

Wooden Legs--Full Jugs In Kansas--and Pinched Pennies

"Just One Wooden Leg"

Faith cures always strike me right on the skeptical funny bone. I can't imagine what a shattered and weak condition my mind must be in if I did not perceive with logic and law that the bunk in such claims. I am skeptical of the disease, of the cure, of the witness, of all the assumptions and assertions involved. "If Christ performed miracles, why can't they be performed today?" asks a pure-and-simple believer, who would be logical enough if he were intelligent and realistic in his premise. If—That's the exceedingly tall, insuperable word.

We have not yet had a report of the "cures" which were said to have occurred so magically at the grave of the priest in Malden, Mass. My curiosity can wait. Perhaps the most illuminating commentary on the Malden idiosyncrasy is the story that a number of Harvard students purchased brand new crutches and left them—a shining pile of "proof"—at the reputedly most holy cemetery. That was a nice, playful way of laughing at a fraud and showing their irreverence for something which was monstrously undeserving of reverence.

And Anatole France remarked wittily upon the "proof" of the miracles at Lourdes in France. When a Catholic pointed to the many crutches left at this miraculous shrine, France countered: "It certainly is impressive. But how much more convincing it would be if there were, among all those crutches, just one wooden leg."

Crutches may come and go, but wooden legs have a way of being persistently useful.

"Corn" Flows In Kansas

Kansas is not the greatest corn-producing State, but it has a very impressive standing in the output of corn whiskey. This has always been well known to citizens of Kansas. Even the Prohibitionists know it, although they try, with more of policy than conscience, to misrepresent the situation. Governor Clyde M. Reed has defended on suitable political occasions the always shaky reputation of Kansas as a dry State. Senator Arthur Capper and William Allen White and other loyal Kansans frequently rise to inform the nation what a model State we have out here in the heart-of-gold of America. Yet Governor Reed, when he was the Governor-elect in December, 1923, stated in a newspaper interview:

Throughout the sessions of the legislature in recent years the growing use of booze parties given by lobbyists with the intention of influencing legislation has become a matter of common knowledge and growing apprehension on the part of good citizenship. Not only is the liquor law being flagrantly violated in Topeka, but the manner of its violation constitutes a danger to the public interests.

The corporation lobby has begun early this year. It already has had one big booze party at one of the principal hotels in Topeka. At this party were eight state senators, four railroad attorneys, representatives of the Bell Telephone Company and other public utility interests. At this party were discussed committee assignments and plans for opposing the incoming administration.

It seems that when Governor Reed is politically in form to rally the voters with the cry of corporation lobbying, he is alarmed at the scandalous circulation of booze in Kansas; and that when he is using Prohibition for political capital, he says that Prohibition is a success in Kansas—even though he obtained a special appropriation from the legislature and a special force of investigators to remedy, as it were, the unsatisfactory success of Prohibition. Scandals, unfortunately too factual, have assailed the holiness of the Kansas Anti-Saloon League. It had State officials on its payroll. Dishonesty forced the retirement of one superintendent of the League; this same man, when an Assistant Attorney General, "collected large

amounts from citizens of various communities for 'law enforcement' and there was no record of these sums in the books. Neither was there any record of the 'law enforcement.' In some cases the donors demanded their money back." This shining moralist, F. L. Crabbe, also was on the payroll of a private insurance company.

The interesting, but to realists not surprising, facts about the flow of liquid "corn" in Kansas and the political and financial racket naturally associated therewith are ably brought together by Walter W. Liggett in an article in *Plain Talk* (February). Mr. Liggett traveled through Kansas and carefully reviewed the situation. He does not claim to have absolute figures, but he reached his conclusions logically and soundly. For example, he ascertained that seven carloads of malt extract had been shipped to Topeka in 1929. "There are approximately 1200 cases of malt to a car," he explains, "and 12 cans to a case. That means 100,800 cans of malt. Each can is supposed to make about 5 1/2 gallons, and, unless my arithmetic is off, this means that the people of Topeka last year manufactured, and presumably consumed, approximately 604,400 gallons of near-beer. That means ten gallons per capita, which is more beer than any part of the United States consumed before Prohibition." Mr. Liggett estimates that the annual output of liquor in Kansas is about as follows: 15,000,000 gallons of home brew; 5,000,000 gallons of wine; between 4,500,000 and 5,000,000 gallons of hard liquor; totaling a yearly booze bill of about \$55,000,000.

These figures, if not precise to the last least unit, are fair in their estimation of the wet condition prevailing in Kansas. They are figures carefully, convincingly arrived at; they represent about what we should reasonably expect—for who was ever so naive as to believe the optimistic (using the politest word) claims of successful Prohibition in Kansas?

Kansas is not dry. But it is second to no other State in its array of hypocritical politicians.

\$81,000,000—and Two Cents

Harvard University, home of culture, has distinguished itself in the field of economics. The study of economics is taught at Harvard. There is also a practice of economics at the University. It is learned that, for all its aloofness and dignity, Harvard even conducts a school of economics for the humble scrubwomen in its employ. The scrubwomen's education was costly, however—it cost them their jobs, poor jobs but better than none.

Twenty scrubwomen who were employed in cleaning the Widener Library were discharged summarily: some of these women had assisted the cause of culture, in an essential albeit lowly position, for 33 years, but they were suddenly turned out and theirs to wonder why. Upon inquiry, the explanation was found to be simple. The Minimum Wage Commission of Massachusetts had remonstrated with the authorities at Harvard for refusing to pay these scrubwomen the rate of 37 cents an hour which is legally provided as the minimum decent wage; however, the law does not provide for the enforcement of this wage minimum, but only for the "bawling out" by advertisements in the newspapers of firms who pay a smaller wage. The women who swept and scrubbed the classical floors of the Widener Library were being paid at the rate of 35 cents an hour—and Harvard University, although it is a rich corporation which has investments totaling \$81,000,000, would not raise these scrubwomen's pay 2 cents an hour. For all twenty women the raise would have amounted to an extra \$12 a week.

Inspired by this incident, Upton Sinclair has composed "The Scrubwomen—Fragment of a Chorus." Mrs. Katharine Donohue and Mrs. Emma Trafton are two of the poor women who received so full and forthright a lesson in economics, learning the difference between \$81,000,000 and two cents. Sinclair's poem follows:

CHORUS OF SCRUBWOMEN:
Justice, O God! To Thee we fly!
All day for bread our children cry!
Bring down the haughty! Break their pride!
Let not Thy Vengeance be denied!

MRS. KATHARINE DONOHUE:
Thirty-three years upon my knees
I crawled that they might learn at ease!
MRS. EMMA TRAFTON:
All night I scrubbed their filthy floors;
They must have culture without pause!
MRS. KATHARINE DONOHUE:
I dared not lift my thoughts a little;
I spent a lifetime in their spittle!
MRS. EMMA TRAFTON:
My children hungered all their days;
I dared not ask the smallest raise.
MRS. KATHARINE DONOHUE:
Two cents an hour was the rub;
A loaf of bread for a while night's scrub!
MRS. EMMA TRAFTON:
On Christmas eve! Oh cruel mocking!
We got the sack instead of a stocking!
MRS. KATHARINE DONOHUE:
A bitter month I've tramped the snows,
My veins are black with varicose
CHORUS OF SCRUBWOMEN:
Justice, O God! To hell with Lowell!
Put in his heart Thy holy rowel!
Vengeance, O God! To hell with Harvard!
Punish all them the poor who starve hard!
GHOST OF VANZETTI:
Forgive us debts as we forgive debtors;
Allow for the arrogance of arts and letters;
The Brahman bigot of Cambridge town,
Wrapped in a Harvard cap and gown!
Have pity upon all scholars and such;
Father, forgive them, they know too much!

President A. Lawrence Lowell, who seems to agree that the dignity of Harvard is not worth two cents, was the head of the commission which, after "reviewing the evidence," decided that it had previously been right in making up its mind (prejudices) to the effect that Sacco and Vanzetti had been given a "fair trial." As Heywood Brown remarked on the eve of the electrocution of Sacco and Vanzetti, "It is not every man who is honored by having the switch pulled by the President of Harvard University."

And the scrubwomen relatively were honored. For two cents they bought the dignity of Harvard and reduced \$81,000,000 to the lowly level of pinched pennies.

E. Haldeman-Julius

Radio Station Submits to the Christian Science Gag

Out of the timely and severe publicity given to the Christian Science conspiracy to suppress a biography of Mrs. Eddy there has come a clearer and wider understanding of the tyrannical policy of this preposterous but very well-organized sect. In their efforts to boycott the Dakin biography out of circulation, the Christian Scientists have simply followed a policy that was started by their bunkistic goddess herself and that has been carefully adhered to, from obvious motives of self-interest, by the hierarchy of the "Mother Church" in Boston and its lieutenants throughout the country. And in connection with this attempt to suppress a book, which fortunately is persistently advertised by its publishers and has been given a great deal of free advertising by the defenders of a free press, other instances transpire in which the mentally bound and blinded followers of the Christian Science style of idiocy have employed similar measures to gag their critics or any one not speaking or writing with the permission of the "Mother Church." The objection to the Dakin biography is that it is "not official"—namely, that it is not "inspired" by the fabricators of Christian Science propaganda. What that means is that nobody should (in the view of the C. S. hierarchy) speak or write about Christian Science except as the C. S. hierarchy gives them its gracious permission or, we may infer, instructs them exactly what to say. This policy of intolerance is illustrated very clearly and characteristically by a year-old incident which is reported by Catherine Allen (New York City) in a letter to *The New Republic*:

Last February, a prominent Englishman, not a member of the Mother Church, was advertised to speak on the subject of Christian Science over the Columbia Broadcasting System. Christian Scientists received letters from the Committee on Publication informing them that the contract had been signed for the lecture, but urging them, nevertheless, to protest against it: "It is not too late to stop the radio talk. Please have the letters or messages of protest delivered to the president of the Columbia Broadcasting System."

The letter then proceeded to tell the members what to say in protest, and concluded with a statement from the local Church board that it recommends strongly each member to follow Mr. Towne's [New York Committee on Publication] advice because it feels that "to be effective the protest against the radio address should come from as many loyal Christian Scientists as possible. Your active participation in this move of defense is considered a true service to the Cause of Christian Science."

so much zeal that the broadcasting company was deluged with hundreds of letters and telegrams containing the statements suggested by the Committee on Publication. Not having the courageous example of Charles Scribner's Sons [publishers of the Dakin biography of Mrs. Eddy] to support them, the Columbia Broadcasting Company canceled its contract.

It is not stated whether the English lecturer was a critic of Christian Science; maybe he was only a seventy-five percent believer in this Barnumesque hokum, whose talk wasn't "officially" arranged. That does not matter. The point is that anything "not official" is therefore damned from the C. S. headquarters. In this and many other instances the Christian Science hierarchy has put forward what is really a claim to a most brazen kind of intolerance—for in all such instances the claim clearly implied, if not made in so many words, is that nothing should be spoken or written about Christian Science which happens to be displeasing to the hierarchy in Boston. And that means, of course, that the hierarchy is against any intelligent discussion of Christian Science.

It is not surprising that such intolerance should be unqualified by a sense of honor. It may be stated broadly and fairly that a sense of honor is something unknown to bigots. They will do anything, fair or foul, to gain their ends; and their ends, even so, are always unfair. In this case of radio gagging, the Christian Scientists, were not deterred by the consideration that a contract had been honorably made between the broadcasting company and the lecturer. They demanded even that a contract be broken—that an honest and rightful agreement should be broken dishonestly—in order to satisfy their bigoted feeling of resentment and their ugly impulse to gag any one who is not an echo of the C. S. hierarchy.

Bigots, we repeat, are unacquainted with the sense of honor.

Liberal and conscientious, *The Nation* looks around to see what it can see and then reports its observations honestly. Now it has discovered that economic affairs chiefly occupy the government in Washington. Many of us read this statement without surprise and, with the best intention, we cannot regard it as "news." But it is fine of *The Nation* to report its discovery without delay.

The ignorant man is not necessarily a criminal, but ignorance lies at the root of the world's major crimes. And education, which includes all the material arrangements of a better life, is the great reformer of man's world.

Dead men are indifferent to fame; glory is in the eye of the posterity that beholds.

Christ and Quackery

When quackery takes on a religious guise of faith-healing, it is sometimes defended by persons who do not really believe in it but who argue that its character of a "religion" suggests its helpfulness and, anyway, its title to reverence. Wrap sacred names and pretenses around the worst bunk, and it will receive a special tenderness: for what men believe in the name of Christ or Allah—ah— isn't that too sacred for harsh, debunking criticism?

It is this reverential attitude toward quackery labeled Christian which appears in an editorial in the *Los Angeles Times*, rebuking Dr. Morris Fishbein for a recent lecture in Pasadena, a city at the edge of Los Angeles. At bottom, one suspects with good reason that the familiar motive of "economic determinism" was a very conscious prompter of the *Times* homily in defense of Christ and quackery, the association of blessed bunk. "Faith healing" is abundantly represented in Los Angeles. That city is a veritable Paradise for quacks and charlatans. Aimee McPherson is only the best known of the charlatans who advertise faith in Jesus and the love of Jesus as the panacea for all the ills of life. Sister Aimee has a flock of rivals, and it seems that there are enough suckers to go round, so that faith pays the "faith healers" at any rate.

And the Christian Scientists, though not numerically strong, appear to be as influential in a certain kind of "censorship" in Los Angeles as elsewhere. For quite clearly it was in defense of Christian Science and other Christ-labeled quackery that the *Times* took Dr. Fishbein to task. Although the editorial mentions other forms of healing, there is no mistaking that the main intent is that of defending Christian Science and similar faiths. The editorial refers approvingly to "the simple form of healing-through-faith employed by Christ Himself," and it adds:

Had Dr. Fishbein been born in Judea in the days of Herod the King he would no doubt have been among the first to fulminate against the unauthorized Nazarene who dared to heal the sick without drugs or knife. He would have included in his list of "healing fads and quackeries" the case of the woman in Galilee "who had an issue of blood twelve years, who had spent all her living on physicians, neither could be healed of any," and the Master's reply to her belief in Him, "Thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

Followers of this faith have no quarrel with their neighbors who prefer the system of medical ethics built on the original ideas of Hippocrates and Galen. But neither should an advocate of this one limited school presume to ridicule those who find help and healing in the precepts and example of the Founder of the Christian religion, whose teachings are accepted by a large majority of the American people.

One seldom or never finds one bit of bunk shining in single isolation. Always, bunk is added to bunk, and the present case is no exception. Two major misstatements are contained in the last sentence quoted: 1. Jesus was not the "Founder of the Christian religion." 2. And the teachings of Jesus are not "accepted by a large majority of the American people." Analyze those two statements for yourself: reflect upon the difference between the Christian religion—that is to say, the immense body of doctrines, variously disputed by the numerous sects, known as Christianity—and the teachings of Jesus: a statement of difference which is a compliment neither to the one nor the other. Then ask yourself, as a matter of common sense and observation, whether any sizable group (not to say a majority) of the American people believe in the teachings of Jesus—turn the other cheek, love your neighbor as yourself, pluck out an eye if it offends you, abstain from sex life, desert your father and mother, etc. After all, only a minority of foolish people look to faith as a cure of disease: many who pretend to trust in a Christ-labeled form of quackery actually employ material means for their relief.

And observe how the *Times* editorial defends Christ and quackery by referring to the "miracles" written in the Gospels, as if all that fabled magic were the unquestioned truth! According to its style of defending alleged miracles today by referring to alleged miracles of two thousand years ago, and of using the fables about Jesus to support the possibility of Jesus-labeled claims of crazy supernaturalism today, the *Times* must believe that faith in Jesus today could raise the dead and drive devils out of swine and (but how unlawfully!) turn water into wine. If the *Times* takes the "miracles" of Jesus as a criterion of truth, then obviously it can believe anything.

Bernard Shaw in a recent interview stated that the net effect of the naval limitations conference will be that "battleships will in the future fight at a distance of fifteen miles instead of twenty miles." One need not be a cynic to fear that Shaw is correct in his analysis. The optimist might suggest, however, that nearness may lead to disenchantment.

It may be suggested that the reason Heaven has never been located is that nobody has ever seen enough evidence of its existence to be curious about where it might be.

Faith is a stagnant condition of minds that lack the healthy activity of thought.

Blood-Lust—Oh, Very Biblical

Bullets—flesh-tearing and blood-letting bullets—are the instruments of reform and salvation that our country needs, according to the holy, fanatical cry of Rev. Percival Clinton, a Chicago preacher who is now professionally a Prohibition lecturer. But how inadequate is the word "lecturer" to describe this man! He is a messenger of the gospel of blood and hate, for which he has—who can deny it?—historic, scriptural, unimpeachable Christian authority. Blood is the principal element in salvation. Blood is the blessed, assuaging drink of the fanatic. And Christianity—its history and its ideology and its sermons and its hymns and its sacred tales and examples—is steeped in blood. Very Christian, very Biblical, is this man of God and God-damner of men when he says, as reported in the *San Diego (Calif.) Sun*:

I cannot see that there would be any crime in shooting at sight any man who violates the law, especially the prohibition law. We execute murderers of the human body, then why in God's name have we no right to shoot at sight the slayers of the soul when they violate the prohibition law? If we are real Christians, and if we observe our fundamentalist laws as they should be observed and study the laws of God in ancient days, we find that all sinners were punished with instant death.

I may be a little unorthodox, but if I had my way, I would treat the violator of the prohibition law with a taste of the Spanish Inquisition before I shot him.

It is an anti-climax for Rev. Clinton to speak of himself in such a mild way as "unorthodox." He really is savage. He is so sure that he is right that he would kill—"shoot on sight"—in the very spirit of righteousness which spreads its scarlet glow over the words and deeds of God which, we are told, constitute the Bible. One wonders, indeed, why he would limit his gunplay to violators of the Prohibition law. Why not send a finally convincing bullet through the heart of every opponent of Prohibition? Why not say that the severe, compelling, unexceptionable law of righteousness is what Rev. Clinton thinks and shoot with consistent ferocity every one who does not agree with Rev. Clinton?

We are not quite certain, even so, regarding Rev. Clinton's program. He speaks of shooting at sight, and of torturing. He seems to mean killing at sight, as one infers from his analogy with the execution of murderers. (Murderers are given the capital penalty, argues Rev. Clinton, therefore let us have a reign of rampant murder.) He doesn't explain how he can invariably know at sight who is a violator of the Prohibition law—but probably he would advocate shooting any man who looked as if he had taken

a drink or knew where a drink could be obtained. Maybe Rev. Clinton, whose savage tastes must be strong and varied, would have the joy of killing instantaneously and, on other occasions, the more deliberate delight of torturing and killing slowly.

And he is really entitled to call himself an orthodox Christian: for it is not true, as he says, that in the Bible record God and his chosen agents dealt largely in slaughter? Undoubtedly many Christians (those who do not as well as those who do violate the Prohibition law) will be displeased with Rev. Clinton's statements and will deny that he speaks for them or for what they understand as Christianity. But it cannot be denied that Rev. Clinton has good Christian, good Biblical, good Church-historic authority for his position. Isn't it the Christian view that the Bible in bulk is holy? And doesn't blood make up the chief weight and the outstanding significance of this holy book? It reeks with bloody death and blasting, savage damnation—oh, there is no doubt that Rev. Clinton could find authority in its pages for as many savage ferocities and fanaticisms as he might piously crave.

"Unorthodox"? Oh, no—not in beliefs and precedents, anyway. Rev. Clinton goes right back to the foundations of religion. He is a real Christian, baptized in blood, and loving the taste and smell of blood. To avoid misunderstanding, let us say—we are glad to say—that most Christians today do not take their Bible and many of their doctrines and the spirit of religion and the precedents of God's behavior and psychology as set forth in Holy Writ so seriously as Rev. Clinton. Many Christians are more civilized than they realize. They are so civilized that real old Bible stuff—the original religion of Jehovah and its more complicated, but not more refined, historic flowering in Christianity—is shocking to them. If Rev. Clinton shoots his way to an eminence worthy of Bible heroes, doubtless many of his bullets will hit men who think they are Christians but who can't stomach Christianity in its raw, primarily "inspired" verisimilitude.

Prejudice and falsehood, wrote Nietzsche, are only different aspects of the same impulse to deny truth. Prejudices are based on lies. They cannot exist without lies. They are lies in which men have been trained to achieve the smoothness and solidity of conviction.

After all, the contradictions in the Bible, while they are important in judging the preposterous claim of divine inspiration, are not so staggering as the impossibilities in the Bible.

Crowning the centuries, we have to record the final definition of God: A three-letter word.

Censoring Old "Mother Goose"

Not in many a year has such a clever work of criticism been performed as that which appears in a curious volume (very curious, as everything is that pertains to censorship) entitled *Mother Goose Rhymes Censored*. It is clever, this amusing book, and yet so very simple. The absurdity and at bottom the pruriency of censorship are exposed by the very artful yet easy process of publishing the dear old Mother Goose rhymes with certain words omitted. Thus we are reminded that censorship stimulates curiosity, heightens the interest in what is called vulgarity (the vulgar interest, that is, in particular works advertised by the attention of the censors), and invariably is nothing if not offensive and ludicrous. When it is suggested that there is something "dirty" about a book, then "dirtiness" is what many people will look for and will manage to see whether it is really present or not. Exemplifying in the ideal comic spirit this tendency of puritanical, "nasty-nice" censorship are the following stanzas from *Mother Goose Censored*:

See-saw, Margery Daw,
Jenny shall have a new master;
She shall have but a penny a day
Because she can't — any faster.

George Porgie, pudding and pie,
—the girls and made them cry.

When the boys came out to play
George Porgie ran away.
Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater,
Had a wife and couldn't —
her;

He put her in a pumpkin shell
And there he — her very well.

There was a little girl and she had
a little curl
Right down in the middle of her —

And when she was good she was
very, very good,
And when she was bad she was
horrid.

Three wise men of Gotham
Went to — in a bowl;
If the bowl had been stronger,
My song had been longer.

Robin and Richard were two
pretty men;
They — in bed till the clock
struck ten.

Who can read this and fail to laugh uproariously at the silliness of censorship? This curious, precious, and invaluable volume ought to be responsible for hooting the censors into oblivion. Probably it won't, for it requires a degree of imagination and intelligence, going scarcely beyond the obvious indeed, which would have made it impossible for censorship ever to have been taken seriously for a moment. But something worthily ironical has been achieved: the Mother Goose rhymes, by a stroke of simplicity which amounts to genius, have been transferred to the shelf where repose Bobby Burns' *Merry Muse* and Mark Twain's "1601" and other classics.

In the World of Books

Weekly Reviews and Other
Literary Ruminations
Isaac Goldberg

A STENCH RISES TO HEAVEN

The full extent to which the Watch and Ward Society of Massachusetts has rendered itself malodorous in the public nostrils becomes more and more evident from the expressions of opinion—public and private—that appear in the Boston press daily. Some of the papers, such as the *Herald* and the *Traveler*, are calling frankly for the dissolution of the self-appointed censors. Their work has always represented a usurpation of police authority, and a gratuitous activity on the part of more or less psychopathic busy-bodies.

It will be recalled that the Dunster House Bookshop, having told a Society detective that it had no copies of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in stock, was nevertheless urged to procure one. Having complied with the wishes of this pseudo-customer, the clerk and owner were arrested and fined. Public opinion flamed up against this method of manufacturing the evidence in order to procure it, with the result that the Society received some very unwholesome publicity.

Now it appears possible, according to a letter printed in the Boston *Herald* of January 27, 1930, that somebody more or less closely associated with the Watch and Ward actually sold the bookshop the copy of the forbidden novel in order to make certain that the evidence would be forthcoming!

It sounds heinous. I will follow this up, and report upon the findings.

It appears, from such evidence as is already in hand, that the Watch and Ward Society, and organizations of like nature, are really in business not to purify public morals, but to secure convictions.

They are a menace.

They lead the innocent into temptation, trading upon that most elemental necessity: the necessity of making a living. They need watchers over themselves. Who shall guard these guardians? Or, as one of George Gershwin's songs had it: "Someone to Watch Over Me!"

THE NATIONAL POETS

Alfred Kreymborg is an ingratiating personality. I still recall with pleasure his unassuming autobiography, *Troubadour*, in which there was much about the radical literary groups of New York City in the days when it meant something to be a literary radical. A book that, somehow, occurs to me together with the name of *Troubadour* is Floyd Dell's *Intellectual Vagabondage*, which is a more precise history of the same days. Well, Kreymborg, as a vacation from writing poetry, has written a huge tome on America's singers. The name of the rambling history is taken from the title of a poem by Robert Frost. The book is published by the Coward-McCann Company, at \$5. It is well worth it.

Kreymborg begins at the beginning and winds up with today, right next door to where you live. Critics have agreed that his work is not too selective; that it is too long; that, toward the end, when space becomes more precious and writers too numerous, he turns into a catalogue; that his impressions are too personal (what else should they be?). And this, that, and the other. Agreed, for the sake of avoiding a wordy argument. What they should have seen, and what they should have been grateful for, is Kreymborg himself, roaming all through the pages.

For each of the salient figures of our poetry this poet is willing to give up an entire chapter. Lesser figures are bunched. There are many extracts from the poems. The excerpts are not, perhaps, invariably chosen as you and I would have chosen as representative. What of it? The important thing is that Kreymborg makes his task seem relevant to finer living, and gives one the feeling that poetry is good fun and an insight into the individual and the national life.

Sometimes Kreymborg is careless. He will write such a sentence as this: "Did not the whole country contribute contributions to the movement?" As a matter of tight writing, the noun *contributions* could have been left out. It is what grammarians know as a "cognate accusative"—the object repeating, that is, the idea of the accompanying verb. So, without any sense of repetition, we say, "Sing a song." But "contribute contributions" is awkward, drawing attention to itself. There is a queer typographical error on page 105, in which the technical scheme of the *Kalevala* is called "unrhymed trochaic diameter." Diameter is a

mistake, of course, for *dimeter*; i. e., two measure verse.

But away with these proof-readers' quibbles!

Our *Singing Strength* is written with a strong sense of song. It is by a poet for poet-lovers. It makes an easy, a pleasant, and a reliable—though not infallible—introduction to the subject.

VULGAR EX-HIBITIONISM

First we had Sex Fiction. Now we are threatened with Ex Fiction, which is both sexy and ex-y. If you don't know what I'm talking about, recall a pair of recent titles: *Ex-Wife*, then *Ex-Husband*. The latter, I am told, was a parody; so much the better. And now, from Brentano's, at \$2, comes *Ex-Mistress*. Soon we shall have *Ex-Gigolo*, and a host of other ex-cesses. It was to be expected. There; you see I've fallen a victim myself.

This *Ex-Mistress* is anonymous. It had better remain so. It is, on the face of it, cheap. Its humor is elephantine, when it is not hippopotamical. (And if that word isn't in your Webster's, I make you and the dictionary a gift of it. Later: It is!)

When a book must lean upon "What-the-hells" to stir laughter; when it must be forever on the verge of obscenity—implied, of course; when it is simply the sluttish follow-up of an essentially sluttish predecessor—well, it'll have to do without the indorsement of this fellow with the graying hair. It's mildly amusing for some persons, I imagine; it can't do anybody any harm. It is simply vulgar, undignified, not funny and a general waste of precious reading time.

Just X this Ex off your list, unless you have been mingling recently with persons of excessive refinement and need a change.

AN "ATTIC" PHILOSOPHER

The Mind at Mischief. Tricks and Deceptions of the Subconscious and How to Cope With Them. By William S. Sadler, M. D., F. A. C. S. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, \$4.

Dr. Sadler deals entertainingly, speculatively and authoritatively with that attic of the human body called the mind. He brushes away the cobwebs and lets in the healing light of the sun. At moments you begin to fear that he is walking on eggs, but he fools you. He knows what he wants to say and he has his own method of approach.

We are suffering today from a plethora of books on the mind and its functioning. Most of them reveal the anemic functioning of the authors' minds. Sadler is a relief

from this welter of self-appointed physicians to the soul. He has, too, a penchant for the study of so-called spiritualism, and his book is original for the manner in which it carries the findings about the unconscious into the realm of the clairvoyants and other such deceiving and self-deceiving gettry.

Another feature of Dr. Sadler's work is that it does not leave the reader with a sense of gloom.

PLEASE!

I have begun, of late, to be assailed again with requests for information as to where certain forbidden books may be bought. In the first place, I don't know. In the second, I don't care. In the third, if I entered into correspondence on such a matter I should open myself to the satistically severe punishment meted out by the law for the infraction of the various "thou-shalt-nots" in the code. So, kind and indulgent readers, please don't waste your time and mine with such requests. Whenever a worthy book happens along, licit or illicit, I speak of it as entertainingly as I can. The law has power only over certain of my actions; my opinions it can neither dictate nor alter. But neither the Haldeman-Julius Publications nor I am in the business of selling prohibited literature or giving information as to where it may be procured. Nor, to gratify a reader's curiosity—however laudable, innocent or well-meaning—can we afford to open ourselves to prosecution.

Haldeman-Julius: A Vignette

[Popular Biography is the title of a very attractive newcomer in the magazine field. It specializes in sketches and character portrayals of celebrated personalities, both of the past and of the present. In the February number appears the following sketch of E. Haldeman-Julius, by Isaac Goldberg.]

BY ISAAC GOLDBERG.

Composite of the man of thought and the man of action, of the idealist and the showman, of the radical and the opportunist, of the writer and the publisher, of the recluse and the publicist, Emanuel Haldeman-Julius has dramatized himself in the minds of the American people as the presiding genius of the Little Blue Books.

An almost incomprehensible number of these books have been sold, and Haldeman-Julius has told their story in his *The First Hundred Million*. A strange, a fascinating story it is, with valuable sidelights upon problems of American publishing and the psychology of the American reader.

Haldeman-Julius put Girard, Kansas, on the map. And it was not so long ago that, under fire from the opponents of companionate marriage, he threatened to remove it. For it was his talented daughter, Josephine, whose marriage suddenly focused the attention of the country upon what previously had been, after all, but a piquant theory of his friend, Judge Ben Lindsey.

Before marriage he had, himself, been plain Julius; it was at his marriage to Marcet Haldeman that, as a symbol of their union, he added to his own name the patronymic of his wife.

Not a conventional fellow, then. And, equally, not a self-conscious bohemian. Haldeman-Julius' theories of life come out of life, not out of books. Born of immigrant parents in Philadelphia, on July 30, 1889, he early worked himself free of the superstitions and customs that so often pass for religion. His academic training was limited to the routine of the public grammar schools. For a year or two after he left day school, he made sporadic visits to night school. Clearly, he was not happy in his surroundings, and he was groping. For a time, amusingly enough, he served as bell-boy for the Castle School for Girls, and beguiled his plentiful leisure with eager reading.

It was this unconventional, self-directed course, and not his orthodox schooling, that turned him into a personality—a rebellious personality that shortly found comfort in the pre-war idealism of the Socialist party. Emanuel was soon orating from soap-boxes; he was writing for the radical press. Some of his finest prose etchings come from these hard days, from the trail that led him all over the country.

When I first got to know him he was Sunday editor of *The New York Call*. Life had worn his sharp edges round; but it had not tamed him. His Socialist phase had been an admirable discipline; he retains its collective ideology, but has long since shed its political idealisms.

Haldeman-Julius has now his own definite points of view: he is the avowed enemy of religion—a twentieth-century disciple of Diderot and Voltaire; he is a free-lance in politics, in culture, in sexology. But he does not impose his notions upon others; and while he does not carry the principle of toleration to the point of absurdity, he makes ample allowance for differences of opinion.

For a time, during the heyday of the Little Blue Books, he seemed to have abandoned authorship, after doing that excellent novel, *Dust*, in collaboration with his wife. *Dust* takes a prominent place among our novels of the Middle West. Of late, however, he has made up for his long silence. *The First Hundred Million*, *The Outline of Bunk*, *The Big American Parade*—these divulge the

secrets of his trade and the attitudes of his heart. Only a few months ago appeared another novel, again in collaboration with his wife, entitled *Violence*. It exposes the double standard of justice that holds sway in the traditional South.

His early days were a physical and an intellectual migration. His marriage stabilized him. After it, I believe, his literary manner softened, his spirit grew more tolerant.

He strikes me as one of the happiest fellows alive. And I attribute much of this happiness to the successful union of his salient qualities. He has his horses and his automobiles and his dogs. The active business man in him, the super-salesman (didn't Charlie Finger say that there was not a little of Barnum in Emanuel?), the radical thinker, the artist—these find free expression in the House of Haldeman-Julius that he built in Girard.

The man that he was is to be discovered in those admirable vignettes gathered under the title *The Color of Life*. [Little Blue Book No. 72]. He was then, as he remains essentially today, a worshiper of beauty. "The conquerors have withdrawn into nothingness. The masters of men have gone to dust. The great have fallen before me," proclaims the King of Time, the Master of Death, the Father of Life, in one of his early prose-poems. "For I give immortality only to things of beauty. Oh, Children of Time, if you would live forever, build a temple or sing a song!"

In Girard he built his temple and still sings his songs.

It is peculiarly appropriate that Haldeman-Julius, while ridding himself of the labels of radicalism, could have achieved practically all the freedoms that those labels designated.

Girard, Kansas, is today one of the world's clearing houses for modern and modernist ideas. It acts, under Haldeman-Julius' eager, curious, hospitable direction, as intellectual liaison officer for millions of readers in every stage of cultural advancement.

Haldeman-Julius, Free-lance! And that lance, as he enters now upon the labors of his maturity, will be a sort of fairy wand, now transformed into a pen for tales of the imagination, now into a sword for the follies of man and mass, now into a goad with which to prod along his own dancing self. A lance as instrument of power; and freedom in which to wield it. Is not this the proper symbol for unfettered, dynamic, self-controlled individuality?

Booze and Birth Control—A Case of Catholic Inconsistency

[Catholic logic, whether it deals with abstractions of theology or with the practical affairs of life, never assumes even the simple virtue of consistency. Perhaps consistency is regarded as very unimportant from the dogmatic point of view; what is said officially by a leading member of the Catholic hierarchy is supposed to be taken thoughtlessly as true, without criticism of its contradictions and absurdities. Non-Catholics, at any rate, will perceive the justice and common sense of the following open letter from Upton Sinclair to Cardinal O'Connell. And even Catholics, we should think, would be able to see the point so plainly and forcibly made by Sinclair.]

William Cardinal O'Connell,
Holy Cross Cathedral,
Boston, Mass.

Dear Sir:

I note a newspaper report of your sermon in which you call upon reformers and believers in public causes to follow the example of Christ, who "gave the commission to His church to teach, to influence by word and example, in His spirit of gentleness and moderation."

The remainder of the quotation makes clear that you are referring to the prohibition law. You are protesting against the use of the police power to suppress the traffic in booze. That is your opinion, and you have a perfect right to advocate it, in church or out. But I note what seems to be a great inconsistency, and I am moved to ask you to explain.

Not so long ago I read a letter from a woman, the mother of eight children by a husband who did not obey the prohibition law. This woman wished to avoid having more children by a drunken husband. She could not support the children, and she appealed for knowledge about birth control. Any one who sent her this knowledge would have been breaking the law, and becoming liable to a long jail sentence. As it happens, this law is approved by your church, and has been supported by you in many sermons. Can you not understand how strange it seems to an outsider that a shepherd of Christ should support the right of the booze interests to make drunk the husband of this woman, while denying to the woman the precious knowledge which would free her from slavery, and free society from having to take care of the defective progeny of a drunkard?

It happens that I am the author

of a novel called *Oil*. In the course of that novel one of the characters refers to the possibility of birth control. He does not give any information as to how to practice it; yet, because of the mere statement that birth control can be practiced, the sale of *Oil* was banned in the city of Boston, and I am reliably informed that the action was taken upon the initiative of the Catholics. I know that it was a Catholic superintendent of police who arrested me for selling the book, and a Catholic attorney who told my lawyer that he would personally see to it that I got six months in jail. It is generally reported and believed in Boston that these Catholic officials are inspired by you in this matter, and it is well known that you have denounced birth control on many occasions. I ask you, in all sincerity, to explain to me what is the difference, and the reason for your inconsistency in this matter. You wish to deal with bootleggers and wholesale makers and sellers of alcoholic poisons after the fashion of Christ, "to teach, to influence by word and example, in His spirit of gentleness and moderation." Why are you not willing to employ the same Christly means in dealing with those who teach birth control? Why do you favor going after them with a \$5,000 fine and a five-year jail sentence?

I note that in defense of the booze traffic you denounce what you call "a frantic and futile attempt to compel virtue by statute." Why do you not apply the same logic to the effort to suppress birth control? Why is all your religious ardor poured out in defense of bootleggers, and none in the defense of the elementary right of men and women to seek knowledge, and to communicate it to others?

I ask you these questions in entire good faith. I am not the only one who is puzzled by the attitude of yourself and your church. This letter will be read by millions of both Catholics and non-Catholics all over the world. I hope, therefore, that you will take occasion to make me a frank answer, and I promise in advance to give it out for publication, complete and unabridged. As it happens, I really believe in using the methods of Christ in defense of my beliefs. I am perfectly willing for the other side to have a hearing; and, no matter how wrong or dangerous I may consider certain ideas, I have never had the wish to send anybody to jail for advocating them.

Sincerely,
UPTON SINCLAIR.

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Around the Table

Chats Among the Editor and His Readers

By E. Haldeman-Julius

COMPANIONATE MARRIAGE
Newspaper sensationalism, with all headlines and highly colored phrases, has treated companionate marriage very obscurely. It has not explained what are the actual and the theoretical aspects of this relationship—or perhaps I should say “proposed” rather than “theoretical,” inasmuch as the proposals (associated in the popular mind with the figure of Judge Ben Lindsey of Denver) are practical enough. Feature writers in the daily press, trying to be “smart” rather than intelligent, have written about companionate marriage in a misconceived style of frivolity and fancy, while moralists, including many preachers, have denounced the proposal in most unfair, exaggerated terms. It is no wonder, then, that there should be a good deal of confusion on this subject among those who know it only as they have met it amid the confusion of story-seeking rather than truth-seeking journalism; who have not read Judge Lindsey's own books and articles setting forth his views, or who have not read the Little Blue Books which discuss clearly all the points of companionate marriage. (See Judge Lindsey's *Views on Companionate Marriage*, by Marcell Haldeman-Julius, Little Blue Book No. 1250; *Why I Believe in Companionate Marriage*, by Marcell Haldeman-Julius, Little Blue Book No. 1258; *Should Companionate Marriage Be Legalized?* a debate by Harry Hilschman vs. Sam Grathwell, Little Blue Book No. 1348; *Why I Believe in Trial Marriage*, by Clement Wood, Little Blue Book No. 1347.)

Because companionate marriage has had more publicity than candid, intelligent explanation, I have received a number of letters from both men and women inquiring variously what States permit companionate marriage, what are the laws governing companionate marriage, what particular ceremony if any is required for companionate marriage, and so on. I cannot reply to all these letters individually. But here I shall give a collective explanation. At present in all the States of America companionate marriage is distinguished from any other sort of marriage only by the attitude of the married pair. Legally, a couple who enter into what they call a companionate marriage have precisely the same status as any others. They are subject to the same laws governing marriage; and they must go through exactly the same procedure to obtain a divorce. They enter frankly into marriage, however, with the ideal of companionship and not the ideal of a family, with children and all the economic responsibilities of a family and home. They are, let us say, a young couple who are facing life experimentally; they feel the strong urge of sex and love, but they are not economically in a position to bear the burdens and responsibilities which traditionally are associated with marriage; neither are they so rash as to entertain the positive conviction that they two, and none other, are perfectly and mystically meant to be mates and that they will be always harmonious, not only in the spirit of romantic love, but in the practical adjustments of life.

In fact, many couples go into marriage with quite the same attitude as those who call themselves companionate couples: only the latter are clearer and, I should say, braver in their attitude. And these couples who acknowledge an open, intelligent, experimental attitude toward marriage have also more fairly the spirit of companionship: they are more apt to guide themselves by the realities instead of the traditions of marriage. Birth control is practiced by many who do not say that they are living in a companionate marriage relationship; and many couples recognize in fact (whatever they may pretend in theory) the aspects of failure in marriage and, if they do not make a go of it, seek relief (and quite rightly) in divorce. Companionate marriage is an honest, intelligent expression of a modern attitude toward sex association, toward marriage, toward divorce: it states clearly on principle what is a very common attitude and practice: individuals adjust themselves to the contradictions between the conventional ideas of marriage and the demands, stresses, and uncertainties of actual living—and, in the present state of our laws, these efforts at adjustment are often confused and hampered; those who believe in companionate marriage advocate a legally recognized, social ideal a custom of marriage which in an unrecognized private way is very general.

Two main demands are made by the advocates of companionate marriage, demands which would fully legalize their ideal: they demand that birth control information shall be given, in a legal and scientific way, to couples wishing to marry for companionship only and who wish also to prove by a period of reasonable association whether they are suited for a permanent union; and they demand that such marriages, when they are childless, shall be legally dissoluble at the request of the couple, who alone (obviously) are involved in the matter. Neither birth control information nor divorce by mutual consent (for childless, companionate couples) is now possible under the laws of any State. True, birth control is widely practiced; true, many couples have the ideal of companionship and of a mutual testing and experimenting when they enter into marriage; true, many arrange for a divorce when, after several years of marriage, they discover that they have made a serious mistake. But at present there is an indefensible confusion and contradiction in our attitude, and especially in our laws, concerning this important relationship; and the traditional ideal of marriage needs, not to be destroyed, but to be adjusted and broadened to fit the conditions of modern life.

A number of couples, franker than others and having a more rational, coherent, clearly thought attitude toward marriage, proclaim the companionate ideal and bring a different, a modern spirit to the marriage relationship. A number of parents recognize the special need of companionate marriage for young people who are not capable, economically, of bearing the traditionally demanded responsibilities of marriage; and these parents favor marriage with such an understanding (the parents still contributing in whole or in part, to the support of the young couple) rather than sur-reptitious, unguided sex associations. Companionate marriages, however, are regarded in law as ordinary marriages—legally there is no difference. A companionately married couple may discover, as best they can, the technique of birth control; but the State, while it does not prevent the practice of, does not recognize birth control and a federal postal law defines as a crime the mailing of birth control information. Failing in marriage—that is to say, discovering that they two particularly are not suited for such a union permanently—the companionately married couple may seek a divorce by the method (illegal but generally practiced nevertheless) of collusion: but the couple must go through the divorce procedure of the particular State in which they seek such relief; and divorce by mutual consent is not permitted in the law of any State.

These are the simple facts about companionate marriage. WHEN THE POPE VISITS US
Predicting that the Pope—the papa, as it were, of the world's 200,000,000 Catholics including America's 15,000,000 Catholics—will hustle on his glad regalia in the uncertain future and pay a visit to the United States, Ella H. Morrison (New York) permits herself the liberty to wonder amusingly what sort of reception will be accorded to the Most High and Infallible Papa of the medievalists. That such an advent would call forth a most gaudy splash of propaganda and ceremonial and interviews and assorted jim-jams is, of course, entirely certain. The Catholics put on a prodigious, albeit idiotic, show. They have the greatest organization on earth for impressing the weak minds of the unjudicious and for making the judicious sneeze—the sneeze indicating a divided mind, struggling between the tendencies to laugh and swear. For Catholicism is ridiculous; but it is also damnable and powerful. But let us derive a moment's entertainment from Miss Morrison's speculations. She writes:
Don't you think you should begin a laughing campaign on the sure-to-come visit of the Pope?
Who is to pay for his visit?
Where is he to be housed?
Who is to entertain him?
What public honors will be heaped upon him?
How many of us must submit, politely, to his “blessings”?
Will the representatives of the other churches scramble to meet him and stand below him in public functions?
Will the streets be cleared and

business be suspended for church parades?

Now can or will our thousands of policemen (Catholics mostly) attend to their duties with such shows going on?

Where will the taxpayer come in on all this?
Was the Chicago school teachers' money spent on the curious visit of subordinates to us some time ago?

Will Mr. and Mrs. Hoover sit on either side of His Holiness, the King and Queen of Italy did in Rome not long ago?

Will we kill each other scrambling to get into cathedrals to be blessed?

Will the presiding officer of our Senate give up his seat to him?

Will the Pope and his entourage wear all their church clothes in the street and elsewhere?

What will not our orators say about and to him!

How many “titles” (to what?) will be asked of him and graciously granted!

What a fuss! What a muddle! What a cost!

Lively as her interrogative picture is, Miss Morrison could not hope to hint at the half of what will fussily, frothily occur when or if the Pope decides personally to shed the light of his presence upon his 15,000,000 American “children.” And I haven't the heart to attempt a more elaborate and precise vision of such a smashing jamboree. It is enough to say that we should have one of the most flabbergasting exhibitions of excruciatingly pyramided nonsense that the world ever beheld. Recall the Eucharistic Congress—the Pope's visit would be so much worse that the bootleggers, enterprising and conscientiously productive as those gentlemen are, would be swamped beyond their capacity with orders for the antidote. In a mad world, is not drunkenness relatively sane? Or perhaps I should say that drunkenness might be regarded—not by Upton Sinclair nor Senator Borah nor Clarence True Wilson, of course—as a relief from a too prolonged gaze of sanity upon the spectacle of insanity. One thing I am sure of, and it is not an invitation to drunkenness: namely, the world can be much more intelligently seen through the bottom of a quart bottle of whiskey than through the monstrous, mad medium of Catholic belief.

From the Catholic point of view, it might be very clever policy for the Pope to visit America. It is to this country, I believe, that the Catholic leaders look most hopefully for prosperity and prestige. There is no doubt that Catholicism is very dependent upon its millions of followers in America and the millions of dollars it collects regularly from this most profitable province of the “holy Roman empire” of medieval faith.

If the Pope visits the United States and will stop at Girard between trains—a longer stop would be intolerable—I shall be pleased to present him with a set of Joseph McCabe's *The True Story of the Roman Catholic Church*. A FRENCH SCHOLAR WRITES ABOUT THE LITTLE BLUE BOOKS
Books suggest books and articles and reviews—and thus an interesting subject enlarges itself, as well as its audience, in widening ripples of discussion. My readers will be pleased to know, for instance, that *The First Hundred Million* (my book about the Little Blue Books and the reading habits of Americans) has been specially discussed in an essay which is to appear in the *Mercure de France* of Paris. I have received the following letter from Prof. Albert Schinz, author of the article:

It may interest you to know that I have just corrected proofs of an article inspired by your *The First Hundred Million*, which is to appear shortly in the *Mercure de France*, 26 Rue de Conde, Paris 6. When the article will appear I do not know—but as I am leaving in the early spring for my vacation in Europe, I thought I would mention it to you now. They do not generally send reprints at the *Mercure de France*—if they do, I will be glad to send you one. As you will see, I do not always agree with your interpretation of your figures; but your book interests me very much and I have taught in America for over twenty years. My subject is French Literature. I am now at the University of Pennsylvania. The *Mercure de France* is a leading cultural and critical publication of France. And in France, by the way, there has long been a respectful familiarity with low-priced paper editions of the best literature. Prof. Schinz is the author of works in French, entitled *La Pensée de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* and *La Pensée Religieuse de Rousseau*.

Ideas which are in themselves unworthy of criticism must often be criticized because of their unfortunate influence. One cannot ignore a fallacy or a falsehood, however ridiculous, which affects in some way or other (and inevitably in a bad way) the attitude of millions. The most important feature of progress is the growth of free thought. Civilization means culture, and there can be no great and valuable culture without that attitude of intellectual freedom which consists in looking at life intelligently.

The odor of sanctity has been the worst stink in history.

Have It My Own Way
BY JOHN W. GUNN.
A young man who was hanged in Missouri the other day gave it as his last word that if he had read the Bible he wouldn't have gone astray. There is a fallacy in that remark, and I am glad of it—very glad. I am glad indeed that negligence or absolute inertia in Bible reading, an indifference which is so widespread, does not signify a propensity toward murder and other deeds of extreme unpleasantness. Life according to this young man's fallacious theory would be intolerable. Hardly anyone reads the Bible.

In an account of a suicide, I read that the act of self-destruction was without any apparent motive, as “the man was very wealthy.” Well? Perhaps it was his wealth that got him into a jam. Or perhaps he had been so fortunate or unfortunate as to have tasted all that life had to offer and was therefore ready to die.

From a pamphlet meant to immortalize a sermon on “Christ or the Red Fog,” I quote this symbolic rendering of the choice between righteousness and iniquity: “It is either Christ or the Red Fog of Communism. It is either the marriage feast of Cana or the brothel of Lenin.” Half of this at least is obscure. The marriage feast of Cana was signaled by the instantaneous, magic manufacture of wine through a twist of the Jesuanic wrist. How does this preacher really know that the feast didn't turn into a drunken orgy? I don't care—I'd just like to know.

THE SHAM OF THE NEWS REELS
If the history of our age were conveyed to posterity via the movie news reels alone, what a dull and silly and pointless history it would be! The men and women of the future might reasonably infer that we had no interesting life to represent on the screen or that we were not interested in life. Out of this world that is so alive with brilliant, profound, significant happenings, what are we permitted to glimpse?

We see President Hoover standing in front of the White House, and we are informed that he has just shaken hands with a delegation from the Chamber of Commerce of Boonville, Iowa. They do—Hoover and all—look like human beings.

There is a flash from a flower parade in Pasadena: temporarily great news for Pasadena maybe, but is it that for the world?

For a bored moment we see a group of boys skating on a pond in Massachusetts: but we know it is winter, and ice is on the waters, and skating is seasonal.

Behold next the scene of a fire in an Ohio city. Are fires unusual in Ohio? If there is any point of significance in this scene, it must be that the fire department arrived in time to save half of the building.

Have It My Own Way

BY JOHN W. GUNN.

A Chicago man and his wife returned home to discover burglars in possession of their home. There were four of the burglars. They got into the house at 7:00 in the evening, by representing themselves as policemen—not difficult, perhaps? The job took nine hours—a bit of overtime, I suspect, but no doubt it could be adjusted in burglarian economics. “They were nice about it,” the owner of the home told reporters. “They simply looked us all in the cedar closet. They left some time after 4 o'clock. We got out about 6 o'clock. They cleaned the house of everything—even my shirts, ties and underwear. They got two fur coats of my wife, some jewelry and we're still checking the rest. I'm wearing the only suit I've got now.” If the victim says the burglars were “nice,” what concern have we to judge otherwise? Such judgments are comparative and personal and, whether from the viewpoint of the victim or the burglars, touched elusively with temperament. Quite arbitrarily, the victim must be right when he says that burglars are nice or not nice.

Very Important

A number of The Debunker readers have complained at our policy in running the Joseph McCabe series (*The True Story of the Roman Catholic Church*) in that magazine. Their dissatisfaction is not with the McCabe material but with the absence, temporarily, of shorter articles. But do these readers realize that they are getting material of extraordinary value and that, to stress only the financial value, they are receiving this Catholic series at the price of \$1.50 whereas the special sale price of the Catholic series is \$2.95?

We felt that this great historical and critical masterpiece by Joseph McCabe was so very important that we wished to give it every possible kind of circulation. And we felt, too, that we were giving The Debunker readers a real privilege and advantage: obviously, at the \$1.50 yearly subscription price they have saved money and they have been privileged as the first readers of this McCabe series—a work that will create a sensation. Haven't The Debunker readers enjoyed McCabe's story of the Catholic Church? Haven't they realized its rare, sensational importance? We

are sure they have and that, upon reflection, they will feel more than satisfied.

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One thing is common to all religions—namely, that the truth hurts them.

The honest definition of a censor is that he is a man who would compel the artist to produce only what he, the censor likes, instead of what the artist or anybody else happens to like.

It has often been remarked that the Devil keeps his promises more faithfully and more generously, too, than God. Perhaps it is because there is more sincerity expressed in following the Devil than in following God.

The Christian Blight on Marriage and Divorce

BY H. L. MENCKEN

I see no chance of dealing with the divorce question rationally until the discussion is purged of religious consideration. Certainly the world should have learned by this time that theologians make a mess of everything they touch, including even religion. Yet in the United States they are still allowed, against all reason and experience, to have their say in a great variety of important matters, and everywhere they go they leave their semipiternal trail of folly and confusion.

Why those of the Christian species should be consulted about marriage and divorce is more than I can make out. It would be only a little less absurd to consult members of the W. C. T. U. about the mixing of drinks, for orthodox Christianity, as every one knows, views even the most decorous kind of marriage with lubricious suspicion, and countenances it only as a means of escape from something worse. In the whole New Testament there is but one message that speaks of it as an honorable estate, and that one is in the most dubious of the Epistles. Elsewhere it is always assumed to be something intrinsically and incurably vile. The really virtuous man avoids it as a plague; his ideal is complete chastity. If, tempted by Satan, he finds that chastity unbearable, he may take a wife to escape something worse, but that is only a poor compromise with his baser nature.

Modern theologians, of course, do not put the thing as coarsely as Paul did, but they still subscribe to his basic idea, however mellifluous and disarming their statement of it. A wife is primarily a sexual instrument, and as such must not flinch her lowly duty. If she tries to avoid having children, then she is doomed to hell. If she finds her husband growing unpleasant and turns from him to another, then she is doomed to hell again. As for him, he is bound in the same way and under the same penalties. Both would be better off if they were chaste, but as long as that is impossible they must be unchaste only with each other, and accept with resignation all the more painful consequences, whether biological or theological.

Such notions, plainly stated, must needs seem barbaric to every civilized man; nevertheless, they continue to color the legislation of nearly all so-called Christian States. In New York, for example, the only general ground for divorce is adultery. A man may beat his wife all he pleases, but she cannot divorce him for it. In her turn she may waste his money, insult him in public and chase his friends out of the house, and he cannot get rid of her. So long as neither turns from the venal unchastity of marriage to the mortal unchastity outside they are indissolubly bound together, though their common life be intolerable to themselves and a scandal to everyone else.

Obviously, it will be impossible to come to any sensible rearrangement of the relation between man and woman so long as such ancient imbecilities corrupt all thinking on the subject. The first thing necessary, then, is to get rid of the theologians. Let them be turned out politely but firmly; let us pay no further heed to their archaic nonsense. They will, to be sure, resist going, perhaps very stoutly, but their time has come and they must be on their way. If any lingering superstition about their heavenly authority tends to relieve them, then let us recall how gaudily they have made fools of themselves of late in another grave and delicate matter—that of drink.

No man is fully emancipated until he can laugh at the thing which enslaved him. True, at times when he observes too closely and vividly its continued enslaving influence upon others (and, by the same token, its threat against him as a member of society who must one way or another share the social fate) he will curse it; he will curse it, however, in the stern and realistic mood of a fighter and one who fights, not alone for himself, but for the general freedom.

"Sin" is an unrealistic conception, a theological dogma meaning the disobedience of a God's commands. But the commands said to be from a God are given to us by certain men, the theologians, who are notorious for falsifying and distorting everything they touch. To "sin," therefore, is only to disobey the commands of theologians. A "sinner," therefore, is a free man, with a reasoned (not a theologically dogmatic) moral code.

The Antichrist

By Friedrich Nietzsche

(Continued from last week.)

From this time onward the priest became indispensable in every human event. At every natural function (birth, marriage, the sick-bed, death) the holy parasite puts in an appearance in order to denaturalize, or, in his words, to "bless" the event. . . . For this must be noted: that every natural function, and every natural institution (the state, justice, marriage, care of the sick and destitute), every action based in the instinct to live, in fact everything which has a value in itself, is made worthless and even dangerous by the parasitism of the priests (or of the "moral world"): it is a sanction after the event, an artificial authority setting up values against nature, and thereby creating its own values. . . . The priest frowns upon what is natural and calls it unholy: that is how he lives. Disobedience to God, that is, to the priest, is now called "sin"; the method of propitiating God, is, of course, the method which gives the priest more sway: it is the priest alone who can be an intermediary for "salvation." Psychologically considered, "sins" are absolutely necessary in every theocracy: they are the actual weapons of power; the priest lives upon sins; he must have people "sinning." . . . First principle: "God forgives those who repent," or in other words, "those who submit to the priest" . . .

XXVII

The Christian religion grew upon a soil of such utter falsification, where the deepest instincts of the ruling factions were opposed to nature and natural values to such an extent, that Christianity became a death struggle against reality which has never been surpassed. The "chosen people," who had adopted priestly names and priestly values for everything, who had been terribly logical in rejecting all earthly power as "unholy," "worldly," and "sinful"—this people now created a religious expression which was so logical that it began to attack Judaism itself. In the form of Christianity even the last kind of reality was denied, Jewish reality, the reality of the "people of God," of the "chosen people." The case is of great interest, for the small dissenting movement which grew around the name of Jesus of Nazareth is the same Jewish instinct at work again. The instinct nurtured by the priests has developed until it cannot put up any longer with the authority of the priests themselves: it has invented a new state of affairs even more unreal than the vision of the organized church. Christianity was actually set up in opposition to the church. . . . At least, I fail to see against whom the revolt (said rightly or wrongly to have been led by Jesus) was directed if not against the Jewish church—"church" being here used in the same sense it has today.

It was a revolt against the "good and just men," against the "prophets of Israel," against the organized hierarchy—not against the corruption of the hierarchy, but against caste, privilege, rank, and formalism. It was an expression of unbelief in the "elect," a denial of everything priestly and theological. But this movement itself gave rise to a hierarchy, if only temporarily, which was to become the skeletal structure supporting the Jewish people in "the flood waters." It was the last leg they had to stand on, the last flicker of their political autonomy: an attack upon it was an attack upon the deepest-rooted tribal instinct, the most tenacious national will to live that has ever existed on earth. This holy anarchist, who called upon the meek and lowly, the outcasts and "sinners," the chandala within Judaism, to rise against the ruling caste—using words, if the Gospels are to be believed, which would get him sent to Siberia today—was a political offender, so far as it was possible to be a political offender in such an absurdly non-political community. It was this which

brought him to the cross: the proof of which is the inscription which was put upon the cross. He died for his own sins; and there is no ground for believing (no matter how often it is reiterated) that he died for the sins of others.

XXVIII

It is quite another question whether Jesus was aware of this alternative explanation of his acts, or whether his acts merely lent themselves to this alternative explanation. And now, for the first time, I refer to the psychology of the Savior. I confess that there are few books which I find so difficult to read as the Gospels. My difficulties are of another sort from those which enabled the learned curiosity of the German mind to achieve one of its most memorable triumphs. Many years have gone by since I, like every young scholar, enjoyed with the conscientious relish of the pernickity philologist, the work of the incomparable Strauss. I was then twenty years of age: now I am too serious for that sort of thing. What do I care for the contradictions of "tradition"? How far can the holy legends of the Gospel be called "tradition" at all! There is no form of literature more disputable than the legends of the saints: to examine them scientifically, without any contingent documents, seems to me to nullify the whole procedure—to be merely a learned waste of time. . . .

XXIX

What interests me is the psychological character of the Savior—which might be studied in the Gospels, and in spite of the Gospels, despite their possible mutilation and irrelevancies: just as Francis of Assisi is revealed in his legends despite his legends. The point is not so much what Jesus did, or what he said, or how he actually met his death: it is whether we can form an idea what kind of man the Savior was, whether his character has been "handed down" to us. All the attempts I know of to construct the history of a "soul" from the Gospels seem to me to imply a deplorable levity in psychological matters. The two most ridiculous contributions to the study of the character of Jesus have been made by that clown in psychological matters, M. Renan: the idea of the "genius" and the idea of the "hero." Could anything be less according to the Gospels than the heroic idea? The Gospels expound precisely the opposite of heroic conflict and the fighting instinct. They construct a moral code from the absence of pugnacity ("resist not evil" is the profoundest maxim in the Gospels, it provides a kind of key to them). Holiness, according to the Gospels, abides in peace, and gentleness, and the inability to fight. What is the import of the "glad tidings"? It is that true and eternal life has been found; it is not merely promised, it is here, it is in you; it is a life of love, love unbounded and free to all, love beyond measure. Everybody is a child of God—Jesus makes no special claims for himself—and as children of God, all are equal in his sight. Fancy making Jesus a hero!—also, how misleading is the term "genius"! What we mean by "intellect" had no meaning in the life of Jesus. On strictly psychological grounds, a totally different word is required. . . . It is known that there is a condition of morbid irritability in the sense of touch, which causes the sufferer to recoil from contact with solid objects. This physical condition can be developed to its logical conclusion—the instinctive hatred of all reality, a flight into the "intangible" and the "incomprehensible"; an opposition to formalism; to the ideas of time and space; to the established order of things; to customs, and institutions; to the church: it can make a man feel at home in his own private world, into which actuality has ceased to intrude; in his "inner" world, his "true" world, his "eternal" world. . . . "The Kingdom of God is within you" . . .

XXX

First, the instinctive hatred of actuality—this is the result of an extreme sensibility to pain and an irritability so great that it cannot bear "contact," because all contacts are too strong for it.

Secondly, the instinctive avoidance of conflicts, hatreds, and of all emotional heights and distances—this is the result of an extreme

sensibility for pain and an irritability so great that it shrinks from struggling and the obligation to fight as an unbearable anguish (that is as self-destructive); and it finds blessedness (joy) only in non-resistance to evil and to danger—because love is the only and the last hope of keeping alive. . . .

These are the two physiological realities upon which and from which the doctrine of salvation has grown. I call them a sublime development of hedonism upon a thoroughly morbid soil. The nearest thing to this was Epicureanism, the pagan view of salvation; even though it retained a big residue of Greek vitality and nervous strength. Epicurus was a decadent type, as I was the first to point out. The fear of pain, even of the slightest pain, can only lead in the end to a religion of love. . . .

XXXI

I have already indicated my solution of the problem. The key to it is that we have only a distorted idea of the kind of man the Savior really was. The distortion is quite comprehensible: for many reasons such a type could not pass into legend pure, whole, and free from additions. The surroundings in which this strange figure operated must have left their mark upon his legend, and even more so must the history and the fate of the early Christian communities: this must have embellished the record retrospectively, with many features that can only be understood in terms of religious war and propaganda. That strange and morbid world into which the Gospels lead us—a world like the plot of a Russian novel, in which the scum of society, neurosis, and "childish" imbecility are brought together—must inevitably have coarsened the legend of Jesus. The first disciples in particular must have transmuted a character full of symbolism and mysteriousness into terms of their own crude experience, in order to be able to understand him at all. For them the character of Jesus could only become real when cast in a more commonplace mold. . . . The prophet, the Messiah, the future judge, the moral teacher, the miracle worker, John the Baptist—all of these traditions were only opportunities for misunderstanding the character of Jesus. . . . Finally let us not underestimate the essential feature of all great adoration, particularly sectarian adoration: it tends to eliminate the original and often painfully unusual qualities from the object of worship—it doesn't even see them there. It is regrettable that no Dostoevsky lived in the neighborhood of this most interesting decadent—I mean someone who could have felt the poignant charm of such a mixture of the sublime, the sickly, and the childlike.

Finally of course there is always the possibility, not to be overlooked, that the original Savior was not one man only, but a number of complex and contradictory decadence-types. Probabilities, however, are against this, for if such were the case tradition would have been more definite and objective: so we must assume the contrary. Nevertheless there is a contradiction between the mountain, sea, and field-preacher, who seems to have been a kind of Buddha on a soil not completely unlike India's; and the aggressive fanatic, the deadly enemy of theologians and priests, who has been maliciously dignified by Renan as "the great master of irony." My own opinion is that most of this spleen (and even wit) in the character of the Master was added to it as a result of the intensity of Christian propaganda. We all know that sectarians have an unscrupulous habit of using their idol as a justification for themselves. [When the early Christians needed an adroit, nimble-witted, combative, and maliciously hair-splitting theologian, to use against their theological opponents, they created their "God" according to their own needs: just as they attributed to him, upon occasion, the quite unevangelical ideas of the "second coming," and the "last judgment," and all sorts of hopes and promises in circulation at the time.

[To be continued next week.]

"Do Not Read," Say Bigots! "We Will Read," Say Free Men!

"I thank God there are no printing presses nor free public schools in this colony," said a governor who once ruled the American colony of Virginia in the name of an English tyrant across the sea. That man made a classic and succinct statement of the attitude which all tyrants and bigots, great and small, ancient and modern, hold toward the dissemination of free opinions. Bigots, for all their false and even stupid opinions, have enough shrewdness to realize that suppression is the necessary policy of bigotry. When any party of men desire a given set of ideas to prevail absolutely, their natural and obvious tactic is to kill or to beat down or keep out of sight all ideas which are not agreeable to their dogmas. They insist upon confining the thoughts of men within a narrow circle drawn arrogantly by these bigots. They fear and they resent the curiosities of men, the doubts of men, the questionings of men, the whole spirit and range of the intellectual restiveness of men. They know well—do these bigots and tyrants—that when men are educated, when they read freely, when they think and discuss, when they are made aware of the conflict of ideas, the foundations of dogma are threatened and must crumble and must give way. Wide, free reading is the enemy of all bigotry, of all error and injustice, of all claims which rest upon authority so called and cannot stand the close examination of reason. "Do not read"—that is invariably the cry of the bigots. Or they cry: "Read only what we tell you to read."

There was a time, not so long ago that its lesson can be taken lightly, when bigotry was expressed through the enormous power of Church and State; when books were burned, and not only books but the men who wrote and read them; when the machinery of forcible suppression was in crushing use. The development of society, both materially and culturally, struck blow after blow at the old system of despotic rule over the lives and thoughts of men. Men had a wider life, therefore they had more freedom; they had a wider access to books and papers and ideas, therefore they had more intellectual liberty and growth. Bigotry lost much of its power—but it didn't lose its nature.

Bigots are active today and, in one way and another, they present obstacles to that free circulation of ideas which is absolutely the breath of life to a cultured, civilized society. The bigots trap their victims through false reasoning and sentiments—and, establishing a thought control

(none the less effective because it is not legally enforceable) they command their followers or as we say their victims: "Do not read this book, that book, the other book! Do not listen to this man or that man when he expresses certain ideas! Do not read or think outside this narrow circle which we, the bigots, have drawn around you!" And the bigots lie to achieve their mind-limiting purpose. The bigots bring social, traditional, emotional pressure to bear against the free, honest consideration of ideas. The bigots use the hateful means of economic pressure to suppress books. The bigots scheme, with every weapon of falsehood and prejudice, to impede the fine civilizing work of a free press.

Just recently we have had reminders of real bigotry, which we must fight here and now, in the shape of a new issue of the old Catholic *Index Expurgatorius* and in the shape of the Christian Science conspiracy to boycott and put out of circulation a truth-telling biography of Mary Baker Eddy. Precisely as of old, these bigots today and all their scheming, suppressing kindred want to stop, to dam up, to impede or turn aside the free, critical stream of enlightening ideas. As of old, these bigots today cry, "Do not read!" They know that the free press is the greatest challenge to their pretensions.

What can be our response to this attitude of bigotry? Clearly it must be the response that has always been made, the response that was of old made under heavy and cruel difficulties, the response that must and can be made now through the medium of the modern free press. We must say: "We WILL read! When you bigots try to stop the circulation of ideas, we will respond by increasing the circulation of ideas. We will assert the widest freedom of the press against those who try to limit that freedom in any way!"

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