

"Hang Socialists!" Says Catholic Priest in Toronto

In 1912 Rev. John L. Belford, a Catholic priest of Brooklyn, N. Y., thought that Socialists should be disposed of by a rain of bullets. This "holy father" is also the publisher of a monthly magazine called *The Mentor* and it was in this magazine that he wrote in May, 1912: "The Socialist is busy. He flaunts his red flag and openly preaches his doctrines. His great point of attack is religion. His power is an actual menace to our city. There seems to be no law to suppress or control him. He is more dangerous than cholera or smallpox—yes, he is the mad dog of society and should be silenced by a bullet."

As Catholics don't usually talk so indiscreetly that was, says *The New Leader* in recalling the incident, a stimulus to exciting comment back in 1912. It may be recognized by our readers as a characteristic expression of the spirit that animates Catholicism, which is the spirit of medievalism. Even so, there is room for a difference of opinion regarding the exact method of violence in putting down opponents of Catholic bigotry. Rev. Belford—now, it seems, Monsignor and of higher rank in the church (promoted, we presume, for his militant medievalism)—has changed his mind on this point. On February 4, 1931, Belford spoke in Toronto by arrangement of the Catholic Truth Society. One of the audience, at the conclusion of the address, inquired of the speaker as follows: "I was living in the state of New York nineteen years ago and at that time I remember a statement of the speaker's to the effect that Socialists were the mad dogs of society and, if

need be, should be silenced with a bullet. Ramsay MacDonald, a Socialist, is now Premier of Great Britain and many other prominent men are Socialists. Is the speaker still of the same opinion?"

As reported in the *Toronto Evening Telegram* of Feb. 5, Rev. Belford said: "There are various types of Socialists. As far as Ramsay MacDonald is concerned, he belongs to what we call the right kind of Socialists. But there is another kind who believe in the throwing of bombs and assassination. They are the mad dogs of society, and should be put out of society. I said use the bullet. Perhaps I should have said the rope. A bullet is of the same value, while a rope can be used over and over again."

Rev. Belford is amazingly ignorant or he was uttering a deliberate lie when he said that there are a kind of Socialists who believe in bomb throwing and in assassinations. We believe that it is quite in character with the man's violent attitude, unreasoning and vindictive, that he lied knowingly. For we understand well enough that what fills such Catholic bigots with hatred of Socialists, and with hatred of all who express modern ideas, is the malice which resents bitterly all differences of opinion. There is no need for denunciations of a philosophy of bomb throwing and assassinations. The real opposition which the Catholic church faces and which all oppressors of mankind fear is not in such violent propaganda. They fear the growing discussion of ideas and the propaganda of forthright intellectual and fact-dealing criticism which is directed against Catholicism and kindred forms of slavery. If

Rev. Belford wants to study bomb throwing, as a very concrete practice rather than as a philosophy, he can find it among the good Catholic gamblers of Chicago. He should look there rather than among Socialists and freethinkers, who use intellectual weapons—weapons, by the way, which these Catholic bigots cannot themselves use capably, wherefore they recommend the use of the bullet or the rope.

We may add that Toronto was a very well-chosen city for such an expression of murderous Catholic bigotry. No doubt there are decent, civilized people in Toronto who will condemn utterly such appeals to violence; but, as revealed recently in the attacks upon *The American Freeman* and E. Haldeman-Julius, the leading journals and the officials and the clergymen of Toronto are essentially in sympathy with the viewpoint, if not precisely the methods, advocated by this Catholic propagandist of the bullet and the rope. It will be noted that, while the Toronto chief constable would not guarantee free speech for E. Haldeman-Julius and while the newspapers and officials and leading citizens were horrified at the thought that Mr. Haldeman-Julius might lecture in their city, no objection was made against these vicious lies and threats by a Catholic enemy of civilization.

This is a vivid measure of Toronto's kind of civilization. It cannot tolerate the prospect of a speaker advocating the use of and familiarity with ideas. But it is an open city for the man who advocates the use of the bullet and the rope.

"Labor Fakers" Have Aided Conspiracy Against Mooney

By John W. Gunn

Capitalistic interests in San Francisco want Tom Mooney kept in prison, not because they believe he is guilty of the crime for which he has served fourteen years of unjust punishment, but because they hate his economic ideas and fear him as a dangerous agitator against their selfish interests. Nominally at the other extreme, yet in fact sympathetic with the capitalistic persecutors of Mooney, stand the San Francisco labor leaders: these leaders also fear Mooney because he has been a sincere and uncompromising fighter on behalf of the rank and file and because his activities have been annoying to these men who use the labor movement for their own selfish purposes.

"Labor fakers" is the familiar designation that is deserved by Paul Scharrenberg and other trade union politicians of San Francisco, who use the labor movement for scheming self-advancement, and by high officials in the American Federation of Labor, whose careers are guided by the motives of reactionary trade union politics. One who makes (to his own profit) alliances with the enemies of labor is a "labor faker." One who opposes the principles of militant labor action and who is more concerned with keeping radicalism out of the labor movement than with making the labor movement radically effective for the good of the workers is a "labor faker." One who seeks respectability and political jobs through the influence of the labor movement, which movement he has conspired to emasculate into a polite futility, is a "labor faker." One who is unwilling to fight when a clear issue is drawn between labor agitators and labor exploiters is a "labor faker."

Disagreement on Defense

On these counts, the San Francisco labor movement and a large part of the California labor movement seems to be extremely afflicted with "labor fakers." The rank and file have true sentiments, but they are continually betrayed, as Mooney has been betrayed, by those who occupy the false role of their leaders. It cannot be said, of course, that the average member of a labor union is genuinely a radical in the larger features of social-economic controversy nor that he is more than occasionally militant in his unionism; also the continuance of the "labor fakers" in power indicates that they are not fully condemned, or perhaps not fully understood, by the victims of their bad leadership. This much is true: no adequate and persistent exposure has been made, showing how the San Francisco "labor fakers" have deserted Tom Mooney to his fate and have treacherously connived at the confirmation of that fate.

When Marcet Haldeman-Julius was in San Francisco, it was the deliberate policy—and the sincere policy—of the Mooney Defense Committee, then under the management of Mary Gallagher, to

keep on good terms with the local leaders of the labor movement and to maintain an attitude of neutral and friendly expectancy toward Governor Young. Mrs. Haldeman-Julius, when she returned to Girard from her personal investigation of the Mooney case, candidly discussed with Mr. Haldeman-Julius and myself her misgivings as to the wisdom of this policy. It was never agreeable to Tom Mooney. He insisted that full and bold publicity should be given to all aspects of his case and Warren Billings' case, and this, as he firmly held, must include an exposure of the San Francisco "labor fakers" and a determined campaign against Governor Young both in the primary and (if he were nominated) in the general election. But Mary Gallagher and other friends and supporters of Mooney felt that, isolated as he was from the center of action, his judgment was doubtful and he might seriously injure his cause. They put faith in assurances, which had indeed reached them from near-official sources, that Mooney would be pardoned by Governor Young; and they also believed that Paul Scharrenberg and other San Francisco union politicians were willing to help Mooney and possibly would be helpful to him, at least within the limits of their conservative kind of action.

Mooney's Wishes Ignored

The facts set forth in the latest pamphlet of the reorganized Mooney Defense Committee—*Labor Leaders Betray Tom Mooney*—show how cruelly correct was Mooney's analysis of the situation and how badly advised his well-meaning advisers were. Governor Young's refusal of a pardon verified Mooney's distrust of the man and should have made emphatically clear to everyone connected with the Mooney defense that only a general and uncompromising fight, an exposure of all the interests and individuals standing in the way of justice for Mooney and Billings, would serve in this acute and outrageous extremity. But Mary Gallagher, then directing the Mooney Defense Committee, refused to follow Mooney's urgent instructions that Young should be opposed in the primary election and that he should be strongly and directly denounced to the union voters of California.

It was Mooney's wish that a *Baltimore Sun* editorial condemning Governor Young and a resolution of the Merced, California, Typographical Union calling upon the labor unions of California to defeat Young on the issue of Mooney's pardon should be printed in leaflet form and at once mailed to California voters. This wish was obstructed by Mary Gallagher who, it seems, from originally having been in true and close harmony with Mooney had been brought under the influence of the San Francisco "labor fakers"; yet it seems fair to conclude, from her notably loyal and useful work

in the Mooney defense—which, I am given to understand, involved much personal sacrifice and patient struggle against difficulties—that she was all along sincere in her dissent from Mooney's tactical ideas; that, at worst, her judgment and not her sincerity was at fault.

"Labor Fakers" Support Young

At that critical turn of events it was also Mooney's insistent wish to have a statement issued in his name, urging all his friends to work for the defeat of Governor Young. Amazingly, Mary Gallagher did just the opposite. She issued a statement that "Tom Mooney would prefer to see Governor Young reelected because of his long study and familiarity with the case, and that if a new Governor was elected, there would be another long delay until Governor Young's successor had studied all the evidence."

Five days after his refusal to pardon Tom Mooney, Young was endorsed for reelection as governor by Paul Scharrenberg, Michael Casey, John O'Connell, Frank McDonald, John McLaughlin, George Kidwell and other leading labor politicians of San Francisco. This one act would be sufficient to illustrate eloquently the truth of H. L. Mencken's statement, in a personal letter to Tom Mooney, that these San Francisco union officials are "all scabs at heart." While they have not dared, because of the sentiment for Mooney among the rank and file, to display an open, extreme, persistent antagonism to Mooney, they have in treacherous ways used their influence constantly against a pardon for Mooney. Paul Scharrenberg's friendship with Governor Young—who was Tom Mooney's official enemy—is partly explained by the fact that he held, by Young's appointment, a profitable sinecure as a member of the State Board of Harbor Commissioners. Political job-holding, political favoritism and political prestige are evidently stronger motives with the San Francisco "labor fakers" than any concern for the real interests of labor or for defenders of labor, true fighters and not fakers, who suffer as Mooney has suffered for his union activities.

Frameup Behind the Frameup

There could be imagined no more bitter, ironical triumph of treachery than the success of these "labor fakers," after what was apparently a long campaign of duplicity and false-friendly influence, in gaining substantial control over Mooney's own Defense Committee and its secretary, Mary Gallagher. The "scabs at heart," among San Francisco's labor leadership, who were Tom Mooney's worst enemies and betrayers, actually succeeded in dominating the policies of the Mooney Defense Committee against Tom Mooney's own strongest wishes and best interests. Justly indignant but not vindictive, Mooney today refers to Mary Gallagher as a "splendid woman" who was "evilily influenced by the degraded, corrupted and degenerated labor leaders." The evidence in *Labor Leaders Betray Tom Mooney* seems tragically conclusive as to this stage

in the betrayal of Mooney: and indeed it is the essence of unexpected and unbearable tragedy that Mooney's friend, Mooney's trusted representative in his defense, the woman who controlled Mooney's publicity and policies and thus his most crucial fate should have come to be guided by men who were stabbing Mooney in the back, who were pretending to be his friends yet secretly disguising their deep-seated dislike and enmity, who were denying that the Mooney case was a labor case and were privately opposing a pardon for Mooney and not publicly insisting upon a pardon, who were openly in political alliance with the governor who had refused Mooney a pardon. So changed had become this formerly active and able director of the Mooney defense, that when she attended in September, 1930, the convention of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters in company with George Kidwell, one of the group of labor politicians in San Francisco who has been insidiously hostile to Tom Mooney, she did not ask the convention to contribute to the Mooney defense nor to pass resolutions demanding Mooney's pardon; yet she was then secretary-treasurer of the Mooney Defense Committee.

These facts are now made public by Tom Mooney not with a view to attacking Mary Gallagher personally, but rather to explain how she was used as an instrument by the San Francisco "labor fakers" to nullify and disrupt the work of the Mooney Defense Committee; not she but the influences scheming for the betrayal of Tom Mooney are vital in this narrative; and these influences were and are within the labor movement, where in decency and loyalty Mooney should have received sincere, steady, militant cooperation in his struggle against the frameup. There is clearly a frameup behind the frameup—a frameup in support of the frameup—and the guilty principals in this subsidiary frameup are labor politicians in San Francisco who, says H. L. Mencken, are "scabs at heart."

This series of articles is based upon the new Mooney Defense Committee's pamphlet, *Labor Leaders Betray Tom Mooney*. Another article will appear in next week's issue of *The Freeman*.

WE ARE NOT moved to sympathy and a flow of tears when we are told that Hoover as President has had "a pitiless succession of bad breaks." We think of the "bad breaks" the American people have had, and the stubbornness of Hoover in opposing a social-minded program of government aid for the American people, and so we are confirmed in our conviction that the American people deserve and need a great deal more sympathy than Hoover.

THE HYPOTHETICAL MAN (whoever he was) who would rather be right than be President—was never President.

ONE ITEM of sure knowledge is worth more than endless Bibles of myth, doctrine and speculation.

AN HONEST discussion is good for all minds.

Free, Says He

A statement from Einstein (*New York Times*, January 28) that he believes in determinism is accompanied by the assertion of Prof. Millikan, the California physicist, that he is a man of free choices and that, moreover, he just can't quite understand what anyone means by "determinism." The famous Einstein's deterministic view was disclosed in a letter to Dr. Abraham Geller of Brooklyn, N. Y., in reply to a specific query from Dr. Geller. Einstein wrote:

I am a convinced determinist. I said in my lecture that the latest theory of the quantum events is a substantially indeterministic theory, because it takes for granted that the latest laws are of a statistical nature. But I have added thereto that, in accordance with my conviction, this theoretical basis will be replaced later on by a deterministic one. Outside of that it is to be noted that the deterministic conception of life-events is not substantially influenced by the other theory.

In other words, Einstein recognizes that the apparent indeterminism made so much of by Eddington and Millikan and the emphasis upon the law of probability rather than completely understood determinism is essentially the statement of a lack of knowledge. In studying the electrons, physicists cannot entirely interpret their behavior; they seem to act inexplicably and freely, subject to no certain laws of determinism; and this means, simply enough, that the physicists are puzzled by the electrons. It is the peculiarity of Eddington and Millikan that they decorate this temporary puzzle with the colors of carelessly speculative mysticism.

On contrast, Einstein, reflecting upon the immense preponderance of facts showing the deterministic character of the life which we know, reasons quite soundly that the uncertainty of present knowledge concerning refinements of physical inquiry will develop into a certainty of knowledge which will turn out to be deterministic. As he says, we know very well that "life events" are deterministic, that free will is an illusion, and that men move unescapably within the limitations of circumstance and natural law. In effect, or apparently, man expands those limitations as he adds to his knowledge. The facts of progress do not indicate that the philosophy of determinism is erroneous; they mean that we are learning more and more about the laws which determine events and that we are placing ourselves more intelligently in cooperation with nature; for when we speak about controlling nature we speak loosely, since we control nature through cooperation with nature.

In asserting his possession of free will, Millikan is very naive and superficial. He knows what he likes and what he wants, etc., therefore he is a free moral agent. He fails to go the one step farther of inquiring whether he can independently determine what he likes and what he wants. When a man says that he can do what he wants to do, we at once ask what it is that makes him want to do this or that. Millikan's letter,

also addressed to Dr. Geller, is as follows:

I do not know what anybody means when he calls himself a "determinist." Least of all, in my mode of thinking, it is possible for a man to be a real determinist who, like Einstein, has a sense of "social responsibility" for the sense of responsibility means freedom of choice and self-condemnation as a result of wrong choices.

If a man means by saying that he is a determinist that, being a man, it is not in his power to act like an elephant, then, of course, we can all be determinists with him. If he means that he has no sense of freedom and hence no sense of responsibility, then I can only say that this is a position with which I cannot myself agree because I have that sense of freedom of choice and of responsibility for the kind of choices I make and it is my conviction that practically all reasonably normal human beings have the same sense of freedom and of responsibility which I have. The reconciliation between that sense of freedom which is a matter of direct knowledge and the principle of the conservation of energy I am not myself wise enough to be able to make, nor do I know of anybody who is wise enough; nor does this bother me seriously since it is only one of the many points at which I find I fail of "all wisdom."

I judge that from the foregoing you will conclude—and rightly—that I regard most discussions of determinism and free will as useless because resting upon the lack of definition of terms and the failure of the contestants to use words in the same sense.

It is beside the point for Millikan to stress the "sense of freedom" which is felt by "all reasonably normal human beings." Certainly they have this sense—because they do not look far enough nor closely enough into the deterministic background of their actions. Neither Millikan nor any other man is an independent entity, thinking and feeling and acting arbitrarily without regard to his human fellows and the forces of nature and society. He has, to start with, a certain heredity; the first great contradiction of free will is that no man can choose his parents nor, therefore, the biological and psychological strain which is in him. And from the moment of birth every individual is ceaselessly molded, this way or that, by the influence of environment. The difference, let us say, between Al Capone and Millikan is not a mystical difference of free will, Capone having chosen to be a gangster and Millikan to be a physicist. The difference between them is to be found in a thousand forces that influenced their characters and careers in far removed ways. Neither can choose to act out of character unless some more powerful influence alters his character. Neither Millikan nor Capone could choose freely to behave like the other, because their standards and their desires have not been determined in the same way. Not only is it impossible for Millikan to act like an elephant; he cannot even act precisely like his human neighbor, albeit both are governed in the main by the same unalterable laws of nature.

As for the sense of social responsibility and the feeling of wrong-doing, these sentiments or convictions are determined by training imposed, of course, upon primary differences in character. Millikan didn't choose to have this feeling of social responsibility; he grew to have this feeling and this

feeling was determined by his particular set of natural sensibilities, by his heredity and training, and by the forces of environment that played upon him and made him what he is. Furthermore, the sense of social responsibility differs widely among men who have this sense: they disagree, that is, regarding ideas and actions which they believe to be socially good, bad or indifferent. Certainly this is not because of free will; it is because of differences in personality and in the interests that move men and in the training (including all the factors of environment) that makes men what they are.

Millikan has the sensation of doing what he wants; but that is only to say that his wants determine his actions, even as his wants have been determined by his life.

THE OTHER SIDE

A reader comments that Christianity is the only religion which has survived persecution. He refers to the persecution of the Christians under a few Roman emperors. Many Christians were killed—that is true—although a good many less than is claimed in Christian martyrology. But the main fact about Christianity and persecution is that this new official religion of the western world survived to persecute on its own account for centuries and centuries of terrible massacres, assassinations, trials and torturings. Christianity must be true, says our reader, because it survived persecution. Then what commentary on its truth is to be derived from its own persecution of heretics against Christianity? We are not exaggerating, but stating a simple and positively proved historical fact, when we say that millions have been killed by Christian bigots, victims of Christian persecution, witnesses to the terrorism (not the truth) of Christianity.

If a God is said to punish men for thinking for themselves, we naturally want to inquire whether this alleged God is equally guilty. Does this alleged God think for himself? Or does he let the mythical Devil or some other non-existent supernatural personage do his thinking for him?

MOST HEROES of human history—those who, in the judgment of civilized historians and students, merit the title of the greatest heroes—have been persecuted for their ideas, while alive and have had their ideas distorted after they were dead.

WHEN A MAN learns that he has been holding an erroneous idea, he should not regret the loss of the error but should congratulate himself upon the discovery of truth.

AN IDEA may be interesting and not be proved; but if it cannot be proved, it is foolish to call it the truth and absurdly arrogant to call it the sacred truth.

A REALISTIC, paradoxical note on mysticism: The greatest wisdom is silent—that is to say, the unconscious, unutterable wisdom of death.

BOOTLEGGING SCIENCE

Isn't it a disgrace that in our modern civilization, in these United States with their boast of learning and progress, science must be bootlegged?

"We have twenty-six states," says Margaret Sanger, national leader of the birth control movement, "in which there is no restriction on giving or getting contraceptive information by anyone. In addition, we have eleven states which allow physicians to give such information (provided they already have such knowledge to give). Yet the federal laws make it a crime for the doctors in these same states to use the United States mails, or common carriers, for contraceptive supplies, books or pamphlets, which means that the doctor, in giving oral information, must 'bootleg' supplies for the use of his patients and 'boot-

leg' books or reports by which he could improve his knowledge."

Of course this federal law against the mailing of birth control information should be abolished entirely. But at present the National Committee on Federal Legislation for Birth Control is concentrating on a bill to remove this restriction from information mailed in or between the states which have no legislation against birth control. This would be a step in the direction of a civilized policy, although the full rights of spreading scientific knowledge should eventually be recognized.

Birth control is a legitimate feature of modern science. It has great social importance and it is also a means of happier individual adjustment to the demands of modern life. Undoubtedly it is a symptom of America's backwardness that we should penalize the circulation of this knowledge and compel even doctors to bootleg it.

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Upton Sinclair Swipes a Line From His Critics

By E. Haldeman-Julius

Upton Sinclair thinks that I am not as constructive as I might be. Did Sinclair forget for the moment and quote his own critics? That is usually what is said about Sinclair; it is what is most frequently said about all exponents of unpopular ideas.

"I cannot refrain," writes Sinclair, "from expressing my delight over the energy and humor you displayed in your relations with the city of Toronto. Often I quarrel with your anti-religious propaganda because it is so purely negative, and I am interested in what is true rather than what is not. But when the Chief of Police of Toronto says that you cannot say something, why then of course it becomes immediately necessary for you to say it, and as loud as possible."

It seems that Sinclair is appreciative of some usefulness in my exposure of the Toronto bigots, although that was the kind of journalism that is ordinarily characterized as "purely negative" and as being destructive, therefore wasted. I dislike to fall back upon a platitude and say that in destroying a foolish and oppressive attitude or in undermining such an attitude to whatever degree, the destructive critic is accomplishing concrete good; he is making it easier for an intelligent attitude to prevail; he is, inevitably as a part of his very destructive publicity, aiding to build such an attitude.

A campaign against bigotry, such as was developed with merry effectiveness through the Toronto incident, is certainly helpful in showing forth the superior sanity and manliness and interestingness of free speech. On the surface such a campaign may appear wholly destructive; yet it cannot, in the nature of things, be that—it must naturally include the presentation of an opposite, more civilized point of view—and that is in effect constructive, whatever the appearance or method may be.

It seems to me comparably true that all destructive criticism, if it be intelligently directed against ideas or institutions or customs that ought to be destroyed, is useful and indeed very necessary. Criticism is one of the important functions of man's intellectual life. Great movements have originated in criticism. And perhaps it may be said that while construction goes on in some activities and destruction is important in other fields, the critical spirit must be brought continuously to judge the whole span of human life; and that is, I grant, too large a territory for me but I try to cover as broad a stretch of interesting things as I possibly can; and I am confident of being on the liberal side of all issues and of hitting hard at error and putting on a lively show in advertisement of the truth as I see it. What particular features of my work are destructive and what are constructive is of less concern to me than that I shall be making intelligent comments on life and stimulating others to look at life more intelligently.

Although giving it a slightly different phrasing, Sinclair offers the old "destructive-constructive" formula and I don't see that he improves on it notably. "I am interested," he says, "in what is true rather than what is not." But can one discuss what is not true without, as a parallel and substantial course, saying a great deal about what is true? What one is doing, after all, is applying one's philosophy of life to the problems of life, to men and affairs, to current or past personalities and issues, to history and morals and religion and politics and many things under the sun. In criticizing a false philosophy, one is by implication—and even more, one is necessarily by direct statement and illustration—bringing to view a true philosophy. I am assuming of course that I have the right side and my intellectual opponents the wrong side; otherwise, I should change sides; and it is my job to show why I think as I do and why I regard myself as arguing on the right side.

If attacks upon religion were only destructive, I should still say that they were essential to the work of civilization; which is indeed another way of saying that they are constructive. In opposing such ideas as God and im-

in believing in the notion of "sin") may be presumed to lend a loutish, perverse pleasure to his surreptitious transgressions of his own trumpeted holy doctrine. Others enjoy themselves in a wholesome manner. They take life's delights and adventures and experiments frankly. This preacher cultivates a morbid passion for the darkness—for dark streets—for dark doors—for dark rooms.

This Elmer Gantryish caricature of humanity damns others in public for having beliefs and a code different from the preacher's—and he privately goes on his lying round of hypocritical assignations.

He lets out an idiotic yelp in his pulpit, crying that the devil is taking the town because somebody is taking a drink of liquor—and he, the Elmer Gantry by another name, has a *sub rosa* yet commonly conned reputation as the town's leading libertine.

He condemns others for their "infidelity" in refusing to believe in his stupid religion—yet he is unfaithful to his own beliefs as he is unfaithful to the husbands of some of his most devoted feminine worshippers.

He is, this preacher, a creature who lacks even the decency to despise himself.

He is a type. He is also a person. He is also the actual, slinking embodiment and literal realization of the word "contemptible."

ILLUSION OF PEACE

There is no doubt that the future of civilization rests upon the ability of the nations to organize a peaceful world. It is equally clear that no such ability, indeed no such intention that can be genuinely recognized as such, has been shown by the nations. Although the Kellogg pact was celebrated with much diplomatic and journalistic fanfare; although the League of Nations still engages in its formal functions, which are neither international (in the sense that they include all nations), nor intelligently pacific in program; although the London naval conference of a year ago was an occasion for more talk of peace; in spite of all these things, the status of the world is alarmingly more warlike than it was in 1914.

The agreement of the London naval conference, as our readers know, was that the armament of sea fighting should not be actually decreased but should be kept down to a relatively limited increase. To build up to the limits decided by the London conference will require a great expenditure by America and will mean a much larger navy than we have had; and this naval increase is now being actively proposed by the militarists, who find the London treaty useful rather than hampering to their propaganda. England is building warships to the amount of 46,145 tons; while France is building 100,684 tons and Italy has under construction 100,777 tons; a naval race threatens between France and Italy which will, under the provisions of the London treaty, justify unlimited naval increases by the United States, England and Japan.

On land Europe is also heavily armed, while America is undoubtedly more militaristic in disposition and could more readily put war machinery into action than in 1917. France, Belgium, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania and Yugoslavia have armies; actively ready for war, of 1,914,990 men; and their reserve forces, potential numbers of war, are 17,767,261. Two hundred miles of fortifications are being erected by France on the German frontier, although Germany was disarmed by the Versailles treaty and is today the least prepared for war of the greater nations.

The world today is in a state of ominous, armed preparation for war. The causes that lead to war are actively in operation: tariff barriers, economic competition, and the old military and naval armament race. The old psychology of nationalism prevails. The false economic and political ideas which fostered the World War are still predominant in human thinking. And this being so, it is nothing less than a betrayal of the cause of peace to talk in optimistic language about the Kellogg pact; the London treaty and similarly deceptive devices of diplomacy. These are illusions of peace which can only defer the possibility of genuine, lasting peace in which the world can rest secure. Peace will come through a persistent exposure of the real causes of war and through realistic, uncompromising efforts toward the ideal of a co-operative world.

MAN AND NATURE

A preacher says that religion is greater than science because it (religion) has placed man above the rest of nature. If that were all, the statement would be meaningless. For science recognizes the superiority of man, mentally and in some features of physical ingenuity (but not in strength), to other living things. Certain aspects of man's superiority are obvious; others we have learned in close detail only through the investigations of science. Moreover, science has shown clearly the resemblance between man and other animals. It has demonstrated fully one great truth, namely, man's kinship with nature.

There is, however, more to the preacher's statement. He says that religion has placed man above the rest of nature and has therefore been of greater importance than science by emphasizing the "immortal soul" of man. But that "immortal soul" has been a dogma of religion and not a real contribution of religion. It is not a demonstrable quality of man or a demonstrable thing that man possesses, therefore it could not have anything to do with proving his superiority.

The greatness of man rests upon qualities and achievements which science and history reliably prove. Religion has not given man a soul. It has merely talked about a soul; and through that talk it has influenced man to many fears and vagaries that have been detrimental to his study and application of his actual superiority. The fiction of the soul has not inspired man to accomplish more in life; rather it has tended to make him place a low valuation, theoretically or theologically at least, upon life.

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In the World of Books

Weekly Reviews and Other Literary Ruminations
Isaac Goldberg

INITIATION

Growing Up. By Karl de Schweinitz. New York. The Macmillan Co. \$1.75.

There is a constant demand for books that shall instruct parents how, in turn, they are to instruct their children in the phenomena of sex. No further proof of our general failure need be had than this selfsame perplexity that haunts even the most enlightened fathers and mothers. The so-called "conspiracy of silence" has bred ignorance and neurotic collapse. Only the bigoted remnants of the various churches still adhere to its insane policy, and their very adherence is a symptom of the disease which they presumptuously pretend to cure or, worse still, whose existence they deny.

It is not only the bigoted who face the difficulties of same sexual instruction. Most parents, however well-meaning, and however emancipated from theological inhibitions, yet need a technique for the more modern methods of training the young in the understanding of that process by which they came to life.

Over-poietizing the issue often proves to be but a symbolic avenue of escape. It may turn out to be as much a boomerang as is the gutter-method or, again, the system of terrorization that is adopted by certain colleges. Too great refinement, in this case, may be as harmful, because as inadequate, as too great coarseness. Excessive delicacy in matters of sex may sometimes favor the development of a child into a personality with a homo-sexual trend. If one had to choose, one might be wise to prefer coarseness to exquisiteness. That way, at least, health lies.

Growing Up is neither coarse nor anemically delicate. It does not invest the subject with an atmosphere of holiness or mystery; it avoids these errors, which excite the child by surrounding the topic with a special air. Instead, it has an interesting story to tell, and tells it very plainly as such. It even employs words that, ordinarily avoided or pronounced with a special emphasis, carry a connotation of disproportionate excitement.

The book is short. It consists of seven well-illustrated chapters. It is addressed to the child directly, and judging from the numerous testimonials that have accumulated since the two or more years when it was first published, it appeals to youngsters as early as their seventh year. One eleven-year-old boy said to his father: "Dad, every question I had in

mind has been answered by this book." Perhaps this is an exaggeration; or again, the child was exceptionally bright. Bertrand Russell tells us that his class of ten-year-old children went through the pamphlet forms of *Wells' Science of Life* with juvenile glee. Maybe children are getting brighter than they were in my day.

There can be no question, however, of the truth beneath these endorsements. No single book perhaps can serve all such purposes as these, but certainly in these hundred and eleven pages there is the distillation of voluminous experience.

The author begins with the simple tale of the egg and of the fertilizing agent. He speaks of flowers and fishes and fowls and animals, thus leading up to man. He does not suddenly become mealy-mouthed when he approaches the mammals. Indeed, he goes straight on without letting the child catch, from tutorial nervousness, any hint that he has stepped upon dangerous or forbidden territory.

A baby, he points out, spends nine months in the body of its mother. An elephant spends twenty months, while a mouse spends 20 days and is ready to reproduce within a month and a half of its birth. For straightforwardness, simplicity, clear scientific accuracy and effectiveness, I recommend the closing paragraphs of the chapter on Pollen and Sperm:

"The dog, the lion, the horse, the pig place their sperms in the body of the mother in much the same way that the rooster does, but the sperms instead of going through an opening as they do with the rooster pass from these animals through a little pipe or tube that is on the outside of the body. This little pipe or tube is called the penis. When the male animal sends the sperms to the female he seems to be trying to climb on to her back. As he does this the penis fits into an opening in her body. This is the opening of what we call the vagina, and it is through the vagina of the mother that the sperms go when they leave the father.

"While the sperms are still living in the male animal they stay in two oval-shaped places called testicles. The testicles are held in a little bag outside the body and under the penis. It is also through the penis that the urine or waste water passes.

"The sperms of men, like those of the four-legged animals, live in two testicles in a little bag under the penis. The father places the sperms in the body of the mother in very much the same way that the four-legged animals do, only the mother and father can lie together facing each other. The penis then fits into the vagina of the mother which has its own opening underneath the opening for the urine or waste water.

"When the sperms leave the father they are in a liquid, called

semen, that is a little thicker than milk, and that looks something like milk. The sperms are so tiny that hundreds of them can live in one drop of semen.

"As soon as the semen has entered the mother the sperms start swimming toward the egg as it comes from the ovary. The sperm that meets the egg joins it and together the sperm and the egg start growing to be a baby.

"This is the way that you began your life. The egg was not you and the sperm was not you. It was when they came together that you became alive. People everywhere begin their lives in this way. Like the fish and the birds and the beasts, we all start to be ourselves when the sperm joins the egg."

Only sick people, it seems to me, could take offense at such healthful simplicity, and it is just such sick people who have perpetuated that mental illness which characterizes our more active censors. Mr. De Schweinitz has done intelligent living and loving a service and his greatest reward should be the wide dissemination of his book. Already it is in its fifteenth printing and promises to become a classic in its genre.

SMILING STUPIDITIES

Boners. By Those Who Pulled Them. Compiled by Alexander Abingdon and illustrated by Dr. Seuss. N. Y. The Viking Press. \$1.

My own interest in boners began when I pulled a terrible one in High School. I had not studied the home lesson dealing with one of Milton's poems. I was quite sleepy during the examination. My answers were mechanical and utterly unrelated to the text at hand. So, when I saw the phrase "unlettered hind" (ignorant human herd) I promptly and confidently explained it as "unbranded cattle." Very properly I got the laugh and I have been careful ever since. Nevertheless, howlers will creep into the best of brains and I am quite sure that a book of boners could be compiled from exclusively standard sources.

Some of the boners in this collection wear a manufactured air. I can believe of no student that he would seriously write "geometry teaches us to bisect angels." However, most of the wild statements in these hundred and two pages bear the imprint of youthful wisdom. Here are a few samples:

"Louis XVI was gelatinized during the French Revolution."

"Queen Victoria was the longest queen on the throne."

"A lot of Englishmen were shut up in the black hole of Calcutta with one small widow. Only four got out alive."

"Poetry is when every line begins with a capital letter."

"Nearly at the bottom of Lake Michigan is Chicago."

"The inhabitants of Moscow are called Mosquitoes."

And, of course, that hoary one: "Homer was not written by Homer but by another man of that name."

THE FINAL BALANCE

The Autobiography of a Philosopher. By George Herbert Palmer. Boston. Houghton Mifflin Co. \$1.75.

Anyone who has been graduated from Harvard during the past few decades, even if he did not study directly under Palmer, usually came within the radius of his influence. He was christened after a noted poet whose works he later edited. One of his wives, Alice Freeman Palmer, became the first president of Radcliffe; he wrote her biography, and it is a salient document. Now Palmer himself, nearing ninety, gives us a too brief account of a life that has been devoted almost in its entirety to philosophy and scholarship.

Palmer came of bad physiological sources; spinal and cardiac weakness ran in his family; he was ill-built physically and for the first forty years suffered torture from headache. Yet care and perseverance triumphed over these handicaps until, at a time when most of humanity has achieved resignation to the ills of the flesh and the plagues of the mind, he had acquired poise of body and psyche.

One is surprised and at the same time pleased to learn that Palmer's prose translation of the *Odyssey*, made many years ago, has sold as many as 40,000 copies yearly even as late as the 1930s. When Palmer started as a teacher the various college curricula were not only under the heavy hand of theology but from any truly educational standpoint beneath serious consideration. He did much pioneer work in forming and reforming the philosophic courses.

Fire for Heretics, Threat of Spanish Mob of Catholics Led by Priest

A shocking illustration of the real spirit of Catholicism is given in a dispatch from the Reuter press agency to the London Daily Herald, under date of January 21, 1931. The dispatch follows:

A number of evangelists in Spain have had a narrow escape from being burnt as "heretics."

While the evangelists, among whom was a Scotsman named F. Gorban, were holding a meeting in a village inn near Almagro they heard a tremendous noise accompanied by the loud clanging of a church bell.

It was discovered that, headed by the local priest, the villagers had assembled en masse and were declaiming against the mission, threatening to put its members to death and to burn the inn unless the inn-keeper ordered them away.

The mayor of the village finally arrived with civil guards and prevented the furious crowd from dealing summarily with the "heretics."

"Death to heretics" is still the principle of Roman Catholic church law, which only lack of power prevents Rome from applying. That the Pope sympathizes in spirit with this priest-led Spanish mob is revealed by the arrogantly bigoted tone of his recent encyclicals and by his recent protests to Mussolini against "excessive liberty" enjoyed by Protestant missionaries in Rome. Catholicism is medievalism.

His ninth decade finds him well adjusted to the universe and as happy as man can be before the Sophoclean fate descends upon him. The proof of the philosophic pudding, we may conclude, is in the eating. But the eating in turn depends upon one's personal digestion. Philosophy is not so objective as some philosophers would deceive themselves into believing.

Thus, at the end of this book, I found myself thinking of a sentence from Walter Bagehot's *Physics and Politics*: "The greatest sage soon shares the opinion of the party with which he votes and the sect with which he worships." Palmer delivers himself at last into the arms of Jesus. . . . Once again, then, we find it possible to admire a personality without sharing in the least his beliefs.

OPEN MIND

Macmillan recently published a symposium entitled *Why I Am and Why I Am Not a Catholic*. (It sells for \$2, if you are interested; I am not.) A friend sends me the review of the book that appeared in the news letter sent out every month by The Catholic Book Club. Let me quote it without any other comment than italicization:

"It is the opinion of this writer that such a symposium as this is not the best kind of a book. *Truth and heresy do not make good book-companions*, especially when both are urged with high seriousness. A Catholic would naturally wish to buy a collection containing answers to the question: 'Why Am I a Catholic?' by Belloc, Sheila Kaye-Smith, Ronald Knox, C. C. Martindale, S. J. and others; but would he wish to be forced to buy, at the same time, the essays containing the reasons why other people, in whom he is not much interested, are not Catholics? And if he was curious, would he be free to read them? The writer has his definite opinion."

Come to think of it, I'll add one comment: the writer has not his definite opinion. It is an opinion that he has been ordered to have. Very evidently—nor can we become excited over it—the Catholic Book Club is a very minor branch of the Index Expurgatorius.

If KILLING murderers prevented murderers from killing, the crime of murder should have disappeared from human annals long ago. The truth is that education and improved social conditions are the only sound, permanent remedies for great social evils. It may be difficult to foresee a time when murders that spring from passionate impulses will not occur; but murders that spring from a bad environment, as so many do, can be stopped by providing a thoroughly civilized environment for all; and, on second thought, could not most murders of passion be described truly as springing from a bad environment?

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tivated and the arts should not adorn our social life—because it would be so beautiful to preserve our sensibility to the effects of ignorance and a cultureless, inartistic, unbeautiful world.

Medical science and social sanitation should not be encouraged—because we should do so much better to preserve our sensibility to disease.

That is Hoover logic. That is the message of Hooverism to the American people. Unquestionably the man belongs in the White House, which has sheltered such a shameful succession of stupidities.

NAILING ANOTHER LIE

Our readers will readily recall what a howl was raised some months ago about the alleged disastrous effect of Russian "dumping" upon economic welfare in the United States. A very ordinary wheat deal by the Russian government was exaggerated to panicky proportions by Secretary of Agriculture Hyde; and Secretary Hyde and other Republican politicians, who were more interested in political bunk than in economic accuracy, harped persistently upon the said-to-be-alarming theme of Russian attacks upon American business. The purpose of this outcry was to suggest another alibi for the Hoover administration: we were being deluged with a vast flood of cheap Russian goods, it was said, and that accounted in great part for our business depression.

Now the figures of Russian and American trade in 1930 are given by the Department of Commerce; and these figures show that the cry of Russian "dumping" was dishonest in the extreme. In 1929 the United States purchased goods from Russia to the amount of \$21,520,000; in 1930 this country bought \$21,963,000 worth of goods from Russia. The difference of \$443,000 can hardly be described as "dumping." In contrast, American goods in the amount of \$81,500,000 were sold to Russia in 1929; and \$111,300,000 worth of American products were sold to Russia in 1930. These figures show how much more, extensively Russia buys from America than it sells to America. We see that instead of Russian "dumping" there has been a considerable increase of Russian purchases from America; and so another political alibi of Hooverism turns out to have been merely a lie.

A PREACHER, trying unsuccessfully and indeed very awkwardly to reconcile the idea of a God with the problem of evil, says that God's will is unlimited in all non-human things; but that when confronting human will, the will of God is limited and is repeatedly beaten. This is to say, of course, that man is greater than God. It is just another reminder of the fog in which theology loses itself.

PATRIOTS AND "FOOLS"

This is not our juxtaposition of terms. The credit goes to Adolph Ochs, publisher of the New York Times, who recently said in an interview in Hawaii that the proposal of a soldiers' bonus (or increased loans on soldiers' insurance certificates) was unsound because, among other things, "A fool and his money are soon parted." Just think back a little. In 1917 and 1918 Mr. Ochs was using his powerful paper to whoop up enthusiasm for the war. An essential feature of that campaign was to refer touchingly to the American soldiers as heroes and patriots. They were, said Ochs' New York Times, nobly sacrificing all in a sublime cause. They were, declared Ochs' New York Times, bravely and of-course intelligently devoted to the crusade for righteousness led by the Allied statesmen and by Woodrow Wilson. The fools then, according to Ochs' New York Times, were those who stood apart from the insanity of war and held fast to the civilized ideas of peace. The fools then, said Ochs' New York Times, were those who exposed the war aims as hypocritical and who perceived steadily the sordidness which underlay the terrible international struggle.

But now, a dozen years later, Mr. Ochs says that the World War heroes of 1917-18 are "fools." The questions one naturally asks are: Were these heroes "fools" at the time when Mr. Ochs and other journalists were eulogizing them for their nobility and heroism and intelligent defense of the right? Or have these heroes degenerated since the war and, once so grand and true, become "fools" in the years between? Or has Mr. Ochs been gifted, during these years, with a clearer and disillusioned vision of the mentality of the soldier boys who fought the war quite faithfully in accordance with the aims of the New York Times?

"A fool and his money are soon parted." This is what Mr. Ochs says today, referring to the World War veterans. Is it possible that Mr. Ochs means that he has contempt for men who would permit themselves to be led, inveigled or driven to the trenches by the New York Times kind of propaganda? Anyway, it is interesting to know that Mr. Ochs is on record as saying that the heroes who believed the propaganda of Woodrow Wilson and the New York Times in 1917-1918 are (and were?) "fools." Let Mr. Ochs or one of his New York Times editors explain.

WE BELIEVE that true morality is a matter of social progress, and the civilized reconciliation of many diverse tastes, rather than a matter of tyrannically imposing laws upon men to dictate their personal habits. When an action has no marked nor important social consequences, it should be left to personal taste.

Exposure of Hoover Before and After He Became President

Our readers will be glad to have, in compact and readily usable form, the complete record of Herbert Hoover. Five books tell the story of Hoover. There is L. M. Birkhead's book on *President Hoover and Quakerism*; Heinz Norden's book on *Herbert Hoover—the Man*; and three books by E. Haldeman-Julius, namely *Herbert Hoover—the Failure in the White House*, *Hoover's Record As President* and *Hoover's Record Before He Was President*.

A full-length critical analysis, like nothing that has ever been written about a President during his term of office, is contained in these books, especially in the three books by Mr. Haldeman-Julius. These three are naturally of most piquant interest, as they expose the failure of Hoover as President, debunk his ideas about politics and economics and—most sensational of all—tell the true story of how Herbert Hoover made millions and what was the real character and conduct of the man.

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Knowledge should not be cul-

"Patriotism" and Politics

Congress, which has had difficulty in agreeing on other relief measures, rushed through with a minimum of delay and debate the bill to increase to fifty percent the amount that can be borrowed by World War veterans on their government insurance certificates. These certificates were issued in 1924 by the government as an additional compensation or bonus to the soldiers; and the loans now increased are to be supplied by the government.

There are several objections to this legislation. It means of course the paying out of huge sums to a large number of World War veterans who are not in need, men who are self-supporting, men even who are considerably above the average level of prosperity. Lawyers, doctors, business executives and other well-to-do ex-soldiers who are making extraordinarily good incomes will be entitled to draw from this relief fund. This is not therefore entirely a genuine relief measure; it deserves the title only insofar as it applies to the minority of veterans who are actually in need.

Then, again, this is obviously legislation in favor of a restricted class. In this crisis the whole people should be considered. General relief measures should be adopted. The real duty of the government, as we have repeatedly insisted, is to do what private industry has failed to do; namely, run the factories and supply the people with work so that they can support themselves (as they are perfectly willing, indeed eager, to do). With the money that will be required to dispense this so-called relief, which for most of the veterans is not genuine, needed relief, a system of unemployment insurance could be established which would be of lasting economic value to all of the workers.

It is certainly not right that in a time of general suffering such favored legislation should be given to a special class. World War veterans who are really in need deserve relief as much as other workers and no more. But the ex-soldiers' bill was "patriotic" legislation and the politicians in Congress hustled one another for conspicuous places on the band wagon. "Patriotism" is always a good campaign slogan. Congressmen voted for the inaccurately named veterans' relief; and they will in turn appeal for the grateful votes of the veterans.

In his opposition to the bill, Hoover has been correct but not from motives that we can admire. He is against any adequate relief for the people. He opposed the contribution by the government of \$25,000,000 to the Red Cross for general relief. He opposed the granting of loans to farmers that they might buy food for themselves, insisting that only food for animals and seed for the next crop should be bought with such loans. He has objected to any program of important government relief for the unemployed workers in the cities. In short, Hoover's objection to the veterans' bill is derived from an unwillingness that the government should help any of the people; it is dictated not by a policy of high-principled belief in relief and equal justice for all, but by a policy of government refusal to deal adequately with this crisis.

The argument in popular use, that the veterans sacrificed their economic welfare and endangered their lives for the country and that now they should have their reward, has obvious and serious faults. Millions of dollars have already been given to the soldiers, by the federal government and by the state governments. This plea of rewarding the veterans becomes, after a time, a mere political slogan and an excuse for a vast scheme of favoritism (or a succession of such schemes) based upon an appeal which is nationally dangerous: namely, the appeal of patriotism, which includes necessarily the appeal of militarism, and which is linked with the self-seeking appeal of politics.

Undoubtedly a monstrous injustice was done to the soldiers when they were forced into the army, when they were bound helplessly to the war machine, and when they were forced to work and fight in the service of special interests of imperialism rather than the alleged national safety (for America never was in danger). It must be remembered, however, that many of the soldiers reached out willingly, even eager, arms to embrace this injustice; that they easily were enthused into becoming loud patriots and believers in the war, helping to crush down

the sentiments of peace and real national welfare.

But the great injustice of the war will not be remedied by granting endless bonuses, compensations and special favors to the veterans. The remedy for that injustice is to use constructive efforts for the abolition of the evil principle of war and the principle of belligerent, narrowly national patriotism upon which it is based and still more the exploitive, competitive private interests of capitalism which lead to the supreme tragedy of war. And plainly one of the most serious obstacles to progress for peace is a large body of war veterans successfully maintaining a tradition of narrow patriotism and a policy of favoritism with a patriotic, flag-waving and militaristic spirit which confuses and indeed corrupts the real and greater issues of national welfare.

We are for equal justice, and no more, to the war veterans as workers and citizens; but we are not for special favors to them as a militaristic class. The best reward that can be given to the ex-soldiers, as to all others, is that of economic justice and full social opportunity in a peaceful, progressive world.

CATHOLICS AND TAXES

It seems palpably and undeniably fair that churches should pay taxes—that, in other words, the state should not contribute in any way to the propaganda of religion. What arguments can be adduced in favor of church tax exemption? The following, written by a Catholic in the New York Telegram, is an example:

In Greater New York [the Catholic church] has built four or five hundred schools to teach some 150,000 children, without any help from the city or state, provided textbooks, maintained the schools at a high standard, built homes for working girls, clubs for boys, homes for aged men and women, hospitals (two in Jamaica) where at least twenty-five percent of the cases are charity cases, orphan asylums and day nurseries to care for the widows' children while she is working, and all of this branches out from the church (the hub), for the church is the foundation of all the good work accomplished by its various branches.

The Catholic family is taxed twice, once for the public schools and then for the building and maintenance of the parochial schools.

It is quite ridiculous to argue that Catholic schools furnish a reason for tax exemption. These schools are obviously maintained for the purposes of priestly propaganda. There is no necessity for Catholicism to maintain schools. Catholic children are welcome in the public schools. They will receive in those schools a very adequate education. What they will not receive is education in Catholic superstition; and it is to supply this kind of education, very improperly so-called, that the Catholic church keeps up its parochial schools.

It cannot be said that any Catholic family is taxed for these parochial schools. They voluntarily contribute to these superstitious mills; if they are so foolish as to part with their money for this sort of thing, they cannot reasonably invoke it as a virtue and claim consideration from the state for their private, religious expenditures.

The homes for working girls, clubs for boys, and similar social centers must likewise be regarded as propaganda institutions for Catholicism. Exempting such institutions from taxation is equivalent to the support of Catholic superstition by the state; and this is intolerable.

A better argument, obviously, can be made for the exemption of genuine charitable institutions, insofar as they are charitable. For instance, if a Catholic hospital has charity cases to the extent of 25 percent, then we might agree that it should be exempted from taxation to the extent of twenty-five percent. This would leave the greater part of Catholic church property fairly and fully taxable.

We shall of course add our conviction that it is a wrong and dangerous principle for charity to be left in the hands of private agencies, religious or otherwise. In fact, the idea of charity is wrong; we should have in its place a broad conception of social justice. It is the duty of the state to provide for its citizens and to secure them employment, decent conditions of living and insurance against accidents, sickness and old age. European nations follow this policy to a remarkable degree. It is the shame of the United States that we do not.

But the fact remains that char-

ity is a minor feature of the activities of the Catholic church. The greater part of its activities are of a propaganda nature. It is unjust that they should be exempted from taxation.

BUT AREN'T WE ALL?

A letter from Dr. Robert H. MacNair, Kansas City, to whom we paid courteously our compliments in the last issue of The Freeman, again illustrates the queer thinking that goes on in the fantastic inner crevices of orthodox brains. We are apt to forget how childish these people are in their attempts at reasoning; so now and then a reminder is not amiss. Dr. MacNair actually argues against our conception of free speech by citing analogies in men's belief in freedom to get drunk, to murder and to rob. Now, really, should that sort of thing be dignified by a deliberate reply? Joseph McCabe says that he could have packed a great deal more proof into *The True Story of the Roman Catholic Church*—but that any reader who is unconvinced by the immense proof that he has packed into that twelve-volume work would not be convinced by any amount of proof. Similarly, we must remark that any reader who could not, unaided, see the absurdity of Dr. MacNair's comparisons would not be enlightened by any comment of ours. It is obvious. Intellectually speaking, the doctor has been guilty of a pitiable extreme of "indecent exposure."

This defender of what he thinks is Americanism (and if he is right, so much the worse for Americanism) says that he is very suspicious of E. Haldeman-Julius' ancestry: he is, probably, says the doctor, "an alien or descended from same." Isn't that an amusing coincidence? It happens that the doctor's name reminds us of things alien. MacNair—that doesn't sound truly, genuinely American. Scotch? Probably that's it. It is beyond a doubt that Dr. MacNair need only turn back a few generations to perceive his own connection with and descent from aliens. The same is true of all inhabitants of this country excepting the Indians. A very small minority of American citizens can trace their ancestry back to three hundred years on American soil; none can go farther back without jumping the ocean and landing on the alien soil of the British Isles or Europe; and most of them—does this include Dr. MacNair?—are more recently descended from aliens.

This truth reappears: whatever pride or advantage there may be in identifying oneself as an American, it does not include necessarily the ability to reason sensibly.

INGERSOLL'S DEATH

A reader of The Freeman asks that we state the facts concerning the death of Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll and his alleged recantation of his agnosticism when dying. This lie is still repeated, it seems, by ignorant or unscrupulous evangelists and in the lowest type of religious literature. The lie is sufficiently refuted by the fact that Colonel Ingersoll died suddenly, as the result of an apopleptic stroke, and therefore could not possibly have changed his views "on his deathbed" even had he wished to do so.

When this story was spread abroad after Ingersoll's death—invented deliberately by liars for the glory of religious propaganda—it was explicitly and completely denied by Mrs. Ingersoll. The ideas of the great agnostic did not change. He was not a coward nor did he become weak-minded in his last years. Until the day of his death he remained true to the convictions of a lifetime. And, as we say, his sudden death would have made a recantation impossible.

It is a contemptible type of person, however, who will circulate such a story; if he circulates such a story ignorantly, believing in its truth, he exhibits an inability, which is mentally most wretched, to appreciate the sincere and fearless character of freethinkers. This story does not dishonor Ingersoll, as it is too silly and too easily disproved; but it dishonors those who repeat it, some of them knowing it to be false and others evidently not caring to investigate the accuracy of a story which therefore they repeat unscrupulously.

IT SHOULD be interesting to find another man in disagreement with one's ideas—granting, to be sure, that the other man's disagreement is expressed intelligently and tolerantly.

BONES AND LEGEND

An example of carelessness or worse in putting forward a friendly word for a religious legend is seen in a news item from Rome printed in the New York World. Digging the foundations of new buildings in Vatican City, ancient Roman graves and the bones of pagans long forgotten and now of course unidentified were discovered—so the story goes. But the headline says, "Tradition of Peter's Crucifixion Supported," and the last paragraph of the story says: "The discovery is thought to account for Peter's burial in the Vatican Hill, where tradition says he was crucified head downward and where the first basilica was erected in his name. It is regarded as supporting the popular tradition as to his burial place."

One of the most useful and wholly false legends of the Roman Catholic church is that the Apostle Peter founded that church in Rome and was martyred in Rome. Absolutely no evidence exists in support of this claim. It is merely a tradition; or, worse, a fabrication by ancient Catholic impostors in support of their authority. Obviously this discovery of a graveyard and of unknown bones under Vatican City does not lend the least support to that "popular tradition" or that priestly fabrication of Peter's presence and martyrdom in Rome.

But religious legends are dealt with favorably by a "respectable" press which is not too scrupulous in its attitude toward truth. This hollow piece of bunk should, however, deceive no one.

BILLY SUNDAY AGAIN

We are amused—and at the same time we are disgusted—by the report of a Billy Sunday sermon in which the clown-evangelist is quoted as yawning about "the futility of seeking after worldly things. The best things in life are not made with hands, nor can they be bought with money, he said, insisting that no one can buy his way into Heaven."

This is amusing, because it is so notoriously insincere. Billy Sunday has made a fortune out of his obscene evangelism. He is the last man who can consistently condemn the seeking after worldly things.

And such a statement, coming from such a source, is of course disgusting for the sheer brazen hypocrisy that it displays. But greedy persons and persistent seekers after material rewards, such as Billy Sunday, are apt to be eloquent in denouncing materialism. It is supposed to be the proper line for preachers. Do many of their followers really swallow this nonsense without gagging? Or do they sometimes reflect on the incongruity, the sickening cant, involved in a denunciation of materialism and worldly goods by a preacher who is out for all the lucre he can grab?

And pardon us, dear readers, if we seem to have taken Billy Sunday too seriously. Low as he is, he can at least furnish us with a lesson in hypocrisy.

"WE MUST defend the civilization of the plow," says "Alfalfa Bill" Murray, Democratic governor of Oklahoma. It seems that "Alfalfa Bill," true to his name, lives reminiscently in the days of agricultural simplicity and primitive field-and-cabin economics. He speaks not only for the civilization of the plow but that of the horse and buggy and the kerosene lamp and the wood stove and homespun clothes and rural isolation. Realistically, we must solve today the problems of the civilization of the tractor, of great electrical machinery, of large-scale operations on farms and in factories. The farmers, like other workers, must look to the collective rather than the individualistic solution of their problems.

THE BELIEVER in free will should demonstrate the soundness of his theory by willing triumphantly to be rich or to be wise or to be happy. We can, it is true, seek these and other qualities or conditions more or less intelligently, more or less successfully; we can make good use of circumstances when circumstances are favorable, including the circumstances of our judgment in making use of circumstances; but none of us can illustrate the operations of a perfect will superior to circumstances.

WHEN an earthquake occurred recently in Oaxaca, Mexico, the roof of the church building fell and fifty-one worshippers were killed. This ought to furnish preachers with the material for sermons on "The Wrath of God" and "A Warning to Sinners."

The Story of the Human Race A Biographical History of the World

By Henry Thomas, Ph. D.

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