

## This Paper's New Policy Will Be a Livelier Use of Its Old Policy

Beginning with this issue The American Freeman will have more liveliness and variety. Its appearance will be striking and its contents will include all the interesting subjects of the day as well as of the ages—news comment and intelligent discussions—attractive departments, thoughtful articles, short editorials, and snappy paragraphs. My plan is to make this the most easily readable, as well as the most important, paper in the United States. There will be few articles of great length, although from time to time there will be specially featured articles of more than editorial length.

Idea of a broad, general, timeless nature—the wisdom and the fine humanitarian principles that have an impressive background in the history of culture—will still be reflected clearly and inspiringly in these pages. The best thought will go into the editing of every issue of The American Freeman. At the same time, there will be a steady and keen-searching review of the major events, issues, and day-to-day discussions of the world in which we live.

The American Freeman is of course more than merely a newspaper; it is, first and last, a journal of liberal and progressive opinion; its purpose is to make men think and to scan the world of culture as well as the world of action; but it will not fail, while keeping in view its sound policy of intellectual enlightenment, to be a newsy, interesting, timely, entertaining, even a gossip publication. If at times the reader doesn't feel like tackling a long article, there will be an abundance of shorter material which he can quickly read.

And let me assure you that every line in The American Freeman, whether in a two- or three-column article or report (for we shall have reports of a news character) or a brief editorial or a paragraph will be important and well worth reading. Each week you will

find not only items of thought but items of news in The American Freeman which you cannot find in any other publication.

With respect to policy, I believe I am quite truthful and not moved by a spirit of boasting when I say that The American Freeman is the freest journal which is published in the United States. (The Debunker, with the same policy of freedom, is different in form and in its way covers other ground.) It is afraid of no idea, no organization, no individual. It has no fetters. It has no so-called obligations, no predilections or prejudices, which would prevent it from speaking candidly and with direct, full force upon any subject. Neither politically nor religiously nor morally nor socially nor racially nor nationally is The American Freeman withheld from truthful utterance by any predetermination of self-interest or emotional favor.

There are other journals which are, on the whole, liberal but which are rather timid in dealing with moral questions, fearing to offend the puritanical feelings of their readers—or, to place a more charitable construction upon their attitude, sincerely reflect the puritanism which is to a degree the conviction of their editors. In contrast, The American Freeman approaches all questions of sex and morality from the same dispassionate, rationalistic standpoint as any other question. Some journals of liberalism, very admirable and useful in their way, are very polite and even friendly toward religion; these journals do not take a clear, uncompromising stand on this major issue. Saliently in contrast, The American Freeman handles religion without gloves in the manner of barehanded truth.

In short, my policy is to make of The American Freeman the one journal in America (including The Debunker) which is absolutely free from bunk of any style

or degree; and it is easy, after all, for me to follow a policy which is to me so natural; and a policy too which, I am proud to say, is so intelligently favored by my readers. For even when a reader disagrees with something expressed in these columns, he states his disagreement as a ground for honest, fair, mutual discussion and not as a cause for bitter, intolerant hostility. We shall have some hot discussions, some merry discussions, some far-reaching discussions in the new department appearing in this issue under the heading "Around the Table." They will be conducted, however, with good nature and with advantage to all of us in thought-stimulation.

The familiar departments by Isaac Goldberg and John Langdon-Davies will continue. "In the World of Books" reflects literature both old and new as viewed by a first-rate critic. There are no better book reviews printed anywhere; and most literary criticism, you may believe me, is far below the Goldberg standard. Concerning the department entitled "A Window on Europe," what more need be said than that it is written by a celebrated Oxford scholar and scientific observer of life-with-culture who, like Joseph McCabe, has the talent to write simply and entertainingly? Mr. Langdon-Davies is one of the best of the younger men who are interpreting the modern world. There is, to be sure, a special and piquant interest in reading the views of a cultured Englishman on the affairs of Europe; through "A Window on Europe" we are afforded a wider, cosmopolitan outlook.

A fighting policy, aimed at contemporary movements that threaten our liberties, telling the full and emphasized truth (which, you know, the daily newspapers often neglect to tell) about current events that deal with questions of free speech, free thought, and the free pursuit of happiness—such an aggressive, con-

stantly watchful, up-to-the-minute policy will characterize The American Freeman. Here is a paper in which you can keep informed, better than through any other medium, of the things which are of the very first importance to the free-minded—and, for their fellows, freedom-wishing—persons who comprise what I have often been pleased very sincerely to call "the Haldeman-Julius family."

And, by the way, it is peculiarly in The American Freeman that we shall have this feeling of being such an intimate group associated with watching and effort in a common cause. Here we shall have the close intercommunicativeness implied by the "family" identification—not so apt a word, perhaps, as few families, aside from the bonds of nature and household affection that unite them, have the inspiration of a common purpose which is felt, I am sure, by all of my readers as I feel it myself with regard to my readers. Naturally, this sense of speaking closeness will be stimulated delightfully by our exchange of talk on anything and everything in the department "Around the Table." That department, I assure you, will be as friendly and chatty and many-sided as I, with necessarily the help of my readers, can make it.

I want The American Freeman to be the most particular and personal paper—at once the broadest and freest in scope and the most directly meaningful to you—that comes to your fireside. I have great ambitions for it. And I want all of you to have great expectations and, in the ways I have indicated, to cooperate with me in realizing those expectations. Together, we cannot fail to achieve the very best.

*E. Haldeman-Julius*

### Rush Madly to Priest's Grave

Reading of the streams of pitifully deluded folks who rushed to the grave of a sixty-year-dead priest in Malden, Mass., in quest of miraculous signs, benedictions and cures, one's first thought is that here is a concentrated movie spectacle of the Middle Ages. It is all so unreal, this outburst of the grossest and—to use words carefully—the most revolting superstition. Is this the Twentieth Century which has shed and is more fully shedding its scientific light upon the nations?

The very unusualness of such a mad rush of medievalism in the modern age is what makes it striking. After all, even where narrow traditions and false beliefs still linger, even though humanity has not yet reached the full stature of freedom and truth, our age is predominantly one of realism. By far the great majority who read of the Malden insanity—one can call it by no other name—will read with disbelief. Psychologically the whole thing is an anachronism. It does not fit in with the general, with the deciding, temper and interests of the age. It is in its way a startling, though not necessarily an alarming, reminder of the past.

Malden takes us back in grotesquely embodied retrospect a half dozen or more centuries. It is a breath from the tombs of history in which are laid away the obscenities and the cruelties and the absurdities of the Middle Ages: absurdities raised to the highest power of overwhelming mass credulity. There is a difference. In the Middle Ages there were not as a rule such intensified dramatizations of mad and withal pathetically hopeful faith. The attitude and the atmosphere of superstition were familiar, continuous; insinuated closely into the daily life of the people. Catholic dogma and Catholic faith were supreme in power and, in spite of heresies, impressed themselves successfully upon the illiterate masses of the people. The notion of saints and devils, of miraculous places and persons and rites, was a commonplace of those dark centuries. Men generally knew only the crudest little, in the spirit of an animal-like accustomedness to the earth, of nature and her ways, scientifically speaking. Of critical knowledge there was little or none in active circulation, certainly not in common circulation, and men had to contacts that would throw doubt upon their ideas nor reports, carefully made, that would analyze the credibility of many remarkable tales. One might say not excessively that before science, and general education, and modern culture were well established in the world men would believe almost anything. And the stranger the tale, one might add, the reader the belief.

Our age is not perfect, and there are traces of medievalism or modified medievalism which a clear mind can at once detect; but certainly this gross, downright, uncritical superstition is not common—is, rather, an egregious exception—in the modern

world. Theoretically men still believe much that is indefensible; and in some ways life is still badly confused by falsehood (sincere enough and unrecognized as such on the whole) and narrowness. We have made a splendid beginning of progress in the fully conceived modern sense, but we are far from the culmination of it. Even so, our world, while it is yet foolish and intolerant and slow to learn in many things, is not *crazy* as was the medieval world; and, to characterize it in another way, it is not sunk in wretched, hopeless stupidity as was the medieval world.

So Malden is an exception. It stands out and is exploited in the news, for one chief reason, because it is such an astonishing, freakish, unexpected thing. From time to time we read of these special eruptions of wild folly, these cults, these odd spectacles—not really dramatic but having an air of theatricality even in the closest view—of human error.

There are some features of the Malden furore of faith that deserve to be particularly noticed. One thing, of course, which is no more than we should have expected is the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church. The Church let this frenzy go on for days with its tacit approval. No doubt it thought to profit by this publicity—but whether that was good policy or not remains to be seen. At last, after the so-called "shrine," the alleged magic-working grave of a long-dead young priest of absolutely no special importance while living (although this, to be sure, would not matter as to the miracle question), had been widely advertised, the spot was barred to further visitors. We shall look with not a little interest to see whether or to what a degree the Church officially sanctions the view that this unimportant mound of earth has supernaturally, sacredly efficacious qualities of magic.

One cannot forbear at the same time a rebuke to the newspapers of the country, which published with a distinct friendliness and an air of reverence and complaisance, if not downright approval of the whole pitiable amazing farce, stories of the thousands who pilgrimaged to the priest's grave; there were suggestions of the simple, beautiful faith of these people; there were intimations or reports of cures, quite uncritically given if not actually vouched for, as if the news consisted in an atmosphere of the miraculous rather than in the atmosphere of the absurdly credulous. It was very evident even to the casual reader that the newspaper reports from Malden were carefully friendly to the Catholic Church. It is in strict truth that we accuse the American press, in its character of a reporting agency, of betraying the modern spirit rather than give offense to a rich, powerful Church whose whole spirit and aim is to maintain a poisonous, propagating center of medievalism in the modern age. Editorially some newspapers—the Kansas City Star, for example—cast doubt upon the authenticity of these rumored or reported miracles; although none, so far as we know,

came out flatly and debunked with unsparing critical truthfulness this utterly incredible and monstrous orgy of superstition.

In part, the American press was no doubt influenced by the desire for sensationalism at any cost. But it must bear the graver charge of describing in a friendly and favorable light a kind of superstition that has still a considerable spread of popularity.

We repeat that the tales of miracles at the Malden priest's grave will be widely disbelieved and considered only as a curious freakishness (and disbelieved not quite consistently—although any degree of removal from superstition is so much to the good—by many people who profess a belief in "spiritual," religious notions). Scientifically we know that this Malden business is the worst kind of nonsense. Doubtless in time we shall have reports written by impartial observers, which will specifically debunk this spurge of miracle-mongering, precisely as similar things have been debunked again and again in the past. Meanwhile we can only reflect rather sadly—yes, and more than a bit disgustedly—upon the folly that men here and there and in this way and that way, are still heir to. But our final thought will be one of deep gladness that Malden has furnished, so to speak, only a movie spectacle of folly and not a true picture of the age—an age not finally and fully free but more and more realistic in tone and tendency—in which we are fortunate to live.

Beyond the Malden priest's grave we see the grave of medievalism, which is not the less real in its character of an entombed past if in some places it is covered with only a little earth and in other places there is a crevice which offers us slightly though vividly enough a glimpse of bones that once walked alive in a world given over to tyrants, bigots, charlatans and their helpless victims.

"An honest god," said Ingersoll, "is the noblest work of man." That reminds us how an epigram, witty indeed and containing an element of truth, can sacrifice a very important aspect of truth. Of course Ingersoll knew very well that imagining a god, even an honest god, would be the most trifling and useless job that man could undertake. The real task of man is to understand life and to perform the progressive works of civilization. Ingersoll also knew that man never imagined an honest god; all the gods ever offered speculatively to our gaze have had features not merely of contradiction but of dishonesty.

S. Parkes Cadman, the New York City preacher who "tells all" to newspaper readers whether he knows anything or not, says in a reply to an inquiring farmer that "in the country there is more fodder for the soul than in the city." Since "Spark Plug" has been inelegant (speaking of "fodder" for the "soul"), we can afford to be. Thus we suggest that maybe "manure" would be a good word to exchange for "fodder" in this instance.

### "The Tiger" An Atheist

On the death of Georges Clemenceau, the great French statesman popularly known as "The Tiger," the newspapers quoted briefly from his autobiography (finished just before his death) a mild paragraph stating his view of death as merely "an endless sleep." By implication that showed plainly enough that Clemenceau did not believe in immortality—but it is very inadequate as an indication of the man's views about religion. He was really an atheist. He says in his autobiography (*In the Evening of My Thought*) that "God is nothing but a word, bearing no relation to fact. Experimental proof is established as the only criterion of truth." The atheistic position could not well be put more incisively; and there is a flat rejection of all "spiritual" perceptions of truth, which is so important a claim of religion.

It is evident that Clemenceau had an unusually clear and strong mind. He regarded religion as nothing better than superstition. He was a realist, grim at times maybe, but consistent and serene in accepting the fundamental "laws"—that is to say, the facts and the familiar, unescapable processes—of life. His opinion of Christianity was very low; if anything, it is the worst religion of all because it has a more terrible history of suffering that it has inflicted upon the race. It has brought more fear than hope into the world, and every historical student knows that its intolerance has been superlative.

Not even the Jesus-revering gesture—the idea that Jesus was, viewed merely as a man, the greatest and best man who ever lived—imposed upon the clear mind of "The Tiger." He says that as "specimens of human greatness Buddha, Socrates and many others were no whit inferior to Jesus."

Superior to the intellectual fallacies and the emotional deceptions of religion, Clemenceau looked at life philosophically. He perceived that the idea of free will is "an illusory sensation": a man who does not reflect has the sense of being free because he does not sufficiently understand the causes of things and that human behavior is conditioned even as is the behavior of atoms or stars. Clemenceau lived, too, without any childish dream of immortality: the "endless sleep" was one which he approached serenely, as skeptics usually do, better than Christians. He recognized no moral law in a dogmatic or supernatural sense. He clearly saw the truth that "The only basis of human morality . . . is man himself." Man's laws are made for man and by man, as a part of the business of living, and, as we are well aware, these laws have been of slow growth, many of them have been seriously disputed, and we cannot regard them as final. Volumes and volumes have been written about the "moral law," conceived as something formulated by a supernatural person or power; yet the proof of the naturalness, the variability, and the human aims and limitations of all laws and ethics

is clearly seen in the records of evolution.

Within the limits of nature, man is great and can be greater; with his growing intelligence (which involves a surrender of the follies of religion), man can, says Clemenceau, develop "a rich idealism that would make him the equal of the gods, did not the pangs of following out his own destiny already make him superior to them." And, of course, man is greater than the gods because he has himself imagined the gods and, what is so much more to his glory, has achieved grandeur of daring and culture infinitely more sublime than his puerile, even when poetic, conception of divinity. But there is an illusion of soulful, unique egotism in man—a feeling, translated by the religions into various statements of belief, that a Supreme Power, ensconced in the uncharted blue of fancy, has marked out a spiritually precious destiny for man—an illusory feeling which Clemenceau, in the tradition of those other French skeptics, Voltaire and Anatole France, is honest and clear-thinking enough to renounce in the interest of truth. Man "is subservient to the ends of the universe."

At best, life is the implacable law which requires us to atone for our emotional pleasures. It is a series of favors diversely felt and diversely paid for. Life is a spectacle, a drama of thought and action, and—to put it modestly—to the best thinkers there is the best show. Understanding is wider living.

In a world of statesmen (politicians) from whom we hear little beyond certain well-carried platitudes of piety and hypocrisy, it is refreshing to have an expression of thoughtful, witty, skeptical culture from Georges Clemenceau. He was a leader of men politically, but in thought he trod the lonely ways. A few of us, at least, will honor him more for his allegiance to truth than for his association with the narrowly patriotic spirit of war and revenge that was the climax of a long, virile, and interesting life.

### Bunkle, Bunkle, Little Star

A "Horoscope" appearing in the Tucson (Ariz.) *Daily Citizen* (and, as a syndicate feature, appearing in other papers) for November 20 says that November 21 is a lucky day. This optimistic news is published a day in advance for the purpose (we take the liberty of supposing) of expediting all births that may be on the point of occurring. Left in ignorance, contemporaneously expectant mothers might let their children be born a day too late. The day itself is not all, however, for we are told: "If November 21 is your birthday, the best hours for you on that day are from noon to 2 p. m., from 5:30 to 7 p. m., and from 10 p. m. to 11 p. m. The danger period is from 8 p. m. to 9:45 p. m." Evidently the planetary influences are remarkably erratic: they can switch from good to bad and back again and then again to bad within a few hours: the stars don't seem to know their own minds in this matter, and probably this is why human beings are so vexed with indecision.

One must in honesty report that, insofar as this "Horoscope" indi-

cates, there is a disappointing insufficiency of evidence to establish that November 21 is a lucky day. Only six names of lucky ones are given:

Jacob Sleeper—Merchant and Philanthropist.  
Lewis Henry Morgan—Father of American Anthropology.  
Mary Johnson—Novelist.  
William G. Angell—Inventor.  
George Howard—Politician and Governor.

It is not a list which, in numbers or eminence, sweeps one off one's feet. The only one of first-rate achievement, who is soundly and impressively known to fame, is Morgan the scientist. And there is nothing said about the bad luck and troubles which not unlikely—upon a reasonable supposition—have afflicted these examples. Nor does this list represent the lucky star or moon or moonshine of November 21 as a consistent character-builder. We are given five different types of mind and character, and only two of them (the merchant and the politician) probably serve as object lessons of the "Horoscope's" assertion that children born on November 21 have "shrewd, determined and combative natures."

And, after all, how incomplete is this list! Just think of the millions and millions who have been born on November 21! Surely these millions have represented every kind of character, every kind of mentality good, bad and indifferent, every kind of fortune. There are thousands of unfortunate men and women who, reading that November 21 is a lucky birthday, must smile derisively. Bums, criminals, yokels, average men, men of various talents and near-talents, poor men and rich men and men who are not much of anything—one can but suggest the range, including as many contrasts and contradictions as life, of November 21 as a "lucky" birthday.

Those who are born on November 21 will, like those who are born on any other day, be influenced by the structure and chemistry of their body machines, by their environment, and by the accidents of life. A sow's ear will not make a silk purse, even though the sow was born on November 21.

One objection to the athletic "education" which bulks so large in our modern American universities is that only a few share actively in this "education" while the rest look on. They share to the extent of cheering, of course; and that is what they do out in the world after they have left the universities—they hurrah for the flag, for their home towns, for the Nordic "race" (which, as a race, does not, correctly speaking, exist), for the traditions and sentimentalities in which they have been drilled. The materials of modern education are wonderful, and so are its possibilities; but if education means the development of individuality and the critical faculty, then it fails of this object in a great many instances.

One simple definition of progress is: The breaking down of the barriers, physical and mental and emotional, that separate mankind.

### Joseph McCabe Month in Kansas City

Joseph McCabe will be in Kansas City, Mo., during the entire month of February, 1930, and will deliver at least ten lectures at All Soul's Unitarian Church, L. M. Birkhead, pastor. The dates of the lectures will be announced later. Mr. McCabe is making a special trip from his home in London, England, for this month's lecture engagement. For many years known to an intelligent minority in the United States, Joseph McCabe has been made widely known in this country by the Haldeman-Julius Publications. He has written 52 Little Blue Books (and 15 more Little Blue Books by him are soon to be published); 5 Big Blue Books; 40 volumes of The Key to Culture; 8 volumes of The Key to Love and Sex; 12 volumes of The True Story of the Roman Catholic Church—which are scheduled for early publication.

In all, Mr. McCabe has written ten very impressive sum of 2,842,500 words for the Haldeman-Julius Publications within the past four years. And all of these nearly three million words have been potent messengers of the most profound and vast-ranging scholarship.

Mr. McCabe's special writings have also appeared in The Debunker and in The American Freeman.

Significantly, this greatest scholar of the modern age has said that his work for the Haldeman-Julius Publications has afforded him, at the summit of his wonderfully productive years, a new and the most inspiring interest in his life.

There is a good deal of foolishness talked about the sense of reverence. Is there a man living without a feeling of reverence for something? Certainly there must be very few, if any, who are lacking in this attitude. It is simply a question of what is and what is not worthy of reverence. The intelligent, consistent man cannot reverence an idea or an image or a tradition or a theory of behavior when critically he has analyzed it and discovered it to be false.

Men make plans about their real life on earth, but who ever heard of a man making, with any similar interest and decision, plans for his alleged "immortal life"? This suggests that men are not really so convinced of "immortal life" as they pretend to be. Whatever they may state as their belief, psychologically they have the deep feeling that immortality is only a dream.

The history of men's ideas—in the mass—teaches us very illuminatingly what not to believe.



## In the World of Books

Weekly Reviews and Other Literary Ruminations  
Isaac Goldberg

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WHERE DO PEOPLE GET THEIR NOTIONS?

Some six or seven years ago I was asked, at very short notice, to give a talk on the drama in place of Professor G. P. Baker. Prof. Baker, then conducting his famous English 47 Workshop at Harvard, has since transferred his activities to Yale, where he puts the finishing—the beginning?—touches to dramatists. I accepted the invitation and, naturally, on opening my talk I expressed sympathy with the audience; they had expected to hear a noted teacher of dramatics, and instead they were confronted by me. I also spoke of the importance of Baker's work. Well, a number of persons left my talk very much incensed; I had no right, they declared, to make disparaging remarks about the man for whom I was substituting! I availed me little to answer that I had made no disparaging remarks about Baker; I'm very grateful to him, in fact, for a reason that he doesn't know to this day. At the oral examination which was part of the ordeal through which I had to go in order to get my Ph.D. degree, Baker kindly asked a question—about the influence of Ibsen upon the Spanish drama—that enabled me to gab for almost a half-hour. The examination was three hot hours long; the day was so sultry, indeed, that when at last I arose from the torture, the chair came up with me, glued to my seat. I was being pressed pretty hard by the sixteen other professors ranged around me, and his question came as a welcome breeze through the torrid desert of their persistence.

To this day, nevertheless, I hear stories of my impoliteness toward the man.

I was reminded of this the other day, after I had delivered a lecture on "Immortality and the Arts," before the Jewish Community Institute of Boston. I do not believe in lecturing. I told my audience so. I also made mention of a few other matters, such as the Censorship—in which I absolutely disbelieve, refusing to recognize any compromise; about laws against obscene literature—which I believe accomplish nothing; about birth control, which should be universally understood, and practiced at the discretion of the two parties chiefly concerned; about adultery, which, if it be wrong is wrong for other reasons than the much cracked Decalogue, and which is not always in my opinion wrong; about abortion, which needed a more civilized approach than we at present accord it. I made it clear that I advocated nothing. Advocacy in such personal matters is silly. What I asked for, and what I received, was dignified attention for topics that are too often passed off with hysterical laughter.

A few days later I was informed that I had advocated adultery, and

I was asked, through a friend, whether I practiced what I preached. I had preached, of course, nothing but an open mind; I had advocated nothing but the dignified examination of an all-important subject. I had tried, as I frankly stated, to unsettle the mind of my audience. I had no desire, however, to implant specific reactions into that mind. Minds must find their own salvation. What I can pour into a mind arbitrarily can be poured out of it by the next strong personality that comes along. My sole idea, that evening—and I enjoyed it thoroughly, though it is by no means a simple matter to stand up before half a regiment of listeners and give voice to seemingly violent heresies—was to justify independent thinking; to show that State and Church were still hand in hand; to destroy the theological conception of Sin, and to restore the body and its joys to their rightful place in the scheme of things.

Well, nobody walked out on me, at least. I remember a far less radical talk, delivered in the vestry of a synagogue shortly before the outbreak of the war, in which women arose by the dozen, and finally by the phalanx, leaving me some three hundred listeners out of an original eight hundred. And you must believe me when I tell you that what I said that evening is now commonplace commentary on the women's pages of our most conservative newspapers.

The world moves. At least, we get the illusion that it does.

### A NEW VENTURE

I notice the names of many Haldeman-Julius Writers in a new, indeed a triple, venture by the Quality Group Publications of New York. Monthly they issue a trio of magazines, somewhat larger than what is known as pocket-size. The trio comprises "The Thinker," given over to scientific, philosophic and artistic matters; "Popular Biography," sufficiently characterized by its title; and "The American Short Story," ditto. The magazines sell at 25c per copy. They are well printed, attractively illustrated, and made additionally interesting by an original layout.

Among the Haldeman-Julius names that I select as I glance through the magazines are Will Durant, James Oppenheim, Benjamin de Casseres, Clement Wood. You'll probably be seeing mine there, one of these days, as I have been asked to do, among other things, a vignette of none other than Chief Haldeman-Julius himself.

*Das Politische Theater*, by Erwin Piscator. Adalbert Schulz Verlag, Berlin, Germany.

This is the tale of the Political Theater of which Piscator is the founder. We shall be hearing more of this gentleman shortly in the United States. For the present, I desire to call the book to the attention of those drama enthusiasts who read German, and who will appreciate a finely printed, excellently illustrated work.

To inquire reasonably the evidences for a theory would seem, to a well-constituted mind, the first thing to do; but it is not only the last thing which many people think of doing, but the one thing which they stubbornly refuse to do.

## And Now I Am Biamed For the Country's Crime!

By E. Haldeman-Julius

The worst has been said about me (or so it is the worst?) now that Rev. Christian Reiser, highly flourishing Broadway (New York City) exponent and practitioner of percent religion has gone and laid the crime wave onto me! True, I but share the guilt. Other "loose writers" (that is Rev. Reiser's pretty loose characterization) are culpable intellectual banditti in this conspiracy—I suppose it is regarded by Reiser, Rev., as a conspiracy. Harry Elmer Barnes, Theodore Dreiser, Will Durant, and John B. Watson have figuratively heaped upon them the same pot of tar or something worse. Everybody has had his swing at solving the crime wave, so why not Reiser? He limps along behind, and as staggers, but here he is at last.

This remarkable fulmination from the heart of New York City's strangely assorted splendor of materialism and culture and tawdry rascalsness of bunk was deemed so important by somebody in charge of dispatching all the latest "news" to panting millions that it got as far out in the hinterland as the *Waterloo* (Iowa) *Courier*. And it is from this Iowa newspaper that I reprint the charges and rages of Reiser:

Much lawlessness may be traced to the loose writers of note like Harry Elmer Barnes and a few former preachers, who, having failed every place else, have joined this crowd in denying God's existence, discarding religion and the church and then furnishing either no substitute or a cheap and intangible thing called humanism.

If the God of love is fiction what solid basis exists for law to rest upon? If we are as the loose behaviorist, John Watson, claims, but the creatures of our surroundings, who has a right to punish us for stealing or for carrying out an "impulse" to murder? If, as the book publisher, Haldeman-Julius of Girard, Kans., claims, sex appetite is to be appeased as that for food, who can complain over polygamy either open or hidden?

Who are Barnes, Dreiser, Durant, Watson, Haldeman-Julius and similar writers whom we allow to sneer about and spit upon this "faith" without offering any substitute? First, they had better show us how to construct a finer nation than Christianity has built. They and their teaching are the chief cause of crime today. Why, then, do the papers give so much space to these blind leaders, even though some of them still retain the titles the Christian church gave them. [Note: I am proud to retain any titles the Christian church has given me.—E. H.-J.] We are proud to have men like Fred Stone, George Jessel, Will Rogers and Eddie Cantor speak in this pulpit and they have all spoken for me. They help restore people to health by starting laughs which break up destructive absorption at serious tasks. Funmakers furnish the salt and pepper to life, the vanilla extract, the tang and taste to things. But God pity one who lives alone for or on pleasure.

Naturally Reiser would rather have comedians than thinkers appear in his pulpit. Laughs, not ideas, are fitly in his line: very superficial laughs (with no disrespect to the comedians named, who are cleverly and frankly such in their popular roles), even as poor and superficial and twisted ideas are the only kind that conceivably could find welcome in Reiser's pulpit. Reiser himself is a very low sort of comedian without knowing it.

It is so easy to debunk these wowlings of Reiser that it is difficult. You know what I mean? Why point out elementary truths in reply to such a brainstorm? But it must be done now and again. The Augean stables must be cleaned and even a handful of mud must be removed patiently when it is thrown upon a clean, clear philosophy of life.

I can see readily enough, at the very outset of his gibberings, what is wrong with the man Reiser. He is concerned about dogma rather than about life. That is shown when he refers to the "cheap and intangible thing called humanism." What! Human beings, the problems of human life, the spirit of making this earth a joyous and intelligent place for human habitation—is all this "cheap and intangible"! On the contrary, what is so precious as human life and aspirations and endeavors? What is so tangible as a philosophy, an attitude toward life, which is human in all its aims and definitions?

You see, Reiser has a hopelessly warped viewpoint: he thinks that religion—his business of preaching about "God" and the other doctrines which emanate from his pulpit—is of greater importance, is more real and vital, than the realistic dealing with life's issues in terms of human enlightenment, happiness, and progress. With such a viewpoint, how could the man speak sanely on any subject?

"If the God of love is fiction," he asks, "what solid basis exists for the law to rest upon?" I recommend that Reiser read Joseph McCabe's *The Human Origin of Morals* (Little Blue Book No. 1061). There he will have explained clearly and at length what is the driving human force back of laws and mor-

als, realistically understood. There are social ethics, and there are individual ethics, and they have very intelligible and (to any but a man of Reiser's dogmatic mental fixation) humanly obvious reasons without dragging in the myth of a God. Actually Christians no more than atheists think of theft and murder as features of behavior to be decided in relation to whether there is or is not a God. Man's attitude toward such criminal behavior, evolved by man himself, is sufficiently clear without anachronistic dogmatizings about a "law of God."

Of course Reiser doesn't understand (or doesn't want to understand) the psychological and sociological theory of behaviorism as principally expounded by Dr. John B. Watson. Far from being a "loose behaviorist," Dr. Watson's main and reiterated theme is that we should study how scientifically to control our behavior and to direct it in ways that are best for civilization. Using the word "morality" in an intelligent bearing, there is a thousand times more hope for a higher morality and a morality more carefully guided (because more carefully understood) from Dr. Watson's teachings of the psychology of behaviorism than from Rev. Reiser's screaminings of ancient, ridiculous dogmas from his pulpit.

As for my having said that sex is an appetite (and, please observe, Reiser puts it bluntly and without any elaborating and defining context), that is an expression of fact which is beyond dispute. It is infinitely harmful to be false, dodging, and, as the phrase goes, "nastynice" about sex. Ignorance on this, as on any other subject, can lead only to unhappiness. It has led to incalculable unhappiness. And one can recognize quite simply the character of sex as an appetite, yet have full appreciation of the more subtle possibilities of this thrilling expression of our nature and of the emotional associations that have been woven by time and culture into the very essence of sex. There are, of course, appetites and appetites. Basically they are all materialistic.

But material things and the mental or emotional reactions to them are capable of various shades and definitions—that is, to a humanist who is at once curious and sensitive about life, though evidently not to a ranting dogmatist of the doleful, purblind *genre* of Reiser. The desire to look upon gorgeous sunsets and to feast upon all the beauties of nature may be called an appetite of the human vision—of our eyes and the nerves which carry to the brain these keen and (certainly) physically felt responses. What then? The beam in Reiser's eye is that if somebody points out to him, as a matter of clear seeing and understanding, that sex is an appetite, he thinks (*that's the nice way* in which a Christian mind can work) that it must be a degraded appetite. It is Reiser who has poured all the evil that he himself imagines into my own perfectly scientific and innocent remark.

Reiser wants to know—and I am disposed to grant that he is honest in his implied confession of ignorance, for really it appears that he needs to know—who are Harry Elmer Barnes, Theodore Dreiser, Will Durant, John B. Watson, and E. Haldeman-Julius. Very well:

Harry Elmer Barnes is a leading scholar of America who is devoting his intelligence to examining history (especially recent history from 1914 onward) in the light of truth and internationalism; and he has been, even so, one of the modern group of devoted teachers of that humanism which Reiser dismisses as "cheap and intangible"—his (Reiser's) bloodless, abstract image of a God is more precious and tangible, he would imply, than red-blooded, yearning, thinking, endeavoring, suffering human beings.

Theodore Dreiser is one of America's very greatest novelists and more than that or consistently with that, he is a man who has a quality of understanding and pity for life which one such as Reiser could never appreciate. If Reiser would read what Dreiser has written—if he could read understandingly any one of Dreiser's novels—he would perceive that here is a man who expresses in the medium of a sympathetic art a philosophy of life which upholds the standards of courage, honesty, intelligence and a fine discrimination-with-tolerance in facing life.

Will Durant—well, Durant's share of the blame in starting the crime wave (which crime wave, by the way, and where?) is presumably derived from his having written *The Story of Philosophy*, in which he introduced modern readers to the great philosophers of the ages. And, again, Durant has in contemporary articles set himself the task of helping apply a living philosophy (rather than a dead religion) to the serious problems of our life. One would be curious to know how many inmates of American prisons would accuse Durant as the author of their guilt.

John B. Watson, as I have said, is the chief writer (in fact, the originator in its well-known form) of the theory of psychology called "behaviorism." Simply put, this theory is that we can best know the nature of people by studying

their behavior under various circumstances. And I repeat, for Reiser's edification (though that aim is, I am pretty sure, futile), that "behaviorism" lays great stress upon the importance of a sane, wholesome, well-ordered environment for human beings from infancy up. How can the theory and the teachings of behaviorism cause crime? Ask Reiser; he doesn't know.

Myself—well, if Reiser will look carefully through the new Jubilee Catalog of 1500 Little Blue Books, he will probably be just where he was when he started: namely, chained to the charlatanism and dogmatism of his pulpit. He might, however, get a glimmering of the idea that I believe in education. What does Reiser believe in besides what isn't so? Evidently he doesn't believe in education. His sermon is a shrieking denunciation (and an ignorant denunciation, even so) of the educational influences of the modern age.

What nightmares must, in the hours of sleep, plague and confuse such a distorted mind!

### A Labor of Love in Easy Guidance to Good Reading

A labor of love that is excellent and inspired by the very spirit of humanism is an attractive little guide to good reading (*Good Books at Small Prices*) prepared by John Cotton Dana and published by the Newark (N. J.) Public Library for the use of its readers. Mr. Dana, for years in charge of the Newark Library, has undoubtedly won a secure eminence as the greatest librarian in the country; and it is he who has made, along with himself, the Newark library famous.

In his very nicely printed pamphlet, Mr. Dana informs readers about book series which are of distinct, outstanding cultural value and yet appeal financially to those who have not much money to spend on books. And it will interest readers of *The American Freeman* to know that the Little Blue Books are favorably listed by Mr. Dana in the following text: "*Little Blue Books* represent a 'democracy of literature.' 1260 titles, paper covers. 24 mo. Average 64 pages. Minimum order 20 books. Five cents apiece. Haldeman-Julius Publications, Dept. C-64, Girard, Kansas." You will note that the pamphlet was prepared before the Little Blue Book series had reached the Jubilee number of 1500.

In an appropriate brief introduction, which reveals the interest (not merely in his own reading but in his wish that others should read) of a genuine lover of books, Mr. Dana offers some reflections which are well deserving of quotation. He says:

Everyone should buy books. By that I mean that every person of intelligence, able to read ordinary print with some ease, will find that the habit of owning books and having them about will give him more pleasure in the long run than any other habit he can form. Only a few buy and read books, to be sure; but then only a few get out of life all the pleasure they are capable of getting. So the small number of the bookish does not prove anything except that the wise are always few!

But the book-buying public is much larger than it was ten years ago, and the publishers of books are working overtime to satisfy the demands of an ever-growing group of people eagerly curious about conditions in our rapidly changing modern world. The last word on children, flight and death is demanded. Perhaps you are one of those impatient seekers of war, peace, science, politics, labor, leisure, love, something new. Perhaps you are not. You may be afraid of the increasing cost of books; two dollars and a half for a novel, three for a volume of essays and five possibly for a popular biography. Perhaps you live in a small apartment and have little room for large and many books; possibly you travel and have a distaste for the heavy book in an overcrowded suitcase. Probably it would distress your thrifty soul to discard the heavy volume that cost so much; but surely you would buy an inexpensive and small-sized book for your apartment in town, for the guests in your summer camp, or to tuck into your hand luggage. . . .

It may be interesting to point out that the Little Blue Books are the lowest-priced series in Mr. Dana's list; most of the series which he lists range in price from fifty cents to a dollar. And the Little Blue Books include the widest variety of literature, scientific and cultural and practical (that is to say, practical books of guidance in various branches of knowledge, books of home study, and books of general and specific self-help); they also include the classics and modern literature and the liveliest up-to-date reports and discussions. It may truthfully be said that the Little Blue Books are the real "democracy of literature."

Another note: The New York Public Library and the Newark Public Library are the only two public libraries in America which have complete sets of the Little Blue Books. Is it just a coincidence that they are also the two greatest and best public libraries in America? You might care to inquire why your public library does not have a complete set of the Little Blue Books.

A lazy man is a man who just isn't sufficiently interested to move.

Life is full of accidents; but we can learn to take advantage even of the accidents.

Those who, discarding this doctrine or that superstition, talk about "true religion" are trying to dodge the truth about religion.

One should know how to ignore the folly that is petty and harmless and how to resist the folly which is a serious threat to our civilized purposes.

It is an adventure to disagree with a man. You don't know whether he will debate the question reasonably or, figuratively speaking, call for the police.

It is wisdom to know where wisdom is: to read the books of the great thinkers, the great truth-bringers, the great historians, the great scientists of mankind.

Perhaps men are not hypocrites—not consciously, which is what we usually mean by this unpleasant term. Still, they are remarkably given to saying one thing and doing another.

War is outlawed (on paper), yet the nations continue to maintain massive armaments and they show no disposition to turn them over to the movie companies for use as theatrical scenery.

Martyrs are not, by token of their martyrdom, necessarily right in their beliefs; but we must admit that they are better than the fanatics who, in trying to enforce their beliefs, make martyrs of other people.

Henshaw Ward in his book of delightful debunking forays, "Thobbing," tells of a university professor who was exasperated by his students saying "I think this" and "I think that," almost always in preface to some loose theory or hearsay. At last the old professor exclaimed: "Don't think. Try to notice."

When you hear anyone saying that the word "bunk" is a crude and impolite word, you will be safe in concluding that this person is self-conscious and on the defensive about some form of bunk which he cherishes. Those who object to the word "bunk" are not, as a rule, so esthetic in their sensitiveness for language.

Happiness is an illusion, if it be meant as a state of being in which there is no pain, no sadness, no uncertainty, no struggle, no occasion for regret or complaint. Yet it is not utterly an illusion, as we commonly use the word, for each man defines happiness in his own way and is able to reconcile it with many contrasts.

Senator Bingham of Connecticut, in resenting criticism of his employment of a manufacturer's representative to assist him on tariff schedules, declared with impetuous oratory: "I resent it and I will resent it until the end of time." Evidently the Senator has faith in immortality or, maybe, he believes that time has not much farther to run.

### Is Truth Partisan?

Should a writer, relating the facts on a subject of peculiar and historic and yet contemporary importance, hesitate to give the plain meaning of these facts? Can a scholar, devoted to truth, refuse to follow where truth leads? Is a clearly expressed viewpoint, derived from a truthful survey of ideas and events, to be branded with any fairness at all as "partisanship"?

One wonders what screw was loose in the mind of a writer in a recent issue of *The Nation*, who reviewed Joseph McCabe's *The Story of Religious Controversy*. Inconsistency, at least, was as rattled as a 1915 Ford car in the mind of this writer. He said that McCabe's scholarship and his facts were beyond dispute. But, he added, McCabe was "partisan" toward religion; and this, we are told, mars a work that is admittedly truthful and scholarly.

If Joseph McCabe, in being strictly truthful, writes history—whether the history of religion or of any other human institution—as a "partisan," then let us have none of the men who write history "impartially": who, in other words, shuffle the evidence to conceal or minimize the truth and who, by implication and gentle circumlocution, reduce or distort the actual significance of such facts as they give.

### The Censor—a Tin God

Isaac Goldberg in *The New Immorality* (Little Blue Book No. 1481). "I do not wish to; I am afraid to; I do not believe I should. . . . THEREFORE YOU MAY NOT!" Here, in a nutshell—I almost said in a numbskull—is the subterranean working of Censorship.

The Censor is not always, he is not usually, a hypocrite. He is simply a bigot.

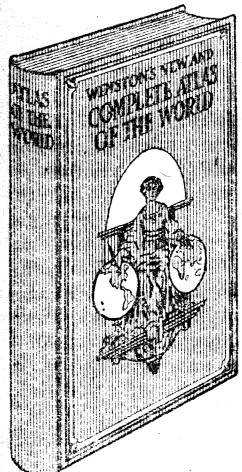
He may not always be wrong in wishing to do away with the object of his disapproval. The wrong lies in his method. He is a King who can do no wrong. His wish must be law. There is no argument; no discussion. There is only obedience. This is obviously preposterous. Let him believe what he pleases to believe; let him work in the interests of that belief. But why seek, by law and other compulsion, to tie his opponent hand and foot? Why deny to ideas different from his own the right to death—or life—in the open field?

The Censor opposes, in life, the survival of the fittest. He seeks for himself special privilege, special concession. He is a Tin God. His way alone is the right way. Instinctively he dreads competition. Is it not significant that, with all the centuries in which he has sat in the saddle, with all the agencies of suppression over which he has ruled, he is still on the defensive?

He, without experience, would deny to others the right to learn from experience. Blind himself, he would lead an army condemned by his own bigotry to blindness. Eyes has he, and dreads to see; ears has he, and dreads to hear. Brains has he—and

No. One doubts that he has brains. Whoever fears the opinions of his neighbors probably has no real opinions of his own.

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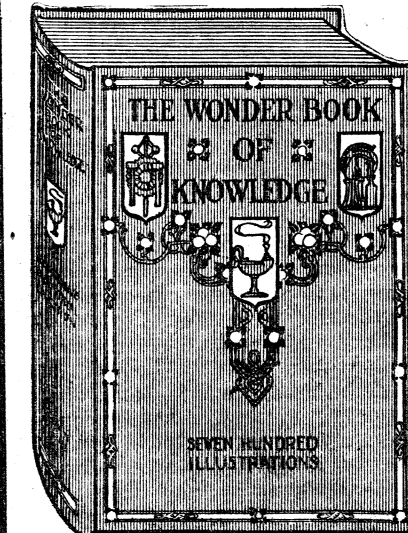
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State



## Around the Table

Chats Among the Editor and His Readers

By E. Haldeman-Julius

### WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT?

There is nothing more interesting than chatty discussion, ranging freely over many subjects, points of views, and topics of the passing hour. It is my wish that in this department, "Around the Table," my readers and I shall enjoy ourselves each week in an exchange of views that shall be various, breezy (tingling breezes of fresh and honest opinion or even of humorous relief), and good-natured. No subject is barred which will furnish ground for a bit of entertaining discussion. "Human nature" will, after all, be our broad subject, as it is manifested in the behavior and ideas which we find in the news, in our reading, and in our direct personal looking at life. Apparent trifles may suggest ideas; humor will lighten and sweeten and, often, will happily inform our thinking; sometimes we shall be serious about little things and sometimes we shall touch lightly upon profound subjects—always our object shall be to find the most intelligent entertainment in the moving, many-shaped, and multi-colored spectacle of life.

Good talk—that is really what I want, and what I am sure my readers will enjoy, in this department. Let us imagine that we are sitting around a table and speaking "as the spirit moves." Of course, we shall want to talk to some point, even though it is not the most important point in the world. We don't wish to bore one another. We do not wish to talk on any one subject until we have weariedly worn it to wretched ravelings and tail-ends of repetition. A spirit of lively, fresh interest should always be with us, whether we happen to be discussing—and maybe dealing one another blows—a subject in a very serious mood or take our ease now and again among reflections and impressions which are not so profound and yet have the sparkle of genuinely thinking, feeling life.

A good many topics for this table talk will naturally be suggested by editorials and articles in *The American Freeman*. You may wish to make additional comment upon something you read in *The American Freeman*. You may wish to have a doubtful point cleared up—and this will be your clearing house, so to speak. You may (very likely you often will) disagree with some of the opinions editorially expressed in *The American Freeman*; and disagreement when it is tolerant (which does not mean tame) is the very breath of good talk which is at the same time intelligent talk. Or, whatever it is that urges you to grab your pen or your typewriter, don't hesitate to "get it out of your system." You can speak freely here.

Naturally, as this department grows we shall have a plenty of topics to keep us going full blast. And there will be a pleasant strain of familiarity and continuity in these discussions. Certain subjects will bob up from week to week, will appear and reappear, treated from a slightly different angle. And it is a

delightful surprise to observe how many subjects, at first glance perhaps seemingly far apart, border upon one another and suggest ideas which are, in one way or another, related. It is truly an adventure. What better adventure is there, indeed, than in thinking about life which finds a familiar, free, and easy outlet in mutual discussion!

You will, of course, understand that this department must have its limitations—mainly physical limitations. Obviously, not every letter can be printed. (But that, if you look at it rightly, only makes the adventure more interesting—to see whether your letter appeared. And, sooner or later, you are pretty sure to be among the talkers "Around the Table" while always you are seated as a privileged, intimate listener.) Again, letters should not be too long. A snappy impressionism, an effect of ideas glimpsed, with quick understanding, in attractive flight, is the style I wish in these letters and in my own comments upon them. Use your own judgment, of course—speak out your thoughts—and, if sometimes I have to omit a part of your letter, I shall carefully preserve its readable identity and be scrupulously fair to your point of view; in editing letters, that is to say, I shall not misrepresent your opinions.

At any rate, be a good intellectual sport and let us know—my readers and myself—what you are thinking about.

### PLAIN SPEAKING AND CATHOLICISM

Plain speaking is admirable in a writer, and never more so than when he is dealing with an important controversial subject. Next to his scholarship—the great value of the knowledge he has to offer on so many subjects—the simplicity and candor of Joseph McCabe are the qualities that win for him the admiration, the enthusiasm, of Haldeman-Julius readers. McCabe never hesitates to call things by their correct names. He is discussing aspects of thought and history and life which are very serious, and he would consider it an unpardonable dishonesty to be obscure, evasive, or polite in his writings. His scholarship, after all, is rendered finally valuable by the sterling integrity of his attitude toward everything that he discusses. I don't know of any writer who can be compared with McCabe for his plain speaking. Charles E. Ruby, a lawyer in Boston, Mass., expresses his pleasure in McCabe's downright-ness—yet, as he adds, candor is always accompanied by good will. He is addressing McCabe:

I have just finished reading your latest book, "The Story of Religious Controversy." You are sixty-two years old, and while I am twenty-six years your junior and have received considerable education both in science and law, with side excursions into literature and music, I feel quite certain that twenty-six years more of education would not enable me to turn out a book one-half so excellent. There is about this book,

as there is about your book on Shaw, a downright forthrightness beautifully—undogmatic—reasonableness, if you like, sweet but firm. And you are so aware of that cardinal principle of all research—seek the original sources for data—a principle not fully appreciated by some men of high position in the scientific world.

I hope that your prediction of a world freed of Christianity will come true—I hope that it is not a mere wish-fulfillment. Catholicism is growing each year stronger and stronger, and it must be remembered that it requires only one determined minority to govern this country, and in particular to tamper with the first amendment to the Constitution. Protestantism is on the toboggan. Perhaps there will be a bloody religious war or wars which we shall not see. Catholicism is not dead: consider the shrine in Malden.

I look not for the masses of people to become skeptical in thinking. At best, they will become merely indifferent to religion, which, any more than any other human institution, cannot survive under indifference and lack of financial support. But indifference can be a very effective substitute for skepticism, where the real article cannot be obtained. Hear the bawlings of the clergy today about the loss of religion by the people! Somebody's income is evidently suffering some diminution. These impresarios of the oldest show on earth are learning that their public wants some change of the bill.

In fact, the various stages of Modernism remind me of the successive skits in a 10-20-30 vaudeville, each act worse than the preceding one. The Roman Catholic Church has thus far refused to change its show, but there may come a time when its High Mass will be presented via the talkies with the Pope presiding and admission at \$10 a head; the Host will be presented to the faithful either by the local representatives, or perhaps by an as yet uninvited electrical means. I favor the latter method—it can be more easily controlled by His Holiness.

On the subject of Catholicism—the nature of its menace, its tactics of propaganda, and the best way to combat it—McCabe has written fully in "The True Story of the Roman Catholic Church" (12 vols. in the same form as "The Key to Culture"), which is now on the point of publication. While he is sure that the modern age in its scientific and emancipated and progressive character will triumph over Catholicism, as over all religion and the mind-narrowing influences of the past, he says plainly that it is still a real menace; as long as it is in existence, it cannot be anything but a menace. The Roman Catholic Church is today, especially in America, using all the tricks of what may be called a diplomatic warfare to insinuate itself favorably even into the minds of non-Catholics. It will (says McCabe) take any position politically for the sake of power. In America, Catholic propaganda persistently lies about what Catholic official dogma really is, and about what Catholic practice is in lands where there is not so much need of guarding against Protestant critics.

I do not think we or our children will see "a bloody religious war." Both Protestantism and Catholicism—all religion—will be defeated finally and completely by the progress of civilization. There will indeed be serious controversies in which we must bear our part; if religion in its guise of formal and absolute theology is nearly dead if not altogether dead, religion as an interference with and confusion of the social, political, personal, behavioristic issues of life is still a force, expressing itself in more than one way and not always openly, against which our libertarian vigilance is required. Our children—or perhaps our grandchildren—may see the struggle ended and religion merely a strange congeries of aberrations to be read about in history. That day is not yet.

When one speaks of one's conviction that modernism will go on to a final and complete triumph over every department of human life—when one expresses an optimistic evolutionary belief with regard to the future—one is assuming that those who believe profoundly in freedom and culture will continue to be active as the necessary human agents of social evolution. When we trace the evolution of liberal ideas in the past, we see how necessary to that progress was the labor of free thinkers and groups that were dedicated to liberty. Even so, our attitude today—our very interested and articulate attitude—must needs keep moving, as it were, the movement of modernism. We must live our thoughts. We must utter the words of truth and freedom unceasingly.

### NEVER TOUCHED HIM

A newspaper bunk-shooter fires at Charles Darwin and sadly misses: this is the amusing item for which we are indebted to T. H. Lowry (Denver, Colo.). Mr. Lowry read in a Denver Post article by one Albert E. Hayes, entitled with unconscious irony "Lest We Forget," the following statement: "Darwin is just as bad as the Fundamentalists in explaining the greatest miracle of all—the electron." Hayes has forgotten what little he probably never knew in the first place about Darwin and about the electron. Mr. Lowry is on the right track when he comments:

I don't feel able to decide what he means by taking Darwin to

task, a biologist, for being without explanation of a physics theory that I do not believe (I may be wrong) was in existence in his day. Is Mr. Hayes sincerely laughing ignorantly, feeding this tripe to his readers, many of whom are only too eager to credit as unimpeachable anything they see in print, and does he really believe his own arguments or is he—well, just what is he doing?

It is true that Darwin wrote very specially on biology and had nothing to do with the science of physics. It is also a fact that the electron was not discovered—that the atom was not refined by scientific perception into the smaller units, electrons and protons—until 1895. Thus the remark by Hayes is perfectly ridiculous.

And that is not all. What does Hayes think he means by comparing Darwin and the Fundamentalists as explainers of anything? The Fundamentalists don't explain—they simply assert the dogma of creation. On the contrary, Darwin explains by the evolutionary method. It is also very loose language to speak of the electron as a "miracle," when we know that the word "miracle" means a suspension of the natural order or "law"—in other words, a miracle is a word for an imagined kind of supernatural happening which has never happened. The "electron" is, of course, no more correctly called a miracle than any other fact of nature.

Thanks, Mr. Lowry, for reminding us again how ignorant or dishonest (in either case the effect is the same) these bunk-shooters are.

### A World in Little

Clarence Darrow in *Farmington* (A Novel of American Boyhood) (Big Blue Book No. B-49).

After my father and mother—whom I did not appreciate, and who, I am bound to think, but half understood me—no other men or women came very near my life. My relations were with the boys and girls—especially the boys. The men and women were there only to board and clothe the children, and furnish them with a place to sleep at night. To be sure, we knew something of all the men and women in the town, but we saw them only through childish eyes.

There was the blacksmith, who was very strong, and whom we liked and called "clever" because he sometimes helped us with our games.

There was one old farmer in particular, who had a large orchard and a fierce dog, and who would let his apples rot on the ground rather than give us one to eat. We hated him, and called him stingy and a miser. Perhaps he was not that sort of man at all, and the dog may not have been so very fierce. No doubt someone had given them bad names, and the people preferred to believe evil of them instead of good.

Then there was the town drunkard, whom all of us knew. We liked him when he was sober, although when he was told that he was very bad; but he always laughed and joked with us, and watched our games in a friendly way, but when we heard that he was drunk we were all afraid of him and ran away.

Then there was another man who kept a little store, and we knew he was very rich; we had no idea how much he was really worth, but anyhow we knew that he was rich. And so on, through all the neighborhood, we knew something of the men, and classified them by some one trait or supposed fact—just as the grown-up world always persists in having a right to do.

The women, too, we knew even better than the men, for it was the mothers who controlled the boys, and in almost every case it depended on them alone whether or not the boys might go and play.

Still, we children only knew and cared about the grown-up people in a remote secondary way. Every home was full of boys, and by common affinity these boys were always together—at least, as many of them as could get away from home. As a rule, the goodness and desirability of a parent were in exact proportion to the ease with which the children could get away from home. I am afraid that in this child's world my good parents stood very low upon the list—much lower than I wished them to stand.

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Most people do not grow old; they do not grow in any real sense; they merely let the years go empty by.

## A Window on Europe

A Weekly Letter from an Englishman About Europe  
John Langdon-Davies

### BIRTH CONTROL AS A COMMUNITY NECESSITY.

A subject which has been the center of much controversy this year in England has been the preservation of "rural amenities": committees for the protection of the countryside, deputations to parliament, bills for the prevention of building development near famous "beauty spots," appeals for funds to buy for the nation fifty acres of woodland here or there to prevent it going on the market as house sites, and shoals of letters to the press. Nothing could bring out more vividly the differences between England and America than this state of affairs.

America has several National Parks larger in area than the whole of England and here we crowded folk are clamoring that a few hundred acres may be found to provide our first National Parklet! A quite extraordinary confusion of thought is being shown over the matter, however, and it is very interesting to note how people insist upon holding doctrines about social affairs which clash with one another.

For example, I know a worthy gentleman, a reactionary Tory by birth and upbringing who in later life, realizing the horrible conditions of the workers, the slums, the sordidness of overcrowding, became a supporter of the Labor Party and advocated the rehousing of the working classes and a policy of building a million houses in five years; yet whenever he sees a new building on a country road where from childhood he has only hitherto seen trees, he has apoplexy. He is a symbol of the human habit of trying to eat your cake and have it, a habit which makes so much of politics and social work unreal.

There are two ways of solving the horrors of slum dwelling without ruining the countryside. The first is birth control, which is in any case making tremendous headway among even slum dwellers. The second is a law insisting that not only must workers live near their works, but that slaveholders and everyone who makes a profit out of a factory must also live within sight and smell of the chimney. As things are at present the men who make the money in Pittsburgh go to live in Palm Beach, the men who make the money in east end London have country estates in Sussex. The first of these two is not politics at all but common sense, the second is unfortunately not practical politics.

Birth control is much more than a method of cleaning up emotional and economic personal problems; we in England are realizing that it is a community necessity as well. People argue that there is no danger of over-population at all, that if wealth was properly distributed, and production reasonably controlled there is enough food for everyone. "Why," I have heard a prominent socialist say, "if electricity is properly developed and agriculture industrialized we could support twice as many people as we can today, in comfort and happiness." The answer is that if food could be made synthetically and food was the only human necessity you could have one man to the square yard of the earth's surface, only even then certain problems, such as drainage, would be very difficult to solve; but that man cannot live by bread alone; he needs, for example, parking space for a motor car and somewhere to be able to drive it in comfort and safety; beyond that he needs a room with a view, and solitude. "I think," said Walt Whitman, "heroic deeds were all conceived in the open air"; he was probably wrong, but nevertheless it is certain that the prospect of the world becoming one large town, even if some good-sized parks were kept for children to play in, means a curtailment of the human potentiality for good and happiness.

On the other hand you have the nice old country clergymen and retired army colonels who want to have birth control stopped at all costs. These same people have this summer become curiously vocal because the new electrical development schemes involve the carrying of high tension cables and the building of pylons over the green downs and country woodlands of southern England. What confusion of thought lies here: you advocate an increasing population and yet you kick at anything which may make it possible to feed and support that population!

Not many miles from where I am sitting—in my lovely room with a view—lies the wild upland of Dartmoor. Somebody wants to start a china clay works in one of the valleys of the Moor; immediately a violent outcry is raised against the spoiling of the amenities of Dartmoor and the pollution of the streams. There you have it, on the one hand a chance of employing five hundred men, on the other some views and expensive fishing spoils. You must have both or neither. Everybody is theoretically in favor of reducing unemployment, but when they find it interferes with their solitude or view they begin to have doubts and to find excuses. And

yet I would bet a large sum that the majority of those who have protested against a curtailment of their landscape in the interests of employment, would oppose birth control instruction being given to all parts of the community. I would also bet a smaller sum that most of them practice birth control themselves!

There is another point which seems to me to illustrate human stupidity very well: people are screaming out that this, that and the other will ruin the beauty of the country as if any change or any artificial feature must ruin the landscape. An owner of several thousand acres finds that a new road may be built within sight of his property; along that road thousands will be able to pass to enjoy the trees and fields on every side; no, the road, the work of man, will ruin natural beauty. I would like to know where our English landscape would be without the works of man, roads, lanes, hedges, fields, farmsteads, villages; instead of this there would be nothing but messy marshes and impenetrable bog. New things are often more beautiful than old; a steel girder bridge, the Brooklyn Bridge for example, is a finer work of art than an old stone arch with ivy growing on it. Suppose we do have electricity pylons on the Down: a hundred years hence when power will be brought to us by "wireless" they will want to pull down the obsolete pylons; then listen to the wailings and anger of the Society for Protection of Ancient Pylons at the threatened desecration of our rural amenities. Lord! what fools these mortals be!

### Views of Paradise

Remy de Gourmont in *Epigrams of Remy de Gourmont* (Little Blue Book No. 444).

Paradise, according to the various social classes:

A salon, where one is presented to the king and the court.

A theater, where one is introduced, behind the scenes, to the actors of destiny.

A circus without formalities where one may fraternize with the heroes of the ring.

A society, where one may sing in chorus the eternal refrains; and so on.

One should not commit oneself to an idea as one signs a note at the bank or the lease of a house. Surely one should make the greatest effort to live one's ideas and be true to them. But then living means growing; and one should ever be receptive to new vistas and values of growing, seeking, undogmatic life.

"For right too rigid hardens into wrong." That is a line seen somewhere in an old book. It is a line packed with social and intellectual criticism. Just for your private edification, look about you for pointed personal examples of this rigid "rightness" that is really the most insidious wrongness.

Gossip is talk about people; it makes all the difference whether it is intelligent talk about interesting people.

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**Trying to Hide Our Impulses**  
Theodore Dreiser in *Neurotic America and the Sex Impulse* (Little Blue Book No. 661).

We find adult boys and girls pretending, even to themselves, that they do not know what sex is and the manner in which children come into existence, and preachers and pretending thinkers speaking and writing as though sex were not at all but dominant force in life. And instead of viewing this inconceivably dull attitude as something that needs modification and bringing ourselves to the realization that there is nothing inherently disgraceful about having sexual desire, or at least knowledge of it, and of eventually gratifying it, we allow ourselves to be kept in tow of crack-brained religionists and ethic mongers who insist on painting our very normal natures as abnormal and so developing national neuroses and psychoses which make us ridiculous, not only to ourselves but to every other nation.

It has even succeeded in twisting our judgments in regard to politics and economics. For without a rational conception of the part, and the very normal part, sex plays in life, how can there be sanity in these other things? One cannot be wrong as to one vital point in life and right as to all others.

We continue to assert, as a nation and as individuals, that everything sexual is wrong, while at the same time having sexual feelings and impulses which we can scarcely disguise even to ourselves and which we satisfy or over-compensate for in ways too ridiculous to mention (a Billy Sunday revival, for instance; a White Slave Crusade in which our papers blaze with sickening criticism; an insane, impossible pursuit of money or vice, due to the repression of every other normal instinct).

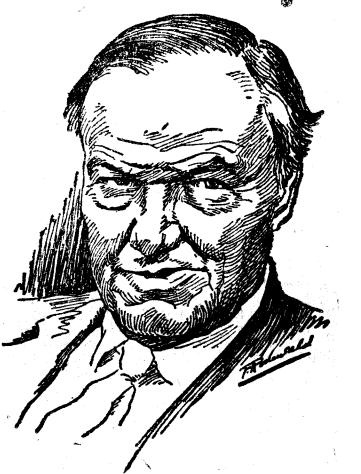
Truly, a goose nailed to the floor by its feet and stuffed daily to produce an enlarged and salable liver could be no more ridiculous or pathetic than the average American debarr'd from every avenue of intelligence or effort save that which relates to money.

As dogmas impressively held, heaven and hell are no longer felt as very real by the majority (if, we may skeptically add, they ever were so very real even in seeming). Yet these and other elements in the conception of the supernatural still confuse men's attitude toward life. The chief indictment of religion, after all, is not so much that it is false as a proposition of reason; but rather that in many other ways, where truth is of the greatest practical importance, it interferes with sane living.

Every man is a poet when he forgets his narrow creeds and definitions and his desires of ephemeral pettiness and feels, with all the strength and yearning of his nature, the continually beseeching beauty of life.

What is love? It is to understand one another. All the rest follows upon that large, sensitive, and tender insight.

It is easy to make a very favorable impression upon the world if you always tell the world that it is right.



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