

**22nd Series**

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

**E. Haldeman-Julius**

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# **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**By E. Haldeman-Julius**

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# Questions and Answers

When I went to register for the draft the other day it came to me that you never wrote a single paragraph against this terrible violation of our traditional Americanism. I don't feel right about it. We shouldn't tolerate the draft in peace time.

I hate the idea of compulsory military service. But as a realist, conditions compel the acceptance of the situation. Don't say we're living in "peace times." That sounds strange and unreal. "Peace times" should mean normal times—and surely no one will hold these days are normal. In these terrible times when democracy and freedom are being threatened by Brutalitarians, we must reconsider our old principles. That's why I accept the draft as a necessary evil. We can't escape it. F. D. R. was right in proposing it. When international aggression is defeated and democracy feels secure again, we'll be able to do away with this draft. But let's support it as long as there's the slightest threat against our American way of life. It would be suicidal to shut our eyes to the horrible facts facing us. Our future is dark and there's no reason for believing Americanism will survive, but we shouldn't rest back and do nothing about it. By meeting the issues now, we make it possible to meet Hitler's challenge. I hope we'll succeed. The draft helps support that hope and give it substance. My reader's assertion that I wrote nothing about selective military service is without factual foundation. If he'll look into my volumes of "Questions and Answers" he'll see at least two articles in which I came out for the law at least four months before it was passed by Congress. I hated to do it, but duty compelled me to write in favor of something I always opposed.

\* \* \*

Don't you think a person should always strive for the higher things?

Not always. Karl Marx's whiskers are higher than Marlene Dietrich's legs.

I want to express my appreciation for the tables printed in your volumes of "Questions and Answers" showing how lightly the rich people in the U. S. are taxed. I could find nothing about the size of the same taxation in England. Please look into your newsclip filing system and see what you can fish out.

There are only about 10,000 people in the British Isles who have incomes upwards of \$50,000 per year. The total income amounts to \$900,000,000 annually, of which \$600,000,000 is taken from the rich in income taxes. Another \$200,000,000 is received by the State from inheritance taxes. This leaves \$100,000,000 for the people in the highest brackets.

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While reading your volumes of "Questions and Answers" I made a careful study of all your writings on the Spanish Civil War. You speak many times of Franco's Catholic-Fascism, but when you speak of the Loyalists you take for granted their republicanism. Why is this? True, Franco accepted aid from Hitler and Mussolini, but the Loyalists accepted aid from the Russians. Why don't you call them Communists?

I didn't call them Communists because I knew they didn't belong to that school of economic and political thought. Their democracy and republicanism proved them to be miles away from Communism. And yet, it's true they accepted help from Russia. Why not? They wanted help from France, England and the U. S., and all stupidly refused such an easy way of writing insurance against totalitarianism. They're paying the price now. And the bill for their blindness will be heavy. The Loyalists, as a measure of self-preservation, had to accept whatever the Communists would sell them. They would have bought much more war materials from us, hadn't our President shown a peculiar lack of understanding in those critical, momentous days. But nothing's to be gained rehashing all that. We have learned our lesson—or at least, it seems that we've learned. Our only hope now is that the future won't see the same kind of silly

blunders. But we mustn't be too hopeful. Look how slow we've been about slapping sanctions on the Japanese. And look how insufficient our measures have been. Up to the time of this writing the U. S. has hardly dented the mountain of war supplies going to Japan. And that's as stupid as our failure to sell munitions to democratic Spain. We have every reason for increasing help to China and for withholding from Japan every penny's worth of oil, gas, copper, processed steel, and the like.

\* \* \*

**How do you account for the miserable showing of the Italian fighting forces? Are the Italians cowardly?**

It's a mistake to dismiss the Italians as so many yellow-livered, lethargic blockheads. They are a fine, civilized, intelligent people whose only crime is that they want to live in peace with the world and at the same time get along with a man who's crammed with imagined divine afflatus and a passion for rodomontade, plus Caesarean overtones. The Italians have no stomach for Mussolini's dreams of grandeur. They want to tend their vineyards, not build new monuments in Africa. And when they're driven to battle they act like so many lost sheep. This isn't to their discredit. I praise them for their fine, human impulses. When they lose battles, don't blame the Italian people. Put the fault where it belongs—with Mussolini and his incompetent, brainless officers who, like their leader, are crammed with the Fascist bunk of being men of destiny, of being charged with the duty to rule a fat slice of the globe. If the Italians have their hearts in a fight, they can act like real men. Look what they did under Garibaldi, when they believed in what they were fighting for. But when they were asked to do things they don't believe in they become as helpless as their officers. Look at the pathetic spectacle they provided at Adowa, about 40 years ago, when a band of half-clad Negroes tore them to pieces. Look at Caporetto, in the first World War, when the Austrians sent them running home like so many children. In Spain, at Guadalajara, the Loyalists, with inferior equipment, set the best Fascist divisions back on their posteriors. And now, Greece. Mussolini boasts of his 8,000,000 soldiers, but even if he had 10

times as many he'd still put on melancholy shows because he can't inspire his subjects with his dreams of empire. But I'm not one who believes Mussolini has 8,000,000 soldiers. He has hardly more than a tenth that many, because a soldier must be judged by his fighting ability and equipment, not by the fact that he happens to be wearing a uniform. About a million Italians are well-equipped, but the rest are so many boy scouts. I offer this obiter dictum: When the legions of Brutalitarianism begin to crack, Mussolini will be the first to fall.

\* \* \*

**How does the fire power of today's mechanized war compare with that of the last war?**

Tell Berna, general manager of the National Machine Tool Builders' association, has studied how war has become mechanized and reports that today it takes only 1,500 men to throw as much metal on the target in a given time as 20,000 men could throw on that target in the last war. He adds:

"These 1,500 men must have from \$2,000,000 to \$2,500,000 worth of equipment. They must have the mechanical skill and the engineering knowledge to operate this equipment. The manufacture of modern fighting equipment requires amazing accuracy. Essential parts must be accurate within two-10,000ths of an inch—less than one-10th the thickness of human hair."

War has become a problem in engineering. That being true, who can question Uncle Sam's ability to hold his own against any combination of enemies, once he gets his dander up and squares off. His fierce, chafing intelligence and sound, scientific, constructive ability can make his position invincible, if he gets to work in earnest on the job of preparedness.

\* \* \*

**Was Napoleon hardly taller than a midget?**

Napoleon was a short man, but it's hard to tell just what his size was, for he never permitted himself to be measured. Common estimates put it at 5 feet 3½ inches, but some authorities dispute this figure. Frequently Napoleon looked much shorter than he was because of his habit of surrounding himself by extremely tall men and women. When inside, he wore slippers without heels; out-

side, he wore shoes with heels hardly more than a half inch high.

One student of Napoleon, Harold Temperley, of Cambridge University, writing in *The Times Literary Supplement*, claims Napoleon wasn't the pigmy tradition makes him out. He insists Napoleon, in his stockings, reached 5 feet 4 inches to 5 feet 5 inches. He bases his conclusion on the fact that Napoleon, when a prisoner at St. Helena, had spyholes cut in his shutters so he could see what was going on outside without being seen. By a series of careful calculations, Temperley figures Napoleon couldn't have been much less than 5 feet and 4 inches, and probably was a little taller.

\* \* \*

I have always worked hard and saved. Now I have a few thousand dollars and everybody is talking about inflation. I would like your opinion as to what to invest in to the best purpose.

Don't pay any attention to this talk about inflation. Put your savings in a safe place—preferably in a postal savings bank—and go about your business. Don't invest your money in any project, no matter how promising, because your few thousand dollars should be considered a nest-egg rather than a means of making profits. There isn't one chance in a thousand that your accumulation will be hurt by inflation. At least during the next few years.

\* \* \*

Can you give me the famous poem, "Tobacco is a Noxious Weed"?

There are a thousand reasons why I should quit using tobacco, but right now I can't think of a single one of them. So I turn to the poetical sermon requested above and study a dozen or more reasons why I should stop making an ass of myself—but I'm a hopeless case, for I've just reached for my cigar butt on which I puff-puff idiotically while copying the piece for the moral benefit of my pious, pure, clean-limbed, gawd-fearing, praying subscribers:

Tobacco is a noxious weed,  
And a thing of evil, 'tis agreed  
It picks your pocket, it burns your clothes,

And makes a chimney of your nose;  
It weakens your heart, and your arteries sclerose,

Then your health will depart, and the Devil forclose.

You, who use it, as everyone knows,  
Stink like Hades right down to your toes;

Physicians dub you, another dope fiend,  
Liable to die by your toes of gangrene;  
If you don't have a stroke, or of heart failure die,

You may go up in smoke, in bed as you lie.

Non-users shun you as something unclean,

Not fit for their company, it's plain to be seen;

Bad decorum denotes you, for you're seen everywhere,

Puff, puffing away polluting the air;

In public you're a nuisance, in private just a dope

Go get in the "dog house," or the out house,

If you can't quit the dope, and must have a smoke.

\* \* \*

Can you summarize briefly the highlights of Mill's "On Liberty"?

This great classic of modern civilization—comparable, in importance, to Karl Marx's "Communist Manifesto," Rousseau's "Social Contract," Thomas Paine's "Age of Reason," and Voltaire's "Toleration"—should be read in its entirety. But in order to invite attention to the work itself rather than to dismiss it with inadequate condensation, let me give readers some of John Stuart Mill's main ideas in "On Liberty." By the way, a certain professor at Harvard has been getting 100 copies of this book from my office each year during the past 10 or 12 years, which means that he considers this work compulsory reading for students of the science of government. Here are some sentences from "On Liberty":

... the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant. ... the appropriate region of human liberty ... comprises, first, the inward domain of consciousness ... absolute freedom of opinion and sentiment on all subjects. ... The liberty of expressing and publishing opinions ... is practically inseparable from it. Secondly ... liberty of tastes and pursuits; of framing the plan of our life to suit our own character; of doing as we like, subject to such consequences as may follow; without impediment from our fellow-creatures, so long as what we

do does not harm them. . . . Thirdly, from this liberty of each individual, follows the liberty, within the same limits, of combination among individuals; freedom to unite, for any purpose not involving harm to others: the persons combining being supposed to be of full age, and not forced or deceived.

A person may cause evil to others not only by his actions but by his inaction, and in either case he is justly accountable to them for the injury.

There are also many positive acts for the benefit of others which he may rightfully be compelled to perform; such as to give evidence in a court of justice; to bear his fair share in the common defense, or in any other joint work necessary to the interest of the society of which he enjoys the protection.

. . . opinions lose their immunity when the circumstances in which they are expressed are such as to constitute their expression a positive instigation to some mischievous act.

. . . trade is a social act. Whoever undertakes to sell any description of goods to the public, does what affects the interest of other persons, and of society in general . . . the principle of individual liberty is not involved in the doctrine of Free Trade . . .

If society lets any considerable number of its members grow up mere children, incapable of being acted on by rational consideration of distant motives, society has itself to blame for the consequences.

The State, while it respects the liberty of each in what specially regards himself, is bound to maintain a vigilant control over his exercise of any power which it allows him to possess over others.

I regard utility as the ultimate appeal on all ethical questions; but it must be utility in the largest sense, grounded on the permanent interests of a man as a progressive being.

The worth of a State, in the long run, is the worth of the individuals composing it . . . a State which dwarfs its men, in order that they may be more docile instruments in its hands even for beneficial purposes—will find that with small men no great thing can really be accomplished.

Let me suggest that my readers put this essay on their "must" list. Written in 1858, it still carries a great lesson for students of modern trends,

especially those that veer towards Fascism. And, while I have the subject in mind, let me criticize those who insist that Mill's "On Liberty" is a plea for individual liberty without regard to social responsibilities. As Professor Robert C. Binkley, head of the history department of Western Reserve University, says, "We have become more dependent upon each other as our economy has become more highly geared, but Mill acknowledges that to compel men to do their share of what is necessary for society is not a violation of their liberty." In short, we are entitled to the fullest freedom, so long as we don't use that freedom to do injury to others. Prof. Binkley (from whom I took the above summary of Mill's ideas) says "Mill sees very clearly that liberty defeats itself if it is interpreted to exclude compulsory education."

Being one who has written numerous columns in defense of freethought, free press and free speech, I am frequently asked by anti-Fascists if I favor permitting such freedom to enemies of freedom, meaning, in particular, those anti-democratic propagandists who are spreading in this country the lying, destructive, degenerate ideas of Hitler and Mussolini. I confess my answer has always been influenced by Mill's philosophy, which held that people must be free to hold and advance opinions that are wrong, provided they commit no overt acts against their enemies, meaning, in particular, acts of violence by mobs. A free civilization must stand ready to defend those who wrongly propose to abolish freedom, subject to the rules of society, of course, and that means absence of violence. As Mill puts the issue: "If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind." As Prof. Binkley explains Mill's position here, "if an opinion is right, its suppression deprives people of a chance to exchange error for truth; if it is wrong, people lose by its suppression the livelier impression of truth produced by its collision with error." However, a sane social order must insist that this freedom of ex-

pression doesn't mean, for example, that a cancer quack has the right to advertise to the world the fraudulent claim that he, for a consideration, can cure cancer. Such an act belongs not in the world of ideas but in the sphere of trade, and trade, according to Mill's view, "is a social act," and as such is subject to the reasonable rules of protection which mankind has the right to enforce against those who would deceive or rob innocent victims of corrupt trade. Also, when certain men—known technically as lobbyists—advance certain opinions because they are paid to do so, they can be compelled by law to so identify themselves by taking out a license or registering themselves with the proper authorities. Such registration is no curb on freedom of opinion. In truth, it's a device for enabling mankind to defend truth.

The Englishman who wrote "On Liberty" 80 years ago is still a living force. Prof. Binkley recognizes this in his essay, which he closes with the following paragraph:

John Stuart Mill ruled a great empire of thought and ruled it well; his satraps were principles and his army was an army of facts. The law of that empire was the law of liberty, progress and utility. The empire still stands, though there are barbarians swarming on the frontiers, and the satraps have set themselves up as semi-independent rulers of petty domains. But the good law that he laid down is still good law, and the empire will stand wherever men believe with him that "the worth of a State, in the long run, is the worth of the individuals composing it."

\* \* \*

An opponent of Freethought, after listening impatiently to my praise for the liberating work done by Robert G. Ingersoll, insisted that the great Agnostic appealed only to the rabble and that no leaders extolled him. Can you give me the straight facts on this?

Outstanding men showed the greatest admiration for Ingersoll's beautiful personality, inspired oratory and messages of intellectual emancipation. Space permits me to refer to only a few. The first that comes to mind is Mark Twain's letter to Ingersoll's sister-in-law, Mrs. Sue M. Farrell, shortly after the famous Rationalist's death, as follows:

"Except my daughter's, I have not grieved for any death as I have grieved for his. His was a great and beautiful spirit, he was a man—all man, from his crown to his foot-soles. My reverence for him was deep and genuine; I prized his affection for me and returned it with usury."

Georg Brandes, the distinguished Danish critic, wrote: "In his mind common sense rose to genius."

Walt Whitman, the poet, according to Horace Traubel, said: "America don't know to-day how proud she ought to be of Ingersoll."

Henry Ward Beecher said, among other things: "... I consider him as one of the greatest men of the age."

In a letter to Ingersoll, John Burroughs, the naturalist and Freethinker, wrote: "To such as you I would send perpetual gifts of fruit and flowers."

Luther Burbank, the botanist and Freethinker, remarked: "His life and work have been an inspiration to the whole earth, shedding light in the dark places which so sadly needed light."

Swinburne, the poet, once wrote that it was his greatest regret that he had never met Ingersoll, "the man above whom all others I should have wished and hoped to meet. . . ."

Ingersoll endured an immense flood of abuse from the supernaturalists and bigots during his lifetime, and since his death their unfriendly, and unfair, attacks continue whenever occasion arises. But the generation Ingersoll served admired his genius, and history has given him a place among the immortal defenders of Reason and Truth.

\* \* \*

Please give me the title of the first little book you ever published.

It's still No. 1 in the series, "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam," the favorite poem of my young years, along with Oscar Wilde's "The Ballad of Reading Jail," which still is No. 2 in the series of little blue tomes. In editing the books I've always insisted that a title shall please me personally before admitting it to the thrice-blessed precincts of my artistic Eden. Nothing is suppressed by the raucous mooing of the publisher's sacred cows. It gives me a pain in the blavatsky to hear someone ask "how much it costs" to get a title included

in my library of almost 1,800 books. Once Lady Windbotton asked me how I got the right to reprint Shakespeare's plays and Lord Bacon's essays. I kept a straight face while I imparted the information that I got in touch with the bard's heirs, who readily granted the permission I sought. Lady Windbotton who was visiting at the home of Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt then told me the substance of Bishop Beerbelch's last sermon which moved me to nominate him for the office of vice-president of the Id-Rather-be-Trite-than-President Club. But let's get back to the Omar Khayyam theme for there's a story to be told, this time about Jake Shubert, who, according to the yarn, was watching a rehearsal of one of his shows one day, when an actor said something about Omar Khayyam. With a burst of temper Jake demanded: "Where'd you get that line?" The actor told him it was in the script. "Don't you know it's Omar of Khayyam?" Jake demanded. "From now on say it that way." The actor complied, and when the director returned to the rehearsal he heard the actor saying *Omar of Khayyam*. The director, rising to magnificent profanity, demanded where in the hell he'd gotten that Omar of Khayyam business. "Orders from Mr. Shubert," the actor argued. The director went to Mr. S. and said: "Look, Mr. Shubert, the guys name is Omar Khayyam, just like yours is Jake Shubert, not Jake of Shubert." Jake studied the problem a moment, pursed his lips, whistled, then, with a burst of inspiration direct from heaven, decreed: "Okay. Take out the goddam 'of.' The show's too long anyway." Which is my notion of getting out of a predicament with speed and dignity. I'm reminded of the Negro chambermaid who accused a colored bellboy of taking advantage of her. In her testimony she said: "You see, Judge, I was cleanin' one of the windows in the room when I hears the band playing and I looks out the window and I seen this parade comin' down the street with the bands playing and Mr. Willkie standin' up in a big car bowin' and scrapin'. Suddenly this Negro comes up behin' me, shuts the window on me and has me in his power." "Did you struggle?" asked the judge. "Oh, sure I did," said the gal, "but he had the window

down on me." "Well, why didn't you yell?" the judge demanded. She answered simply: "Ah didn't want people to think I was cheerin' a Republican."

\* \* \*

Can you give me Ingersoll's tribute to tobacco?

Robert G. Ingersoll liked to smoke. When anti-tobacco fanatics assailed the Freethinker for indulging in the "nasty habit," Ingersoll replied with the following prose poem to the fragrant weed:

"Nearly four centuries ago Columbus, the adventurous, in the blessed island of Cuba, saw happy people with rolled leaves between their lips. Above their heads were little clouds of smoke. Their faces were serene, and in their eyes was the autumnal heaven of content. These people were kind, innocent, gentle, and loving.

"The climate of Cuba is the friendship of the earth and air, and of this climate the sacred leaves were born—the leaves that breed in the mind of him who uses them the cloudless, happy days in which they grew.

"These leaves make friends and celebrate with gentle rites the vows of peace. They have given consolation to the world. They are the companions of the lonely—the friends of the imprisoned—of the exile—of workers in mines—of fellers of forests—of sailors on the deep seas. They are the givers of strength and calm to the vexed and wearied minds of those who build with thought and brain the temples of the soul.

"They tell of hope and rest. They smooth the wrinkled brows of care—they drive fear and strange mishapen dreads from out the mind, and fill the heart with rest and peace. Within their magic warp and woof some potent, gracious spell imprisoned lies that, when released by fire, doth softly steal within the fortress of the brain, and blind in sleep the captured sentinels of care and grief.

"These leaves are the friend of the fireside, and their smokelike incense rises from myriads of happy homes. Cuba is the smile of the sea."

After this florid piece got into print—where it was admired by all sinful devotees of Lady Nicotine, a tobacco company's representative asked for permission to name a cigar after Ingersoll, which he granted with the

suggestion that the company adopt for his cigar the following slogan: "Smoke here and not hereafter." This was done, and, to the consternation of the pious, the cigar sold well enough to bring the cigar company much money.

\* \* \*

Please tell me what varieties of oranges are grown in California.

There are two varieties of oranges grown in California, the Valencia and the Navel. With this in mind you'll be able to follow this little story: A rich English visitor to this country was driving his car through Arizona. His companion was a native daughter of California, the kind of woman who, when she undresses, shows deep girdle marks all over her ample torso. They passed many jaloppies full of humanity on their way West. This fact caused the Englishman to inquire: "Where are all these people going?" He contemplated on the eccentricities of Californians after the woman answered: "Why, they're on their way to California to pick our Navels."

\* \* \*

I'm sure the enclosed press clipping will burn you up the way it did me. It tells about the way the Duchess of Windsor spent thousands of dollars to transport a hairdresser from N. Y. to the Bahamas in order to get just the right hair-do. And in London the people are being torn to pieces by the Nazi savages. It burns me up, I repeat.

I agree. It positively sings all three hairs that quaintly nestle in my navel. But just what we can do about it—outside of raising a squawk—is beyond me. Let's dismiss the whole disgusting spectacle by describing it as so much horse manure. However, let's not shut our eyes to the fact that this situation—the Duke and his Duchess, and the whoopsy, la-la boy from N. Y.—has given the world a neat little story, which I want to pass on. While the Duchess was having her hair done by the lavender-scented lad, he kept telling her how grateful he was for her thoughtfulness in sending for him. "I've been having the loveliest time," he chortled, "and I've been entertained by the best people." "I'm glad you've been enjoying yourself," said the Duchess. The fairy continued: "I hope you don't mind my new friendship with Edward." "Not a bit," the Duchess assured him, "I want him to keep occupied and enter-

tained. Good luck to you." "Oh, goody, goody, goody, goody," cried the sweet pansy, "I've spent over two weeks with him, every day and night. He's become very fond of me, really." The Duchess said: "That's all right, but no matter how much he loves you, you'll never be Queen." To which the pansy added: "I don't care about being queen so long as I can be his Fairy Queen."

\* \* \*

Who's your favorite radio humorist?

Fred Allen, who has a nimble wit. Too bad the radio nice-Nellies don't let him bust loose with his more worldly humor. All he needs to round out his career is to hire me as one of his aides-de-shicedrek—and I can be bought. Don't mention Jack Benny in the same breath when you bring up the name of Dr. Allen. Jack Benny, who draws more money, is only a purveyor of corn-pone naivete. On the other cuff, Fred Allen's humor is adult and his material is usually unformalized. I always enjoy that sour-pussed but amiable word-tumbler. I understand Allen's wife, Portland, was named after a thriving municipality in the far Northwest. I like that. I hold a name should mean something, even if it's just a Chic Sale edifice. For example, consider the case of Wilbur Windbottom, who named his first daughter Latex, because if it hadn't broken she'd never have been born—which sounds like something out of the collected works of the dunderheaded Stoopnagle, but which makes sense, if you concentrate. To return to Miss Latex Windbottom, the last I heard, she was looking frantically for a competent technician who could get her de-knocked up. But none of this should be blamed on Fred Allen, who, so far as I know, lives a clean, upright life.

\* \* \*

I wish you would write a little sermon on the type that's always doing something regardless of time or circumstance. At the moment I happen to be thinking of a chap who's always spouting Shakespeare. Now, I've no prejudice against Shakespeare, but there's a time and place for everything. No matter what's said, this geezer will bring out one or more quotations, which he recites with gestures, thereby giving me what you've described as an acute pain in a private part of my anatomy.

There isn't much one can do, except to resort to a quick, painless

shooting. It's one of the signs of good taste and culture to keep things appropriate to the occasion. There's a time for everything. Remove something from its time element and immediately there's trouble. Sometimes there's unconscious humor. Other times there's farce. I'm reminded of a cockney who had just been married. He hurried to a taxi with his bride, followed by a number of their friends. As they sank back into the seat one of their friends leaned in and leered at them: "What abaht t'night?" he chuckled. He repeated his question: "What abaht t'night?" "Yes," the bride shot back at him, "and what about this awfternoon, eh?" I hate to everlastingly belabor my readers with my moralizing, but it seems someone has to do it these terrible times, so I may as well devote a part of my energies to this thankless task, though for the moment I'm not sure which person I'm to bawl out—the friend or the bride. I'll study the situation and let you know.

\* \* \*

Can you tell me how many persons fall to their death through doors of moving passenger motor cars which they open in order to slam them shut? I refer to accidents caused by the rush of air swinging the doors completely open, pulling the person out of the vehicle.

The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company reports 300 persons meet their death that way in the U. S. each year.

\* \* \*

Being interested in writing I sent for the "Writing Aptitude Tests" given by the Newspaper Institute of America, Inc., whose advertisements you have doubtless seen. The test was duly written and shortly afterwards I received a pencilled form which gave a personal criticism of my test. They stated that I had made the grade and invited me to join and learn to write. Their proposition is interesting, and although the fee is high they have a monthly payment plan. Do you think a person with average intelligence can learn to write by their method?

The Newspaper Institute of America is a legitimate concern, so any criticisms I care to make are offered in a friendly spirit. I don't believe any correspondence course in authorship will do anyone the slightest harm, except to the purse. Whether such a course will do the beginning writer any good is debatable, and I

take the side that it ought to do some good. But, I insist there isn't a thing an ambitious amateur can get out of the correspondence schools like N.I.A. that he can't get out of a few simple books that can be bought for a few dimes, and, in a few instances, a dollar per copy. I always tell my readers to learn the principles of authorship from inexpensive books instead of spending from \$75 to \$150 on courses that are based on textbooks that cover the same ground. I may be loaded with conceit, but it's my notion there's just as much helpfulness in my own book on authorship as will be found in the best \$150 correspondence course. I realize this looks like a case of sour grapes, that I'm trying to boost one of my own works over the offering of a correspondence school, but I want to insist I'm not looking at this matter from my own view but from that of my readers. I believe that \$5 or \$7 worth of books, carefully selected will do a beginner more good than any correspondence course now available.

\* \* \*

Do you classify sex under the heading of work or pleasure?

Let me answer by telling about the major, captain and lieutenant who got into a hot argument over sex. The major insisted that sex is 75 percent work and 25 percent pleasure. But the captain disagreed, insisting it's 50 percent work and 50 percent pleasure. Here the young lieutenant butted in with the claim it's 25 percent work and 75 percent pleasure. "We don't seem to agree," said the major. "Let's call in the orderly." This they did, and when they explained the case to him he said: "Well, if you want my candid opinion, and with all respect to your rank, you're all wrong. It's 100 percent pleasure. If there was any work connected with it, I'd be doing it."

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#### FREETHINKERS ASKED TO ORGANIZE

[B. L. Taylor in The Bulletin of Freethinkers of America, November, 1940, published at 317 E. 34th St., N. Y. C.:]

Recently, Mr. E. Haldeman-Julius, editor of The American Freeman, was kind enough to print one of my letters in his magazine. It brought responses from all parts of the country requesting information on how to start local Freethinkers' associations. A typical

sentence from one of the letters is as follows: "Tell me how I can help spread the cause." Yes, there are millions in America who are intelligent enough to appreciate the truth of the statement by Robert G. Ingersoll: "By lifting others we are blessed." The job for us is to find them, and give them an opportunity to release the precious energy which is smoldering in their minds.

\* \* \*

Were "The Sayings of Poor Richard" original with Franklin?

Is his introduction to Benjamin Franklin's "The Sayings of Poor Richard." Paul Leicester Ford discusses the sources of what Jefferson Davis characterized as the "incarnation of the peddling, tuppenny Yankee," as follows:

"It is hardly necessary to state that Franklin did not originate all the 'Sayings of Poor Richard.' He himself tells us that they were the 'wisdom of many ages and nations.' Any one familiar with Bacon, Rochefoucauld, and Rabelais, as well as others, will recognize old friends in some of these sayings, while a study of the collections of Proverbs, made in the early part of the last century by Ray and Palmer, will reveal the probable source from which Poor Richard pilfered. Yet with but few exceptions these maxims and aphorisms had been filtered through Franklin's brain, and were tinged with that mother wit which so strongly and individually marks so much that he said and wrote."

I have long been an admirer of Franklin's "Poor Richard's Almanac," which I early gave a place in my library of little volumes. Of course, quite a few of the Sayings were pretty rough stuff for the Puritans, for Franklin always had an appreciation for Rabelaisian wit. His most famous piece of off-color humor is, needless to say, his immortal letter to the Royal Society of Brussels, in which he suggested, with pretended solemnity, that chemists get to work on the problem of manufacturing a powder that will enable refined and cultured esthetes to break wind in a manner that will prove pleasant to man's finer sensibilities. I'm sure Jefferson Davis never read that amusing piece of nonsense, for if he had he never would have called Franklin a "peddling, tuppenny Yankee." Franklin had his tuppenny, peddling side—we all have—but the whole man was much bigger than that. "Sentimental

Windbreaking," if nothing else, proves that.

In addition to being a "peddling, tuppenny Yankee," Franklin was a writer, editor, printer, publisher, book collector, father of libraries, promoter of educational institutions, postmaster general, patriot, statesman, diplomat, inventor, scientist, philosopher, humorist, conversationalist, teacher, lover of women, master of sound sense, and hater of tyrants. As A. R. J. Turgot, in his inscription for the Houdon bust of Franklin, wrote, "He snatched the thunderbolt from heaven, the sceptre from tyrants."

When Thomas Jefferson went to France as our envoy to take Franklin's office, he said, "I succeed him; no one can replace him."

\* \* \*

Are you so naive as to believe it's possible for man in the mass to throw off old errors and accept the truth? Surely you must know that only the exceptional individual is capable of grasping new truths.

Go into the street today and ask the first 100 men you meet whether they believe the earth's flat and you'll find that all will say they don't. There aren't more than 10,000 people in the entire country who still embrace the old error about the earth's shape, and yet only a few centuries ago man in the mass believed emphatically that anyone who suggested the earth was round deserved punishment. Man in the mass is slow to grasp new truths, I grant you, but even such a vast body can be moved. However, thinkers don't aim directly at man in the mass. They strive sanely to reach only a portion of the public. Schopenhauer, that great thinker who made a habit of dipping his pen in acid, has a passage in one of his works that expresses my notion accurately, so let me quote it below:

When any new and wide-reaching truth comes into the world an obstinate stand will be made against it as long as possible; nay, people will continue to deny it even after they slacken their opposition and are almost convinced of its truth. Meanwhile it goes on quietly working its way, and, like an acid, undermining everything around it. From time to time a crash is heard; the old error comes tottering to the

ground, and suddenly the new fabric of thought stands revealed, as though it were a monument just uncovered. Everyone recognizes and admires it. To be sure, this all comes to pass for the most part very slowly. As a rule, people discover a man to be worth listening to only after he is gone; their "hear, hear!" resounds after the orator has left the platform.

Schopenhauer, despite all his pessimism, had to admit that new truths do manage to assert themselves, if only we wait long enough. Discussing the same thought, Schopenhauer, elsewhere, said:

That men are slow to recognize genuine merit when it appears in their own age, also proves that they do not understand or enjoy or really value the long-acknowledged works of genius, which they honor only on the score of authority.

\* \* \*

Will whisky cure a cold?

Of course not. I've touched on this subject several times, as may be seen by peeking into my volumes of "Questions and Answers." Whiskey's no cure for a cold, and besides science doesn't know of anything else that'll cure your sniffles. And yet, whenever I catch cold (which isn't often) I dose up with a half dozen shots of good whisky, because the stuff makes me feel able to endure the tortures of a cold while waiting for nature to get in its licks. Once, while hacking and sneezing, I met a fellow who was fresh from the paternity nook of a maternity mill, and after he finished boasting about a new baby that looked like an unripe monkey, he produced a piece of paper which he waved under my dripping nose. This, he cried, was the geni which would transform me into a new man. Here is his perfect cold cure:

Take one pint of whisky, and into this stir well one tablespoonfull of whisky; then add another quart of whisky. Beat carefully with spoon or egg-beater—keep pouring in whisky.

Fill large bowl with water; have the wife set it out of your reach—or better yet have her blindfold you and hide it where you will not be able to find it.

Now take a small tumbler and into this pour two teaspoons of water; pour out the water; dry the tumbler carefully and fill it with whisky. Add contents of the tumbler to

the first ingredients. Flavor to your taste with whisky.

Dosage: Four fingers every hour. Continue treatment until patient finds and upsets the bowl of water.

\* \* \*

I find the need of some belly-laffs now and then of an evening, especially when I've missed a movement during the day. Could you recommend Stoopnagle?

Colonel Lemuel Q. Stoopnagle may be your dish, depending on the sort of things you laugh at. I don't feel competent to tell others what'll make them bend over in belly-laffs. One man's belly-laff is another man's mirthless titter. I'll give you a peep at a few pieces of his merchandise, after which you can make up your own mind. When he answers the telephone he usually says: "Speakstoople nagling!" Then he goes into a daffynition: "Straws are stuff that you drink soda through two of." Or maybe it's: "Gasoline is stuff that if you don't use good in your car, it doesn't run as well as if." After this you ought to be ready for a more formal joke, like this: "If you bought apples at 2c each and sold them for a nickel, how could you still lose money?" The solution: "If I had a hole in my pants pocket." When caught standing behind a window-screen, he explained he was taking his version of a Hollywood screen test. The colonel is also an inventor, his latest gadget being an alarm clock with half a bell to wake up one person when two are sleeping in the same room. From here you go on your own.

\* \* \*

For thirty-seven years and four months I've tried to read Karl Marx's "Das Capital," but never was able to suffer my way beyond page 12. Immanuel Kant fared even worse, for I always quit before finishing page 5, and my newsclip filing system (plug) shows 162 attempts. I need your help. I want to be cultured, even if it costs me a broken leg.

If a book's heifer-dust to you, treat it as such. Never try to swallow a book that gags. If a writer bores you, treat him like any other bore—run away from him. Such writers wouldn't give you the sleeves out of their vests, because they have nothing for you. Don't let it worry you. I've made a dozen attempts to read Max Stirner's "The Ego and His Own," and never connected up with the current. No dice. And I don't care a damn. Karl Marx's journalism is readable, al-

ways. His pamphlets and newspaper articles are exciting, even now. But I agree with you when it comes to "Das Capital," one of the most dismal and boring books ever written. And the same goes for Kant's hard reading. What I know about Kant (and it isn't a great deal) came from the much ridiculed popularizers—hard workers who do the thankless job of making unreadable writers understandable. You can learn all you ought to know about Kant by reading several of my easy, simple, informative Little Blue Books. I once knew the head of a family, who'd actually read and re-read every page of "Das Capital," and no one around him has lived happily ever since. He's gone to meet his Ethereal Esquire, and heaven's gain isn't the world's loss. I grant you my life's run with the punctillio of radio broadcasts, but there are limits to my orderly existence, near the top of my list of rejects stand "Das Capital" and the immense books of Kant.

\* \* \*

Please dig into that bottomless news-clip filing system of yours and bring out the words of the song, "No More Booze."

"No More Booze" was sung back in the '90s, and here it is:

There was a little man and he had a little can,

And he used to rush to the growler;  
He went to the saloon on a Sunday afternoon,

And you ought to hear the bartender holler:

No more booze, no more booze,  
No more booze on Sunday;  
No more booze, no more booze,  
Got to get your can filled Monday.  
She's the only girl I love,  
With a face like a horse and buggy.  
Leaning up against a lake,  
O fireman save my child.

The chambermaid came to my door,  
"Get up, you lazy sinner,  
We need these sheets for tablecloths  
And it's almost time for dinner."

CHORUS: No more booze, etc.

\* \* \*

Hey! What's going on here? Today I received a circular advertising "Soviet Russia Today," a magazine which devotes itself to the U. S. S. R. I am positive my name was received from your mailing list. You know me well enough to realize that I don't want to get connected with any Communistic, or Fascist organization.

I'm just as much opposed to totalitarianism, or Nazism, or Communism, as is my het-up reader. See my volumes of "Questions and Answers" for proof of the assertion that I am an anti-Communist. I'm all the way for democracy, and the true American way. It's a fact that I rented some of my names to the magazine, *Soviet Russia Today*, but that isn't anything unusual. Only the other week, *The New York Times* ran a large advertisement for this same magazine. That didn't mean the august *Times* had gone Communist. We traditional Americans believe in letting even our enemies have a hearing. We aren't afraid of their open propaganda, because we have the facilities with which to answer it. If we really believe in a free press we must be consistent and give unpopular (and even wrong) schools of thought a hearing.

\* \* \*

What are your volumes of "Questions and Answers" but hashed Freemans without the letters?

The volumes include even the letters, because I refuse to pass up so many interesting, amusing and informative epistles, especially those that come from that facile Freemanite, C. A. Lang, of Maplewood, Mo. Yes, the books contain all my Freeman material, but I resent that word "hashed." The pieces aren't hashed. They're presented in an orderly way, covered by indexes on which I spend many painful, exhausting hours. Naturally, it wouldn't do to index each issue of *The Freeman*. Besides, the papers, after a few months or years, would get to be unwieldy, torn, worn dust-catchers. How much better is it to have all the Freeman pieces in simple, attractive volumes—21 of them to date—that'll look nice on your library shelves.

\* \* \*

I appeal to you for help—my last resort for even Dorothy Dix can't help me. Can you recommend Bartlett's "Familiar Quotations"?

John Bartlett's "Familiar Quotations" contains many valuable pieces, but honesty compels me to report that the book for you is Burton Stevenson's "The Home Book of Quotations," because it's fatter and arranged better. I use both, but the Stevenson tome is easier to get at. At that, you won't be far wrong if you put

both in your library, as I did. But I use Stevenson's book 10 times to Bartlett's once. And that's no shicedrek. Now, please don't think I'm trying to pull anything on you. I agree that you should distrust anyone who tries to fast-talk you into something. ...Whenever anyone tries that on me I always think of the man who attended a barbecue where no toilet facilities had been arranged. One of the guests just had to go and in desperation he had a creative idea. He cornered the Negro cook and standing close to him started telling him what a fine cook he was and that the barbecue was the best he had ever tasted, and what a fine looking man he was. Finally the Negro felt something warm on his leg and he said, "Boss, you ain't wettin' on me, are you?"

\* \* \*

You will see from the enclosed clipping that a man named Turner insists on spelling it Phtholognyrrh. For the love of all wordy debunkers, of whom I'm one in good standing, let loose with a little wisdom from that \$10 brain of yours.

Mr. Turner—who stands six feet in his sox feet—is just turning out a little comedic fodder, the object of his spoof being the slightly eccentric orthography of our wonderful language. In short, Mr. Turner is giving Webster the old brush-off, and, as they say out here, he's never had more fun since the pigs et granpaw. Technically, this valiant tosspot is right, and here's the evidence:

phth, as in phthisis, is pronounced	T
olo, as in colonel, is pronounced	UR
gn, as in gnat, is pronounced	N
yrh, as in myrrh, is pronounced	ER

\* \* \*

Thanks very much for your story about the Parisian butcher who had some fun with a cow's udder and for that story about Colonel Carter's dragon. Now everything's set for Fred Allen's letter commenting on L'Affaire Eagle.

Fred Allen used an eagle in one of his Wednesday night shows, and when the bird flew over the frightened studio audience, he decided to play safe the following week and chained the eagle (whom he called Mr. Ramshaw) to his perch. While in this condition the eagle disgraced himself by improvising a bit of business that wasn't in the script. This reminds me of the opera singer who persisted in ad libbing. Finally, the manager

told him to quit improvising or he'd be fired. That night a horse was brought onto the stage, and without regard for the refinements of civilized living the animal started to make a huge puddle. "Don't you know," cried the singer, "that we're not supposed to improvise?" But, to return to Fred Allen, here's his letter on the incident involving Mr. Ramshaw:

Am in receipt of your letter commenting on L'Affaire Eagle.

I thought I had seen about everything in radio, but the eagle had a trick up his feathered colon that was new to me. I thought for a minute I was back on the bill with Lamont's Cockatoos.

An acolyte from your quarters brought news to us, following the 9 o'clock broadcast, that the eagle was to be grounded at the midnight show. It was quite obvious that Mr. Ramshaw, as the eagle is known around the Falcon Lounge at the Audubon Society rooms, resented your dictatorial order. When his cue came to fly, and he was still bound to Captain Knight's wrist, Mr. Ramshaw, deprived by nature of the organs essential to the voicing of an audible complaint, called upon his bowels to wreak upon us his reaction to your martinet ban.

Toscanini, your house man, has foisted some movements on studio audiences in 8H, the Bulova Company has praised its movement over your network, but when Radio City is being torn down to make room for another McGinnis Restaurant, in years to come, the one movement that will be recalled by the older radio fans will be the eagle's movement on Wednesday last. If you have never seen a ghost's beret, you might have viewed one on Mr. Rockefeller's carpet during our sterling performance.

I know you await with trepidation the announcement that I am going to interview Sabu with his elephant some week.

Yours for a wet broom in 8H on Wednesday nights.

FRED ALLEN.

\* \* \*

In his broadcast on November 13, 1940, Boake Carter said: "The USSR is trying desperately to involve the world in war while she stands aside. She tried first to inveigle England, France and Italy into battle over Ethiopia, and again later over Spain. Now Stalin's dream is to get the U. S. A. to enter this war." Please comment.

Boake Carter is one of the worst dunderheads I've ever had to deal

with. If you'll look through my volumes of "Questions and Answers" you'll see at least a dozen articles in which I show up his mental cocaine. If Carter is right about Stalin's dream to get the U. S. A. into the war (on Britain's side), how does it happen that The Daily Worker and the speeches of Earl Browder follow the strictest isolationist line?

\* \* \*

Your intelligent and scientific remarks about golf move me to ask if the management shouldn't be made to feel responsibility for balls under certain conditions.

The management should always strive to improve the course in every way, but it's manifestly unfair to hold it responsible for the balls lost in the brush between certain holes. Also, the management should ask players to see for themselves that all holes are kept clean.

\* \* \*

How do you explain Wythe Williams' exclusive, confidential, inside reports about the world's bigwigs?

He's just a goddam, cheerful liar.

\* \* \*

Several of us here have a weighty problem. On page 209 of "The Grapes of Wrath" we find: **ITYWYBAD?** What does it mean?

If I tell you will you buy a drink?

\* \* \*

What, in your opinion, is the most ridiculous thing in the world today?

I can't imagine anything more ridiculous than the fact that The Freeman costs only \$1 per year.

\* \* \*

Pease comment on the enclosed clipping, which quotes the German Ministry of Propaganda as telling its own people, and the world via radio, that "The Great Dictator" is a flop.

Charlie Chaplin's blast at Hitler is not a flop, according to *Variety*, the organ of show business. It reports, among other successes, \$20,000 at the box office during the first week of the picture's showing in Buffalo, \$34,000 in two Chicago houses, and \$28,000 in a Cleveland theater.

\* \* \*

In one of your volumes of "Questions and Answers" you speak of "a lag, in the sociologist's sense." Whatinhell do you mean? Usually you're as hot as that famous red-headed virgin on the verge (if I may quote you), but here you give me a chill in the midriff.

I'm sorry I almost knocked this reader's navel out of his girdle. When

a sociologist speaks of a lag he refers to a condition in which a custom has persisted in surviving despite the fact that the original conditions that brought it about have long disappeared. A New York writer recently called attention to a lag. It happened on election night, when 400,000 persons crowded Times Square to hear the election returns when they didn't have to go there at all, because they could have tuned in at home and caught the election returns hot off the air-waves. There was a time when it made good sense to go down to Times Square (or up to it, if you want to be technical) for the election returns, because that was a good place to get them while the news was fresh. It isn't necessary now, but hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers continue to crowd the famous square, some coming even in Buicks provided with good radios. Speaking of Buicks reminds me somehow of the man who bought a new Buick. The next day he took it back to the dealer and asked that the word "Mayflower" be painted on both sides. The surprised dealer, who asked why he wanted to ruin the looks of his brand new car, was told: "I want to celebrate; a Puritan came across in it last night." Try as I will, I can't tie that up with a sociologist's lag, but who cares? A punster, after hard muscular work, might be able to squeeze something out of "lag" and "lay" but such goings-on never appeal to my sensitive artistic esthetic nature. But since we're off again, let me tell you about the girl with a touch of lavender past. Asked what her biggest thrill was when she was married, the maiden answered: "It was thrilling when John took me to the marriage license bureau; it was another thrill when the preacher pronounced us man and wife; and when he signed the register 'Mr. and Mrs.' without giving a phoney name. I thought I would pass out with excitement. But imagine my feelings when we had gone to bed and a knock came on the door and I could thumb my nose at the house-detective." That also, I confess, is some distance from a sociologist's lag.

\* \* \*

What is the war costing the British people?

\$36,500,000 per day, according to figures released by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on November 25, 1940.

You've been taking some hot shots from your readers of late—and in good humor—but I refuse to join in that melancholy chorus. I want to say a good word for your passion for the facts, for accuracy, for the truth.

Facts, according to my method, must be tied up with ideas. Facts alone are mighty dull things. I avoid them when they don't bring out a wider meaning. As for accuracy, let me say that several decades ago I took to heart Samuel Butler's remark that he didn't mind lying but he hated inaccuracy. But, in the words of the late Charlotte Perkins Gilman, a concept is stronger than a fact. However, this doesn't mean we're to shut our eyes to facts. To return to my old favorite, Mark Twain, "Get your facts first, and then you can distort them as much as you please." But let's not walk in the path of the Negro woman who was brought before a judge after a fight. He asked if she was cut in the fracas, to which she replied: "No, your honor, somewhere between the navel and the fracas." the poor woman was trying to be accurate, but her knowledge of the facts wasn't quite up to par.

I notice that you've been dipping into your past, giving us long articles about your experiences, especially in your adolescent years. Isn't this a sign of senility? Aren't you beginning to suffer from the affliction of the aged—the urge to go back into the remote, distant past?

Even if this reader's criticism were sound I still can't see anything wrong about trying to reach into the record of one's life and bringing forth interesting, informative or entertaining experiences. Someone has well said there's a book in every life. Here I'm reminded of an old couple that spent the evening at a glamour-saturated movie. The old gentleman felt a little romantic after they retired, and said to his ever-obliging wife: "Dearie, let's reach back to the thrills of earlier years." The next morning, when they awoke, she said to him in a tone of interest: "How did you make out last night, Sam?" That, I insist, is a beautiful incident. It tugs at the strings of one's heart. Just what happened to the old man the story doesn't tell, but the spirit of it brings to my eyes a picture of old age refusing to bow to the tyranny of time. Such people shouldn't be rebuffed. And if I

can help my readers to better appreciate this attitude I'll feel my efforts will not have been in vain.

How do you react to the mania for seeing a Fifth Columnist behind every hedge?

The problem of Fifth Columnists is serious enough without making it worse. It's reached the point where name-callers yell Fifth Columnist at any individual who happens to hold an unpopular opinion or who has a higher I. Q. than they have. Only the other day I heard about an old maid that slept in a four-poster bed and looked under the bed each night for the Fifth Column. You could never reason with such a mentality. Just what can be done about behavior of that kind is beyond my powers of understanding.

Can you give me instructions for the correct way to use sulfanilamide for the cure of gonorrhea?

Medical doctors report successes with sulfanilamide in cases of gonorrhea, but the drug can be given only by a competent doctor. Laymen who dose themselves with this new wonder-drug take their lives in their hands. Look around for a qualified specialist. If necessary, make inquiries at the office of the secretary of your local medical association.

I am a young woman and my parents are trying to arrange a marriage with an old man. Would you advise me to obey my impulse and refuse to accept the arrangement?

You're young only once, if you'll let me make an original observation I'm sure you don't want to feel old age creeping on you long before your time.

Why are some installment houses called "Borax Houses"?

A *Borax House* is any installment house that cleans its customers, like borax. In short, a clip joint. These establishments have an inside jargon that is interesting to the knowledgeable. For example, a *Schnook* is the general name for a sucker, but a *Clutch* is a sucker who shows sales-resistance against the Borax House's sizzlemanship—who, in short reveals buymanship by insisting on actually reading the contract, who squawks when the house asks for a wage as-

signment, a chattel mortgage, or an add-on contract. These words, let me add, are used by the people in the industry—the employes who clip the Schnooks. They call the credit manager or his assistant a *Home-wrecker*, which sounds perfect. A *Schlacht House* or *Slaughter House* is any borax house in which anything goes, in which no holds are barred. The poor Schnook never gets far in such a place of business. The *T. O. Man* is the turn-over man, who is another salesman who poses as a high executive. When the first salesman is having trouble with his *Schnook* or *Clutch* he calls for "*Mister Billy*," the signal that brings the *T. O. Man* running. After a few sentences the *T. O. Man* offers the *Clutch* (for at this stage he Schnook has evolved into a *Clutch*) a 10 percent discount "just for you." If the *Clutch* is still hard to make, the next higher up that's called for is *Mr. Otis*, who will chop off another 10 percent, if that's necessary in order to make the sale. The name (*Otis*) was inspired by the elevator label, meaning to go up higher in order to bring the *Clutch* down lower. After all this rigmarole the Schnook gets diddled even though he's classified as a *Clutch*. The moral: Stay away from Borax Houses. Don't let some *Mister Billy* or *Mr. Otis* disequilibrate your mental faculties. It's such goings-on that turn me into an anathematiician.

\* \* \*

I like the way you try to strike a happy medium. No one can call you an extremist. In fact, your voice is sane and your advice is helpful and constructive. You know where to draw the line, when to stop, and what surprises me is that you never pose as a moralist, preferring to give out your helpful hints casually and lightly.

Knowing when to stop is one of life's hardest problems. We all have a weakness for going too far. As I grow older I find it suits me to try to draw a circle and say to myself, Beyond this mark don't stray. Of course, it doesn't always work, but the notion is worth playing with. I try to draw an uplifting lesson from the sad experience of a Hollywood movie star who once found herself afflicted with a slight attack of crabs. A friend told her she could get rid of the creatures by rubbing the afflicted parts with Paris Green. A

week later the friend met her and asked if the stuff had killed the crabs. To which she replied, "Yes, and a couple of directors, too." The moral is obvious. If my little sermons can help bring light into the lives of such persons I'll feel my efforts will not have been in vain. Another type of person I like to help along life's thorny road is the kind who always expects a great deal in return for little. It's a form of greed that always annoys my sensitive, esthetic nature. I can illustrate what I mean by telling of two Kansas farmers who met on the road. One asked, "What's new?" The other said, "My wife gave birth to a four-pound baby last night." The first farmer, scorn in his voice, commented: "Hell, you hardly got your bait back." That, I insist, shows a small, petty, ungrateful spirit. If I can influence such individuals to change their outlook on life I'll feel once more that my efforts will not have been in vain.

\* \* \*

I have been following your potshots at Henry Ford these many months, and while many of your points are well taken, it seems to me you give the impression that the Industrialist is a complete washout. After all, you have to admit the man's a mechanical genius and that he set new and high standards for other employers to try to reach. Give the devil his due.

I've never said that Henry Ford didn't know how to build cars. He can make cars with the same ease and assurance that Mrs. Heinz makes baked beans or Dr. Goodyear makes condoms. I seek no shoulder-to-shoulder slugfest with Mr. Ford on his ability as an industrialist. Just because I criticize Ford on various subjects of public policy it doesn't follow that I'm trying to emulate the ostrich, that symbol of wishful thinking. I still have some distance to travel before I become a fugitive from the booby-hatch. But let's be careful and not fall for the clever Ford propaganda in the matter of "high wages." That's one of the prettiest myths in American life. The record shows that in many cases the Ford-Lincoln wage maximum in at least a half dozen important classifications is below the minimum at the Chrysler and Briggs plants in Detroit. A few comparisons, compiled by the Ford Organizing Committee of the United Auto Work-

ers, throws light on this Ford hoax. Consider the following facts:

Minimum Wages Per Hour			
Chrysler Briggs Ford			
Arc and gas welders	\$1.13	\$1.10	\$ .75
Metal finishers	1.13	1.10	.75
Spot welders	.98	—	.75
Water sanders	1.13	1.10	.90
Paint sprayers	1.13	1.10	.85
Dingmen & metal repair	1.38	—	.95
Doorhangers	1.11	1.10	.75

We can still grant that Ford is an excellent mechanic—or at least he was back in the days when he was building an enormous business in his famous Tin Lizzies. Yes, Ford had a feeling for the nuances of machinery back in the old Model T days when Ford jokes flew around faster than his Lizzies. Some of the jokes were revealing. I recall one about a man driving a Ford and getting stalled. Henry Ford, in a Lincoln, drove up and stopped. 'I can't seem to turn the engine over,' said the Ford owner. Mr. Ford leaned down and whispered to the mechanic. Immediately the car started. 'Please tell me what you told the engine, Mr. Ford, so I won't have this trouble again.' 'I just whispered, 'Lizzie, this is Henry, turn over,' said Henry. Granting this delicate ear for the finer things in the world of mechanics it doesn't follow we should shut our eyes to his Fascism, his love for Hitlerism, his hatred of democracy, his vicious anti-labor policies, his race-baiting propaganda, his bigotry, and his general, stubborn ignorance.

\* \* \*

I want to know what the Catholic press is saying about the great questions that are troubling today's political, economic and other fields. I'm not interested in questions of religion or dogma. To hell with theology. It's the social angle that attracts me.

Representative Catholic publications are the following: Father Coughlin's anti-Semitic, anti-democratic, pro-Fascist *Social Justice*, the Jesuit society's *America*, the Paulist *Catholic World*, the Brooklyn *Tablet*, and the N. Y. *Catholic News*. Study their files and you get a complete picture of the policies of the Catholic Church in political and governmental questions. The effect is terrifying to all true believers in Americanism, democracy, intellectual and cultural freedom, and anti-totalitarianism. The standard press is afraid to tell the public what the

Catholic press is doing in these appalling times. The average person doesn't know that the Catholic Church is the open, avowed friend of the Brutalitarianism and the frank enemy of democracy. Let me summarize the main issues, showing the attitude on the hierarchy: (1) The U. S. is urged to refuse material and moral aid to England. This means that the Catholic Church wants Fascism to win the war. There's nothing surprising in that, for all informed people know what the Catholic Church has been doing all these years in Italy, Poland, Germany, Spain, Portugal, France, and other countries. Catholic-Fascism has always blessed the banners of the aggressors and helped destroy freedom and progressive civilization. (2) The Catholic press is united in its stand against the U. S. giving England military or naval help. It wants the U. S. to let the Fascist Brutalitarianism alone as they go about the ghastly task of rooting out and destroying every manifestation of liberalism and democracy. In short, the Catholic press is working to establish a condition in which the U. S. will be the only democratic power facing the world's united dictators. This can mean only one thing—the Catholic press is striving to see free Americans crushed and Catholic Fascism established. It's policy is to help the dictators enslave the American people. (3) The Catholic press is opposed to any attempt to make possible Russian cooperation on the side of England. The old communist herring is dragged out to make more difficult the position of democratic England. In short, the Catholic press wants Stalin to help Hitler and Mussolini destroy what's left of democracy. (4) The Catholic press is taking a firm stand against the British blockade. It wants British sea power destroyed so that Fascist Europe will be able to reach out for world-wide domination. An international totalitarian State will be completely acceptable to a totalitarian Church. It's always been that way. The Church has never failed to sustain the numerous dictatorships of the past, so long as they permitted the Church to enjoy her special privileges. If the British blockade could be nullified, this would mean victory for Hitler and Mussolini.

(5) In discussing the situation in France, the Catholic press praises Petain and Weygand for the way they destroyed French democracy and established "hierarchical government." Petain is pictured as the perfect Catholic statesman. Many articles show how Petain is reestablishing the Church's ancient privileges in France. This is another victory for Catholic-Fascism, but the standard press refuses to emphasize this important point. It is practically ignored, and yet it's one of the most significant questions facing this generation. (6) President Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor Policy" is attacked effectively in the American Catholic press. The editors see that American democratic influence in Central and South America will serve to undermine the power of Fascist dictators, especially Salazar of Portugal and Franco of Spain. The Catholic Church wants both Salazar and Franco to have more influence in Latin America because the priests can expect more privileges from them than from democratic, liberal Roosevelt . . . The above policies are of great importance to all Americans who want to rescue the world from a return to the Dark Ages. They show that the Catholic Church, true to its ancient position, is still the most reactionary force in the international scene. In the U. S. there is a pathetically small minority (mostly laymen) who express approval of democratic ideas, but this thin fringe is opposed by the powerful Catholic engines of the press and education. Recently 60 Catholics (most of them laymen) signed a statement favoring U. S. aid to Britain, but not one of the Catholic magazines listed above printed their argument or approved their position. These Catholic liberals included the names of only two of the 100 bishops in the U. S., and these two are independent Southern bishops. There are 33,000 priests in the U. S., and yet only 10 came forward to sign the statement denouncing Hitlerism. This situation reminds me of the piece I wrote during the Spanish civil war (see my volumes of "Q & A"), in which I showed that while the hierarchy and the vast body of priests throughout the world supported the Fascist Franco,

a tiny minority came out on the side of the democratic-minded Loyalists. They were immediately denounced by the Church. At some future time, when Jesuit propagandists will seek to throw liberals and democrats off their guard, these few Spanish priests will be pointed to in order to prove that the Catholic Church didn't oppose the Republic and the pro-English statement referred to a few sentences back will be brought out to show how the Catholic Church really opposed Fascism and didn't want to see England defeated. But the informed student of the affairs of the Church won't be fooled by that ancient tactic of fraud and deception. He knows the truth about the Catholic Church, and with Voltaire he cries, "Crush the infamous thing!"

\* \* \*

Enclosed you will find my check for \$20. This is not a donation. This is a proposition: I am 52 years old, and am offering you \$20 in payment for a whole life subscription to The American Freeman. If this is acceptable to you, I am wondering whether it would not be an idea to start a campaign offering the same proposition to your readers. This plan would probably tend to relieve the present financial strain of The Freeman and help to make your task easier, and better enable you to continue the fine work you are doing.

Oh, my Gawd-O-my-Gawd! Why didn't I hit on the same idea? The writer of the above is William Rosenthal, N. Y. C., who's on The Freeman's subscription list as long as both of us are in the realm of the living. It happens by a coincidence, that we're both the same age. I'll be 52 next July 30th. Naturally. I intend to exploit Reader Rosenthal's suggestion. And I hope many other readers will follow his lead. I'm sending him my autographed photograph, taken when I was young and handsome. The same gift will go to every other Freeman reader who splashes in with \$20 for a life subscription to The American Freeman. Also, every name will go on a Roll of Honor, to be printed in this organ of chastity and piety. That this project will be a success is as true as the fact that the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides, something I learned while editing a

series of mathematical volumes. What a break it'll be for The Freeman if a whole regiment of my pious communicants were to come across with their 20 bux. Think of buying the right to listen to the endless wisdom from this *enfant terrible* as it oozes from his editorial podium. Such a group will form the New Amerocracy, candidates for the *ne plus ultra* of thought and aspiration. This perceptive editor knows a peachy idea when he bumps into one. I guarantee you life subscribers (if you come) that you won't die of bore-poisoning, a highly infectious ailment. I'll work my usual charm and magic to make you smile as you listen to the story of man's "blind struggle in the network of the stars," with a little vicarious yencing thrown in for entertainment. Mr. Rosenburgh's idea is merely perfect. After I read his letter six times and showed his check to the near-blonde in the front office, I commented cryptically that here's a typical why-didn't-somebody-think-of-that-before item. My blood pressure hit the safety valve. It left me goggle-eyed. So, readers, the fat's in the fire. Give this project a break. Let me hear from you. If I don't it'll be a catsastrophic. Come across. All out, straight down the line. I don't want Mr. Rosenburgh to occupy a lone, eccentric position. Scores, even hundreds, should join him at once. What's the answer? You see, I simply can't stick to my not-too-urgent manner. My impatience is bubbling over and I can hardly wait to see how many Freemanites become life subscribers at 20 bux per soul.

\* \* \*

"Crackpot" is one of your favorite words. I see it scattered through all your volumes of "Q&A." I have a general idea of what it means, but I wish you'd define it anyway.

My pet authority, Webster, says "crackpot" is slang, meaning "a harmless lunatic." I'm not so sure about the word "harmless," after watching the cavortings of the disfigureheads of Brutoeracy. When we consider our crackpots we must take some notice of the malevolence of human stupidity. True, a crackpot keeps his brains in his tokus, but he often manages to connect up with real authority, which means he's something more than a sapient fat-

head and goose's rear. Thus has that dreary little man brought a change into a word that once was the favorite of the merely amiably malicious. Today's crackpots do more than ad-lib bunk. It's a good idea to be precise about the words we use. Let's not be like the woman who, when asked if she'd ever been financially embarrassed, replied: "No, never, but many times I've been pushed for money."

\* \* \*

I showed a friend your articles exposing crooked gambling, which I found scattered throughout your books of "Questions and Answers." He says he isn't afraid to play with gamblers because he's always careful to check the cards in order to make sure they are legitimate. He can spot phony cards at 10 feet. Please comment.

Such a sucker is a heaven-sent prize to any clever cardsharp. The gamblers who know their business don't have to depend on "gimmicks" (crooked devices special markings, etc.) but can do wonders with a fresh, virgin, legitimate deck in just a few rounds. Such a game can be "straight" for the first five or ten minutes, after which the crook, by his special system of markings, will be able to call every important card in the deck. I stick to my original sermon—never play with strangers. If you're an ordinary player, you're sure to be robbed.

\* \* \*

How many people, in normal times, sleep five hours or less a night?

Julian Huxley says this question was studied in peace-time London, the survey showing about 3 percent. During the months when London was being bombed almost daily the number went up to 40 percent. I have no other data on this subject.

\* \* \*

Can you give me the Marxist's angle on Dorothy Thompson?

Freud is her dish.

\* \* \*

In your interesting discussion on problems of diet in your volumes of "Questions and Answers" you speak of beriberi. I haven't a medical dictionary, so I must ask you to tell me what this disease is like and the language from which the word is derived.

Beri-beri, which is also correctly spelled "beriberi", is prevalent in the Far East. The disease is classed as a neuritis. Medical authorities say it's main cause is polished rice.

When rice is polished, valuable vitamins are destroyed, causing partial paralysis, dropsy, and swelling of the legs. The word is from the Singalese.

\* \* \*

### Why does rubber stretch?

Two university professors, Hubert M. James and Eugene Guth, have made a careful study of the structure of rubber bands and believe they know why they're elastic. It's a little technical, but even a layman can get the drift of the argument, which follows:

Rubber consists of a series of molecular chains, each composed of atoms and curled into small, compact knots. When the band is stretched the molecules are pulled out of their knotted shape. Each molecule, however, tends to return to its original knotted form, so that the combined tensions of the molecules produce the elastic quality of the rubber band. If a rubber band can be stretched only so far and no farther it is because the molecular knots have been opened out as far as possible, whereupon the molecules "freeze" into crystals.

\* \* \*

Having studied your writing against Nazism, Fascism, Bundism, etc., and your consistent arguments in support of freedom and democracy, I want your reactions to the enclosed clipping.

The press report is about the New Jersey "anti-Nazi" statute, under which eight German-American Bundsmen have been ordered to stand trial. The complaint describes anti-Semitic speeches. As a believer in our Constitution and Bill of Rights, as a writer who has always stood by democracy and freedom, and opposed Totalitarianism, let me say that I consider this N. J. law an unlawful and unconstitutional restriction on the American rights to freedom of speech, press and assemblage. I take the traditional position endorsed by Justice Holmes, when he said, from the bench of the Supreme Court of the U. S., that he was for "the principle of free thought—not free thought for those who agree with us, but freedom of thought for those we hate." I despise everything connected with Bundism, but in fighting this menace I don't want to see our democratic, constitutional rights destroyed, for that's what it would mean if we were to

gag our enemies in the name of freedom, and destroy democracy in the process. Yes, these are "critical times," but that's the time to stand by our traditional Americanism instead of joining the jackals of Brutalitarianism. I insist the Bundsmen have a right to preach anti-Semitism, if our Constitution means anything, but as one who is horrified by everything connected with racial persecution I demand the right to reply to such attacks and give the real facts as I see them. That's the essence of free democracy. The American Civil Liberties Union, which has studied this N. J. statute, says it's void because it violates free speech guarantees and because it's vague, adding that "under the guise of protecting constitutional liberties, the statute seeks to prohibit them. The statute is not limited to acts or incitements to acts; it prohibits mere speech, the preparation for speech or the assistance of one who makes a speech." The A. C. L. U. continues: "It makes criminal any utterance which in any way incites, counsels or promotes or advocates hatred, abuse or hostility against a group of persons by reason of race, color or religion." The Union insists a wide difference of opinion can be attached to any one of these words quoted from the statute. The penalizing of utterances of such a vague, undefined character in itself renders the statute void, declared the Union. We believers in democracy deplore anti-democratic statements, but we don't hold that our democracy will be strengthened if such expressions of opinion are suppressed. While on this subject of civil liberties let me add a few words for the benefit of two or three readers who asked me to comment on the U. S. Supreme Court's decision declaring exclusion of qualified Negroes from grand jury service is unconstitutional. This decision is of far-reaching importance to civil liberties, and all believers in our traditions of freedom and democracy will applaud the Supreme Court's position. Justice Black, who delivered the unanimous decision which set aside the conviction of a Houston, Tex., Negro sentenced to life for rape, said that "it is part of the established tradition in the use of juries as instruments of pub-

lic justice that the jury be a body truly representative of the community." That logic is sound, and the South is going to learn that the Supreme Court means business. The South may go ahead and convict no end of Negroes without giving qualified Negroes the right to serve on grand juries, but the Supreme Court can go on ordering the sentences withdrawn and the victims freed. Racial bias has been hit hard by the Supreme Court.

Is Vatican State a real, independent State?

The idea that Vatican State is a sovereign, independent State is without factual support. The Pope is supposed to be king, but Mussolini's Fascist government is the real boss, though the publicity doesn't announce that fact. For example, in October, 1940, Mussolini ordered the three Vatican postoffices closed "as a consequence of the war." This was done in order to enable Mussolini's censors to examine all incoming and outgoing mail. In addition, the Fascists censor the Vatican State's telephone system, and its said this control will continue "for the duration." The Pope-King is just about as independent of Mussolini as the "prime minister" of Slovakia is independent of Hitler.

In one of your articles about the Jesuits you say they are opposed to public education and then add that they specialize in publishing magazines and running educational institutions. Please explain.

There's no inconsistency here. It's true that the Jesuits—of whom there are 26,309 in the world—have 12,084 schools, but they strive mainly to reach the children of the upper middle class and the rich. Their literature shows they teach their students to reject progressive, liberal ideas. Our secular educational institutions they deride for what they call "motion without direction." The chief Jesuit magazine in this country, *America*, said in its October 31, 1931, issue that the Jesuits are against our American system of universal elementary education, and went on to say that the idea of teaching every child to read and write "is one of the heresies of democracy." The same article argued that "in-

discriminate 'education' applied to all alike under State systems is the result of the heresy of the equality of man." The same magazine, in its issue dated August 31, 1940, called the U. S. public school education "publicly-supporter paganism."

Please comment on the case of the eight divinity students who were convicted because of their refusal to register in the draft.

In November, 1940, eight divinity students in N. Y. C. were sentenced to a year and a day each for refusing to register under the Selective Service Act. The young men had appeared on October 16 before their local draft boards and left letters of explanation stating their refusal on conscientious grounds to register. They plead guilty, and at this writing are each serving a year and a day, which means they have lost their rights of citizenship, although the law says theological students aren't liable for military training under the law. The sentences being given by federal judges in such cases are too severe. Even in wartimes, England's maximum penalty for a similar offense under the draft act is a fine up to \$100. During the first World War the maximum sentence for such an offense in the U. S. was a year, which made it a misdemeanor instead of a felony, thereby saving the convicted persons their rights of citizenship. It's plainly extreme to go beyond our wartime experience in handling conscientious objectors, persons who are supposed to be granted exemption if their sincerity can be established. That this problem is a mild one in this country is shown by the fact that fewer than 50 men failed to register because of conscientious objection to service under the law. In the case of the divinity students, they should have been suspended and then paroled to continue their calling. Others could be paroled and assigned where feasible to some work of national importance that would meet all the proper exigencies of the situation.

In a friendly discussion on the question of powerful propaganda coming from a small body I pointed to the Jesuits as leaders. Am I right?

The Jesuits edit more than 1,000 magazines throughout the world. This means one magazine to every 26

members of the Jesuit order. In addition, there's a constant flood of books and pamphlets. All this vast propaganda is aimed to support the 400-year-old objective of the Jesuit society—to protect and advance Jesuit-Vatican policies. This small, compact, powerful society not only conducts a tremendous propaganda on its own but influences practically every member of the world-wide Catholic press.

\* \* \*

I am married to a woman who has a bad case of halitosis. Can that condition be used as a cause for divorce?

The Koran puts down bad breath as a good cause for divorce. That's the only source I can point to, so it looks as though you'll have to go to a Mohammedan country if you want to get rid of your mate on the score of her exhalations. Why not have the poor victim see a good doctor? He may find her stomach sick, or she may have decayed teeth, two common causes of this offensive condition. Strange as it may seem, bad odors don't always offend. Stekel tells of one of his women patients who enjoyed her husband's embraces only when he was full of beer and smelt like a brewery. Many women hate the odor of tobacco on their love-partners; others like it. "He smells so mannish," was the way one little filly put it. That was a case of "love at first smell." Casanova, that great authority on the deathless pantomime, knew something about the place of odor in the alchemy of love. He wrote: "Is it not every lover's ardent desire to inhale part of the beloved?" As generally known, sex in the animal world is closely related to the sense of smell. Some writers insist that the Eastern custom of rubbing noses corresponds in some degree to the sniffing of animals. Odors have long been known to have erotic consequences.

\* \* \*

You talk about inaugurating a jihad against bunk, but the volume of your "Q&A" in which your humorous comments appeared didn't deign to define the word. Come across and help a fellow who likes to understand what he's reading. Otherwise I threaten to put your 20 volumes aside and not touch them. By the way, you spell it "jihad" in your index and jihad in your article.

Jihad is also spelled *jahad* and *jihad*. It means "holy war," and

comes from the Arabic. Mohammedans use it when speaking of a war against enemies of their religion. As I've met your request, please return to my volumes of "Q & A" and continue your good time. If you get stuck again, don't hesitate to call me in for expert advice.

\* \* \*

What is the most rapid rate at which germs can multiply in the human body?

It's possible to start off with a single malignant micro-organism and 24 hours later have 4 followed by 21 zeros. But don't let that worry you. It's just a theoretical calculation. Justina Hall, in her book, "Germs and the Man," shows that "even with individual cells so small as to measure 20,000 or 30,000 to the inch, a collection numbering 4-plus-21-zeros would clog a one-inch pipe from the Atlantic to the Pacific."

\* \* \*

Name the largest international industry.

Bunk.

\* \* \*

Your dirty insinuating dig at Oscar Ameringer and The American Guardian is uncalled for.

I made no "dirty insinuating dig." I merely reported the fact that the German-American Bund's official organ, *Beobachter*, in its November 7, 1940, issue, reprinted Ameringer's articles. There must be something about Ameringer's *Guardian* that the Nazis like or they wouldn't give him an editorial play. The American Freeman has never been quoted approvingly in any Brutalitarian publication. Ameringer is against any kind of American help to England. This is playing into Hitler's hands. The Brutocrat couldn't ask anything better from a U. S. periodical. Does any supporter of Ameringer's isolationism believe I couldn't back up my assertion that the Bund organ drew on the Guardian's editorial matter in order to keep us from helping England? My piece wasn't a "dirty dig"; it was a piece of factual reporting. If the facts carry a dig, don't blame me, blame Oscar.

\* \* \*

What do we know about the color tastes of the people at large?

Science says the human eye can see about 10,000,000 different colors, but the human brain is surprisingly elemental, being interested only in 18, as follows: red, orange, yellow,

green, blue, violet (or purple), pink, lavender, flesh (peach or salmon), buff (ivory or cream), maroon, brown, tan, white, gray, black, gold, and silver. In short, most of us stick pretty close to the major notes of the rainbow. Sophisticates go in for fine color differences, but the masses—as volume merchandisers can testify—limit themselves to surprisingly few.

\* \* \*

Are the Eskimos and Indians members of the same race?

Anthropologists are generally agreed that both are Mongolians. Chinese crossed to this continent by way of Asia and Alaska. The branch that spread into the Arctic became Eskimos; those who traveled South became Indians. Among many others, Joseph McCabe, in several of his books, dwells on this interesting subject. Dr. Ales Hrdlicka, curator of physical anthropology, National Museum, holds the same view, and adds that it's a misnomer to call the Indian a red man. Racially, he says, the Indian is a yellow-brown. He writes: "Studies have shown that the Indian, the Eskimo and all the Asiatic races are of the same root. The term red man apparently came from the fact the Indians liked to 'doll up' with red paint for war."

\* \* \*

Would you recommend a St. Christopher medal?

The reader who asked the above enclosed a clipping from *The New Republic*, October 20, 1937, in which was quoted an advertisement of the Catholic Information Society of Richmond, appearing in *The Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch*, as follows:

"So you see, a St. Christopher medal in a car can do a lot of good. Indirectly it can stop skids, blow-outs or any other calamity, if one has faith in the prayers of a saint and appreciation of the fact that God can do anything He wants to."

It seems to me that the great companies that advertise their tires are guaranteed against blow-outs should tie up with the Catholic Information Society. By getting motorists to use St. Christopher medals and show real faith in its powers, the companies that sell tires could save themselves hefty gobs of kale, thus enhancing dividends for themselves and satisfying the motoring public at the same

time. It's funny how hard-headed businessmen pass up such obvious keys to prosperity. As for myself, I'm writing to the Catholic Information Society today asking what a medal will cost, F.O.B. Girard. I'm also telling the insurance company which covers my car to look into this St. Christopher medal business. I like to pass these constructive ideas around, for, like a bright Boy Scout, I'm ever on the watch to do humanity a good turn.

\* \* \*

Can you refer me to some famous writers who were absolutely original?

I don't find myself able to recall a single name, and I happen to be familiar with almost every famous writer, past and present. I've discussed this matter of originality before, so let me close with a quotation from Ambrose Bierce, who expresses my ideas perfectly, only he happened to say it a half century before I ever put pen to paper:

"There is no copyright in thought. Who may lay claim to an original thought? Can any man say that any idea is peculiar to him? As material for literature, it is every man's property. The style in which the thought is dressed, the art with which it is put to new uses—that is about all the originality that most literature of this day can claim."

\* \* \*

Since you quote Mark Twain frequently, perhaps you will be able to let me have that great humorist's "war recipe."

Mark Twain's description of how nations drift into disaster will be found in his posthumously published masterpiece, "The Mysterious Stranger," one of the most devastating and debunking books ever written, and, let me add, one of the best works of Freethought I've ever read. Mark Twain's war formula is timely reading in these days of Fascist dictatorships in cahoots to destroy Democracy and enthrone world-wide militarism. Here are Mark Twain's truthful, forceful words:

"The loud little handful—as usual—will shout for the war. The pulpit will—warily and cautiously—object—at first; the great, big, dull bulk of the nation will rub its sleepy eyes and try to make out why there should be a war, and will say, earnestly and indignantly, 'It is unjust and dishonorable, and there is no necessity for it.' Then a handful will shout louder. A few fair men

on the other side will argue and reason against the war with speech and pen, and at first will have a hearing and be applauded; but it will not last long; those others will outsmart them, and presently the anti-war audiences will thin out and lose popularity. Before long you will see this curious thing; the speakers stoned from the platform, and free speech strangled by hordes of furious men who in their secret hearts are still at one with those stoned speakers—as earlier—but do not dare to say so. And now the whole nation—pulpit and all—will take up the war-cry, and shout itself hoarse, and mob any honest man who ventures to open his mouth; and presently such mouths will cease to open. Next the statesmen will invent cheap lies, putting the blame upon the nation that it attacked, and every man will be glad of those conscience-soothing falsities, and will diligently study them, and refuse to examine any refutations of them; and thus he will by and by convince himself that the war is just, and will thank God for the better sleep he enjoys after this process of grotesque self-deception.”

I checked the above lines twice, to make sure Mark Twain's paragraph was reprinted accurately. I'm reminded of a correspondent of mine who ended a letter on peace with a bit of poetry which moved along all right until he got to the last line, when he put in a word of his own, which turned the piece into a bit of unconscious humor, as follows:

Peace, the dream of the ages;

Peace, the creed of our sages;

Peace, humanity's wages:

Why can't there be no peace?

\* \* \*

The editor, his staff, Bishop Beerbelch, Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt, Colonel Droopy-Drawers, Lord Plushbottom, Prof. Wang Hung Lo and Dr. Who Flung Dung all join in wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

\* \* \*

I read with deep interest your report from high authorities to the effect that New Jersey's swine have tails that curl in a certain direction, but consider this fact rather limited. Your data should cover the country in general on this all-important question.

J. H. Zeller, of the U.S. Bureau of Animal Industry's swine division, reports that a careful, exhaustive inquiry among 200 many-sized and colored pigs scattered throughout the

nation revealed that their tails curled as follows: rights, 98; lefts, 98; borderline cases, 4. It would seem that the eternal porcine question of whether a pig's tail curls to the right or the left is settled once for all with the established fact that they curl both ways.

\* \* \*

In "Science and the Supernatural," Arnold Lunn writes: "I believe in Moscow on the authority of people who have visited it, and I believe in hell on the authority of Jesus Christ, who claimed to be God, and proved his claim by rising from the dead." Please comment.

Such crude Fundamentalism is acceptable only to the less educated portion of the clergy. The fact that Moscow exists is verifiable, and the skeptic can always check his authorities by buying a ticket and going to the place for first-hand observation. Try to ask the transportation seller for a ticket to hell and see what happens. I'm not a skeptic about Moscow, but I am one about the "proofs" that established Jesus' claim to be God and the further controversial point that he rose from the dead. The difficulties and doubts are a little more pressing than Mr. Lunn thinks. Mr. Lunn, by the way, is a Roman Catholic. His Church isn't given to open discussion, and when it is able to assert its will, it is:

Such as do build their faith upon

The holy text of pike and gun;

Decide all controversies by

Infallible artillery;

And prove their doctrine orthodox

By apostolic blows and knocks.

\* \* \*

The bankers are always putting the screws to us. And I'm tired of getting screwed. Is there any way to beat their game, short of following the example of Jesse James?

I've studied this problem for more than 30 years and now I'm able to report that there's one method that promises to work like a charm. And it's legal, too. The mathematician in me recognized immediately that here's the answer to a busted man's prayer:

Deposit \$50 in the bank; then

Draw out ....\$20 Leaving ....\$30

Draw out .... 15 Leaving .... 15

Draw out .... 9 Leaving .... 6

Draw out .... 6 Leaving .... 0

Total.....\$50 Total.....\$51

If the above's sound figurin' then

it follows that if a depositor were to open 5,000 \$50 accounts each month in 5,000 banks he could figure on an income of \$5,000 12 times a year. I believe I've got somethin' here, buddy. You see, I made it modest—only a one-buck nick each month—so it won't be noticed by the bank cashier. If one were selfish and greedy one could turn the above upside down and get these grander results:

Deposit	\$50		
Draw out ....	6	Leaving ....	\$44
Draw out ....	9	Leaving ....	35
Draw out ....	15	Leaving ....	20
Draw out ....	20	Leaving ....	0
Total.....		\$50	Total.....\$99

Don't try it. You're sure to blow your top and spill the beans. A more conservative plan could be worked out, thus:

Deposit.....	\$50		
Draw out ....	15	Leaving ....	\$35
Draw out ....	15	Leaving ....	20
Draw out ....	10	Leaving ....	10
Draw out ....	10	Leaving ....	0
Total.....		\$50	Total.....\$65

Then there's the utterly reckless get-rich-quick scheme of resorting to ten \$5 withdrawals, which would make the right-hand total \$225, but such figuring would cause a revolution in any well-run bank. Avoid such big-time stuff. Stick to the \$1 idea and see the \$5,000 roll in each month from 5,000 banks. If the clerical chore becomes too tiring, hire a competent office worker who can take the details off your mind and leave you free for more interesting and stimulating experiences. Needless to say, all banks do business by mail. The above schedule is based on the assumption that the bank cashier will figure the same way as the depositor—that is to say, accept the procedure of adding up the successive remainders. If he doesn't do this the whole scheme collapses. The cashier may say, in his crassly mercenary way, that there's no reason in the world why the right hand (or "leaving") column should be added up. He may, in his crudely conservative way, insist on subtracting your withdrawal checks, showing what's left to your account in another column, but never adding that column. If he does that, you're sunk. He might calmly explain that the only figure he's interested in is the "0" at the bottom of the right-

hand column, meaning you've withdrawn all you had to your credit. If pressed, the cashier could resort to the dirty innuendo that the above tables throw in something extraneous to divert attention. If he wants to get real uppity he might hint that it isn't necessary for the two columns to agree, that the sum of items withdrawn must equal the amount deposited, but the sum of the balance may be anything. In the above tables it's suggested that the sum of the right-hand column should equal the sum of the left-hand column, which looks O. K. to the depositor but doesn't look so good to the reactionary cashier. This whole question of money brings us naturally to and logically to the problems of love, another field in which men find it necessary to resort to numerous devices, some sound, others screwy. Take, for example, the traveling salesman who wants to play safe whenever he decides to dally in the perfumed garden of love. Such an individual took time out recently to let me in on a home-made contract which he insists on flashing on each of his lady-loves before he agrees to participate in the age-old pantomime. If she refuses—no dice. Just how valid his contract is in a court of law I leave to men like Felix Frankfurter to decide. As a layman, I limit myself to the duties of a reporter. The neatly printed contract—which looks like a legal document even if it may not be good law—is entitled: "Safety First Guarantee." Then follows: "This certifies that I, the undersigned, a female about to enjoy the company of (insert here the name of the party of the second part), am above the age of consent, and in my right mind and am not under the influence of any drug or narcotic. I am in no fear of him whatever, do not expect nor want to marry him; don't know whether he is married or not, and don't care a tinker's damn. I am not asleep nor drunk, and I am entering into this relation with him because I like him and want him as much as he does me, and if satisfied I am willing to play an early return engagement. Furthermore, I agree never to appear as a witness against him, or to prosecute under the Mann White Slave Act. Signed before retiring, this 15th day of October, 1940." Space is provided for the woman's signature, address,

and telephone number. As such an agreement needs to be witnessed, there's room at the bottom for the signature of a willing bell-hop, who is usually tipped 50c. Maybe some of my readers who are lawyers can tell me what's wrong with this agreement. As a layman, I'm struck by the absence of consideration—or is that implied? Should any lawyer write informatively on this subject I warn him not to do it professionally, for I'll refuse any bill. We laymen are always afraid to ask a lawyer the time of day lest he send a bill for services rendered. Here I recall the friend who inquired of a woman: "And have you found a law firm that is satisfactory?" The woman replied: "Don't talk to me about lawyers. I've had so much trouble over my seduction suit that I sometimes wish that man hadn't ruined me." At this moment my fly-paper memory swings into action and fetches up a cartoon I saw in *The Masses*, more than 25 years ago. It showed two Negro women—one in near-rags, the other dressed like one of Mrs. Astor's horses, looking like a million dollars. The ragged colored gal asked: "Where you get all them swell clothes?" The fat colored gal: "Ain't you heard about it? I done been ruined."

\* \* \*

Dr. Harry Elmer Barnes, in his *Little Blue Book No. 1507*, entitled "A Rational View of the Sex Issue," tells of the statement of one of our most eminent sexologists who found one patient whose sex experiences could not possibly have exceeded 200 or 300 during his life, and another who was able to demonstrate at least 60,000 instances of sexual experience to his credit. If this latter person had started in when he was 15, which is rather young, he would have had to have three acts a day for 60 years till he was 75 in order to have 60,000, which seems impossible. Please comment.

That isn't impossible, by any means. It's merely unusual. Furthermore, there's little evidence to support the conclusion that such a run of activity must necessarily be harmful. It all depends on the individual. It's the old story of one man's meat being another's poison. I can point to several men—all well into middle life—who haven't missed at least one act a day during the past 30 years, and there's nothing to show they're the least bit neurotic. As for old men, I don't know what it is, but many are

able to execute young ideas. As for myself, I still retain the Gallic Chic of Chic Sale edifice. The sexual life of men and women always yields interesting and surprising happenings. Not many months ago I got acquainted with a Missouri musician who claimed, in all seriousness, that he had gone through the experience an average of nine times each 24 hours during the first four months of his married life. He was 20, his bride 17. I didn't check the claim (which wasn't made boastfully) but I'm inclined to accept it as something near the literal truth. And don't get the idea he must have looked terrible. He didn't at all. In fact, he looked better than average in appearance and demeanor. As for intelligence, he was far above average. After watching the human animal in action these many years I've come to expect just about anything in the field of emotions. Of course, I'm not speaking as an expert. In sex I remain, as ever, only a layman.

\* \* \*

Why, in these exciting and sensational times, do you go in for such small type and no headlines?

Because I don't recall having received a call from God to save the American people.

\* \* \*

How many more years may the Dionne quintuplets expect to live as an unbroken group?

A statistician, for a life insurance company, figures the 6-year-old Dionne girls may expect 41 more years as an unbroken group. Individually they have an even chance to live to be 69.

\* \* \*

Did Elinor Glyn discover "IT"?

"It," meaning sex appeal, was used as a title of one of Elinor Glyn's novels (1927), which was movieized, with Clara Bow in the title role. This made La Bow "the It girl," until she became as round as a Japanese admiral. For years, we spoke of a woman as "having IT" and went on as though we were lousy with sophistication. Speaking for myself, after hearing it for the millionth time my stomach turned sensitive everytime I heard the word, leaving me ready to throw up my socks. Until a few months ago we called the same mysterious power that moves ambitious men to higher and outstanding things, "Oomph." Today, it's "glamour." Tomorrow? Orgiastic? Who knows? But it'll be

the same old line of goods. You can give it a new name, but the thing itself remains the same. However, while we're setting the record straight, let's make clear that Miss Glyn didn't coin the word "It" as a synonym for S. A. She merely popularized it. The real inventor was Rudyard Kipling, who, in his "Mrs. Bathurst," in 1904, wrote: "'Tisn't beauty, so to speak, nor good talk necessarily. It's just It. Some women'll stay in a man's memory if they once walked down a street."

\* \* \*

John B. Kennedy, broadcasting on September 3, 1940, made this astonishing statement: "Some people have complained that the Churches of Italy have blessed the weapons of Italian Fascist soldiers. Well, one could hardly expect them to bless the enemy's"! Please comment.

I've shown in other articles that the Catholic Church *did* bless the banners and weapons of the enemy. We know what's happened in Germany, Poland, Belgium, France and Spain. The weapons of the enemy have always been blessed by the priests—the enemies of freedom, tolerance, decency, humanitarianism, democracy and progressiveness. Did it ever occur to Mr. Kennedy that a church dedicated to Jesus needn't have blessed anyone's weapons?

\* \* \*

You want to destroy Catholicism—for the sake of saving a more contemptible religion, Judaism. The Jews wrote the Old and New Testament. Ingersoll was different. He said: "I want to kill all at once. Why kill just a flea? I prefer to kill the dog."

This reader shows plainly that he hasn't the slightest notion of what I've been driving at these 30 years. As for Ingersoll being O. K., I agree, but it happens that I'm the only publisher in the U. S. who has Ingersoll's famous "The Mistakes of Moses" in print, the greatest attack ever made on the Old Testament, especially the Books of Moses. If I wanted to support Judaism I certainly wouldn't be issuing this large-sized book. I mention this book's size because it's possible many of my readers may get the idea this Ingersollian masterpiece is one of my Little Blue Books, which, of course, it isn't. As for works on religion in my list of Little Blue Books, you'll find titles by Joseph McCabe and others which deal dead-

ly blows at the religious ideology of the rabbis as well as the priests and preachers. Right now, the real, dangerous issue is Catholic-Fascism, so I pay special attention to the conspiracies of the hierarchy, but this doesn't mean I'm trying to switch my readers from the orthodoxy of Catholicism to the orthodoxy of Judaism. As a Free-thinker I want to see man rid himself of all forms of supernaturalism. Obscurantism—whether of the priests, the preachers, or the rabbis—must go before man can become intellectually emancipated.

\* \* \*

I have just seen a natural gas pipe-line walker on duty here in Western Missouri. He's supposed to discover gas leaks. How can he do this when the pipes are hidden underground?

The walker watches carefully for dead vegetation, the texture and color of the soil, even in plowed ground and winter snows. In Winter he carries a pressure gauge to help detect leaks by measuring gas pressures. A large leak will freeze ground around the pipe line even during the Summer, because of the great pressure of the gas.

\* \* \*

I liked your piece about PM, because I admire this newspaper, having read it from its first issue. Do you base your approval on the fact that PM refuses advertising? I imagine that's the real reason, because of your own prejudice against advertising.

If you'll look through my writings (including my volumes of "Questions and Answers") you won't find a sentence opposing advertising. I never was opposed to advertising. I consider it a necessary practice. My objection is to advertising's influence on editorial independence. As for PM's refusal to accept advertising, I didn't say a word in approval of this policy, because I believe it's silly. If PM's publisher could get advertising (and I believe some excellent copy is available) he should grab it. Naturally, those advertisers who want to censor the editorial columns would stay out. Let them go. There are others, including profitable and useful book advertising. If advertising is accepted as paid publicity it does no harm to the paper's editorial policy and serves the readers by making available valuable information. No advertiser can influence my paper's opinions on subjects of public policy, but

that doesn't mean I'd reject good, honest, truthful advertising, if it were available. It's the misuse of advertising that I'm against. For example, recently a N. Y. magazine offered \$10,000 worth of advertising copy to a number of N. Y. newspapers and the copy was turned down because it advertised a tie-up between Henry Ford and the German-American Bund. The newspapers didn't want to offend Henry Ford, knowing his budget is many times larger than that of the lone publisher who wanted to call attention to a series of articles on the Fascist activities of America's greatest anti-Semite and industrial czar—Henry Ford. Several managers said they had to turn the anti-Ford copy down because of lack of space, but they always have room for Ford's full-page motor car advertisements. It's that practice that I write against, not advertising as a medium of communication. If I were manager of *PM*, the first thing I'd do would be to install an advertising department. And, it's my guess that *PM* will head for the rocks if it doesn't change its business methods. Advertising is legitimate, if the publisher is strong-minded enough to tell the advertising agencies to confine their activities to the business departments. Of course, this will mean the loss of many hefty accounts, but there are others. A publication can be kept honest and progressive if its management hews to the line, regardless of consequences. Many won't survive. Others will pay expenses and perhaps leave a few dollars for beers and visits to the neighborhood hamneggery.

\* \* \*

In going through your volumes of "Questions and Answers" I find that you frequently quote Walter Winchell's gags and wisecracks, but you never discuss the question of that columnist's general accuracy as a journalist.

Winchell's whiskerinos (usually trimmed and lotioned for the jitterbug trade) express the mood of the day—brittle, superficial, quick, nervous and worldly-wise—the perfect literary diet for Homo Boobiens who think they're wise laffer-offers. Here he's amusing even though he's nothing more than a literary spittin'-whittler, on a level with the poet who discovered that June can be rhymed with moon, and a notch above the gagsters who cook up q. and a. jokes. Win-

chell is a post-graduate worker in the gee-whiz school of rhetoric and he plays his gags like a close-to-the-belly poker player. In the wider field of reporting—away from his blessed eventectomies—there's a glittering generality that would have us believe Winchell's a glutton for accuracy, that he has a genius for getting significant pieces of news straight from the horse's mouth. This is a glittering generality that should be de-glittered, for the record shows he's as unreliable as a cracked thunder-bug. St. Clair McKelway, in his book, "Gossip, the Life and Times of Walter Winchell," says he took five Monday columns that appeared in April, 1940. Of the 239 separate items he studied, 108 belonged to the so-called blind item class the lowest form of journalism—being pieces where no names are mentioned. That left 131 pieces worth investigating, and here McKelway found 41.2 percent were completely inaccurate, 18.3 percent partly inaccurate, and 40.5 percent completely accurate. Winchell was supposed to achieve new wonders while covering the Hauptmann trial, during which he advertised the claim that he had scored 19 separate scoops. Here's how McKelway disposes of that claim:

"... of the 19 scoops, there were two scoops with qualifications; one scoop, which since it was never confirmed, is hardly a scoop; two scoops printed the same day by other papers; six scoops which had been printed from four days to seven weeks earlier by the (New York) Times; seven scoops which cannot be considered as scoops in the accepted meaning of the word, and one scoop in which he misquoted his own editor."

Winchell can dismiss the above record by pointing with bursting pride to his yearly income of \$185,000. That argument will satisfy him and a great part of the public. Financial cripples have no right to smear a guy who takes in more money per year than the critic earns in a lifetime. That's poor logic, but it works. We haven't learned William Shakespeare's sympathy for the lame, the halt and the afflicted. For example, consider the bard's touching reference to a bow-legged man, "who cometh here with legs like these, and wears his nuts in parentheses." Winchell, of later, has become something of a crusader for democracy and

against Nazism. That's all to the good, for the man certainly has a sincere hatred for persecution and aggression. His personal reaction is progressive and commendable. But did you notice his indifference to social problems? Never, so far as I've been able to check, has Winchell praised Roosevelt's program in favor of unemployment insurance, social security and, above all, the advanced, humanitarian thesis that employers must recognize the right of their employees to organize in unions of their own choice. The NLRB functions on another planet, so far as Winchell is concerned. But Nazism is different. It strikes at freedom, which provokes quick responses from Winchell. Keep it up, Walter, by all means, but don't forget the social problems closer to home. Many of us have followed him far enough to know that he isn't above suspicion. He should think of the girl and fellow on a sofa. He moved closer up inch by inch and finally whispered in her ear: "Don't you smell a rat?" There's a lesson there for Mrs. Winchell's boy Walter. But let him continue bringing out his spate of gags. His sophisticated sizzlemanship is superb. I can get a smile out of him even when I wake up to find gloom that's cheese-thick.

\* \* \*

Do you have any faith in the laboratory reports issued by the experimental departments of our State agricultural colleges? I've been told this work is done mostly by students.

I'm sure that if students conduct laboratory tests they're carefully supervised by experienced, competent scientists. However, one has to risk the chance of a slip-up. There's the case of the Iowa farmer who made a batch of home brew, but, because of the scum which developed on top of it, decided to send a sample of it to the Iowa State College's experimental department, to have it tested to see if it was O. K. He forgot to enclose a note telling what it was and a few days later he received a reply that the horse had weak kidneys.

\* \* \*

What position do you take regarding "of between" and "of from"?

I'm against both, looking on them as low-brow stuff, pure and awful. Or should I call them grammatical spinach? Anyway, they're as ugly as the bottom of an old teakettle. I shudder whenever I come on an enormity

like "he suffered a loss of between \$1,000 and \$1,500." The "of from" is just as bad. This arguifier opposes "he enjoyed a net of from \$1,000 to \$1,500." "Of whether" is almost as bad, when used like this: "The radio commentator argued the question of whether we should embargo shipments of oil to Japan." The "of" in "of between," "of from" and "of whether" should be dunked in the nearest thunder-mug. But don't, by any means, go through my volumes of "Questions and Answers," looking for "of froms," for you'll find plenty. At least I know better. I do lots of things that hadn't ought to be did, but that doesn't stop me from bawling out others for committing the same offenses.

\* \* \*

How many chewing gum factories are there in the U. S. How much is their product worth?

There are 26 chewing gum factories in this country, and they turn out \$60,745,986 worth of products annually, according to the U. S. census of manufacturers.

\* \* \*

What's our national income today? What will it be in a few years?

Figures compiled in November, 1940 show our national income is now at the rate of \$74,000,000,000 per year. My guesstimate, for two or three years hence, is around \$100,000,000,000.

\* \* \*

How many chaplains are there with our armed forces?

There are 1,008 members in the Chaplains' Corps. In July, 1940, the Department announced it was seeking 565 more ministers for its Chaplains' Reserve Corps to meet the "needs" of an expanding army. The theory is that these Men o' Gawd will fix things with the Ethereal Esquire so that we'll win battles against an enemy who also employs Men o' Gawd to win the Grand Ghost over to their side. The chaplains on both sides collect good pay for this. And Heaven's Foremost Foreman continues to pull for the side with the most bombers and tanks. As for the enormous expense to keep this mumbo-jumbo, fish-posh and shicedrek going, the taxpayers are used to burden. If they don't mind, why should the priests, preachers and rabbis worry? Look at the billions' of dollars of church property that's given tax exemption.

There's a graft that saves the Men o' Gawd scores of millions of dollars yearly in taxes. This moves me to fetch from my newsclip filing system a piece from the August 26, 1940, *N. Y. Times*, which reads:

"A dog owned by a priest is not exempt from a license tax, the Kentucky Attorney General's office has held. A priest who asked the ruling contended the dog was the 'property of the church' and therefore tax exempt."

Some crude mugs may ask that since the priests were already getting away with hundreds of millions of dollars in sacred, pious graft why should they draw the line at a \$2 dog license? However, the Ethereal Esquire will take care of that Kentucky public official when he reports, at the Pearly Gates. He's going to be given the gate, the bum's rush, a kick in the pants, or whatever it is that goes out to the poor lugs who can't present proper credentials to St. Peter.

\* \* \*

Am I to understand, after studying your writings in "Questions and Answers" that any newspaper that depends on advertising must necessarily be subsidized and corrupt?

By no means. I never made such a ridiculous statement. *The Manchester Guardian* is the greatest newspaper in the world, judging it by its high journalistic ethics, independence, honesty, courage, and sheer ability. And yet this magnificent newspaper accepts advertising—as much of it as it can get, and from the copies I've seen it gets its share. On the other hand, the American Communist press—particularly *The Daily Worker*—is the rottenest, most dishonest, most lying, unethical, corrupt, contemptible, incompetent, ugly-spirited and bunk-ridden journal in all American publishing history. And yet, it gets only a dab of advertising, and most of that is concerned with its own projects. The mere fact that a publication doesn't carry advertising doesn't make it honest. Here the reader must use his intelligence and judgement. He must learn to read between the lines, make comparisons, check assertions, and remember the editor's general policies over many months, even years. It takes time and effort, but the job must be done if one hopes to learn the truth about what's going on. A Communist rag like *The Daily Worker* can get along without advertising, because a considerable portion

of its money comes (by indirect means) from Moscow, which explains why its columns can be innocent of advertising and still be as gory as Goering. With regard to the standard press, most newspapers are capitalistic because they are capitalistic institutions. By that I mean they're for big business because they are big business themselves. A provincial leader like *The Kansas City Star* is easily worth \$15,000,000. *The N. Y. Times* must be worth at least \$50,000,000. For that reason one mustn't be surprised when the standard press takes the conservative, even reactionary, side. But even here there are exceptions, as mentioned earlier in this piece. *The Manchester Guardian* is the world's best example of what I have in mind. All this means the situation is mixed up a great deal, but it doesn't follow that the readers have to be confused and misled. They can still learn the score if they use their heads. There are publications that aren't afraid to tell the truth about politics, government, economics, industry, finance and religious obscurantism. And it doesn't take genius to discover them. When really independent, progressive, honest, fearless editors serve you, go out of your way to help them especially in the important matter of getting them new readers. That's been one of my pet sermons for years. I've pounded on this theme to the point of boredom, but I consider it part of my job to impress on progressives the importance of giving moral and material help to any editor who doesn't blink in the presence of the light of truth. If such readers would render the services suggested above it would be an easy matter to build a powerful, truth-seeking and straight-dealing press. Honest editors can't get their jobs done if their readers don't jump in and do their share of the work.

\* \* \*

Will you tell me why Machiavelli's name comes up so often whenever the dictators are discussed?

Niccolo Machiavelli's manual on the art of being a tyrant is a "must" with the Blitz Brothers, Adolf and Benito. International gangsters study Machiavelli's famous book, "The Prince," because it is the most thorough guide-book ever written on the subject of absolutism. All you have to do is to change Machiavelli's word

"prince" to "dictator" and you can apply his advice to modern conditions. Study Machiavelli's "The Prince" and you'll get today's Totalitarianism in a bombshell. Years ago, when Mussolini was just beginning his career of mass-murder and intrigue, I decided it would be a pious idea if I were to condense "The Prince" and offer it to my Little Blue Book readers. This was done, and the book, No. 320, is still available. In addition, I brought out Lord Macaulay's essay, "Machiavelli: Master of Political Intrigue," as No. 305 in the same series of handy, little volumes. Any reader who studies both these brief works will get a well-rounded view of Machiavelli's political philosophy. They should be "musts" with you, if you haven't read them yet. Keep up with the Blitz Brothers, of whom there are really three, the third being the Mikado, who can't blitz because he's constipated and throws fits.

\* \* \*

What is there to the enclosed article on the way refugees are getting jobs away from Americans in Hollywood?

Not much. I have a statement from the Screen Actors' Guild saying it found "that out of over 19,000 movie employes exactly 18 come under the heading of refugees." But straight facts never bother anti-Semitic propagandists.

\* \* \*

Is the name of the Deity a four-letter word in all languages except the English?

The Deity is a four-letter word in almost all civilized languages, except English, Norwegian, Swedish and Danish. I offer 17 versions: French, Dieu; German, Gott; Dutch, Godt; Spanish, Dios; Ancient Greek, Zeus; Modern Greek, Teos; Latin, Deus; Assyrian, Adat; Persian, Sern; Arabic, Alla; Sanskrit, Deva; Egyptian, Amon; Inca, Papa; Phoenician, Baal; Japanese, Shin; Chaldean, Nebo; Hindustani, Hakk. I feel impelled to hint that I may, in my crude, coarse way, be an instrument of the Ether-eal Esquire, for I've been known, during these many years, to refer casually (and with feeble humor) to the Big Guy as Gawd. I picked up this pronunciation from Men of Gawd who belabor Fundamentalists here in the Bible Belt. I thought it mildly funny whenever I used my four-letter

word, but, after checking the 17 languages above, I squirm with the inspired hunch that maybe I'm the instrument that'll put the English in line with the others. I leave the three Scandinavian lingos for others to tussle with. To popularize and regularize Gawd is enough for one lifetime of effort and achievement.

\* \* \*

What is genius?

Genius is the ability to do great things easily. I'm sure that Shakespeare, when he finished "Hamlet," strolled to the nearest bar and set up a round of beers. He probably chose as his topic for conversation the weather or a friend's change in mistresses. Only mediocrities work hard over their creations, puff when they finish, and spend hours talking about it. Genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains—painlessly.

\* \* \*

In my history class the statement was made that the problem of evacuating women and children from large cities is peculiar to this war because of the development of air bombing. Is this sound history?

The same problem presented itself to George Washington when, on August 17, 1776, he wrote a letter to the N. Y. State Convention requesting that something be done to remove the women and children from N. Y. C. while he engaged the armies of General Howe. The facts will be found in David M. Schneider's "The History of Public Welfare in New York State, 1609-1866," in which the following letter written by Washington is printed:

Gentlemen: When I consider that the city of New-York will, in all human probability, very soon be the scene of a bloody conflict, I cannot but view the great numbers of women and children and infirm persons remaining in it with the most melancholy concern. When the men of war passed up the river, the shrieks and cries of those poor creatures, running every way with their children, was truly distressing, and I fear will have an unhappy effect on the ears and minds of our young and inexperienced soldiery. Can no method be devised for their removal? Many doubtless are of ability to remove themselves, but there are others in a different situation. Some provision for them afterward would also be a necessary consideration.

It would relieve me from great

anxiety if your Honorable Body would immediately deliberate upon it, and form and execute some plan for their removal and relief, in which I will cooperate and assist to the utmost of my power . . .

Mr. Schneider adds that the convention accepted Washington's suggestions, voting to remove all women, children and infirm persons. A committee was chosen to supervise the evacuation from N. Y. C. Those unable to pay the costs of evacuation were provided with funds from the public treasury. All this sounds as modern as recent reports from London.

\* \* \*

Please give the total collected in taxes from motor vehicle owners. How much of this money went to non-road purposes?

In 1939, according to the National Highway Users' Conference, motor vehicle owners paid taxes aggregating \$1,252,205,000, of which amount \$181,654,000, or 14.8 cents of each dollar, was diverted to non-road purposes. (Yes, I'm not going to miss this chance to put in a plug for my newsclip filing system. It means a lot to be able to put my hands on a clipping in less than 30 seconds, as was the case when I dipped in for the data just quoted. My system is simple, but it works like a charm. Anyone can install it in a few minutes, if my instructions are followed to the letter. Ask me for an article I wrote on the best way to file noteworthy clippings from newspapers and magazines. But be sure to enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. I'll supply the reprint of the article free of charge. Many times, when you're impressed with my pontifications, let me suggest that you recall the fact that much, if not all, of the credit should be given to my newsclip filing system. Yes, my luxuriant, orchidaceous growths of knowledge don't mean I'm another Herbert Spencer; rather am I a careful, wise, methodical user of the information that is available to all of us, the difference in my case being merely that I make constructive and orderly use of the facts. You can do the same. Maybe I'll end up by educating some tens of thousands Americans to become addicted to that most pleasant and useful of hobbies—putting away newspaper clippings. There's much more sense to it than

you'll find in stamp collecting, though I'm not casting aspersions on that numerous tribe of pasters-of-stamps-in-books. That hobby's expensive; mine's so cheap it costs only a little more than a couple of movie tickets. But don't get the idea that because I go in for cutting things out of publications and filing them away it follows that I stand as the *corpus delicti* of dead ideas. The data aren't dead at all; they're as live as a Chaplin film. Even Bishop Beerbelch and Mrs. Priscilla Prissy Pratt can join in this informative hobby and have a barrel of fun.)

\* \* \*

Can you explain why, after more than a year of World War II, Bernard Shaw remains mum?

Shaw says that since the war was begun without his advice or consent, nothing remains but to ignore it.

\* \* \*

Thanks for the delightful yarn about the Parisian butcher who played a joke with a cow's udder. I've told it to a half hundred boozers, with excellent results. One fellow so forgot himself he bought a drink out of turn, which put me ahead 35c. Why don't you tell that other barroom favorite—the one about Colonel Carter's dragon?

Colonel Carter's dragon story has been told in a dozen versions, all of them sure-fire. Here's the one I like: The colored houseboy came home late and the boss bawled him out for staying out drinking himself stinking drunk. "Boss, I wasn't drinking, positively." "Then why are you so late?" "I was following Colonel Carter and his dragon. The colonel was out walking with his leash and on the leash he had a dragon. Yessah, a dragon. The dragon would walk up to a lamp post, squint over his shoulder at the colonel, hoist his hind leg and let fly. The lamp post went up in a flash of smoke. 'Look here, you dragon,' sez Colonel Carter, 'You got to stop ruinin' them lamp posts.' But the dragon, he got to another lamp post and he let fly. 'Look here, you dragon,' sez the colonel, 'I's a taxpayer and I gotta pay for them lamps. You gotta cut that out.' Well, boss, the dragon he got to another lamp post and he let fly again. The colonel, he was furious. 'Look here, dragon,' he sez, 'This has gone far enough. If you ain't careful, I'll take an aspirin and then where'll you be?'"

Do you think it's possible for one person to make over another?

I wouldn't say it's impossible, but I'm still to meet up with a real case. I've seen no end of attempts, and the results have been appalling. A woman who marries a man to reform him, or any person who sets out to reform any other individual, is merely putting out his or her chin for trouble. I always cast a jaundiced eye on such behavior, because I've seen enough horrible examples to know that people can't be changed by such frontal attacks. They merely incite resentments, hatreds, and other reactions. I have my own private opinions about other people's behavior (as they have about mine) but I prefer to keep them to myself, for I believe in that good, old-fashioned idea about minding one's own business. If someone does something I don't like, I duck away as fast as possible—and stay away, if at all possible—instead of sticking around and trying to do so fatuous a thing as to reform another's character or personality. All I ask of them is that they keep away. I know this moralizing sounds like the croakings of a frog in an empty barrel, but I can't help getting it off my chest.

Was Thomas A. Edison a Freethinker?

The great inventor was a firm Rationalist all his life. He not only openly admired Robert G. Ingersoll but wrote glowingly of the mind-awakening achievements of the great Thomas Paine, as follows:

It was my good fortune to encounter Thomas Paine's works in my boyhood. I discovered a set of the writings of Paine on my father's bookshelves when I was 13. It was, indeed, a revelation to me to read that great thinker's views on political and theological subjects. Paine educated me then about many matters of which I had never before thought. I remember very vividly the flash of enlightenment that shone from Paine's writings, and I recall thinking at that time, "What a pity these works are not today the school-books for all children!"

I have, in my earlier writings, given considerable space to the rationalistic utterances of Edison, presenting much evidence to prove conclusively that our greatest scientist belonged in the ranks of the Freethinkers.

Did you ever indulge in quaffing from a wassail bowl, and if you did just what did you quaff?

Wassail is a favorite subject for rollicking songs and lively stories, especially of older times. Those who know how serve themselves wassail and generally have a right peppy time, for the stuff carries authority. The Bartenders Institute of New York City, which says wassail is exceptionally good for a jittery stomach, gives the following recipe for it:

"Heat, without boiling, 3 quarts of ale. When almost boiling add 1 lb. of powdered sugar, dust nutmeg on top of mixture, add four glassfuls (about 10 ounces) of medium sherry. The preparation is then placed in a punch bowl which has been pre-heated in an oven or in hot water. Float thin slices of toast on top of the mixture and ladle into warm cups or glasses."

The above, you will notice, says nothing about having apples in the drink, an extra touch which Webster's dictionary insists it should have.

\* \* \*

Is it true that watch manufacturers prefer to show their advertising clocks and watches in windows and on sidewalks with the hands pointing to 8.17 because it is the "dread moment when Abraham Lincoln was murdered?"

It's funny how these notions get around and how hard it is to slay them. This particular belief—and it's held by many persons in and out of the watch industry—is all wrong, for the following reasons:

1. Abraham Lincoln wasn't murdered at 8.17 o'clock. The play at Ford's Theater didn't begin until after 8.30. The assassination took place during the third act, at 10.10 P.M. Lincoln didn't die until the next morning, at 7.22.

2. Watchmakers and signpainters painted the hands at approximately 8.20 long before Lincoln was born.

3. It's suitable to paint the hands in that position because it allows room for advertising matter and at the same time supplies artistic balance.

\* \* \*

While reading Longfellow the other night I came on a word he says he lifted from Goethe. It's "shicedrek." What does it mean?

It's a melodious, refined German word, meaning the manure of Homo Boobiens.

How much does the earth weigh?

The U.S. Bureau of Standards, by the use of a new apparatus, finds that the earth weighs 6,576,000,000,000 billion tons. The apparatus uses platinum for all working parts because of that metal's density. It's so sensitive that it's affected if a person should happen to walk around in the laboratory. In order to avoid the interference caused by traffic vibrations, observations are made at night, when such vibrations are at a minimum.

\* \* \*

Is it true that termites are practically new to this country, having arrived in a shipment of lumber from a foreign country?

No. Termites are native to this country. In fact, termites were here 15,000,000 years ago, according to the records of rocks and fossils.

\* \* \*

Is it a fact that historians have had access to every letter, document and scrap of paper written by Abraham Lincoln?

By no means. Though it's true that the literature about Lincoln is immense, there are original sources yet to be tapped. The Library of Congress still has, in its collections of private papers, sealed envelopes of Lincolniana that can't be inspected even by competent historians. These papers will be thrown open to scholars some day, but no one knows just when.

\* \* \*

Whenever I take in a strip-tease I go away with my eyes red, sore and inflamed. Can you comment on this, please?

After this try blinking your eyes once or twice during the show—you won't miss much.

\* \* \*

Both Catholic and Protestant priests and preachers receive enormous wages for one hour's work. Where does that money come from?

It comes from the consumers of the theocrats' slungullion. The intellectual poison gas works like opium—the more the victim takes, the more he's willing to pay for his mental decay. The whole rotten business is a symptom of our sick civilization. But, fairness compels me to state that the befuddlers of the masses aren't having the easy time they enjoyed a few centuries ago when the consumers swallowed every religious lie without gagging. The few who re-

sisted were denounced as heretics and sent to the torture chamber and later burned at the stake. The patient is still sick, but not as hopeless as his ancestors, so there's room for optimism.

\* \* \*

Please explain the custom of "bundling" as practiced during Colonial days.

"Bundling" was a quaint and heart-warming institution that did a great deal to keep alive the spirit of romantic love in the days of Puritanism. In the cold months, when an eligible young man courted the girl of his heart, he was put up, when he visited his maiden's home, in her own bed—along with the girl. The lack of fuel and the absence of extra beds made it necessary for the boy and girl to go to bed together, properly "bundled" by the girl's mother, who was supposed to see to it that neither party to the "bundling" took off too much clothes. The custom prevailed for many generations and was looked on as a wonderful help in getting likely young people married. A comedy based on this theme was produced on Broadway a few years ago, with box-office success. Spectators agreed generally that the custom had many fine points.

\* \* \*

I am looking for a quotation that will contain its own refutation. I need it to be amusing. I know there are endless examples of statements that refute themselves, but I want one that's funny. Can you oblige?

An amusing example of self-refutation will be found in the following story about Dean Inge, which was told a few years ago:

Dr. Inge was invited to give an address. During the course of his address he drew attention to the difference between God-made and man-made things. God made no two things exactly alike, he said; while man-made things all lacked individuality. "Look at those chairs, for instance," said he, pointing to the chairs on which we were sitting, "as like as two peas."

\* \* \*

What is the Episcopalian conception of the God-idea?

Robert G. Ingersoll not only quotes what this questioner seeks but comments in a way that's well worth reprinting:

"In the Episcopalian creed God is described as follows: 'There is but one living and true God, ever-

lasting, without body, parts or passions.' Think of that! without body, parts or passions. I defy any man in the world to write a better description of nothing. You cannot conceive of a finer word-painting of a vacuum than 'without body, parts or passions.' And yet this God, without passions, is angry at the wicked every day; this God, without passions, is a jealous God, whose anger burneth to the lowest hell. This God, without passions, loves the whole human race; and this God, without passions, damns a large majority of mankind. This God, without body, walked in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day. This God, without body, talked with Adam and Eve. This God, without body or parts, met Moses upon Mount Sinai, appeared at the door of the tabernacle, and talked with Moses face to face as a man speaketh to his friend. This description of God is simply an effort of the Church to describe a something of which it has no conception."

\* \* \*

I wish you would comment on a passage in R. B. Henderson's book, "Belief in God," as follows: "The Theist begins with an act of faith, but in so doing he is not departing from the strictest rules laid down by science. The natural scientist also begins with an act of faith, and it is of precisely the same kind as that demanded by the theologian. The scientist starts off on his quest with a belief in nature."

For Mr. Henderson to label such an argument a scientific one is to expose his own ineptitude. If the man had taken the slightest interest in logic he would see how shoddy his analogy is. The scientist, says our author, starts off with a belief in nature. True, but that's a verifiable fact. There is the best authority for belief in the fact that nature exists. To use that as a springboard and jump into the muggy waters of Theism is nothing less than self-exposure. The theologian starts off with inferences and assumptions that are beyond demonstration, beyond verification, beyond reason. They are mere generalizations of blind faith. The difference is so obvious it should be plain to an intelligent child.

\* \* \*

How far West does the Mason and Dixon line extend?

It marked only the boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland.

### GEORGE G. WHITEHEAD DIES

George G. Whitehead died of a heart ailment on October 7, 1940, in Columbus, O. Whitehead for years handled the speaking and debating business of the late Clarence Darrow, eminent lawyer, Freethinker, writer and lecturer. It was through his efforts that many of Darrow's articles, lectures and debates were issued in Little Blue Book form. Whitehead himself wrote two little works on Darrow, as follows:

1464, Clarence Darrow—the Big Minority Man; 1606, Clarence Darrow—"Evangelist" of Sane Thinking. In his position of manager for Darrow, Whitehead took on himself the work of preparing many of the famous Agnostic's works for the Haldeman-Julius presses. If it hadn't been for his friendly efforts many of the following titles might never have seen the light of print: 53, Insects and Men; Instinct and Reason; 509, Are We Machines? 829, Lecture on Voltaire; 843, Can Individuals Control Conduct? 883, Debate on Capital Punishment; 884, Debate on Prohibition; 910, Is Life Worth Living?; 911, Is Mankind Progressing? 933, The Skeleton in the Closet; 934, Realism in Art and Literature; 974, Ordeal of Prohibition; 1256, Darrow-Wheeler Dry-Law Debate; 1286, Do We Have Free Will? 1329, Facing Life Fearlessly; 1404, Myth of the Soul; 1423, Is U. S. Immigration Law Beneficial? 1424, Examination of Bryan at Evolution Trial; 1425, The Open Shop; 1500, Why I Am An Agnostic; 1541, What Life Means to Me At 72; 1581, Environment vs. Heredity; 1596, Should the 18th Amendment Be Repealed? In addition, articles by Darrow will be found in No. 1, The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam; 1332, Debunking the Laws of Moses; 1637, Absurdities of the Bible. These works by Darrow have enjoyed remarkable public acceptance. One reason is the fact that Darrow was a humorist. His books make you smile while they teach you the facts of life.

\* \* \*

Can you supply me with a quotation which will describe the casualness of life?

The best I know of is by the immortal Shakespeare:

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage

And then is heard no more; it is a tale Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, Signifying nothing. . . .

\* \* \*

Can you tell me why men hate to see women kiss one another?

I haven't given the subject much thought, but I guess it's because the males usually don't like to see women do men's work.

Would you say that Mexico today is Spanish or Mexican?

Spanish influences are waning rapidly in Mexico, especially since President Cardenas inaugurated his program of land reform, social security and education. Prior to the revolution of 1910, Mexico was Spanish, but since then the drift has been in the direction of Mexicanization. A. G. Dominguez, Mexican consul at Dallas, Tex., discussed this subject in a recent statement, from which I quote:

"Mexico's yesterday passed in 1910, possibly 1920, along with Spanish mantillas and bullfights. Mexico now is no more Spanish than the United States is English. The heritage of Spain brought many things to Mexico yesterday. Mexico today is not 100 percent Spanish. It is 95 percent Mexican and 5 percent Spanish.

"After all, Mexicans have a wonderful heritage from the Aztecs, Toltecs, Mayas, dating from before Cortez or the Puritans. Under Spanish rule Mexicans fought without knowing what they were fighting for. . . . Their land was taken from them. There was a time, indeed, when Chinese owned more land in Mexico than did the Mexicans. Those were the days of 'romantic Mexico' which the tourist of even today hopes to find.

"The Mexico of today is for Mexicans, with 20 percent of the government's budget spent on schools, and much on highways and dams. Mexicans are getting their land back at the rate of 15 acres per man. Illiteracy has been reduced from 85 percent to less than 50 percent. Mexicans today are beginning to own motor cars of their own, and to have the best education possible."

\* \* \*

Do you favor heckling?

Heckling is a noble practice and should be encouraged, as it is in England. I've long felt disgusted over the way American audiences sit like a bump on a log and let public speakers get away with murder without so much as a peep. In fact, by some ridiculous twist of mind we've actually come around to the silly notion that asking questions of public speakers is somehow an exhibition of bad taste. Many speakers look on heckling as a form of disorderly conduct, and when faced by an insistent questioner they yell for the cops and want the heckler thrown in the hoosegow.

A speaker who insists that his words should be accepted without debate is suffering from elephantiasis of the ego, and it's a matter of public duty to deflate him. Heckling is a cure for windbagitis.

This calls to mind a clipping in my files, which tells of how a speaker in Columbus Circle, N.Y.C., caused a heckler to be arrested on the charge of "asking numerous questions" of the soap-boxer. (The report shows that the speaker wasn't a liberal, a radical or a Freethinker; he belonged to a conventional school of thought, the kind that can't stand criticism or too persistent inquiry.) When brought before Magistrate Louis B. Brodsky, the "culprit" was discharged, which showed that the judge knew his business. The magistrate then delivered himself of these sensible words:

"You gentlemen who speak must expect to answer questions. When I was in England I used to enjoy visiting Hyde Park. There the speakers and their audiences came well prepared to question and answer questions. It would be an excellent idea to make another Hyde Park of Columbus Circle, where the citizenry could get rid of their excess steam, if I might be permitted to use that term.

"Speakers should not be afraid of questions; they should welcome them. Questioning reveals an intelligent and alert audience. Heckling is a recognized art and is conducive to bringing out the good of all sides of a problem."

\* \* \*

Was Jack London debunked religiously? I've heard tell that he was a Spiritualist.

While it's true that Jack London's father and mother were Spiritualists, his mother giving professional seances and his father going in for Astrology and other eccentric notions, the great author himself threw off all such ideas in his early manhood. In my previous writings about Jack London, I've shown him to be a thoroughly debunked individual, an Atheist, a Materialist, and an Evolutionist. His intellectual fathers were Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, Prof. Huxley, Charles Darwin, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and other heterodox thinkers. Irving Stone, in his biography of Jack London, entitled "Sailor on

Horseback," gives a great deal of evidence to prove London's Atheism, and summarizes his observations as follows:

Jack revolted against all manifestations of religion, belief in a life after death and a God-controlled universe. "I believe that with my death I am just as much obliterated as the last mosquito you or I smashed." He believed the entire Christian religion to be a mass of empty ritual. He was convinced that any and all religion was mankind's greatest enemy, because it doped the brain with dogma, made men accept blindly instead of thinking for themselves, kept them from asserting themselves as masters of the earth upon which they trod, and hence from bettering their lives.

\* \* \*

I have been your reader for many, many years and have always been interested in your frank opinion and intelligent reasoning. I have a problem on which I would like your opinion. I have three small boys, one and one-half, three and one-half, and five and one-half years old. The two older boys have been going to a local university nursery school, the parents of the children attending this school being of all beliefs and denominations. This question has just come up by some of the parents, "What about the religious education of these children? How are we to answer their various questions on God, etc.?" The Dean of Education has set aside an evening for discussion. A Protestant minister, a Catholic priest, a rabbi and a psychologist have been asked to speak on this subject that night. We as parents have been asked by the Dean to turn in questions to be answered by the above four celebrities. What is your opinion in this matter and what questions would you ask? I know of no other man who can give me a more modern answer. I wish you could be here to sort of round up the discussion. Am enclosing one dollar with this letter for a personal reply.

Children should be given a secular education, because it tends in the direction of realistic thinking. Theistic philosophy (the theories in support of the God-idea) demand mental processes that are quite beyond the immature, groping minds of children. To inculcate religious ideology into the education of a child is to take an unfair advantage of the young student, because it is incapable of indulging in the complicated demonstrations of logical analysis required to

digest (critically or uncritically) the involved processes of theistic or anti-theistic methods of arriving at what one considers to be the truth. The purpose of our religionists, in indoctrinating the young, isn't to encourage intellectual speculation and exercise but to befuddle and "convert." An Atheist, who tries to be fair in such an issue, says the child should be let alone until he is ready to apply a mature mind to questions that are really a part of philosophy and therefore a subject for one who is prepared for advanced studies, preferably one of university age. An honest Theist would ask the same thing, if he weren't blinded by his zeal to win followers to his set of ideas.

The parents who express concern over their children's secularized education by asking "How are we to answer their various questions on God, etc.?" seem to hug the illusion that such questions can be put and answered in words of one syllable and settled once for all. If they would stop to think for a moment they would confess to themselves, in all candor, that the questions a child can ask about God, Immortality, Death, and the like, can't be disposed of with finality, because these philosophical problems are highly debatable, with hundreds of different kinds of religionists presenting answers based on dogmatism, and skeptics—such as Agnostics, Rationalists and Atheists—advancing logical, scientific or historical arguments against blind acceptance of theistic notions. The whole matter isn't as simple as parents innocently believe, and it would be an act of mercy if they said such subjects should be studied when the student can show he has absorbed enough knowledge and understanding to permit him to delve into these branches of learning without warping his mind with blind superstitions or utterances that are looked on as being so "sacred" as to be beyond discussion.

When the children at the university nursery school described by my correspondent are made to listen to a minister, a priest, a rabbi and a psychologist, they will be getting a first-hand lesson in religious obscurantism, because each religious protagonist advances his credo on the assumption that a kindly God has imparted Truth to his Church alone and

that all other religious organizations are really beyond the pale, though politeness demands that this be implied instead of being blurted out in simple, candid speech. If the meeting is to be for the parents alone, they will find themselves confused and befuddled by the contradictoriness with which God "reveals" Himself to the faithful. If that's so, imagine what the experience will mean to children who should be playing games and learning the alphabet instead of trying to dispose of ideas that have caused philosophers and logicians to turn out libraries crammed with weighty tomes on the difficult problems evoked by theistic assumptions, illusions or delusions.

As a parent, I can say in all sincerity that I never tried to impose my anti-theistic opinions on my children when they were young. I left them to their own devices. Instead of spoiling their minds with cast-iron dogmas, I taught them—without the slightest attempt at high-pressuring them—to be most skeptical about those topics on which priests, ministers and rabbis are most certain and emphatic. At the same time I let them fall in with the best literature of the anti-Theists, which they read and pondered when their minds were ready for stiff fare. Today, as university students—one a senior and the other a freshman—they are Free-thinkers without the slightest hint of mysticism. I never told them to disbelieve in a God. I merely told them to study the works of our great Theists and anti-Theists, which they did when they were culturally ready—and the results are hearty recommendations for non-violent methods.

\* \* \*

It has been a great pleasure to be educated by you. For one thing, you enable me to distinguish between bunk and fact in a great majority of cases. But it has one drawback—it opens one's eyes to the gloomy side of life as it is now in the world. It makes one aware of the ignorance, miserv, prejudice, graft, corruption, etc., that reeks in every nook and cranny of the earth. I have been an EHJ reader for the last 20 years. I have read 90 percent of your publications. I guess I should give you credit for much of my knowledge and for my opinions. All my thoughts are pretty well colored by this knowledge.

A letter like the above leaves me puzzled. Here's a man—he happens

to live in a remote part of Canada—who has been reading my pieces for 20 years and, after admitting I have helped guide him in the direction of sound thinking (thanks for the compliment), he busts loose with the astonishing assertion that the *draw-back* in all this is the fact that I opened his eyes to the "gloomy side of life." Isn't it a part of intelligent, realistic self-education to want to know every phase of life? If there's a gloomy side, don't we, as informed, civilized people, want to understand it? Why shut our eyes to the world's ignorance, hypocrisy, brutality, prejudice, and the like? How can we hope to make this world a decent place to live in unless we are ready to open our eyes to civilization's darker side, its gloomy aspect, its shortcomings, its injustices, its brutalitarianism, its superstitions, its false leaders, its reactionary elements, and so on? While it's true that I refuse to shut my eyes to the "gloomy side of life," I try to be as cheerful and entertaining, as human and interesting as conditions and my modest capabilities permit. I've always fought the "Christian Science attitude" towards life—of shutting myself in a room and pulling down the shades in order to keep the world's seamy side from showing itself. The realist in me urges me to go out into the side streets and back alleys for the facts of life, and the cheerful optimist in me tells me that these unsightly problems can be solved—if we would free ourselves from intellectual slavery and join the ranks as soldiers in the liberation war of mankind.

\* \* \*

How much time does a farmer give, on the average, to raising a bushel of wheat?

Ten minutes. A century ago it took three hours.

\* \* \*

I am, like yourself, interested in American humorists. Since you write of them so frequently, perhaps you can tell me if there were any humorists in this country before we got our bunch of them—Artemus Ward, Josh Billings, Petroleum V. Nasby, and, the greatest of all Mark Twain—during and shortly after the Civil War.

There was Captain George Horatio Derby, who wrote under the names of Squibob and John Phoenix, Esq.

This West Point graduate and U.S. army officer was born in Dedham, Mass., April 3, 1823, and died on May 15, 1861. Writing was a pleasant avocation with this army engineer. In 1882, William Dean Howells wrote:

"Before 'John Phoenix' there was scarcely an American humorist—not of the distinctly literary sort—with whom one could smile and keep one's self-respect."

This humorist's book, "Phoenixiana," published in December, 1855, went through more than a dozen printings, which was proof of his popularity. Today, he's hardly a name to even informed readers. This is because most of his work, though funny in many ways, was based on current happenings. If you knew the background of one of his pieces you could get the laughs he angled for, but not knowing it his humor was certain to fall flat, though some of his pieces, especially one of his parodies I intend to quote soon, can still bring one to laughter. Captain Derby, unlike Josh Billings, Nasby, and other Americans, including Will Rogers, never resorted to twisted spelling and purposely crooked grammar to get his spoofing over to his readers. His audience included what we would call the sophisticates.

And now, let me give my readers a sample of his humor, or rather, just a few sentences from a sample. Aiming his satirical darts at the musical critics who write involved program notes about symphonies—frequently getting themselves tangled in a suffocating mess of verbiage—our pre-Civil War humorist parodied the crew of artistic high-brows in the following imaginary notes on an imaginary orchestral masterpiece, "The Plains—Ode Symphonie par Jabex Tarbox":

"The symphonie opens upon the wide and boundless plains, in longitude 115W., latitude 35 21' 03" N., and about 60 miles from the west bank of Pitt river. These data are beautifully and clearly expressed by a long (tonographically) drawn note from an E uat clarinet.

"The sandy nature of the soil, sparsely dotted with bunches of cactus and artemisia, the extended view, flat and unbroken to the horizon, save by the rising smoke in the extreme verge, denoting the vicinity

of a Pi Utah village, are represented by the bass drum. A few notes on the piccolo, calls the attention to a solitary antelope picking up mescal beans in the foreground. . . ."

In addition, "Phoenix" was something of a prankster and practical joker. One story told about him—I don't know how true—had him taking a seat in the rear of a New England theater. He tapped the man in front of him and asked him to tell the man in front of him to tap the man ahead. The request, politely carried out to the letter, resulted in no little commotion, to all of which Derby pretended to be oblivious by busying himself with his program.

\* \* \*

Please comment on the claim that the Bible is the inspired word of God.

If the reader who asked the above would study the literature of Free-thought she would soon abandon all notions about the Bible being the inspired word of God. She will find, among the volumes I have issued, valuable books by Joseph McCabe, Voltaire, Thomas Paine, Ingersoll, and many others, all of which will teach her to look on the Bible as a production of the mind of Man and not the will of God. Man speaks in the Bible, not God.

\* \* \*

Does the Catholic Church oppose laws intended to prevent diseased persons from getting married?

If syphilitics, epileptics, and even lepers want to get married, no State should use its power to pass laws against such marriages, in the opinion of the Roman Catholic Church. The Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., in his "Power of the Church and State Over Marriage," in *The Catholic Mind*, January 22, 1939, (p. 523), explains the official position of the Church in the matter of marriage between diseased persons, as follows:

"All the physical afflictions that can ensue from the marriage of a diseased person, both to the healthy consort and to the offspring, are an immeasurably lesser evil than one mortal sin which the marriage could avert."

This horrible attitude means that a woman has no right to refuse sexual intercourse with a husband who is syphilitic or who is afflicted with leprosy. She is denied the right

to a divorce. She must remain the sexual instrument of her diseased partner if she would avoid "one mortal sin." My volumes of questions and answers contain many quotations on this subject, for, as some readers know, I have specialized in the history and practices of the Catholic Church during several decades. Never once have the Church's apologists been able to catch me in so much as a single misstatement or inaccuracy. The hundreds of columns on Catholicism which will be found in the volumes just mentioned (not counting the hundreds of pages devoted to the appalling record of Father Coughlin) have been permitted to circulate unchallenged by a Church which employs an efficient and vigilant propaganda department. How strange that these spokesmen for the Church have never seen fit to point to a single claim, allegation, quotation or assertion and nail it as a lie. They know better. I spare no efforts to check my sources, and when I deal with Catholic doctrine I am always careful to go only to official sources. Some day I'll misspell some priest's name or make some typographical slip, and then I'll be branded as a liar and a fraud. That's one of their favorite tricks. Joseph McCabe, for example, has written more than 100 volumes exposing the record of the Catholic Church, and his facts have been ignored for 30 years or more. But when his name is brought up in some Catholic organ he is dismissed as inaccurate and dishonest because, some 25 years ago, in one of his large books, he credited a Catholic document to the wrong source, misspelling its name and getting the date a little off. His vast case is ignored and the man's gigantic inquiries are dismissed through the easy device of pointing to that single error. It fools only the dupes of the Church.

But to return to my subject. Damen, C. S.S.R., professor of Moral Theology, University of Propaganda Fide in Rome (in his "Theologia Morals," vol. 2, n. 636) even denies the State the right to demand a medical examination of those about to be married, as follows:

"Q. May the civil authority prescribe a medical examination for those about to be married?

"A. For baptized persons the civil authority may not prescribe this examination in such wise that if this condition is not fulfilled, marriage is forbidden to them . . . for thus the State would be directly or indirectly establishing an impediment, and this the State is entirely incapable of doing."

According to this (and it's the official position of the Catholic Church) the State hasn't the right to prevent lunatics from marrying, it can't put any obstacles in the way of lepers, syphilitics and other diseased persons from getting married. If this statement sounds outlandish, let me quote from Sabetti-Barrett, S.J., moral theologian, whose text-book of moral theology is used in all Catholic seminaries in the U.S. His "Compendium Theologiae Moralis," (n. 842, Q. 6) says:

"Only the Church can establish impediments, whether diriment or prohibitive, for Christian marriage . . . Leprosy and other revolting and contagious diseases such as syphilis and epilepsy, are not impediments."

Can anyone imagine a more revolting dogma? And when one considers such expressions (which are offered as serious bases of behavior) can one be accused of extreme statement when he brands such people as belonging in the darkest of the Dark Ages? Why, the authority on Catholic moral law whom I've just quoted, actually says: "All the new laws regarding eugenic marriages passed in our country violate the power of the Church." (This sentence is from the book quoted in the previous paragraph and will be found in m. 874, Q. 8.) *The Converted Catholic*, for March, 1940, discusses the efforts of many of our States to meet the problem of protection of future generations from unlimited propagation of the insane, the criminally degenerate and the syphilitic, by showing that sterilization would reduce by 50 percent the cost of State government in New Jersey, where, for instance, "State expenditures are approximately \$40,000,000 a year; \$20,000,000 of this goes for the support and maintenance of social misfits." The same source summarizes some of the benefits which would accrue from sterilization properly and adequately administered:

1. Effective use of existing institutions by permitting release of inmates on parole to their families or other guardians.

2. More effective use of existing institutions for defectives by removing the need of commitments solely to prevent parenthood, thereby permitting use of these facilities for other persons.

3. A considerable lessening of family relief load, especially among the permanently unemployable.

4. A lessening of delinquency and crime among defective and abnormal groups, by not replenishing these stocks to the degree which now obtains.

5. Successful rehabilitation of many who might otherwise find the burdens of family life excessive.

But what do such humanitarian arguments mean to a Church which demands under its Canon 1096 of the *Codex Juris Canonici*:

"It belongs only to the supreme authority of the Church to declare authentically when the divine law impedes or invalidates matrimony. To the same supreme authority it belongs exclusively to constitute other diriment or prohibitive matrimonial impediments for baptized persons after the manner of a universal law."

Dr. Leo H. Lehmann calls attention to the fact that in Canon Law, "baptized persons" includes Catholics and Protestants. Now let's see the fruits of this Catholic policy as described above. If the Church could point to higher educational standards, better social and individual health, less insanity and the like, one would have to grant the pragmatic justification of its position, but the facts point to opposite conditions. The record indicates appalling results from the Church's organized campaign for superstition, ignorance, and fanaticism. The Sterilization League of New Jersey, Princeton, N.J., issued recently a report entitled, "Sterilization and the Organized Opposition," from which we learn that the Catholic population is in greater need of the social relief provided by eugenics and sterilization than is the non-Catholic portion of the community. In New Jersey, where Catholics were only 25 percent of the total population in 1930, we find the following amazing conditions:

Of the resident delinquents in State

institutions between January 1 and June 30, 1935, 47 percent were Catholics.

Of the mentally deficient in institutions between April 30 and July 1, 1935, 38 percent were Catholics.

Of the admissions of the mentally diseased, for the year ending April 30, 1935, in one institution, and resident population on June 26, and July 15, in two other institutions, 52 percent were Catholics.

Of dependent children, on May 31, 1935, and resident population, June 19, in School for the Deaf, 53 percent were Catholics.

Of the grand total resident in 17 State institutions and one State agency, 49 percent were Catholics and 51 percent non-Catholics.

I consider facts like the above of tremendous social significance. They should be studied carefully by every citizen who wants to see his country make physical, moral and material progress. I know that many of my readers are now learning the anti-social policies of the Roman Catholic Church for the first time. That's because the standard press is afraid to tell the truth about this reactionary, cruel, inhuman, destructive, intolerant organization. The average editor trembles at the thought of printing anything that even hints at criticism of the dangerous, ruthless, relentless Catholic Church. The Catholic and non-Catholic populations must be kept in ignorance, say these false editors, but this country hasn't surrendered completely to the Black International (the Vatican)—at least not yet. There's still a Bill of Rights and a Constitution that protect editors who aren't afraid to tell the truth regardless of the threats and bulldozing tactics of the Catholic Church. We still have a free press, though many editors refuse to exercise their full rights. The public that seeks for the truth, that wants the facts about all anti-social elements should give unstinted support to those editors who break away from the herd and strike out for truth, freedom and justice. They're needed more than ever. If they were to be gagged, the road would be wide open for the Fascism of the hierarchy and Father Coughlin.

I believe it would be amusing if you were to point out what hits you as the ugliest lines ever written by a great poet.

There's ugliness in the poetry of all great artists, as there are numerous arid stretches in the music of the profoundest composers, and here I certainly include even Bach, Beethoven and Brahms, three masters who have always thrilled me. I must confess that Bach often gives me a pain in a certain place. Bach's light pieces are just so much nibble-dible to me, running along with destructive monotony, but when the master busts loose with a run of mighty chords and crashes, it begins to look as though the nearby hills are going to topple, and it's those too brief moments that compel me to forgive the master's reams of boresome drivel. When we come to sheer ugliness in the poetry of the great, it's hard to point out the piece that's above all others, for there's so much of it. But maybe I'm pretty close to the truth when I say that John Milton's "Paradise Lost" contains a passage that defies comparison. I refer to the lines that tell of legions of pygmies and giants, thus:

and what resounds  
In fable or romance of Uther's son,  
Begirt with British or Armoric  
knights,  
And all who since, baptiz'd or infidel,  
Jousted in Aspramont or Montalban,  
Damasco, or Morocco, or Trebisond,  
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric  
shore  
When Charlemain and all his peer-  
age fell  
By Feuntarabia.

One should read the above many times—always aloud—to get the full force of its superb ugliness. Back in the 18th Century, Richard Bentley commented on these lines, blasting them to hell and damnation, as follows:

Milton indeed in his prose works tells us that in his youth he was a great lover and reader of romances; but surely he had more judgment in his old age than to clog and sully his poem with such romantic trash, as even then when he wrote, was obsolete and forgot. To stuff in here a heap of barbarous words, without any ornament or poetical coloring—would be such pedantry, such

a silly boast of useless reading, as I will not charge him with: let his acquaintance and editor take it.

I think it would be interesting if some of my informed readers were to submit what they consider to be the mightiest and most challenging examples of poetical ugliness in the works of the giants of literature. I wonder if any such specimens could take the crown from the piece I've just quoted from Milton.

\* \* \*

Are you a vegetarian?

No. I wish I could live without eating meat, but I can't, because brain labor requires plenty of solid, powerful grub. If I tried to get by on vegetables, nuts and that sort of thing (I like them along with meat) I couldn't keep my body strong enough to get my job done. I remember hearing Upton Sinclair explain why he'd deserted vegetarianism (after many years of preaching that izzum) while we were both broiling a two-pound sirloin in his Pasadena home. He couldn't do his heavy brain-work on a vegetable diet. At that, I rarely eat the meat of wild or free animals, for there's something in me that rebels against that sort of thing, but when it comes to eating the meat of a steer, sheep, goat, chicken, and the like, I never feel even a twinge. In most cases, they were actually bred for the uses to which they were put. By this I mean, of course, that the animals most of us consume would never have been born if we hadn't raised them for our tables. It may be cruel, but it isn't the same as living off the bodies of wild creatures. Whenever I discuss this subject I'm sure to be hit by dozens of correspondents who feel I should join them in their vegetarianism, although I recall hearing from several food faddists who insisted that even vegetables shouldn't be eaten because it's known they suffer when put to the knife or boiled in one's kitchen. I've often wondered what such precious ésthetes or ascetics eat, but have never come around to putting the question. Perhaps they thrive on the vitamins and calories in their ideals. This matter of cruelty to vegetables reminds me of how Mark Twain pointed out how some vegetables show their suffering by tears, like the onion, and some by bleeding, like the beet. He continued:

"Only think of the millions who daily indulge in such hideous cruelty as gouging out the eyes of potatoes, flaying rhubarb, disembowelling pea-pods—to say nothing of such ghastly and refined torture as the quartering of French beans." Joking aside, Jagadis Bose, scientist, says in his "Plant Augraphs and Their Revelations," that vegetable life is more like animal life than the average person supposes. His report tells how, with the use of delicate instruments of his own invention, he measured the heart-beats of a plant, observed how its blood flowed, and measured its pulse under the quickening actions of stimulants. True, but I'll continue to enjoy a bowl of combination salad along with a 12-ounce sirloin from a corn-fed steer.

\* \* \*

I enclose an article from a magazine, in which you will find the statement that Buddhist Burmans don't believe in killing living creatures, but you'll notice a picture showing them in the act of bringing in a catch of fish. How come?

The human mind is capable of wonderful contortions. It's true that the Buddhist Burmans are against killing anything, but at the same time they like fish, and here's how a Burman prince explains the contradiction:

"See that light at the bottom of the river? It's simply a slab of wood, painted white, and placed there by a native fisherman. It glows strangely in the light of the moon, and the fish, frightened, leap into the air—to fall back into the net. It is then possible for the fishermen to assuage their consciences by saying: 'We didn't kill these fish—we simply gathered in the suicides.'"

\* \* \*

Can you give me Tony's rhymed complaint because of the 10c paint that wouldn't dry?

"Tony's Complaint" is popular with paint store owners because it pictures the misfortunes of a consumer who thought he'd use cheap paint on the toilet seat, thereby causing severe complications. The tender gem runs this way:

I got complaint,  
'Bout one dam can of ten cent paint  
My wife, she's buy from your dam store,  
An' now, by dam, I good and sore.  
You see, las' wik de spring time come,  
An' ever'ting he's son de bum;

De wall, de floor an' de window too,  
He's dirty lak hell, Sacre Blue.

Now, my wife, she's like be clean an' neat

So she's buy some paint for toilet seat;  
An' for one whole week we watch, with eye

But these dam paint, she's no git dry.  
My wife she's short an' kinda fat,  
By dam you should see where she's sat;  
She's got big ring, goes 'round complete,  
Where she sit down on toilet seat.

My daughter too, she's got ring 'round,  
When on the seat she's go sit down.  
For one whole week, we wait an' wait,  
An' now we all got constipate;  
By dam, we don't know what to do,  
You gotta eat, we all feel blue;  
My wife, she's sit an' cry an' cry,  
Cause these dam seat she's no git dry.

Now, don't you t'ink we got complaint,  
For buy from you dat ten cent paint?  
I live long tam, I never see,  
A man got so dam mad, like me;  
But when I t'ink 'bout dat dam paint,  
I git so mad I hasa faint.  
De paint he's use' I can't bring back,  
Excuse if I git off de track,  
But how can house be nice an' neat  
If paint no dry on toilet seat?

\* \* \*

What's your opinion of the editor of PM when he says his paper is to be written in English, not journalese.

If PM's editor means bad journalism by journalese, I'm for him hotter than an orgasm, for journalese means bad writing, hackneyed words and ideas, fly-specked notions, and moth-eaten verbiage in general, but journalism is the stuff of literature. Here I bring in a paragraph by Bernard Shaw, in which I consider the subject disposed of for all time. I've already arranged to have it read at my funeral and carved on my tombstone. Here's Shaw's brilliant praise of journalism:

"The writer who aims at producing the platitudes which are 'not for an age but for all time' has his reward in being unreadable in all ages; whilst Plato and Aristophanes trying to knock some sense into the Athens of their day, Shakespeare peopling the same Athens with Elizabeth mechanics and Warwickshire hunts, Ibsen photographing the local doctors and vestrymen of a Norwegian parish, Carpaccio painting the life of St. Ursula exactly as if she were a lady living in the next street to him, are still

alive and at home everywhere among the dust and ashes of many thousands of academic, punctilious, most archeologically correct men of letters and art who spend their lives haughtily avoiding the journalist's vulgar obsession with the ephemeral. I also am a journalist, proud of it, deliberately cutting out of my works all that is not journalism, convinced that nothing that is not journalism will live long as literature, or be of any use whilst it does live. I deal with all periods but I never study any period but the present, which I have not yet mastered and never shall."

All beginning writers should memorize every word of the above, and each arrived writer should have it engraved on the back of his watch. Incidentally, the above is an example of excellent writing—easy, urbane, informative, entertaining, tight, compact, and, as one of my city editors used to keep harping, full o' guts. I like straight, strong English—the kind that gets to the point with a rush. I'm reminded of a woman, several decades ago, who roared, "I wouldn't waste my semen on a seaman." That's swell journalism, because it's loaded with the warm juices of life. It sounds like something out of Elizabethan literature, though it's possible that anonymous woman may have been its creator. I don't remember what she looked like, whether she was young, pretty or old, but I do remember her sentence as though it had been shouted only a few minutes ago. That's litrachoor.

\* \* \*

I've been reading your pieces for more than 20 years, which means many millions of words, so I can say I have a fair idea of your style as a writer. One thing that I've noticed is the way you practically ignore the exclamation mark. How come!?

I never use an exclamation mark except when I get off an actual exclamation, such as: "Good Gawd!" "You turd-tumbler!" Putting the mark at the end of a sentence displeases me. For example, consider this sentence from a popular writer's dialogue: "You can't fool me, that ain't no peanut!" In what way does the exclamation mark add emphasis to that sentence? Too frequent use of the mark is a sign of bad writing. And doubling or trebling them is to

make a bad thing worse. Now and then I come on writers who insist one shouldn't bother too much about punctuation. It's hard to know just what they mean, for they never say how far one should go in one's indifference to punctuation. I'm no stickler for the niceties, preferring a system that enables me to express my ideas and get them across to my readers. After all, that's all punctuation's intended for. If we left out punctuation entirely we'd cause no end of confusion. Let me, for example, take a passage from Robert Louis Stevenson's "Kidnaped," first giving the words without marks and then giving them as Stevenson wrote the lines. You might tussle with the paragraph, trying to say, and later check against Stevenson's verbiage that's properly marked. First, the unpunctuated:

as soon as we were alongside where I sat fairly gaping at the ships height the strong humming of the tide against its sides and the pleasant cries of the seamen at their work hoseason declaring that he and I must be the first aboard ordered a tackle to be sent down from the main-yard in this I was whipped into the air and set down again on the deck where the captain stood ready waiting for me and instantly slipped back his arm under mine there I stood some while a little dizzy with the unsteadiness of all around me perhaps a little afraid and yet vastly pleased with these strange sights the captain meanwhile pointing out the strangest and telling me their names and uses but where is my uncle said I suddenly ay said hoseason with a sudden grimness thats the point

Now take a look below when punctuated:

As soon as we were alongside (where I sat fairly gaping at the ship's height, the strong humming of the tide against its sides, and the pleasant cries of the seamen at their work) Hoseason, declaring that he and I must be the first aboard, ordered a tackle to be sent down from the main-yard. In this I was whipped into the air and set down again on the deck, where the captain stood ready waiting for me, and instantly slipped back his arm under mine. There I stood some while, a little dizzy with the unsteadiness of all around me, perhaps a little afraid, and yet vastly pleased with these strange sights;

the captain meanwhile pointing out the strangest, and telling me their names and uses.

"But where is my uncle?"—said I, suddenly.

"Ay," said Hoseason, with a sudden grimness, "that's the point."

So much for punctuation. Now let's turn to Anatole France, a master stylist, who usually demanded eight successive printer's proofs. Each time he made endless changes, even rewriting whole sections. As a writer I admire his patience, but as a publisher I feel sorry for the poor man who had to handle Anatole France's copy. I would have been polite, but I would have insisted that he employ a competent typist, who could turn out as many rewritten versions as he cared to work on. If he had rebelled, I, knowing myself as I do, would have called him a few plain and fancy names and told him to go to H—l with the rest of the turd-tumblers, thereby doing serious damage to the cause of literature. Anatole France was fortunate in having a publisher who placed literature above typesetting costs. France once said of himself: "I have no imagination, but I have endless patience. I have never felt wildly inspired. I have never worked with frenzy. I write laboriously. My pen jogs along without haste." On his first rewrite, he changed emphasis, thus helping to create that wonderful Anatole France touch. For example, his original sentence which read, "Milady was wealthy and of good repute," was given new life and sparkle by the change to, "As Milady was wealthy, she was also held in good repute." In the second and third sets of corrections Anatole France struck out innumerable *thats* and *whiches* and *whos* and *whoses*. Said France, in explanation: "We are no longer in the age of funeral orations and long harangues. Those pronouns make a sentence look like a wry neck." Returning to punctuation, France was prejudiced against semi-colons, saying he preferred "the more manly colon or, better still, the period. The best sentence is the shortest." France used the fourth correction to rearrange the sentence in order to avoid repetition of words. The fifth was devoted to adjectives, which he always sought to make more effective.

"Do not despise negative epithets," said France. "They are effective if unexpected, and therefore irresistible: 'blossomless gardens' . . ." In the sixth proof France went after artificiality and ornaments. He had a horror of wedding cake decorations. "They serve only to cover up the poorness of the inside." And so on, down to the eighth set of proofs and a bankrupt publisher. Here's France's parting words of advice, after telling what he did with the eight sets of proofs: "One becomes a good writer as one becomes a good cabinet maker: by planing down one's phrases." All of which cuts me like a knife, for I see at last that I'll never be an Anatole France. I write my pieces at breakneck speed, make my first and final corrections immediately after pulling a sheet from the typewriter—and, whiff! it's off to the linotype operator, who is yet to endure the experience of having to reset my stuff because of a newly acquired passion for precision and perfection. If that were to happen just once I'm afraid he'd think I'd gone crazy. And that's why he'll always be just a printer and I'll never be an Anatole France. Well, the hell with him. After all, my way has its compensations. For example, I know more off-color stories than Anatole France knew in his entire life. They won't fetch me literary immortality, but they bring my readers a smile—and that's half my job. But don't get the impression I'm asking you beginning writers to follow my example. No, stick to Anatole France. I can say, by the way, that I've already learned from France's first rewrite—the one in which he changed the emphasis. I came on a sentence which lent itself to just such treatment, so here it is after I got through with it, knowing my pious readers already are familiar with the original thought: "Greater Love Hath No Man Than This, That He Lay Down His Wife for His Friends." And yet, the new emphasis ("He Lay Down His Wife") still seems to lack something of the Anatole France sparkle. Maybe the old Frenchman was right in rewriting so many times.

\* \* \*

How can I get Vitamin P?  
Drink lots of beer.

Is it a fact that worry spurs chronic ailments?

It's an established fact that constant worry about one's job, your vanishing savings, the war, and the like, can cause chronic ailments like stomach ulcers, asthma, skin disorders, and even heart troubles. This doesn't mean a temporary spell of worry will bring disastrous results; the worry must continue over a long period of time. The above assertions are taken from an address delivered by Dr. Abraham Myerson, of Boston, to a meeting of the American Psychopathological Association. He also said that a great deal of what we call nervous indigestion is emotional indigestion. Strong emotional states, he added, may not only cause hysteria, rages and suicidal impulses, but some psychiatrists believe they also change the production of red blood cells. Skin specialists, he said, "have seen many cases of face and body eruptions clear up quickly under proper mental treatment after failing to respond to treatment for infection. . . . Fatigue is in large measure emotional, and disturbance of sleep is created by emotion and undue excitement. Many abnormal conditions of the body are brought about by excessive emotion or, at least, by experience adversely reacted to. This is especially the case in abnormal sexual activities." There are other authorities who insist, along the lines of Dr. Myerson's report, that we must take into account our emotional state if we would be healthy. We know definitely that organic diseases are finally created by repeated functional disturbances. There's sense in the two lines quoted below from Edmund Vance Cooke's "Don't Take Your Troubles to Bed":

Don't fight with the pillow, but lay down your head  
And kick every worriment out of the bed.

If you're in debt, let your creditors do the worrying, for, as George Herbert wrote, "a hundred load of worry will not pay an ounce of debt." I can give this advice from the heart, because on occasion I can give the greatest experts lessons in how to worry. Sowhelpme, I know the gold-durn thing. That's why I can repeat David Keppel's words and attest to their truth:

Better never trouble trouble  
Until Trouble troubles you;  
For you only make your trouble  
Double-Trouble when you do;  
And the trouble—like a bubble—  
That you're troubling about,  
May be nothing but a cipher  
With its rim rubbed out.

\* \* \*

Your piece on scented advertisements moves me to consider this new medium for my own purposes. Of course, as you say, Kotex and limburger ads present great mechanical and chemical difficulties, but what about a series of scented ads in your paper promoting my liver and bacon, which I produce in great quantities?

I'm now equipped to use triple-distilled concentrates in publishing scented and odoriferous ads, but I don't see how I can handle your liver and bacon copy in the same issue that throws out whiffs of Virginia ham, Jones' sausages, Goodyear condoms and a new brand of glue. I warn advertisers that I can't assume responsibility for changes in humidity and wind-drift affecting the olfactory power of said advertising. All smells will be inserted on a strict basis of the advertiser's own risks, nor will I accept blame for sudden changes in the weather. All this reminds me, without much sense, of the fellow who was unsocial enough to break wind in the presence of a person possessed of sensitive nostrils. "Did you just make that awful smell?" he was asked. "Sure," the guilty one replied, with galling smugness, "you don't think I smell like that all the time, do you?"

\* \* \*

I have used many brands of kiss-proof lipstick, but I can't keep it from coming off. What would you suggest?

Eat plenty of onions.

\* \* \*

Recently I saw Jack Earle, who is a giant, and another big fellow Robert Wadlow. Do these giants live very long?

Earle is 8 feet 6 inches tall and weighs 371 pounds. Wadlow is 8 feet 9 inches. The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company's statisticians studied seven giants and found their average life was only 34 years. It would seem, therefore, that these "bean poles," who undoubtedly get that way because of glandular deficiency, can't last very long. But this doesn't mean that reasonably tall people can't last

the normal life span. The same statisticians who studied the giants also surveyed the longevity of 20,000 tall Americans, who ranged in size from 6 feet 2 inches to 7 feet 1 inch, and found that while the death rate "was slightly in excess of normal for younger men, those who were past 40 were slightly better than the rate for shorter men of that age." The same investigation showed that these very tall men suffered less from tuberculosis than the average. "Mortality from degenerative diseases was high only among the overweights of the tall men, a condition that prevails among overweight men of lesser heights."

\* \* \*

Where did George Washington warn the country against alliances with Europe?

I've written at least a dozen pieces (see my volumes of "Questions and Answers") showing that Washington in his Farewell Address, never issued such a sweeping warning. Our isolationists (especially Senator Nye) are intellectually dishonest when they quote only a part of the address.

Washington said we should "steer clear of permanent alliances." He then added these words: "trust in temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies." Don't these quotations give an entirely different view of the situation? Also, don't they apply to the conditions prevailing in 1940? Thomas Jefferson in 1814, wrote words that our isolationists prefer to ignore, for, at a time when Napoleon was threatening to win complete control of Europe, he saw the possibility of Napoleon invading this hemisphere, using captured British ships for this purpose. It was then that Jefferson wrote: "It cannot be to our interest that all Europe should be reduced to a single monarchy." Surely an invasion 125 years ago was possible, as Jefferson said. Why can't such an invasion take place today? Such an attack would be possible when one considers that a victorious Hitler (as I write these words England is still undefeated) would not only have access to five times the shipbuilding facilities enjoyed by the U. S., but he would strive to put the British Navy to his uses. Also, he would have the Italian Navy to help, and, finally, he would be able to use Japan's Navy in a grand squeeze play that would truly put us on the spot.

Let me turn to James Monroe, who promulgated the Monroe Doctrine at a time when the Holy Alliance had real aims against the Americas, perhaps through Latin America, in one form or another. Such a conquest, said Monroe, must be fought without compromise, because, as he showed, "the political system of the allied powers (Russia, Prussia, Austria, Bourbon France, Spain, and the Roman Catholic Church) is essentially different from that of America." This view was accepted by the British government, causing Monroe to write these highly important and still applicable words:

"With the British power and navy combined with our own, we have nothing to fear from the rest of the world; and in the great struggle of the epoch between liberty and despotism, we owe it to ourselves to sustain the former in this hemisphere at least."

As I write this brief comment I learn that President Roosevelt has just announced (September 3, 1940) that arrangements have been completed to turn over 50 of our over-age destroyers to Britain, in exchange for vitally important naval and air bases. This was a wise, shrewd move. But it doesn't go far enough. We should, as I've written several times, join up to the hilt. We should declare war against the Fascist powers, including Japan. We should help England, because by doing this we help preserve our own institutions and sovereignty. If we wait, England may be crushed—and then action on our part will be too late. It's a case of fighting now or accepting national suicide in a few years. If it's true that Hitler is our Enemy No. 1, then we should do the sensible thing and fight him near his own bailiwick. Why wait to fight him over here when he'll be ready to strike us down? The sane thing to do is to fight him now, over there, using our naval and air forces. Such an attack might make it unnecessary for us to send armies to Hitler's enslaved countries, but should it be necessary we should go the limit even on that score. England is our first line of defense. If that line cracks, we'll be in a serious fix—in fact, we'll be in danger of annihilation or enslavement. That's why I say we should use our money, our economic power, our fighting

equipment and our man power to protect ourselves today. Let's remember that appeasement is impossible. You can't satisfy a dictator except by surrendering to him. If we don't want to do that we should strike while we are free to defend ourselves. Strike over there. That's simple, obvious strategy. Let's not kid ourselves into believing that Hitler and Mussolini have no designs on us. They need our wealth and our capacity to produce more wealth. We can make their militarism profitable from every viewpoint. By resisting Fascism today we show ourselves to be in harmony with the ideals and policies of the Founding Fathers. Roosevelt has made a good beginning, but it's only a beginning. Why help England with only 50 destroyers? How much more sensible it would be to help with our entire navy—and with every other fighting arm at our disposal.

\* \* \*

What is your opinion of George Sel-  
des' "In Fact"?

George Sel-  
des used to be a crack  
newspaperman, but now he's just a  
Stalin crackpot. The man has degen-  
erated tragically. All he seeks to do  
now is to rationalize Stalin's line of  
mass murder, assassination, terror,  
imperialism and common thievery.  
This pen prostitute specializes in  
pointing out the lies of the standard  
press (a worthy job at all times) but  
shuts his eyes to his own lies, distor-  
tions, libels, and plain and fancy rig-  
ging. It sounds unbelievable, but it's  
true that Sel-  
des, a Jew, is using his  
brilliant powers to help Hitlerism via  
the Moscow pipeline.

\* \* \*

Can you give me a word that contains  
a remarkable number of other words  
without transposing?

"Feathered" is well loaded with  
other words without transposing—  
15, in fact: Feat, feather, eat, at, the,  
there, he, her, here, ere, red, er, eats,  
ath, er.

\* \* \*

Please comment on the enclosed ad-  
vertisement which says its rat poison  
and insecticide drive the pests outdoors  
to die.

The Federal Trade Commission has  
gone after several advertisers who  
used this selling argument in their  
copy. The FTC insists the pests won't  
go outdoors to die unless the pests'  
burrows and habitats are outdoors.

Is Ben Turpin really cross-eyed or does  
he cross them on purpose for the movie  
camera?

The cockeyed comedian was asked  
the above question so often he re-  
sorted to a mimeographed reply,  
which follows:

Thanks for your interest. From  
youth I have been so cross-eyed  
that I once spent some months in  
the Southeast trying to enlist in the  
Northwest Mounted Police.

Something tells me I've used the  
above before, but I'm too lazy to  
check the item in my volumes of  
"Questions and Answers."

\* \* \*

Can you tell me if Coca-Cola and Pepsi-  
Cola drinks are harmful to the health?

These coke drinks won't hurt you,  
according to my inquizition. If they  
please you, drink them as often as  
you get the notion.

\* \* \*

What's your opinion of Dale Carnegie's  
daily column?

Trash.

\* \* \*

How many new books do the publishers  
issue in the U. S. annually?

About 9,000.

\* \* \*

What, on the average, is the weight of  
a human being's blood?

About seven pounds.

\* \* \*

Do all fruit trees produce only one crop  
a year?

All except the fig tree, which pro-  
duces two.

\* \* \*

Why are so many Chinese called Wing?

Because 450,000,000 Chinese can't  
be Wong.

\* \* \*

What's an army "shavetail"?

A recently appointed second lieu-  
tenant.

\* \* \*

How many times does the human heart  
beat in an average lifetime?

About 2,000,000,000 times.

\* \* \*

Do you believe beauty is only skin  
deep?

Yes, and often not even that.

\* \* \*

What happens to a girl in cotton stock-  
ings?

Nothing.

\* \* \*

How many camels are there in use for  
transportation purposes?

About 3,000,000.

Which means of travel carries the most passengers?

The motor car. In 1939, motor cars traveled 287,000 million miles, and carried passengers 10 times farther than all other travel means combined.

\* \* \*

Kindly tell me the meaning of "Vini, vidi, vici."

The Latin words refer to Julius Caesar and mean: "He saw, he conquered, he came." (There's another translation in use but I like mine better.)

\* \* \*

What's the history of the word "cabal"?

Cabal—which means to engage in intrigue—got its start in a peculiar way. In 1671, the British cabinet consisted of five men, as follows: Clifford, Arlington, Buckingham, Ashley, Lauderdale. Notice that the initial letters of these names form the word "cabal." They got to be known as "the Cabal" because of their conspiracies and intrigues.

\* \* \*

Is there any truth to the widely held belief that Russian men and women are the quickest in the world when it comes to getting the preliminaries over before making love?

I know of no authentic data, from official verifiable sources on this interesting phenomenon. After an exhaustive, but fruitless, examination of all statistical abstracts in my rather complete reference library, I am inclined to the opinion that speed in arranging a love match depends on the individuals, regardless of race. I've seen pretty fast workers out here in Kansas. I doubt that even a sex-liberated Russian could do better. However, there's a story I want to retell here, for it illustrates how a Russian fast worker—well, let's not anticipate. Here's the yarn:

A train streaking over the Siberian plateau. A big, bearded Russian in a compartment reading a newspaper. At one of the stops a beautiful girl is ushered into his compartment.

The Russian is absorbed in his paper. Suddenly he looks up and asks, "You go Moscow?" The girl replies, "Yes."

Back to his reading for another ten-or-so miles and then—"Russian girl?" "Yes."

Another league is jolted away before the Russian booms out,

"Twenty-one?" "Yes, almost twenty-two."

Back to his reading, apparently satisfied, the big, bearded Russian says nothing for more miles. Suddenly he comes to life, throws the newspaper to the floor, and proclaims, "Enough of this love-making. Take off your clothes!!"

\* \* \*

How do you like Bret Harte?

He's a top-flight third-rater. Add up all his stories and you'll find it's a case of zero plus zero equals zero. Mark Twain, in "Mark Twain in Eruption," says:

"Harte had no feeling, for the reason that he had no machinery to feel with . . . He hadn't any more passion for his country than an oyster has for its bed; in fact not so much and I apologize to the oyster."

And yet, Harte fooled a lot of people in his day, the way William Saroyan's fooling slews of gullibles today.

\* \* \*

How did Mexicans come to give us the name, "gringos"?

When General Winfield Scott's troops were fighting down there during the Mexican War they used this line in one of their marching songs: "Up in the North where the green grass grows." "Green grass" became "gringo," and that became a scornful name for Yankees.

\* \* \*

Is the Consumers Union reliable or is it just another racket?

Consumers Union of United States, Inc., 17 Union Square West, N. Y. C., is authoritative, reliable and well run. I recommend its services to all consumers who want to practice intelligent buymanship. Its director, Arthur Kallet, is an experienced technical supervisor who knows how to go behind the advertiser's claims and dig into the real facts.

\* \* \*

Dr. Arthur E. Hertzler, in his "The Doctor and His Patients," gives strong emphasis to the fact that love and sex need not be closely connected. Please comment on this frequently-heard view.

Dr. Hertzler, who is a man of wit and sagacity, puts the notion this way:

"It might help a little if people could get the very obvious fact into their fool heads that the sex act has nothing to do with love."

It seems to me that Dr. Hertzler,

sometimes qualifies as the late May-or Gaynor's "man of vast and varied misinformation." He is worth reading when he sticks to his field, but when he begins straying he shows himself to be a man of limitless limitations. The above quotation—which I've seen in one form or another during all my years of reading—belongs in a screw-loose comedy and not in a serious study of human behavior. But, we mustn't look for perfection in this imperfect world. We're all jumbled together higgledy-piggledy. Dr. Hertzler, who is said to be especially good on nose operations, according to one of his satisfied patients, should confine himself to odor-engineering, but if he persists in wandering afield he shouldn't object if we vulgarians indulge in a clap, giggle and guffaw. Sheer virtuosity can be met with on rare occasions, but not in men like Dr. Hertzler and myself. In the sermonesque remark about love versus sex, the simple answer that pops into my once-in-a-while logical mind is that he would have us believe that the ideal couple would be a eunuch married to a woman whose ovaries had been removed. I'm crude enough to believe that platonic love is just another myth, unless it serves as play for the man and a tonic for the woman. Take love out of sex and you have the behavior of steady customers in a fancy house; take sex out of love and you have the millions of neurotic, unhappy marriages that so many of us don't like to talk about. I'm materialistic enough to believe that a healthy sex life is the physical foundation of the most exalted love.

\* \* \*

I know your fly-paper memory won't help you here, so dip into your news-clip filing system for the facts I want. How much petroleum has been taken out of the U. S. in the entire history of the industry, and if all that oil were put in a single tank how big would it be?

U. S. wells have yielded 35,240,-600,000 barrels of petroleum since oil was discovered in the U. S. If all that oil were put into a single tank it would measure a mile square and a mile and a third high. While I'm on this subject let me say that the 35 odd billion barrels mentioned above represent one trillion and 62

billion gallons of petroleum. That means about 54,200 gallons to every U. S. family, based on the 1940 census.

\* \* \*

I am 21 years old, a college student, and have been chaste all my life. I now intend to break this chastity. Can you suggest any helps? You realize what a tremendous obstacle I face—inhibition, false modesty, social backwardness, inexperience, etc. I will appreciate the suggestions and helps of those who should know.

I wonder if it wouldn't be a pious idea for some of my readers to jump at the above and give us the benefit of their knowledge and experience. Letters should be brief—not more than 300 words. Needless to say, this sincere young man's facing what's a serious problem to him, so let's avoid whacky nonsequitors, attempts to sharpen our risibilities, and broad efforts to be Chaplinesquely funny. We ought to have an interesting time, for here's a subject in which miles of typewriter ribbons have been beaten thin and dim.

\* \* \*

What about the efficiency and economy of fluorescent lighting? My town has taken to it like all get-out. One man spent \$400 for his home, office and little shop. The claim is made you get better light for about a third the money, and that the power companies are clamping down on the fact that such lighting is cheaper. They are careful not to give the new lighting their fullest endorsement. Please comment.

Fluorescent lighting, like cellophane and kotex, is here to stay, but one shouldn't go in for too heavy a splurge, for the light is still in its experimental stage. True, it's far more economical than ordinary light bulbs, giving about double the light for the same money, but the power companies aren't far from wrong when they hint that the public not go too fast in putting the fixtures into homes and offices. The chances are the lighting will be so improved in the next few years that equipment installed now will be out of date and be subject to almost 100 percent obsolescence. The lighting is excellent for stores, shops, saloons, restaurants, and the like, but one should install the cheaper fixtures on the assumption that the equipment isn't to remain for many years. Users report that when the voltage is low the lights flicker or go out.

Please tell your readers what has become of Joseph McCabe. Is he safely away from London?

The last time I heard from Joseph McCabe was on December 10, 1940, when he wrote me from a London suburb, Golders Green, to acknowledge receipt of my check in payment for his latest manuscript, just published under the title of "Inferiority Complex Eliminated." His brief, chatty, cheerful letter didn't even mention the bombings of the might-minded Brutalitarian. He says he's being kept busy with several literary projects. His health is good. And he hasn't lost any of his grave-faced irony. Nor has he lost the knack of making bunk dissolve like an aspirin.

\* \* \*

Is it true that TWA is all washed up with Colonel Lindbergh?

Yes. I showed that the great commercial airline was through with Fifth-Columnist Lindy more than a year ago, as may be seen by referring to my volumes of "Questions and Answers." The name of Lindbergh, since the flyer began playing the Nazi side of the street and let the Hitler Brutalitarian decorate him, has been a liability instead of an asset to TWA, so the legend "The Lindbergh Line" has been gradually given the works. Planes, office doors, stationery, advertising, etc., have quietly and thoroughly been freed of this Fascist's once-honored name. Space doesn't permit me to repeat the great quantity of Lindbergh data gathered into the volumes just mentioned. I prove to the hilt that Lindbergh, like Father (of what?) Coughlin, Henry Ford, the Rev. Winrod and George Sylvester Viereck—is a dangerous, menacing propagandist in support of Nazi ideology.

\* \* \*

Paul Sullivan's news broadcasts always close with the words "Good night and 30." I've been told the "30" refers to the temperature at the point where the broadcast originates. I've also been told it means the half-hour. Which is right?

"Thirty" is printer's slang, used for generations. It means the end. When a reporter, for example, finishes his story he types "30" at the bottom of the last sentence. There's one radio news reporter in Kansas who always closes his announce-

ments with "So long and 72." I don't know what his "72" means. Maybe some reader can set me right.

\* \* \*

As you are a veteran in the mail order field, please give me the benefit of your knowledge. I am about to run some full-page advertisements. Should I request right-hand pages?

I found that a right-hand page is better than a left-hand page by an average of 13 percent. This is because a right-hand page commands greater reader-attention. Also, if there's a coupon, it's easier for the prospect to cut it out.

\* \* \*

Is it a wise idea to run mail order advertising during periods of great public excitement?

No. When Hitler went through Norway, mail orders dropped. When he went through Holland and Belgium, returns were even smaller. And when he struck down France, business, via mail order, just about went to near-zero. When England began to stand up and strike back, thus giving the public reasons to believe that the English had at least a 50-50 chance to win the war, mail orders began to pick up. I remember that during the week the Lindbergh baby was kidnapped I was running some page advertisements in a string of newspapers, and the returns were awful. When placing advertising in a newspaper, first put in a full line of prayers to Gawd that no big news event will take the public's mind off advertising. People who are excited by the front page don't pay much attention to paid space on an inside page. This also applies to magazines, but not to the same degree. I'd say, roughly, that a front-page smash story like a Lindbergh kidnapping will knock at least 25 percent off the business one has a right to expect from coupon advertising in newspapers. As for magazines, I can only offer a guesstimate, putting it at about 10 percent. It's a good idea never to run mail order advertising in newspapers before a holiday or on the day of a holiday. Millions of people who are getting ready to go home for Christmas, let's say, aren't in the mood to fill out a mail order coupon. Nor will they do the job on the holiday itself. It's better to catch them while they're at work, for

people like to attend to their personal affairs on the boss's time. This is especially true of office workers. It's my polite theory that at least 25 percent of mail order coupons get their finishing touches while the customer is engaged in certain private activities in the washroom.

\* \* \*

#### Name your six favorite symphonies.

I'll list my pet pieces, but next month I may give myself a kick in my sensitive rear for indulging in such dancy-prancey stuff. I'm familiar with more than a hundred symphonies, and my caresses flit hither and yon like a jumping hop-toad with bleeding piles. Today's yippee-yoo may fill me with twitterment tomorrow. The things I may be applauding prissily this moment can look like artistic arterio-sclerosis a month hence. It happens that my Victrola is near that sacred sanctum in which I shave, scrub, and surrender to joyous moments of elimination and profound depths of meditation. And on a table near that juke-box is a stack of records, among which you'll find my current favorites, which I list: (1) Beethoven's Fifth; (2) Schubert's Unfinished; (3) Cesar Franck's D Minor; (4) Dvorak's From the New World; (5) Tchaikowsky's Pathetique; (6) Goldmark's Peasant Wedding. It happens that Berlioz's Fantastic Symphony is also on that table. I'm calm as I say I consider it the greatest masterpiece of pretentious crap ever squeezed from the innards of a man of genius. At that, next year I may see beauties in it that escape me now. Yes, and there are a couple of Haydn symphonies on that table, and I still hold that they're tinkling jingle-bell stuff, nowhere near Bach's Fugue for Foghorn in F-flat. Haydn had a facile talent, and could entertain, but by and large he was just a short-horn punk, what the Greeks called "a silly little keirp." All this is going to bring me letters expressing pain over my romping tomfooleries. Too bad, but as I belong to the vim-and-vintage type I can take it. I never let them disturb my serenely so-what state of mind. The reader who put the above question also asked for a list of my six favorite jazz songs. Sorry, but I can't name even one. They all sound to me as though they'd been written by fellows suffering from burning

wee-wee, the kind who are chronic bargain-hunters in adultery. You can take all the jazz ever written and shove it up your well-known flue. I'll stick to Brahms. And, by the way, I already want to revise my list of six and make room for Brahms's First, which I'd trade for Goldmark's opus, and throw in the Pathetique as a bonus. Now that I'm started on one of my essays (the kind that William Hazlitt called "familiar") there's no telling which china closet the bull will muss up next. When I get that way I usually run into a story, often the kind that's sure to delight 51 percent and offend 49 percent of my pious subscribers. The purity of an angel's breath is still only an ideal with me. If I work hard, concentrate, dedicate my soul and discipline my character I may yet be able to avoid that tiring state of chemical cleanliness. But to the story, which came to mind because I was thinking about the way I don't know where I'm going to be next. An old couple had been living alone and had been studying Spiritualism, Transmigration of Souls, and Theosophy. Finally the old man died and his wife started going to Spiritualist meetings regularly, trying to get a message from her departed husband. At last, she was successful. "How are you, dear?" she asked. He replied "I'm enjoying myself fine and having the time of my life. The cows are wonderful here, really inspiring." When she said she was afraid she didn't understand, he repeated: "The cows are wonderful here." "But," she exclaimed, "I didn't know they had cows in heaven." To which he answered: "Hell, I'm not in heaven. I'm a bull in Montana." But, enough of this unseemingly levity. More weighty subjects demand consideration, this time the predicament of a farmer. This man of the soil—a devout herring-snatcher—was having trouble with his cattle. They were sickly and not doing so well. Finally, the priest was called. He sprinkled the cattle with holy water, which is exactly what I would have done in the same situation. All of the farmer's cattle were home, except the bull, so the priest said he would leave a bottle of holy water and the farmer could sprinkle him himself when the beast came home. The farmer took the bottle and set it on a shelf near some other bottles, among which was a bottle of turpentine. Lat-

er, when the bull came home, the farmer told his hired man to get the bottle of holy water and sprinkle the bull's back, but the hired man got the bottle of turpentine by mistake. When he poured it on the bull's back the enraged animal started to bellow and jump around like crazy, even running through a couple of barbed wire fences. When the farmer saw that, he cried: "You can't take it, eh? You Protestant sonofabitch!" Just what the moral is I don't know, nor do I care. Since we're on this serious trend of thought, let me tell you about the veteran office assistant who took to drinking his boss's ink, thereby making the big guy in the front office mad as all get out. Each morning another quart of ink would turn up missing. "Say," cried the employer, "what's the idea of drinking all my ink?" The employee replied: "To tell you the truth, I'm in a bad fix. The lead's all gone from my pencil and I'm trying to turn it into a fountain-pen." Silly, isn't it? And at the very moment I was trying to be profound and serious. Well, since I've gone this far I may as well tell about the school teacher who told one of her pupils to write a story, selecting the subject herself. The child—a six-year-old precocious lassie—turned in this piece, which she called: "Virtue Is Its Own Reward":

A poor young man fell in love with the daughter of a rich lady who kept a candy store. The poor young man could not marry the rich candy lady's daughter because he had not enough money to buy any furniture. A wicked man offered to give the young man \$25 if he would become a drunkard. The young man wanted the \$25 very much so he could marry the rich candy lady's daughter, but when he got to the saloon he turned to the wicked man and said: "I will not become a drunkard even for \$25." On his way home he found a pocketbook containing a million dollars in gold. Then the young lady consented to marry him. They had a beautiful wedding, and the next day they had twins. Thus you see that virtue has its own reward.

\* \* \*

Can you do a little piece on the evils of boasting?

I've long become inured to the boasts of small-fry individuals, but during the past few years we've had boasting aggravated by the disgusting way the Brutalitarrians stand

up and boast for hours at a stretch. It's enough to drive a poor scribbler to purple, hortatory passages. We workadayers like to go about our jobs without fuss or self-commendation. We prefer to let our jobs speak for us. We take to heart the words, "where boasting ends, there dignity begins." But bawling out the boasters won't stop the evil. It's a mental disease that's almost impossible to cure. Old Samuel Johnson recognized this unfortunate, melancholy fact, thus:

"Every other enjoyment malice may destroy; every other panegyric envy may withhold; but no human power can deprive the boaster of his own encomiums."

True, we can't cure 'em, but we certainly can have some fun with 'em whenever there's a chance. This brings me to Mrs. Murphy, who wanted to impress her neighbor, Mrs. Goldberg, so she started bragging about her daughter. "My Maggie is a fine girl," said Mrs. Murphy, a lady richly endowed with a broad beam, "and she done fine at business college. Then me little girl got her a wonderful job as private secretary with a big company, where she done so fine the first week the president gave her a mink coat. But my Maggie didn't stop there, like any ordinary girl. She went aforin' right ahead—forgin' and forgin' like all get-out and at the end of the second week the president gave her a shiny, new roadster with a rumple seat all for her own dear self. You'd think a girl'd stop there, but not my Maggie, who's got the go-ahead in her. At the end of the third week the president was so satisfied with her that he decided she should have her own penthouse, which he built on the roof of the office building so when she got through her work at midnight or 2 o'clock in the mornin' she wouldn't have to wear herself out comin' home an' maybe catchin' cold. I'm sure proud of my Maggie." Mrs. Goldberg, who also had enough tokus for two, shook her head slowly and asked: "And what about your other daughter Irma?" "Oh, Irma," said Mrs. Murphy, "she's a hustler, too."

\* \* \*

I have an idea in mind. The idea is new, at least so far as I know. However, the parts used in developing it are already in existence. I can as-

semble them in an entirely new way and use them in a new way. Is an idea one's own so long as one doesn't make it known to anyone else? Does one surrender an idea as soon as one tells it to some other person? Is it possible to patent or copyright an idea?

An idea in the abstract can't be considered property. It must be given concrete form. For example, an idea for a book can't be copyrighted, but the book embodying that idea can. An idea for a new mechanism, if really original, can be patented only if it can be given real form, as in a model or a set of drawings. For that reason, it would be a good idea to keep your idea to yourself until it takes sufficient shape to warrant protective measures.

\* \* \*

What does it mean when it's reported that Congress has adjourned "sine die"?

*Sine die* is Latin for "without day," so when Congress adjourns "sine die" it means the body has adjourned without setting a day on which to meet again.

\* \* \*

You say Mahatma Gandhi is the world's most humbler man. I don't agree. The "honor" goes to Shelley. Please comment.

You've got me there, brother. Percy Bysshe Shelley was not only devoid of all humor, but hated it. He even went so far as to write these almost unbelievable words: "I am convinced that there can be no regeneration of mankind until laughter is put down." I've seen pictures of Gandhi laughing fit to bust a button. Shelley not only hated laughter but led a crusade to convince the people of Ireland that they shouldn't drink intoxicating beverages. He thought it was sinful to play. But that doesn't erase the fact that Shelley wrote some of the most beautiful and noble poetry in all literature. This Shelley talk moves me to dip into my fly-paper memory and bring out a dark fact in my otherwise pure life. Back in those unregenerate days when I registered at hotels with some temporary pawn of passion, something in my artistic, sensitive, esthetic soul rebelled against the commonplace, conventional, half-humorous "Mr. and Mrs. John Smith" or "Mr. Smith, and wife." I solved this problem in esthetics by invariably writing, in a beautiful hand,

"Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd E. Shelley." I don't remember what the "E" stood for. It seemed fitting that pawns of passion should travel in the satin and velvet cape of a great poet of pure, noble, soul-lifting, spiritual love.

\* \* \*

Thanks for the educational work you are doing in support of the noble philosophy of Freethought. We Rationalists appreciate your tireless propaganda for truth and reason. While reading your volumes of "Q & A" I came on your reference to William Lloyd Garrison, great Abolitionist, as one who had criticized the Church for its failure to support freedom; in fact, for its heartless help to slavery. Can you give me the quotation in full? I am sure many Freethinkers would like to study such an important expression.

William Lloyd Garrison (born December 10, 1805) wrote the sentences referred to above in 1829, thus:

What has Christianity done by direct effort for our slave population? Comparatively nothing. She has explored the isles of the ocean for objects of commiseration; but, amazing stupidity! she can gaze without emotion on a multitude of miserable beings at home, large enough to constitute a nation of freemen, whom tyranny has heathenized by law. In her public services they are seldom remembered, and in her private donations they are forgotten. From one end of the country to the other her charitable societies form golden links of benevolence and scatter their contributions like rain drops over a parched heath; but they bring no sustenance to the perishing slave. The blood of souls is upon her garments, yet she heeds not the stain. The clanking of the prisoners chains strike upon her ear, but they cannot penetrate her heart.

Only the most liberal fringe of the Church took a stand against chattel slavery in the U. S. I refer to advanced, progressive churchmen like the Unitarians. The conventional, orthodox churches gave their moral support to the slave-holders, as the Church always has done in its black, ignoble, reactionary history. And yet, uninformed speakers and writers tell us frequently how the Church struck the chains from the wrists of the slaves! They don't know that for centuries the Catholic Church was the world's greatest slave-owning establishment. And today, that same

Church is working energetically to spread the New Odor in Europe—Catholic-Fascism. This, needless to say, is a theme which I've dwelt on no end, as may be seen by referring to my volumes of "Q & A." The new diabolism of the Brutalitarianism is only a new set of words for the ancient evils which have always been protected by the Church. As for the American Abolitionists, most of them were Freethinkers, Rationalists, Deists, Skeptics, or extreme liberals in religion. The orthodox churches were their bitterest enemies.



### Are you reconciled to necessity?

With Aeschylus, I say the force of necessity is irresistible. The wise man learns to become reconciled to life—if he wants to remain sane. "Whither I must, I must," said the Bard of Avon. This is true, even though Aristotle complained that every act of necessity is disagreeable. Cervantes, recognizing this, urged that necessity compels us to desperate measures. In short, as the night club habitués exclaim, as they leave for "the place": "When you gotta go you gotta go." This piece of sound philosophy can be illustrated by the experiences of a farmer who had become ill. After hitching up his horse and buggy, one Saturday afternoon, he drove to town to see the doctor. The "doc," after making an examination, diagnosed the case (in the dignified, polite, discreet language of the radio announcers) as "faulty elimination," so he prescribed a drastic purgative (which acts like calomel though it contains no calomel), and advised the farmer to spend the night at the local hotel—for obvious reasons. (You see how subtly I approach the element of necessity in my preachment.) The farmer was careful to inquire of the owner the exact location of "the place" before retiring. Along about 11 o'clock he "had to go," and after hurriedly slipping on his pants, ran toward the bath room, only to find it occupied. So he decided to go up to the next floor, thinking surely that he'd find another "place" up there. After fumbling at practically every door and not locating the much-sought room, he yelled, "Land Lord!" The Land Lord didn't hear him, so he ran back downstairs, but the special

room was still in use. Again he yelled, "Land Lord!" No response. He started down to the lobby, yelling "Land Lord, Land Lord!" as he went. On reaching the head of the stairway from which position he could clearly see the proprietor at his desk, he cried, "Land Lord! Lord, Lord!"



I have read your publication, "Aphrodisiacs and Anti-Aphrodisiacs"; also Dr. Serge Voronoff's "How to Restore Youth and Live Longer." In the Summer I work in a steam and diesel plant and in the winter I stay here on my ranch in Oregon. I have never used tobacco, don't drink tea or coffee, and rarely take small amounts of alcoholic beverages. My 60th year ends today and I am strong and able but my potency is waning and I can't carry on my plans if I weaken, which is sure to come about with impotence. Can you tell me the name of some surgeon who can give me the gland transplanting operation along the lines worked out by Voronoff? Voronoff, in his book, says he would like to work on men who had not progressed so far in senility as those he had experimented on.

I doubt there are more than a half dozen surgeons in the whole world who could give this correspondent the Voronoff operation. Progress is being made, but the whole subject is still in its formative stages. Fifty or a hundred years hence something constructive may crop out of all this research. At that, I doubt if the sexual urge can be sustained for more than a few short years beyond the normal span of one's physical mechanisms. After all, the machine's wound up to do a certain amount of work, and all man's skill can do is to pep it so it'll function another few months or years. In the case described above let me suggest that the reader take good care of himself by eating plenty of the right kind of nourishing food and keeping his mental attitude right, by which I mean he should try to keep from defeatist, melancholy thoughts which can easily cause conditions of nervous impotence. I've found that in many cases a man who thinks he's becoming impotent really finds himself full of pepper and ginger because he took the trouble to arrange a change of partners. There may be something in this for my correspondent.

I have been noticing many of your small advertisements in magazines and newspapers, in which you offer the public a free catalogue of your Little Blue Books. As an experienced mail-order man do you consider this medium better than radio announcements?

My little advertisements have been running in numerous magazines and the book review sections of good newspapers, with excellent results. The inquiries cost about 10c each, which is considered economical. I have checked the names, which reveal the fact that about 75 percent of these inquiries are from men, which is desirable for bookselling by mail. Men are better book-buyers than women. My list of names of actual buyers of my little books shows 75 percent men and only 25 percent women. After keying 100 requests for catalogues from magazine and newspaper readers, I found that 12 percent actually sent in orders, the total volume amounting to \$21.03. At the same time I keyed 100 postcard requests from radio listeners and found, first of all, that about 75 percent of the requests came from women, which is a bad sign from the viewpoint of a bookseller. The key sheet showed that only 2 percent of the 100 radio inquiries resulted in orders, and the total money received from these two buyers was \$2.56. Magazines, therefore, are eight times as good as the radio. Of course, I didn't use any out-and-out pulp magazines (cheap 10c Westerns, Mystery, etc.,) concentrating instead on *The American Mercury*, *Grit*, *Movie-Radio Guide*, *Atlantic*, *U. S. News*, *Household*, *Friday*, *Pathfinder*, *Popular Science Monthly*, *Popular Mechanics*, *Current History and Forum*, *Current Events*, *Los Angeles Times*, *N. Y. Mirror*, *Louisville Courier Journal*, *Boston Herald*, *Kansas City Star*, *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, *Nashville Tennessean*, *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, *Omaha World Herald*, *Des Moines Register*, *Oklahoma City Oklahoman*, *Philadelphia Record*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *N. Y. World Telegram*, *Toledo Blade*, *Worcester Telegram*, and so on. Most of this audience is far above the class of readers who go in for pulp magazines. Radio, on the other hand, is pure pulp, especi-

ally during the day. Speaking only as a bookman, I can say from studied experience that the printed word is miles ahead of the radio as a selling medium.

\* \* \*

I was delighted with your article on the surprise element in life. That alone was worth the cost of your volumes of "Q&A." Nothing disheartens me more than to be told, in the tone of one reading a death warrant, that I must appear at a certain place at such-and-such a time. Like you, I enjoy the unexpected, unprogramed, spontaneous things that give life its happy lifts.

I understand how this reader feels. Happy surprises are the things that put color and dash into life. I too rebel when I know that a cut-and-dried appointment has been arranged by, or for, me. Needless to say, there are exceptions. One mustn't be too literal. Consider the interesting and informative case of a young couple who were going to be married. They were to live in the upstairs rooms of a duplex, in the lower part of which her parents lived. It was a Saturday night and a week before their wedding day. They were all alone in the big house and were upstairs arranging their furniture and other belongings. When they finished putting everything in order they looked around and talked it over. Their final decision was that it was indeed a shame to let this cute bedroom go to waste without being used for a whole week. They ended up by disrobing and heading towards the bed, but just then the telephone downstairs began to ring. The bride-to-be scampered out and said, "I had better go down and answer that. It may be the folks. If I don't, they'll wonder what happened to us and might suspect something! I'll go just the way I am and I'll be right back. You wait!" She went down the back stairs, feeling her way in the semi-darkness. He, not wanting to be away from his beloved for even a moment, decided to go along. He followed closely behind. She didn't protest. She answered the phone. The lights went on and everybody yelled, "Surprise!" Now there, I insist, is a surprise that our young couple could have got along without quite nicely. But the idea is still sound, if not run into the ground.

Please dish out a good golf story.

I don't go in for golf stories, because most of them are bad, but here's one that I thought rather cute. It's yours now, and you're stuck with it: An ardent golfer died. Much to his surprise, he went to heaven. When introduced to St. Peter he asked if there was a golf course. The answer was, "No." The golfer said: "This is a hell of a place. Do they have golf courses in hell?" "Sure, would you like to go there?" asked St. Peter. "Certainly," agreed the golfer, and poof!—he was there. When he met the devil, he immediately asked if there was a golf course. "Of course, of course, what would we do without a course?" replied the unholy one. He took the golfer out to the best golf layout that the enthusiastic pasture-pooler had ever seen. "Ah, it's wonderful. Boy, I can hardly wait to get my hands on a club!" He asked where the clubs were kept. "Oh, we don't have any. That's the hell of it."

\* \* \*

What is chemistry's greatest triumph?  
A blonde.

\* \* \*

You plead for civilization and culture in one column, but in the next you describe the savagery of the totalitarian mass-murderers. Have we evolved up from beastliness? If so, how explain the behavior of men who, as I write this, are burning London?

My reader doesn't seem to understand the biological foundations of civilization and culture. Without such scientific knowledge he can get only a superficial view of the picture. True, we speak of culture. We speak of civilized men. And yet, at the same time, we speak of savage acts committed by men and women. But there's no contradiction. The situation lends itself to a simple explanation. Man is both noble and wolfish, cultured and barbarous, esthetic and brutal. What does it all mean? Here, let's turn to a book by J. Howard Moore, "The Law of Biogenesis," which influenced me profoundly when I first read it several decades ago. Moore answers the enigma presented by my reader, as follows:

"It has been said that a child is a born savage. That is not quite true; it is worse than that. Human beings are at birth quadrupeds. \* \* \* The child is a savage, just as the higher races of men were savages in their infancy. The child has the

emotions of the savage, the conception of the world common among savages, and the desires, pastimes, and ambitions of the savage. It hates work, delights in hunting, fishing and fighting. \* \* \* The hero of the child is the bully. \* \* \* Savages cry easily, are amused at simple things, love toys and pets, and are notoriously unreliable. \* \* \* 'Hoodlums' are merely individuals who have grown to physical maturity without having undergone the usual changes in mind and character—they are men (and women) in body but children, savages, in mind and character."

In short, no man or woman is born cultured and civilized. Such beautiful accomplishments are acquired, not inherited. We are born, as Moore says, nothing more than savages. Savagery is our true heritage, and will remain so for millions of years to come. Culture comes through favorable environment and education. A hoodlum like Hitler isn't something biologically foreign to human nature; he is merely one who, through faults of environment and education, never grew far beyond the savagery he, like the rest of us, inherited. For some vague reason (which I don't care to probe) I'm reminded of the day after Dick and his cute little lassie got married. Dick's father, interested in his son's biological equipment and competence, said: "If you took good care of your wife the first night you're a man, my son, but if you had to wait until the second night then you're just a mouse." To which Dick replied: "To tell you the truth, Dad, I took care of her the night before, which must make me a rat." . . . And, while in this lighter mood, let me tell you about the four-year-old 'lassie who was bathing with her brother, a year older than herself. Seeing something about him that attracted her, she asked: "Mama, can I have one of those?" Mama, who knew the world, replied: "Not now, dear, but if you'll grow up to be a good girl you'll get one, and if you'll be a bad girl you'll get lots of them."

\* \* \*

Would it be possible to carry a few screaming headlines in The Freeman, such as, **HOLY NAME SOCIETIES ACCUSED OF 5TH COLUMN ACTIVITIES?**

The Freeman isn't a crusading publication. It's just the personal organ of its editor. I touch on Free-thought because I'm a Freethinker

and not because I want to "convert" the country. During many years in journalism it was my ambition to get out a paper devoid of headlines. Well, The Freeman is such a journal, and means one dream has been realized. My idea is to make the paper so interesting that it'll be read for its text and not because reader-attention was nailed down by means of sensational headlines. It's my notion that a paper will be read even if it's mimeographed on toilet paper—if the editorial matter is worth a reader's attention. There isn't a headline in The Freeman, and yet I know every word's read, judging by the way the least slip brings me scores of letters, by the way the slightest hint of a pious, chaste story is praised or slammed, and by the steady flood of questions intended for future issues. On this last point, let me say that I answer about 100 questions in each issue, and as I get upwards of 500, many questions have to be passed over in silence. That's another headache, for readers who don't happen to get the attention they think they deserve write scorching letters and frequently order me to stop the paper and stick it up where it'll do the most good. I smile and go about my job, for I've learned the trick of accepting cancellations without batting an eye or twisting an idea. I always say if you don't like my dish pass it up for some other brand of literary hash. And, while I think of it, let me add that I don't write for children or supporters of the Epworth League. I have no time or energy to waste on propagandizing Fundamentalists. I write for Freemen, for Rationalists, for Skeptics, for Freethinkers. All others can splash in and join the show, but they must do it on the paper's own terms. This editor is as independent as a hog on ice, for he not only turns a deaf ear to advertisers but isn't afraid to tell readers to go to hell if they try to terrorize him with the solemn threat that such-and-such a piece will result in their throwing up their subscriptions. Throw it up and be damned, is my reaction. I'm running this show. When I request friends to pass the paper on to others, I don't mean they're to work on Fundamentalists,

Obscurantists and Dogmatists, but to try to interest men and women who show curiosity about ideas, want to see a debunker in action, want to chuckle and laugh and smile now and then, welcome red meat instead of angel cake as a foundation of one's diet, who aren't worried by controversy, who don't ask that the truth be dressed up in long underwear, and who don't faint whenever someone flashes a couple of earthy quips.

\* \* \*

We amateur poets have a hard time getting a hearing. Why don't you publishers establish a rate so that we poets who are willing to put some cash on the line may do so at so much per line? I have an 8-line poem I've been trying to get published for months, and without success. I'd be willing to pay something. Please comment.

It's a good idea, but I haven't the slightest notion if there are enough moneyed poets in the country to make the project produce a fistful of nickels. I'd be willing to publish any printable poem at, say, 25c per line, but I'd have to spend quite a little time, money and effort getting the service publicized. If a man has a right to spend a couple of dollars to advertise in my classified section for a female correspondent why shouldn't a poet have the same privilege when all he wants is to have the world read his effusions? The same goes for writers of articles and other pieces. I'd be willing to play nursemaid to their creative epitomizing, if they'd come right out and say frankly they're willing to pay for the service. I wouldn't mind being kept as busy as a cat trying to cover a mound on a marble floor—if only the literary artists would attach postal money orders to their masterpieces. They have a right to be heard, if they're willing to pay the costs. Maybe I've started something here. I'll see what kind of a kick-back I get after this appears.

\* \* \*

In one of your volumes of "Q & A" you discuss George Washington's plea for preparedness, but you fail to give the direct quotation. Will you please quote it now?

Washington's words on national preparedness follow:

"If we desire to avoid insult, we must be able to repel it; if we desire to secure peace, one of the

most powerful instruments of our rising prosperity, it must be known that we are at all times ready for war."

Let me add a statement made by President Theodore Roosevelt, in his special message to Congress on April 14, 1908:

"I advocate that the United States build a navy commensurate with its powers and its needs, because I feel that such a navy will be the surest guaranty and safeguard of peace. We are not a military nation, yet we are a rich nation and undefended wealth invites aggression."

The above two statements carry an important message to Americans of this generation.

\* \* \*

How many library borrowers are there in the U. S.?

26,000,000, according to the American Library Association. That's a lot, but remember there are 130,000,000 people in this country. The immediate goal of our librarians should be 50,000,000 borrowers.

\* \* \*

What does it cost Americans to get their packages wrapped in department, general merchandise and apparel shops?

About \$25,000,000 per year.

\* \* \*

What did it cost to travel a mile in a motor car in 1900? What is it today?

In 1900, it cost 30c to drive a motor car a mile; in 1939, less than 3c.

\* \* \*

As a Socialist who has been reading your articles since the time you were on the editorial staff of the N. Y. Call, let me say that I am deeply disappointed over your war position. If you can show me that England is fighting for Socialism I'll join you in your policy of all aid to Britain, but I defy you to do this. I also don't like the way you endorse F. D. R.'s petty reforms. I don't believe in patching up Capitalism; I want to see the system destroyed.

This old reader should read a little more before he crawls out on a limb. Let me give him a simple, clear, convincing illustration, taken from history. Karl Marx, the founder of scientific Socialism, was active in London during the years Abraham Lincoln was fighting to preserve the Union and destroy the slave oligarchy. Lincoln wasn't struggling to eliminate Capitalism. He was striving

to save his country and at the same time preserve civilization by erasing the meanest blot on our national life—chattel slavery. Karl Marx and his associates in London recognized the simple fact that Lincoln, though he wasn't a Socialist, was standing for something truly magnificent, that Lincoln was befriending the ideals of enlightened labor by striking at the reactionary Southern slave holders. Marx and his group not only endorsed the North's position in our Civil War but conducted an effective propaganda campaign to keep the British aristocrats from helping the Confederacy. The facts will be found in my earlier writings, including volumes of my "Questions and Answers." Today, England is fighting to save its own existence and crush the most aggressive, reactionary anti-democratic dictator the world has ever known. England, like Lincoln, is fighting for civilization. True, England isn't establishing a Socialist republic, but that doesn't alter the fact that liberty-loving workers and all other progressive, liberal elements should support the English people in their magnificent effort to resist and crush Hitlerism. We know that democracy under Capitalism spells progress, though we admit there's much to be done along the lines of social reconstruction. Economic and social changes can come later; meanwhile, let's preserve those democratic powers that will enable us to advance the cause of the world's toilers. If Fascism triumphs and we lose our civil liberties, the working class movement will slip back 500 years. As I've said before, democracy under Capitalism at its worst is better than Fascism at its best. This question of social reform brings up another objection sometimes registered by uninformed Socialists. They think it's somehow wrong and unhistorical to propose social reforms. Well, to return to Karl Marx, if they'll look into his famous Manifesto of 1848, they'll find the document closes with a long list of social reforms, including a demand for the 8-hour day. In those days it was considered "revolutionary" to insist on a 48-hour work week; today, Socialists who don't know the history of their party think it's merely palliative to insist on a general 40-hour week. I could

go on to show how many of the reforms of President Roosevelt are in harmony with the immediate demands of Socialist Party platforms ever since the movement began its organizational and educational campaigns. There's something blindly fatuous about Socialists who insist on standing with the angels, who offer only councils of perfection, who belabor those who would improve labor's immediate lot because, as they insist, the "real objective" is some ideal State that must be imposed on the masses fullblown and in going condition. Social reforms are preparatory to vast social reconstructions. They prepare the way. They strengthen the workers, and that means the growth of power among those who are to have the responsibility of building a cooperative, mutual-minded social order in which the large-scale industries and utilities will belong to society and be run democratically for the good of all men and women who are willing to produce wealth by the powers of brain and brawn.

\* \* \*

Though you have told your readers many times that you look on Christianity through the eyes of a Rationalist, you are yet to tell us just what it is that Rationalism rejects in the Christian faith.

If ever a writer has gone to great lengths to explain his objections to Christian and other forms of supernaturalism, I'm that one, as may be seen by referring to my books already in print. It may be that you are a recent reader who's unaware of the avowals, inquiries, and criticisms I've offered my readers during the last quarter of a century.

Perhaps this reader holds, along with so many others, that the Bible is God's own word and therefore is entitled to acceptance as a moral guide. I don't remember how many times I've preached little sermons in which it was asserted that the Bible is a man-made book that should be accepted for what it's worth, for there isn't a scrap of evidence to prove it expresses anything but the ideas, superstitions and notions of men who are ordinary in some ways and extraordinary in others. Rationalists suggest that readers should approach the Bible as they would any other hu-

man expression, applying to it the same demands for facts, logic, evidence, verification, and good sense.

The Rationalist, needless to say, rejects the Creationist Theory, for it insults his intelligence to tell him a God made the world, that Adam and His first man, and that Eve was made from one of Adam's spare ribs. Rationalists accept the science of evolution.

The Rationalist, knowing that religion rests on supernaturalism, says science is yet to find an iota of proof that supernaturalism exists. At the same time he listens patiently while the religionist preaches his doctrine of a divine system of rewards and punishments, by which we're sentenced to Hell if we've been naughty, and swished off to Heaven if we've been good. The Rationalist asserts no one has the slightest inkling of an after-life. So far as we know, when we die we're dead. That, at least, is what our senses tell us, while the supernaturalists would have us believe something entirely different but without the support of a scrap of testimony, other than the say-so of a book that's saturated with myths and supernaturalism.

The Rationalist smiles when asked to accept notions like the fall of man, the power of prayer, miracles, original sin, redemption by faith, and the other dogmas of the Church. He long has asked for facts to prove these doctrines, but without serious response. At the same time the Rationalist says there's no evidence that these beliefs have any real meaning to the scientific minds of the modern world. When the priest tells the Rationalist that man's purpose is to "glorify God," the realist shows how this worked out during the Dark Ages when most of Europe accepted that dogma. Instead, says the Rationalist, man should work to develop his intelligence, widen his knowledge and understanding, learn to apply the blessings of science to everyday life, improve the individual and the race, and reform social evils through the intelligent use of political, economic and social forces. Man's salvation rests in his own life, brain, character and outlook. Man's never going to get pie in the skies. He'll always have to make his own pies right

down on earth, if he's to have any. The Rationalist sees no sense in "bowing to the will of God," as he's asked to do by the priest. Instead, he tries to develop his own will so that the blessings he seeks may be established in the here and now. And when the Rationalist is told that he can be saved because Christ died for him, he smiles again and says the fact that a man died almost 20 centuries ago (granting he ever lived) is no reason why we should look to him for salvation. We have at hand the tools with which to build a mighty, humane, prosperous, civilized order. We'll be saved by our own intelligence and not because someone "died for us." We have it within our power to remedy all the social ailments afflicting us—war, poverty, unnecessary disease, enforced idleness, exploitation of labor, organized ignorance, and the like—if we were to get ourselves out of the notion that some mythical character beyond the clouds is going to save us, and if we decide, at last, to let intelligence lead us to social progress, instead of resting our case with the forces of intolerance, superstition, supernaturalism, mysticism, obscurantism, and the other manifestations of old man bunk.

\* \* \*

How does the humor of Irvin S. Cobb look to you?

Like the thing that's smeared on a lettuce sandwich.

\* \* \*

Please comment on the statement that the Roman Catholic hierarchy is storing ammunition and rifles in its churches in this country.

There is clear evidence that the Catholic Church used its churches and other buildings as arsenals during the Spanish Civil War. For proof see the early volumes of my "Questions and Answers," in which I gave considerable space to the record of Catholic-Fascism in Spain. The Catholic Church always has been ready to use direct, militant action when circumstances made such a policy expedient. The same methods will be used in the U. S., should it be deemed expedient to participate in a Fascist rebellion. But for the present, there's no proof that ammunition and rifles are being stored in the crypts and cellars of cathedrals in the U. S. When we come to Eastern Canada a

different situation prevails. There the Catholic Church is openly Fascist in deeds as well as words, with the use of force whenever conditions warrant. In the U. S., offshoots of the Catholic Church (Father Coughlin's Christian Front, for example) have gone so far as to rob U. S. arsenals in order to obtain arms for use against supporters of democracy, freedom, racial tolerance, free education and press, and the like. Father Coughlin's hoodlums, mainly in New York and its environs, have participated in drills and rifle practice for several years. Only a few months ago it was shown in a report to Mayor LaGuardia that 400 Catholic men on the N. Y. police force were active members of Coughlin's militant Fascist organization. Such trained fighters could do much to promote Catholic-Fascism when the time arrives for violence against American freedom and democratic institutions. The excuse, of course, will be to save the world from Communism, but the real motive will be to crush democracy. One must learn to look beyond the sweet slogans of the Catholic-Fascists. When almost 20 of Father Coughlin's followers were tried in Brooklyn recently for stealing guns and ammunition from the U. S. Government, it was discovered too late that several of their local leaders had been slipped onto the jury, with the result that the Government's case was rejected and the criminals released. One of the main arguments of the Catholic Fascists was that they "intended to use the guns against Communists in order to save the country from Bolshevism." The real aim, as I've shown before in numerous articles, was to establish Catholic-Fascism. During any preliminary period of Fascist violence the Catholic Church prefers to depend on its "splinter organizations" rather than to come right out into the open with guns and bombs. The Catholic Church, during its long, bloody history, has never hesitated to use the weapons of murder and terror in order to buttress its economic, religious, political and financial privileges. It has caused millions of violent deaths. Its hands have always been soaked in the blood of innocent victims. It has always hounded as its enemies those who pay homage to freedom, truth and decency. The terrible things done by the Church in

Europe and elsewhere can easily be repeated in the U. S.—when the stage is set for a revolt against democratic institutions and the American way of life.

\* \* \*

Why do birds, when they drink, throw back their heads before downing the liquid?

Birds, because they can't use suction in drawing in water, must throw back their heads in order to swallow. The exception is the pigeon.

\* \* \*

I claim that the louder the noise made by the cork the better the champagne. Am I right?

You're wrong. The pop hasn't anything to do with quality. However, when a man pays \$12 for a quart of champagne he expects the waiter to bring him a bottle that'll make \$12 worth of noise. No matter how sophisticated, diners always turn for at least a quick look when they hear a bottle break wind. We're the gawdamndest exhibitionists.

\* \* \*

I enclose press clipping which says the Italian newspaper, *Il Regime Fascista* of Cremona, organ of Italy's anti-Semites, editorially demanded a ban on the "anti-Christian novels of the Jew, John Steinbeck." Two specific novels are mentioned—"Grapes of Wrath" and "Of Mice and Men." Please comment.

John Steinbeck is not a Jew.

\* \* \*

Is it true that black coffee is more stimulating than coffee with cream and sugar?

No. The Department of Agriculture says the caffeine, which provides the stimulant in coffee, is not affected by sugar or cream.

\* \* \*

The typical New Yorker thinks the West begins about 100 miles inland. How do you explain such ignorance?

Westerners are guilty of the same provincialism. I don't see what you or I could do about it. The whole thing simmers-down to pure ignorance. I'm reminded of the New Yorker who, on meeting Klondike Pete, said: "Yes, sir, I went out West 40 years ago looking for different types of down-to-earth, breezy females." Klondike Pete: "How fur'd you git?" New Yorker: "All the way out to Buffalo." Klondike Pete: "That musta been about the same time I went East lookin' for some new kinda gals

for I was mighty fed up with the same old faces in the fancy houses back where I'd staked my claim." New Yorker: "And how far did you get?" Klondike Pete: "I went as fur as Butte, Montana. Nearly ran into each other, didn't we?"

\* \* \*

How do you react to the fellow who says: "I'm willing to try anything once?"

It's all right for some people and it isn't all right for others. If the thing isn't carried to extremes there may be something to it. Here I recall the Kansan who was visiting in New York. While killing time in a stuffy club, he tried to get into conversation with the Hon. Plushbottom, who was grim-looking and anti-social. Said the Kansan: "Excuse me, sir, I'm a stranger here. Will you have a drink with me?" Plushbottom: "Don't drink; tried it once, didn't like it." A little later the Kansan, still lonely, tried again: "Will you have a cigar with me?" Plushbottom: "No, don't smoke; tried it once, didn't like it." The Kansan, noticing the billiard room, proposed: "Pardon me, sir, but maybe you'd like a game of billiards with me." Plushbottom: "Sorry, don't play. Tried it once, didn't like it. But, my son will be along soon. He'll enjoy a game with you." Kansan: "Is he your only son?" Plushbottom: "Yes, why do you ask?" Kansan: "I figured you'd tried that once and didn't like it." Plushbottom: "Sir, you're wrong there. I tried that twice."

\* \* \*

Please comment on Wendell Willkie's challenge to President Roosevelt to debate campaign issues.

At the same time that Mr. Willkie called on the President to meet him in a series of debates, Norman Thomas, Socialist candidate for President, challenged Willkie to meet him in public discussions. Willkie ignored Thomas's telegram of August 19, 1940, in which he suggested a meeting on a platform similar to that offered by Town Hall. This incident shows Mr. Willkie's insincerity. If he were an honest man he would admit that Norman Thomas's invitation was just as valid and just as much in the public interest as his own challenge to Roosevelt. Willkie, in so many words, was told to "put up or shut up," and he chose to treat a fair opponent with

silent contempt. After all, there were serious reasons why Willkie should debate Thomas. There are a few topics that are of importance to the American people, including several in the field of public utilities. It would be interesting to hear Mr. Willkie say whether or not he still thinks that TVA should be turned over to private industry. The public has a right to know whether or not Willkie still believes that holding companies should retain control of many of our largest utilities. Also, is he still opposed to public ownership because it smacks of "Socialism"? Mr. Willkie has made millions of dollars representing public utilities that are controlled by a few financiers and high-salaried men, who determine policies and rates even though their companies are in default on preferred dividends and have never paid dividends on common stock. Mr. Willkie has long specialized in helping robber barons not only to gouge the consumers but to confiscate the money that legally belongs to holders of bonds and stock certificates. Such topics could make a debate interesting to the average voter. Also, why has he failed, to the date of this writing to explain his stand on wages and hour's legislation and the Wagner Labor Act? Such questions could be turned into a lively debate. What about it, Mr. Willkie?

\* \* \*

**How large a following did Léon Trotsky have at the time of his death?**

As I haven't access to exact data, the best I can do is to take a stab at it and guess that Trotsky's Fourth International never had more than 3,000 members at its peak and perhaps not over 2,000 at the time Trotsky was murdered by one of Joseph Stalin's assassins. Most of Trotsky's followers are in the U. S., so it's safe to say that his influence throughout the world was surprisingly weak. However, Stalin wanted him in his grave because he knew too much about the history of the Russian Revolution and Stalin's own record. It was known that Trotsky was at work on a biography of Stalin at the time he was struck down by Stalin's pick-ax murderer. Besides, being the last of the great figures that inspired the Revolution, and being ready to return to the Russian masses, should circumstances arise to make such an up-set

possible, Stalin felt he had to use the weapon that always comes to his hand when faced by a problem — murder. In addition to liquidating Trotsky, Stalin caused the deaths, directly or indirectly, of all of Trotsky's four children.

On August 22, 1940, the day after Trotsky died, I was interviewed by an Associated Press reporter who wanted my comments on the oft-repeated story that Trotsky had once worked here in Girard. I quote from the AP story:

E. Haldeman-Julius, Girard publisher, today made his "billionth" denial that Leon Trotsky, exiled red leader slain in Mexico, worked in Girard at one time. "That," he said, "has been a hoax going the rounds for twenty years, and in reality, Trotsky was never west of the Hudson river."

The report, which frequently bobs up with the mention of Trotsky, was started by a "drunk," Mr. Haldeman-Julius said. The thing was originated as a gag, but it has never died out, and frequently there are persons who state "positively" the former red leader was here.

Mr. Haldeman-Julius said he had repeatedly denied the reports, but without success.

Trotsky had a brilliant, untiring mind, but he couldn't stand up against the gangsterism of Stalin, who always operates on the theory that the best mind is just a pushover when pitted against a hoodlum armed with a pick-ax. In the old days of the Czar (who was a gentle "liberal" in comparison with the blood-stained Stalin) an enemy of the Russian State was usually safe once he managed to get out of the country, but in these more brutalitarian days dictators don't hesitate when their enemies reach foreign lands. Their secret police rove the world looking for enemies that have been slated for destruction.

\* \* \*

I've been hearing a lot about the air and submarine base Stalin is building on Big Diomedé Island, in Bering Straits, only a hop and a skip from Alaska. Tell us something about the project, please.

Don't worry about it. There's nothing to it at all. To begin with, Big

Diomede isn't big; it's really tiny. There's no harbor in that wee, rocky island. Also, it's covered by fog about five days each week. And, to cap it off, it's icebound eight months out of 12. Pipe down on the jitters or you'll have me suffering from acute pratt-pains and drive me to a mental concentration camp. Learn to look beyond the surface. Come to grips and reality. Don't be like the guy who went up to a fairy and said: "My, what a beautiful pearl you've got in your necktie." He (or should I say she?) wiped it off with the end of his sleeve and pouted: "Don't be ridiculous; that's no pearl." You see the moral, I hope. Try to get your facts straight. And that goes for Joe Stalin's Big Diomede Island.

\* \* \*

I've been wondering if there are not other Freeman readers who, like myself, like to write and receive letters. I would like to get in touch with them, especially women readers, as my object is friendship only. But I hesitate to put such an ad in your paper. Somehow I just don't like the idea though I can't explain exactly why.

I know how this reader feels. He's afflicted with a puritanical hangover. Let me assure him (and many other readers) that there's nothing wrong about making it known that one is anxious to correspond with persons of the opposite sex. A small advertisement may be the means of bringing much stimulation, interest, amusement, entertainment and intellectual adventure to men and women who otherwise might be condemned to heart-searing loneliness. Get over that feeling of shame about wanting to enjoy the company of the other sex. It's a natural desire and should be satisfied in a simple, natural, honest way.

\* \* \*

Hedda Hopper, the movie gossip, says that Myrna Loy and her husband sleep in a double bed. Does this move you to a masterpiece of comment?

After watching the bedroom manners of a couple of generations this "connyser" of the art of living has come to the conclusion that the double bed is one of the best friends marriage ever had. I haven't any statistics on this. The insinuating I offer is the result of casual, unchecked, unverified observation. If an imp of Satan invented twin beds, it was the old

Devil himself who worked out separate bedrooms. Marriage, as Upton Sinclair said in one of his inspired moments, is a condition in which two parties agree to a mutual exchange of their germs, for good or ill. If I could sneak into the bedroom of each first-night couple I'd whisper in their ears (if I could get their attention) that double beds sound old-fashioned, but they're pillars of marital stability, other things being equal. Yes, our grandparents were right. They didn't stop to worry about the "sanitary" aspects of the question (whatever that means) but decided from long experience, that great, big double beds were as good for healthy family life as were the fancily decorated porcelain thunder-mugs. I doubt the piece of ornate crockery will ever regain social respectability, but I have a sneaking notion that Myrna Loy's way is going to gain new popularity with the years. With that I draw my morologue to a close.

\* \* \*

Herebert L. Lehman, Governor of New York, recently denounced Fifth Columnists, which I know you also oppose. But the Governor made a passing remark that I wish you would comment on. He said he considered "people who believe in religion and despise dictatorship" as the same kind of people.

Governor Lehman is a sincere anti-Fascist, but his facts aren't always straight and his thinking isn't clear or he wouldn't utter such nonsense. A high school boy ought to know that Fascist hatred for democracy is strongest in the reactionary church, especially the Catholic hierarchy, which has always supported totalitarian government and authoritarian religion. Surely Governor Lehman read the report from Vatican City (July 18, 1940) which contained the following revealing sentence:

"In this situation the Vatican has indicated that it approves the Fascist government organized in France by Marshall Petain and Pierre Laval and it hopes to see the totalitarian regime of other 'corporate' states, such as those in Portugal and Brazil, spread throughout the world."

Petaín, Weygand, Laval and the other French reactionaries who delivered France to intellectual, political and economic slavery are all Catholics. Mussolini is a Catholic. Hitler

was born into the Catholic Church, calls himself one now (see my recent volumes of "Questions and Answers") and never was excommunicated. Salazar, Fascist dictator of Portugal, is a Catholic. So is Spain's dictator, Franco. Poland, which was a near-Fascist government, had support for Catholicism written into its Constitution. Fascism and Catholicism have always been brothers. They are the twin menaces that threaten the world. Ex-King Leopold, who surrendered Belgium to Hitler, is a devout Catholic. In America, the Catholic Church has never moved a finger to silence Father (of lies) Coughlin, who is one of the Fascist leaders in this country and who is a dangerous Fifth Columnist who can be depended on to do everything in his power, to destroy American democracy, liberalism and tolerance. Italy's House of Savoy has always been Catholic and under the thumb of the Jesuits. On the other hand, let me, as a Free-thinker, freely admit that Protestantism isn't one-tenth as dictatorial as Catholicism. In fact, Protestantism in many countries, has given consistent support to democracy. I don't deny the existence of Protestant Fascists, but they aren't as powerfully organized and effective as the Totalitarians that bear the hall mark of Vatican City. Most Protestant organizations have taken a stand against dictatorial thinking and the corporative, authoritarian State. But when we come to the Black International—the Roman Catholic Church—we come to a tremendously powerful institution that is the sworn foe of everything connected with democracy. That's why I say the Catholic Church by its very existence, is a Fifth Column in the struggle to destroy freedom in democratic countries. That's why I wrote so many pieces condemning President Roosevelt for appointing Myron C. Taylor to the Vatican as our ambassador to the religious State. For my numerous arguments let me refer readers to recent numbers of my volumes of "Questions and Answers," books which contain all the material which I write for *The American Freeman*. In all fairness, let me emphasize the fact that we Freethinkers weren't the only ones to protest against an appointment which gave so much prestige to Catholic-Fascist ideology. Protest-

ant organizations and leaders were quick to sense the danger and voice their objections. In mid-June, 1940, a conference representing all faiths in the U. S. (except Catholicism, of course) met in Constitution Hall, Washington, D. C., and petitioned Roosevelt and Congress to

"safeguard meticulously the American principles of separation of church and state and in no particular to grant to one religious body recognition, favor or assistance not accorded to all other religious bodies" and, therefore, specifically, "not to establish diplomatic relations with any ecclesiastical body."

The Protestants who wrote the above certainly were aware of the fact that Catholicism and Fascism are in conspiracy to return the world to the Dark Ages. As I write these words, England is fighting for its life. Catholic Fascism is aiming its daggers at its heart, as did Fascist Italy when France was mortally wounded by Hitler's mass-murderers. Has the Vatican given the British people a word of encouragement or sympathy? Instead, the Pope expressed joy when democracy died in France and Fascism established slavery for the people of France. When Mussolini rushed into France for the kill, the hierarchy in Italy issued pastoral letters and other declarations calling on all Catholics "to obey and trust Mussolini in the war he is waging for the welfare of the Italian people." The Archbishop of Gorizia ordered all Catholics in Italy

"to lift our reverent thoughts to the ever-victorious King and Emperor and to the undefeated Duce, to whom we have entrusted the fate of our armies and of the whole nation—May God always bless and protect him."

After all, what's surprising about such a declaration? Didn't I show in my volumes of "Questions and Answers" that the Catholic Church blessed Mussolini's banners when he went into Ethiopia to destroy an independent government and murder 250,000 unarmed, helpless, innocent men, women and children? The Archbishop of Gorizia, after uttering the words quoted in the above paragraph, said Italy is struggling to attain "the goal assigned to them by Providence." So much for the Vatican and Italian Fascism. What about Hitler? On

June 7, 1940, according to the United Press, "Special meetings of the Roman Catholic bishops throughout Germany resulted in a decision to hold thanksgiving masses for the German victory in Belgium and Flanders."

America's glorious traditions are poison to these leaders of the Black International. The ultimate aim is to destroy everything that the Founding Fathers fought for. The Americans of this generation are threatened by a peril that's even greater than any that faced the revolutionary leaders who established this nation. We must cherish and sustain the words of the Declaration of Independence. Here let me quote wonderful words written by Thomas Jefferson, in June, 1826, in one of the last letters to come from his pen. Attacking Authoritarianism and supporting democratic institutions, Jefferson referred to the Declaration of Independence, as follows:

"May it be to the world, what I believe it will be (to some parts sooner, to others later, but finally to all), the signal arousing men to burst the chains under which MONKISH IGNORANCE AND SUPERSTITION HAD PERSUADED THEM TO BIND THEMSELVES, and to assume the blessings and security of self-government. That form which we have substituted restores the free right to the unbounded exercise of reason and freedom of opinion. All eyes are opened, or opening, to the rights of man (and) the palpable truth, that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few, booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately by the grace of God."

Notice Jefferson's plain words about "monkish ignorance and superstition." Jefferson knew the record of the Roman Catholic Church and wasn't afraid to express himself in criticism of its crimes against civilized humanity. Today's editors and political leaders lack his courage. The old thunderers are dead and gone. The generation that rules today is afraid to tell the truth, is unwilling to face the facts. They ignore crimes that cry to heaven. They remain silent when the day's happenings demand fiery protests and appeals to the conscience of free men and women.

I am anxious to give some special attention to the development of my brain. Please list foods that make that organ stronger.

There are no special foods for the brain. Whatever's good for the region surrounding the navel is good for the think-tank.

\* \* \*

Wendell Willkie says this country never had more available capital than it has today. Please comment.

If this is so (and I believe it is) what becomes of the pet charge that F. D. R. has bankrupted the country? In the orchestra of politics we must ever attune our ears for world-shaking, Wagnerian fartissimos. They're loud, but soon they're gone with the wind. The truth is, business never had a better friend than Roosevelt. Look at the 1935-40 financial statements of the great industrial organizations. Compare them with the profits made in 1932-33. Willkie is right when he says we have no end of idle capital that can be put to work. The fellows who own it are already making plenty of dough, but they're holding back because they can't stomach the fact that that man in the White House actually had the audacity to put over a program of social security, unemployment insurance, old age pensions, public works, protection of the right to organize labor unions, and the like. But those reforms have helped to stabilize Capitalism. Without them we would always face the danger of revolution. That's why I say our capitalists are ungrateful jackasses. They don't have sense enough to recognize friendly acts.

\* \* \*

What is the greatest number of hours a clock can be wrong?

Six.

\* \* \*

Do so-called Magnetic Belts have any curative powers?

No. They're bunk.

\* \* \*

What are some of the names Oregon loggers are called?

"Jungle-buzzard," "timberbeast," "timberhound," "woods savage," "brush-cat," and "lumberjack."

\* \* \*

I believe the grocer I do business with is using crooked scales. What can I do about it?

You should make a complaint against the merchant at the office of your city's weight and measures de-

partment. *The Consumers' Guide*, publication of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, tells about an Omaha, Nebr., businessman who uses an idea that consumers like. The report says that every customer is invited to be his own check-weightman by one Omaha merchant. This store, which sells meat, "placed a regular butcher's scale out in one of its aisles and invited patrons to weigh what they bought to make sure that they actually received the amount they paid for."

\* \* \*

I want to buy a little monkey, the kind that picks up pennies for organ-grinders. It's to be a pet. How much should I pay?

Not over \$10. You had better hurry, because the war has cut off the supply.

\* \* \*

If all the cars and locomotives owned by U.S. railroads were coupled together how long would the train be?

About 20,000 miles.

\* \* \*

I have what my friends call "a whisky baritone." What can I do about it?

See a doctor who knows a lot about the throat. Dr. Chevalier L. Jackson, of Philadelphia, Pa., knows as much about the throat as any specialist in the world, and he says a whisky baritone is caused by a growing flabbiness of the vocal cords. Dr. Jackson says he often gets good results by having the patient quit smoking and drinking and removing some of the flabby tissue.

\* \* \*

What's your notion about this new campaign to put over a liquid dentifrice?

It's bunk from beginning to end. The idea of using a liquid for washing one's teeth is ridiculous, and enormously expensive, when compared to powder. Tooth powder is cheap and effective. It contains the proper abrasives which help remove dirt. A liquid can't do this. Only half idiots will fall for this attempt to line up the nation's consumers of dentifrices. I venture to say a liquid tooth cleaner will cost the consumer at least 10 times as much as a good tooth powder. And it won't be one-tenth as good.

\* \* \*

Why do most ball players in the major leagues come from small towns and the sticks?

The answer is obvious. Boys in the smaller communities and the country

have more chances to play the game. Boys in the big cities haven't enough places to play ball, so when they have any spare time they usually go to a movie or the like. Country and small town kids begin playing early, and if they show outstanding promise there is always the chance of a scout hearing about them. The great teams usually farm out gifted youngsters to teams in the bush leagues, where they pick up valuable experience. Later, when they know all the scientific angles of the great game and have had enough actual experience they're put into a big-city team.

\* \* \*

I wish you'd take the strain off my credulity and debunk this piece about a guy writing a novel in which he never once used the letter "e."

I can's oblige, for it happens to be true. I've seen the volume—it contains 50,000 words—and there isn't an "e" to be found. The author, Ernest Vincent Wright, wrote the piece as a stunt, just to prove that the letter "e" can be dispensed with. "E" is commonly used five times more than any other letter. Wright worked on his book for five and a half months, tying down the "e" bar of his typewriter. Just what it all adds up to I don't know. Here's a sample of the e-hating author's technique in telling about a county fair:

"What mobs on that first day!

And what a din! Bands playing, ballyhoos shouting, popcorn a-popping, 'hot dogs' a-sizzling, ducks squawking, cows lowing, pigs grunting, an occasional baby squalling; and 'midst it all, a choking cloud of dust, a hot Autumn wind, panting, fanning matrons, cussing husbands . . ."

I wonder how many hundreds of aspirins Mr. Wright gulped down in order to get his job done. Some people achieve fame by solid achievement; others try to get there by making freaks of themselves.

\* \* \*

Do you know the source of the phrase, "furor Teutonicus"?

The phrase—it means "the German fury"—goes back to the Latin poet, Lucan. He was telling about the steady fighting at the head of the Adriatic, where many tribes attempted to invade Italy. In speaking of one particular tribe, Lucan mentions "the course of the Teutonic fury."

Can you tell me how much money was borrowed by the U.S. during the last two years of the Revolutionary War?

In cash, more than \$500,000. (Authority: "Business Enterprise in the American Revolutionary Era," published by the Columbia University Press.)

\* \* \*

Does hair ever grow on the human tongue?

Yes, but rarely.

\* \* \*

Can you tell me the meaning of the word "thrip" used by Senator Carter Glass in his speech?

In describing Hitler, Senator Glass said: "His pledged word is not worth a thrip." This is an old English colloquialism. Thrip means a 3-penny piece.

\* \* \*

Please list Uncle Sam's outlying possessions.

Hawaii, the Philippine Islands, Alaska, Puerto Rico, Guam, portions of both the Samoa Islands and Virgin Islands. Sometimes we count the Panama Canal Zone.

\* \* \*

I am looking for a sweat cabinet to cure a case of rheumatism. I would be thankful for your suggestions.

Where'd you get the idea you could cure your rheumatism with a sweat cabinet? It'll cost you much less money—but the benefits will be about the same—if you were to soak your body in a tub full of hot water. Just sit there as long as it suits your fancy, and imagine you're in a sweat bath. The results will be about the same. And you'll be money ahead.

\* \* \*

I have been interested for quite a few years in taking up dress designing professionally. I have visited different schools here in Chicago, and while the course they offer is described as professional, I think it is more advertisement than anything else. A school, which advertises in Vogue Magazine, is very well known. I enclose literature. Please give me your advice in a personal letter.

It is impossible for me to keep track of thousands of private schools scattered throughout the country. For that reason, I can only generalize when asked whether or not one should join up with some particular establishment that offers courses in this or that. By and large, it's a proven fact that in 99 cases out of a hundred

these private educational plants aren't able to deliver the goods in the same way one can enjoy at a tax-supported school that is run on a non-profit basis as a public service. If a person, let's say, wants to study dress design, I invariably suggest that careful inquiries should be made in the offices of local universities or colleges, where frequently one can get courses at extremely little cost. If a university offers such a course—and many of them do—it goes without saying you'll get far more for your time and money than you'll get from a school that's run for private profit and which gets its students by means of newspaper, radio and magazine advertising. If you'll look through my 18 volumes of questions and answers you'll find, in scores of instances, that I have preached the above sermon with hardly a change of words. And I've never had occasion to think my advice isn't sound. I know for a fact that my hints have saved prospective students literally hundreds of dollars. I've known of many young men and women who were ready to spend as much as \$400 for a course in a private school when tax-supported institutions were offering better instruction at perhaps a tenth of the money. Those who are unable to find out which public institutions offer the particular course they're seeking should make inquiries at the office of the secretary of the local Board of Education.

\* \* \*

Please send me your opinion of the Thomas System. The people who run it call themselves the world's leading hair and scalp specialists. Are they worth while?

The men who run the so-called Thomas System don't know any more about preventing baldness than I know about running a cat-house. As I've written a dozen times (see my volumes of questions and answers) honest scientists are among the first to admit that they are yet to find out what causes baldness. They agree there's no preparation on the market that'll save a man's hair. All a man can do is to keep his scalp clean and hope for the best. A cake of 5c soap is just as good as any \$1 concoction that's sold in any drug store. Maybe better. If a man's scalp itches, the

chances are it's just plain dirt. If necessary, soap the hair thoroughly and rinse (preferably under a shower) every morning. Don't believe the advertising which says it's bad to wash the scalp every morning. Keep away from drug store preparations and don't have anything to do with advertising specialists. The latter will take anywhere from \$30 to \$100 of your money, and the chances are they won't save 30 of the hairs that may be hanging precariously from your worried head. If you can't save your hair, the least you can do is to save your money.

\* \* \*

Please send me a personal reply to the following question: Have you any idea for a snappy holiday greeting card?

The greeting card business is a big industry. In Kansas City, there's one company that employs 1,000 people, who turn out millions of cards that sell anywhere from 5c to \$5 each. Scores of men and women connected with this one establishment have nothing to do but think up new ideas for cards. I don't feel competent to compete with such professionals. I know my limitations, of which there are many, but up near the top is my inability to turn on the faucet of creative genius and pour out something snappy in a holiday greeting card. If I could do it I'd feel prouder than writing a dozen big, fat tomes. But I can't. Another ambition—to be able to tattoo social security numbers on ladies' hips—also is beyond me.

\* \* \*

Would you advise me to buy a doughnut or corn machine? Are the products profitable? Please answer by personal letter.

I advise my readers against buying doughnut and corn machines because I consider the price far out of line and the possibilities for profits less than the corporations' advertising leads prospects to expect. The chance for making even a meager living from these projects is rather remote. A few well-established locations do fairly well, but newcomers will find it almost impossible to buck these old-timers. A beginner is hardly more than an Alice in Wonderland. Meanwhile, the Chicago doughnut and corn companies have your money—lots of it. I suggest you stay out.

I am employed as a clerk-typist. In order to gain advancement I must master some form of shorthand. I would like to ask your opinion as to which you think is my best bet—pencil shorthand or stenotypy. Please answer by letter.

There are some cases in which it's advantageous to know stenotypy, but they're few and far between. Most private and public offices depend on pencil shorthand. A correspondence course in stenotypy costs about \$150 (including the machine) which I consider too much money. Also, it's inconvenient to have to carry a machine around with one when on the job. Most office executives are prejudiced against stenotypy, according to my observation. I believe a good pencil shorthand worker can get just as far as a machine operator. Let me suggest that you turn to the easier, simpler, and less expensive method of pencil shorthand.

\* \* \*

What's the difference between a toad in the road and a woman's panties?

There's no difference. They're both in the road.

\* \* \*

Can you give me the source of that most peculiar phrase, "It's a humbug"?

In 1870, when Europe was ripped wide open by wars, Hamburg was the headquarters for all kinds of lying war bulletins and false reports. When a skeptic cocked an eye at the truth of a report, he'd say: "That's a Hamburg!" Eventually "Hamburg" was corrupted to "humbug." According to my newspaper filing system, the above nugget of information appeared in a magazine called *Better English*, which I read with interest. I'd like it even if it didn't run two pages of advertising in each issue offering my Little Blue Books to its readers, and another full-page advertisement offering my larger volume, "How to Improve Your English in Speech and Writing." (Yes, you're right. This simmers down to a plain plug. *Better English* plugs my books, so I turn around and hand the magazine a deserved plug. But it's all on a high, idealistic, moral, educational, pious plane. Nothing cheap or vulgar—in short, no humbug!)

\* \* \*

Why is it you quote so much prose and so little poetry?

Because, frankly, I like prose better than most kinds of poetry. But,

instead of telling you about the forms of poetry I don't care for (including every line of freakish, eccentric "modern" verse) let me give you a sample of the kind that pleases me, after things like "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam," "The Ballad of Reading Jail," "The Cottar's Saturday Night," "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," and related pieces. The other day I came on a thing called "Clinic," a satire on the discomforts of attending a clinic. It was written by a 17-year-old highschool senior, Sala Weltman, who says she received her inspiration for the poem from an actual visit to a New York clinic, where, three years ago, she had a tooth pulled. Here's her poem, and I'm here to say it's good:

## CLINIC

Your name? Your age?  
Where do you live?  
Your height? Your weight?  
Yes, you must give  
Your mother's name,  
Your father's name,  
Your brother's name.  
Your work? Your wage?  
Your boss? Your shop?  
Here, put an X  
Right at the top  
It means you're poor,  
That's all; sit down  
And wait, you're poor.  
Doctor? No,  
Sit down, no hurry.  
Come? He'll come  
Sometime, don't worry.  
Time? It's eight.  
Time? It's nine.  
Time? It's ten.  
Time? It's time.  
Your name? Your age?  
Hurt much? Hurt here?  
Say ahhh, relax;  
Lean back, draw near,  
Say ahhh, breathe out—  
And out—and in—  
Go home? No, wait,  
The nurse must have  
Some facts. Please state  
Your middle name,  
Your mother's name,  
Your father's name,  
Your brother's name—

\* \* \*

If all the automobiles in this country were filled to their normal capacity how many people would be in them at one time?

Every man, woman and child in the land—130,000,000. Every fifth person in the U.S.A. owns a car.

The brick weighed a pound and a half-brick. Figure out how much a brick and a half weighed.

That's an old favorite with puzzlers. Don't continue reading until you've given yourself enough time to answer the above problem. If *el pooblic* is ready at last, here's the answer: If a brick weighs a pound and a half-brick, then a half-brick weighs a pound. Hence a brick and a half weighs three pounds. That's simple, but lots of people worry a long time before they can work it out. Simon and Schuster's "A Book of Modern Puzzles" contains the Gleepers and Plonths Problem, which goes this way:

If a GLEEPER is twice as long as a PLONTH and a half-GLEEPER, and a BLAHMIE is twice as long as a GLEEPER and a half-BLAHMIE, and a POOSTER is twice as long as a BLAHMIE and a half-POOSTER, then how may PLONTHS long is a HALF-POOSTER?

Again I ask *el pooblic* to pass up the answer for a while in order to enjoy working the thing out.

If a GLEEPER is twice as long as a PLANTH and a half-GLEEPER, then a half-GLEEPER is twice as long as a PLONTH. In other words:

$\frac{1}{2}$  GLEEPER equals 2 PLONTHS,  
or 1 GLEEPER is 4 PLONTHS.

$\frac{1}{2}$  BLAHMIE equals 2 GLEEPERS,  
or 1 BLAHMIE is 4 GLEEPERS.

$\frac{1}{2}$  POOSTER equals 2 BLAHMIES,  
or 1 POOSTER is 4 BLAHMIES.

Therefore

$\frac{1}{2}$  POOSTER equals 2 BLAHMIES  
equals 8 GLEEPERS equals 32  
PLONTHS.

When I'm ready to bring out another edition of my own book, "Problems, Puzzles and Brain-teasers," I'll be sure to include the above two problems, for they'll fit in perfectly. The other week, while passing through my shipping department, I noticed a package of books going out to Dr. Logan Clendening, of Kansas City, Mo., and the first title that caught my eye was my own book of 162 interesting, entertaining and amusing problems, with their answers. Dr. Clendening, as many of my readers know, is the author of several important medical books (written for the laity) and does a daily health column for numerous newspapers—

the best column of its kind, in my opinion. I hope Dr. Clendening enjoyed my compilation. He probably finds relaxation in doing such problems. I know I do.

\* \* \*

Are there any animals that normally are hermaphrodites?

Snails are hermaphrodites, capable of both laying and fertilizing eggs. However, according to an article by Marcel Roland, in the *Mercure de France*, the two sexes "in the same individual ignore each other, and when the time comes for the snail to propagate its species it seeks out a fellow snail." The article shows that the male of the one unites with the female of the other, and vice versa: then both, after having served mutually as males, go off to lay their eggs like the good simple females that they are . . . in part. That's moving in odd circles to get the job done. We humans have our funny sexual quirks, as may be seen in mountains of books—and life, if you're interested. Svdnev Smith said the French discovered, among other things, that there are three sexes—men, women, and clergymen. Then consider Freud's favorite triplets—Inhibition, Complex and Libido. But, after all, Samuel Hoffenstein ended the discussion for all time, so far as I'm concerned, with:

Breathes there a man with hide so tough  
Who says two sexes aren't enough?

\* \* \*

Do you know of any language which doesn't require the lips to come together?

The nearest that comes to a "lipless language" is that spoken by the North Carolina Cherokees. Here are some of their typical words:

Tuckasegee. Hawassee. Junaluskee, Cullasajee. Nantahala.

\* \* \*

What is meant by "occupational therapy"?

This is a high-toned way of expressing a simple idea that's familiar to all of us, even though we're just a bunch of plain, un-degreed laymen. The idea is this:

If you're worrying yourself into a nervous breakdown, don't squirm around like a kid that's long overdue at the toilet. Get busy on some routine activity, even though it's monotonous, but be sure it leads somewhere—such

as carpentry, cutting the lawn, driving the motor car, sewing, knitting, weaving, setting your papers and files in order, and so on. Most of us do that when we feel an attack of the worries coming on us, but we never stop long enough to figure out such a thumping name as "occupational therapy." This brings to mind the remark of a famous neurologist: "Nobody can enjoy a nervous breakdown on a bicycle."

\* \* \*

In reading your volumes of questions and answers I find you specialize in debunking history, including fables like Washington and the cherry tree, Washington praying at Valley Forge, John Brown kissing the Negro slave's baby before going to the gallows, etc. Regarding the John Brown incident, I wonder how you handle the evidence found in Whittier's poem, the Currie and Ives lithographs, and the reports of press correspondents.

The second stanza of John Greenleaf Whittier's poem, "Brown of Osawatomie," follows:

John Brown of Osawatomie, they led  
him out to die;  
And lo! a poor slave-mother with her  
little child pressed nigh,  
Then the bold, blue eye grew tender,  
and the old, harsh face grew mild,  
As he stooped between the jeering ranks  
and kissed the negro's child!

The above was written at the time John Brown was executed at Charlottesville, Va., December 2, 1859, thus being the first to give the story wide currency. The Whittier poem appeared in the *New York Independent*, December 22, 1859. In his biography of John Brown, James Redpath, in January, 1860, described the baby-kissing incident. Later, two newspapermen, one of whom told this story of John Brown in *The New York Tribune*, confessed they had faked the incident. This appeared in the *Tribune* of December 5, 1859, with a Harper's Ferry date line of December 3, according to James C. Malin, professor of history, University of Kansas. This *Tribune* hoax provided Whittier with the material for the stanza quoted above. The famous Currier and Ives lithographs, one appearing in 1863 and the second in 1870, merely put into pictorial form the idea exploited by Whittier and others. Later, in 1881, the painter, Thomas Hovenden (1840-1895) produced his famous "Last Moments

of John Brown," in which John Brown is shown in the act of kissing the Negro slave's baby. Professor Malin debunks the story, as follows:

"If it were possible the historian would wish the poem and the pictures to stand as history, but truth does not permit. On the day of Brown's execution soldiers were drawn up in lines on either side of the road to the scaffold. Rumors were afloat of plans for a rescue. No chances were taken. The public was excluded from any possible direct contact with the prisoner . . .

"Had he (Whittier) been in a critical frame of mind at the time he would have recognized the impossibility of the story, as descriptions of the execution had explained the stationing of the troops."

I don't see how it lessens Brown's greatness if we limit ourselves to only the truth about his daring, humanitarian achievements. These fables make excellent propaganda, but they aren't good history.

Is it a fact that a fine violin shouldn't be played too much?

Yehudi Menuhin—who happens to be my pet fiddler at this writing, mainly because of the way he did Schumann's Concerto in D Minor—recently obtained an instrument made in 1742 by Joseph Guarnerius del Gesu, the only serious and worthy rival of his great neighbor, Stradivarius. This means that Menuhin will carry two fine violins on his tours, the other being his Khevenhueller Stradivarius. He did this because, as he explained, the old instruments of Cremona develop what violinists know as "fatigue" in the course of strenuous and constant use. "With that fatigue," says the great 22-year-old artist, "comes hoarseness and harshness of tone, as if the instrument were crying for rest and relaxation." It's a known fact that many fine instruments, like some humans, have lost, perhaps forever, their healthy condition through excessive use.

Do you recommend the use of tear-gas traps in office safes? I have been approached by a salesman who says these will thwart burglars.

I don't know how many of these tear-gas traps are being sold to businessmen, but I know that they can't do much to hinder a burglar who knows his business. Smart safe-

crackers usually place electric fans near a safe to blow away the fumes. They laugh instead of cry over these contraptions.

What is the most exciting of all narrative themes?

A man's struggle for his life.

Which book now in the U.S. cost the most money?

The Congressional Library's Gutenberg Bible, printed between 1450 and 1455 by John Gutenberg, cost the government \$350,000, which makes it the costliest book in the country. However, it should be mentioned that this famous book is in three volumes.

Fletcher Pratt, in *The Saturday Review of Literature*, says Walt Whitman was indifferent during the Civil War, "a totally disinterested participant." Please comment.

Mr. Pratt wouldn't have made such a silly statement if he'd really read Walt Whitman's magnificent poetry and his prose notes. Walt says, in one of his poems: "I do not pity the wounded person, I myself become the wounded person." Does that sound disinterested? In "Specimen Days," Mr. Pratt will find quite a few pieces about the Civil War. That great upheaval moved Whitman to the roots.

Is it true that some people are practically immune to insect bites while others get bitten whenever they're exposed?

Yes, according to Dr. Logan Clendening, the medical man who writes the best health column in America. He shows that "the newcomer to a region suffers the most severely. It is often noticed by fishermen that the guides or boatmen who live in the district are not affected by mosquitoes at all, and do not pay any attention to them, while the members of the fishing party are 'eaten up.' . . . There is definite evidence that the fleas' selection of their victims is not a matter of chance. The flea knows who will be poisoned by his bite!" As Dr. Clendening says, the reaction to insect bites is a form of immunity or allergy and affects people in different degrees. But I'll bet Dr. Clendening a bottle of the best Canadian or Scotch whisky that anyone who gets smeared with the juice of a "blister bug" will get mighty sick in

a few hours. Last Summer, I happened to wipe a bug from the back of my neck, and in doing this I crushed the fellow. An hour later I felt a burn in that spot. Another hour later I had a blister. The next morning I had a group of blisters at least three inches in diameter. It took seven visits to my doctor before I got over the effects of that bug's juice. If it ever happens again I'll get busy at once with applications of whisky or alcohol until I can get a salve that'll have the strength to neutralize the poisonous liquid that's squeezed out of a "blister bug." Since I had my experience I've heard from many people how they'd been poisoned the same way. One fellow, while out fishing, sat on a rock on which some of these "blister bugs" were located. Both cheeks of his fanny went bad for weeks. Boy, I can sympathize with that poor devil.

\* \* \*

**What is the average car speed?**

According to the latest survey of the U.S. Public Roads Administration, the average speed of motor cars (excluding trucks) is 41.6 miles an hour.

\* \* \*

**What is the highest temperature recorded in a human being?**

As a general thing, a temperature of 104 is considered dangerous; 106, hopeless; 107, sure death. But, according to a report made by Dr. Esther-B. Tietz to a meeting of the American Psychopathological Association, a red-haired woman at times registers a temperature of 112 degrees. This is believed to be the highest yet recorded. According to previous medical belief, she should actually burn up and die, but Dr. Tietz says she is "normally healthy and happy." At times, according to the report, the patient becomes violent and uncooperative, "but a few hours later is calm and smiling." Her ailment is enlargement of the pituitary gland, the body's "master" gland which is located at the base of the brain and controls all other ductless glands in the body.

\* \* \*

**What is New Yorkese?**

Some experts in phonetics say the characteristics of New Yorkese are: 1. Flat, monotonous tones. 2. A harshness and stridency, known as the

"subway voice." 3. Hurried and careless articulation (*A kunnert 'n' twenny*). 4. Lazy lips. New Yorkers don't open their mouths wide enough when speaking, swallow their voices, talk through their teeth and a tightened jaw. That makes us a race of mumblers. 5. A sleepy tongue, which remains against the bottom teeth without moving, produces a thick *t* and blunts the clarity of consonant sounds. 6. Mispronunciations such as: The intrusive *r*, as in *idear*. The *k* sound for *ng* as in *goink*; and insertion of a *g* where it does not belong: *Long Gisland*. The *e* for a *a* as in *ection* (action). Use of *uh* for *aw*, as in *lo-uh* (law). The dentalized *t*, which produces a faint *s* sound, such as *Tsom tsook* (Tom took). The broad long *aw* as in *tawk* (talk) and *faw* (four).

One expert says a good speaking voice should have a range of at least eight notes; the average New Yorker uses about two and a half, which means users of New Yorkese speak the most monotonous English in the world. Both the dialect and the intonations could be eliminated in a few months, according to dialectologists. One writes: "The key is to relax, slow down, keep your jaw and muscles at ease. Become a careful listener and take time to speak plainly." This is sound advice, but just try to get the "dese, dem and dose" pipples to admit they talk New Yorkese.

\* \* \*

**Can you explain why Negroes love to give their babies high-sounding names?**

It's something of a reaction against their low position in the social scale, something of a protest. Also, there's an urge for beauty, albeit expressed crudely, for it's usually the uneducated who go in for this high-toned stuff. I'm reminded of a story Isaac Goldberg tells in his fascinating book, "What You Laugh At—And Why," which shows how this passion for beauty in names can bring ludicrous results. A poor Negro mother, who had given birth to a baby in the hospital, was asked by her spiritual adviser what the name of the infant was to be. "I've got a wonderful name!" she cried, in delight. "I foun' it on de chile's wrist this mo-nin'!" The minister: "And what is that wonderful name?" The mother: "Wasser-

man Positive!" . . . Goldberg, in his chapter entitled "The Negro Joke," shows how Negroes like big words. Instead of saying simply that the rec- tor was pacing along the corridor of the church, one ambitious Negro announced: "De rectum am pollutin' along de corridor!" But such talk isn't limited to Negroes, by any means. As Goldberg says, "Mrs. Malaprop was not a Negress."

\* \* \*

Is it not a fact that most of our ailments are in our minds, the figments of our imagination?

No. Most ailments are real. But there are many people who only imagine they're sick. All doctors know this to be a fact. I'm reminded of a press story that told of a man who rushed into a hospital and said he'd swallowed his false teeth while sleeping and that they were lodged in the pit of his stomach where they were causing unbearable pain. While preparing to take an X-ray, the telephone rang. It was from home, where the man's teeth had been found in his bed. Pure imagination, and yet the man felt real pain in his belly.

\* \* \*

I was surprised to find so many articles on the mathematics of gambling in your volumes of questions and answers. I'm not complaining, for I needed the data. As a result of this knowledge, I believe I'm going to save a lot of money—by not shooting any more craps or turning any more wheels. You make the point that it's practically impossible to win because games run by professionals are crooked at one time or another, depending on the types of patronage. Isn't it a fact that even honest dice can't be mathematically true?

So far as I know, even the best manufacturers can't turn out dice that have true surfaces. But even if the surfaces were true, according to Professor E. P. Worley, of Auckland University College, New Zealand, "the system of numbering thwarts the honest manufacturer and player." He explains one phase of this by showing that "more material must be gouged out to make six spots than two. Since opposite faces always add up to seven, theoretically six should turn up more frequently than the ace on the opposite side because the ace side is heavier." My reader is right in calling attention to the

fact that my volumes of questions and answers contain a great number of pieces on gambling percentages, tricks of professional gyps, and the art of turning out mechanical and other devices to help clean the suckers. The reason is that games of chance have always fascinated me, mainly from the scientific and commercial sides. My mathematical reports on games of chance came from numerous sources that I checked carefully for accuracy. But it all boils down to this: Don't gamble with professionals. Don't play their game, because they have everything fixed. This is true even when the games are straight, which is practically never. Even if the games were straight, the percentages would still be in favor of the house. However, the houses are in too much of a hurry to bother with straight games. Why work over a sucker for a week when it's possible to roll him in a few hours? That's the code of 9,999 out of 10,000 houses, and the one "straight" house will switch to crooked equipment if the player is too dumb to know what's going on. Play cards or shoot craps with your friends in the office or at home—if you like the excitement of gambling—but don't go into the wide, wide world looking for winnings from professionals.

\* \* \*

My lovely young wife is in a Philadelphia asylum, where she has been for four months. She is some better but still woozey. The principal psychiatrist who has my wife in charge sent meager reports (because I begged and begged) only twice in four months. Now, why are these buggers so damned reticent? What is their game? . . . I asked for a report that says something, but get only generalities. I don't want to travel from my home here in Boston to Philadelphia when he could tell me everything I want to know in a letter. They are probably holding her there as long as the money holds out. Will you tell me frankly and openly your honest reactions to the whole thing? I may have a fight on my hands and I want to be right about every step. It is amazing how full of Bunk the world is, and it is disgusting. . . .

You aren't being quite fair to the psychiatrists at the hospital mentioned in your letter. Why suppose the doctors are indifferent? You admit you haven't called at the establishment. It's hard for the technicians

and other experts in an up-to-date hospital to get into correspondence with a layman, especially when the subject is so complicated and difficult as a mental case. The sensible thing for you to do is to go to the hospital in Philadelphia and see for yourself. You then will be able to see your wife and discuss her condition with the doctors in charge. If you think they don't know their business, let me suggest that you send her to Dr. Karl A. Menninger's hospital in Topeka, Kans. This doctor has an international reputation as a psychiatrist, and can give your wife the best that modern science has to offer. However, I know nothing about the business side of Dr. Menninger's place. You'll pardon my frankness, but it seems to me that you yourself could make good use of the services of an expert psychiatrist. You get over to me a mood of hysteria and extreme jitters. While looking after your wife's interests, I'd suggest that you ask some able psychiatrist to have a look at you. Please don't take offense. I mean this in a friendly spirit.

\* \* \*

**What do you think of the way people decorate rooms and fireplaces with firing pieces?**

People who like old muskets and pistols get a kick out of displaying them, especially over large fireplaces. It's considered sporty. And I don't see anything wrong about it, though I never have the itch to own any of those relics. Speaking of relics reminds me of the man who went to see his doctor about something that was troubling him in his old age. The doctor suggested that the patient's testicles be removed forthwith, to which the man protested. "But," said the doctor, "you're over 70 years old, so why should you mind?" The patient: "I like to have them around even though they mayn't be of any use. You see, they look so sporty."

\* \* \*

**I'm 75 and have been taking baking soda almost every day for 40 years. Am I hurting myself?**

This old home remedy doesn't seem to have hurt you, so go right ahead with it for another 40 years. If, at the end of that time, it hurts you, quit it for good. The Maharaja of Ismyasore once told me that baking

soda keeps his stomach just right, and he was 89 at the time. His ambition, he told me, was to come to the U.S. and get thrown out of a night club for disorderly conduct. What a man! I don't say baking soda did it, but it didn't hurt him any. I suppose your ambition, at 89, will be to get caught in a raid on a fancy house. I wish you every good fortune, and keep taking nips of baking soda, if they please you.

\* \* \*

**I wonder if there's any merit in the idea of getting rid of mice by isolating them from water.**

Dr. H. W. Gates, zoologist, Louisiana State University, reports he found that several laboratory mice "had lived a normal life for two years in a sealed glass container, into which dehydrated air and food was piped."

\* \* \*

**Once in a while I meet a person who has had only one love in his or her life. Why does this move so many poets and novelists to ecstasy?**

I don't know. It's not much to blow about. Oscar Wilde spotted the type and stabbed it with these words: "The people who love only once in their lives are really the shallow people. What they call their loyalty and fidelity, I call either the lethargy of custom or their lack of imagination."

\* \* \*

**Let me suggest that you devote a column each month to reprinting the jokes that appeared in previous issues. I am a new subscriber and want to read the funny yarns that have already been printed.**

That wouldn't do at all. Those who want to read the jokes that have appeared in *The Freeman* during the past eight years can get all of them in my 19 volumes of questions and answers. The other day I checked and learned those little laugh-provokers run into the hundreds.

\* \* \*

**How much coal does a freight engine need to get started and reach a running speed?**

About 1,000 pounds.

\* \* \*

**Would you mind telling little me (just a flapper and jitterbug) what I should do with my underwear when I wear it out?**

I suggest taking it home with you again, if you can find it.

How much rubber goes into the average motor car?

About 50 pounds.

\* \* \*

How much does the average American citizen spend in barber shops in a lifetime?

About \$2,000.

\* \* \*

Knowing you have had much experience in titling books, please suggest one for a booklet I am compiling about our nudist colony.

The first attention-getter to pop into my head is: "A Candid Look at the Bare Facts of Our Nudist Colony."

\* \* \*

What is the meaning of the expression, "the goose hangs high"?

In brief, everything's hunky-dory, the immediate future's bright, there's a goose up high that's seasoning; so soon we'll all feast on roast goose. The Century Dictionary puts it this way:

"Originally, perhaps, 'the goose HONKS high,'—it cries and flies high. Wild geese fly higher when the weather is fine or promises to be fine. Hence, the prospects are bright; everything is favorable."

\* \* \*

Can you give me the text of the full-back's report of his "passes" at a campus cutie, all done in football lingo?

It's said, according to Don Strauss, that the following spiel appeared in a letter from an All-American full back:

I kick off last night with a box of chocolates, and follow this with a series of plays at several local night spots. Here I am charged, out-charged, and clipped from both front and rear. So we go for a drive to the beach where the moon beams down on just us two. Here I try a couple of passes, but one is blocked and the other intercepted. I guess my line is too slow. So I try a reverse and am thrown for a bad loss. Sadly I take my sweet home and decide to try one more play. I call for an off-guard sneak, but when I am penalized 15 yards for holding and called off-side on the same play, I heads for the showers. I hear she carries the torch for the anemic gent what figures out card tricks for between the halves.

\* \* \*

How often does that famous geyser in Yellowstone, Old Faithful, come up?

I could get the correct answer if

I went to my reference books, but I don't feel like doing the job, because it's my notion no one really cares a damn whether it's every 23 or 43 minutes, or some other figure. But most of my pure, pious readers will be glad to have me tell them about *Mademoiselle*, a popular women's magazine, which recently ran an article entitled "Heart Chat for Honeymooners." Suggestions No. 1 to No. 12 were right sensible, but No. 13 reached the proportions of a masterpiece, according to my standards. It read: "On your way West, stop at Yellowstone and let your spouse take a hint from Old Faithful!"

\* \* \*

Why don't you, once in a while, print some of the questions you don't answer, especially the ones that are somewhat amusing?

Here are a few:

How come a traveling salesman never meets a farmer's son?

What happens to an old fool who never had any money?

What name do the Smiths use when they register at a hotel?

What kind of a chance do you tell a Chinaman he hasn't got?

If a rolling stone gathers no moss, what does it gather?

When the eight ball has troubles and sorrows what does it get behind?

Do doctor's wives eat an apple a day?

Where do people in Hell tell each other they can go?

Who tells a train conductor where to get off?

Who must the dentist see twice a year?

When Jack and Jill went up the hill were they really after water?

Who wants to touch anything with a 10-foot pole?

When a flag-pole sitter mourns a departed relative does he sit at half mast?

When a worm turns does it put out its hand?

Where does a man go when he wants to get away from himself?

\* \* \*

Are 4-lane highways safer than 2- or 3-lane roads?

The Michigan Highway Commission's chief engineer, at a meeting of engineers in Ann Arbor, Mich., said the 3-lane highway is safer than the 4-lane or 2-lane roads. He reported that a check-up showed that 1,374 accidents on 743 miles of high-

way proved that 1.97 persons were killed for every 1,000,000 vehicle miles of travel on 2-lane roads; 1.32 on 3-lane roads; 1.81 on 4-lane roads. The facts show, therefore, that 2-lane roads come first in safety, followed by 4-lane roads, and with 2-lane roads coming last. This is explained on the basis of the average rider's driving habits. On a 3-lane road the driver looks on the center lane as merely a means of passing, and therefore is extra careful when trying to get in front of the car ahead. The accidents increase on a 2-lane road because there's no center lane and therefore each attempt to pass entails the possibility of a slip, and a slip often means a serious accident. The 4-lane roads are bad because the driver knows he has two center lanes and therefore is given to over-confidence while attempting to weave in and out of traffic. When two motorists make miscalculations at the same moment there's trouble ahead, and the 2- and 4-lane roads give motor car drivers more opportunities for risks.

\* \* \*

You will see from the enclosed press clipping that the Italian Fascist press (there's no other kind, of course) says Paul Revere was of Italian descent, which means he "came by his hatred of the British naturally." Please comment.

The Fascists liars can't make that argument stick, because Paul Revere wasn't of Italian extraction. He was French, the son of a Huguenot known as Appollos de Rivoire. M. Rivoire hailed from the island of Guernsey, which puts him pretty far from Italy. The Fascists are trying to make it appear that Revere is a misreading of Rovere, a famous Italian name. But the facts tell a different story.

\* \* \*

Can you explain why the first Atlantic cable burned out?

In 1858, when the first Atlantic cable was ready for use, the engineers labored under the delusion that an immense flow of juice would be necessary to carry the signals from Ireland to Newfoundland. As a result the cable burned out. This false belief was abandoned when the second cable was finished, for by that time the electricians learned that an astonishingly small volume of electricity would be needed. In his book, "A

Saga of the Seas," Philip B. McDonald explains how the engineers demonstrated the case for small amounts of juice, as follows:

To prove it, a technician borrowed a small silver thimble from a guest. Into the thimble he placed a little sulphuric acid and a tiny fragment of zinc. The silver, zinc, and acid constituted a miniature battery, and with the charge of electricity so generated, the signal traveled the entire distance in little over a second.

Later, another engineer, to make the demonstration even more dramatic, sent his compliments across the ocean "with a battery composed of a gun cap, with a strip of zinc, excited by a drop of water, the simple bulk of a tear!"

\* \* \*

What satisfaction does one get from chewing gum?

A psychologist, Dr. H. L. Hollingsworth, says chewing relaxes. But so do fiddling, doodling, diddling, watch-chain twiddling, coin-jingling, smoking, knitting, crocheting, tatting, wriggling, grimacing, fidgeting and scratching. But Prof. Hollingsworth claims chewing leads 'em all, which I doubt.

\* \* \*

What is glamour?

Glamour is the trick of placing a higher value on the cellophane wrapping than on the package's contents.

\* \* \*

Doesn't your philosophy of Freethought mean, in brief, "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die"?

I have no objection to eating, drinking and merriness, but I insist the Rationalist doesn't limit his life to those ends, however worthy and pleasant they may be. I found this subject covered quite well in a quotation from the well-known British Freethinker, W. K. Clifford (1845-1879), as follows:

Our interest lies with so much of the past as may serve to guide our actions in the present, and to intensify our pious allegiance to the fathers who have gone before us and the brethren who are with us; and our interest lies with so much of the future as we may hope will be appreciably affected by our good actions now. Beyond that, as it seems to me, we do not know, and we ought not to care. Do I seem to say: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die"? Far from it;

on the contrary, I say: "Let us take hands and help, for this day we are alive together."

The Freethinker is a truth-seeker, and as such he takes a serious view of life. Knowing there's a secular morality which is far more operative than one laid down by divine mandate, the Freethinker considers it a part of his job to advance the worthwhile, precious, enlightening, civilizing factors, without which civilization can't exist. He would take care of his body with good food, rest and healthful practices—added to which he welcomes merriness—but at the same moment he seeks tirelessly for a world of cooperation, in which men shall not exploit and rob their fellow beings, in which militarism, Fascism, and aggression shall make way for international amity and peaceful construction, in which supernaturalism surrenders to science, in which man's economic institutions are reformed so that the toilers who produce wealth shall enjoy the fullness of their hard-wrought harvests, in which the mind shall be free to range the universe in the search for truth and justice, and in which the chains of superstition shall make way for the light of reason. A true Freethinker wants more out of life than a full belly. Bovine contentment isn't his objective, though he insists that empty bellies can be filled if mankind will reform his social order and establish industrial democracy.

The great English Agnostic, Prof. Thomas H. Huxley, (1825-1895), has a paragraph that I want to quote, because it shows how a fine, brilliant, educated Freethinker looks at life and the constructive lesson of humanitarian action he's able to draw from it. Huxley's message:

Why trouble ourselves about matters of which, however important they may be, we do know nothing and can know nothing? We live in a world which is full of misery and ignorance, and the plain duty of each and all of us is to try to make the little corner he can influence somewhat less miserable and somewhat less ignorant than it was before he entered it. To do this effectually it is necessary to be fully possessed of only two beliefs: the first, that the order of nature is ascertainable by our faculties to an extent which is practically unlimit-

ed; the second, that our volition counts for something as a condition of the course of events.

Let me repeat: Freethinkers always seek to translate their ideals into real life. They really strive to change the world for the better. By this I don't mean to infer that they are always ready to apply quack (and quick) remedies, because they know there's no short cut to a better social order. The road is hard and long. Mass ignorance and superstition are twin demons that die hard. There's no pet formula that's guaranteed to cure the world overnight. Short-cuts are usually the longest in the end, because they end up in swamps and badlands. Nietzsche expressed this thought clearly when he wrote:

So-called "short cuts" have always led humanity to run great risks; on hearing the "glad tidings" that a "short cut" had been found, they always left the straight path—and lost their way.

We avoid short-cuts and strike out for the long road of sound knowledge and science. That's the safe road to take. And Freethinkers aren't afraid of tackling the harder way. As they journey forth to help improve man's position, they find their ways barred every few feet by the old dogmas of religion and superstition. They are man's greatest obstacles to mass progress. Back in the 18th Century, Baron d'Holbach (1723-1789) a great, fearless Freethinker and fighter against supernaturalism, expressed the thought this way:

Nature tells man to seek light, to search for the truth; religion enjoins upon him to examine nothing, to remain in ignorance. Nature says to man: "Cherish glory, labor to win esteem, be active, courageous, industrious"; religion says to him: "Be humble, abject, pusillanimous, live in retreat, busy thyself in prayer, meditation, devout rites."

"Eat, drink and be merry," we say, but at the same time we insist: "Think, seek the truth, try to advance humanity to a higher plane, fight superstition, and help make the world the abode of civilized men and women who know and worship peace and who hate tyranny and injustice." This doesn't mean we are to be ponderous and solemn. In the words of Montaigne (1533-1592), "The most mani-

fest sign of wisdom is continual cheerfulness; it is like things in the regions above the moon, always serene."

\* \* \*

A hermit once lived in a beautiful dell,  
No legend or myth in this tale do I tell,

For my sire's sire swore that he knew  
him quite well, **THE HERMIT.**

He lived all alone in a cave by the lake,  
Decoctions of herbs for his health he would make,

And nothing but fish would this good  
man partake **ON FRIDAY.**

He came when he wished and went when  
he chose,

Each year he would bathe his body  
and clothes.

How the lake ever stood it the Lord only  
knows, **AND HE WON'T TELL.**

One day as he rose all dripping and wet,  
His horrified vision two maidens met.

Now in feminine business he was not a  
"Vet" **SO HE BLUSHED.**

He reached for his hat which lay on  
the beach

And covered up all that its broad brim  
would reach,

Then cried to the maids with a terrible  
screech: **GO AWAY!**

But the maids only laughed at his pitiful  
plight

And begged him to show them the  
wonderful sight.

But he held to his hat with all of his  
might, **TO HIDE IT.**

However, just then a villainous gnat  
Made the hermit forget just where he  
was at.

He struck at the insect and let go the  
hat, **OH HORRORS!**

I now have come to the thread of my  
tale,

The hermit turned red and then he  
turned pale,

He murmured a prayer for prayers never  
fail, **SO 'TIS SAID.**

Of the truth of this tale there is no  
doubt at all,

The Lord heard the prayer and answered  
the call,

Tho' he let go the hat, the hat didn't  
fall, **THE MIRACLE.**

\* \* \*

After studying your volumes of "Q&A"  
I have come to the conclusion that  
you are entirely satisfied with our  
rotten money system. I cannot find a  
single word of criticism.

I never waste any time worrying  
about our money system. It seems  
to work pretty well. The system I'm  
interested in is how to arrange for a  
steady supply of the units that constitute  
our money system. In short,  
like the rest of my readers, I work  
like hell to make a few dollars each  
week. When I get them, everything's  
all right; when I don't trouble begin.  
So far as I know, a penny still

buys a stick of gum; a nickel takes  
care of the slot in the pay toilet  
of the swellest hotel; a dime finances  
a glass of beer; 15 cents will put  
a gallon of gas in my tank; a quarter  
will pay for a ticket at the average  
cinema out this way; 50c will do  
wonders in almost any Kansas  
restaurant; and a buck will buy 20  
of my little blue books, plus 1c per  
copy for packing, handling and carriage.  
The average person looks at this  
thing just about my way—how to  
get more of the kale. The money  
question is the pet subject of every  
economic quack and political illiterate.  
Look at what Father (of what?)  
Coughlin can do with the iniquitous  
money question. He can get into a  
lather over it any time he grabs the  
air, but this rowdydowdy refuses to  
get het up over his foolish, frantic  
and fatuous cavortings. When ever  
he bawls out our dollar I console  
myself with the thought that it can't  
be so bad if it continues to pay for  
a year of The Freeman despite hell  
and high water. But there are many  
political screwballs who turn on a  
tense gee-whiz hush whenever some  
intellectual bottleneck brings up the  
money question. In a tone that's  
distinctly placatory let me assure my  
indignant reader that even after he  
reads a second batch of 20 volumes  
of my "Q&A" he'll still find me  
indifferent to the money question.  
Frankly, I don't care a damn. When-  
ever it's mentioned I hand out a  
razzberry that's as big as a desk  
sergeant's tokas.

\* \* \*

Recently I visited the Natural Bridge  
in Virginia, where I was made to pay  
\$1.10 to visit the place. Can you  
explain how it comes about that private  
interests are able to exploit a piece of  
natural scenery?

On July 5, 1774, George III granted  
a deed which gave the Natural  
Bridge to Thomas Jefferson, for which  
a payment of 20 shillings was made.  
Since Jefferson's day the property has  
changed hands 12 times. It now belongs  
to a corporation which claims  
its property has an appraised valuation  
of \$1,500,000.

\* \* \*

Here's a little riddle for you: If Hitler  
and Mussolini were in a boat in mid-  
ocean, and the boat were to burst into  
flames and sink, who would be saved?

The people of Europe.

## ANSWERS TO UNASKED QUESTIONS

From Dublin comes word that the authorities of Eire (Ireland) have banned Guy de Maupassant's great and famous story, "Boule de Suif." It was done on moral grounds. Ireland, after freeing itself, went carefully about the melancholy farce of enslaving its own mind, for it's the cold literal truth that Catholic fanaticism is stronger in Ireland today than at any time in its history. It would take a column just to list the masterpieces of literature that have been banned since Ireland gained its political independence. More than 20 years ago I arranged to have "Boule de Suif" translated into English for inclusion in my series of Little Blue Books, where the gem is still shining as No. 199, the title being "The Tallow Ball (A Prostitute's Sacrifice)." I've sold hundreds of thousands of copies of this magnificent work of fiction, and I'm still to hear a single complaint about its capacity to send one to Hell and damnation. The story, laid in the Franco-Prussian War period, deals with the escape of a group of refugees from Paris, made possible by one of the group, a prostitute, through her yielding to the advances of a German officer. The way the author handled this simple theme is beyond my powers of praise. I consider "The Tallow Ball" one of the greatest stories ever written. Ireland's ban won't hurt de Maupassant's position as an artist; it'll serve only to convince intelligent people to what depths of bigotry and ignorance the Irish government has sunk. Eire is challenging Eastern Canada for the "honor" of leadership in self-imposed cultural totalitarianism.

I am probably the most productive pamphleteer in all printing history—in the sense of making, not writing, them.

One of the greatest lies ever invented is the belief that war is a natural part of man. Not many centuries ago the same lie was accepted about the institution of slavery.

Roosevelt in the White House waiting to be elected; Willkie's in the ash can, waiting to be collected.

Thomas R. Meredith, Chester, Pa.; "Since a certain number of your subscribers object to your sophisticated stories I suggest you get a black-out rubber stamp and have one of your office staff obliterate the gayety of those Freemans that go to pious objectors."

McNary had a little lamb, its name was Leg o'Mutton, and ev'ry time it wagged its tail it showed a Willkie button.

David Belasco once toured 16 U. S. cities, giving out 16 interviews. Each began with: "If I could be born again I would choose this city as my birthplace."

Elocution has killed more people than electrocution.

Frank Case, the hotel man to whom I wrote so sweetly and tenderly the other day, claims he's the man who "first did away with the raw potato as a penholder on a hotel desk." I, for one, always liked that quaint, eccentric, use of spuds, and coming to think of it I haven't seen a murphy used that way for years. I ought to dip my pen in corrosive sublimate, but this Little Eva of Littrachoor will never pinch-hit for Simon Legree. I prefer to continue to exploit my we're-snug-in-our-little-nest ostrich appeal.

A Londoner, with a talent for statistics, tells the world there's one pigeon to every 90 inhabitants of London. He then comes to the pay-off: "After all, if 100,000 pigeons so rarely score a direct hit, why should I worry about the Nazis?"

Rob Wagner offers this slogan for the Blitz Brothers, Adolf and Benito (assisted by Japan): "Join the Knaves and Seize the World!"

When you build your air-raid shelter don't forget to allow a little space for a stack of Freemans.

Scrap of talk: "Next to Shakespeare and myself, I love Beethoven best."

Wesley B. Reed, Mass.: "Your jokes have afforded me much amusement."

A rich, 60-year-old duddy-fuddy once asked Voltaire's advice about a young woman he wanted to marry. "I'm wondering," he told Voltaire, "if I wouldn't have a better chance with her if I told her I'm 50 instead of 60." Voltaire, who was in a pleasantly sub-acid mood, replied: "Knowing the young lady, I'd say your chance of winning her would increase if you told her you're 75. She'd see a brighter future."

An Arkansas loafer was asked by a stranger if he knew where the post-office was. "Do I know where the post-office is?" the walking bottleneck asked. "I wish I had all the money I knew where the postoffice is!"

The American Freeman is a power plant for democracy, with chuckles as its by-product, and no room for gorgeous tragedy's scepter'd pall.

Father (of what?) Coughlin's mind smells like a letter-carrier's toe-jam.

One of my readers, writing from Mexico, uses the term "clam broth" to describe aphrodisiacal literature, which is something new, so far as I know.

The American Freeman specializes in shellacking intellectual frauds.

Mark Twain: "Repartee is something we think of 24 hours too late."

This rambler along the by-paths, alleys and out-houses of life has dealt-out some kiln-dried calumination in his day, but never has he put as much manure on the pump-handle as John Randolph of Virginia was able to deposit when he disposed of Henry Clay with this piece of expert shellacking: "Like a mackerel in the moonlight he shone and stank."

When you have to pay through the nose sneezes aren't acceptable.

Middle-aged character actress to popular, accomplished strip-teaser: "One thing you need never worry about is being replaced by the machine."

Radio bulletin caught by a reader: "It is officially reported that Clano flew to meet Ribbentrop in the Sudetenland, where they will hunt peasants." Are we to assume it was closed season on pheasants?

Elmer C. Helm, Brentwood, Md.: "I see that a high-pressure bunkshooter from Duke University, one Dr. Joseph Banks Rhine, has some followers at the American University here in Washington, D. C., and now said university has a course in clairvoyance. Thanks to your excellent publications, especially your volumes of 'Questions and Answers,' your readers know the tricks of these bunk-ridden believers in the new quackery known as Extra-Sensory Perception."

Lillian Symes, in The Call, organ of the Socialist Party, comments on the career of John L. Lewis—his evolution from "Hamlet to ham."

I don't like: boughten eyelashes; jazz, monacles; radio razz-a-ma-tazz; Kate Smith as an inspirational philosopher; jokes about Bing Crosby's horses; comic strips; football or baseball broadcasts; Popeye movies; the jokes about Roosevelt.

"The Mark of Zorro": Sumptuous slop and hoity-toity heifer-dust.

In "The Revolution Is On," M. W. Fodor writes that one form of torture used in Hitler's concentration camps is enforced lack of sleep. The same book

contains a sample of Viennese wit, in which the question is asked: "What's the difference between Russian Bolshevism and German Nazism?" The answer, according to Mr. Fodor: "The Bolshevik goes to the farmer and says: 'You have a cow. This cow now belongs to the State.' The Nazi goes to the farmer and says: 'You have a cow. It remains your private property. We only ask you to feed it with the best fodder and look after it in every way. We ask nothing from you except the milk, and, if the cow passes away, the meat and the hide.'"

If it's human it'll wear out.

Just because a writer's always careful to avoid the perpendicular pronoun it doesn't follow he's modest.

I met an undertaker recently who said something about wanting to jazz up his business, put color and dash into it, remove its melancholy aspects, and go in for a spell of advertising which'll emphasize the fact that his associates all call him "the Merry Mortician." He claims it's possible to put enough oomph and glamour into a funeral, making it pulsate with sex with a capital X. This word-tumbler and trend-finder remains skeptical. No matter how you dress it up, a funeral still gives me a nervous sweat, and no amiable loon is going to talk me out of it.

Scrap of conversation: "His vigger wasn't hurt by a spurt of likker."

I usually avoid football movies, because they always enact a scene that strikes me like a bullet in the tokas. The favored team is making a bad showing, and while resting between periods of action the men are bawled out by the coach. When the tough, old cock finishes his advocacy appeal there's a long pause, during which we are given close-ups of sobered players. Then one of the players shouts, "What's keepin' us? Let's go!" And the team goes out to win. When the dyspeptics and constipatics who turn out films that are as fragrant as a letter-carrier's sox come around to seeing things eye to eye with this cheerful obituarian and give him the authority of a director he's going to do a sequence of pin-point delicacy. I'll do the scene as before—up to the point at which the outraged player cries, "What's keepin' us? Let's go!" Then I'll have the team go out to play like hell—and lose. I swear this by book, bell and candle.

I don't like: The click of boughten teeth; fancy cooking; letters written with a hard pencil on lined paper; slow thinkers and talkers; toe-jam; Graham McNamee; tea-shoppie eateries; marshmallows in a salad; Irvin S. Cobb; carbonized steaks; writers who are chock-

ablock with pious piffle; what the underworld calls "a dirty leg"; the editorial policy of The New York Worried-Telegram; ideological crap on the literary pump-handle; critics whose musical-scholarship is limited to vague, meaningless, arty verbiage.

I like: mountain oysters, persimmons; Macy's advertising; smoked turkey; aphrodisiacal gags; inner-spring mattresses; women with eloquent posteriors; people who have the courage to greet bad jokes with three short laughs; plenty of Vitamin P; clam broth; writers who do little guesstimating.

A Joplin, Mo., mining engineer was sent to do some work in Mexico. Being detained longer than expected, he wired his young and beautiful wife to join him for a few weeks. She was anxious to go, but found herself loaded with household responsibilities, so she replied: "Can't get a girl." To this her husband answered: "Same here. Hurry up."

Gag from Ed Wynn's new show: "A man went duck hunting with the duke who didn't duck so he had duke instead of duck for dinner."

Sam Jaffe, the Jewish actor, has coined the name "Talmud Tories" for those Jewish big businessmen who are ultra-conservative or reactionary in their politics.

Elmer C. Helm, Brentwood, Md.: "What do you think of the blankety-blank manner in which 'Time' and a few imitators butcher our language? I find it makes slow reading, and is sadly lacking in emphasis. The omission of the final conjunction in a series leaves me with one foot up."

Wesley B. Reed, Southbridge, Mass.: "One of our friends called my wife on the phone and asked for 'Mrs. Wesley P. Reed.' Later, in explaining why she had used the wrong middle initial, she said: 'I meant to say 'B,' but I was laughing so hard that it came out as 'P.'"

An American, in Berlin, boasted to some Germans that in Hollywood films are produced with a cast of 50,000. "That's nothing," said one hearer, "we in Germany are now making 'Les Misérables' with a cast of 80,000,000."

Sign in hash-house: "Jello—jittery pudding."

Father (of what?) Coughlin—the nation's No. 1 intellectual bottleneck.

Western Union won't send my Sneer-o-Grams, so I print them here.

The pussy cat, as she rescued her offspring from the violin factory: "I didn't raise my daughter to be fiddled with."

Pretty hat-check girl: "I want to improve my mind, so tomorrow I'll begin horse-back riding."

Hint to lovers of good eating: Mountain oysters.

If I were 20 years old and knew as much as I do now, I could, after 30 years' hard work, become a good writer.

An observant reader says he saw a tall, statuesque blonde in pants which weren't of one piece in the front section. Instead, she had a zipper where a man would have a zipper if his pants carried such an accessory instead of the conventional buttons. A gentleman stepped forward, tipped his hat to the blonde, and said, with the profoundest politeness: "Pardon me, madame, but your fly is open!"

Statement made by H. Bedford-Jones: "The further a writer gets, the more dependent he becomes upon the editor." As an editor who has worked on thousands of manuscripts, let me offer the suggestion that Mr. Bedford-Jones' opinion is all wet. An editor doesn't mind helping a beginning-writer, but he always hankers for the writer who can stand on his own. Yes, I've given out assignments—hundreds of them—but I've never told an experienced writer what to say or how to say it. Joseph McCabe has written millions of words for me, but outside of agreeing in advance on the subjects to be covered I've never offered a single hint on how the themes were to be developed. A crack journeyman never goes around asking people how he's to get his job done.

Smiling Joe Cook, in his show, "It Happens on Ice," does a scene in a restaurant that carries these signs: "DINNER 40c—WITH MEDICAL ATTENTION, 50c." "TODAY'S SPECIAL—2 CUPS COFFEE 5c EACH." "IF YOU LIKE OUR FOOD TELL OTHERS—IF NOT, IX NAY ACKIN CRAY."

Spinoza, several centuries ago, expressed an idea that has tremendous meaning to our generation: "If we mean by peace slavery, then nothing is more wretched. Peace is the harmony of strong souls, not the fightless impotence of slaves." Those words should be remembered whenever Hitler offers "peace." Hitler's peace and war are the same thing.

Rich American Jews stand in the forefront of those who prefer the hush-hush-don't-look-now-and-the-evil-things-will-vanish attitude.

Let The Freeman recharge your battery.

From a letter to EHJ: "You laffin' sourpuss!"

Reader's curt blast at the editor: "Sir, you cur."

Norman Baker, the notorious cancer quack who was exposed as a crook and a swindler by *The American Freeman*, ordered his corporation, Norman Baker, Inc., on November 4, 1940, to surrender its charter with the Arkansas Secretary of State's office. This surrender signifies the end of his fake hospital at Eureka Springs, Ark., where thousands of cancer victims were robbed of their money and sent home to die. The credit for Baker's downfall belongs to *The American Freeman* and its army of loyal, progressive readers.

In Peoria, Ill., a woman who runs a boarding house set fire to her place in order to get rid of a roomer "who always wants to make love and never wants to pay rent."

Dodd, Mead and Company, publishers of "The Trojan Horse in America," received a letter from a veterinary school asking for a complimentary copy. The letter, signed by the assistant dean of a Massachusetts university, asked for "The Trojan Horse in America" because it "should have merit to our students enrolled in the school of veterinary medicine." This dean probably specializes in the animal's rear end. Well, at any rate, he brought a smile to my bibliulous puss.

Pardon me, but another reason why I use my newsclip filing system is the way it enables me to store up my ideas for a brainy day.

Many radio and newspaper commentators, who indulged in a large sticking out of the neck when they predicted F. D. R.'s defeat, should have taken Josh Billings's wise words to heart: "Don't prophesy unless ye know."

The *American Freeman* didn't get much excited over the election because its editor's money was on F. D. R., the theory being that there are more poor people than rich guys in the U. S. A.

The corny hillbilly band was doing its best when someone called the piccolo player a bastard. The leader tapped his baton on the stand, the players became silent. Turning to the audience, he demanded: "Who called my piccolo player a bastard?" A voice in the rear yelled back: "Who called that bastard a piccolo player?"

At the bar I found my pet mixologist, a bottle-shouldered runt who gives the world a "Foobie" look and holds we're all zanies. After commenting on how the navy "perteks" us, he told about the time he was cruising the Caribbean and met a Russian concert pianist who was drinking himself to death. Anxious to get the reason for his suicidal behavior, this mixologist started to pump him—and the truth came out. A month before he had stepped on the stage of

the municipal theater at Barranquilla, Colombia. He looked around for the piano. There was none on the stage. There was none in the theater. The management had forgotten to provide one. The way the mixologist told it I thought the yarn screamingly funny, laughing fit to split my sides, which I fortunately failed to do. He then turned his mordant wit on half-ass Marxians, but that's a subject for a future paragraph. I have to take time out to laugh some more about that Russian pianist's predicament.

I grant you *The Freeman's* as homely as a mud fence, but the rag carries more sunshiny laughs than any slick-papered, four-colored magazine in the country. Want to make something of it?

One of the great medieval painters had painted a beautiful angel on a church wall. One of the priests laughed and pointed at the picture with the remark: "Who ever saw an angel with sandals on?" The artist promptly replied: "Who ever saw an angel without?"

"Reason," a Rationalist periodical published in Bombay, India, says in its August, 1940, issue: "The Questions and Answers Magazine, *The American Freeman*, edited by E. Haldeman-Julius, is an excellent and very interesting monthly journal and gives valuable information on many subjects."

A be-diamonded doll, in New York's Colony Club, set out to impress a jewel-burdened dowager. "Oh, I'm so unhappy about my diamonds," she said. "I simply must open a bottle of champagne." The other: "Champagne? Why?" "I always clean my diamonds in champagne. What do you clean yours with?" "Oh, I never clean them at all. When they get dirty I just give them to the Salvation Army."

I've just seen a movie in which a hog is shown several times, once in a close-up. The hog was the only member of the cast who wasn't hammy.

Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt, who studies carefully before she parts with a dime, renewed her *Freeman* subscription without batting an eye. Of late she has been going in for careful, comprehensive surveys of poetry that's intended for mass circulation. Here's one she found when she sneaked a look into the pockets of an altar boy: "There was a young corporal of Kildare, who was fondling a girl in a chair. At the sixty-third stroke, the furniture broke, and his rifle went off in the air."

Life's an endlessly serious problem to a waiter. Each customer poses the same unpredictable element—the size of the tip. Each move and gesture be-

trays his obsession. This doesn't apply to waitresses at all. They want tips, of course, but their activities are based first on sex and afterwards on the tip. A waiter hands out service up to the precise size of tip he expects. A waitress can give a dollar's worth of service to a dime-tipping glamour boy and a dime's worth to a real spender whose only offense is that he's bottle-shouldered or runty. I've known women to sell themselves to an unwanted man for \$10 in order to get the money with which to buy a \$9.95 outfit in which to dazzle a boy-friend who can have all he wants just for the asking. That attitude is carried into the dining room, which helps explain why men are better waiters than women.

When I let my tailor fit me for a suit I never tell him what to do. After all, it's his business to know what's best for me in the way of lines, style, etc. I pick out the fabric—or at least I think I pick it. Most times the tailor merely lets me think I chose the fabric. All of which is to the good. Try not to argue with a man who knows his business and who can be trusted to give you the benefit of his knowledge, if you pay him enough.

Scrap of conversation: "One night with Venus, 18 months with Mercury."

Scrap of conversation: "She could speak 14 languages and couldn't say No in any of them."

Wisecrackers are now calling it "the Vichy-Washy government."

"Neuropa" is the name the Nazis say will stand for the New Europe they're establishing. A reader suggests that the people living under Hitler's Neuropa will probably be called Neurotics.

Professor Albert Einstein tells this story on himself: An eight-year-old daughter of one of his Princeton neighbors visited the scientist every afternoon. After this had been going on for several weeks the little girl's mother called on Einstein and apologized for her daughter's constant interruption. "Oh, I enjoy her visits," said Einstein, "and we get along fine." "Really?" the mother asked, "but what can you and a little eight-year-old child have in common?" "More than you imagine," Einstein replied. "I'm crazy about your home-made doughnuts which she brings me and she loves the way I do her arithmetic lessons."

Voltaire: "All men are born with a nose and 10 fingers, but no one is born with a knowledge of God."

"Are you interested in Eugenics?" asked the kindly old gentleman. "At my age, sir," replied the lady, "a bit of straight biology is much more preferable."

A big, powerfully-built man came hurrying through the lobby when he was approached by a fancy hussy. He blurted: "Scram, bitch!" The gal: "Russian, eh?" And with that she returned to the task of energetically molarizing a masticatory substance which was identified as chewing gum.

On the day the N. Y. World's Fair closed the girls in the Nudist Camp were laid off. When Tillie, after two seasons in the show was paid for the last time she was asked what she intended doing with her money. She replied: "With this and all my saved-up money I'm going to buy me the swellest outfit you ever saw."

When his wife died, Goldberg made the house ring with his lamentations. His brother, worried lest the widower suffer a nervous breakdown, persuaded him to go to his room, to quiet himself. For three days nothing was heard from him, so the brother decided to investigate. When he found him with the maid, the brother cried: "Louis, what are you doing? Only a few days your wife is dead and look at you." Goldberg stopped long enough to look up and reply: "In my grief, I should know what I'm doing."

As my readers know, it's no trouble any more to get into hotels whether with baggage or without. "Shall I bring in your baggage?" the bellboy asked the guest who had just registered. "Never mind, she can walk."

Said the farmer's wife to the drug-gist: "Now be sure to write plain on those bottles which is for the horse and which is for my husband. I don't want anything to happen to that horse before the hay's cut."

They still tell the old gag around here about the couple who brought the back seat into the police station and reported the car stolen.

It happened at the picture show. The hero was down for the count, and for a moment it looked as though the villain might accomplish his foul designs on the starry-eyed heroine, the niece of Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt and distant cousin of Lady Windbottom. All spectators were on the edge of their blavatskys, so bound in suspense that you could hear a pin drop—when all at once a medley of petulant voices was heard and there was a commotion in the center of the theater. One customer was down on his knees, rummaging around the feet of those next to him. "Say, Whassamatter with that guy?" one member of the audience grumbled. "He's lost sumpin'," another replied. "What d'ja lose down there, Mr. Man?" "I lost a caramel," the man mumbled. "A caramel! Chrissakes! D'ja hear that,

guys? He's lost a caramel! Say, d'ya mean to say you're makin' all this fuss over a lousy caramel?" "I gotta find it. It's got my teeth in it."

"At any rate," said the local auctioneer, "mine is a profession that women can't take up." "Nonsense!" said strong-minded Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt. "A woman would make quite as good an auctioneer as a man." "I wonder," replied the auctioneer. "Try to imagine an attractive woman standing up before a crowd and saying: 'Now, gents—all I want is an offer!' Then when some gent opened with a \$5 bid it'd have to be made clear just what he was bidding for."

Physicists ought to glamorize their subject by posing questions along the order of: What would happen if an irresistible red-head met an immovable fall-dark-and-handsome?

It has been said that when a man in the Tennessee hills marries an 11-year-old he combines rape with good-citizen-ship.

Charlie Lake, Youngstown, O.: "Haldeman-Julius really puts on a grand show—one of the world's rare spirits."

Joseph Herrick, Hollywood, Calif.: "I am paid up for several years of The Freeman, the mightiest of all publications in America, in my opinion. But how can I resist the best offer you have made in the entire life of the H-J publications? I borrowed the money to take advantage of your astounding bargain. It certainly is a pleasure to enclose \$3 for a three years' renewal to The Freeman and receive, free, the entire, complete 20 volumes of Questions and Answers, prepaid. It's almost unbelievable. More power and success to you. Keep up your sardonic sense of humor."

A census-take, who called at the home of a woman, was told she had three children. When asked their names, she gave them as J. C., M. C., and D. C. "I can't accept initials," said the census-taker. "You must give me their names." The woman replied: "J. C. stands for Just Curious, M. C. is for Misplaced Confidence, and D. C. is for Damned Carelessness."

The most snuggable and huggable girl in the precinct had just whispered a low, passionate "Yes." "Do your people know I write poetry?" he asked, nervously. "Not yet, dear," she replied. "I've told them about your drinking and gambling, about the term you served for violating the Mann Act, about the affairs you've been having all over town with all kinds of women, about the support you have to give each week to your little bastard, about the alimony you pay your three ex-wives, but I couldn't tell them everything at once."

The wife was sitting beside the death-bed of her husband. The man knew he was doomed and said with a sigh of repentance: "I've a confession to make, darling. I have been a whizzeroo of a chaser. I never missed a chance to make love to any stray female that came my way. You think I'm leaving you a fortune, but the truth is there isn't even any insurance, and as for my long list of stocks and bonds you thought I would leave, let me confess that I turned them into expensive motor cars and mink coats for a long string of wicked women. Never during all our 30 years of married life was I without a mistress, and most of the time I had several." Wife, feeling momentarily benign, rather than astringent: "Oh, don't let it worry you, old pal. I poisoned you."

I know a man of respectable ideas, a conservative Republican, who confesses his secret ambition is to throw an egg into an electric fan. I leave the psychological-sexual aspects (if any) to the Freudians.

"Shampeeoch" is a dog soap.

Last night I had my worst nightmare—I dreamed the Blitz Brothers (Adolf and Benito) were triplets.

My old, dear friend, Edna Porter, writes from N. Y. C., that a Jewish woman alien, who couldn't read or write, was registering. "Well," said the clerk, "just make a cross here after your name." She drew back in holy horror and pushed it aside, saying: "I would never make the sign of the cross!"

Ogden Nash, in his "The Face Is Familiar" tells how to get a party to break the ice:

Candy is dandy

But liquor is quicker.

Another Ogden Nash sentence: "No McTavish was ever lavish."

A draftee couldn't pass water at his physical test, so the doctor told him to return later with a specimen from home. The young man collected samples from his family—his father, sister and dog. When the doctor examined the sample he shook his head and said: "I've discovered something remarkable. Your father has diabetes, your sister is pregnant, the dog is in heat, and you're in the army."

Thus far the human race has made a complete success of the art of perpetuating its own stupidity.

The humors of unfortunate juxtaposition sometimes attract my attention. A Christmas edition of The Christian Herald had its cover decked out in holly, with an illustration in colors of the Virgin and Child. Below, in big letters, was this announcement: "The Great Betrayal—New Serial Starting in This Issue."

Writer: "I'm looking for a word for 'sin' that'll be just as much fun."

An auto worker took time out on the assembly line to mutter: "I could stand even this speed-up if the average chassis looked something like Betty Grable."

It's been yars, an' yars since I heard anyone sing the wartime favorite: "Ashes to ashes, and dust to dust; if the Camels don't git you, the Fatimas must!" It was as American as corn on the cob. It was usually sung by fellers with a sense of humor that reminded me of a wide-open fly with all its four buttons disassociated from their corresponding button-holes. They didn't belong to the arty-arty clique (with a capital F), nor did their thoughts go soaring into the empyrean. And when a mouse (woman to you) sang it, she always shook a mean pelvis and gave off a devilish swish. As for myself, it always put whee in my knee and made my muscles hustle. We didn't go in for whiffenpoof, back in the second decade of this century. If a gal did the singing, she might have a train-announcer's contralto, but she was as lively as a colored fish-fry. Such entertainers never made my blavatsky tired, even though the glamorous bitches weren't in ermine. Of course, it all lacked dignity. But, if I may repeat myself, dignity, my asthma! I always put my moola (dough to you, you dope!) on those hot-spot mamas, for they carried enough electricity to run a Buick—a perfect antidote for the company of Miss Priscilla Prissy-Pratt, who dressed like a girl scout leader and was unswervingly inhibited and uninhabited.

From a reader whose address is prison: "I did not become a Freeman reader until after I came to this place. Since then I haven't missed an issue. I believe it to be the best periodical published in America today, an opinion which, by the way, is shared with me by the sociologist of this institution, a brilliant man, holder of two university degrees. Each month he shuts himself away with *The Freeman*, and being a robust person, he shakes the building with his guffaws. He says that if he were in prison he would want no more than a complete collection of your publications."

For years I've held that you can tell what a book's like by reading the first page. Now I find that Arnold Bennett held the same notion. It's shocking to nurse an idea and then suddenly discover it looks like a 3-year-old bird's nest. But, the idea's sound anyway. One can't expect to be hot all the time. Candid self-criticism compels me to admit I'm not so hot—just a little warm now and then. Speaking of the heat, I've felt a pistol that's just been shot off. I've

dipped a thermometer into the dripping lava of Vesuvius, but the world's hottest thing is a red-headed virgin on the verge. But just what, I ask you, has all that to do with Bennett's claim that he could tell what a book was like by reading its first page?

Hitler, during his last visit to Mussolini, sneaked into Rome and hurried to the Vatican, where he fell on his knees before the great Moses statue by Michelangelo. He prayed: "Dear Moses, tell me how to get across that Strip of Water."

Heard in a drugstore: "I want a box of Kotex, thank God!"

A little boy rushed to his teacher and put something moist in her hand. "Hold this for me," he exclaimed, "there's a fight outside!" As he ran out, teacher realized she'd been put in charge of the kid's glass eye.

A drugstore proprietor, with whom I do business, is a pillar of piety in the church and a mighty power for righteousness in the community. After talking to him a while, I learned he had consulted his conscience about the sale of condoms. "Sure, I sell 'em," he blurted, "but I always want to know where they're going."

This obituary appeared in a church paper: "Louis March; born Feb. 7, 1867; died April 16, 1940; joined German-town church in 1884; leaves widow and 15 children; W. W. Smart assisted." It seems he was a good man, but needed help.

The movie star, Ray Milland, gives us this hint on the art of making subtle love to the girls: "You look away from the girl, but make her believe you are looking at her." I see now why I never became a great lover. I don't know how to look away and yet make her believe I'm looking at her.

From an Adola Brassiere advertisement: "No reason, girls, to feel so blue. I know a bra that'll oomphasize you."

The other day I gave birth to my 21st volume of "Questions and Answers." Being with book is like being with child, only it causes more labor and is more painful. Being pregnant 21 times in eight years ought to prove something. [Notice to letter-writers: No wisecracks about birth control, please.]

Don't miss "Escape." It's a peach—perfect acting, brilliant direction, a good story, and (here I raise my voice) a tract for the times.

Random House, in advertising Arch Oboler's book, "Radio Plays," says a radio playwright can have a larger audience in a half hour than Shakespeare had in a lifetime. True—for that half hour—and then what?

Price Gilbert, in a speech before a convention audience, said it's simple to sell Coca-Cola. All that's necessary is to use the power of reputation. To illustrate his point he sang several bars from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

A CBS listening post picked up a short-wave broadcast in Hindustani from the Nazi station at Zeesen, from which the following is taken: "We, the German people, respect Gandhi just as much as we do Adolf Hitler. Herr Hitler has the same principles as Gandhi. Hitler, too, teaches non-violence."

N. A. Crawford tells of a man who lives alone and would like to try some new recipes, but he's discouraged because they all start, "Take a clean dish."

A hundred years ago a N. Y. magazine printed this joke: "You're thin," said Pat, "and I'm thin, but Murphy's thinner than both of us put together." Isn't it about time it got into a radio comedian's script?

D. F. Stoolfire, Muskogee, Okla., says the jingle I asked for goes like this:

Some come here to sit and think,  
Some come here for worse.  
Some come here to spit and drink,  
And swap in noble verse.

Some come here to grit and blink,  
Or pat an empty purse.  
And ponder well and wonder how  
The hell it could be worse.

The Fidelity Trust Insurance Company has a letter from a woman who said she didn't trust her husband and therefore wanted his fidelity insured.

As this is being written Metaxas is slipping the axe to the axis.

The German-American Bund's official organ, *Beobachter*, knows effective Nazi propaganda when it sees it. The November 7, 1940, issue of this journal of Hitlerism reprints the attacks on help to Great Britain which have been appearing in Oscar Ameringer's *The American Guardian*. The great Oscar (in the name of Socialism!) has been standing with Fifth-Columnist Lindbergh, Dawes, Hoover, Ford, Father (of what?) Coughlin, George Sylvester Viereck, General Hugh Johnson and our other appeasers of friends of Brutalitarianism.

Francis Hackett, in his book, "I Chose Denmark," joins *The American Freeman's* one-man crusade against what American bakers call bread, and contributes this piece of dispraise of that vile article: "aerated blotting paper."

No sooner did I record the gratifying news that Francis Hackett had joined me in the great fight to expose American bakers' bread than I received an official communique that my old fight to call our Civil War the Civil War had

been taken up by another literary leader, Bernard DeVoto. For years (see my volumes of "Questions and Answers" if you think I'm lying) I've fought against that pet device of our professional Suthin-uhs (or So'th'nurs), that heap of heifer-dust, that cackle of many a professor demeritus—*The War Between the States*. Once I even used a four-letter word for the results of flatulency in order to hit the quacks. "Not 'War Between the States,'" writes Mr. DeVoto, "That is the soft-deceptive phrase behind which in the best of metaphors, lurks a Trojan Horse. Its official name is the War of Rebellion, and if you want to do business with the U. S. A., which won it, you have got to call it that. Its accepted name among unofficial, right-minded, unromantic, plain-speaking men in the Civil War. That phrase accurately defines and describes it, and under that name it will go down in history . . . Not 'War Between the States.' Civil War!"

B. L. Taylor, Naval Dental School, School, Washington, D. C., asks if you've heard the one about the new recruits. It goes like this: They were lined up and counting off. One, Two, Three, Four; and then with a high-pitched voice, "One," and continuing with the Two, Three, Four. Well, the hardboiled sergeant, after making them count over, and noticing the high-pitched voice again, stepped up to the timid "One" and said: "Are you 'One'?" The reply was: "Oh, yes, sir! Are you one, too?"

Similie by A. M. Paschall, Azle, Tex.: "Blushed like a deacon caught coming out of a fancy house."

When Willie Hammerstein was managing a vaudeville house, a nut got into his office and announced he wanted a job. "For \$2,500 I'll commit suicide on your stage." Mr. Hammerstein thought for a moment and found this escape: "Yes, but what would you do for an encore?"

A lot of this country is run by people in the middle income and middle brow class.

Lin Yutang tells, in his "With Love and Irony," what he—a charming, witty, intelligent, skeptical Chinese—wants out of life. He wants "a room of my own, not too orderly, books and friends . . . decent clothes . . . a good library, good cigars and a woman who understands and leaves me free to be myself . . . I want the freedom to be myself." I can't find much wrong with his list, except perhaps the way he overlooked putting a half-case of Canadian Club into the bottom drawer of his dresser. Incidentally, Dr. Lin Yutang is a vegetarian who likes to flavor his vegetables with meat. In another place he defends kow-towing on the ground that it's a pleasant, non-violent form of exercise. He didn't, but could have, said

that champagne is the cheapest drink and caviar the cheapest food—if someone else pays for them.

The newspapers tell of a letter from Germany, received by a Californian, in which the following sentence was contained: "We are as happy and comfortable as though we were in Paradise, California." Paradise, Calif., happens to be a cemetery.

About 30 years ago I registered in a down-at-the-heels, grubby hotel run by a Frenchman, who asked: "Duz ze gentleman weesh ze room for lodging or for pleasure?" Ten years ago, according to a popular joke, a desk clerk asked a Wall Street broker: "Does the gentleman want a room for sleeping or jumping?"

It was Thoreau who said that his idea of circumstantial evidence was a fish in the milk.

Fundamental law of politics: "If you can't beat 'em, jine 'em."

Another proverb that I don't believe: One picture is worth 10,000 words.

My son, Henry, who's a senior at the University of Kansas, is wondering why instructors don't practice what they preach. Recently he got back a quiz paper with the grade "B" and an illegible message from the teacher. After puzzling over it for a while, he took it up to the desk to be deciphered. The message was: "Next time please write a little more distinctly."

Bit of talk: "I ask only one question: Are you sanitary?"

An Arkansas Freemanite, when ordering a 10-lb. grab-bag, issued this four-negatived warning: "Please don't send no religion as I don't want to go to no heaven."

This generation is proving to the hilt the truth of Voltaire's remark that "history is only a record of crimes and misfortunes."

An attempt to suggest decency, humanitarianism and justice to a Nazi would be as useless and meaningless as to try to describe the taste of cheese blintzes and chopped chicken livers to an Eskimo.

I can't stand a stingy man. W. C. Hazlitt, in his "English Proverbs," tells of a miser who'd drive a louse a mile for its skin and tallow. I know a farmer who's so stingy he wouldn't give you the sweat off his bulls. The mere sight of him gives me the tingling meemies.

When wit travels the streets, walks with common humanity, exchanges remarks with all manner of people, steps into saloons, looks in on unmoral and immoral women, it's natural for it to get a little dirty. Those who scorn such wicked company have nothing to do but

join the sweetie-pie school of litrachoer. The wit that's been keeping company with the men in the street is full of manhood vitamins and come-again calories.

Many of the glorious pleasures of life—persimmons, fresh figs, dates, pumpernickel, corn on the cob, alligator pears, and the like—are also good for the bowels, thus giving profound satisfaction at the end as well as the beginning.

A thousand authors (at least) have been credited with this epigram: "A statesman is a successful politician who is dead." It sounds true, all right, but why do so many writers slap their names on it?

Don't waste your time with epigrams, if you want to become a famous writer. In the entire history of authorship hardly two dozen writers have won fame as creators of epigrams. Today's successful penmen whave learned that lesson, which explains why so few of them put their hand to that tight job. Why boil a notion down to a sentence when it's more profitable to blow it up to a book? That's one reason why there's so much literary pish-posh in the world.

Prostitutes can get to the point quicker than any other commercial bodies.

He who receives a good turn should never forget it, for there's always the possibility of a return engagement.

Guy E. Whitaker, Almo, Ida., writes: "I received your 20 volumes of "Questions and Answers" and am more than pleased with them. I was deeply impressed with the way your impressions and opinions of the movements of world events have worked out. You have been wrong at times, and partly wrong on other subjects, but as a general thing you've proven to be a pretty good prophet."

A reader, who won't play second-fiddle-faddle to anyone, draws a full breath and comes up with this: "Wee Wendell Willkie Went Woefully Wrong, Waltzing Wretchedly Wallstreetward, Wiscracking With Wind."

My shelf of "Questions and Answers" continues to grow. Vol. 21 is hot off the press. That brings my wordage up to 1,680,000—all written since January, 1933—the month Hitler stole power. That's at the rate of almost three volumes per year, with about 80,000 words to the volume. How's that for steady literary blitzkrieging? One would imagine that after all that verbiage my voice would sound like an old gate creaking in the wind, but it isn't so at all. True, I'm not always dignified, but I always say: Dignity, my asthma! Some readers

comment on the fact that as I grow older my humor gets more unbuttoned. Some try to read ominous things into that. Others wonder how I succeed in remaining unhoosegowed, especially when I let loose some impertinent remarks about the Ethereal Esquire who runs that big Real Estate in the Clouds. One reader ordered me to switch the paper from his home to his postoffice box because he didn't want his niece to grow worse than she is, considering her doctor gets her unfixed at least twice yearly. I never heard of a girl ruined by a book, as Jimmy Walker once remarked. That niece is already rich in boudoir talent, and anything she picks up in these columns won't make any difference in her colorful life. My intellectual clam-bake won't hinder or accelerate her in her chase for thrills in the game of emotional patty-cake.

Jose Acosta Rivera, of Jimenez, Chih., Mexico, sends me this bit of humor, which is concerned with Don Francisco de Quevedo, one of the foremost Spanish poets of the 16th Century and a man of keen wit, and thereby a favorite with the king. This monarch called him once and said: "Quevedo, I want you to invent an excuse that should be worse than the fault for which it was given. If you don't, I'll have you slapped into jail." Quevedo, who knew the king could do anything with his subjects, was in a fix, but he came out of it in a swell way, for the next morning, as the king came walking across his palace, he hid himself behind one of the pillars, and as the king passed he sprang out and gave him a hearty kiss on each cheek. The king, indignant, cried: "Quevedo, what does this mean?" Quevedo stepped back humbly, doffed his cap, and answered: "Majesty, pardon me; I thought it was the queen."

Scrap of talk: "James Joyce is a literary cross-word puzzler."

He: "What are you doing?" She: "Writing to my Fairy Godmother." He: "Whats that?" She: "Don't you know everyone has a Fairy Godmother?" He: "No, but I've got an uncle I'm suspicious about."

Some 300 years ago, James Howell wrote: "Change of weather is the discourse of fools."

Edna Porter, a N. Y. C. Freemanette, says a friend in Europe writes that she and her husband have given up smoking cigarettes, to save money. That's getting life down to a gnat's rear end.

According to Frank Case's "Do Not Disturb," the writer, Wolcott Gibbs, was visiting a newly rich friend in the country and got pretty tired of the vulgarian's show-off tennis courts, swimming pools and tiled stables. Pointing to a tree on the terrace, the friend said:

"See that tree? It stood for 50 years on top of that mountain. I had it moved in here just to shade the swimming pool." Mr. Gibbs said, evenly: "That just shows what God could do if he had money."

An elderly man, who was tenderly lifting the leaves of an artichoke, one after another, remarked gently and reminiscently: "Are you old enough to remember when women wore petticoats?"

Someone has let slip, the remark that "The Freeman is a Coney Island of mental recreation." I don't know just how to take that crack. It may be a sly way of calling me a grubby, down-at-the-heel heel. Behind this verbal cabbage may be a gesture to outblitz the Blitz Brothers (Adolf and Benito), or at least to sneer that I'm giving a clam-bake (in radio lingo, a rotten show), but I have a way of disposing of such riff-raff by telling them to climb up the well-known flue—the kind that everyone has. But all this may be waste of emotion. The writer may have meant something friendly and quotable.

J. Acosta Rivera, Jimenez, Chih., Mexico, writes: "I am a regular reader of The Freeman and enjoy the fine bits of humor both from you and your readers."

A handsome young man entered a store to buy a pair of gloves for his sweetheart, Lolita. At the same time and at the same counter, a woman bought for herself a pair of panties. Somewhat in embarrassment over the good looks of the young man, the girl at the counter made a mistake, giving the package containing the gloves to the lady and the one containing the bloomers to the young man. Later the boy friend sent it to his sweetheart with a letter, as follows: "Dearest Lolita: I am sending you a new pair instead of the ones I spoiled for you last night. I'd give anything to be at your side to help you put them on and give you some instructions about the way to fix 'em. If they are oversized, let them drop downwards. Nowadays many women use them so. The girl who sold them to me says she has a pair exactly the same kind and has worn 'em for more than three months with no need of sending them to the laundry, as they haven't wrinkled nor soiled. I almost forgot to tell you, Lolita, never to take 'em off while on the street-cars, for you might get a cold or get your skin cracked, and above all, don't let cousin Bob handle them, for he has very rough hands and might tear them off."

A Jewish refugee got a job as janitor in a convent. After three weeks, the Mother Superior of the convent telephoned Bishop Beerbelch to tell

him he'd have to get another janitor. "What's the matter? Isn't his work satisfactory?" asked the bishop. "Perfect," the Mother Superior replied. "The convent never before has been kept so clean. We do have some trouble with his ignorance of our ways. He persists in washing his face and hands in the holy water, and stacks his broom and mop in the confessional. But he's always so sorry about those offenses, when I explain them to him, it's easy for us to pardon him." "Then what's the trouble with him?" queried Bishop Beerbelch. "It seems to me you have a jewel." "A jewel he may be," admitted the Mother Superior, "but the man is driving me out of my mind. He keeps on calling me Mother Shapiro!"

Douglas Jerrold, in a letter which never was sent to the red-headed virgin on the verge, said: "Honest bread is all very well—it's the butter that makes the temptation."

My favorite six-year-old girl, precocious as ever, asked a little boy: "How old are you?" "I don't know. Four or five, I guess." "Don't you know for sure?" "No." Then she got an inspiration. "Do you ever do any thinking about women?" she asked. "No." "Then you're four," was her triumphant conclusion.

Golf professional: "Now, Mr. Jones, there's one thing I must impress on you—always keep your eye on the ball." Novice (coldly): "Oh, so that's the sort of club I've joined."

The young man, a sparkle in his eye, walked into a famous Fifth Avenue establishment and picked out a magnificent diamond tiara. "If I bought this on easy payments," he asked the sales person, "how long would it take me to pay for it completely?" "How much," the salesman countered, "can you afford to pay each week?" The young man rubbed his chin. "Well," he said finally, "I earn \$25 a week. I imagine I can pay off about \$5 a week on this tiara." "Five dollars a week!" the salesman cried. "Why, at that rate, it would take you more than 300 years to pay off this diamond tiara!" The young man gazed longingly at the precious thing. "So what?" he mused. "She's worth it!"

#### BAKER'S GUILT IS UPHELD

The American Freeman's crusade to break the back of Norman Baker, the notorious cancer quack, reached a successful climax on November 22, when the U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals, sitting in St. Louis, Mo., affirmed the conviction of the Eureka Springs, Ark., and Muscatine, Ia., "miracle worker." The court said the evidence (much of it taken from the columns of The American Freeman) proved Baker's

claims to be "pure hoax" and "utterly false." Baker, who was in jail awaiting the outcome of his appeal to a higher court, must serve four years in a federal prison for his numerous crimes against thousands of cancer victims, whom he robbed and sent home to die. When The American Freeman began its campaign against Baker's fake cancer cure his "hospitals" were running full tilt and the cash register was ringing merrily. Baker was, in short, riding high, wide and handsome. But The Freeman struck out with its full strength, presenting evidence to prove that Baker was nothing more than a common thief. Baker soon filed two libel suits against the editor of The American Freeman, one for \$500,000 and the other for \$100,000, but before the cases could come to trial Baker was in trouble himself, having been indicted for using the mails to defraud while promoting his "cure." When Baker filed his libel suits, the paper's friends rushed in and gave material and moral support. Their money enabled The Freeman to continue exposing Baker's amazing career and to meet the legal issues raised in the libel suits. Editor Haldeman-Julius has stated, on more than one occasion, that the real credit for the downfall of Norman Baker belongs with The Freeman's loyal and generous readers, who dug down for the dollars that made a victorious outcome possible. This case shows what a free, independent, fearless, unsubsidized periodical can do for the public good, especially when that publication's readers stand ready to support the editor. Norman Baker's racket was crushed by The American Freeman. The record proves that to be true.

A melodrama was being played to an audience of factory workers. The heroine, lured all unsuspecting to the villain's lair, had just realized with horror that his intentions demanded a sacrifice on her part that's worse than death. Swiftly she snatched up a carving-knife. "Stand back, you unspeakable cad, or you will rue this hour!" she cried defiantly. "I may be only a poor, weak feminine creature—but I'll sell my honor dearly!" Came an accusing voice from the gallery: "Profiteer!"

Dr. Morris Fishbein, editor of the Journal of the American Medical Association, tells of a doctor who prides himself on the skill with which he taps patients in order to gain information as to the physical condition of the cavities within. Going to call on a friend one day, he applied his tapping skill to the door of his apartment, tapped it once, and announced confidently, "Yes he's in, and by Jove, there's a woman with him!"

A Chinese fireman, in Shanghai, wrote the report in English on a fire which had damaged a school building. Among other things, he took care to mention the conspicuous bravery of a Chinese fireman who had climbed up the ladder three times, and each time had "come down pregnant." The chief summoned the man into his presence. He referred the chief to the dictionary definition—"with child."

"Here I go shuffling down Memory Lane again," said a gabby fellow who'd been places and didn't mind telling the world. "I remember when I first decided to pass up my usual \$2 house and take my patronage to a \$5 house. I didn't know then that the only difference is that a \$5 house has floor lamps. When I got into the place the madame said, 'Give!' I went through my pockets and at last had to confess: 'I'm sorry! I thought I came in with \$5, but I have only \$4.97.' The madame, a woman of vast robustness, gave a quick look and said: 'We'll not quarrel about 3 cents. Give me your evening paper and we'll call it square!'"

The Daily Worker ran a half-page ad in the November 16, 1940, issue of The Nation, in which it gave its news coverage quite a boost, but nowhere did the paid announcement give the address of the publication or its subscription price.

D. H. Galloway, Roswell, N. Mex., says he was in a Los Angeles department store elevator that was packed with people. Near the door stood a big fat woman and a tall man. Behind them was a woman and a little boy. As the car started, the fat woman gave the tall man a resounding slap. At the second floor the man got off hastily, and was his face red. The fat woman got off at the fourth floor. As the elevator went on up, the mother remarked to another woman: "I'd like to go back to the fourth floor and find out what happened." The little boy began to cry and said: "No, mama, I don't want to go. That was a bad, mean woman. She pushed my face so I couldn't breathe, and I bit her in her big place." [This is strictly a little comedy of action-pure slapstick—the kind that the Mack Sennett movies exploited so thoroughly. The fat woman rests her protruding rear on the little boy's face; the little boy bites the offending part; the lady slaps an innocent bystander. That's all.]

Some readers apply to me the words Ellis Parker Butler applied to Mark Twain: "Guess his humor ain't refined quite enough to suit my mind."

Cicero said joking and humor "are pleasant, and often of extreme utility." Coleridge went further, holding that no mind is "thoroughly well-organized that

is deficient in a sense of humor." It has been argued that a sense of humor will keep a man aware of his own absurdities, thereby saving him from the commission of all sins, to which Samuel Butler (the younger) added "save those that are worth committing."

Much-quoted gag: "The U. S. Navy calls for whisky, the British Navy takes to rum, and Duce's Navy sticks to port."

Ten years ago an itinerant religious pageant troupe showed up in Denver, where the actor who played the leading part and the one who played Judas got into a fight, with the result that the former shoved the latter through a plate glass window. The Rocky Mountain News carried the facts of the story, but killed this inspired headline:

Jesus Settles 2,000-year-old Grudge;  
Pushes Judas Thru Plate Glass Window

I don't vouch for it, but it's said Mussolini in mid-November sent this wire to his general in Albania: "My invincible legions, enroute to their inexorable destiny, should pause for a fresh look-see at the road-map."

The Hearst press gives us a daily lesson in the art of making dullness sensational.

A writer's unforgivable sin—dullness.

Raymond Gram Swing is a good reporter, but he'd be better if he had a sense of humor.

Whenever H. V. Kaltenborn gets the feeling his comments are flat and dull, he raises his voice.

When General Tom Thumb, Barnum's famous midget, was playing a certain town, the local paper sent a reporter around to his hotel to interview him. The reporter got the room number and knocked at the right door. It was opened by a towering giant, who filled the doorway from threshold to lintel and jamb to jamb. "I'm from the Times," says the reporter. "I want to interview Tom Thumb." "Glad to see you," says the giant, "I'm General Tom Thumb. Come right 'n." "You're crazy," says the reporter, peering up at the giant, "General Tom Thumb's a midget." "Well," says the giant, "this is my day off."

My story about Colonel Carter and the dragon brings back the gag about the sour-pussed old farmer in a day coach with an animal-box on the seat beside him, obviously containing something alive. A drummer sits down opposite. After studying the box a while he leans over and asks: "What you got in that box, stranger?" "Mongoose," says the farmer, tersely enough to close the conversation. The traveling salesman shuts up for a few minutes, then: "Say, what's a mongoose?" "Little animal that kills snakes." The traveling man ponders that one for a few minutes, "What-

cha want to kill snakes for?" . . . "I got a brother . . ." "What's your brother got to do with snakes?" . . . "Wal, he drinks . . ." "But those ain't real snakes, brother." . . . "This ain't a real mon-goose."

I still insist there's too much shicedrek in the world.

Iva Ettor, Burbank, Calif: "Of all the scholars I've followed for a quarter of a century—and they are many—Joseph McCabe is tops."

If my opinion's worth anything, it seems to me I'm a pessimist, but manage to keep cheerful about it.

We're all malicious; the best we can hope for is to be amiable about it.

Man cannot live by bread alone; he must do a little gravy-dunking.

An American thinks he's moral when he's only uncaught.

He who can, does; he who cannot, preaches patience.

Prisons are monumental reminders of the fact that the world is inhabited by only two classes—those who occupy the cells and those who ought to be in them.

"You have a right to your opinion"—130,000,000 Americans say it but not 130 mean it.

If justice is blind, why is it that a \$20 lawyer has never been known to beat a \$20,000 lawyer?

A wise man, in his dealings with others, always makes allowances for stupidity.

No one has yet discovered a sure system for confounding the amiably malicious.

The more civilized man has become the closer he has brought the toilet to the bedroom.

The fact that man is offensive to himself is proven by the immense growth and prosperity of the toilet paper industry.

No snob can be snobbish during those critical moments when he "has to go."

Thomas Carlyle said "Man is a hole-filling animal." He's right—in a couple of ways.

Only a fool tries to steal ideas from the truly great.

A reader, who's 72, writes for advice on how to break himself of the habit of masturbation. At his age it isn't a "sin"; it's an achievement.

To be successful, an author must tell his readers what they already know or what they want to believe.

Writers—especially novelists—like to describe what they call "feminine intuition," which they take for granted to be a fact when in reality it's only

a myth. Funny, no psychologist has ever found such a phenomenon. The truth is, men and women have the same intuitions, the differences being only in individuals, regardless of sexual apparatus.

Groucho Marx's humor is his own, and, if you like screwiness, it's good. Remember how he told a high-pressuring California realtor: "Take away those mountains and the Pacific Ocean, and what've you got?" Or, consider the incident of the missing painting. Groucho decided it must be in the house next door, but recalling there was no house next door, he decided: "Then we'll have to build one."

When the drug-store fizzician was asked to make a banana split with chopped walnuts he told the customer he was out of walnuts so he'd have to make it without chopped peanuts. [Yes, quite popular 10 years ago, but still going the rounds.]

I'm told that along about the fourth drink this screwy gag gets laughs: A dinner-guest is served creamed cauliflower, who dips in both his hands and rubs the creamed cauliflower into his scalp with great care and thoroughness. H's hostess, after a few moments of speechless horror, finally gasps: "Do you realize that's creamed cauliflower?" "Cauliflower!" he cries, apparently alarmed. "Why, I thought it was parsnips!"

I like the way some of my readers are making frank use of the facilities I offer for interesting personal correspondence between my subscribers. I refer, of course, to the personal ads in my classified department, which I hope to see grow. Classified ads are the poor man's advertising. The big fellows can buy \$8,000 pages in the Saturday Evening Post, but that doesn't mean the little fellow with a few dollars can't put in his "Howdy." One Freemanite, who wanted to hear from women Free-thinkers, says he's writing regularly to an interesting, intelligent, informed reader. His purpose, needless to say, is to "feel out" and not "up" the feminine portion of my subscribers.

B. L. Taylor, Naval Dental School, Washington, D. C., says the Freethinker's Calendar advertisement (which he paid for out of his own funds) is drawing many inquiries, though it's doubtful if the calendar will be put on the market this year, but next year ought to see it sure. He adds: "Two sailors from Quantico were in to see me yesterday. They have received The Freeman and are getting a big kick out of it."

Two fellows were bending elbows at a bar. The first man was doing all the talking. He gesticulated wildly, banged the bar, shook his fist in the little fel-

lows face, and finally let loose with a series of terrific wallops on the silent chap's jaw. When the big guy pulled away he was asked to explain his strange conduct, for witnesses agreed the little fellow hadn't done a thing to provoke the attack. Said the mauler: "I was talkin' about politics an' I sez sumpin an' this squirt looks like he don't believe me, which is practic'ly callin' me a liar, ain't it?"

A young man, finding himself suddenly getting hard of hearing, decided to see a doctor, who found him otherwise in excellent health. "Do you drink intoxicating liquor?" the doctor asked. "Oh, not more than seven or eight highballs a day." "Do you smoke?" "Yes, I'm a chain smoker—three packs a day." "Do you—er—have any lady friends?" "Why, of course, there are six girls I'm quite fond of and who give me heavy dates." "I see," said the doctor, "I'm afraid you'll have to give all that up." "What!" cried the young man, "all that just to hear a little better?"

Monty Woolley muffed a line in the Boston opening of "The Man Who Came to Dinner." The line as written by the authors reads: "I have now fifteen minutes to reach into my hat and pull out the God-damnedest rabbit you have ever seen," but George S. Kaufman instructed Woolley that for puritanical Boston and its population of Priscilla Prissy-Pratts it would be wise to substitute the words "most gigantic" for "God-damnedest." This is what came out in the first performance: "I have now fifteen minutes to reach into my PANTS . . . (he paused because he realized his error) . . . and pull out the most gigantic . . . (he paused again, completely startled, and roared on) . . . and pull out the most gigantic RABBIT you have ever seen." The audience gasped, while Kaufman and co-author Hart, collapsed in the wings.

Bert Lahr makes good and fancy with a story about a gent in Russia who was considered tough because he went around bumping heads together. When he came to America, he continued being a gorilla. One day he came home all banged up and his wife asked what happened. He explained that he got into a fight with an Irishman, but he gave this Irishman good. "But what happened to you?" his wife demanded. "Your eyes are black; your nose looks like Russia; and from your lips is coming borsht." "Oh, that don't count. I gave it to him good but HE made fancy."

The director, Auriol Lee, tells this polite yarn: I once had the misfortune to direct a woman who had a vagabond bosom. Since this definitely distracted from the lines I insisted that she wear a brassiere. She began to pout. "Oh, I don't want to. My friends like me this

way." "Naturally," I said, "but that is outside the theater and an entirely different system. That's Braille."

That lively wit, F. P. A., once noted that the unfortunate thing about being a humorist is the fact that his "sharpest thrusts are generally discounted on the ground that they are All in Fun." Humor isn't one of the grits-and-hog-fat necessities of life. People have been known to get along without it all their lives. Several come to mind as I write—Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt, the Maharaja of Privydore, Lady Windbottom, most Men o' Gawd, the Ethereal Esquire, and Mahatma Gandhi. The world doesn't waste time crying for disturbing thinkers who laughingly de-glitter glittering generalities. The masses are leaving the priest-run joss-houses in droves, but that doesn't mean they're jamming the stands for the latest works of the writers who throw spit-balls at the aides-de-crap. Spiritual cocaine is still respectable while debunking isn't. When the people explore the field of escapist make-believe they don't want to be disturbed by deflators of stuffed shirts. A writer must work in cellophane and tinsel, and not flash a sheet of litmus paper whenever an idea, real or near, is hung up for consideration. You're darn tootin'. The average person is like Priscilla Prissy-Pratt, who holds that the true purpose of literature is to flatter her and make her feel important. She expects an author to tell her her shicedrek is attar of roses.

When the actress received loud bursts of applause for her performance, her agent turned to the person who was sitting next to him and said: "I always said she was good, and now I believe it."

When you're able to identify and list your own prejudices you're beginning to get wise to the show.

During a hot spell Mrs. Bard took her little four-year-old boy over to call on Mrs. Miller, whose two little daughters were having a grand time running naked through a lawn sprinkler. "Of course, Buster, you can take off your clothes and play." Later that evening a caller at the Millers' asked Buster what he had been doing that nice hot day. "I was over playing with the Bard kids," he replied. "The Bard kids—are they boys or girls?" asked the caller. Buster looked puzzled and then answered, "I don't know. They didn't have any clothes on!"

Many writers of popular music resort to a detestably pharisaical form of narcotizing bunk when they take a theme from Beethoven, Tchaikowsky, or some other master, adopt it as their own and then decompose it until the heifer-dust becomes as fragrant as a policeman's sox.

In his "A Treasury of the World's Great Letters," M. Lincoln Schuster says that "in Venezuela love letters are sent through the post at half rate, if enclosed in bright red envelopes." This sounds exciting, but the skeptic in me resists accepting the statement as cold fact. I'd have to see one of the letters with my own eyes, preferably addressed to me by a black-eyed Latin girl who had invested in a red envelope. Even then I'd ask an assistant postmaster (they always know more than a postmaster) if the postage showed the sender had enjoyed a 50 percent discount on account of her passion for the snooky-ookums school of literature.

J. W. Gallagher, Trail, B. C., Canada: "The Freeman is much appreciated in this country just now as it is about the last gleam of light left for the duration of the war."

This manufacturer of lit'ry woodpecker doodle likes: trapeze-phrases; black lace step-ins; Campbell's mushroom soup; the Better Business Bureau of Kansas City, Mo.; research into the technique of siren man-traps; artists who know how to draw a chansonette; the inner secrets of the femme fatale.

I don't like: shoot-and-scamp Western movies; wit that's in the form of affectionate insults; the bassoon-voiced, frozen-panned Dorothy Lamour; above-love June-moon ditties; any picture about the Northwest Mounted Police.

Gustave Goldstein, Chicago, Ill.: "I think The Freeman is truly educational and a pleasure to read because the style in which it is written is fascinating. I enjoy your humor, too."

The reason I can't stand people who are afraid of change is because they remind me of myself.

Clifford R. Pearson, Minneapolis, Minn.: "I have just received your 'Shackles of the Supernatural' and seven back issues of The Freeman. I haven't looked at another piece of reading matter since I got them. They seem to me to be full of life and I get a kick out of them. I like your jokes—most of them."

The nice thing about writing for my own paper is that I can express my opinions freely without fear or favor—and suffer no consequences except the loss of subscribers. Some readers don't like my opinions because their own opinions are different. As Stephen Crane said: "There is nothing in the world save opinion—and opinion be damned." I don't mind having angry readers damn my opinions, but when they shut off their subscriptions they hit below the belt

right into the darkest recesses of the pocketbook. It costs money to get new readers. But there's no use talking—I don't know how to dress up my opinions so that others who are opinionated won't be offended. Often, when I get blue over the fact that the morning mail showed an exceptionally large stack of cancellations, I console myself with meditation, medication, prayer, and a silly story. It's the Abraham Lincoln in me. And to give this somewhat gloomy paragraph a lighter finish let me tell about the two London ladies who were discussing the war. One said, "I don't like these Blitz Brothers (Adolf and Benito) because you never know when you are going to be knocked into maternity." The other lady, equally vehement: "Oh, yes, but I don't like the blackouts—you never know who to blame!" . . . That, it strikes me, is rather cute, but even such a piece of innocent verbiage will bring me two, perhaps three, letters telling me to stop contaminating their boudoirs.

Motto for a blend of pipe tobacco: "Fit for a king—mighty pleasant to the queen."

This faithful lit'ry servitor is glad to pass on the latest version of a popular story told here several years ago (a fact that can be checked by referring to the vols. of "Q&A"): An Easterner on his uppers was trying to induce a pal in similar circumstances to thumb with him to Los Angeles. "Why," he enthused, "everything's free out there! Free food, free beds, free liquor, free lovin'—" The pal, suspicious, interrupted, "Who told you?" "I just got a letter from my sister."

Thomas Jefferson, putting aside problems of government, said that "games played with a ball stamp no character on the mind." My obiter dictum on the subject—assuming my readers want it—is that Jefferson administered the coup de grace to an activity that deserved it, but what brings me up with an air of portentous gravity is the fact that while Jefferson's been gone these many decades, the different ball games are still here, with some new ones thrown in. But that doesn't mean Jefferson was wrong. Maybe the answer to this problem is the cry of Smoky Stover: "A Foo and his Goo are soon Poo."

At the county fair near Girard I heard a gesticulating farmer tell this to a group: "A man who had a chicken farm thought he'd heard a noise in the hen house just as he wuz goin' to bed. Havin' on jest 's long underwear, he slips on a pair of house shoes, gits a shot gun and flashlight and goes out

to investigate. He throws open the hen house door, kinda squats down, point-in' his gun and flashlight an' peers into the hen abode. Well, you know the seat construction of long-handled underwear. They kinda gapped, an' about this time his ol' houn' dawg came over to see what wuz goin' on an' touched his master with his cold nose on the rear, and the chicken farmer killed 15 of his chickens. Think it over; it gits funnier the longer you think about it."

Snatch of conversation, heard for the 1,000th time: "Women make the best prostitutes." Another: "Her real name's Fleur de Floosie." Still another: "The moment you have a woman in your arms, you have her on your hands."

The author, George Whitman, Jr., says he's working on a booklet entitled: "What the June Bride Will Dare."

A favorite story in the American Navy is the one about a sailor who wired his captain for extension of leave, his reason being that he was about to become a papa. The captain replied: "While I know you were indispensable at the laying of the keel, I see no reason why you should be present at the launching."

At the moment I can't think of anything more amazing than the fact that The American Freeman, official organ of the pious and righteous, costs only a buck per year.

James Thurber: "Humor is a kind of emotional chaos told about calmly and quietly in retrospect." That's a neat parody on Wordsworth's: "Poetry takes its origin in emotion recollected in tranquillity."

My writings (especially the volumes of "Questions and Answers") will be read when Homer and Virgil are forgotten—but, in the words of a reader, not until then.

A member of Hemengway's hair-on-the-chest-and-around-the-navel skool of litrachoor was at it again—abusing all the other modern literati. Said a hearer: "He would abuse all the ancient ones, if he knew their names." Whereupon the Hemengwayite cried: "Your mind is chrome-yellow, like a baby's diapers." Then he dropped a remark about "bulbous nudity" and started on the second quart. When he got well into that, he began muttering about the one who had been guilty of "bulbous nudity" but only one phrase could be understood—"subcretin gullibility." He then passed out.

If Henry Ford could get degrees for ignorance he'd have as many as a thermometer.

A colored preacher, when asked the secret of a fine sermon, answered: "Well, I get up and tell 'em what I'm going to tell 'em, and then I tell 'em, and then I tell 'em what I told 'em."

Those readers who have been following this debunking publication these many years will give ear to the wise words of Immanuel Kant: "Anyone who has once known the taste of real critical thought is revolted by dogmatic rubbish of any kind."

One of the world's minor ailments: too much clowning oratory and not enough clowns.

Leon Trotsky, in 1937, summed up Joseph Stalin's place in history, as follows: "Stalin will depart from the scene laden with all the crimes which he has committed—not only as the grave-digger of the revolution but as the most sinister figure in the history of mankind."

Eugene G. Steele, M. D., Lebanon, Mo.: "The last census taken down here shows more horse's posteriors than horses. How do you account for it?"

My volumes of "Q&A" have it in them to de-narcotize Homo Boobiens.

Mrs. Goldberg: "Would you lend me your carpet beater for use on my mattress?" Mrs. Murphy: "He won't be back for hours, and besides you have no right to try to break up my home."

Whenever that dreary little man is called Herr Hitler I want to change it to Herr Shirt Hitler.

I like: quick-minded dogs and people; coke as a chaser; G. A. Borgese; Gaetano Salvemini; the prodigious anger of Donald Duck; de-narcotizing books; shopping by mail; people who practice Pater's "subtle tact of omission"; happy, lively phrases; odd words; the humor of cuckoldry; most of the off-color stories told by bright women.

I don't like: infant prodigies; amateur cooks; after-shave lotions; broadcasts by movie gossips; immense hotels; swanky motor cars; red finger nails; Time magazine's telegraphic English; temporary blondes; people who are heinously ignorant about everything but yencing; pickbrains (who act like pickpockets); child actors; gastronomical algebra; people who tell me they can't pass The Freeman around because of its jokes; reformed spelling; big books that are aimed to prove that zero plus zero equals zero.

Mark Twain: "Humor must not professedly teach, and it must not professedly preach, but it must do both if it would live forever. By forever I mean 30 years."

Silence, said Josh Billings, is one of the hardest arguments to refute.

Each set of my vols. of "Q&A" carry sump'n like a tonic folk-wisdom, despite an occasional rambunctiousness and a veneer of levity.

Robert C. Loper, The Oswego Democrat, Oswego, Kans.: "I came across a copy of The American Freeman the other day, and immediately began to wonder where it had been all my life. Send the paper to my home address because I don't want the bunch down at the office to get it until I've read it from kiver to kiver."

My volumes of "Q&A" are as indigenous as Philadelphia scrapple.

Seddeee, as he weptandweptandwept through eyes like the slits in an out-house door: "Why have I had to wait so long for a litry show like The American Freeman?" If you readers would pass the good news on to your friends, The Freeman wouldn't be such a secret publication and its editor wouldn't continue to look as though his face has worn out several bodies.

Scrap of conversation: "One pales when he exhales."

If I can remember it, the next time I tell a story about the madame of a fancy house, I'll call her Madame Knucklebones. But I rather doubt she'll take hold the way Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt did. Many of my correspondents refer to her, and recently I saw the name in a prison paper published at Menard, Ill. I like Mrs. PPP better than Mrs. Grundy.

Commenting on Thomas Carlyle's remark, "A lie cannot live," Mark Twain said: "It just shows he did not know how to tell them."

Proverbs, said Josh Billings, are "literature on the half shell."

The Japanese word our proverb, "Every man to his trade" this way: "For rice cakes go to a rice cake maker."

In a hoarse, conspiratorial voice I utter the suggestion that it's something of a catsastrophe to pass up my volumes of "Q & A."

"Pax Americana" is The Freeman's meat, but first let's take care of Hitler.

F. Murgatroyd King, Sedro-Woolley, Wash.: "You might be interested in knowing that my wife gave me one of your newsclip filing systems for a birthday gift after I spent several weeks talking about that being just what I wanted. Damned if it isn't as good as you crack it up to be."

The near-blonde in the front office, who reads my proof, put a paragraph before me and asked if it was all right. I explained patiently that it was

absolutely O. K., that it was a quip, something akin to a joke, and that I intended it to be at least mildly funny. When she insisted the meaning wasn't clear I went on to explain that the joke tells of a Pullman porter who's in a dentist's chair and the colored porter asks the dentist to please fix up lower seven. I looked up into her face, expecting to see the light of humor, but the stern visage still hovered over me. So I said, abruptly, "Kill the thing. If you have to explain 'em, kill 'em." So out it went. She left my desk with the light of victory on her countenance.

It's more important to confine our attention to the affairs of this life than to bother about some problematical next.

We'd be a whole lot better off if all the time, money and effort now devoted to the futility of religion were diverted to the bettering of this mundane sphere.

It's extraordinary how some otherwise intelligent men of science hang on to the ideas of their childhood when it comes to a criticism of religion.

Isaac R. Handley, Tarawa, Gilbert Islands: "I am enclosing \$10 for the strained financial position of The Freeman. One could write reams on your solid missionary effort of enlightenment. May you live to see great results."

A Kansas congregation read the Bible in 17 hours and 40 minutes. Or was it 40 hours and 17 minutes? Anyhow, did they learn how Cain got his wife?

My father used to tell about a hired man who wanted to quit his job on a German's farm to take the same kind of a job on a farm in the next county. After paying him off, the boss asked, "How long you been here?" "Eighteen years," answered the farmhand. "How long you hold down your last job?" "Ten years." "H-m-m. You'll never amount to anything. Too much wanderlust."

In the picture, "Go West," Groucho Marx dumps popcorn into a locomotive's firebox and cries, "Pop goes the Diesel." In another scene he says, "Time wounds all heels," a nifty that's hit my ears before, but I don't remember how, when or where.

This holier-than-thou lit'ry improvisator and juggler of verbal annotations bruises easily whenever he sees W. C. Fields, master of comic Machiavellisms. In his "The Bank Dick" he uses the chaser for a drink as a finger bowl. This scrivener is a push-over for that sort of foolishness, a fact which he makes no attempt to cover with Gestapo secrecy.

I'm impressed by today's extraordinary efflorescence of good off-color stories.

This lit'ry peasant has been reflecting on his past, as a part of a sociological study of environmental determinism. But all this isn't as high-brow as it sounds. One of my notes touches on the old Kensington theater, in Kensington, Philadelphia, of 30 or 35 years ago, where I heard a comedian, whose dialect oozed beer and sauerkraut, cause hearty and unashamed laughter with: "Every time I take a ferry-boat, it makes me cross." That's still splendidly poisonous.

Back in the old days tramp comedians used to drop lighted cigarettes into their over-sized, tattered pants.

Although a reader seeks to prod him into an outburst, this lackadaisical scrivener enters no caveat against the kind of lover who buries his head in perfumed gloom.

A tourist was complaining teetotally about the richness of New Orleans cooking and the frequency of meals. "Then you don't like New Orleans?" "Like it? I love it! It's Gout's own country."

Anything by Cecil B. DeMille is escapist—that is to say, escape it, by all means.

I don't like: people who secretly admire what they pretend to dislike; anything by Cecil B. DeMille; the team of Ray Milland and Claudette Colbert; some-of-the-time blondes; apologists for the Brutocrats; the fake reciprocal animosities of Jack Benny and Fred Allen; anyone who accepts the axioms of the axis; people who meet factuality with fabrications; broadcasts of Catholic sermons; anyone who emits private noises in public.

Not that it's important, but it happens I've nursed an unattained ambition ever since I heard my first opera from the gallery of Philadelphia's Academy of Music—to listen from the wings. But now I learn that Bernard Shaw, as a boy, "managed to get admitted to the stage once or twice during an opera performance, and learned thereby that this is quite the worst way to enjoy it, and that anyone behind the scenes who has no business there is as great a nuisance, and is as little considered by those who have some business there, as Mr. Pickwick at the Chatham review." That still leaves me with an unfulfilled urge—to help a competent madame fill out her income tax blank, thereby gaining an insight into the business side of the world's oldest profession.

Sexual athleticism, if discussed freely in the sports pages, where it certainly belongs, would command more

reader-interest than an Army-Navy football game.

Someday this lit'ry entrepreneur hopes to sneak into a piece the pippick-tickling phrase "sui generis." That would make him as proud as a wench in a \$250 coat.

The worst thing we can say about our schools, next to their failure to encourage independent thinking, is the way teachers do nothing useful about the habit of slovenly speech.

A great actress once paralyzed a sales clerk by the dramatic emphasis she gave her question, "Will it wash?"

We speak of a woman being ruined. Why don't we say the same about a man? The answer is, it'd cause too much laughter. Moralists tolerate abuse, anger and insults, but they can't stand up to a Bronx cheer.

Papa Stork, Mama Stork and Baby Stork were just finishing lunch when Papa Stork jumped to his feet and said, "My goodness, I almost forgot my date with Mrs. Johnson. I must hurry." Mama Stork also looked at her watch and exclaimed, "That reminds me I have an appointment with Mrs. Jones immediately." Papa and Mama Stork both looked at little Baby Stork. "Now what are you going to do, baby?" Papa inquired. "Oh, I don't know," baby replied. "I'll probably go out and scare hell out of a couple of high-school kids!"

Mr. Smith had been to a 13-inning ball game, where he had yelled himself hoarse and could talk in no more than a stage whisper. That evening he decided to go over to tell his neighbor, Mr. Jones, about it. Mrs. Jones came to the door in answer to his ring. "Is Jones home?" he asked in a horse whisper. "No," she whispered back, "come right in."

Recently, a set of twins, named Hoover and Roosevelt, became mixed in the hospital, and a doctor was called to solve the problem. He bent over the crib, straightened up, pointed out the one on the left, and said, "This one's Roosevelt—he's done something."

A middle-aged gentleman, who hadn't played much golf, accepted an invitation from a friend and went out to the friend's country club for a game. The gentleman, never having played the course before, stepped to the first tee and placed his ball for the drive, swung once and missed. Again he swung, and missed again. And then the third time he fanned the air. Shaking his head, he muttered, "Tough course, isn't it?"

Oscar Wilde on Bernard Shaw: "An excellent man; he has no enemies; and none of his friends like him."

A Topeka, Kans., department store advertises women's wool underwear as "draft evaders."

I've seen many productions of "King Lear," but I'm still to see a good one. That's because he's played as a magnificent, broken figure. All wrong. There's only one way to play Lear—and that's as a lunatic, a fugitive from a madhouse. The man was crazy and Shakespeare planned his play as a study in insanity.

James J. Lyons' rhyme for the times: "Buy Gum and chew it, but, By Gum! don't strew it."

The Greeks, in order to lessen the squeezes and itches of existence, gave their Gods a sense of the ridiculous by granting them the privilege of indulging in magnificent orgies of hilarity.

A woman, asked how she had felt while under an anesthetic in the hospital, answered: "It was beautiful. I thought I was in heaven—till I saw my husband!"

Whenever I trim my toe-nails I give thanks that man's only a 2-legged animal.

Jack Ginster, Whitesboro, N. Y.: "The Outline of Bunk, by E. H.-J., is the greatest book, from every viewpoint, that I've ever read."

Dr. Geo. M. Kitter, New Kensington, Pa.: "I vote for more and better stories."

Bernard Shaw, the Bardicide, said the devil can quote Shakespeare for his own purpose.

Scrap of conversation: "He makes money aplenty, but doesn't care for it except insofar as it makes it possible for him to satisfy all his wants."

A reader, who signs himself Student Subscriber, writes: "Keep up the good work. You're one in a million. Intellectually, you stand head and shoulders above the mob."

Even our best scholars, when they take up lecturing, have to become showmen.

Peter Sorensen, Galveston, Tex.: "I like to read your Answers to Unasked Questions. There are some good ones here and there."

When Sam said he'd given up craps for bridge, his friends asked the reason. "Cause they gives prizes in bridge, an' I likes prizes. Las' night I won second prize—two bits." His friends were astonished that the prize was so small. It seemed not worth playing for. So they asked him the amount of the first prize. "Well," replied Sam, "that's more. You see, the fella that wins first prize gets t'sleep with the hostess."

It's true that you can put 10 friends on The Freeman's subscription list for only a buck. Yes, 10c a name.

An exclusive hunt club decided to hold a fox hunt, and instructed members to bring only male dogs. However, one influential member owned only a female, and she was allowed to run with the pack. After following the dogs for two hours the hunters lost them completely. One of the hunters saw a farmer in the field and asked him if he'd seen anything of a pack of dogs and a fox. "Sure, they passed here a while back—going in that direction. The last I seen of 'em, the fox was running fifth."

For 30 years I've been studying and writing about Voltaire, and always believing he was a wiry, little fellow. Today, while reading one of Lytton Strachey's essays, I learned he was thin and tall. You could've knocked me down with a strip of latex.

B. L. Taylor, Naval Dental School, Washington, D. C.: "Thanks for the autographed photo of yourself. I always had the impression that you were an old man, about 70. And I was both surprised and elated to know that you are still much in your prime, and always ready to fight for justice and freedom. I don't know where I got the idea that you have one foot in the grave. Long before that unfortunate occasion occurs I hope The Freeman will have increased its circulation to 100,000 or more. It's the real Free-thought paper of America."

George Price: An author's wife complains that "they don't even send him rejection slips any more; the stories just come back marked 'opened by mistake'."

For five solid, consecutive days I've been the best seller in this shop. I mean that my 20 volumes of "Q & A" have been out-selling everything else in the catalogue. Do I feel puffed up!

"Of course" could be omitted 95 percent of the time without hurting a writer's stuff.

Associated Press papers carried this story, under the heading "BOMB WORTH PAYING FOR": "Girard, Kas., Dec. 6.—E. Haldeman-Julius, publisher, offered in a letter to Prime Minister Churchill of England to pay the cost of a bomb dropped on Berchtesgaden, Hitler's mountain home." (The near-blondie in the front office said she'd like to chip in on that one.)

That distinguished totter of epistles, C. A. Lang, Maplewood, Mo., submits this melancholy sprinkle of verbal annotation: "Speaking of your French hotel with the room either 'fowl lodging or pleasure' reminds me that I've

heard that hereabouts we have tourist cabins where one's asked whether it's for all night or 'just to rest awhile.' That's just about the catastrophe for tactful euphemism."

A cartoon in London Punch shows an upper-claws Englishman showing his shelter to a visitor. He says: "Yes, it's bombproof, blastproof, fireproof and gasproof—our only trouble is mice."

Mark Twain rapped lightly on Horace Greeley's door, pushed it open and stepped in. "The interview was brief," said Mark Twain. "Before I could pull myself together and back out he whirled around and glared at me through his great spectacles." Greeley: "Well, what in hell do YOU want?" Mark Twain: "I was looking for a gentlem—" Greeley: "Don't keep them in stock—clear out!" Mark Twain wrote later that he could have made a neat retort but didn't, "for I was flurried and didn't think of it till I was downstairs."

I can't see anything funny about the way a whole school of American humorists (led by Josh Billings) went in for tortured orthography.

Mussolini's army in Albania is such a pushover, it's almost safe to say the Japanese, with five times as many men as the Greeks have, could have done almost as well.

Poems quoted in blitzkrieged London: "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may, for time brings only sorrow; the girls who might have kissed today may wear gas masks tomorrow."

I wonder if the walls of Rome are still plastered with the slogan: "Il Duce is always right."

Mark Twain: "Always do right. This will gratify some people and astonish the rest."

A gallant Italian officer drew his sword and cut down a side street.

Latest Nazi story: Berlin newspapers were instructed to play up the "news" that the German Air Force had reduced Random to rubble. Goebbels had picked up a report from London that most of the Nazi bombs were dropped in the London suburbs at random.

John T. Appleby, Yellville, Ark., reports that the Ozark boys know an easy way to tell a virgin. According to the local wits, he says, "when you push a girl over and she just lays there, it means she's willing. If she gets up again, she ain't."

S. R. Schrag, Associated Newspapers of Toronto, Canada: "A few weeks ago, while touring in the U. S., I read several issues of The American Freeman. In my opinion your work is indeed commendable. Seldom have I seen a paper that

could hold my interest to the point of offering my congratulations for the splendid work it does in enlightening our all-too-gullible 'Mr. Average American.'"

The candidate was in the throes of his whirlwind campaign. After delivering his 200th back platform and 300th auditorium speech, he found himself back in his old stamping grounds and near his favorite fancy house. Having a few hours for his own pleasures, he hied to Maud's establishment, where he was greeted effusively by the entire staff. Finally, the madame asked: "Aren't you nervous about coming into a place like this during your campaign tour?" The candidate: "Everything'll be all right so long as I don't have to make a front-porch speech."

That four-year-old precocious boy I write about occasionally has been trained to straighten his own room, make his bed, and put things in order. "Did you do everything this morning, dear?" his mother asked. "No, mother, not quite. I didn't kill Hitler."

I don't like: parsley; canned spinach; zombies; Mischa Auer; Jean Hersholt and his "Dr. Christian"; Cecil deMille; Mortimer J. Adler; pink whipped cream on green angelfood, and any other kind of food dyed any color but its natural one; writers who steal my happy phrases.

"Fly-paper memory" is a happy phrase that my one-hoss's-rear-power brain invented, and its first appearance was in these chaste, pious columns. I've already seen it in a high-brow book review in an important N. Y. paper.

One of my second-cousins-three-times-removed is a young married woman who's obviously expecting the stork. She's carrying life under her heart (as they say in the sentimental pomes) and it's scheduled to pop into the world long before these words reach my pietistic subscribers. Not only is she married, but she's a howling success in her career, which she runs under her maiden name. She gets her mail under both names, which brings into the picture the letter-carrier (not C. A. Lang, of Maplewood, Mo.) who delivers her mail. He, in his own words, "wuz can'date fur shurf" and got elected, so he quit his job and made way for a green letter-carrier. Consider, then, what the new mailman thought when he asked her if her name was Miss Jones. "Yes," she replied. "I'm Miss Jones. Give me my letters." The postman gave her a quick look, then pointing in the direction of the "condition," he blurted: "And I hope, mum, that the dirty so-and-so gits life."

Suggested headline for an undertaker's advertisement: "Once in a Lifetime."

The world's Problem No. 1: how to get the crap cleaned up.

A farmer was giving evidence, having witnessed a terrible railroad accident in a single-track line. Questioned during the hearing, he said that he "looked in one direction and saw No. 41 coming lickety-split about 60 miles an hour; then I looked the other way and saw No. 18 rolling from the opposite direction as fast." The judge then asked: "Now exactly what did you do when you saw this?" The farmer: "Couldn't do nothin'. Only stood there and thought to myself: That's certainly one hell of a way to run a railroad."

Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt asked for a book on sex. The librarian suggested one, and when she returned it asked her how she liked it. "It was bad," she answered, "for it told me more about sex than I wanted to know."

A doctor was walking one afternoon with his young and beautiful bride when an attractive woman nodded to him. Suspecting an earlier love affair, the wife asked, "Who's that lady, dear?" The doctor replied, "Oh, only a woman I've met once or twice professionally." The wife: "Whose profession, yours or hers?"

A man, applying for county relief, was filling the customary form. When he came to the question, "Do you owe any back house rent?" he answered: "We ain't had no back-house for years. We got an inside toilet."

Vassar students who are about to go on houseparty dates are handed a pamphlet entitled, "What Every Young Lady Should No."

Dolores Ibarruri, Spanish anti-Fascist: "It is better to die on your feet, than to live on your knees."

First Femme: "Gilbert has the most powerful pair of binoculars!" Second She: "Good, I worship these strong, virile men."

A Broadway hooper met a famous Shakespearean actor and began telling him that although he was just a tap-dancer and singer of swing songs, he was really interested in the higher things, especially Shakespeare. "In fact," he said, "I've studied the great bard since I was a boy. But one thing has always troubled me: Did Hamlet ever have an affair with Ophelia?" The celebrated Shakespearean artist answered, "In the show I was in, he did."

A girl, showing up for her first rehearsal, impressed the director by the way she used her pleasant voice, but he frowned on her skin-and-bones figure. He took her aside and suggested that she could add to her displacement up front by going to the ward-

robe mistress and asking for number one three. Later she returned, looking like the late Tetrizini. When the director complained, she replied that she had done as instructed, having asked for three one. "Number three one," the director explained, "is Falstaff's bottom."

James Annamunthodo, Aruba, N. W. I.: "I and my friends enjoy reading *The Freeman*."

W. B. Jones, U. S. S. Pensacola, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii: "Congratulations on your fine paper. I've seen practically every kind of amusement, and I will say that never yet have I seen anything quite so amusing, educational and straight-to-the-point as *The Freeman*. Did it ever occur to you that modern sailors should be the first on your list of subscribers? Many of them would get much more out of life by reading your publication than to go ashore to some honky-tonk. I for one would rather see it that way."

Sample of farmer's gift for humorous overstatement: "That hired man's so lazy he tried to climb a barbed wire fence without taking his hands out of his pockets."

Order received from a Freemanite suspected of harboring a concealed passion for spoofing: "Send me 25¢ worth of rubber erasers—the kind that can correct mistakes in any language."

Scrap of conversation: "The only thing Mussolini can lick is Hitler's boots."

Why is it that the dog that barks at the postman never barks at the milkman?

The man who invented the zipper was as great a genius as the inventor of nickel-in-the-slot toilets.

Sign in a N. Y. barbershop: "Physionomical Hair Cuts."

Anatole France: "A good critic is one who relates the adventures of his soul among masterpieces."

When Theodore Parker, Boston preacher-Abolitionist, visited Thomas Carlyle one Sunday night, he found the Scotsman before a vast bowl of whisky, which he ladled into his mouth with a huge spoon. "What on earth are you doing?" asked the American, goggle-eyed. "Why," said Carlyle, "I take a whole bowl of whisky punch every Sunday night. Don't you?"

Latest epithet for the Nazis: "Berlinsects."

The identification tags of two babies—one German and one Italian—were lost, so somebody asked the nurse in charge how she could tell which was which. "That's easy," she replied. "I

just say 'Heil Hitler'—and the German baby lifts its right arm in salute, while the Italian baby immediately kisses the Little Heinie in a private part of its anatomy."

Mark Twain, in a letter, once wrote: "So long as I continue to dig \$70,000 a year out of Harpers on magazine stuff and old copyrights you will always find me acting respectable."

Not long ago there was an F. B. I. notice on a postoffice bulletin board offering a reward for a fugitive outlaw and adding the helpful hint that the man may be recognized by a peculiar tear in the back of a leather zipper jacket.

A little girl came home from school after learning the Salute to the Flag. Her proud mother asked her to recite it. Here's how she responded: "I pledge leegance to my flag and to the country for witch it stands, one naked individual with liberty 'n'justus ferall."

Listen: 3 bux will get you my 20 vols. of "Q & A" and three years of this bright, pious, uplifting sheet.

Movie magnate, blowing about his habitat: "You'll find Hollywood filled with a lot of nice homes, same as elsewhere, with a lot of real people all cohabiting together."

Noel Coward's "Bitter Sweet": Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald are pleasant to look at. The music's mildly entertaining. No laffs. The last 20 minutes are full of treacle-talk. The Mac Donald tokus is still something to marvel over—in a quiet, conservative, restrained way. Plenty of amusing people, but no amusement. It's just right if you're stuck for the evening, tired, and no other show in miles.

A coactive reader tells me he chucked his Little Liver Pills down the lavatory after taking my organ of uplift and clean living. He suggests I take over Carter's slogan and tell the world a subscription will give "that glorious feeling that goes with regularity."

Line from a 1940 poem: "God, I am beautiful tonight."

George S. Kaufman once told an eccentric speller: "There's only one z in /s."

Frank Harris, on pulling out a red handkerchief, explained to a daffy filly that he chose it because it matched his nose.

We need a few writers who'll mix their verbal concoctions with less sugar and more bitters.

Fascists hold to the idea that democracy isn't any good because it lacks "unity." According to that argument Sing Sing ought to be a Garden of Eden, because if there's one thing

that's outstanding in that establishment it's unity. The wonderful thing about democracy is that it's idea of unity is to accept instead of to suppress differences of opinion, scholarship, culture, research, and expression generally. That's one of the greatest glories of democracy. Fascist dictators, on the other hand, suppress all differences encouraged under democracy, and they call that domination unity!

One difference between The Saturday Evening Post and The American Freeman is that the Post is always trying to increase its profits while this organ of piety is trying to decrease its deficit.

A Georgia printer decided to issue an almanac, and when he came to the Fourth of July he marked it down for snow and zero. His proofreader noticed this extraordinary forecast and asked if the boss meant it. When told that the July 4th blizzard was to stand, the proofreader said: "Why, people'll think you're nuts." "Sure," came the calm reply, "but just think what a reputation I'll have if it does come out right."

Edward Sanders, Goodlettsville, Tenn.: "The Freethinker must by wisdom and knowledge, which is light, make the world so bright that the darkness of ignorance will have no place to cast its gloomy shadows."

Alexander Gluck, D. D. S., Brooklyn, N. Y.: "I enjoy and profit by your writing."

The great electrical engineer, Dr. Charles P. Steinmetz, shortly before his death wrote: "No evidence or proof of the existence of a god has been found in the phenomena of nature, based on experience."

Dr. Sigmund Freud, the discoverer of the science of psycho-analysis, wrote that "religion was the counterpart of neurosis" in the individual.

Elsie Post-Betts, Terra Bella, Calif.: "To me, Ann Lindbergh's book, 'Wave of the Future,' is the softest-footed, sneakingest bit of pro-Nazi stuff yet published in America. It is all of a piece with the propaganda issued by the revised 'Bunds' under the guise of proposing to 'Save America First.'"

This grubber-after-fax has learned from careful observation that there are some things in life that are too sacred for levity—such as radio commercials. A light and whimsical commercial would be considered blasphemous.

Cecil B. DeMille's "North West Mounted Police": It's showy, it's expensive, and it stinks. Dead and near-dead hodies scattered everywhere.

The historian, Gibbon, that great enemy of obscurantists and obfuscators, jiggled his pippik and turned loose this bucket of verbal lava: "The Church of Rome defended by violence the empire which she had acquired by fraud." Hot diggety! Outspoken, forthright writers are my dish. The others aren't worth a goodgoddam. In literature I prefer the chronic window-putter-uppers.

Always take sides.

A Chinese authoress, fresh from China, was a guest at a N. Y. literary luncheon, where she sat next to an American who was having a hard time trying to understand her broken, unintelligible English. "And may I ask what you plan to do in this country?" he asked. "Me also," she replied, "will far go there around for tour here lecture."

F. P. A., of the New York Post, has joined my revolution against that sleazy, vague, ambiguous word "very," and I welcome him into my army with the rank of a shavetail. In bawling out the word, F. P. A. took Mrs. Roosevelt's column, "My Day," as a warning to would-be writers. She has a passion for "very extremely," "very, very fine," "indeed, very good," "my very soul reacts against the very horrible misdeeds of the Nazis." Every "very" could be knocked for a loop without hurting her stuff. In fact, the comments would read better. "Very" is the favorite word of writers of hogwash, and Eleanor isn't that kind of penwoman. But getting authors to go easy on "very" is a hard job, like picking lint from one's navel (pippik) with boxing gloves. While this mourning male was going through his morning mail recently he found gooeey splotches of "very" in almost every epistle, which shows the verbal disease is chronic. I insist the word is banal and barren, sterile and stupid. And now, echoing Ginger Rogers, "Cigarette me, big boy!" so I can get myself hopped up for a spasm of unmannerly, coarse and disputatious gripes, groans, gasps, guffaws, blasts, wind-breaking noises made with the mouth, and other ways of getting off steam and giving out sparks.

Humor loses much of its savor when it lacks the salty colloquial touch.

I send thanks from the deepest recesses of my pippik to the 1982 Freeman readers who demonstrated their collective virtuosity with the comment that the new Nazi decree legalizing dog meat for human consumption is a case of dog eat dog.

If all churchmen were like Jonathan Swift, most Atheists would be deacons.

Iva Ektor, Burbank, Calif.: "Let me congratulate you for bringing the great

powerful teacher, Joseph McCabe, to the hungry-hearted masses. That is a supreme achievement. Many years ago I had the delightfully edifying experience of reporting verbatim 30 lectures by McCabe. He is the greatest of all great teachers."

Clarence D. Stephenson, Marlon Center, Pa.: "I appreciate The American Freeman, but I fear the war and its resultant intolerance will squash your fine efforts at enlightenment. I hope not. You print some types of material which I cannot find elsewhere."

This morning, at half past my orange juice, it came to me that in all my experiences with junk men (and I've dealt with scores of them) I've never seen one who wasn't able to yank out a roll of bills that could make any editor feel like so much flotsam and jetsam. Show a junk man a carload of waste paper or scrap iron and he takes on an air of casual elegance that impresses because of the knowledge that the toll of kale is there. I'm tempted to switch my daisy-petal affections from the more esthetic values and put in a plug for the substantial realities.

Kruger was wiser than Solomon. The old king wasn't so smart when he offered to cut the baby in two. Suppose neither woman had been the mother. Suppose a lot of other things—and you see a sliced baby. It's silly. But look at Kruger, who decided a dispute about land ownership between two brothers by decreeing: "Let one brother divide the land, and let the other have first choice."

In my dealings with the world I've learned to be trusting in little things and suspicious in big things.

Jonathan Swift, when writing to a woman about marriage, told her he didn't care whether her person be beautiful so long as she was clean. Then he mentioned money, for he frankly wanted her to bring a certain amount.

Moliere, through one of his characters, showed how expecting too much of human nature can end in misanthropy.

While digging into Herodotus recently I came on this little gem: "No man is so foolish as to desire war more than peace, for in peace sons bury their fathers, but in war, fathers bury their sons."

A reader tells about a Scotsman who's saving all his toys for his second childhood.

Shakespeare rings the bell with this: "A miser grows rich by seeming poor; an extravagant man grows poor by seeming rich."

Macy's, N. Y., is promoting a mystery novel of the month under the stop-em-in-their-tracks name of Macy's Guilt-Edge Mystery. That's an excellent attention-getter, but no better than the single word I used over the advertisement offering my special sale of Little Blue Books, as follows: **BOOKSKRIEG!** The tall near-blond in the front office suggested the tag-line—"AT LAST BOOKS ARE CHEAPER THAN HAMBURGERS." Not bad. In fact, good.

The steady, reliable dullness of Norman Thomas reminds me of the crack Samuel Johnson handed an 18th Century poet: "He was dull in a new way, and that made many think him GREAT."

A Californian pulled up his car before a Miami fruitstand and, thinking he'd kid the benighted natives of Florida, picked up a big green winter squash and asked sarcastically, "Is this how small your alligator pears grow here?" The fruit-monger replied, with heavier sarcasm: "Put down that grape!"

Said the boy rabbit to the girl rabbit: "Wham, wham, thank you, ma'am."

A Jewish boy in Berlin was panning "the Leader" to a sidewalk group. Up comes a Storm Trooper and roars: "Here, whadda mean by panning DER Fuehrer?" "I'm not panning YOUR Fuehrer. I'm panning OUR Fuehrer—Moses." "Well, why are you panning Moses?" "Because if he hadn't led us out of Egypt we might all have British passports!"

About 40 years ago the press quoted a Negro woman on how she had lived more than a century: "When I sits loose and when I worries I goes to bed and sleeps."

The Freeman for what ailsem.

You're getting old when there's spring in the air and none in your pants.

John Barrymore (on his most recent wife): "Elaine is the kind of girl who'll not go anywhere without her mother—and her mother will go anywhere."

All magazines that have words like "Mother," "Home," "Church," and "Woman" in their names are sure to be tedious.

New York's Nazi section—"Malice in Bunderland."

Einstein doesn't wear socks.

The whole trouble is there are too many people who don't know their asphalt from a hole in the ground.

My old-time reader, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, the explorer, and Freethinker, says the nice thing about the reasoning power is that you don't have to use it unless you want to.

One of my readers, Dr. Lulu F. Manus, Kirksville, Mo., uses this apothegm of Narada on her letterhead: "Never utter these words: 'I do not know, this, therefore it is false.' One must study to know; know to understand; understand to judge."

Pointing to a sign reading "Drink Canada Dry," the drunk said: "It can't be done."

Night club M. C.: "Quieten, please."

There's only one way to talk to Hitler—spit in his eye.

A prominent businessman says he has been enjoying a steady increase in sales because of his happy habit of bringing his problems to Gawd. When the Ethereal Squire gives him the green light he can't lose. Fifteen minutes of prayer each day brings fabulous dividends. This isn't going to sound pleasant to Bishop Beerbelch, but it seems to me the situation demands action by the Federal Trade Commission. A cease and desist order should be issued against Gawd because of his participation in a scheme to injure a businessman's competitors. Its unfair business practice to use the Almighty's powers to boost one concern at the expense of other men engaged in the same business. The F. T. C. should take the position that even though the prayers are corny they ain't hay.

Alvin A. Lasko, Los Angeles, Calif.: "The Freeman is O. K. I'm for more jokes and more articles on Socialism."

Sign in the laboratory of the W. M. Welch Scientific Co., Chicago, Ill.: "In this LABORATORY please use the first 5 letters, not the last 7."

Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt, the quaint old udder, after entering in her diary that she preferred the word, "pferdeshice" because it's more refined than "shicedrek," turned to her radio and caught the instructions of the announcer. Enclosing a box top she carefully wrote on the envelope: "In care of the station to which you are listening, Cincinnati, O."

At that, a live eunuch is better than a dead Casanova.

John Barrymore, who can hit a bottle with the force of a diving Stuka, was jousting with W. C. Fields (another two-quart soak), and during the alcoholic discussion defended his drunkenness with this cute, if unverified, assertion: "There are more old drunkards than old doctors."

I like to sleep on my tokas. I also like to sleep on my pipplik. And on my left side; also on my right side. In short, I like to sleep.

A hint to authors: Be human and let who will be profound.

"In the last issue of *The Freeman* you asked for the meaning of '72' at the end of a radio newsbroadcast. It isn't '72' it's '73' and is radio slang for 'best regards.'"—Hugo S. Maresin, Huntington Park, Calif. (Editor's Note: Maybe this reader can supply the answer to Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt, who wants to know the slang meaning of "69.")

Four-year-old: "How can you sleep in heavenly peas, daddy? Wouldn't that be awful wet?"

Sol N. Lasky, Chicago, Ill.: "I like your publication. When I'm finished I always hand it to someone to read, and I know of a couple of new subscribers you got that way. 'We depend on our friends' is a good slogan. Give it publicity."

"Your *Freeman* is the only really satisfying reading I've been able to lay hands on for months."—Kenneth O'Brien, Gainesville, Tex.

Shirley Temple, who was all washed up at 11, managed to get along without her \$5,000 salary for a few months, but the movie biggies thought the gal should be given a new chance. Now she's drawing \$2,500 a week, with the promise of quick promotion if the veteran stages a come-back.

Popular gag: "Hitler has an Achilles heel, and Mussolini is that heel."

That ancient cliché, "If you don't like it here," etc., has been revitalized this way by John H. Culley: "If you don't like it here, why don't you go back to the place you came from, that isn't there any more?"

Anyone who's only 99 percent wrong is going places.

Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt spent her recent vacation in Los Angeles, where she expected to be shocked but instead found things so moral that she gladly gave the much-maligned community her imprimatur. With impressive emphasis she said: "I am favorably impressed with the splendid family life in Los Angeles. Never have I seen so many old daddies dancing with their daughters."

From a travel lecturer who asked that his name be taken off *The Freeman's* subscription list because he's leaving for a tour of the South Pacific: "And now, regretfully, I must say adieu, but as I drift into the fading sunset, my heart is lightened by the knowledge that someday, somehow, I will return—and tell you to put me back on your list again."

Hemingwayish slaughter is only a hop from the violence of the pulps.

The Knoxville, Tenn., school board isn't going to tolerate anything that

might tend to lower our moral standards. One of its members, Dr. H. E. Christenberry, recently registered a protest because, to quote his own words, "tots two and four years old of both sexes are allowed to use toilet facilities at the same time." Rising to righteous fury, Dr. Christenberry thundered: "We have no place in our school system for the practices that have been reported. The lowering of moral defense in just such instances has caused the downfall of such countries as France, and I am not in favor of it."

John Barrymore, as a young man, wanted to be a painter, which shocked his father, the actor Maurice Barrymore. A question by dad changed John's life. "Do you want to be an artist and daub all your life, or," (here his well-trained voice dropped to a seductive coo) "do you want to be an actor, and ma-ake loooooove?"

The last time I was in New York I arranged to meet Clement Wood and his wife, Gloria Goddard. Both have written many Little Blue Books for me. After Mr. Wood joined me at my hotel, we waited for Gloria, who, said Clement, had been ill of late. Finally a telegram arrived, which read: "SICK TRANSIT GLORIA!"

The wife of a W.P.A. worker explained her inability to pay a bill to the collector as follows: "No, I can't pay it. My husband's project has been cut off and I haven't had any relief for six weeks."

Fred Allen tells of a student who was so long at Harvard ivy grew up his leg.

A baby has been defined as an alimentary canal with a loud voice at one end and no responsibility at the other.

If I don't know the name of a cinema glamourette I always call her Miss Tootse Picface.

I knew long ago that Mussolini's "boology" would blow up the first time it was put to a test.

The trouble with our intellectual leaders is too many of them have caponized minds. Mental rheumatism is an even commoner ailment.

There's no denying the fact I have a taste for anecdotes that are a bit on the bitchy side.

Two clichés that muss my hair: "don't take any wooden nickels" and "you're as old as you feel."

The movies are still true to rib-rattling pratt-falls.

I'm still waiting for some swingster to do Bach's doleful Fugue for Foghorn in F-Flat with a boogie-woogie bass,

From a reader: "I sometimes think you talk from both ends."

Angry woman, to another: "Gawd-blitz you!"

Ogden Nashed his teeth and produced this:

One would be in less danger  
From the wiles of the stranger  
If one's own kin and kith  
Were more fun to be with.

A chap was taken to one of those mutual entertainment parties, where each guest was supposed to do some stunt for the amusement of the others. When his turn came he claimed he could do nothing. But the stubborn hostess asked if he could sing. He answered in desperation that he knew only part of one song. Immediately the hostess announced, "Friends, our guest, Mr. Blank, holds the unique distinction of being able to sing but one song, and now he'll sing it for us." "But," cried Blank, "I can't recall all the words." "That's all right," she replied, "do as we girls do. When we fail to remember the words we say 'hoopedoodle-do' and go ahead with the tune." So the guest started on "Old Uncle Ned": "There was an old Negro and his name was Ned; he lived long, long ago. He had no hair on his hoopedoodle-do, the place where the hair ought to grow."

C. C. Miller, Jr., Morgantown, W. Va.: "I am a student in West Virginia University, and am, partly because of this, somewhat hard-pressed financially. Therefore your extremely reasonable prices on first-rate literature is quite heartening, for it makes it possible for one who has developed a taste for better literature to satisfy this appetite."

Leslie W. Mollins, Co. 2, Veterans' Home, Togus, Maine: "The Freeman is worth a dollar a copy instead of a dollar a year. I have obtained education from it and the various books I have bought from the H-J office. Having a keen sense of humor, the jokes of EHJ are excellent. The H-J publications, besides giving me an education, have whisked away many a monotonous hour."

Kay Kyser's "You'll Find Out"—a cinematic enema.

Fred Allen and Jack Benny, in "Love Thy Neighbor," sacrifice themselves blandly in an unblushing apologia for nitwit-incompetence. It tears the inner mucus stratum of my bowels to say this because I've been a bought-and-sold admirer of Fred Allen. By the way, it seemed to me Allen's the spittin' image of Henry L. Mencken, except that Allen's a little taller and Mencken's a little chunkier.

When Johnny was told to run down to the grocery store and get mama a dime's worth of fly-paper, the lad luffed and luffed because he knew flies don't use paper.

I don't like: excessively heroic heroes and overly villainous villains; the sensational Class B work of William Saroyan, to say nothing of his beautiful love affair with himself; the publicity campaigns of Edward Bernays; Peglerian polemics; Pat O'Brien's sock-and-bust-em style of acting; the ability of the masses to absorb bunk like a pancake absorbs syrup.

Looking up from the cross-word puzzle she was working, the blonde asked the boy-friend: "What's a four-letter word, ending in -it, that stands for what's found on the bottom of a bird cage." "Grit," replied the young man. "That's right," she said, "please lend me the eraser on the end of your pencil."

The Cooperative Builder (page 4, December 21, 1940), published at Superior, Wis.: "... E. Haldeman-Julius, the sage of Girard, Kansas, is one of the most interesting personalities in the country ... He is a crusader who has always been in the vanguard of liberal causes. He has published many books and much information which might have been lost forever to American readers if he hadn't put out cheap editions that the common man could buy and enjoy ... Mr. Haldeman-Julius writes a monthly magazine ... It is a racy, amusing capsule of fun."

The most bibulous citizen in that Bibulous Babylon of Missouri—Joplin—entered Maud's establishment by the front door, and as he was noisy and stinking drunk the Madame refused to call in any of her merchandise. He went out, but after a little time he sneaked in by way of the back porch. Madame Maud turned him out again. About five minutes later he boldly walked through the basement door, having climbed into the cellar through the coal-chute. The exasperated Madame shouted at him to get out or she'd throw the bastard out. To which the fellow replied, "Look here, woman, do you own all the fancy houses in Joplin?"

A newspaper that offered \$1 for each description of "embarrassing moments" gave this entry the prize: "I was working on a night shift and, returning early, I found another man busy with my wife. Please send \$2, as my wife was also embarrassed." But the newspaper sent \$3, explaining that no doubt the "other man" wasn't feeling so good, either.

A rabbi is sometimes referred to as the divinity that shapes our ends.

Wortman the Welder, Albany, Ga.: "When it comes to knowing all about everything you and Joseph McCabe come as near to it as seems humanly possible. Leonardo da Vinci had a narrower world."

A verbose English politician said: "You are enjoined not to disseminate reports of indeterminate provenance which have insufficient bases of authenticity and which by repetition tend to acquire cumulative inexactitude." What he meant to say was, "Don't spread rumors."

When paying our respects to the country's asses, let's not forget the asses.

As the inmate in the mental institution said, "We're all here because we're not all there."

A man entered the reference room of a public library and asked for something about Noah's ark, and when the attendant suggested the Book of Genesis, he replied: "No, that won't do. I want something longer and more authentic than that. Didn't Noah keep a diary, write letters or do his autobiography?"

Signs. In a women's dress shop: "Clothes Make the Man." In a hot night club that goes in for strip-teases: "Uncover Charge, 50c." In a fur shop: "We Sell the Surest Cure for Frigid Women."

First Model: "I wouldn't pose for Vladimir Z. Zilch, because there's one artist I'm afraid of. He looks the type that'll make a pass at all his models." Second Model: "You're wrong. I've met four of his models, and they didn't complain about his love-making." First Model: "Who were they?" Second Model: "An onion, a banana, a petunia and a string of garlic."

I like: the newly invented pinless, non-skid diapers; straight whisky; air mail; correspondents who close their letter with the fine words, "No Answer Expected"; readers who send in good off-color stories; horse radish; Lea and Perrin's Worcestershire Sauce; a competent impresario des femmes; a woman who irroseates the scene; people of politically liberal orientation.

The Goddess of Retributive Justice should do something about the professor who told his students, "Proceed to the due performance of your prescribed task," when he meant, "Go to it."

That dangerous gal, Nemesis, should turn her eyes on the stodgy scrivener who wrote "more precipitation, less acceleration," when he had in mind, "More haste, less speed."

I don't like: wrestling matches; singing boozers; beauty contests in the

newsreels; the Dead End Kids (after their first movie, which was good); General Hugh S. Johnson; Eddie Guest's poetry; Dale Carnegie's success philosophy; uniformed servants in private homes; clean humor; beautiful, expensive snot-rags; Dorothy Dix, the lit'ry cousin of Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt; Tyrone Power; week-end parties; any year's glamour debutante; cream in tea; the animated cartoons of Max Fleischer; professional abracadabra; night clubs.

Slogan in sleeping pill ad: "Take deze and doze!"

Tell a few friends about the lit'ry dish served up in The Freeman.

Yes, The Freeman looks like a bum, but it's innards bespeak intellectual stimulation. Its sorry raiment is worn for virtue's sake.

The Freeman is never sensational, but always exciting.

The Freeman's editor never yells; this modest paper is a record of his quiet conversations. When all the world is in a frenzy of noise, it's a good idea for at least one periodical to lower its voice.

S. L. Hoover, Mt. Ranier, Md.: "Please send me two more complete kits of your newsclip filing system, for which I enclose \$2.50."

I don't like: witty husbands who call their wives "the wiff" or "the ball and chain"; mechanical pencils; the human head impaled on a toothpick; H. L. Mencken's potshots at democracy; revolving doors; paper matches; hard pencils; juke boxes; fiction writers who make their heroes "debonairly flick ash from their butts"; the Strange-Things-I-Did-in-Pago-Pago school of lecturing; copycaters; stumble-bum barflies; cosmopolites whose charm rests on a sort of rueful urbanity; successions of corny contretemps; cocktails; iced coffee; people who say "not hardly"; motor car horns in city traffic; people who say "dark complected"; motorists who chase after an ambulance in order to get a first-hand look at the accident; movie comedies that rest on elaborate pratfalls; people who say "genial boniface"; reviewers who don't know their-er, er, literature—from a hole in the ground; writers and speakers who roost on the most uncertain of seats, the limb of prophecy.

A Chinese philosopher (not Confucius) said it's a fine idea to avoid starting life with just one good idea. That isn't enough. "You should have two good ideas," he said, "in case one of them lets you down."

The worst bores are the clean-minded ones.

B. L. Taylor, Naval Dental College, Washington, D. C.: "Our words are no more effective than the circle of readers or listeners to which they extend. Pass The Freeman on to your friends, after you have read it." Reader Taylor's advice is excellent. I hope many subscribers will follow his suggestion.

Clifford R. Pearson, Minneapolis, Minn.: "About four years ago I sent a Freeman subscription to Erick Kendall, writer of 'Blazing Away' in The Cooperative Builder. It was at a time when he was sick in the hospital and it amused him very much, for he has been a subscriber ever since. He often mentions you in his column."

When papa told daisy they'd have to pay the \$2,000 mortgage, his daughter said she'd pay it and for him not to worry. "Daisy, have you got \$2,000?" "Yes, Papa. I saved it up and it's in the bank." "Daisy, have you been a good girl?" "Yes, Papa, I gotta be good to get \$2,000."

For the past 15 years I've told a thousand times that I mustn't pass up the short stories of Dorothy Parker, an author who's supposed to personify Manhattan's wit, wisdom and intellectual wickedness. The other day I dipped into a volume of her short stories, and while they weren't bad I couldn't see anything in them to get hot about. She's over-rated by at least a thousand percent, in my opinion. Her so-called sophistication leaves me fairly tired. If she's a genius then I'm Schopenhauer.

It's funny what a guy'll remember. More than 30 years ago I admired tomboyish Eva Tanguay's vaudeville turns, in one of which this joke was used: She: "Harold, have you taken a bath?" Harold: "No, is one missing?" . . . Here's another gag that was popular in those days: Once, in the small hours, Duffy and Sweeney tipsily joined the members of a cowboy act in their hotel room. They made so much noise practicing the "Tulsa mating call" that a sleepless guest in the next room rapped sharply on the wall. Duffy paused, then yelled: "A hell of a time to be hanging pictures!"

When John Barrymore was in the big money and bought the palatial yacht, "The Infanta," he handed Dolores Costello, his current wife, a bottle of champagne and asked her to break it on the bow. "It's too heavy," she protested, "I'm afraid I can't." "Go ahead," John coaxed, "just think of me." She smashed the bottle into a million pieces. "Damn near wrecked the boat," said Barrymore.

A couple of years ago I gave my pious subscribers a cute little story about a couple of rabbits who were

chased by wolves. I did it in 27 words flat, counting articles. (See my Volumes of "Questions and Answers" for the text, and while you're looking do a little dallying with my other gags.) Now my rabbit story is pure literature. At an authors' luncheon in N. Y. C., under the auspices of the Herald-Tribune, the book-writer, Rex Stout, before an audience that included Franz Werfel, Walter Millis, Lewis Gannett, and other lit'ry lights, picked up the rabbit yarn and did it in 108 words. Such padding is understandable. We book-readers know how our masters of friction make a profession of blowing up 27-word ideas to 108-word purple passages. Let's see how my simple joke looks when dressed in the habiliments of culture. From here on it's all Rex Stout: This is a democracy, and in democracy the majority rules. You know what the gentleman rabbit said to the lady rabbit. They were chased by a couple of foxes. They ran as fast as they could, over hill and dale, until finally, exhausted they sought refuge in a hollow tree. They snuggled there a while until they got their breath back, and he said to her, "Look out and see what they're doing." She took a peek and reported, "O my heavens, we're goners! There's a lot more—there's dozens of them! What on earth shall we do now?" He said, "There's only one thing we can do; stay here till we out-number 'em."

Ricardo Lopez Campos, Havana, Cuba: "Keep up the good work pulling the wool from the eyes of the fretful through ignorance."

Invest \$1 in The Freeman and for a year you'll draw fat dividends in the form of ideas, laughter, fax, criticisms, reviews, comments, information, peppy and poopy verbiage, and close-ups of Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt and Bishop Beerbelch.

Back in the '60's, Mark Twain, still a young man, wrote: "Honest poverty is a gem that even a king might feel proud to call his own, but I wish to sell out." At about the same time he did a piece on why he found nose picking laughable. If I did a thing like that I'd have to figure on losing another two score readers. Some are ready to quit as soon as they find out what I mean when I write about my pippik, assuming it means what they think it means, which it doesn't.

Here's the title an author gave his book: "The Frogs and Reptiles of Okefinokee Swamp, Okefinokee, Georgia."

Authorship's first commandment: "Be lively."

Letters, said Voltaire, are the consolation of life.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor: In your comments about the religious enthusiast who goes around trying to convert people to his peculiar form of orthodoxy, and who advances the argument that free thought has only a destructive influence on men's character, that it doesn't encourage constructiveness, etc., I was annoyed that you did not mention the name of Joseph Lewis, author of "The Bible Unmasked," "The Tyranny of God," "Jefferson, the Freethinker," "Spain, A Land Blighted By Religion," and other instructive and constructive books, to say nothing of the work he has done toward keeping religion out of our public schools. You spoke of Albert Einstein. No doubt the world needs more men like Einstein, but before we can use them to any practical advantage we must have more down-to-earth Freethinkers like yourself and Joseph Lewis. Washington, D. C.

B. L. TAYLOR

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Editor: "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (Mat. 21:22). Millions upon millions of sincere but deluded people took this biblical statement literally and in response to the President's proclamation setting aside, Sunday, September 8, as a day of prayer, reverently petitioned the so-called "Ruler of the Universe" for world peace. How disappointing it must have been to many of these credulous folks to hear the news reports Monday morning of increased defense appropriations here in America, and intensified bombing and bloodshed in war-torn Europe.

The churches ballyhooed this National Prayer Day for all they were worth and realized free radio and press advertising. They were particularly careful to emphasize the President's proclamation, but extremely cautious not to mention the fact that said proclamation was issued only at the behest of an avalanche of petitions to the White House,

instigated by religious leaders from all sections of the nation, virtually demanding that the President proclaim a day of prayer, beseeching some nonexistent spiritual Bigwig "for the establishment of a just and permanent peace among all nations of the world."

Well, we've had our National Day of Superstition in this supposedly civilized country, the churches have profited materially and financially by all the free publicity, but the world in general still continues morally and spiritually unaffected.

A God—if God there was—who would deliberately and persistently ignore such humble and fervent supplications deserves not worship, but condemnation and ridicule. There is still only one reasonable and intelligent explanation for all these billions of unanswered prayers: "There isn't any God."

H. G. HAYES

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Editor, The American Freeman:

In regard to conversation-openers, I suggest that you try this one:

"By the way, I understand that Abbott Velvetips of Sunkist Monastery has announced that the new slogan chosen by the pious monks of his abbey is, 'If at first you don't succeed—they're seedless.'"

Robinson, Ill.

WALTER HOOD JR.

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Editor: Although some Man of Gawd every Sunday waxes enthusiastic and urges all Christians to "read your Bibles," I wonder if he really means it. Personally, I doubt it. No doubt the Men of Gawd long for the good old days when people learned about the Bible from them, and not from modern thinkers and writers whose works are saturated in skepticism. However, it seems to me, assuming that most people still ignore the growing library of Freethought, the preachers' name is still mud if the people take up the Bible to read with open minds. The most intelligent of them are bound to ask

embarrassing questions. African bushmen, and Polynesians, who never heard of any of the great skeptics, such as Paine, Ingersoll, and McCabe, can tear the Bible to tatters, literally, and give the missionaries a helluva time explaining.

"Read your Bibles," really? To have people really set out to see what is between the covers of their Bibles must make the clergy feel about as uncomfortable as a host whose visitor goes about over the house, jerking up rugs and opening closet doors, revealing all manner of trash hitherto hidden.

A. M. PASCHALL

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Editor: After noting the current cases of dysentery of the mouth which Roosevelt and Ickes display, I'm moved to this expression:

I wish I were a sparrow, with entrails like a goose, so I could fly around unseen with bowels large and loose. I'd circle over Washington, no one would ever know, and when I heard the words "My friends" I'd chirp and let 'er go.

G. PRUDOHOMME

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Editor: I see that professional religionists and their apprentices are exempt from conscription. This would indicate that priests, ministers, and theological students are of more value to the nation than, say, research workers, dentists, and shoemakers. At first I was indignant at the obvious injustice of it, but now I think I begin to see what's really behind it. A modern army must advance or retreat speedily and it must be alert. These features are impossible with woozy men mooning about trenches and roads and muttering: "Brothers, let us kneel and pray." So the government saves the soldiers at the sacrifice of the civilians—by leaving these preacher creatures home.

THOMAS BAILEY

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Editor: There is urgent need for Freethinkers to become organized. Every day we are being pushed around by ignorance; we must pay taxes to furnish transportation to and from sectarian schools; we must support a State Board of Education that forbids the teaching of evolution; we must tolerate a growing inclination of the public to believe in miracles—to believe in "God." We are forced to listen to such songs as, "God Bless America." And, today, in a local newspaper, I saw a picture of

an officer who was recalled to the Navy, displaying a large poster: "God Bless the Navy."

All of this is quite irritating to a Freethinker, because he knows that by spreading religious propaganda and allowing the Church to get a foothold on our government, we are only doing something which will someday have to be undone. If Freethinkers of America are strong enough they can stop this negative movement before it is too late.

The recent revolutions in Spain, Russia, and Mexico have taught us a great lesson. Freethinkers know the causes which brought about those internal wars. Freethinkers also know the only effective remedy that will cure the disease. This remedy is proper education of the masses, and this is not the kind of education which is built upon falsehood and lies.

If you live in the vicinity of Washington, D. C., (please write to Washington Freethinkers' Association, P. O. Box 3624, Washington, D. C. This is a branch of Freethinkers of America, New York, N. Y. If you live elsewhere, start or join a Freethinkers' Association today.

B. L. TAYLOR

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Editor: Thanks for your several appreciative references to the olfactory delights presumably afforded by letter carrier's feet. But the sad fact is that these remarks show again how easy it is to slip into error when one strays into the field of another's specialty. For the truth is that few of us letter carriers would last more than a year or two if we didn't take a good deal better care of our feet than do most people, which of course means that fragrances are kept at a minimum. And, since it bears on the subject, I want to remark that "letter carrier" is today a gross misnomer, although the vast majority of us, I dare say, wouldn't abandon the term in favor of a more accurately descriptive one. Actually, however, we're freight husters. And by a method at that, which was outmoded thousands of years ago—when some near-simian stuck an axle in a piece of log and found that he could move a bigger load that way than he could on his back, and more easily, too. But that can be the subject for a later sermon; right now I'm talking about our feet. Those feet must remain in working order for 30 or more years for a jaunt of about 200,000 miles—about a fourth of the way up and down steep mountains and about half of the time in excessive heat or cold, in rain, snow or wind, or a

combination of these (but without the inspiration that the change of scenery would ordinarily afford on such a walk)—while they carry, in addition to their owner's weight and that of a few letters, a varying load that probably averages, conservatively, at least 25 pounds, mostly slick paper advertising. Quite a chore when thus summed up.

After listing some of the things you don't like, I'm surprised to find missing from the list a reference to those off-key, merrily-we-roll-along cow horns with which some young goons are equipping their jallopies . . . Your "anathematician" and "drug store fiz-zician" bring to mind one I heard the other day—from a 72-year-old woman, by the way—If a centipede a pint and a velocipede a quart, how much would a precipice? . . . Your blue print for a new kind of football movie looks auspicious. But I believe even it could be improved: when the outraged player cries, "Let's go!" have him lead the team, single file, through the door marked "Men." . . . I've long ago, myself, quit trying to read "Time" and for the same reasons given by brother Helm, of Brentwood, Md. Seldes' "In Fact" seems to have something like that wrong with it too. Anyway, I find it hard to read.

Maplewood, Mo. C. A. LANG

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Editor: Were it not for the fact that Walt Disney must have been busy on his production of "Fantasia" during most of 1940, I might claim credit for giving him the idea for this picture, for on June 2nd I recommended in a letter to you—which appeared in the September number of The Freeman, I believe—that either he or someone else should do precisely what he has now done in "Fantasia." I suppose that now I'll console my vanity with the reflection that great minds frequently hit on similar ideas at about the same time. I notice, even, that Tschalkowsky's Nutcracker Suite, to which I specifically alluded at that time, is included in "Fantasia."

I'm sorry, though, to read that Disney's "idea men" had been "worried for months over how to find the perfect action for three little notes in one of the Nutcracker Suite dances." This undoubtedly refers to the theme around which The Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy is built. Had I only known about it, I could have helped Disney a lot here, for it happens that my older daughter and I have, for a long time, pantomimed those three notes every time we hear them by stretching, yawning, nodding and slumping in our chairs. So now I'm happy to hear that

his army of idea men have finally decided that a yawning fairy would interpret the music perfectly.

However, it's things like that which make me suspect that many of these latter-day efforts to popularize great art are extravagantly wasteful. Tschalkowsky wrote the entire Nutcracker Suite all by himself during the first half of 1891 and, during the same time, wrote a lot of other things besides. Now, in order to interpret, pictorially, three fleeting notes in one dance of the eight movements of this suite, Disney has to hire a crew of idea men who sweat for months for a single idea. Has Disney, himself, lost the brains with which he so hopefully started a number of years ago? Has he been overwhelmed by the manual labor of cutting out and actuating his thousands of paper dolls—a labor which he well might hire, and for far less than he hires idea men, I imagine? No wonder "Fantasia" has cost him two and a quarter millions.

Disney might use these impudent questionings as the basis for an uproarious farce in which a brilliant idea that builds its author's fame leads, by unforeseen and absurd extensions, to his own befooling and undoing. I give him or anyone else the right to exploit this suggestion.

To come back to "Fantasia," though, I'll be skeptical until I've seen it, that anything with the spontaneity of great art can come from such ponderous production methods. The capitalist apologist can argue that enterprises such as Disney's are among the "new industries" destined to pull us out of the doldrums; that he is giving opportunities to hundreds of budding geniuses. Perhaps. But thousands of other real and would-be artists still hunger and shiver on the outside, or eke out a miserable living from blind-alley jobs that they detest—and doubtless will do so for yet a long time to come. Meanwhile the climbers and shovers among them—who are by no means always and necessarily the most talented—may get into organizations such as Disney's. Result: months of fumbling for simple ideas; staggering costs. Then extravagant advertising (more costs) resulting in "road show" admission prices, thus excluding from participation the very classes supposed to be most benefitted. And lastly, the effete class which can pay the price is, on the whole, too stupidly smug to make intelligent and helpful criticism. Thus stultification proceeds in a circle. Evidence? The gushing acceptance of "Gone With the Wind."

Maplewood, Mo.

C. A. LANG

Editor: Attempts recently have been made by a few Men of Gawd to "streamline" religion. To Freethinkers, this is an amusing attempt to give sales appeal to the commodity they have to sell—a commodity that has no new markets today and no trade-in value whatsoever. Many possessors of this commodity (religion) sometimes show strange yearnings to get rid of their old model and trade it in for a new model, but after shopping hither thither, and yon, are forced to give up in despair. No new model is available; and a new coat of paint on the old model soon cracks. If there were such a thing as a late model of religion, one would, naturally, find it on display in a church. But when one goes to church in search of this new "streamlined" model, as some Men of Gawd are bold enough to advertise, he finds the same old crap. He is invited to look at Exhibit A, which is the Virgin Birth; to believe that the Ethereal Esquire copulated with a virgin on earth and the result was a child, half-God and half-man; to believe that this child, when grown to manhood, died—a sacrifice to save all Mankind from eternal hell-fire; to believe that this same half-God, half-man was placed in a tomb, only to escape and fly up bodily to a place beyond the clouds, called Heaven. Could one find, outside Grimm's Fairy Tales, a story more fictional than this? And yet, only the other night, I heard a Man of Gawd rehash this same old tripe, and even without tongue in cheek asked his auditors to accept this as literal truth. He happened to be an army chaplain talking to a bunch of raw recruits whose Service Records show such notations as "Average mental age, 12 yrs.," "Average mental age, 14 yrs.," "Average mental age, 16 yrs.," "Vocabulary test score, 54 percent," etc. However, one could hear the same old stuff at the Little Church Around the Corner or the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine. Streamlining religion is an impossibility. One can no more streamline religion than he can the theory that the world is flat.

A. M. PASCHALL  
Company K, Fort Sam Houston Training Center, San Antonio, Texas.

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Editor: It's a year since I first read The Freeman. Little did I realize then that because of it I was to save over \$50 a year, the amount I formerly contributed to the Almighty's ambassador. Add to this another \$25 spent on church socials, membership dues for religious organizations, etc. Believe me, this money comes in handy for a lot of things, especially for pleasures I once denied myself, to say nothing of di-

verting some of it to the cause of breaking religious bubbles. I didn't support the church because I wanted to or because God had so commanded me, as some fanatics would have all non-members believe. I was simply scared I'd go plumb to hell if I didn't. Now I'm free. I feel free, and have a new invigorated perspective of the intricacies of life. In short, The Freeman has made a reasoning, freethinking man of me.

Your paper is unique in that it has a pleasing combination of witticisms, facts, opinions, and earthy jokes. It has answered many disturbing questions outright and helped solve others by throwing light on them.  
Ogilvie, Minnesota CLAYTON BLISS

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Editor: As my reward to a benefactor of reason I enclose the small sum of one dollar for the purpose of furthering your ideas. Although it is not a substantial amount, its moral is that there are people who show in a small way that they still stick by the principles of reason and Freethought.

I have been an ardent follower and admirer of your publications for nearly four years and my hope is that you will be far more successful as years go by. It is to you alone that I owe my thanks for liberating my mind; it is something that money alone cannot repay. I am 19 years of age, but despite my age I am proud to say that I do not gullibly swallow irrational religious ideas. My first conception of skepticism was like an awakening of the mind, which started when I was about twelve years of age. I shall never regret that I came in contact with your writings at an early age in life; but I would deeply regret it if I had not till later in life. The spirit of courage alone is indeed a promoter to successful ambitions; while truth is the emblem printed on the flag carried by all Freethinkers. May your principles of skepticism be the rejuvenation of all shackled minds.  
Anaconda, Mont. EARL STEPHANSON

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Editor: Edwin C. Hill, in his broadcast [November 20], paid tribute to Msgr. Fulton J. Sheen, who, he said, had a way with words. He could "make them purr like cats," or he could make them "cut and sting like a whiplash." At a centennial mass in San Francisco, Msgr. Sheen had rebuked "those who go about wailing and moaning that the world is going to the bow-wows; and in tones vibrant with faith he had assailed those spineless creatures who are unworthy of being American citizens." (I'm curious to know just which spineless creatures he means; surely he couldn't mean those too spineless to tell such organi-

zations as the Bundists, Silver Shirts, Christian Mobilizers, Christian Fronters—whom Msgr. Sheen must particularly despise—where to get off.) And by the way, is Coughlin yet an American citizen?

Msgr. Sheen also assailed those who are "down" on everything. "They shout 'Down with the government, down with labor unions, down with this class, or that class.' They should learn to say 'UP from class hatred, up from ALL hatred.' Let us stop 'downing' everything, and look up, up, UP, to God!"

Which sounds fine, but it doesn't explain how we are going to love the dictator and his victims at the same time. Are we expected to love Hitler, Mussolini and Franco, as we look upon their millions of emaciated, pathetic victims? We still have sense enough to recognize rattlesnakes and vultures when we see them, and not to waste time trying to change their natures by "love." Let the Chamberlains do that.

Certain clergymen seem to think inconsistency a virtue. I recall Msgr. Sheen's own statement, "I submit that there is a great need for intolerance." Now he is preaching tolerance and love. And from day to day we don't know what it is he wants us to tolerate, or what to hate. Remembering a pronouncement of his in an Easter sermon, (1940), "What we call progress is nothing but the progressive putrefaction of a corpse," we can make a pretty good guess, however.

Although we don't hear radio commentators whooping it up for the Hon. Harold Ickes, he can handle words as brilliantly and as acidly as Msgr. Sheen. But of course there's a difference. We always know where Mr. Ickes stands; his eloquence is used to defend democracy, tolerance and decency, not to inveigle simple folk into thinking democracy is rotten, that progress and freedom are putrefying corpses, and that we may as well go back to the Middle Ages and ecclesiastical dictatorship. Wilmington, Del. W. MATTHEWS

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Editor: Your story of the butcher's escapade with the cow's udder is very good, but that ain't the way I heard it. The other version may not be better but it is different. Here it is:

A practical joker stopped at the butcher's shop and asked for a cow's udder. After arranging it properly, he started home. At the first corner he met a friend who was properly shocked, and called his attention to his plight. Looking down, he sized up the situation, and said, "Well, I'll be damned!" So he out with his knife and whacked the thing off. Friend fainted.

Readjusting his udder, he proceeded down the street. Next he met a policeman who took him to task quite severe-

ly. Again he took a look, and said, "Well, I'll be damned!", out with his knife and whacked it off. Policeman fainted.

All set again, he made his way home. His wife met him at the door and screamed her astonishment. He took one look, said, "Well, I'll be damned!", out with his knife and whacked it off. Wife fainted.

Then our practical joker went out into the back yard and threw the udder into the garbage pail. Looking closely, he discovered that only two teats had been cut off. Joker fainted. Brentwood, Md. E. C. HELM

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Editor: Formerly we heard a great deal about a moral equivalent for war. Now, we have the war itself, so we are not thinking so much about its equivalent. But here is another thought: The Freeman is a moral equivalent for a good many things. Among them are some that are real money-savers, to wit:

A month's contribution to the minister .....	\$10.00
Price of the month's best-seller..	2.50
Ticket to a scientific lecture..	1.00
Two tickets to the Gayety Theater	1.10

\$14.60

Those of your readers who can afford the above-mentioned luxuries should contribute the amount saved each month.

Brentwood, Md.

ELMER C. HELM

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Editor: I don't see quite eye to eye with you on the urgency or desirability of our entering into the present international orgy of blood-letting. For one thing, I never had any hankering to rush off to any man's war even when I was of suitable military age. Now that both you and I are beyond that age I think it only seemly and modest that we let those who are going to have to do the dirtiest work also do the shouting if they so feel inclined. And, as a matter of fact, there are plenty of indications that such shouting as they are doing is, and will be, against, rather than for, the proposals that you and many of the rest of our leaders are making. Quite aside from that, too, it seems an inescapable fact—even if an unpleasant one—that we are too unprepared at this time to enter the conflict ourselves without suicidal result. To rave and bluster in such circumstances, then, looks to me like the height of futility. That we'll ultimately have a conflict to wage, of course, seems highly probable. Therefore the wisest thing is to get down to business with as little frenzy as possible and plan as we've never planned before. If, in

the course of the program that is then evolved, we lose a few of our hard-won liberties, that will have to be expected. These liberties, by the way, have been all too smugly taken for granted by most people for a long time; I have often doubted that a genuine passion that goes deeper than mere flag-saluting, for the preservation of democratic prerogatives can survive unless it is seriously challenged every other generation or so. Maybe, then, if for a time we have to put them aside in favor of a sterner and more efficient discipline in order to weather a storm, they'll be more appreciated again afterward. Among such disciplines we may as well face at once the need of some system of universal military training, and to get in on part of that, incidentally, neither you nor I are yet too old. I favor some such scheme as the Swiss have had for a long time; it is democratic in operation, it puts faith in the individual citizen by allowing reserves to keep in their homes their elementary arms, and it is therefore less amenable to the designs of ambitious usurpers. For, whatever else we may charge the world aggressors with, it was by deliberate, cool-headed planning and organization and by determined, ruthless intelligence and efficiency—in a military sense, that is—that they have come as far as they have. If we cannot develop a technique that matches or exceeds theirs, our ways are doomed, later if not sooner. If, while we are thus preparing ourselves, we can also give some aid to what remains of the so-called democracies of Europe, well and good. But I doubt that we should weaken ourselves in a single particular in such an attempt. Appalling stumblebums that they've been, I sometimes feel, terrible as it sounds to say it, that they richly deserve the punishment that they're getting. But since we've been little if any better ourselves, the less said in that vein the better, especially until we've shown ourselves unquestionably more competent. It seems to me that if we thus conserve our energies and improve our time and leave to the aggressors the awful job of transporting the equipment for such usurpations as they may contemplate in this hemisphere rather than now assume the job of going abroad ourselves—and in a half-cocked manner at that, remember—we have everything to gain. As a matter of fact, the first step in such a stay-at-home program is to put ourselves in right with the other countries on this hemisphere and that involves economic rather than military measures. Indeed while we are now

happily beginning to think in such terms, we should have done so long ago; economically—and perhaps more than we realize militarily, too—the aggressors are already in South America. To win away from Hitler the good will of the Vargas and some other governments will require heroic measures. That there is as much ill will toward us as there is down there seems directly chargeable to the swindling activities of our own worthy capitalists. Some rather broad hints have been made in the press recently, too, about Hitler-lovers in our own State Department. Until such things are straightened out it seems crazy to me to talk about going to war.

Maplewood, Mo

C. A. LANG

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Editor: Speaking of Gandhi's humorlessness: recently *Liberty Magazine* ran a story purporting to be the inside dope on the great leader's sex life. Much of it was put in his own words and for a page or two he rambled with great solemnity about the exaltation and spiritual gain that came when he ceased cohabiting with his wife. He called it slavery to her. Also his relations with a large retinue of women followers were said to have improved marvelously since he had taken this step. The restraints and lack of wholesome naturalness which he says existed theretofore are now entirely removed. I know at least one fanatic like that myself and to me it's perfectly evident that he and Gandhi—and all others who make such professions—are impotent, or so nearly so that the abstinence no longer causes them any inconvenience. The tragedy in such things is that so many people still take such stuff seriously. To those of us who see through these old boys, however, when, with straight faces, they attribute the natural effect of their dimming embers to the development of unheard-of reservoirs of strength, will, virtue and what not else, it has all the elements of rich humor. While reading Isaac Goldberg's book, "What We Laugh At—And Why," I ran across a passage the other evening which bears so pertinently on this subject that I can't refrain from quoting it: "I have always had a notion that many women—perhaps most normal women—secretly laugh at, or even resent, the man who 'worships' them, who 'respects' them, so deeply that he never offers to touch them. This is a laughable situation, for men and women were made to touch each other, and are going to touch each other regardless of the most solemn injunctions issued against such commerce. The man or

woman who really believes that men and women are not going to seek each other out through the most difficult conditions and against the most awful threats is humorless as well as sexless." Maplewood, Mo. C. A. LANG

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"Mr. E. H.-J., you're wrong on at least one little count about the Church when you say it's reactionary, non-progressive, and fights tooth and nail to maintain the medieval status quo. Yes, you're wrong. For, in at least one respect the Church is progressive and stays abreast of the times. Hasn't it made St. Christopher the patron saint of autoists, and that only recently? That's progress—for the Catholic Church. And it's safe to say the Church won't stop there, either. It's in the cards that St. Christopher will become the patron saint of glider enthusiasts, travelers on stratoliners, and, some day, travelers on inter-planetary rocket ships."—A. M. Paschall, Azle, Tex.

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Editor: In a recent issue of The Freeman you gave a quotation from Shakespeare to describe the casualness of life. The following quotation from Lord Byron's "Don Juan" also describes it well, I think:

Well, well, the world must turn upon its axis,  
And all mankind turn with it, heads or tails,  
And live and die, make love and pay our taxes,  
And as the veering wind shifts, shift our sails.  
The King commands us, and the doctors quack us,  
The priest instructs us, and so our life exhales,  
A little breath, love, wine, ambition, fame,  
Fighting, devotion, death; perhaps a name.

If there is anything in literature which describes the whole range of life better or more concisely, I would like to know where it can be found. Hayward, Calif. C. W. SPALDING

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Editor: According to Walter Van Kirk, who broadcasts "Religion in the News," it has been decided that the N. Y. C. school authorities would grant all students permission to absent themselves during the last school hour, each Wednesday, in order to attend classes for religious instruction in the church of their choice. This arrangement, he said, [November 16th], was opposed by John Dewey as being in defiance of the Constitution of the United States; but the school authorities declared it involved no threat to the separation of Church and State.

And then the churches wonder why intelligent persons look upon them with suspicion! If the church were high-minded and self-respecting enough to refuse to accept a "victory" gained at the expense of a violation of the people's constitutional rights, how much more respect we might have for that institution!

But the churches seem only too willing to seize any kind of opportunity to thrust their doctrines down reluctant throats; it matters not to them if the opportunity is provided by a group of clerical and lay bullies, who bludgeon the youngsters into taking "religion" and liking it. And just what they expect to accomplish by this Wednesday dosage of religion it is hard to tell. Probably they would say, the preservation of democracy or morals, or both; but we know the students of Spain and Italy have been dosed with nothing but religious instruction, morning, noon, and night, year in and year out. And we know there is not a vestige of democracy in either country, and that according to statistics the standard of morality is not so high as in any Protestant country you care to name. So it looks as if there were truth in the charge made by a few of New York's braver spirits that the whole business was planned as an entering wedge in the campaign to end separation of Church and State. W. MATTHEWS  
Wilmington, Del.

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Editor: The holiday season is over for another year. "Silent Night, Holy Night" has been sung with the same old fervor in spite of the fact that thousands of Christians in Europe were trying to sleep beneath roofs which have been made "holey" by bombs dropped from screaming warplanes. To be truthful, they should have said: "Noisy night, holey night: all is not calm, all is not bright." But what does truth mean to an aspirant of Real Estate in the Clouds? They want their myths and they're going to have them as long as Christian propaganda is stronger than Freethought propaganda. Although many quasi-Free-thinkers of America join in the singing of Christmas carols, they are aiding Christian propaganda and paying homage to an institution which is unworthy of their loyalty and support. If you don't believe this, may I refer you to your history books. Washington, D. C. B. L. TAYLOR

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Editor, The American Freeman:  
Mae West went to the White House for a little visit with F. D. R. When she got there, she found she "had to go." So she asked where the place was and he answered, "Just around the

corner." Wherenpon Mae replied: "Listen, Franklin, I'm not looking for prosperity; I want relief."

Greta Garbo went for an auto ride. She also "had to go," so she asked her chauffeur to stop at a service station. Upon doing so, and assisting her from the car, he asked: "Do you need any help?" "No, I want to be alone," said she.

Brooklyn, N.Y. JOSEPH STRIEGEL

Editor, The American Freeman:

Concerning that Y.M.C.A. lecturer's plea for "modesty" on the grounds that "even nature is modest, concealing sexual parts, etc." in animals, I would like to add to your own apt remarks about the pig, that when one thinks about the horse—even the unsexed individuals—and about the cow, mare and slut in heat, the bull with his pendulant ornament, the dog with his constant leaving of messages and his sniffing manner of giving and receiving entitlements when meeting another of his kind, one is left a little amazed at a person who draws on the ways of nature with animals for models of modesty. And since most of his plea for "modesty" probably had to do with clothing, as is usual with such people, I am wondering whether he pushed that aspect of the discussion to its logical conclusion; that is, to say that clothes are therefore "natural" to us. Yet we are not born with them! But hold. If he is looking for a "natural" application of modesty to man, there IS one little feature about which I had almost forgotten. Nature has, indeed, uniquely endowed us with a natural modesty device—apparently in anticipation of the day when, after eons of body-and-mind-stultifying clothes-wearing, some of us might want a good excuse for throwing aside our garments. I refer, of course, to the jolly way in which all of us—yes, even the "Cardinals Bladder dew" and "Bishops Beerbelch"—are decorated with public hair.

And now that we have had another laugh at the poor "Y" sky-pilot, suppose you tell us just what is the latest dope from anthropological science on the subject of public hair. How came man, and man alone, by such an ornament? And if man was once entirely hairy—as is most probable—why did he shed everywhere else but not about his sexual parts? Has any really plausible theory, since Darwin scratched his head over it to no avail, yet been advanced in explanation of this mystery?

#### SUBSCRIBER

(Editor's note: The patch of hair, called by Sir Richard Burton "The Perfumed Garden," given by nature to both men and women is of real help in the urge for the preservation of the species.

It serves to stimulate many additional nerve centers, thereby giving greater satisfaction and making the act more pleasurable and therefore more certain of consummation. The same applies to the neat mounds of fat supplied both to males and females, which tend to give increased pleasure to the participants.)

Editor: Wee Wendell Willkie's grammar is terrible. In his Omaha speech: "It deeply touches Mrs. Willkie and I . . . aggerculchur . . . sekatar 'vaggerculchur . . . we will never obtain our objectives" . . . and a lot more that many of us make, of course, but that sound horrible in the other fellow. Kansas City, Mo. ED. C. KRUSE

Editor: I don't savvy your explanation of public hair. I've never perceived your alleged superadded stimulations. In fact I incline to the view here that hair is a positive detriment to really delicate sensation—unless one happens to get in the way, when it's an intolerable irritation. To boot I think that like a beard it's ugly and unsanitary. But hold: maybe I've overlooked something; think of the myriads of crabs that would have suffered oblivion had not an omniscient diety provided this delectable arrangement for their special benefit. "Perfumed Garden" in sooth! Maybe, sometime after we descended from the swaying boughs and began to shed our hair elsewhere, the hair on this special patch was preserved the better to harbor such "perfumes" as seem still to be needed to attract male to female in other species. And for that reason maybe this is today but another ill-adapted, quaint and amusing vestige. Maplewood, Mo. C. A. LANG

"That vivid description by Jonathan Edwards of God holding sinners like spiders in his hands over the mouth of hell, caused me to wonder why the old wind-bag forgot that God might blister his own hands."—Reader.

"I think that it's more than a mere coincidence that I too, was most impressed with Mark Twain's 'Mysterious Stranger.' I've recommended it to a dozen people and yet I'll bet not one of them has treated himself to the luxury of reading it."—Reader.

Editor: Your account of Joseph Stalin's naivete in the matter of varietism in copulative postures reminds me of the one about the connoisseur in this fine art who boasted about and described to a friend some 57 varieties of positions with which he was familiar. The friend listened studiously and then

remarked, "But I notice that you have overlooked one way." "And what way is that?" asked the connoisseur. "The right way."

Speaking of some Negroes' love of flowery language and the ludicrous misuse of words that sometimes results therefrom, reminds me of the colored gal who said to the doctor, "Ah wants you to see if I ain't fragrant; Ah ain't demonstrated for mo' than three months."

Maplewood, Mo.

C. A. LANG

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"I was amused at your brief reference to Bach's 'nibble-dibbling' and wondered whether some of the Brandenburg Concertos, which I like, would be so characterized by you. Last spring I went to hear one of his oratorios sung in a St. Louis church. I decided that you can depend on the churches to exploit an artist's dismalest work—and then ham-act it to boot. Of course a fellow can't get up and leave a place like that in the middle of things, so I nearly died of ennui. Never again."—C. A. L., Mo.

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Editor: Here is a suggestion for the person who asked your advice about a greeting card. I don't know what kind of a greeting card the writer had in mind, but if it was for a Christmas card, you might tell him or her that one reader said this: "I never send Christmas cards because as long as we observe Christmas we shall be honoring a man who has brought more division, horror, and bloodshed to this modern world than any other figure of history. Most of the trouble, however, is no fault of the Nazarene preacher. Still, when we observe Christmas we are doing homage to Christianity and helping to perpetrate the holiday of pagans. Below is the printed greeting card that I intend to send to my friends this year:

MAY FREEDOM OF SPEECH,  
FREEDOM OF PRESS, RIGHT OF  
ASSEMBLY, FREETHOUGHT, AND  
THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS  
BE YOURS THROUGHOUT THE  
COMING YEAR.

Washington, D. C. B. L. TAYLOR.

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Editor: Your recent remarks in reply to a suggestion that great musical compositions—such as Beethoven's—must surely be due to extra-human or divine inspiration, caused me to remember some relevant statements made by Samuel Chotzinoff in connection with this Summer's distribution of some popular-priced recordings of Beethoven's and other's music. Among these were Beethoven's fifth and eighth symphonies. Speaking of the eighth Chotzinoff informs us that Berlioz had once remarked that the second movement of

this symphony seemed to have "fallen from heaven into the brain of its author or and to have been written at a sitting." I'll admit that were I less a skeptic I might easily make a similar remark; the movement is utterly charming. However, Chotzinoff goes on to say that an examination of Beethoven's sketch-books and papers shows that many different sketches were used in the final development of this movement. To my notion this is significant in that it dispels, by a consideration of hard facts, much popular romantic illusion about the technical methods of genius. It proves anew the statement made by some other genius whose name I've forgotten, that inspiration is mostly perspiration. In the several appreciations written by Chotzinoff for this series of recordings there is much other testimony to support your own conclusion that most of the masters of music, including Beethoven, were studied Rationalists. To be sure, Chotzinoff's style is much less bold and direct than yours, nevertheless any perceptive person can come to the same conclusion as you from his remarks. Concerning Beethoven, one incident is worth recalling. It seems that the great composer did not scorn the advantages of wealth, being, unlike many another of his craft, a shrewd businessman who knew how to exact his rights from his publishers. Nevertheless, when a brother of his—in the conceit which custom then granted one who was acquiring considerable property—sent the composer his card inscribed "Johann van Beethoven, Landowner," the composer rebuked the rising capitalist by sending him a card of his own, inscribed "Ludwig van Beethoven, Brainowner." In addition to the disdain which this action showed for popular and respectable vanities, I see in it something more: he said "Brainowner," not—as a less materialistic person might in that day well have said—"Mindowner," or even "Spiritowner" or "Soulowner." He thus displayed a comprehension far in advance of his time of the basic nature of all intellectual and artistic effort. More than a hundred years ago this keen intellect had cut through the obscurities of "spirit" and "soul" and "mind," and for himself at least gotten down to the reality of the brain itself. This is something which the rest of us are only now slowly coming to; indeed the "soul" (psyche) still lingers in the very name of the new and growing science of the brain.

Maplewood, Mo.

C. A. LANG

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Editor: I am shocked and surprised by your attack on me in your December Freeman. It is absolutely false.

I have read your writings for many

years, subscribed to them, tried to get Ken (of which I was once editor) to reprint your debunking series. I have frequently disagreed with you, but like Voltaire, I am willing to defend the right of anyone to say what he pleases. Moreover, I have not said you were a Hitler or Japanese agent, paid by Tokio or Berlin gold or a spy for Mr. Dies, when I found something that angered me.

It is a lie to say that I am following anyone's line. I have a paper in which I am free to write anything; it is circumscribed only by ethical standards and the libel law. It is a fact that 90 or 100 percent of the press lied about the Finnish war, and naturally the press being 100 percent anti-Soviets, the lies were all against Russia. It is my job as a critic of the press to point out this truth. It is also my job to point out the lies in that 90 or 95 percent of the press which favors Willkie: but that does not make me a Roosevelt man. All I am interested in is facts, and I write facts and truth to the best of my ability.

Norwalk, Conn. GEORGE SELDES

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Editor: You have a terribly bad habit of useless name-calling. Those with whom you disagree are usually screwy, cracked, liars, crooks, bastards and sewer-rats. Your recent potshot at George Seldes was unjust, and I say this in all sincerity, yet I don't know the man personally. What I do know is that his paper *In Fact* is a very informative little sheet. You may not think so because its political and economic reasoning doesn't conform to your own.

As I see it, and I am friendly in saying it, you ought to take inventory of your own political and economic thinking. You call yourself a Socialist, but the type of Socialist you are must ever remain a mystery even to your readers. To ask that we rush to the aid of England in full force as you do proves beyond a doubt that your Socialism is superficial to say the least. I'm sure I don't want to give my services to Lord Beaverbrook, Sir Kingsley Wood, Neville Chamberlain, Sir Samuel Hoare, Winston Churchill and the rest of the aristocratic mass-haters now in charge of the English Empire. To say that these fellows are interested in democracy is to make a joke of the word. Ask the Hindus!

You are a successful businessman while I am a laborer and that distinction is bound to make a difference in our world outlook. That difference however wouldn't mean necessarily that I am goofy, cracked or screwy. Your economic lot is a fortunate one and I am sure that a Revolution would scare hell out of you; mine is a miserable one and

a Revolution wouldn't scare me a damn. Stalin looms as a monster to you, to me he seems a pretty level-headed political realist. You think Seldes is a Stalinist who distorts facts to suit his line, but I think his line corresponds pretty well with Charles Beard's, Corliss Lamont's, Theodore Dreiser's, Clarence Seely's, Porter Sargent's, John T. Flynn's, to name a few. And so the world moves. Neville Island, Pa. MELVILLE KRESS

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Editor: I have been struck more and more, in recent months, by the obvious efforts of broadcasting rabbis to lay the blame for anti-Jewish atrocities on "godlessness, paganism; the brutality of two godless men, Hitler and Stalin." Of course any rabbi knows that persecution of the Jews existed long before Hitler and Stalin were thought of; they know as well as McCabe does that the root of anti-Semitism was the Roman Church. They know it was the Catholic Crusaders who slew Jews by the million in the good old Age of Faith. Yet they politely omit any references to Jewish persecution as instigated by the Church. They are becoming as adroit as the Church itself at leaping from the era of Huns and Vandals right over the Middle Ages to the era of Hitler and Stalin. Of course, the only thing they can do about Mussolini, the godly, is to avoid mentioning him. He is anti-Semitic, but he isn't godless—so what can they say? Silence about Benito is the best bet. There can be no doubt that this cowardly toadying is hurting all Jews. Of course, there are courageous, outspoken ones; but when Gentile liberals hear Jewish-moral leaders catering to the enemy, they can't help thinking, "Why should we put ourselves out to fight for people who won't fight for themselves?" Our blood still boils at the inhuman treatment of ordinary Jews—indeed it seems to boil more than that of certain rabbis, who should be the first to stand up for those whose contributions support them. I predict that the well-to-do and comfort loving Jews who prefer to side with Ford and the Roman Church will get a swift kick from those gentlemen for their pains.

Wilmington, Del. W. MATTHEWS

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Editor: Although a third presidential term may lead to a fourth, fifth, or more terms, it must be acknowledged that each additional term can be had only by the democratic consent of the people through the use of our free election system.

The American voters have the right to elect Roosevelt for a third term or Willkie for a first term. I believe the people should and will disregard the third term issue and elect the man they feel is most capable.

However, many Roosevelt opponents consider the third term issue the fundamental issue of the presidential campaign. Indeed, if the two term limitation is so basically important, why has it not become a constitutional law instead of a mere tradition?

In fairness, it should be remembered that U. S. Grant and Theodore Roosevelt tried to break this unwritten, but "sacred" law. Perhaps President Roosevelt is merely following a "bad" example set by two outstanding Republicans. Spokane, Wash. ROBERT SLOCUM

Editor: I get a great kick out of the way you satirize what passes for intellectual speech. Most stage, movie, radio and "salon" gab is enough to turn a girl's stomach! Am sending along a little poem, "Diction," by Charlie Lake, and hope you get the same bang out of it I did! Youngstown, O. MARION CARROLL

#### DICTION

The English have a funny way  
Of talking, don't you know—  
It sounds to my uncultured ears  
As if they had to go.  
I think that they should take a tip  
(Their diction's such a sin!)  
And talk a little more  
Like people who had been.

—CHARLIE LAKE.

Editor: A year in an army training camp, as a willing conscript or otherwise, is going to be mighty tough on Freethinkers, unless something or somebody throws up bars and keeps out the Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratts and the Bishop Beerbelches. Imagine a Free-thinker having to put up for a year with the prissings of Mrs. P. P.-P. and the burpings of Bishop Beerbelch.

Signs already indicate that those dunked in religious bunk, with churchly connections, are just itching for an opportunity to "save our souls." The Y. M. C. A. is stirring like a monster that has slept for the past 22 years and is already moving in on many spots to see what can be done in the way of providing good wholesome "Christian" entertainment for "our boys." The "Y," however, isn't as much to be feared as some of the ample-fanned religious-minded dames who think they have just what the boys need. (Must I point out here that I have reference only to things of the spirit?) The Y. M. C. A. has lost great gobs of its religious sheen. It now smacks more of Rotarian Clubism and Babbitty than it does of things religious. But, even so, the word "Christian" is still part of its trade name and the religious-minded, with cash for memberships, are welcomed with more open arms than are the skeptics, also with cash.

The one saving feature about those new sound trailer vehicles the army has ordered is that they will be used for functions other than religious services. Maybe those other functions will serve to more than balance what the army chaplains dish out. Azle, Tex. A. M. PASCHALL

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Editor: You and I have the same views regarding God. I knew, traveled with, reported his speeches and corresponded with the great Robert G. Ingersoll. His oration on his brother always struck me as an emotional outburst rather than a cool conclusion. . . . "Listening love hears the rustle of an angel wing" is really off the Ingersoll key. I think Herbert Spencer's Unknowable touches the heights of logical analysis, yet he says: "Men are learnedly critical over a Greek ode, yet pass by without a glance that grand epic written by the finger of God upon the strata of the earth." Of course, it might be deemed a figure of speech, but I don't see such usage in your writings. Preachers are working up these two views, especially: "Hope sees a star." and so on. San Francisco, Calif. LEIGH H. IRVINE

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Editor: A radiatorator the other evening, whooping it up on a "religion in education" drive, said: "H. G. Wells once said that the future is a race between education and catastrophe. I would say, rather, that the future is a race between religion and catastrophe." There you have it!—the Man o' Gawd's point of view. Since the would-be salesman of superstition made so bold as to change Mr. Wells' saying, I myself change it and come out with this: The future, as always, is a race between education and religion. "Religion" in this case (and any case, as far as that goes) is synonymous with "catastrophe." The future, 15 centuries ago, was a race between education and religion, and religion won out. We know what followed. Let us hope it does not so happen again.

I for one have to admit that I am almost as puzzled over present-day indifference to things religious as are the priests, preachers, and rabbis themselves. Strange indeed that with all the powers-that-be standing squarely behind the Men o' Gawd; with the press and radio willing vassals to the Ethereal Esquire; with no medium by which Freethinkers can make themselves known save to a few thousands, nevertheless the religious structure is getting crumbly. For all the support given religion by the high-pressure boys, religion seems definitely on the way out. Indifference to religion is growing by leaps and bounds despite the frenzied efforts of the Men o'Gawd and their backers, financial and otherwise, to keep the monster alive. They now realize they are up against a mighty

tough proposition; and I doubt if the high-pressure boys, the Men o' Gawd, and the prostitute press can continue to put over religion as a necessary commodity on a public that is getting wiser every day. What the Men o'Gawd would like to do now, with the help of the high-pressure boys, is to start a back-to-religion movement, back to the days of a trustful, ignorant mass of people without an iota of skepticism, for they realize, that indifference to religion is the overture to Freethought. However, as they've probably discovered, what they are up against is like trying to hold down a circus tent in a cyclone.

Azle, Tex. A. M. PASCHALL

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Editor: That one about the fat colored gal who explained her swell clothes to her ragged questioner by remarking that she'd been "ruined" reminds me of an ancient burlesque scene, Mae West and her maid, Beulah, got it off the last time I heard it. Says Beulah, "U-u-u-huh? Where'd yo'all get dat splendidous coat?" "You like it?" says Mae, schwanzing over to her mirror. "Ah shore do!" from Beulah. "Where'd yo get it?" "I found me a man with a thousand dollars," said Mae. Not long after, Beulah shows up with even a finer coat. "Where'd you get that coat?" demands Mae. "Ah found me a thousand men with one dollar."

And then there's the one about the two colored scrub women, one of whom was upbraiding the other because of her persistently sloppy appearance, off as well as on the job. "Woman, why don't yo'all buy some clothes," she chided, "What yo'all do with your money, anyway?" "Ah hoard it," was the answer. "Sho, Ah knows dat," the other came back, "but Ah's askin' yo' what yo' DO with it, not how yo' gets it!"

Maplewood, Mo. C. A. LANG

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Editor: What's the matter? Are you slipping? Since when does a man of your wide knowledge and vast experience have to request help from his readers to fill in the last line of a poem that is famous throughout the English-speaking world? I am referring to the line in your recent Freeman, which goes: "Some come here to sit and think." I have heard of women who close their eyes when kissing, but not yet have I heard of a man who does the same while getting rid of an excess amount of Vitamin P. This must, however, be one of your habits. The next time you get the urge to go places when away from home just keep your eyes open, for this little poem is written on every wall in every room where the word "Men" appears over the door. Are you really in ignorance of the word of this Shakespearean poem? Another sign that you are in a bad way is the poor-

ness of your example of misplaced commas. Here goes with a much better one: "A sick woman sent her absent husband a telegram, as follows: 'Am not getting any better Stop Come home at once Stop.' The husband, however, got the following telegram: 'Am not getting any Stop Better come home at once.'" Only a misplaced Stop sign, but what a difference.

Wyandanch, L. I., N. Y.

E. WYLIE

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Editor: I have been a Judge but I've never been able to solve a question that is asked here in Mexico. I'd like to submit the question to the readers of The American Freeman, perhaps among them there is a Solomon who will enlighten me. A pickpocket goes to make confession with a Catholic priest and the first thing he does is to pick the priest's watch. "Father," he says, "I have stolen a watch." "You must give it back to its owner, son." "I'll give it to you if you want it." "I don't want it. Give it back to its owner, I say!" "But I have offered it to its owner and he doesn't want it." "Why, then, you may keep it, son." He kept it. Was he right?

And now, a little clam-broth. A young woman, terribly excited, ran into a police station. "Officer," she yelled, "I've been robbed of \$50 right in that movie theater," pointing to a cinema across the street. "I thought that was a decent place." The officer asked, "But where did you have your money when it was stolen from you?" "I had it tucked into my stocking, right under my garter." "But how is it you didn't feel when it was taken from you." "Oh, well, I felt somebody fumbling under my dress, but I thought he was well meaning!"

Five years ago, in Mexico City, we used to tell a story that may still be circulating, since skirts are going higher and higher again, like the cost of living. Two fashionable young ladies in dishabille were chatting in their boudoir. One of them whimpered: "Oh, I am the unhappiest woman in the world!" "Why, dear, what's the matter?" "Oh, I can't use the skirt that's coming into fashion next year. I was operated on for appendicitis and I wouldn't, I won't show that horrible scar. Oh, o-o-oh."

JOSE ACOSTA RIVERA

Jimenez, Chih., Mexico

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Editor: "I've been especially interested in the controversy involving publication of stories in The Freeman. About two years ago, it happened that a friend aroused my interest in The Freeman by reading aloud a story. During the process of looking for some more jokes to satisfy the "baser element" of my nature, I read the whole sheet with enthusiasm and thus became a Freeman reader. By all means, keep The Freeman

predominately informative, but keep it also intellectually stimulative and well mixed with morsels of worldly, salty humor.

Spokane, Wash. ROBERT SLOCUM

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Editor: Your little sermon to the remote Canadian reader who, while crediting you for most of his education, complains that his eyes have been opened to the "gloomy side of life," causes me to suggest that perhaps this reader didn't succeed well in saying exactly what he wanted. I offer this thought because I've had some of the same feelings as he, only perhaps I'm a bit less rueful about it. I believe that this reader would like to have said that his regrets about enlarged knowledge of the world's squalor and ignorance are caused not so much by the knowledge itself as by the realization that he is doomed to share, personally, and for as long as he lives, many of the deprivations which would be unnecessary if all people were more intelligent, and by the further fact that there is really so little he can do about it. We who feel as he does know, for instance, that the only peaceable way in which a better life can come to the vast majority of the people is through a gradual alteration of the legalistic structure that now prevents it. Further, we know that in order to bring that about, enlightened people who see things about as we do have got to be elected to the various legislative bodies—municipal, state, and national—which alone can alter that structure. But have we any idea how more people of that sort can be elected—other than the excruciatingly slow and faltering way of gradually raising the General level of intelligence so that more people of intelligence are likely to appear among those who now strive for public office? Of course it must be admitted that that is a pretty sure way. But to offset the reassurance that this first thought seems to offer we see only too well how few really intelligent people ever aspire to public office and how ignominiously they are pushed into oblivion by servile party hacks and cunning self seekers when they do. We see too, if we have only a little insight, how unwilling we ourselves are to put forth the effort to strive for positions of political power. We are not strengthened in our vacillations in the matter by the reflection that very little aid will ever be given us if we do make up our minds; that sixteen-car special trains for our campaigning convenience will assuredly never be our lot; that our more likely reward will be obloquy, personal bitterness and defeat. Last of all—and that's really at the bottom of the difficulty—we realize how few people who know what it's all

about, who know the causes of our distress and what to do about them, who are intelligent, in a word, have the personal attributes that seem to be needed for leadership. I refer to the charm, the ability to think on their feet, and the forensic powers needed to put their ideas over in the only place where it matters: the conference floor and the public forum. These are the things which, clearly seen, go a long way toward keeping "the soldier in the liberation war of mankind" deflated and unhappy, especially the isolated one. And it's just as possible to be isolated in a big city as in the remote wilds of Canada.

I noticed with interest "Schoolmarm's" and that Chicago dentist's reactions to what the latter calls "back-alley stuff." No doubt you noticed that the dentist didn't say, definitely, that he doesn't READ the "nauseating" stuff. He merely doesn't "pass on your paper." Of course it's true it isn't the kind of paper he could leave lying in his anteroom; he'd soon lose the patronage of his prudes and bigots, and I don't blame him a bit for avoiding that. But in addition to such prudence, I suspect that he's got some degree of the Puritan-Comstockian complex that inwardly enjoys what it outwardly calls nauseating. Naughty but nice—you know the type. I know a number of people like that. They're mostly aging women—of both sexes, incidentally—who, if still sexually potent, labor under some sort or other of insurmountable frustration; or else they're impotent and therefore (they think) have become "good" and with characteristic human cussedness expect all others to be likewise. I notice, however, that another dentist—this time from the Naval Dental School in Washington—is enthusiastically for you, saying nothing at all about the dirt. That reminds me (why, you can figure out yourself) that I've wanted to ask you why a zipper night gown reminds one of an air field. The answer is that zipped a third of the way it reveals two hangars; another third discloses the Naval Base; and all the way exposes to view the whole plane.

Maplewood, Mo.

C. A. LANG

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"Regarding your remarks about your coming out for Roosevelt with what was probably the shortest editorial of the campaign: 'Re-elect F. D. R.' News comes from Washington that the President is seeking ways to reward those who supported him in his campaign for re-election. After Mayor La Guardia and some several others are rewarded, perhaps your time will come. Wouldn't it be ducky if the President rewarded you for your support by making you Ambassa-

dor to the Court of the Maharaja of Privydore?"—A. M. Paschall, Azle, Tex.

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Editor: You have a great sheet in The Freeman, and apparently a great mind behind it! It's by far the most stimulating piece of reading material issued today. I happened to catch Charlie Lake's piece of verse, "Diction" in a past issue. As a skeptic and coterie poet, Brother Lake really puts it on the line! Lost soul that you are, you should enjoy Lake's "My Sentiments." It was good old Mother Nature From whose womb I came a bouncin', I believe no God but Fate Can give you or me a trouncin'! When my machine is rusted And they kill the stench with sod, I'll be just a piece of bug-meat— Not a lap-dog for some "God"! New Castle, Pa. JOHN REZNOR III

\* \* \*

Editor: I wrote the four lines below last summer. The idea was conceived as I gazed on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the National Cemetery at Arlington, Va. Wouldn't the below poem be more appropriate for the inscription on the tomb than the present one "Known But To God"?

It's a long trail that leads to peace,  
But with Science as our guide we  
shall not cease  
To conquer every stubborn, selfish  
creed

Which brings about these wars of  
strife and greed.  
Washington, D. C. B. L. TAYLOR

\* \* \*

Editor: I returned home from a business trip and found the current Freeman, manhandled as usual by the rest of the Rosenburghs and several good friends, who have kindly consented to finish my booze and smoke out my cigars since I have been advised by a doctor to live like Mark Twain said he would rather not. I was mighty proud you found my proposition worth while exploiting and it is with the belief that you are not kidding (and I don't mind if you are) that I make a suggestion which I believe would be effective in arousing hundreds, even thousands, of loyal Freemanites to join the honorable ranks of the "New Amerocracy" and send in their life subscriptions to the American Freeman at \$20 each.

I believe, that while you printed my letter and your comments on the front page, it did not have the sales appeal that I know you understand so well. I offer in evidence your five pages of Little Blue Book ads in the 1941 World Almanac.

Why don't you give the idea a little of that "oomph" that I know you possess? I do not expect that it should

be given more space for that would be cheating us of some of the endless wisdom that oozes from what you term your "Editorial Podium" which we all devour so ravenously.

I suggest that you place an ad in The Freeman like you would in another publication, and work out your idea of "The Honorable Order of the New Amerocracy," and play up your autographed photograph offer. You'd be surprised how many of your readers are dying to see what you look like. Now that I know, I can guarantee that there is a treat in store for them.

Seriously, I believe that with just a bit of ballyhoo this idea ought to go over with a bang.

N. Y. C. WILLIAM ROSENBURGH

[Editor's Note: I don't like to disagree with so generous a Freemanite as Friend Rosenburgh, who, as readers know, sent \$20 for a lifetime subscription to this organ of righteousness and piety. I know from experience that this paper enjoys extraordinary reader-interest among its friends, so when I gave his plan space in the editorial columns I was really shooting the works. This trying-to-find-himself scrivener knows that once a subscriber gets properly inoculated with the germs of Freemanitis he betrays his condition unfailingly by reading every word of the sheet, even down to the earthy stories. I once thought that my more serious-minded customers would skip those pieces of facetious folderol, but to my surprise they eat the things up, and this goes for the sanctimonious sheep who happen to stray into my barnyard for a sniff and a howl. There's no doubt in this writer's mind that all Freemanites know Mr. Rosenburgh's plan by now. The only question that remains is whether the hard-boiled crew will join up as they're told. That's up to them. And no amount of advertising ballyhoo can make a Freemanite do something he hasn't the notion to do. In such a case it's best to throw out the suggestion in plain, simple, unpretentious terms and then see which way the lightning strikes. Incidentally, let me add that Reader Rosenburgh's plan not only means financial help for the deficit-hugging Freeman but gives them a smart bargain. Freeman subscribers love to help the best of all causes—Freethought—but they love a bargain almost as much, and here's a chance for many of them to satisfy their urge to save the world and save dollars at the same time.]

\* \* \*

Editor: This one happened right here in this little place of Jimenez. A doctor who was famed for his medical knowledge as well as for his drunk-

eness was called once, while in his cups, to attend a dying man. He couldn't go under his own power so he was dragged somehow to the bedside of the dying man. Instead of taking the pulse of the patient he took his own, and after careful consideration, said: "Oh, shucks, you have nothing at all. All there is to it is that you are damned drunk and take on too many women."

JOSE ACOSTA RIVERA  
Jimenez, Chih., Mex.

\* \* \*

Editor: In the January, 1941, issue of *The Freeman* (page 3) you answer a query relating to certain letters and documents of President Lincoln that are now held by the Library of Congress.

Your answer is mainly correct, except for the error in the last six words. For some time scholars have known when this material will be available to them. In the 1934 issue of the *World Almanac* (page 199) we find the following paragraph:

"Robert T. Lincoln was found dead in bed, July 26, 1926, at his home, Manchester, Vt. He was buried in the National Cemetery, at Arlington, Va., across the Potomac River from Washington. He had turned over to the U. S. Government more than 10,000 letters to and from Abraham Lincoln, also drafts of State papers, pamphlets, and newspaper clippings—all to be kept sealed at the Library of Congress until 21 years after the donor's death."

Thus, by the Summer of 1947, our historians should be in possession of some valuable material on the time and life of this Man of the Ages.

Reynolds, N. Dak. J. J. MEALY

\* \* \*

Editor: Occasional criticisms of you by old doctrinaire Socialists move me to comment. History and experience seem to show that however much a few like you, in all ages, have wanted to go forward to a better, more abundant life by easy, peaceable stages, and however well this ideal can be pursued a part of the time, yet there are frequent periods in which this orderly process bogs down. It seems to me that since 1914 we have been passing through one of those disorderly periods.

Whether the cause of such occasional chaos is to be found in an as yet imperfect development of man's brain power, or whether it is due to an inherent incompetence that he will never overcome, only the distant future can determine; the question, while interesting, is not relevant to the point I am trying to make. That point is that, taken the world over, in spite of strenuous and noble effort by pro-

gressive thinkers during the past half century to re-mold our social and legalistic procedures to keep pace with an amazing technological progress, in many important respects the effort has failed. The presence of mass unemployment and misery in the midst of potential plenty should be sufficient evidence of that. Significant, too, should be the fact that the few moderate reforms that obviously would ease the stresses of the times—mild advances in the direction of shorter hours and higher wages, principally—not only fail of voluntary establishment by the owners of monopoly industry, who have the power to decree them and who in the long run would profit most of them because such concessions would assure their tenure of management and ownership indefinitely, but right down to the perilous present such tendencies when proposed by the only supervening authority, the government, continue to be strenuously and more or less successfully opposed by those owners.

Now, it is undoubtedly true as Joseph McCabe has pointed out, that in pre-Hitler Germany some progress was being made in soothing these growing pains of capitalism. But the mere fact that Hitler and the explosions that he has caused came nevertheless, should be evidence enough that the remedies were not adequate. Nor is this observation any the less valid because, obviously, Hitler and his methods do not get at the root of the trouble. It merely explains, without excusing it, the behavior under stress of man in the mass. For it must be remembered that even if Hitler didn't poll a majority in his "election" he nevertheless commanded an imposing minority; I'm not convinced that this minority was wholly fraudulent—nor coerced. The blather-skite will have his day and conditions will go from only partial to complete chaos and years, maybe even centuries, of progress be lost. I sometimes feel that so colossal and blind are the forces at work and so little will the outcome be the expression of any individual's aspirations, ambitions or ideals—even the most influential, ambitious or idealistic, at the moment—that it is almost futile for an occasional lesser light to uncover itself.

I feel, then, that when your old friends—seeing, perhaps for the first time, that their youthful Utopian dreams will be for them unrealized—become petulant and cry out that they want to see the capitalist order destroyed, it will hardly improve their temper to overwork in their behalf a perfectly good and clever word like "brutalitarian." War is essentially brutal. The side most adept in the arts

of brutality will probably win. And you want England to win. Point out to them that the capitalist order is in its stupidity destroying itself—just as every other decadent order has done in its own sweet time, and that the best that we can do is shout for the side that seems least likely to impose odious obstacles to further progress when violence has run to exhaustion. Also we can sound the hopeful note that while in times such as the present the race has always slipped backward much too far, yet, when the uproar has died down—as it always has—it has never yet ceased striving toward higher levels of happiness.

What these old Socialists seem to lack most is the ability to visualize the horrible personal reality of the oppression, deprivation, fear, suspicion, surveillance and generally bigoted regulation to which the vast majority of the people are subject under the dictatorial setups. They see clearly enough that to some degree these evils exist in England and her colonies and in our own land as well, and that they are likely to become more onerous as the struggle progresses. But the immense difference in the DEGREE to which these curtailments of liberty operate in the two opposing camps seems often to escape them.

Those, then, who prefer to progress to better things gradually, and who abhor violence, cannot help taking sides with England. The only other choice is complete isolation and in the world of today that is simply impossible even if it were desirable, and nothing short of complete isolation could keep us completely neutral. This, to be sure, involves to some degree the violent participation in the struggle by those who abhor violence, a regrettable and complicating side-issue for the non-totalitarian position, but still a side-issue only. For the principle involved is no different now than it was before the invasion of China; before Ethiopia; before Spain; or Austria or Czechoslovakia. A determined stand at any of these crises by the three great democracies — America, Britain and France—would almost certainly have elicited the co-operation of Russia too. Down to the time of Munich such a stand would have brought results, almost certainly without bloodshed, although admittedly at risk thereof. Most of us, including your well-meaning Socialist critics no doubt, urged such cooperation at those times. But for various paltry reasons, considering the terror and imminence of the peril, opportunities were piddled away. Democracy will pay a terrible price for its procrastination but I see no way of evading the issue now that

a belated and tragically weakened stand has been taken.  
Maplewood, Mo. C. A. LANG

\* \* \*  
Editor: As an ex-amateur radio operator I excuse myself for breaking into your column with an answer to your question on the meaning of "72." (reference current issue of The Freeman on Paul Sullivan's "30"). First to set the record straight, your "near-blondie" slipped up in her notes, as the closing announcement of that radio news reporter must have been "73" and not "72." In amateur radio parlance this means "best regards" and is used in signing off after a pleasant contact on the air, expressed in code by the euphonious International Morse or continental signals or symbols which go — — . . . — — or in more modern times on phone by a hearty voice saying "73."  
Philadelphia, Pa. A DEAN SNYDER

\* \* \*  
Editor: "Shicedrek," when translated into English, is repulsive. I suggest "pferdeschice" because when the American wishes to express his sovereign contempt for blah, he says just that in English. Pferdeschice when translated is good for a laugh instead of a grunt. This is only a suggestion, of course; not at all a rebuke. The American Freeman is as homely as a mud fence, as you have said, but it carries more items to laugh over and items to think over than any of the good-looking magazines that come to our house. We read every line in The Freeman and tell each other what impressed us and in that way get full value of the wit, wisdom and humor out of our family paper. I honestly hope 1941 will bring you more customers.  
Rochester, N. Y. FRANK HART

\* \* \*  
Editor: I'll just be big and let a lot of people in on this one: A smart young blade, strolling along the lake with his heart-beat-of-the-moment, spied a small boy fishing, and wishing to impress the luscious lass (further), said to the boy, "Adolescent, are you endeavoring to induce the members of the finny tribe to engulf in their denticulated mouths a barbed hook upon which you have placed a tempting and dainty allurements?" The boy replied, "Hell no; I'm fishin."  
Texarkana, Ark. HARRY E. EYERLEY

\* \* \*  
Editor: The incident described below occurred in a schoolroom in Southwestern Bohemia, where my mother attended school. The farmers, there would cut up their hay and straw each evening for the next day's stock feed, placing it in a large vat in their house, after which they scalded it with

hot water. Then some who were exceptionally frugal, in order to save salt, would have the family take turns to urinate into the silage. The above explanation is necessary in order to better appreciate what follows. The priest always came two afternoons weekly to teach religion in the schools there. He had a class of 6 to 10-year-olds, on whom he tried to impress the necessity of prayer as the first duty when they arise in the morning. He questioned one little boy on what was the first duty he should perform on arising in the morning, but the lad wasn't able to answer. Then the priest asked him what his pap did first when he arose in the morning. The little boy then brightened up and replied that papa stretched himself, discharged gas, and urinated into the silage.

Velva, N. D. \* \* \* E. J. PRAVDA

Editor: Here's an item of interest, in case you haven't seen it, from Father (of what?) Coughlin's magazine, Social Justice, December 30, 1940, p. 15.  
Chester, Pa. THOMAS R. MEREDITH

#### HALDEMAN-JULIUS

E. Haldeman-Julius, the champion of companionate carriage and the dispenser of salacious trash which he palms off as "educational literature" has offered personally to pay for a half-ton bomb to be dropped on Adolf Hitler's Berchtesgaden retreat.

In a letter to Prime Minister Winston Churchill of Great Britain, the anti-Christian Kansas publisher wrote:

"I offer to pay the cost of a half-ton bomb, which I am told is about \$1000, if you will assign one of your most competent fliers to the scene of Hitler's conspiracies against civilization. I am also willing to add \$100 to pay for the gasoline necessary to carry the bomber to the chief butcher's habitat, and if anything is left over, it is to go for a big dinner for the crew."

An office quipster suggests that the hyphenated scandalmonger could be more certain of achieving his objective by loading his pockets with some of his choice moronic booklets, flying over Berchtesgaden, and then jumping.

The stench of the "literature" would asphyxiate Herr Hitler, and America would also be rid of Haldeman-Julius.

\* \* \*  
"If you want to sell yourself the goddamnedest headache you ever had, and kill The Freeman at the same time, just start taking money for the space some scribblers want to use for seeing their poems and articles in print. Coming from one who has en-

joyed the freedom of your column for a long time without ever paying a cent therefor that may seem a singularly concealed statement. But the truth is that I get no particular thrill out of seeing my stuff printed; if it weren't good enough for its own sake for publication I wouldn't spend a plugged copper in its behalf; I can explain the egotism that would do that only on the basis of wackiness; even if I'd never see a line of my pecking in print I'd still probably write you some kind of a letter about once a month. Anyway, I advise you, if you ever embark on such a venture, to refuse inexorably ever to do any editing if you expect to keep your sanity. (I've had a little experience along this line myself that I'll tell you about sometime if you're curious) and to give them a space to themselves which all can see is paid for, where their follies can be read or avoided as one wills."—C. A. Lang, Maplewood, Mo.

\* \* \*  
"I'm one, too, who reads Little Blue Books mostly after I go to bed. Right now I've got about 25 on a handy chair. But I'm usually so sleepy when I finally get to bed that reading is but a brief prelude to unconsciousness, and so that's slow work."—Reader.

\* \* \*  
"You ask why the dog that barks at the postman never barks at the milkman. I'll overlook the rashness of the generalization and assume for the moment that it's valid in order that I may offer an explanation: maybe it's because the postman deserves to be barked at, being the last of the human bearers of burdens still to hang on his back a load that he should put on wheels."—Reader.

\* \* \*  
Editor: Here's a limerick I picked up:

An old linotype went askew  
With its naked machinery in view  
It made love to the press  
In this state of undress  
Saying gently, "Etaoinshrdlu."

Oswego, Kan.

BOB LOPER

\* \* \*  
Editor: I read with interest your comments regarding Percy Bysshe Shelley. Though I am far from being an authority on any poet or their works I sincerely admire both the man Shelley and his works. Though he may have been devoid of any humor he was most certainly one of the best loved men of his time. Byron once said something along this line. His idealism, his love for the masses, his irresponsibilities all met a world of harsh reality.

THEODORE MAHAFFEY  
El Centro, Calif.

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