain amount of reading, without much conviction, in the literature of the metaphysical religions. As my understanding deepened I found much that was helpful, especially in the literature issued by the Unity school of Christianity.

As I look back on those crucial days, the causative factor in my awakening eludes me. When the opening of a door is controlled by an electric eye, it is the step forward into the beam, that operates the mechanism. I may, unwittingly, have taken that important step. The light that has streamed through that opened door is wonderful.

Further reading, ranging from the three-hundred-year-old *The Practice of the Presence of God*, by Brothe Lawrence to *Preface to Prayer*, b Gerald Heard, has given me mor glimpses of the ultimate meaning o life. I have found out that many ex pressions of spiritual truth which ha previously been for me but wistfu hopes were, in fact, statements o a vitally real experience.

I wish that I could erect a signpos that would inevitably lead other who are confused and suffering, t the way of realization and peace tha I have found. Each of us must, I fear seek out his own path, following th guidance that most appeals to him If but one person should find in my words a single marker on the trail, I shall be happy.

By the middle of October, when mother became the instrument of my enlightenment, I was failing rapidly. My considered judgment at that time was that I would be doing well if I lived to see 1948. My doctor has since agreed that that was what he thought too. I was losing weight, eating very little and taking codeine about once a day. Relief from the strain of trying to work plus folic acid, which the doctor had recently prescribed, brought apparent improvement, though loss of weight, weakness and considerable pain continued until Thanksgiving time.

Coincident with my spiritual experience, a notable change for the better gradually came in my physical state. The need for codeine disappeared. Appetite and my comfort in

eating improved. I started to gain weight slowly. About the same time, after a physical examination, the doctor reported that the growth of the tumors had practically ceased. During the winter and spring there were ups and downs but the total aspect remained surprisingly favorable.

As my health improved, I became aware of a new problem of adjustment. I discovered illness was not an excuse that my conscience would accept for complete self-indulgence. Service commensurate with my strength was demanded of me. Greater activity brought another problem, too. I had to learn to keep my feeling of relaxed spiritual sustainment in the midst of busyness. Also, as a pupil in the school of life, I had to discover that the living of just one day at a time, desirable for everyone, was absolutely necessary for me. Today, alone, is surely mine and I live it fully and joyously.

So weeks became months and again it was June. On the anniversary of my operation, I prepared for my physician a written summary of the health factors within my observation. The gist of my report was that I was, most of the time, feeling better than I had for a year and a half, and that I was able to carry on a normal range of pursuits for an hour or so at a time.

After the doctor had made his examination, his manner was curiously solemn as he uttered a pronouncement: "Do you want to know what I think? I think you now have a good chance of living three years."

I realize fully that too much reliance cannot be placed on that estimate. At least, it gives me the hope of a little time to exercise my newfound insight into life's possibilities. Also I can look forward, perchance, to the opportunity of seeing my daughter graduate from college and my son graduate from high school in June 1950. At present, I can envision no greater happiness.

As I write this the sun is shining. There is a whisper of a breeze. It is a perfect summer day. In the flower garden, petunias are blooming in gay profusion. The hungry cry of the baby pigeon from the roof coping is raucous and insistent. He is alive. He is the very quintessence of life. I respond to life with a quivering intensity of joy.

The mellow tones of the ancient piano bring me pleasure, as my sister enjoys the music which is her hobby. My mother, a little more tired, perhaps, than last year, reads beside me on the porch. Not far away my son, now sixteen, pecks away with one finger on the dilapidated typewriter. He is well along on a science fiction story. It is one of those strange tales, in which the imagination stretches the known facts of science to the limits of probability and beyond. He shows promise of real writing ability. (I don't think that remark comes merely from maternal pride.)

The present is good. The future? Who knows? Whatever comes, however, I am confident that nothing can for long disturb my inner serenity.

THE FRESH-WATER COLLEGES

BY *WILLIAM HINES*

WEBSTER oversimplifies when he defines the fresh-water college simply as "a comparatively small or insignificant college." Plenty of non-fresh water schools are relatively small: Stevens Tech at Hoboken enrolls only 1500 students, and many more or less insignificant colleges — the lush and luxurious Rollins in Florida, for example — likewise fall outside the classification.

A good definition of the fresh-water college begins within the mind of the alumnus who cites his educational background by saying, "I went to Guilford; it's a little fresh-water college six miles west of Greensboro in North Carolina." Beyond this half-proud, half-self-conscious statement lies the true definition of the fresh-water college: the coeducational liberal arts school which grants no advanced degrees, limits its normal enrollment to (or at any rate normally enrolls no more than) one thousand, and owes allegiance of some sort to a Protestant church or, if unaffiliated, is a "religious" school.

The 176 American colleges which fit into this pattern lie mainly in two broad belts across the eastern half of the nation. The primary group is scattered thickly across the rich farmland from Kansas and Nebraska east to Ohio and Kentucky, and on into Pennsylvania and West Virginia. The second starts in Pennsylvania and meanders down through Virginia and the Carolinas and across into Tennessee, finally petering out in Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi.

It is no coincidence that these fresh-water college areas are the Protestant churchgoing sections of America. The deep religious feelings of the average American farmer — especially the well-to-do one — have made possible, even necessary, the founding of the fresh-water colleges. The proletarian sections of the United States have been more inclined to have their education conferred upon them by the State or the Catholic Church.

It cannot fairly be said that the fresh-water colleges educate most of the college graduates of the country, though this statement is made repeatedly by speakers at small school

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commencements. As a matter of fact, the overstuffed postwar enrollment of all 176 fresh-water schools hardly equals 110,000 — a total far exceeded by the 1946–47 registration of four universities (New York, Columbia, California and Michigan) alone. Nor can it be said with any justification that any single fresh-water college amounts in the national scheme to what is inelegantly known as a damn.

The importance of these 176 colleges lies in their aggregate impact on the nation: *Who's Who*, in its Fiftieth-Anniversary edition, indicates that these smaller schools have contributed to the big book of notables four times as many names in proportion to enrollment as have the larger colleges and universities. But perhaps even more of moment than the fact that small college folk make *Who's Who* with surprising regularity is the fact that the next generation will be, for better or worse, largely in the hands of today's fresh-water collegians at school and at church. Founded by churches, these colleges exist, if not primarily, at least substantially for the making of ministers. The manufacture of teachers seems to be a sideline yearly growing in importance at the expense of the ministerial aspects of fresh-water education. The responsibility of the small colleges is clear-cut and in most cases is recognized by presidents and deans, to whom it is no secret that if today's preachers are bigots and today's teachers fools, tomorrow's adults may be expected to flower accordingly.

II

No school — college or university — is any better than its accreditation. This was pointed up graphically a few years ago when the University of Georgia lost simultaneously its prestige and its accreditation because of a blundering political move by the late lamentable Gene Talmadge. The monkeyshines corrected and accreditation regained, Georgia assumed again its place in the educational world. At no time did the curriculum change, but while accreditation was lost, all was lost with it.

It is the same with the fresh-water colleges. The only way to answer the question, "Are these small schools as good as the liberal arts colleges of the universities?," is to look to the universities themselves. Accreditation of the fresh-water college by the state university may be considered an admission by the highest educational authorities of the state that the small school offers teaching equal to the state's best.

To achieve state university accreditation, a fresh-water school's curriculum must parallel closely that of the university. For this reason, church-sponsored colleges teach by the books rather than by the Book. The anti-Darwinian views of the Fundamentalist faiths are as a rule submerged, and biology receives the same objective treatment as it does at State College. The fresh-water colleges are, by and large, surprisingly aware of the importance of the sciences,

natural and social. Guilford, for instance, has an enviable standing as a pre-medical school, and Guilford mathematics and physics majors are sought after as instructors elsewhere. Milo V. Gibbons, Guilford '37, for instance, teaches mathematics and mechanics at the U.S. Naval Academy.

Within the Fresh-Water College field itself, some of the top-rankers are recognized by all the others, meanwhile guarding jealously their own recognition of other small schools. A case in point is that of Guilford vis-à-vis its near neighbor, High Point College. Guilford's credits are accepted almost everywhere at face value, but Guilford will accept High Point transcripts only on a conditional basis.

Grades and transcripts are more important to the scholar who seeks advanced degrees than to the run-of-the-mine college student who looks on a bachelor's degree as an apprentice's ticket in the business of adult living. For the lad who wants a sheepskin to flash while job-hunting, there is little choice between a diploma from a cosmopolitan university and an accredited fresh-water college. "Princeton firms" and "Yale companies" aside, businesses are inclined to evaluate education by its level rather than by its source. Government — increasingly a big business — is generally uninterested in the name of the school, though placement counsellors, scanning "Forms 57" of job-seekers, have been known to ask, "Where the hell is Guilford?"

To the alumnus who, with the wisdom of twenty-one, scorned the fresh-water college years as time wasted in a rustic atmosphere, it comes as a shock to find after more than a decade that the idea of the small college belatedly makes sense. *Sapientiam atque virtutem molior* is the motto of Guilford College. It means something like, "I am striving for knowledge and strength of character." Other schools, other mottoes, but this thought expresses fairly well what the small, church-related, coeducational, liberal arts college is in business for. One would not miss the point too widely to say that good citizenship is the ideal.

There is little doubt that the majority of fresh-water colleges are living up to this ideal according to their own lights. Guilford is sponsored by the Society of Friends — Quakers — whose ideas of citizenship do not include the bearing of arms in defense of their country. Guilford therefore gave no aid to the nation in either World War, nor to either side in 1861–65, nor in any other war since the college's founding in 1837. But, on the other hand, neither did Guilford proselytize pacifists, even in the 1930s when at bigger colleges revulsion against war caused young cynics to form such groups as "Veterans of Future Wars." The little Quaker school turned down three World War II requests from the armed services to conduct military courses, and went its peaceful way through the war with a student body of under 200 —

:ss than half its normal enrollment. 'hese were mostly girls: in 1943 the arsity basketball squad was made p of an epileptic, a somewhat crip-,led 4-F, two ministerial students nd two boys of less than seventeen 'ears.

Schools of other faiths, meanwhile, ccepted "V" classes from the Navy nd ASTP men from the Army and ,allooned their enrollments up into he thousands. Guilford came back .fter the war with the matriculation)f veterans under the GI Bill of Rights and now has a student body of ıround 600. The schools of wartime ;ood fortune have maintained their)ig enrollments until now, but the lay of reckoning is due when the :resh-water college must re-examine tself for the future.

III

There are two broad classes of fresh-water schools: those which are small rom choice and those which have always secretly or openly fostered ideas of bigness. The first type feels it is fulfilling its mission by being small; the second looks enviously at Dartmouth.

In another sense, too, there are two types of smaller colleges. The first — representing a majority — can best be exemplified in more detail later by Guilford College. The other is typified by a runaway hillbilly institution currently known as Bob Jones University. Financially, there is for the student little choice to be made between the two — without aid, it would cost around a thousand dollars a year to make one's way through either.

The Bob Jones College, as it was known in those days, was born a quarter of a century ago in Cleveland, Tennessee, of a fine religious frenzy in the mind of an itinerant tent preacher named Bob Jones. Jones developed a curriculum designed to transform slew-footed young mountain morons, in four years' time, into evangelists of that boisterous breed so greatly appreciated in the danker portions of the South. Aided by the Lord, a businessman named Mack, and a group of forlorn hill kids who contributed nickels and dimes, Bob Jones realized his colossal dream. With ineffable crust he named the college for himself. His far-seeing eye could discern in the future a horizon filled with camp-meeting tents, each tent holding an open-mouthed congregation spellbound by the hell and brimstone fury of a Bob Jones College alumnus. He bought radio time on an East Tennessee station and weekly used to solicit contributions for his college:

> This is Doctor Bob Jones speakin' to ya from the Margaret Mack Auditorium of the Bob Jones College in Cleveland. Now, the Bob Jones College is coeducational, interdenominational, non-sectarian and orthodox. It stands without apology for the old-time religion and the absolute authority of the Bible.

A couple of years ago Cleveland — the "Holy Roller Capital of the World" — got too small for Bob

Jones, his namesake son and his college. He moved lock, stock and barrel to Greenville, South Carolina, changed his enterprise from a "college" to a "university," turned the robes of the presidency over to Bob Jones, Junior, and sat back to watch the University grow. Though this school doesn't have all the accreditation most fresh-water colleges think is desirable — its standing among colleges is equivalent to the Morris Plan's standing among banks — Bob Jones U. has 2000 students and a faculty of a thousand, or at least such is its latest claim. Whether it has turned out any bigots the equal of Torquemada or the Salem Judges is not on record, but its yearly crop of evangelists is considerable. And the man who gets through Bob Jones U. is a high-minded, moral man. He'd have to be; last year, it is reported, a veteran was expelled for hand-holding on campus. The young lady with whom he was romancing was his wife.

Guilford, like the more stable colleges generally, is inclined to take this sort of thing in stride, expecting a good deal of hand-holding and considerable surreptitious hanky-panky as an inevitable part of a coeducational system. While apprehension of fornicators *in flagrante delicto* spells immediate expulsion almost anywhere, most of the church-related colleges take the long view of romance, and experience seems to bear them out. The percentage of campus love affairs which result in marriage is surprisingly high, and of such marriages ending in divorce gratifyingly low.

As a matter of fact, while there is perhaps the expected amount of unblessed sex activity at schools of the Guilford type, there is little female promiscuity. Nymphomaniacs hit the campus perhaps once in a quadrennium, and usually leave shortly afterward in disgrace. Between engaged couples, or between "steadies," however, there is likely to be extra-marital sex experimentation which the colleges naturally condemn and, admittedly rather futilely, try to prevent.

For this sort of goings-on, every college in the country has what long ago was archly and rather undescriptively termed "The Old Ox Road." Guilford's is the Friends burying ground across the highway from the campus, where shades of Quakers long dead — so the story goes — moan in envy at what the younger generation is up to.

Most church-related colleges find it expedient to establish a double standard for the control of their students. In line with North Carolina Quaker thought, tobacco is technically taboo at Guilford. (Incidentally, undergraduates chuckle at the Quakers who insist on this rule, many of whom are prominent North Carolina tobacco farmers.) Actually, the smoking ban applies only to women, and is enforced fairly strictly. Liquor is forbidden men and women both on and off campus, but enforcement is concentrated on the distaff side. Men in recent years have quit drinking the

poisonous "sugarhead" and second-rate corn of the environs, but only because bootlegging in the middle-Carolina area has blossomed into a big business and branded liquors are readily available.

The rules and the strictness with which they are enforced vary to a great degree with the mores of the religion sponsoring the school. The Friends are a folk to live and let live, firm believers in the conscience of man as God's policeman on earth. The more Pentecostal sects hold a tighter rein over their charges, some of them proscribing dancing, gambling and the reading of frivolous books. Dr. Clyde Milner, the kindly, gray-haired Quaker preacher who heads Guilford, sums up his views thus:

> We have minimum rules which we think are necessary for young, inexperienced people in their first years away from home. They are in a transitional phase here; we must not risk their well-being with complete *laissez-faire*, and their families would not wish us to. But on the other hand, I do not spy on them, I do not lie in ambush to catch them. The rules are enforced as well as they can be; their brunt is felt by flagrant and consistent violators.

Milner is recognized as one of the outstanding small college presidents in the country and is one of the better-known philosophers of the South. His philosophy of the small college is keynoted by his remark that "as soon as the veteran rush is over, I want to get back to the prewar situation. In those days, I knew the first and last name of every boy and girl on campus." Though it may be insignificant at a large university, the effect of the president's character on a small college is tremendous.

IV

A fresh-water campus can be pretty well described, wherever it may be, by describing Guilford. The college lies in the middle of a small area which has been predominantly Quaker for a quarter of a millennium. The Friendly Road, which ends at the nearby village of Friendship, has in its name a hint of Guilford's pervading Quakerism. Once in a while, if you eavesdrop on a conversation among indigenes you may catch a sentence with "thee" in it, and no one would be surprised if a freshman should drop into the president's office to ask, "Clyde Milner, will thee help me with my troubles?"

The "thee" Quakers, however, are dying off. The last of the great ones was a gentle soul named Elwood Chappell Perisho, to whose undying glory this whimsical tale is told:

> In his declining years, Dr. Perisho taught but one class, a natural science survey course. One warm day, when the windows of the ground-floor classroom were open and a baseball game was scheduled in Greensboro, he noticed each time he turned from his blackboard that he had fewer listeners. Feebly, the old man continued his lecture, turning slowly every few minutes to make a point on the board. After half the hour had passed, he had only a few students before him. "Ah, well," he said to the others, "they have all gone to the ball game. Thee may as well go, too."

Dr. Perisho and baseball were in Guilford's old days two of the grandest things about the school. Wes and Rick Ferrell, who were major league stars in the thirties, came from the tiny Guilford College community. Later, there was Russell Pope, a poet and scholar who found New York University too hectic. If the Quakers were monument builders, Perisho, Pope and baseball would be so honored today.

From the gate of Guilford a tree-lined road stretches perhaps two hundred yards to the campus proper. To the right of the road is a music building, thoughtfully placed as far as possible from study rooms, and across the street from the music building is the Quaker Meeting House, where the North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends convenes to regulate the discipline of Quakers in the South. No non-Quaker, so far as is known, has ever been urged to attend; let the Spirit move him, however, and he is welcomed as a Friend.

The rest of the campus is laid out in a quadrangle. The alumnus revisiting his old school might follow a counter-clockwise path around the tree-shaded lawn.

First on this route would come Archdale Hall and then Cox Hall. Both are decrepit men's dormitories which boast hardly more than floors, walls, ceilings, windows and plumbing. In Cox only Charity herself would call the plumbing adequate. But the alumnus recalls the student brawls — the water fights, the stampeding cow in Cox New North — and his critical attitude is tempered by wonder that after sixty years the old dormitories are still standing. He inquires, too, whether Cox New South is still known as "Yankee Stadium" in derisive honor of the many Northerners who come to Guilford and traditionally live in New South. It is.

He rounds the far end of Cox New North and sees a brick gymnasium, far and away the best building on campus, and remembers that this must be the building for which the Alumni Association hounded him for funds. He makes a mental note to kick in when they start the drive to remodel or rebuild Cox and Archdale.

Farther along the quadrangle is a new soda shop where, at lunch time or between classes, couples can get together — as they used to do at Clyde Pleasants' store — for a quick coke and a little necking. Daylight loving of a mild type is *comme il faut* in a school where they lock up the girls' dorms at 10 or 11 P.M. The soda shop is new to him; it was built after the war by government grant.

Founders' Hall is the heart of the campus. The original building of the school, it was opened in 1837, and here the more prosperous of the women students live, and most Guilfordians eat. Food service was recently changed from family to cafeteria style, to the general delight of the students. From a nostalgic viewpoint, however, the change was for the worse: the charming Quaker custom of silent grace had to be aban-

doned when a chow line was set up. The food, which was execrable in the old days, is held by the present students to be still abominable; there is no real basis for comparison, for time dulls the memory of tastes and the new students never ate there when the meals were really bad. Poor diet or good, the miracle of the loaves and fishes is repeated there morning, noon and night: the food budget per student is $1.01 a day.

Here at Founders', too, is the heart of the campus in another sense. Quiet parlors invite young lovers, and every overstuffed chair, no matter how small, assures its occupants that it was built for two. Coeducation at its best, which goes beyond Plato and stops short of Priapus, exists in these parlors and on the West Porch of fond alumni memory.

Almost unnoticed between Founders' and Mary Hobbs, the other women's dormitory, is an ivy-covered building which used to be a powerhouse but which now accommodates students groups. It is of but passing interest to the alumnus who confined his student activities to postprandial petting and never saw the "Hut" except over the scented shoulder of a coed.

To the young man looking for a bride — and many a male Guilfordian looks — Mary Hobbs Hall is, from a utilitarian standpoint, probably a better hunting ground than Founders'. The women who board at Mary Hobbs engage in a cooperative living experiment which has enabled many impoverished girls to get degrees and husbands. Unfortunately, a pretty dress exceeds a talented kitchen manner in magnetic power and Founders' as a rule receives the greater play from swains.

The ubiquitous married veteran lives behind Mary Hobbs in crowded prefabricated apartments. Life in the prefabs is not all beer and skittles, but who could blame a young man for taking a chance on love and learning at the same time? Times are tough here as elsewhere for the married student, but the college lends a hand financially now and then, and a youth with athletic prowess will find the alumni-sponsored Guilford Foundation ready to help. Others hold down part-time jobs, and still others — like the husband of President Milner's winsomely beautiful secretary — have wives who can smooth the rocky financial road to a college degree.

V

On around the quadrangle past Mary Hobbs lies King Hall, the one building dedicated solely to classrooms. Decrepit almost as much as Cox and Archdale, it seems to come close to the small college ideal of "Mark Hopkins at one end of a log and a boy at the other." By and large the quality of teaching is as good as the condition of King Hall is bad; 40 is a sufficient number of instructors to handle a student body of 600 without serious overcrowding. It is tragically typical of fresh-water colleges that the pay scale at Guilford — averaged across the

board from $2300 instructor to $4500 full professor — does not quite equal the income of a union sign-painter in Greensboro.

Guilford's library, built by Carnegie grant, adjoins King Hall. Katharine Ricks is symbolic of the thousands of overworked, underpaid, brilliant men and women who staff the fresh-water colleges. For 25 years she has run the library so well that miscreant students, campused for their sins, have found little fault with the traditional "punishment" of expiating their misdeeds in evenings of study under Miss Ricks' watchful eye. Here, perhaps, many a student has acquired a love of poetry by getting acquainted with the poets as a time-killing measure.

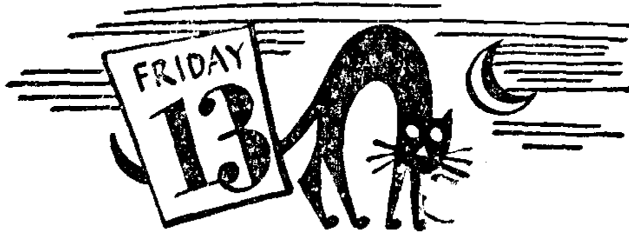
Memorial Hall is the last building but one in the tour around the campus. It is a hall of strange sounds and smells, where the ear may be assailed of an evening by practice sessions of Guilford's famed *A Cappella* Choir in the second-floor auditorium and the nose by late experiments of a chemistry major in the first-floor laboratories. The propinquity of the labs to the offices of the president, dean of the college, treasurer, registrar and alumni secretary makes it possible for any prankster who knows the formula for hydrogen sulphide to make the administrative wheels of Guilford grind to a smellbound halt.

Recently an additional classroom and some office space were provided behind Memorial Hall by the construction of an annex. Approaching middle-age caught up with this writer in Mem Annex when he came face to face with twelve years ago. Young Daryl Kent, who had been a student in 1936, greeted me with the same friendly Quaker grin. But the hair above the smiling eyes was gray and Kent's name was listed in the College Bulletin as "Dean of Men." Later, it surprised me a little to hear the present occupant of my old room at Archdale speak of Dean Kent in the same way that I, in the old days, had spoken of Dean Purdom.

In all, the old place hadn't changed much — and won't. As more time goes by and the alumnus revisits his campus, there will be each time a few surprises in store, as there were this time: Dorothy Gilbert is a little grayer but as understandingly critical of his ambitions and his English themes as ever; Russell Pope, the wisest teacher of them all, is in his grave these eight years and may the God of George Fox embrace his soul; Clyde Milner's hair is turning from gray to white, with "each white hair caused by another student just like you, Bill." But be his old school Guilford in the Carolina Piedmont or almost any one of the others, the returning alumnus will find that although its girls grow prettier and its faults dimmer in retrospect, *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose;* and that when his school taught him the virtues of intellectual curiosity — never to take yes for an answer — it did everything that anyone could ask of a fresh-water college.

THE SKEPTICS' CORNER

by ***BERGEN EVANS***



That Americans are the best fed people on earth

Not according to Fred Bailey, Executive Director of National Agricultural Research, Inc., who stated (in the *American Magazine*, Oct. 1947) that while we do consume more fruits and vegetables than any other nation, we are thirteenth in the per capita consumption of milk products, sixth in the consumption of meat and twelfth in the consumption of proteins in general. He believes that New Zealanders are the best fed people on earth.

That Pontius Pilate was a villainous wretch

The disinterested reader, accepting the narrative in *John* at its face value, finds it hard to regard Pilate as a villain. Although the ruler of the country, he met the unknown prisoner on terms of intellectual equality and tried to reason Him out of what must have seemed a fatal hallucination. It is true that with weary cynicism, under the threat of being accused of treason himself, he allowed the Jews their morbid privilege. But he plainly regarded the crucifixion as murder, did his best to prevent it and went out of his way to express his horror of the whole business and to disassociate himself from it.

His posthumous career has been a strange one. There was a persistent legend (supported by Tertullian) that he attempted to get Christ recognized as one of the Roman gods (thereby, as Gibbon remarks, exposing himself to the danger of martyrdom without acquiring its merit) and he came to be regarded as a holy figure. He was canonized in the Abyssinian Church (June 25) and his wife, Procla, was canonized in the Greek Church (October 27). In the Western world, however, he increased in villainy, reaching his nadir in the Mystery Plays in which he was so evil that he became a recognized comic, was given a tremendous, bellowing, ranting rôle and, as a final indication of his upper-class wickedness, always spoke Norman French.

That massaging reduces fat

Mark Twain once said that the shivering of the ague was a merciful dispensation of Providence to permit the crackers along the river bottoms to get exercise without exertion.

Many believe that massaging serves the same purpose and that, furthermore, it reduces fat. But the only one who gets any exercise from a massage is the masseur, and while exercise does burn up fat it takes a great deal more than turning over and grunting a few times to burn up any appreciable amount of it.

Sweating, such as is induced by steam cabinets and Turkish baths, will reduce weight by dehydration, but no fat sweats out and the water is usually replaced at the nearest bar.

There seems to be no way around it: if you want to weigh less, you've got to eat less.

That in the First World War the British and Germans played football in No Man's Land

This myth, sacred in the pacifist canon, was repeated by earnest college students in the twenties and early thirties as proof that the little men on both sides were fundamentally decent and that world peace was prevented from occurring spontaneously only by agents of the mysterious merchants of death.

Marie Bonaparte in her study of the myths of war is of the opinion that this yarn, which first appeared when the war was in progress, served to bolster morale by denying the dangers which the enemy represented. It also gratified the Frenchman's scorn of the Britisher's love of sports.

That skin diseases are highly contagious

Commenting on the average layman's revulsion at and fear of almost any skin eruption, Dr. Albert S. Tenney, of East Orange, N. J., writes: "The common skin diseases which one finds in a dermatologist's office are acne, eczema, athlete's foot, ringworm of the groin, itching of the arms and vulva, hives, psoriasis and drug eruptions. None of these is contagious." On the other hand in the general practitioner's office, where the same layman feels quite secure, "one finds patients suffering from active tuberculosis, influenza, severe colds and bronchitis and infantile paralysis, all of which are highly contagious and may be fatal." None of the rare, fatal skin diseases, Dr. Tenney adds, is contagious.

That the Hindu rope trick has actually been performed

Eventually every skeptic will be challenged to account for the famous Hindu pastime of throwing a rope into the air and having a small boy climb it and disappear at the top.

The only answer — and it is utterly unconvincing to those who want to believe — is that there simply isn't

any authentic account of its ever having been done. When George V, as Prince of Wales, visited in India in 1902, Lord Lonsdale, the sporting peer, offered £10,000 to anyone who could perform the rope trick and found no takers. Mr. G. Huddlestone, writing in *Nature* in 1919 said that he had resided in India for thirty years, during which time he had ceaselessly made inquiries regarding this trick but had never found anyone willing to perform it and did not believe that it could be or had been done.

Still the accounts come in. The latest is by Sir Henry Sharp, C.S.I., C.I.E., on pp. 61–62 of his *Good-Bye India*. Sir Henry, after a long career in India in which he had a particular interest in magic, confesses that he had never seen the trick performed and doubted that it could be. Then one gusty evening in St. Moritz he met a mysterious stranger who at the mention of the rope trick paled and trembled and told him that *he* had seen the trick performed years ago and, like the Ancient Mariner, had been unable to shake off the experience and was compelled to relate his ghastly experience. Astonishing as it may seem, Sir Henry seems to give him credence — offering "mass hypnosis" as a possible explanation.

That modern traffic jams are the worst ever known

On his seventy-fifth birthday Mr. George Bernard Shaw was asked in what department of life he had observed the greatest improvement. His answer — street traffic — was generally received as an amiable jest, for if there is anything we pride ourselves on it is the belief that our streets are more completely blocked, choked, dammed, obstructed and nullified by traffic than ever before in the history of harassed man.

But Mr. Shaw, as so often, was probably speaking the simple truth. City streets were formerly narrower, twisting, and intersected each other at difficult angles. Horses are feebler than gasoline engines, so there had to be more of them per pound moved and the greater congestion of cities probably required as much material to be moved within an equivalent space as we now move. Then too, horses are larger than engines and require more room. Their food cannot be concentrated and still more horses had to be used to supply them with it. Their exhaust, as every farm boy knows, does not float off by itself. They cannot be controlled with the precision of mechanized traffic and they are subject to hell-raising and contagious panics.

The last two plates of Hogarth's *Industrious Apprentice* give us a fair idea of what city traffic once was and occasionally in letters and memoirs we get further glimpses. Thus Voltaire and Madame du Châtelet were once caught in a traffic jam in Paris that remained snarled all night. They abandoned their coach to the coachman, squirmed their way to an unoccupied house and bivouacked.

STREPTOMYCIN AND TUBERCULOSIS

BY *WILLIAM ELLSWORTH CRAFT*

AT THIS year's mammoth meeting of the American Medical Association, more than ten thousand doctors from every section of the country converged on Chicago's Navy Pier to pool their medical experiences and learn at first hand about the year's most significant advances in medical and surgical techniques. Easily outranking all other disclosures in over-all importance and sheer human drama was the symposium wherein six of the nation's foremost tuberculosis experts revealed their latest findings on the treatment of TB with streptomycin.

The conclusion agreed on by all was that streptomycin is the most effective anti-tubercular drug ever known to medical science. It was also evident, however, that it is no cure-all. In many cases streptomycin produces results that are little short of miraculous; in other cases it acts only as a highly useful aid to other methods of treatment. As one doctor put it, streptomycin gets the patient off to a running start in his fight against the disease. By suppressing the infection and arresting its progress, the drug enables victims of the disease to gain an ascendancy over the tuberculosis microbes. Healing then occurs by natural processes. Streptomycin does not kill the bacterial invaders in the human body. It immobilizes them and prevents their extension. The natural defense forces of the body then assume command and — if the invading bacteria have been stopped early enough — complete their destruction.

To attack and immobilize the virulent tuberculosis microbes, streptomycin must establish actual contact with them. But in certain forms of the disease, the body reacts by building an impenetrable wall around concentrations of the bacteria. While this body defense succeeds in limiting the spread of the disease in some instances, it may also defeat the action of streptomycin by shielding the bacteria from its attack. It is in those types and stages of the disease in which large numbers of the invaders are accessible that streptomycin works best.

In acute miliary tuberculosis, a

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type in which hordes of invading bacteria sweep through the blood stream to establish innumerable foci of infection throughout the body, streptomycin is strikingly effective. Because of its rapidly overwhelming course, this form of the disease was almost invariably fatal prior to the introduction of streptomycin. But because the drug is blood-borne, and penetrates wherever the blood stream reaches, this type of tuberculosis is by nature exquisitely susceptible to streptomycin treatment.

Against tuberculous meningitis, a form of the disease in which the tuberculosis microbes invade the brain and spinal cord with a swiftly lethal effect, streptomycin produces results so far superior to other forms of treatment that conservative medical observers describe its effect as phenomenal. Tuberculous meningitis has always been the commonest and most destructive type of meningitis in infancy and childhood. About 33 per cent of all children who succumb to tuberculosis in the United States are killed by tuberculous meningitis, and 91 per cent of them are less than ten years old. The records of the Boston City Hospital reveal that during the past 32 years no child stricken with this vicious disease has left the hospital alive. But today the story is different.

II

One chill afternoon in October, seven-year-old Tommy S. came home from school with a "cold." During the next two weeks he was kept in bed with a cough and slight fever. By the second week he had lost all appetite for food and became alternately irritable and listless. One day, when he was especially irritable, his mother noticed a weakness in his left arm. The family physician was called and he immediately noticed that the boy's neck was stiff — a sign that often means meningitis. He was rushed to the hospital, but by the time he got there his left arm and leg were paralyzed. In addition, the left side of his face showed signs of weakness — of beginning paralysis. His temperature had jumped to 103° and his pulse to 100°. Laboratory tests for tuberculosis came back positive. A diagnosis of tuberculous meningitis was made, and the race against death was on. But no streptomycin was immediately available.

Penicillin and sulfa drugs were administered, but his temperature remained high. For eight fitful days and nights, doctors fought with all their available resources to keep this boy alive. On the ninth day, streptomycin was injected. By this time his condition had deteriorated greatly. He had fallen into a state of mental confusion, and had lost all conception of time, place or his own identity. He was constantly drowsy, unable to speak, and could not recognize members of his family. When doctors inserted hypodermic needles to draw off spinal fluid for examination — ordinarily an extremely painful procedure — Tommy did not struggle or cry.

Streptomycin began to work on the

tuberculosis microbes that were eating into his brain, and by the third week doctors saw the anxiously awaited signs that the drug was gaining the upper hand. Tommy called for food and fed himself with his right hand. He began to show interest in his surroundings and cried normally when the spinal punctures were performed. When samples of his spinal fluid were injected into guinea pigs, they showed no signs of tuberculosis. Tommy continued to improve gradually, and by the seventh week he responded to simple requests, could repeat words, and was able to identify a few ordinary objects. By the ninth week, he was as bright and alert as any normal seven-year-old boy.

For the first time in 32 years, doctors at this hospital were able to send home alive a child who had been stricken with tuberculous meningitis. One year later, this boy remains mentally alert and active. His left leg drags slightly and, though he can bend and use his left arm, he is still unable to grasp with his fingers. Some of his nerve cells had already been destroyed by the invading bacteria before streptomycin immobilized them. However, as time goes by, it is entirely possible that he will regain complete use of his originally paralyzed limbs.

Not every victim of this form of TB will be as fortunate as Tommy. The disease must be detected early and treatment begun immediately to get the best results. So far, streptomycin has saved up to 45 per cent of such cases, and it appears that these unprecedented results will be further improved.

When tuberculosis strikes the larynx and upper air passages leading to the lungs, the victim usually dies within a few weeks. Often he can neither talk nor swallow; frequently he dies of starvation. Streptomycin brings relief within a week, and healing is usually complete within a month. Other forms of the disease in which streptomycin has achieved striking effects are intestinal tuberculosis — a miserable condition — and tuberculous sinuses. Here again, streptomycin is superbly effective because the bacterial invaders are accessible to its attack.

III

The accumulated experience of the U. S. Veterans Administration in careful studies of more than 3000 cases of all types of TB affords an excellent basis for a résumé of what streptomycin has already accomplished. The drug has achieved some of its most remarkable results against tuberculosis of the upper respiratory tract (larynx, trachea and bronchi), intestinal tuberculosis, glandular tuberculosis and tuberculous sinuses. In this group, between 85 and 90 per cent of the cases have responded dramatically to streptomycin. Against these, as well as against tuberculous meningitis and miliary tuberculosis, streptomycin treatment is mandatory. In a group composed of tuberculosis of the lungs, skin, eyes, heart mem-

branes, kidneys, bladder and genital tract, streptomycin has been effective in 60 to 80 per cent of all cases. In the final group, which includes the ordinarily fatal miliary tuberculosis and meningitis, as well as crippling tuberculosis of the bones and joints, streptomycin has performed successfully in 30 to 45 per cent of the cases. Before streptomycin, a diagnosis of miliary tuberculosis or tuberculous meningitis meant that early death was virtually certain.

The limitations of streptomycin result from a curious phenomenon known to doctors as bacterial resistance. Just as a drug addict develops a tolerance to a drug after long-continued use, certain bacteria are capable of building up a resistance to streptomycin after a period of time. All the invading bacteria must be quickly destroyed by the combined attack of streptomycin and the natural body defense forces. Otherwise the survivors — even if there are only a few — can multiply rapidly and cause a return of the infection. When this happens, further treatment with streptomycin is futile. It is because of this unfortunate phenomenon that doctors sometimes are compelled to tell certain patients and their anxious, perplexed families that streptomycin is not suitable in their cases. It is because of this also that all other available measures such as bed rest, sanatorium care and appropriate surgical procedures should be employed whenever circumstances make them advisable. In certain instances, doctors may even find it advisable to withhold streptomycin temporarily if a particular case promises to yield to other methods of treatment. This may be done rather than risk later development of bacterial resistance and thus render streptomycin impotent at the time when it might be most urgently needed, should the patient take a turn for the worse. Though acquired bacterial resistance remains a problem that must be considered in each case, doctors have found that by shortening the period of treatment with streptomycin they can reduce the incidence of resistance without materially impairing streptomycin's curative effect. The maxim today is: Give streptomycin when it can hit the microbes hardest, and withdraw it before the bacteria have a chance to retaliate. The natural body defense forces and complementary treatment measures are then better able to cope with the infecting organisms.

Unlike penicillin, one of the least toxic of drugs, streptomycin when given in large doses over long periods may damage the auditory nerve. This important nerve controls hearing and equilibrium. When its function is impaired, patients suffer attacks of dizziness, lose their sense of balance, and may even become temporarily deaf. However, intensive research by the producers of streptomycin has yielded a new chemical entity, *dihydrostreptomycin*, which evidently has all the therapeutic attributes of streptomycin, but is very much less toxic. Clinical trials to date have

shown that the incidence of auditory nerve damage with this new drug is extremely low. It is expected that the major streptomycin manufacturer will be in a position to make this remarkably improved drug available to doctors and their patients in the immediate future.

IV

America has been largely asleep concerning the dangers of tuberculosis. Once a year, in December, we awaken temporarily and buy Christmas Seals. During the rest of the year we do little about it. And, with the exception of the distraught families of dead, crippled or wasting victims, we *think* little about it. We hear much of cancer and heart disease which, admittedly, are the greatest killers in point of numbers. But these are diseases of the waning years of life. Tuberculosis robs us of the best years of our lives. As one authority has recently pointed out, the average woman today can expect to live for some 69 years. If she dies at 62 from cancer, she has lost seven potential years of life — years of diminishing activity. On the other hand, if she dies at 24 from tuberculosis — a common occurrence — she has lost 45 potential years, including many of her best. In the aggregate, approximately 1.2 million potential years are lost by those who die of tuberculosis, as against about 1.3 million potential years lost through cancer — a small differential indeed.

Tuberculosis today is one of the most serious health problems confronting any state or community. There are now about 500,000 cases in the United States, and an average of 50,000 persons are killed by it each year. Tuberculosis is the most prevalent of all infectious diseases, and is the leading cause of death from disease during the green years of fifteen to 34. During the years of World War II it killed two thirds as many Americans as were sacrificed in battle. With streptomycin treatment, approximately 80 per cent of all types of the disease can be improved or cured, and this percentage is, of course, higher in those types of the disease most amenable to this drug. But before streptomycin and other forms of treatment may be given, the presence of the disease must be detected. The best results are obtained when the disease is exposed early and treated selectively at the proper stage.

The most effective method of accomplishing widespread detection of tuberculosis would be through mass use of chest X-rays. As the National Tuberculosis Association pointed out in a statement issued recently:

> The first step in the eradication of tuberculosis is to find the persons who already have active pulmonary tuberculosis. If case finding is not carried on constantly, it does little good for the community to provide hospital beds and other services, necessary as they are. For the persons who should use them will still be engaged in the ordinary activities of life in the community. When symptoms of tuberculosis appear it is usually too late to have prevented the spread of the disease and the

best opportunity for effective therapy is gone.

A relentless search for active but undetected cases — case finding — should be the moral obligation of every community. Case finding is also a sound investment for any community. The earlier the disease is discovered, the shorter the period of hospitalization and the greater the chance for cure. The heavy financial burden laid on the taxpayer by long hospitalizations in state-supported institutions is not fully realized by the general public.

Public health authorities, backed by supporting laws, should compel the mass X-ray examination of all school teachers, food handlers and domestic employees; a striking number of these groups are eventually admitted to sanatoriums with advanced tuberculosis. And these are the people who — directly or indirectly — are in daily contact with our children, who can unwittingly transmit this disease to our children before they themselves know they have it.

Industry can play an important rôle in reducing the prevalence and ravages of this disease by requiring a routine chest X-ray with each pre-employment and periodic health examination. Every patient admitted to a general hospital should also have a routine X-ray examination of the chest. Tuberculosis is especially prevalent among inmates of mental hospitals and prisons. A great many of these men and women are eventually discharged to their homes and communities, so that they increase the dangers of undetected active tuberculosis. Routine X-ray examinations of these groups, which could be performed easily and economically, should be mandatory.

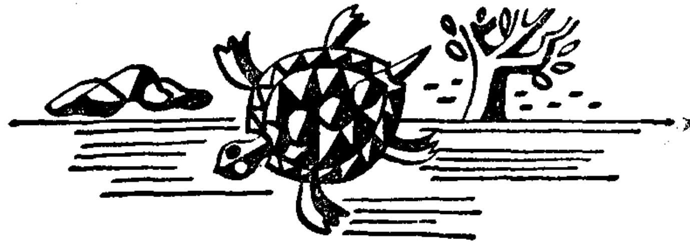
Too many patients are admitted to tuberculosis sanatoriums with far-advanced disease after having been under treatment over a period of months for "chronic bronchitis." It would be a commendable policy for practicing physicians to insist on an X-ray film of the chest whenever a patient's cough persists for more than two weeks. This applies also to diabetic patients, in whom the prevalence and rapid spread of tuberculosis is notoriously common, as well as to patients who have recently recovered from pneumonia. An attack of pneumonia often provides the spark that causes an old, inactive tuberculous lesion to flare up.

In addition to these measures, it is axiomatic that greater efforts will have to be expended to clear slums and crowded tenement districts if tuberculosis is to be eradicated. Hot-beds of infection such as these constitute active nuclei from which the disease can spread to less congested areas.

Now that physicians have at their command a weapon as potent as streptomycin, these measures for uncovering and fighting tuberculosis assume even greater importance. For the first time in the long, blood-stained history of this disease, we have in our possession the implements and knowledge to defeat it.

DOWN TO EARTH

by ALAN DEVOE



NATURAL HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS

THERE is no other holiday in our year which is celebrated with such extensiveness and enthusiasm as the one called Christmas. Weeks and months before Christmas, legions of merchants are stocking in special preparation for it. Innkeepers are making reservations for Christmas parties; greeting-card wholesalers are shipping reams of their product to retailers; Post Offices are arranging for the hiring of thousands of Christmas helpers. Choristers are rehearsing Christmas carols, sorely tried little boys and girls are rehearsing Christmas pageants, writers are struggling to produce the Christmas articles commissioned by their editors back in August. Christmas is *the* day in our calendar.

This being the case, it is curious how little we have inquired into the origins of the day's significance, and the meaning of its familiar ceremonies and symbols. Christmas? Why, Christmas of course is the birthday of Jesus Christ. We take it to be an annual observance that has been occurring peculiarly in Christendom since a December twenty-fifth now twenty centuries ago. Holding this understanding, we surprisingly seldom look into the matter any further.

But the story of Christmas is a much older and stranger story than that. Christmas is undoubtedly one of the oldest festal days on earth; not twenty centuries old, but uncountable centuries old, going back and back to the primitive dawn-days of our earliest awareness of the natural world around us. As a Christian observance, it does not date back to Christ's time nor to anywhere near it. The Christian Christmas came into existence only after the Church had already been flourishing for centuries. The twenty-fifth of December was not the day Christ was born.

To examine into the history of Christmas is to explore many ancient and curious areas of folk-lore and religion, and to find surprising things.

All religions, in a certain profound sense, are of course nature-religions.

They utter man's worshipful awe as he looks upon the sky-vault over him, and the incredible earth-life around him, and the strangeness of seas and seasons. Awed, he seeks also to interpret. These star-patterns, what do they signify? These rhythms and recurrences, what is behind them? Now it is hot; now it is cold. Why? Mythology and theology set to constructing their answers. The clouds race across the sky as they do because they are indwelt by antelopes. An eagle-bodied giant, shaking his wings somewhere invisibly, creates the blowing of the wind. Mars is a peacock, singing at midnight to the moon. The Sky-Father is now smiling; now terrible in thunder; now breathing his great rhythmic breaths that are the seasons. . . .

The ancients, looking up at the sky, made it their calendar. Dividing it into twelve divisions corresponding to months, they made the brightest stars in each division a symbol of the happenings in nature at each season. At lambing-time the sun was in the sign of Aries, symbolic ram. As the sun receded to the south, it was in Cancer, the crab that walks backward. When the bullocks were put to plowing, the sun-sign was Taurus, the bull. And so all around the year. Terminologies varied, but everywhere in the ancient world there was observed the symbolic calendar of the sky.

The shortening of days as winter draws on has a certain grimness or bleakness for us even now, relatively free as we are from the power of the weather, and firmly convinced though we are that the days will presently lengthen again. For the ancients, the withdrawal of the sun meant darkness and cold and foreboding. As the sun got lower and lower in the gloomy days before the winter solstice, it looked very much as though the sun might be going to disappear below the southern horizon for good. The sun appeared to be entering into death. Who should say whether, under the grace of the gods or God, there would ever be a re-birth again?

Then the solstice would come; and, lo!, the sun was born a-new. As it started on its northward journey, beginning an astronomical new year, the constellation on the eastern horizon was Virgo, the virgin. Behold the new-born sun, cradled in the arms of the virgin mother!

In Scandinavia, the people rejoiced with noise-making and uproar. For seven days, generally from the eighteenth of December, the Romans engaged in their Saturnalia, pressing gifts upon one another and lighting myriads of festive candles. To the north, not candles but greater fires were kindled: solstice-fires, symbol of a new year and all its promise of light and warmth and the blaze of fertility. Among the Angli of Britain, says Bede with a certain embarrassment, there was celebrated a wild *modra niht*, "mothers' night," so-called "by reason we suspect of the ceremonies which in that night-long vigil the people performed."

In Egypt:

According to the testimony of Macrobius and of St. Epiphanus, the Arabs of Petra, the inhabitants of the valley of Elousa in Idoumea, and certain others in Egypt had the custom of taking from the sanctuary, at the time of the winter solstice, an idol of the sun, represented as a newborn child, whilst the priests went along in a nocturnal procession and chanted: "Korah, the Virgin, has given birth to Aion!" Aion was the new sun.

II

For some three hundred and fifty years after the establishment of Christianity, the birth of Jesus was accorded no celebration. As late as the year 245, Origen specifically condemned the thought of such a celebration as sinful, "as if Christ were a Pharaoh." Little by little, however, there began to be speculation about Christ's birth-date, and a growth of sentiment that the date should be honored. The ensuing debates and discussions lasted into the sixth century, and were frequently of the quaintest. There was the elaborate argument, for instance, that Christmas must fall on the twenty-eighth of March. The world had been created perfect, with leaves and flowers. Therefore it must have been spring. Also, the full moon was out; therefore it must have been at the equinox. We know from Scripture that the moon and sun were created on a Wednesday. The twenty-eighth of March meets these requirements. Conclusion: The Sun of Righteousness, Christ, the new Adam, was surely born on that date. Equally remarkable arguments sought to establish Christmas as November 17, April 20, and January 6.

That December 25 should finally have been selected, however, was nearly inevitable. The winter solstice, according to the Roman calendar at the time, fell on that date. Either the twenty-fifth itself, or a date a few days one way or the other, was immemorially a great pagan festival, celebrated with an uproar of fire-worship and fertility-worship, nearly everywhere in the northern hemisphere. Ready-made for Christian purposes, the date provided the perfect symbolism of the Sun and the Son, the Sky-Virgin and the Virgin Mother.

Christmas, the twenty-fifth of December, at last came officially into being.

III

Now this year Christmas is again upon us, and we bring forth the familiar furbishings of the celebration: the holly, the Yule-log, the sprigs of cunningly hung mistletoe. The subject of our celebration we understand to be the birth of Christ; but the paraphernalia of it go back to the old, old pre-Christian Christmas, the solstice-blaze, and the *modra nihts.*

Holly, the holy tree, the Christ-thorn, is to pious people now a symbol of the Savior's crown of thorns. But anciently holly was a feature of the Roman Saturnalia. It was a feature of Britons' solstice-vigils. There are prickly and non-prickly holly leaves, and it was an early and natural gesture

of sexual symbolism to call them "he" and "she." The nomenclature survives still, in parts of rural Europe; and there are folk-sayings to the effect that the "sex" of the holly-leaves brought into the house at Christmas-time determines whether man or woman is to rule the house during the coming year. In an earlier day, the bringing together at the solstice of "male" and "female" holly leaves was attendant upon the bringing together of the human sexes, in riotous salute to the restoration of the sun and the splendor of fecundity.

The Yule-log which we ignite at Christmas-time was originally ignited, according to one school of philologists, in honor of the Celtic sun-God Yaioul. It was in any event ignited, certainly, to the accompaniment of *yollen*, which was Middle English for tumultuous outcry, from Anglo-Saxon *gylan* which meant merry-making. Our word *yodel* comes from the same source. December and January were known to us, once upon a time, as former-Yule and after-Yule; and it was between them, around the time of the end of Christmas week, that men and women plunged into the round of merrymaking and mating and fire-building that signalized the turn of the sun and the renewal of life's promise.

It is our Christmas mistletoe that is most vividly a link with the long ages of Christmases before Christ. The thought may occur to few decorous ladies now, standing coyly under the little sprig of leaves and berries and hoping for a Christmas kiss, that they are offering themselves in a mild modern survival of a fierce fertility-rite. But such is the case. There is no Christian significance in mistletoe. But there is an ancient Druidic one, wild and earth-close. The Druids did no such feeble thing as merely hanging mistletoe in bunches and standing beneath it. They crushed the mistletoe, and made a draught of it, and drank it. On those solstice-nights which embarrassed the Venerable Bede, they drank it as a cure for sterility and as an aphrodisiac.

IV

There is a kind of timorous Christian who is dismayed to consider that his Christmas customs are adapted paganisms, and that his Lord was not in fact born on the day set aside for observance, and that the Christian story of the Virgin and the Son follows antique myths of another Virgin and another Sun. To any such readers, there are commended these words:

> Let no one be frightened by all this. It is a delight to be able to go back to the origins — to follow historical developments and distinguish their outlines: to proceed from the astronomical sun to the Spiritual Sun, from the zodiacal virgin to the manger of the Infant. . . . We must realize fully how much the liturgies owe to astronomy.

This was written by one of the most learned experts upon Christmas, its ancient origins and subsequent history, and also upon many other questions connected with the development of the calendar. From him

comes the quotation, cited earlier, about the ancient Egyptian religious ceremony, at the time of the winter solstice, in honor of the Virgin Korah and her Son the Sun. He is a man who has been studying these matters devotedly now for thirty-seven years, and remains serene. His name is Abbé Chauve-Bertrand, and the sponsor of his researches is the Vatican.

To all readers of this department: Merry Christmas!

MORE THAN YEARS

BY SJANNA SOLUM

Maturity is learning how to weep
Invisibly: to feel within the throat
The slow hot tears without initial note
Of grief. Maturity knows how to keep
Its anguish to itself — and how to sleep
With loneliness for lover — to devote
Attention to a tune it knows by rote:
An acquisition deeper than skin-deep.

Maturity is hardly earned — result
Of more than these accumulated years
Of breathing. There is knowledge back of tears
Unshed, indicative of hope. No cult
Encompasses this lesson of the wise:
Tears in the throat and laughter in the eyes!

THE GREAT BOORN MYSTERY

BY *STEWART H. HOLBROOK*

HAD not Sally Boorn Colvin found herself with an unwanted pregnancy in the otherwise pleasant spring of 1815, there might never have been a Boorn Mystery, Great or otherwise; and the good people of Manchester, Vermont, together with their descendants for three generations, would have been deprived of a fascinating subject for conversation.

It was unquestionably Mrs. Colvin who made the affair possible. When she discovered the awkward condition she was in, her lawful husband had been absent for more than three years. Not until then did Sally Colvin, or anybody else, display the least interest in his whereabouts.

The Boorns, in that time and town, were a prolific race. I find no less than 28 persons of that name living in Manchester, listed in the Vermont census for 1800, so the condition of Sally was not astonishing, even though, to put it as delicately as possible, she had no visible inseminating agent. But only a few of the many Boorns concern us here.

Jesse, Stephen and Sally were the children of Barney and Elizabeth Boorn. The boys, if old accounts are to be trusted, were shiftless and given to rum. Whether Sally, too, was shiftless and sunk in liquor is not now known, but she patently had ways of amusing herself. Then there was Barney's brother, known throughout the affair as Uncle Amos, a "solid and respectable" man whose only fault, it would seem, was talking overmuch of his dreams, which were often of the nightmare sort.

Then, of course, there was Russell Colvin, who married Sally and was legally and perhaps even actually the father of her first two children. To be both brief and kind to Colvin, it may be said he was shiftless and weak-minded, the sort of person designated as "queer" in Vermont. Much of the time he, Sally, and their brats lived with and on the bounty of Barney Boorn, who was a farmer. Colvin, says John Spargo, one of his many biographers, with careful understatement, had little sense of responsibility toward his family. On several occasions he had left home suddenly to wander for months God alone knew where; and then, just as casually, he would show up again at Barney Boorn's, stow away a good mess of victuals, and resume his none too diligent labor on the farm.

Such were the leading participants in Manchester's greatest drama.

II

The Boorn Mystery began to take shape on or about the tenth of May in 1812, when Russell Colvin again disappeared from the Barney Boorn home. It made not a ripple in the village, or even at home. There was no talk of Colvin until three years after, when Sally began, as Judge Sherman Moulton, an authority on the case, puts it, "to ponder her approaching confinement and the support of the infant." She went to Squire Hitchcock, a local attorney, who told her flatly she could not swear the child upon anyone while her husband was living.

Well, *was* he living? The question immediately became of the greatest importance to all of Manchester. Indeed, says an old account, "the most exciting topic of the day, in the absence of mad dogs and revivals, was the mysterious disappearance of Russell Colvin."

Suspicion gradually centered on Colvin's brothers-in-law, Jesse and Stephen Boorn. They were known to have quarreled with Colvin. In fact, Stephen, who heartily disliked the two Colvin children and their father, had gone so far as to inquire if there was no method by which more offspring of the union could not be prevented. And now, with Colvin gone and Sally pregnant, the town itself suddenly took interest. The support of mother and child might well become an item in the Manchester town budget. And the town officials, as Judge Moulton remarked, were thrifty.

As nearly as could be made out, Russell Colvin had last been seen in the company of Jesse and Stephen Boorn, picking stones in a field on the Barney Boorn place. On that day Sally herself was away in Bennington, probably frolicking in that metropolis. If she troubled to inquire, on returning home, what had become of her husband, it is not in the record.

But now, three years later, she did ask her brothers what had become of Colvin. They replied that he had gone to hell, that they had put him "where potatoes would not freeze." They related much the same stories to inquiring townsmen. Then there appeared the immortal woodchuck. This animal had been killed by Stephen Boorn and given to one of the Colvin children, who took it home. Sally cooked and served it for what was presumably an unforgettable repast. Thereupon Russell Colvin had remarked it was the last goddam meal he would eat at her table, and promptly walked out the door and out of her life. Or such was Sally's story.

The various and ever-changing tales of Sally, Jesse and Stephen ran on and were worked over again and again. They ran on throughout 1816 and throughout 1817. In that year Stephen Boorn and his wife and children removed to Denmark, New York, a distance of some two hundred miles from Manchester. Whether or not this move was made to escape local

tongue-wagging is not clear. Jesse Boorn and Sally Colvin remained behind.

The local talk of Colvin's disappearance never ceased, and it was going strong in 1819 when Uncle Amos Boorn entered the affair. This man of "unimpeachable character" dreamed — three nights in a row, naturally — that Russell Colvin had appeared at his bedside, told him he had been murdered, and asked him to follow and be shown the place where his body had been hidden. This spot turned out to be familiar enough. It was an old cellar hole over which a house had once stood.

Townsmen hearkened to Uncle Amos' dream, and soon they were excavating the cellar hole, which had been partially filled with earth and leaves. The hole was in the same field where Colvin, with Stephen and Jesse, had been picking stones on that long-ago day in 1812, when Colvin was said to have disappeared. Moreover, this very hole had been used for burying potatoes in winter. And what was that story Stephen and Jesse had told — about putting Colvin away where potatoes wouldn't freeze?

Suspicion of the two brothers now turned quickly to certainty, for the excavating work brought forth some damning evidence, namely a button, a jackknife, and several pieces of bones. Sally Colvin was asked to describe the buttons on the coat of her late, or her absent, husband; and his knife. She did so, and when the encrusted dirt was rubbed off, the button was seen to be of the exact color and design named by the wife, or widow. It was the same with the knife; before she saw it, Sally called the turn.

This was very bad, but it was far from all, for with seemingly fiendish sentience the coils of circumstance began to tighten around the two Boorn brothers, Jesse and Stephen. Then their father's barn burned to the ground; and a bit later a small boy and a dog dug up, near the site of the barn, what appeared to be charred human bones. It was time, and long past, said local authorities, for the town of Manchester, Vermont, to act.

III

On the twenty-seventh of April, 1819, or almost seven years after the supposed murder, Jesse Boorn was arrested and put into the town jail. A warrant was issued for the arrest of Stephen, long since a resident of Denmark, Lewis County, New York. Three Manchester worthies, Sam Raymond, Truman Hill and Robert Anderson, were sent into the far wastes of York State to fetch the wanted man. They made the journey in three days, promptly located and surrounded the Boorn home, then closed in and arrested the astonished Stephen, whom they loaded with chains. If the arresting officers ever heard of the laws of extradition, they paid them no heed. They took Stephen straight to Manchester and put him into jail with his brother.

During the months intervening before the fall term of court, time must have hung heavy for the Boorn brothers, chained to the walls of the tiny jail. The local Congregational divine, the Rev. Lemuel Haynes, labored with them, urging the virtues of meekness and resignation; and many a townsman visited the boys and exhorted them to confess the crime they were surely to hang for. And there was one Silas Merrill, a fellow prisoner, in on a charge of forgery, who talked a great deal with Stephen Boorn and told him endlessly that by confessing the crime he doubtless would be found guilty of nothing worse than manslaughter and would thus beat the gallows.

And presently Stephen Boorn called for pen and paper. He sat himself down and in his own hand wrote a long and rambling confession in which he admitted having quarreled with Russell Colvin, on May 10, 1812, and of killing him and hiding the body. He did not implicate his brother Jesse, or his father, Barney. (The latter had been arrested but released.)

Perhaps this is the proper place to relate that right after Stephen's confession, Silas Merrill, the alleged forger, was relieved of his chains and allowed comparative liberty in the jail house. This fact was later used by attorneys for the Boorns at the trial, in an effort to show that Merrill had been urged by town authorities to get Stephen to confess — on a promise of leniency for himself.

The two Boorns officially pleaded not guilty and placed themselves "upon the country," which is to say they submitted to trial by a jury of men in the vicinage. The trial occupied five days. On the last day of October, 1819, the jury, in one hour, brought in a verdict of guilty in the first degree. Both Boorns were sentenced to be hanged on the twenty-eighth of January, 1820.

In those days the Vermont legislature had the power to pardon or commute a sentence. Petitions of the two Boorns were prepared and presented in November. Jesse's sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, but the solons refused to save Stephen from the hanging he so obviously deserved. Jesse was taken to Windsor and placed in the state prison. Stephen remained in his vile cell at Manchester, still attended by the faithful Rev. Haynes.

The case of the Boorns now seemed settled; all that remained was a good public hanging, to come in January.

In reality the Boorn affair had hardly begun.

One of the attorneys for the Boorns was young Leonard Sargeant, an able and conscientious man who now visited poor Stephen in his chains. Sargeant was downcast and told the prisoner that all hope seemed to have fled. Stephen brightened for a moment to ask the lawyer if it might not be a good plan to advertise in the press for news of Colvin. Sargeant responded with a question. "Did you," he asked, "murder Colvin as you confessed you did?" "No!" said Ste-

phen, who then went into such a vehement denial that the attorney was impressed. He forthwith prepared a notice which was sent to and published in the weekly Rutland *Herald:*

> MURDER. Printers of newspapers throughout the United States are desired to publish that Stephen Boorn, of Manchester, Vermont, is sentenced to be executed for the murder of Russell Colvin, who has been absent about seven years. Any person who can give information of said Colvin may save the life of the innocent by making immediate communication. Colvin is about five feet, five inches high, light complexion, light colored hair, blue eyes, about forty years of age. Manchester, Vt. Nov. 25, 1819.

The notice appeared in the *Herald* on November 30. The editor, patently a skeptical man, had an editorial in the same issue intimating that the Boorns were probably guilty as charged, but with pious smugness he remarked it would be a happy event if the press were the means of having "one raised from the dead, another saved from the gloomy abode of the State's Prison for life."

So it would be, but the circulation of weekly papers such as the *Herald* was limited, the mails were slow, and less than two months away loomed the gallows for Stephen, still chained to the rock-maple plank of Manchester jail. And he surely would have remained there until led to the gibbet had it not been for two men of curiosity and great good will named James Whelpley, of New York City, and Taber Chadwick of Shrewsbury, New Jersey.

These two men were present the lobby of a New York City hot when somebody read aloud a lett in the New York *Evening Post* whic had been first printed in the Alban *Daily Advertiser*. This was not th advertisement prepared by Attorney Sargeant, but a commentary on the Boorn case in which the writer stressed the "divine agency" of Uncle Amos' dream, by which the crime allegedly was discovered and the murderers brought to justice. The writer of this letter had evidently not heard of Sally Boorn Colvin's connection with the crime.

In any case, the interest of both Mr. Whelpley and Mr. Chadwick was aroused by the letter in the *Post.* And Whelpley, who had been born in Manchester and known the Boorns fairly well, now "enlivened the conversation" in the hotel lobby by relating stories of Colvin's eccentricities. Chadwick listened with more than common interest. He was thinking of a peculiar man who worked on the farm of his brother-in-law, William Polhemus, of Dover, New Jersey. A few days later he wrote to the *Evening Post*, which published the letter, dated at Shrewsbury, N. J., on December 6, 1819:

> Sir: Having read in your paper of the conviction and sentence of Stephen and Jesse Brown [sic] of Manchester, Vermont, charged with the murder of Russell Colvin . . . and not knowing what facts may have been disclosed on their trial and wishing to serve the cause of humanity I would state as follows. . . . Some years past a stranger made his appearance in

this county and on being enquired of said his name was Russell Colvin, that he came from Manchester, Vermont — he appeared to be in a state of mental derangement, but at times gave considerable account of himself. . . . He is a man of rather small stature, round favored, speaks very fast, has two scars on his head and appears to be between 30 and 40 years of age. . . . He is now living here, but so completely insane as not to be able to give any satisfactory account of himself. . . . If you think proper to give this a place in your columns it may possibly lead to a discovery that may save the lives of innocent men. . . . I am, sir, with sentiments of regard, Taber Chadwick.

Good Mr. Chadwick also wrote in similar vein to the postmaster of Manchester, Vermont, who just happened to be the same Attorney Sargeant that had put the advertisement in the Rutland *Herald*. But Sargeant's faith in the advertisement must have been woefully weak. It seems incredible, but it is a fact that he wholly ignored Mr. Chadwick's letter. . . .

Mr. Whelpley, however, was taking steps. Upon reading the Chadwick letter in the *Post*, he went at once to New Jersey and there called upon Mr. Polhemus, employer of the insane hired man. This person had been working on the Polhemus farm since April of 1813, or about a year after the disappearance of Russell Colvin. Whelpley talked with the dim-witted fellow, who said that his name had once been Colvin but that now he was another man altogether. He disclaimed any knowledge of Manchester, or of Vermont. But when Whelpley asked how he had come by the scars on his head, he replied he got them while "chopping on the mountain" for a man who Whelpley knew was a neighbor of the Boorns in Manchester.

IV

Mr. Whelpley was satisfied. This assuredly was his man. But when he endeavored to get Colvin to accompany him as far as New York, Colvin refused. Nor would bribes or arguments move him. But devious Mr. Whelpley was not done. Through the kindly offices of a handsome young woman, who used certain "blandishments and promises," Colvin was persuaded to go, and go he did, without fuss, as far as New York. But when the pretty young thing disappeared, as she presently did, Colvin demanded to be taken back to the New Jersey farm. He would be damned, he said, if he went one step more.

But Mr. Whelpley was a man of parts and imagination. He told Colvin that British men-of-war had entered New York harbor to lay siege to the city. It would be dangerous, not to say plain suicide, for them to attempt to cross the Hudson to New Jersey; and he proposed they return to the Polhemus farm by stage, in a roundabout way. The dim Colvin recalled that the United States and Great Britain had been at war when he came to New Jersey in 1813, and fo all he knew they were still at war Without more bother he accompanie Mr. Whelpley.

That must have been a ride to remember — Mr. Whelpley, the madman at his side in the stagecoach, rolling north up the Hudson to Albany, then eastward to the Green Mountains at Bennington. One wonders what monstrous lies Whelpley had to think up to keep his charge from leaping out and taking his chance with the British navy and army. It was accomplished, however, and on December 22 they arrived in Bennington, Vt., where court was in session. The arrivals created a sensation and a courier was sent riding ahead furiously to Manchester.

Manchester, shocked to its marrow by the news, recovered quickly, and was ready when the stage bearing Colvin and his keeper arrived at nightfall. An immense crowd had assembled in front of the tavern. The jail door was opened and Stephen Boorn was brought forth. The fetters on his wrists were removed but — says Judge Moulton, the historian — "those upon his ankles were left, possibly through the caution of the jailor." Jailors in Vermont, in those days, were careful men.

Colvin was brought before the prisoner, and at once inquired why Stephen was in chains. "Because," said that poor man, "they say I murdered you." Colvin seemed mildly surprised. "You never hurt me," he said. "Jesse struck me with a briar once, but it didn't hurt much."

Townsmen were rolling out the old village cannon, which for years had been used for occasions of great rejoicing; and Stephen Boorn, his fee presumably still fettered, was per mitted to fire the first of the fift salutes which seemed proper for a man snatched from the gallows.

Colvin recognized and warmly greeted his two sons, Lewis and Rufus; but when his wife Sally came up, he said he wanted nothing to do with her. (There is no record of what happened to her three-year-old baby.) But most of all Russell Colvin wanted to return to the Polhemus farm in New Jersey — British or no British. So, in company with the faithful Mr. Whelpley, the man who had not been murdered was taken back whence he came. He died there a few years later.

Finally, even the leg fetters were removed from Stephen Boorn and he was free — exactly 37 days before the date set for his hanging. He attended services in the Congregational church, where his good friend, the Rev. Lemuel Haynes, preached a rouser of a sermon, "The Prisoner Released." Then he was taken to Windsor to greet Brother Jesse as the state prison's doors opened.

The Brothers Boorn had had enough of Manchester, Vermont. And Manchester possibly felt much the same toward the brothers. The town contributed to the cost, at least so far as Stephen and his family were concerned, of moving them to New York State. Jesse went too, and later both families moved to Geauga County, Ohio, where they are said to

have "sustained a good moral character."

As for good Mr. Whelpley, who more than any other agency was responsible for the happy denouement, he was recompensed for his trouble and expense, by the state of Vermont, in the sum of $88.50. And the Corporation of the City of New York, by what divine interposition I cannot even guess, came through handsomely and paid Mr. Whelpley $37.50, the cost of his trip of investigation to New Jersey and the Polhemus farm. Thus was an innocent man saved from the gibbet, and another from prison, for a total outlay of $126.

All of these details are good to know, but one could wish that some historian had been curious enough to investigate the outcome in relation to Mrs. Colvin. She seems to have been pretty much ignored by the chroniclers of the case. I for one shall always wonder what became of Sally.

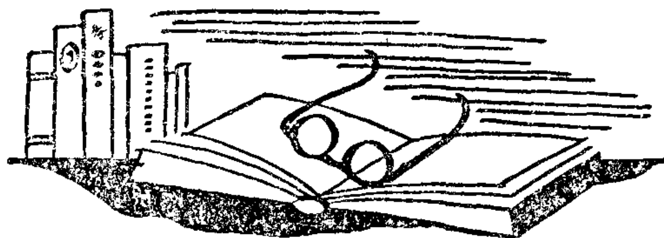
NUDE SWIMMER

BY DANIEL SMYTHE

The weight of sky is yours — an airy cloth;
And when the pool gulps up the body's wedge,
Some pulse of mystery runs along the swathe
Of water wrinkling on its sandy edge.

Be glad! And find exultance . . . make it yours
Of all that sky renews on naked skin.
Swimming the light, you are like one who soars,
Cut from a shroud, free in life's origin.

THE LIBRARY



THE WAY WE CAME

by BEN RAY REDMAN

AT A time when our entire civilization faces possible destruction, its history assumes a significance, and is read with an urgency of interest, that is strange to more complacent ages. In the warm Victorian sunlight, which was assumed by so many of our fathers to be a permanent source of well-being, and amid the noisy bustle of an America of limitless opportunity, it was possible for the ordinary reader to find only idle entertainment in accounts of battles long ago and far away; possible for him to view with tolerant superiority the stumbling steps — political, economic and scientific — by which the Western nations and Western man had won their way to a plateau of civilization that was almost certainly higher, and quite certainly more comfortable, than any ever reached before by human beings. Best of all, an even better life still lay ahead! So what, to him, were the drums and tramplings of past conquests? For the most part, a tale told by an idiot, interesting and exciting only because of a few great men, a number of heroic deeds, some famous love stories; and, of course, for the sake of the national or racial achievements with which the reader could vaingloriously associate himself.

Now, however, when the world's darkening shadows threaten a total eclipse of the light and lights by which we have been and are still living, it is hard to believe that even the most ordinary of ordinary readers could take up such a book, for example, as the revised and enlarged edition of Thad W. Riker's *A History of Modern Europe* [$6.75, Knopf] without asking it earnest questions, demanding serious answers, and, in general, soliciting its aid in the task of understanding the historical predicament in which the ordinary reader and all his fellows find themselves.

The more thoughtful and articulate among us will know what we are after and how to phrase our questions. We shall not be studying specific historical examples as a guide to future conduct, for the complex uniqueness of every historical moment, of every circumstantial web, makes any such

pursuit no better than a fool's quest — however learned the fool may end by being for his pains. Nor shall we be seeking a universal, all-explaining scheme of history; for such schemes, whether constructed by an Augustine or a Leibnitz or a Toynbee, must always be inadequate, not because of what they include, but because of what they must necessarily omit if a simplification is to be propounded. The great communist was right, when — in the words of M. M. Bober, whose valuable *Karl Marx's Interpretation of History* [$6.00, Harvard University Press] has just gone into a revised edition — he filed "a protest against the conceptions that the foundations and prime motors of human affairs are to be sought in the ways of Providence, in great personages inspired by mighty ideas at fitful moments, in the metaphysical unfolding of the Absolute Idea of Hegel's imagination, or in the dynastic ambitions and political stratagems of kings and nobles." And Marx would have increased the sum of his rightness had he added that his own theory of economic determinism was not as omnicompetent in historical cases as he wished to believe.

The foundations and prime motors of human affairs are so many, so mysteriously involved with one another, and so obscure in their operations, that they will probably continue to elude our theories; but if we cannot hope to control the course of events, or even predict them, by virtue of historical knowledge, and if we cannot expect to comprehend fully the causes which have brought us to our present pass, we can still find some satisfaction, however melancholy, in looking back over the way that we have come, and in trying to reach at least a partial understanding of how we happen to be where we are. At the same time, our review of past actions and human character may furnish grounds for an optimistic or a pessimistic view of the fate in store for us.

In this enterprise Dr. Riker's volume can be of considerable help, thanks to the skill with which he has organized and presented a huge, unwieldy body of facts, and to his intelligent interpretations of them. After a preliminary chapter, in which he crosses the vaguely defined area which lies between what we call the Middle Ages and the Modern Age, his story runs from the formative years of Tudor England and Bourbon France down to the present hour, in which Russia and the West spar dangerously while fear of atomic warfare grips mankind. It is the story that we must know, if we are to know ourselves. So let us look to Dr. Riker for guidance in the present brief retrospective survey, while we also look beyond him for possible further enlightenment, and hold him in no way responsible for conclusions.

II

Broadly speaking, our Western civilization is built at one remove upon the ruins of the Greco-Roman world, and it rests more immediately upon

the historical stratum of medieval Christendom; a foundation that was shattered, if not pulverized, by the generative forces of Renaissance and Reformation. We may say with confidence that Western man is the child of these two powerful agents, so long as we remember what he owes to more remote ancestors.

Dr. Riker roughly dates the beginning of the Modern Era from the first decades of the sixteenth century, although he is tolerant of those who would assign it to the seventeenth, and he finds, as have other historians, that its prime factors were "the emergence of the individual, the emergence of the middle class, and the emergence of the modern state." The triple stamp of these prime movers is ubiquitous in the Western world; or it might be better to say that the factors themselves have long since developed into, and crystallized as, institutions. And when we say this we can hardly fail to realize, perhaps with a shock, that these same three fundamental institutions, after having enjoyed a long and flourishing career, are now seriously challenged, and suffering from varying degrees of disrepute. The individual in Europe, and elsewhere in the West, is menaced, if he has not already been destroyed, by totalitarianism. The power of the middle class is being steadily diminished by the increasing power of the laboring classes. And many respectable thinkers assure us that the career of the national state is ended; or that it must be ended, would we survive. If, with or without benefit of a third world war, we are really confronted by a major historical change, as important, let us say, as the change from feudalism; if we are really facing the end of an age, in the most comprehensive sense of the word, then history could hardly bracket an era more tidily than by marking its beginnings by the rise, and its end by the fall, of the individual, the middle class, and the national state. And whatever such unusual neatness might mean to the living, should it come to be, we may console ourselves with the thought that it would certainly prove the delight of future historians — assuming, of course, that they will retain sufficient individuality to be capable of delight.

As Dr. Riker says, the three progressive factors were closely interrelated. "The rising self-confidence of the individual was at bottom the cause of the growth of the middle class, and the middle class assisted the evolution of the modern state." But he does not underscore the fact that the very idea of materialistic progress is modern and Western. Writing 79 years ago, Walter Bagehot declared in his brilliant *Physics and Politics*, recently reprinted [$2.75, Knopf], that "the ancients had no conception of progress; they did not so much as reject the idea; they did not even entertain the idea." And he went on to say that "the idea of using a settled study of nature as a basis for the discovery of new instruments and

new things" did not exist in the days of Greece's glory.

> It is indeed a modern idea, and is peculiar to a few European countries even yet. In the most intellectual city of the ancient world, in its most intellectual age, Socrates, its most intellectual inhabitant, discouraged the study of physics because it engendered uncertainty and did not augment human happiness. The kind of knowledge which is most connected with human progress now was that least connected with it then.

Obviously there can be no progress in a society that insists on conformance in belief and behavior. The civilization of such a society, after the original shaping influences have spent their force, must be static. Conformance is the rule of children and savages, and, despite the unique brilliance of the Greek achievement, we have Grote's word for it, quoted by Bagehot, that in the field of religion this same rule was generally respected in Hellas. The Greek, who wished freely to ponder the ultimate mysteries, collided with the tough fact that "his *gens* or his *phratria* required him to believe as they believed." But we are now enjoying, of course, the spectacle of man's supreme experiment in intolerance; for Soviet Russia, with its insistence that the Party Line be followed in every human activity from the composition of a symphony to the growing of vegetables, is putting both children and savages to shame.

The way was opened to progress, which is after all only one kind of change, when the self-confident individual, in the pride of his intellect, stood up against authority and spoke the truth as he saw it, as a result of private investigation and private thought. This stand became common with the Renaissance, but the men of that exuberant age could look back to the twelfth century for an example, for, as Helen Waddell tells us in her learned, fascinating, and beautiful book, *The Wandering Scholars*, it was Abelard, "the scholar for scholarship's sake," who breached the adamantine walls; it was Abelard whose "claim for reason against authority was an enfranchisement of the human mind."

III

Gathering pace and force, the revolt against tradition and static faith swept forward. The work of sapping Church prestige, authority and actual power, which was begun by the Renaissance, was carried forward by the Reformation, which finally tore to tatters what had once been, at least in theory, the seamless fabric of Christendom; and powerfully advanced the growth of increasingly independent, self-centered national states, the creation of which brought into simultaneous being new values, new loyalties and new problems.

Conscious of latent powers, and spurred by unaccustomed desires, the emergent individual began to use and enjoy his freedom in numberless ways. While the scholar was busy discovering the beauties and wisdom of classical literature, artists and ex-

plorers were pushing back artistic and geographical horizons, and merchants were taking advantage of new trade routes to accumulate the wealth that would animate the capitalist system. New lands would mean colonies; colonies would mean new sources of income and new markets; the relation between mother country and colonies would produce the mercantile system; mercantilism would yield to laissez-faire; and laissez-faire, after spectacular achievements, would be more and more restricted by government controls.

As Europe grew rich on the fat of lands beyond the seas, and saw to it that her colonists were her best customers, the demands upon her manufacturing potential increased enormously. Greater production required greater concentrations of capital, and the once despised profession of banking waxed in importance, profits and dignity. The guild system gave way to the domestic system, and still later the cottage worker was summoned to slave in factories where, for many years, hours were merciless and conditions lethal. As the centuries passed, commercial capitalism was superseded by the finance capitalism of huge corporations, trusts and cartels, while the center of the financial world shifted successively from Antwerp to Amsterdam to London to New York.

Meanwhile, the extraordinary advances of both pure and applied science were among the most conspicuous features of Western civilization: the first a delight to the emancipated mind, free to probe the mysteries of the universe, and the second a profitable enterprise, carried on in conjunction with an always expanding business economy, which could reward the practical scientist as no patron prince had ever been able to reward his favorite artists. But in this field the line between purity and practicality is indefinite and often crossed: the physicists who first set out to split the atom, for example, were not plotting mass murder.

IV

With the planting of colonies and the development of overseas trade, the great states which had come into being by suppressing private warfare and making war a national pursuit, found themselves moving into new areas of conflict. To their religious wars and their continuing dynastic struggles — in which Habsburg marriages played a leading part — they could add colonial wars and trade wars. Land-grabbing at home was matched by land-grabbing abroad, as the competition for wealth and markets became ever more intense. Spain and Portugal rose and declined; when Spain went down, the Dutch and English came up; after Holland had dominated the seas in the first half of the seventeenth century, she was driven from them by Britain, who then found herself toe to toe with France, committed to a decisive struggle. The powers faced each other in Canada, the West Indies and India,

and when the Seven Years' War was over Britain stood before the world as an imperial giant. She was soon to lose her most important colonies, but India would be hers to exploit for almost two hundred years, and her strength would be augmented by the fraternal cooperation of Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders and South Africans.

The European balance of power system, based on the example of the constantly feuding Italian states, was a system that could achieve only momentary equilibrium, subject as it was continually to the rise of new and disturbing forces. The character of such a man as Charles XII of Sweden, for example, created difficulties which had not existed before his arrival on the scene. When Peter the Great stretched westwards, new fears were born; when Catherine moved against Turkey, and took her slice of Poland, the Polish problem and the Near Eastern question were plumped into the laps of European statesmen, while Britain looked to her defenses against the Russian Bear.

The anarchy of Central Europe was largely reduced to order by the Hohenzollerns, from the Great Elector to Frederick the Great, but the rise of Prussia was a threat to Austria, and a new and potent factor in international discord. Revolutionary France, circled by royal enemies, developed a previously unexampled spirit of patriotism, which Napoleon used in the almost successful attempt to impose his will on Europe. The Holy Alliance was as insubstantial as a dream, and the Concert of Europe was perverted to the preservation of Metternich's *status quo*. Suppressed nationalism and irredentism became increasingly troublesome elements in the European situation, while the seismic tremors set in motion by the French Revolution refused to subside. Mazzini, Cavour and Garibaldi created a new nation. Bismarck put the capstone on the work of Brandenburg's Elector. A new arrangement of power consequently took form in the Triple Alliance and Triple Entente, and exploded into the first world war; during which the United States threw its immense weight — and its peacemaking ability — into the European system, with results that are still incalculable.

What is certain, however, is that the direct intervention of the United States in European affairs, in 1917, was the most fateful action of its history, and one of the most fateful of all history, for its entrance into the second world war was only an inevitable second step, once the first had been taken. All thoughts or plans of continental isolation became absurd as soon as America had introduced a new and mighty national force into Europe's ancient complex of national forces, thereby making certain that any future balance of power would have to be global in character rather than merely European. In the attempt to preserve such a global balance we are now desperately engaged.

V

Looking back over the road that Western man has traveled, we can hardly fail to be impressed by certain facts, which suggest certain generalizations.

The passion for progress, the determination to conquer and control nature, and the dynamic expansionism of the West — which began with the ascendancy of Spain and Portugal — are, so far as we know, unique historical phenomena. While expending an immeasurable amount of energy at home in religious, dynastic and territorial struggles, we of the West have still had enough surplus vigor to invade the comparatively static Eastern world, where we have forced open doors deliberately shut against alien influences, preached our sermons of progress, cried up our Occidental values, sold our gadgets, goods and weapons, infected placid peoples with our restless ambitions, warred against regulating beliefs and traditions, and loosed the slumbering energies of multitudinous populations, with consequences that cannot be even dimly foreseen.

That our moral progress has failed to keep pace with our advancing material welfare, that our statesmen have lagged far behind our scientists, that we have grasped thunderbolts which defy our control, are now commonplaces. Our achievements have been sporadic and disorganized, our golden days have been localized and brief. If human actions and events of the past 35 years do not convince an observer that Western man's belief in his capability of steady progress is a great delusion, on any but the most materialistic plane, then that observer is steeled against persuasion. Such gains as have not already been wiped out have been placed in jeopardy. Our boasted Western progress has clearly been proved to be only Sisyphean.

Looking back, we see that we have advanced by means of what Bagehot calls provisional institutions, of which slavery is one of the most conspicuous (think of what it did for Athens), and we must agree with him when he says that we have often bought momentary gains at a ruinous after-cost. "The whole history of civilization is strewn with creeds and institutions which were invaluable at first and deadly afterwards. Progress would not have been the rarity it is if the early food had not been the late poison." Again and again we note that men's achievements and institutions carry within them the seeds of their own destruction, that contradiction is often implicit in the affirmation.

One of the broadest views of the course followed by Western man is taken by Hermann Broch, in his remarkable trilogy, *The Sleepwalkers* [$5.00, Pantheon Books]. Mr. Broch's theme is the atomization of values which began with the Renaissance, and which would logically end in the anarchy of utter individualism. The medieval integration, which subordi-

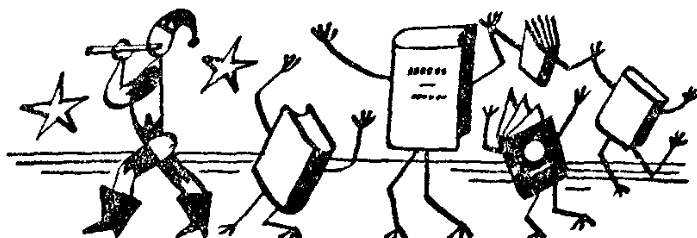
nated all other values to the supreme value of "belief in a Christian God," was followed by progressive disintegration; unity gave way to disunity; a total value-system was succeeded by independent, and often hostile, fractional value-systems. In short, according to this view, we may attribute most of our woes to "that criminal and rebellious age known as the Renaissance, that age in which the Christian scheme of values was broken into two halves, one Catholic and the other Protestant, that age in which with the falling asunder of the medieval organon a process of dissolution destined to go on for five centuries was inaugurated and the seeds of the modern world planted."

The medieval synthesis was, of course, effected by a total suppression of the individual. It was a system less evil than, but still uncomfortably akin to, the totalitarian value-system which Russia is so eager to press upon a reluctant world. Yet there is no doubt that Western man is suffering from a fragmentation of his vital values, and it may well be that a new integration lies ahead of him, for better or for worse. At its best it would be the attainment on a large scale of the kind of variety-in-unity which was briefly achieved in fifth century Athens; and recently celebrated by W. H. Auden in his introduction to *The Greek Portable Reader* [$2.00, Viking Press]. At its worst it would be the worldwide extension of the Soviet system.

Whether for better or for worse, there can be little doubt as to how the integration, if any, will be accomplished; for no one can honestly survey the history of man's conduct, and that of Western man in particular, without agreeing, however unhappily, with Bagehot's declaration that, "the progress of the military art is the most conspicuous, I was about to say the most *showy* fact in human history" — or without recognizing that this conspicuous advance has been paralleled by an almost continuous practice of the art, which the practitioner shows no signs of abandoning. The glib and fashionable assertion that wars settle nothing is true only in the sense that they settle nothing permanently. Of course they don't, for the enduring reason that a permanent state of rest is impossible in human affairs. But the fact is that history is in large measure a record of differences resolved, conditions established, circumstances altered, and quarrels settled, for longer or shorter periods, by war; and while it would be folly to deny that human character is capable of change, as regards war, it would be idiotic to claim that any indications of such a capability have as yet been displayed.

There may, however, be no integration of any kind. The story may take another turn. Perhaps Western man, who has so prided himself on the conquest of Nature — from whose bosom he has plucked uranium — is destined to learn once again that no conquest endures forever; that no conqueror can ever sleep safely in his bed.

THE CHECK LIST



BIOGRAPHY

LINCOLN'S HERNDON, *A Biography*, by David Donald. $5.00. *Knopf.* Here is the first full-length biography of Lincoln's partner and it is a magnificent job, both as research and as sheer writing. With this book Dr. Donald, who is an instructor of history at Columbia University, instantly joins the company of the great Lincoln experts of our time. He does for Herndon what Herndon tried to do for Lincoln in his celebrated biography of the martyred President: that is, he tries to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He points out that Herndon was somewhat slipshod in various phases of his life, that he was familiar with the bottle, that at times he wasn't too scrupulous with facts, but he also shows that he, more than anybody else, gave us a full-length portrait of Lincoln which clashed sharply with the rapidly growing fictions about him. "Thus Herndon stands, in the backward glance of history, myth maker and truth teller." Carl Sandburg contributes a very appreciative introduction. There are several illustrations, a good bibliography and an excellent index.

A MAN CALLED WHITE, by Walter White. $3.75. *Viking.* As a representative of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Mr. White has been involved in virtually every important battle for Negro rights in America during the past 30 years. Although he is obviously a man of invincible good will, his autobiography makes it clear that fighting for Negro rights can be, to put it mildly, an exasperating occupation. It is not only the Rankins and Talmadges that he has to contend with, but also many of the people who profess friendship for his cause: the Southern liberals, who want to solve the Negro problem in their own way and their own sweet time; the Northern liberals (including President Roosevelt), who can think only in terms of long-range educational programs; the Communists, intent on exploiting the Negro for propaganda purposes; and finally, some of the Negroes themselves, who are passionately devoted to White and the NAACP, but who are still chary of acquiring reputations as "trouble-makers." The author does little editorializing; he is content, for the most part, to let the facts speak for themselves. Altogether, a deeply moving book.

HARVARD YARD IN THE GOLDEN AGE, by Rollo Walter Brown. $2.50. *Wyn.* Mr. Brown, who knows Harvard as few other Harvard men know it, has assembled here a collection of profiles of a dozen eminent characters at the University of thirty, thirty-five years ago. Among them are "Copey," Le Baron Russell Briggs, Charles Lyman Kittredge, George Herbert Palmer, William James, Josiah Royce and George Santayana. All Harvard men will read them and re-read them with increasing pleasure and delight, for Mr. Brown writes simply, charmingly, and with the proper amount of sentiment. All the chapters are so good that it is really impossible to single out any one or two for special mention, but perhaps Harvard men will incline to rate the one

on "Copey" as somehow more flavorsome than the others. That chapter is a warm and pulsating and highly revealing portrait of a man the like of whom has probably never before graced American higher education and probably will not do so again for a long time to come. Incidentally, non-Harvard men also should find the book of much interest, for the character studies are fascinating in themselves, whether the subjects were personally known to the reader or not.

WOBBLY, by Ralph Chaplin. $5.00. *Chicago*. Mr. Chaplin was one of the builders of what is roughly known as radicalism in the United States. For some fifty years he lived and thought it, and he was on very friendly terms with such men as Debs and Bill Haywood. Lately, as the saying goes, he has calmed down a great deal and is now inclined to put far less faith in Karl Marx than in the Sermon on the Mount and the Bill of Rights. His present book is somewhat rambling and occasionally verbose, but it is also full of excitement and color, and will doubtless be a source book for future histories of American labor.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

THE NEW MEN OF POWER, *America's Labor Leaders*, by C. Wright Mills. $3.50. *Harcourt, Brace*. Professor Mills considers American labor leaders to be in a peculiarly strategic position. He feels that by virtue of their "control" over 14 million workers, they would be able, in the event of a depression, to save the country from war or fascism. The purpose of this book, which appears to be written from a socialist viewpoint, is to analyze the labor leader — to find out his social beliefs, and to estimate what he would be apt to do in a time of crisis. Professor Mills' answers to these questions are based on an elaborate, but scientifically dubious, poll of labor leaders. He mailed out 1026 questionnaires to various officials of the AFL and CIO, and got 410 "usable returns." The size of this sampling, and the failure to provide assurances that it is typical, can only induce skepticism about the complicated statistics based on it. How much confidence can we have, for example, in the precise assertion that 34 per cent of all CIO officials who joined their unions before 1935, and 44 per cent of those who joined after that date, believe business will try to "break" the labor movement? This statistical foolishness is all the more unfortunate in that Professor Mills is otherwise a shrewd and original observer, who writes without any of the partisan hysterics commonly found in books on this subject.

THE PROPER STUDY OF MANKIND . . . , *An Inquiry into the Science of Human Relations*, by Stuart Chase. $3.50. *Harper*. Like many others, Mr. Chase is appalled by the wide gap between man's achievements in the physical sciences and his ability to solve the problem of living with his fellows. His thesis is that social science, which he defines as "the application of the scientific method to the study of human relations," is "the last best hope for man's continuing on his evolutionary way, unimpeded by gamma rays." The nub of the book is that we must turn social science into a study as near in exactitude to the other sciences as possible, transferring it from the academic level to the practical and abandoning the system of water-tight compartments which today separate the various social studies from one another. The five chief elements which must be integrated into the new social science he lists as anthropology, psychology, sociology, economics and political science, while mathematics, statistics, logic and semantics are the "tools" with which the operation can be performed. As usual, Mr. Chase combines an extraordinary erudition and remorselessly logical mind with a gift for getting down to the reader's level and putting his points across in terms that make them stick.

THE INSIDE STORY OF THE LEGION, by Justin Gray, with Victor H. Bernstein. $3.00. *Boni & Gaer*. The author of this irate volume worked on the Legion's American-

ism Commission until he was dismissed, in October 1946, at the personal insistence of the National Commander. How Mr. Gray got the job in the first place is never explained adequately: he says that even then he regarded the American Legion as a sort of strikebreaking outfit, permeated by NAM thinking and disdainful of the interests of its own rank and file. Now he adds a few other counts to the indictment, such as anti-Negroism and a covert sympathy for some of our gutter fascists. In most cases Mr. Gray's thesis is draped around impressive piles of statistical and other data. Occasionally, however, the book is pitched on the level of Party-line rhetoric.

CROSSROADS OF AMERICA. *The Story of Kansas City*, by Darrell Garwood. $4.00. *Norton.* The history of Kansas City since its founding 110 years ago has been largely one of violence and subjection to the paramount influence of various dominant individuals, a circumstance which Mr. Garwood has exploited to the full. The period preceding the Civil War, in Kansas and Missouri, was punctuated by fairly constant strife between pro-slavery and anti-slavery forces, which led, during the war, to ferocious guerrilla warfare in which noncombatants received no quarter. After cessation of hostilities, the James brothers, Jesse and Frank, contrived to endow a career of murder and theft with the attributes of a patriotic campaign against the Yankee usurpers, appearing to the local populace more as heroes than as malefactors. For over half a century until 1945, another pair of brothers, Jim and Tom Pendergast, kept Kansas City politics firmly under their personal thumbs. Mr. Garwood's narrative moves at a brisk pace and conveys much of the flavor of Kansas City. Maps and photographs accompany the text.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

HATE, HOPE AND HIGH EXPLOSIVES, *A Report on the Middle East*, by George Fielding Eliot. $2.75. *Bobbs-Merrill.* In this report on a two-month fact-gathering swing through the Middle East (with stopovers in Greece and Trieste), Major Eliot accomplishes what he sets out to do: "make what military people call 'an estimate of the situation,' with wishful thinking and emotion rigidly excluded." Thus, for example, he avoids the double-barreled upbraiding of the British usual in much American comment on Palestine these days; depicting them in the closing days of the Mandate (when he made his visit) as the sorely-tried recipients of abuse and accusations by both the Jewish and Arab contestants. His observations enabled him to call the turn neatly on the impending Palestinian strife (he left for Athens a week before expiration of the Mandate), for he felt that the ardently patriotic, up-to-date, efficiently-officered Israel forces would be more than a match for bumbling Arab irregulars, aided by militarily weak and politically disunited Egyptian, Syrian and Transjordan troops. He appears more than a little premature, in his summary chapter, however, when he states that "it is this evidence which has at last convinced Mr. Bevin's sturdy British common sense that the policy [of aiding the Arabs] is all wet."

YOU CAN'T TURN THE CLOCK BACK, by R. W. G. Mackay. $3.50. *Ziff-Davis.* Mr. Mackay, a Labour Member of Parliament, is of that stout-hearted but dwindling company which still believes in the possibility of a Western European "Third Force" which would hold itself chastely aloof from the vulgar power clashes of the two giants to the west and east. The United Nations, based as it is on a multitude of irreconcilable national sovereignties, he considers hopelessly bankrupt and capable of appealing only to the "wooly-minded." Recognizing the present impossibility of bringing Russia and the U. S. together in any scheme for world federation, he proposes instead, as a barrier to war between the two great antagonists, a socialist federation of Western Europe. Then, whenever Communist Russia and capitalist America should both see the folly of their present absurd

bickering, they could unite with the rest of the world in a world federation. The basic premise for Mr. Mackay's cheerful blueprint for triparite political equilibrium is simplicity (and simple-mindedness) itself: "Soviet Russia has been developing a form of economic democracy of its own and is entitled to go ahead with it. The United States is developing a form of capitalist democracy on its own and is entitled to continue doing so. Great Britain and some of the European states have been developing socialist democracy. . . ." And so on.

FROM THE ASHES OF DISGRACE, by Admiral Franco Maugeri. Edited by Victor Rosen. $4.00. *Reynal & Hitchcock*. Having served as Director of Italian Naval Intelligence during the last two years of the Fascist war effort and led an underground intelligence service on behalf of the Allies after the surrender, winning an appointment in 1947 as General Staff Chief of the new Italian navy, Admiral Maugeri is well qualified for the authorship of this volume of cloak-and-dagger derring-do and behind-the-scenes revelations. His political insights appear rather limited, but he does provide a number of disclosures of value to military historians (for instance, ascribing the repeated Italian naval débâcles to the lack of air reconnaissance and radar equipment; and revealing that a naval-air descent on Malta was planned for the summer of 1942 but dropped when the situation in Africa deteriorated). He was the one charged with escorting Mussolini to his island exile after the fall of Facism, and found the Duce thoroughly unrepentant and still convinced he commanded the affection of his subjects.

ANTHOLOGIES

BASIC WRITINGS OF GEORGE WASHINGTON, edited by Saxe Commins. $3.75. *Random House*. It seems almost incredible that we have had to wait all these years for a good one-volume edition of the writings of the first President. Not only has Mr. Commins filled the need, but he has done so most admirably. The nearly 250 selections are all important for one reason or another, and the editorial comments throughout are most helpful.

A TREASURY OF JEWISH FOLKLORE, edited by Nathan Ausubel. $4.00. *Crown*. Jewish folklore probably has the longest and most continuous history of all known folklores, and it is almost incomparably rich in poetry, philosophy and morals. The greater part of it appears in the Agada of the Talmud and the Midrash. Mr. Ausubel has brought together a huge and magnificent collection of the stories, legends and humorous passages in both works. His volume is probably the most comprehensive of its kind available in English.

GOLDEN LEGENDS, *Great Religious Stories from Ancient to Modern Times*, collected by Samuel Cummings. $4.00. *Pellegrini & Cudahy*. A huge and excellent collection of religious stories from the Bible, *The Desert Fathers*, *Gesta Romanorum*, and by such authors as Swift, Melville, Tolstoy, Dreiser, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Hawthorne and Anatole France. The selections are uniformly good, and the volume as a whole should appeal to many people who are not too familiar with the rich religious literature of the world. There is a sensible introduction by the Reverend Alson J. Smith.

WRITINGS AND SPEECHES OF EUGENE V. DEBS. $4.00. *Hermitage*. This immense volume, nearly 500 pages in length, including a very generous selection of speeches and articles by the celebrated Socialist leader, has been long overdue. They are still amazingly timely and readable, despite the occasional clichés current in radical circles in Debs' time. He made his mistakes, as when he expressed uncritical admiration for the Bolsheviks shortly after the Revolution, but he quickly saw his error and denounced the tyranny of the Communist philosophy in sharp words. There is a fine appreciative introduction by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.

MUSIC

OUR MUSICAL HERITAGE, by Curt Sachs. $5.00. *Prentice-Hall.* This short history of world music by the distinguished musicologist associated with New York University and the New York Public Library, is not a "human interest" account of the successes and tragedies of individual composers, written "dramatically," which is to say, cheaply. It is rather a sober and extremely comprehensive account of movements and trends, and within the brief space of a small volume it is very nearly perfect. There are many illustrations, a selected bibliography and a good index.

CHAMBER MUSIC, by Homer Ulrich. $6.00. *Columbia.* Some of the most profound works in all musical literature were written for very small chamber groups, yet this history of the field, by the associate professor of chamber music in the University of Texas, is apparently the first in English. Critically, it is quite sensible, and it is acceptably written, though the addition of a hundred or even fifty pages could have made it more comprehensive. Too many important composers are only mentioned, scantily treated or totally ignored. In the appendix appear a good bibliography and a list of chamber music publications and recordings. The index, happily, is sufficiently detailed.

FICTION

SIR AND BROTHER, by Harry Lee. $3.00. *Appleton-Century-Crofts.* This is the story of a labor leader who literally works himself to death for his union. During the period he is leading a strike he falls in love with a married woman who enchants him, but who obviously is too sophisticated in the realm of sexual morals for his peace of mind. The romantic aspects of the book are not very successful; they are, in fact, on the pulpy side. But the sections dealing with the leading character's handling of the strike are quite effective and give the book stature.

CREOLE FOLK TALES, *Stories of the Louisiana Marsh Country,* by Hewitt L. Ballowe, with illustrations by Joseph V. Rigsby. $3.00. *Louisiana State University Press.* Nineteen creole- and cajun-flavored folk tales, set against a background of the Mississippi delta country. The author is a doctor by profession, and seems to have collected his material in thirty years of work in the marshes. His stories have a sleepy, timeless quality about them; the atmosphere of the region is captured with consummate skill and sustained successfully throughout all the pieces. The doctor also has a deft hand with humor. All in all, a remarkable collection.

MISCELLANEOUS

THE THEATRE BOOK OF THE YEAR, 1947–1948, by George Jean Nathan. $4.00. *Knopf.* This is the sixth volume in Mr. Nathan's annual series. The period covered is from May 1, 1947 (*The Telephone* and *The Medium*) to April 30, 1948 (*Inside U. S. A.*). Mr. Nathan's general comment on the period is that "The theatrical year . . . was all in all an indifferent one." Readers of THE AMERICAN MERCURY don't have to be told that Mr. Nathan is the most authoritative drama critic now practicing in the United States, and that he writes with a vigor possessed by no other critic. His present volume is probably the soundest record of the period covered.

PILGRIM EDITION OF THE HOLY BIBLE, edited by E. Schuyler English. $4.50. *Oxford.* This is easily one of the best and most useful editions of the Bible now available. There are long introductions to the two Testaments as well as brief introductions to each book. In addition there are numerous extremely helpful explanatory notes, an excellent index and several first-rate maps. The version used, happily, is the King James, which still remains one of the great pillars of English literature. The printing and the binding leave nothing to be desired. Altogether a superb achievement.

THE OPEN FORUM

WALLACE'S COMMUNIST-FRONT PARTY

SIR: As a reader of the MERCURY for almost twenty years, I would like to commend you on the article by Charles Angoff in the October issue on the Wallace party. Mr. Angoff has given us a penetrating analysis and a lucid exposure of Wallace; the piece is nothing short of devastating. The article adds to the accumulated prestige of the MERCURY as a magazine of intelligence and courage. . . .

LLOYD E. PRICE

Fort Worth, Tex.

SIR: Mr. Angoff's clear analysis of the forces behind Wallace makes significant reading. Probably the single most important aspect of the article is the realization that the largest group supporting the former Vice-President, *outside of the Communists, is the youth* of the nation. Were we faced with a grave economic depression, comparable to what we had in the thirties, there might be some justification for these people's dissatisfaction with our present form of government. That economic hardship is not the reason for their support of the Progressive party can be shown by statistics: many of these young people come from the upper economic strata. For many of them support of Wallace is just a fad, similar to the antics of the flappers and raccoon-coat set of the twenties. . . .

HARVEY GREENFIELD

Cambridge, Mass.

SIR: The MERCURY and Charles Angoff are to be congratulated on his fine article. . . .

Much has been written about Mr. Wallace's current third party, but the "primer" style of Mr. Angoff's article takes the reader over the hurdles step by step, shows us how Mr. Wallace got that way, and puts the spotlight on his party in such a way as to leave no doubt as to who controls it.

I think it would be a fine thing if reprints of this article were made available to the school children of our country. The election is over, but reading this article would show them why the vast majority of our people were not taken in by Wallace.

ANN TANNER

New York City

SIR: In Mr. Angoff's article there occurs *this statement (on page 414)*: "When three delegates from Vermont urged that a declaration be inserted in the platform stating that it is 'not our intention to give blanket indorsement to the foreign policy of any nation,' . . . the leadership permitted no discussion."

This is a flat untruth. As a matter of fact there was extended and rather heated discussion of this proposal.

Of course, the logical reason for rejecting this proposal, although it was not very clearly brought out in the discussion, is that the purpose of a political party platform is to set forth promises or intentions of what the party will undertake to do when it comes into power. "Blanket indorsements," or condemnations, of the foreign policy of any

other nation are entirely extraneous and have no rational or legitimate place in such a document.

HENRY PRATT FAIRCHILD
New York City

SIR: Dr. Fairchild's notion of the meaning of "extended and rather heated discussion" differs sharply from mine, as, I imagine, his notion of the meaning of the words *democracy* and *progressive* differs sharply from mine. He seems to think that discussion and one-sided denunciation are the same things. I don't think so.

The facts were clearly enough set forth in the major newspapers of the country, and in the British press. A good deal of the time — about a half hour, according to a letter from Dr. Fairchild to me — devoted to what he calls discussion, was, according to the New York *Times* and *Herald Tribune*, taken up by denunciations by such Progressive party leaders as Rexford Tugwell and Lee Pressman, and numerous party-liners from the floor. The Vermonters and their supporters did little more than present their proposal. So one-sided, indeed, was the "discussion" that nearly the entire American press implied that it was a sham. I could quote from several reliable papers. I limit myself to quoting only from the correspondence of Mr. Richard L. Strout in the *Christian Science Monitor*, a paper distinguished for its fair and objective reporting. According to Mr. Strout, the revolt of the Vermonters was "promptly squelched," and their amendment was "immediately denounced . . . and overwhelmingly defeated. . . . The amendment was shouted down in a roar. . . ." In view of these facts I think it is entirely legitimate for me to say that there was no real discussion but rather the kind of strangulation of free democratic debate usual in Communist or Communist-front organizations. I am sure that if similar treatment to a similarly important subject were given at the Republican or Democratic convention, Dr. Fairchild would have felt about it precisely as I feel about what went on at the Progressive convention. I am appalled that Dr. Fairchild thinks otherwise. I had expected something enormously better from a man with his background.

I am also puzzled by his last paragraph. I'm not sure I get his point. Does he imply that the Vermont amendment was a blanket condemnation? Of course, it was nothing of the sort. If he does not see that, then I am almost tempted to say he should have a literacy test. But perhaps it would be more charitable to say of Dr. Fairchild's protest what Mr. Strout says of the feeble protests made by some delegates to the Progressive convention, namely, that they revealed "the utter lack of comprehension of some of the politically inexperienced groups as to what was going on."

CHARLES ANGOFF
New York City

HAROLD ROSS

SIR: I don't know when I have run across a profile that delighted me as much as the one in the August MERCURY, on the editor of the *New Yorker*, Harold Ross. I will now read my *New Yorker* with a more seeing eye, and most certainly a broader smile. Thank you for giving your readers such a story. Allen Churchill, who wrote the article, did a good job.

MRS. FRANK MARTIN WEBBER
New York City

PHRASE ORIGINS

SIR: In his phrase origin in the September MERCURY, Mr. Louis J. Herman declared that the phrase "to peter out" is derived from the word "saltpetre." I have consulted the following dictionaries: Webster's, *Century*, Funk and Wagnalls, *Oxford*, Wyld's *Universal Dictionary*, and the *American College Dictionary*; and in none of these do I find any mention of "saltpetre" in relation to "to peter out." Ditto for Weekley and Shipley. Some are silent on the derivation; others relate it to the French *peter*, to crackle; none is certain. Where then does Mr. Herman find his authority and what makes him so certain?

In answer to my letter in the August issue, in which I objected to his statement that most authorities favored his derivation of "hoodlum," Mr. Herman cited a few, who hardly make up a majority. Moreover, the authorities he did cite, did not by his own admission feel certain of that derivation but qualified it by "probably" and the like. Moreover, either by negligence or actual design, Mr. Herman forgot to note that Weekley's *Etymological Dictionary* had a question mark in front of the alleged derivation. Moreover, Holt, whom Mr. Herman called "charitably disposed," was utterly sarcastic and Mr. Herman apparently mistook none-too-subtle sarcasm for generosity. No dictionary supports Mr. Herman. Add up the evidence, or count authorities, and the verdict is that very few support Mr. Herman's idea that "hoodlum" is Muldoon in reverse, with one letter changed. Mr. Herman should be more careful and should label as fanciful or conjectural that which is so. Etymology may not be an exact science but an etymologist should use scientific methods and he should remember that etymology means "the true word" or "the study of the truth."

MORRIS ROSENBLUM
Brooklyn, N. Y.

SIR: It is regrettable that Mr. Rosenblum's earnest inquiries have not led him to the source of my derivation of the expression, "to peter out." Authority for the origin I cited in the September AMERICAN MERCURY exists, nonetheless. It is to be found in *Crowther's Encyclopaedia of Phrases and Origins*, published in London in 1945. To forestall possible prolonged and acrimonious discussion on the question, I quote verbatim the explanation offered therein:

> To peter out means to have reached the end of the profitable supply, either of money or commodity, from which one has been drawing. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives the source as the U. S. gold-mining camps, but adds that the origin is obscure. The writer is indebted to an old gold-digger [sic] of British Columbia for the origin. He was among the earliest men to use the phrase. "The dictionary is correct," he says. "It did originate in gold-mining camps. The method of panning gold is known as 'Placer mining,' and is obviously surface work. But actually to mine gold, the rock is drilled and charges set to blast the rock. The explosive, in the old days, contained saltpetre, and was colloquially known as 'peter.' After a lead, or seam, had been exhausted, and there was no further object in blasting, we were wont to say that we had petered it out, or that it was 'petered out.' This is the correct origin of the word."

It might be added that the *New English Dictionary* and Funk and Wagnalls both agree that the term harks back to the gold-mining profession, while the latter and Webster's cite "peter," in the noun form, as a colloquial term for "saltpetre." This would seem to lend substance to the origin presented by *Crowther's*.

As for Mr. Rosenblum's *bête noire*, "hoodlum," I should like to refer him to my rebuttal to his earlier letter, published in the August MERCURY. In it, I cited four authorities whom he has not yet been able to refute. Weekley, as he astutely notes, did, indeed, precede his derivation ("perverted back-spelling . . . of *Muldoon*") with a question mark. I concur fully; in fact, in my original note, I described my derivation as "a matter for debate."

Here, in full, is what Holt has to say in his *Phrase Origins*:

> [The] guess that this California word is either Spanish or pidgin English is perhaps no worse than the story that a notorious thug's name was Muldoon, which, spelled backward, became "Noodlum"; and this by association with *hooligan* soon gave birth to *hoodlum*.
>
> [He observes further:] The supposed derivation of *Hooligan* [from "a rowdy Irish family of that name that lived in Southwark, London, in the 1890's"] would seem to strengthen the possibility that another Hibernian surname [Muldoon?] may have figured in the development of the word.

It would thus appear, at this writing, that I have succeeded in marshalling to my colors a total of six authorities, four of them reasonably unassailable and two more some-

what watered down. Mr. Rosenblum, by dint of his unflagging labors, has obviously rallied a goodly host behind him. Having fought it out on this line all summer, however, I would now suggest a truce. Frankly, inasmuch as I carefully qualified my original note in the May MERCURY and have presented the aforementioned authorities, I believe that my opponent is wasting an inordinate amount of ammunition firing at straw men.

LOUIS JAY HERMAN

New York City

BRITISH SOCIALISM

SIR: As a recent immigrant from England, may I be allowed to comment on Mr. H. W. Seaman's article, "Life Under Socialism In England," published in your September issue.

Mr. Seaman's article may have "news value" for those readers who are unfamiliar with the difficulties which confront the Labour government, but if this is how he presents what is, presumably, his considered judgment on the situation in England today, I cannot think that it does him credit.

In the first place, I fail to see what follows from his quoting of the GI veteran who bemoaned the inability to purchase "a quart of milk and then another quart." Surely if one accepts the general principle of equitable distribution, the rationing system cannot be disputed.

It is, too, of interest to note that according to figures taken from *Hansard* of May 12, 1947, the consumption of liquid milk during the period June 1946 – June 1947 showed an increase of 44 per cent above the 1934–38 figure. This augmented quantity has been equitably shared, with extra allocations to priority groups: cheap milk for babies, nursing and pregnant mothers and school children, and priority milk for invalids.

And however much Mr. Seaman may decry the effect of the government food subsidies of £470 million per year, he cannot but agree that in this way the prices of basic foodstuffs have been brought within purchasing range of all classes of the population, a situation which before the war, when there was no control of food purchasing, did not exist. Though on balance the country as a whole is eating less, a not inconsiderable number of people (that is, those who constituted the lowest income group) are, as a result of fairer distribution — the rationing system and food subsidies — buying and eating appreciably more than before the war. This is a long way from saying that people are eating as much as they would wish, or that the diet is anything but monotonous.

How can Mr. Seaman scorn the social security legislation under which, for the first time in their lives, the working classes have freedom from want and can feel secure that ill health will not mean degrading poverty? Whatever else he may wish to say against the present régime in England, he must agree that legislation has been designed to raise the standard of living of the lower income groups, who are the majority of the population.

His story (I do not doubt its veracity) of the businessman who was granted petrol coupons for a one-way journey, but told he must return by bus, may make amusing reading but it proves nothing except the inefficiency of a clerk. Nor do I wish to say anything about the Ministry of Labour official who directed a carpenter to return to his old job when there appeared to be a shortage of work in his particular situation. But no one can say that the government has abused its powers in regard to direction of labor. Indeed, under the Control of Engagements Order, the number of directions has been pitifully small. In point of fact, the government has, for the most part, elected to appeal to the worker's sense of national interest and the providing of incentives in the undermanned essential industries, a policy which is generally acknowledged to have largely failed.

The regulations concerning foreign travel and the limitations on pleasure motoring have been designed for perfectly sound reasons not, as Mr. Seaman seems to infer,

merely to cause annoyance to the foreign traveler and to the motorist. Quite clearly, the conservation of foreign currency was a matter of vital importance; in regard to the question of how much a motorist might be allowed to run his car for his own private enjoyment, the government was clearly faced with no alternative. In the interests of a real effort to make some headway on its adverse foreign trade balance, imports for non-essential uses (however irksome it might be) were out of the question. . . .

Admittedly, where controls and regulations exist, some measure of freedom is given up, and it may well be true that the time is ripe for the lifting of some of the controls. But controls are necessary where there are insufficient goods and services available, and where the home consumer market must take second place in the interest of increased exports. I make no apology for the shortcomings of the Labour government, and they are many, but the government took over in 1945 after a war which had disrupted the country's economy much more than many realize. It is important to realize too that all the faults are not on one side; the workers themselves have not cooperated as much as they might — for example, the conservative attitude with which the miners have approached new methods and new tasks.

Even the most loyal supporter of the Labour government cannot feel too happy about the economic state of the country, but this is no excuse for the presentation of an unfair summary.

CLIFFORD CAIN

Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

SIR: If Mr. Cain will do me the kindness of reading my article again he will find in it no denial that some people are better off, materially, than before socialism came to this island. These beneficiaries include some well-heeled citizens as well as the poorest. I cannot agree that even the poorest are better fed than before the war. Some poor people of my acquaintance now sell their points because they cannot afford to buy pointed goods. A can of salmon, for example, costs not only four times its prewar price but also a whole month's points for one person. Canned salmon, one of the many luxuries that were common vittles before the war, is now going off the market because our government have decided that we cannot afford to buy it. But caviar, unpointed, is in the shops, compressed ham, in the form of Danish salami, is freely on sale at 5s. 4d. a pound; and anyone who cares to run the risk of jail and can tolerate the smell of spivs can buy butter, tea, beefsteak, bacon and sugar at approximately American prices. So much for "equitable distribution."

Mr. Cain suggests that before the war basic foodstuffs were out of reach of certain classes because there was then no control of food purchasing. Possibly it was so during the depression. There is no depression now, but, our legislators assure us, full employment. Nearly all of us are hard at work, but how little we have to show for it! Hardships and shortages were inevitable after an exhausting war, and surely the government's first task should have been to tackle the problems of food, clothing and shelter. Instead, they embarked at once on a grandiose programme of doctrinaire socialism, and after three years they are still at it. When the workers asked for incentives, such as goods to buy with their wages, they were promised more nationalization and prettier locomotives. When they kicked they were told, on the billboards, to "Work or Want." Now they have the whip, in the form of compulsory labor, which seems a little thing to Mr. Cain but strikes me as the most reactionary measure since the Statute of Laborers, A.D. 1351. "Under the Control of Engagements Order," he says, "the number of directions has been pitifully small." Why pitifully? Would he like to see wholesale direction?

Mr. Cain appears to give socialism credit for the social legislation which he accuses me of scorning. But surely he knows that compulsory health insurance and social security, in much their present form, were in the programme of the non-socialist parties, which did most of the spade-work be-

fore the socialist government arrived. As another Englishman, he knows, too, that the discomforts and nuisances I mentioned in my article are common causes of grousing when Englishmen meet. The picture was certainly not exaggerated, and I was careful to speak of our statesmen with respect, even though he and other correspondents have dragged more politics than I intended into the discussion. The only adverse criticism of the article that I have seen in print in England — and that in a socialist publication — is a suggestion that to tell foreigners such things is hardly cricket: "It is the sort of thing Tory politicians do." I am no politician, and hardly a Tory; and I felt that I could do my country no disservice, but possibly some good, by describing our present way of life.

H. W. SEAMAN

Norwich, England

BORAH AND IDAHO

SIR: The article on Glen Taylor by Richard L. Neuberger in the September number is very interesting in spite of the fact that Mr. Neuberger does not seem to be too well informed on Idaho and its politics.

In the last election in which he ran for the Senate, Mr. Borah received something like a 100,000 majority, while Mr. Roosevelt and the Democratic state officials got something like 25 or 30 thousand. Yet Mr. Neuberger says Borah was diminishing in popularity. I think this was the largest majority that Mr. Borah ever received in any election and in a state where we cast less than 250,000 votes 100,000 is quite a majority. . . .

BEN H. MATKINS

Hamer, Ida.

SIR: Mr. Matkins cites the formidability of Senator Borah at the polls as evidence that I am wrong regarding the diminution of Borah's reputation in Idaho.

The article specifically referred to Borah as "Idaho's dominant public figure for nearly half a century." I am well aware of the Senator's political talents. My point was that Borah's *posthumous* standing in Idaho has deteriorated as a result of the total failure of isolationism as a foreign policy for the nation. . . .

RICHARD L. NEUBERGER

Portland, Ore.

NEW HAMPSHIRE'S STANDARD OF LIVING

SIR: I have heard and read much indignant criticism from my friends and neighbors of Mr. Arthur K. Smart's article, "The State of New Hampshire," which appeared in the July AMERICAN MERCURY. Mr. Smart has drawn some erroneous conclusions. Notable among these are: (1) that industry is moving out of the state, (2) that wages are below normal, and (3) that there is a movement of people out of the state because of the absence of opportunity.

New Hampshire's population is not declining but is increasing. According to the Bureau of the Census, only seventeen states had a greater rate of civilian population-growth between 1940 and 1946. Between 1935 and 1946, there was a net migration into the state of over 22,000 people. Only fifteen states experienced a greater immigration in this period, and 29 states had a net out-migration.

Mr. Smart cites the New Hampshire 1946 per capita income, ranks it with the Southern states, and concludes that wages and salaries are low here. In the first place, our per capita income is well above the Southern states, according to government statistics from which source the following figures were obtained:

1946 PER CAPITA INCOME

United States	$1200
New Hampshire	1048
South East	801
South West	927

In the second place, per capita income is not a good measure of wage levels, since it includes all forms of income — proprietors, annuities, social security, property, etc. A

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(*Continued from page 761*)

much better index of trends in income can be obtained from a study of manufacturing salaries and wages. If Mr. Smart had made such a study, he would have found that between 1940 and 1946, manufacturing salaries and wages increased 138 per cent in New Hampshire, compared with 126 per cent for all England and 134 per cent for the country as a whole.

Furthermore, Mr. Smart fails to recognize the fact that living costs in New Hampshire are below the national average. According to the Labor Department's *City Workers Budget*, it costs from $200 to $300 less per year for a family of four to live in Manchester than in Washington or Seattle or New York. This in itself is equivalent to 10 to 15 cents per hour in the take-home pay of New Hampshire workers.

According to the New England Council, more new industrial jobs per 1000 population were created in New Hampshire in 1947 than in any other New England state. We have no available information to make the comparison with other sections of the country.

Those of us living in the Granite State know that New Hampshire is a growing industrial state; that opportunities for the future are excellent and that it is an ideal place in which to live, work and play. Mr. Smart had better take another look at our picture.

A. R. SCHILLER

Manchester, N. H.

SIR: Mr. Schiller might tell his indignant friends and neighbors that I neither said nor intended to imply anything about the relative quantities of immigration and emigration in New Hampshire. I talked exclusively about the latter, and with special reference to those of superior ability. Certainly, one cannot grow up in that state without some day asking himself what has become of many people with whom he went to school, especially the more able ones. The fact that others may have moved into town does not answer this question, nor do census figures tell much about the quality of those who have come and those who have left.

Nor did I imply that the problem of

emigration was unique to New Hampshire, or even that it was more pronounced here than elsewhere. Perhaps it is significant that of four articles on New England States that have appeared so far in the MERCURY's current series — all written independently of one another — three have noted this same phenomenon. And it happens that the writer who did not mention this was talking about a state which is actually losing population.

Perhaps it is not necessary to determine whether people find it more profitable to live elsewhere because of a low wage scale or because of a low per capita income. Fact is, in 1946, after an increase in manufacturing wages and salaries of 138 per cent (greater than elsewhere) New Hampshire's per capita income still was only $1048. Had Mr. Schiller chosen to give the average income for the country exclusive of the South and that for the South, he would find that New Hampshire's figure comes closer to the latter, even with her welcome betterment of conditions.

In discussing living costs, Mr. Schiller shifts from national averages to make comparisons with Washington, Seattle and New York, three particularly expensive communities. A full comparison of income and living costs between those places and Manchester might not be to the advantage of the latter.

Even taking Mr. Schiller's figure of a difference of 10 to 15 cents per hour in take-home pay as an accurate measurement of New Hampshire's saving in living costs, we can still make some comparisons. Since writing my article I have seen newspaper stories telling of a carpenters' strike in Manchester. It seems that these workers were getting more than 40 cents an hour less than carpenters in Massachusetts cities less than 40 miles away.

Indeed, New Hampshire is an ideal place in which to live, work and play. In spiritual, esthetic and intellectual qualities — the things that really count — I doubt if she has an equal. She still has a problem in arranging her material circumstances so as to enable more people to enjoy these things. . . .

ARTHUR K. SMART

San Francisco, Cal.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AND MARCH 3, 1933

of *The American Mercury*, published monthly at Concord, N. H., for October 1, 1948. State of New York, County of New York, ss. Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Joseph W. Ferman, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of *The American Mercury* and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit: 1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are: *Publisher and Editor*, Lawrence E. Spivak, 570 Lexington Ave., New York; *Managing Editor*, Charles Angoff, 570 Lexington Ave., New York; *Business Manager*, Joseph W. Ferman, 570 Lexington Ave., New York. 2. That the owners are: The American Mercury, Inc.; Lawrence E. Spivak, 570 Lexington Ave., N. Y.; Joseph W. Ferman, 570 Lexington Ave., N. Y. 3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None. 4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him. J. W. Ferman, *Business Manager*. Sworn to and subscribed before me, this 21st day of September, 1948. Ethel M. Shields, *Notary Public*. [Seal] (My commission expires March 30, 1950.)

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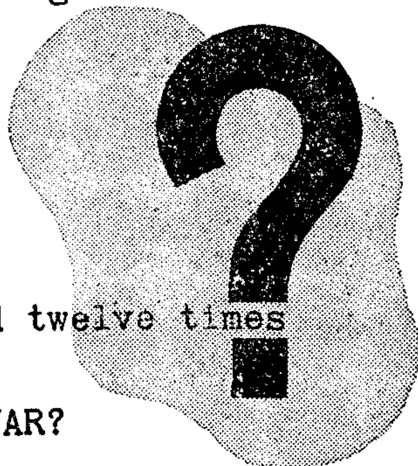

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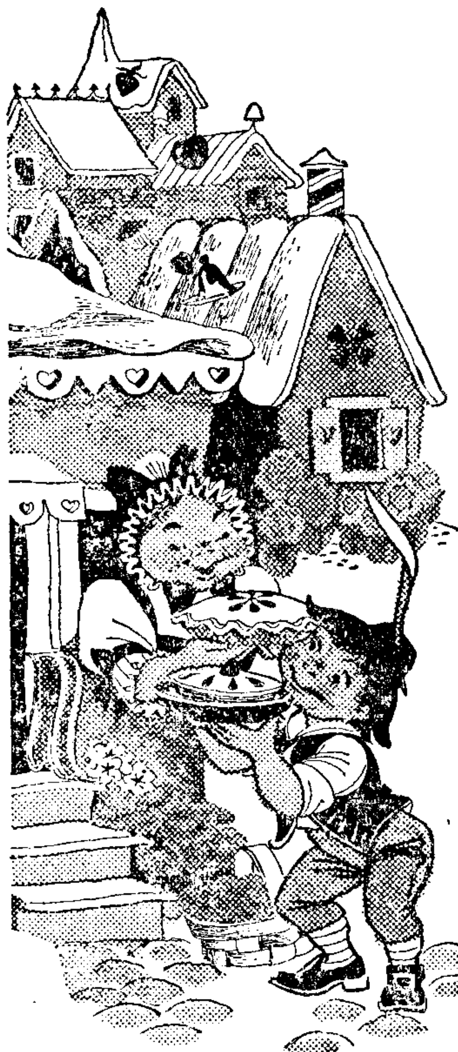

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