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HOW TO BE A SALESMAN

By Clarence Darrow

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HOW TO BE A SALESMAN

All my life I had been interested in books, but somehow I had overlooked books on salesmanship. Literally hundreds of them, it appears, are now on the market, and used by our colleges, universities and Y.M.C.A. night schools in the laudable business of giving hope and cheer to the overworked and underpaid. The topics they deal with range from those which might properly be placed under the heads of calisthenics, physical culture, hypnotism, phrenology, psychology, dress, and deportment, to specific directions for the treatment of hard customers and tricks for getting the unwary to buy.

Among the first things which attract attention in this literature is the fact that a prospective purchaser is not regarded simply as a human being, or even referred to in terms of his occupation or social position. For the salesman all men are Prospects. It seems to me only fair, then, that we look upon every one who attempts to sell anything as a Prospector.

Obviously, if a Prospector is to be successful, he must prepare himself for his arduous life of gold-digging. All the books thus start out with chapters on the general subject: "How to Get Ready and Why." The first thing the aspiring salesman must do, it appears, is to develop the physical basis for the combative spirit necessary in forcing a Prospect to buy:

Many young men are not highly developed in the faculty of combativeness and in order to become good salesmen they require this faculty brought into positive function, that they may not give up or become undecided and discouraged. Combativeness functions through the shoulder and arm muscles as shown by the soldier, prize fighter, athlete, etc., and, well developed, it imparts a feeling of enthusiasm, physical vigor and power of decision that no other faculty can give; the best way, then, of bringing it into proper function is to take up some form of exercise that will call into use the shoulder and arm muscles, each morning immediately upon arising, devoting ten or fifteen minutes to this. The same amount of time may be devoted with profit in the evening if one feels the extra need.

But this is not enough. No ambitious salesman will be content with the development merely of his physical powers. He will also cultivate his spiritual gifts for the contest. Thus he is instructed to say to himself: "I will succeed. I will awaken tomorrow feeling good. I will go through the day doing work better than I have done it before. I will meet every one with a feeling of good will!"

It is a good idea, we are informed, to keep on repeating this formula until one falls asleep; then the subconscious can carry on while one is sleeping. By morning, one will thus have made as much progress as if one had stayed awake repeating the formula all night!

All this mental discipline, of course, is possible only if the salesman has some training in and understanding of psychology. Accordingly, each one of the books I have examined devotes a few pages to explaining the fundamentals of that recondite science. One book gives an elaborate diagram of the human head divided into thirty-seven compartments, and labeled "amativeness," "parental love," "combativeness" and so on, down to "inductive reasoning." I had seen such charts forty years ago in Fowler and Wells' famous treatise on phrenology, but I had thought that they were extinct. Of course, the new books do not lay quite as much stress on phrenology as would have been the

case forty years ago, but they are very strong on the use of what they call psychology. One of them sagely advises the student to "spend a few evenings studying psychology." Out of that study, brief as it is, he is supposed to attain to complete control of the Prospect:

To master conviction it is essential that you have knowledge of the human mind and how it works. You must know what takes place when a customer deliberates. What change takes place in his mental consciousness, what is his mental attitude, and what is his state of mind while being convinced.

In many of the text-books, the salesman is carefully instructed as to the use of particular words and as to their proper pronunciation and warned against errors in grammar. However, he must understand, too, that it will not do to be over-particular about grammar. He must be democratic and despise the snob. One of the best books gives this suggestion:

I know a man who found it helpful with his general methods to deliberately cultivate a few incorrect habits of speech, such as dropping the *g*'s in words ending in *ing*—saying *goin'* for *going* and *advertisin'* for *advertising*; and saying "there *ain't* any" for "there is none" (*sic*). By *unaffected* use of these expressions and careful use of otherwise *good* grammar and pronunciation, they secure an added impression of *earnestness* in what they are saying.

The text-books give a large number of opening sentences that are certified to be effective. As, for example, "All that you say is true, but . . . ; A little reflection will convince any one that . . . ; Fortunately, that can be taken care of . . . ; I assert without fear of successful contradiction . . . ; There can be no two opinions about . . . ; You are right in your judgment, but . . .," and so on down to this gem: "*Your desire to think it over is commendable, but . . .*"

The student is further instructed that "four salesmen out of five have got to be *actors*. In fact, *all* salesmen ought to be more or less actors. Follow the good actor's lead and learn your lines and then throw your feelings into them. Learn the places to get enthusiastic, the places to get calm, the places to bang your fists on the prospect's desk and the places to shut your mouth and keep quiet."

Having mastered all these principles, the student is ready for his first Prospect. But before he can make Selling Talks, he must manage to run his quarry down. If the Prospect is a business man in a down-town office, a careful plan of attack must be formulated. If the Prospect is a housewife or a farmer, a different and perhaps more subtle method must be used.

In discussing the stalking of a businessman, many of the books give full instructions for getting past what they refer to as the Outer Guards. These guards are generally office boys and stenographers. Some none too astute salesmen hand the office boy a card reading

Mr. B. Clyde Edgeworth,
Boston, Mass.

with the inscription in the corner, "Representing the United Bond Co." But this is bad practice, for

The office boy takes this to the inner office and returns a few moments later with the answer that the president is too busy today to see you. You have committed an error in your approach. There is nothing for you to do but leave and try at some future time when you have worked out a more unique method of getting the interview.

Here it is perfectly plain that the Prospect was warned that he was expected to part with money. He should not have been told in this abrupt way. The next time you call, if you are a good salesman, your card will read simply:

Mr. B. Clyde Edgeworth,
Boston, Mass.

The Prospect will be glad to see Mr. B. Clyde Edgeworth from Boston, Mass. If he is a lawyer, for example, he will probably surmise, or at least hope, that Mr. Edgeworth has come from Boston, Mass., to give him money. So Mr. Edgeworth is at once ushered in, and once he gets in he can take his choice of any number of approaches. One book suggests that he may even forget his card and explain to the office boy that he has none. This may induce the Prospect to think he has a client waiting outside.

It is even suggested that "many will insist on using a name so difficult that the office boy will forget it. Something like this is used by a clever salesman with a national reputation who enters the outer office and gives the name of Mr. Eishenhimmel." No office boy can remember this name, so the manager hears only that some gentleman from Boston wants to see him. This arouses his curiosity and the interview is granted.

Sometimes the Prospector finds an office unprotected. The proper method of procedure in this case is to stroll carelessly in, "indicating by this attitude that he is familiar with the surroundings." When the Prospect appears, the salesman informs him that he has been waiting for some time. This immediately puts the Prospect on the defensive. Still another way is for the salesman to walk up to a girl in charge and ask for the Prospect and then walk right in to his private office. This will lead to the belief that the girl has sent him in. "While the Prospect is wondering what is wrong with his office system, the salesman is getting warmed up on his talk."

The methods which are suggested for getting into the home and talking to the housewife are even more interesting. We are assured that the following plan is used with great success by the talented representative of a large canned soup company. He carries a thermos bottle filled with hot soup. He rings the bell and the door opens:

"Good morning, Madam."

He pours a small portion of the hot soup into a paper cup which he has handed her.

"I just want you to try this soup."

While she is tasting the soup, he gives a brief explanation and then endeavors to book her order for three or four cans. He explains that the order will be given to her grocer and delivered the same day. She need not pay until the end of the month.

All Prospects, of course, cannot be treated in the same manner. One canvasser was selling a household appliance. He always took note of everything that was to be seen both before he rang the bell and after the lady of the house appeared.

If the woman came to the door in an apron or working dress he said: "Have I interrupted you in your work? I am sorry." The average woman, overcome by his solicitous tone, protested that it was no trouble and the foxy salesman had a few sensible remarks to make on housekeeping, which brought him naturally to the appliance he had to sell.

Occasionally a sharp woman would come back, "Yes, I am busy and have no time today!" Thereupon, the salesman would agree quickly: "I'll bet that's true. When I was first married, my poor little wife just worked herself sick keeping up a house. And I made up my mind then that every little thing that I could get for her to save a little bit of work or time I would if it would take my last dollar."

The woman is softened.

"And I accidentally ran across the cleverest thing you ever saw for saving her back—here it is right here—I've helped, oh, I guess 2,000 women, to get one like it."

And he is on with his canvass.

Some methods are a little more drastic. One book tells of excellent success following making the Prospect angry.

It was up to me to get their attention. What did I do? I tramped

on their corns. I reached over and plunked down on their corns. I really did this; I am not stuffing you. When they got red and mad all over, I knew that I had their attention. Then I would say: "I was clumsy, wasn't I? But profits, profits for you today and profits you haven't dreamed of. . . ."

The scientific salesman must not overlook the power of the magnetic eye. This power was first used by snakes in charming birds, and it has been long used in taming lions and other wild animals. Here is its modern application:

Can you look a prospect straight in the eye? Can you keep him looking at you while driving home a point? If you can't, learn how. If you want to be master of the situation, if you want to cast an influence over his mind that will be hard to resist, do it with the eye. If you can hold your gaze on a man without wavering, you can practically persuade him in every instance, unless your proposition is too unreasonable.

While looking a prospect straight in the eye, *it gives him no chance to reason or reflect*. An idea is planted on the subjective mind. It is not analyzed. It is not compared with some past experience. *It is taken as a truth*.

The Prospector is given plenty of illustrations of the way to awaken the Prospect's imagination and create a Desire to Buy. A story is told of how a very talented expert was called in to increase the business of a shoe store. He soon discovered that it would be impossible to give its customers any better shoes or any more shoes for their money. Then he asked himself the question: "What more *can* we give?"

The salesman was required to take off the customer's shoe, get the size and an idea of the style desired.

Ordinarily, the next step would have been to bring out a few pairs of shoes and perhaps try them on.

Not so, now.

The salesman must examine the foot carefully. He must span the width with his fingers. Lift the foot up and put one hand on the sole and one on top as though getting its contour well in mind. Then he lays it on the floor and asks the customer to put his weight on it. Feels of each joint, squeezes the balls of the toes, and presses upward on the arch.

All this before he has made a single move towards actually fitting it.

The salesman then straightens up and looks at the foot critically—then examines the other foot.

The customer is watching and begins to feel that an *expert* is fitting him—and that he never had such careful attention before.

The salesman then goes to the shelves for shoes. He brings back only one. Does not put it on the customer's foot, but just compares the foot and shoe with his eye. Then returns it to the shelf and brings back another. This one he tries on, but with the same excess of carefulness as he used in his examination.

When the salesman pronounces the customer's foot fitted, it generally goes.

And the customer goes out with the shoes feeling that he has indeed received big value for his money.

I defy anyone to resist this method. Somewhere in my unconscious mind there lurks a suspicion that a Prospector has somewhere worked this game on me.

To influence a Prospect thoroughly, it is important to have an eye for details. As a rule, the salesman cannot get too close to the customer.

It is much better in talking with a Prospect not to sit at too great a distance from him. It has been demonstrated that if you sit or stand close you can make a better impression and will have more

influence than if at a distance. This may be accounted for by your personal magnetism, or the radiating of energy which at close range cannot help but prove more effective than at a distance.

Now and then a Prospect shows fight. He has a foolish idea that he ought to have something to say himself about how he spends his money. A good salesman is alert to catch the first sign of this untoward resistance. The Prospect is carefully enjoined, to quote the words of one of the books, that

If you keep a tight rein on a skittish horse, you can handle him, but the minute you let him grab the bit and feel he is boss, then you have a dangerous chance of a runaway.

This admonition is followed by a touching story of a clever salesman whose Prospect began to take the lead in the conversation. Disregarding all the rules, this Prospect forced the salesman to follow in *his* lead. Promptly the salesman shut him off.

At the first sign of unruliness in the Prospect, he began to pick at his thumb nail. As the Prospect got further out of control he would examine the supposedly afflicted thumb anxiously. Then in the middle of the Prospect's remarks he would say, "Pardon me, but have you a sharp knife?" The Prospect produces a knife and generally apologizes for its not being very sharp. The salesman says that it will do and begins to cut at an imaginary hang-nail and complains of what a nuisance hang-nails are. The Prospect generally sympathizes and as he draws up to look at the operation, the salesman says, "There, I guess that's fixed," shuts the knife and with a sigh of relief looks up at the Prospect again. "Let's see, what were we talking about? Oh yes, about so and so. . . ."

The whole procedure may be summed up in one sentence, taken from a leading text-book: *Do not permit the Prospect to reason and reflect.* A scientific salesman must always bear in mind that it is his first duty to get control.

A thoroughly trained psychologist, by observing the facial expression of his Prospect, his feeble remarks, his wariness, and his show of fight, ought to be prepared at any moment to change his tactics. The expert fisherman tries out the fish—if one kind of *bait* doesn't get the strike, he changes. And if one kind of hook doesn't *land* them he changes hooks. If he is alert, aggressive, masterful, persistent and a thorough psychologist he perseveres. He carefully lays his snares, places his bait and, then the unsuspecting Prospect falls into the trap.

No matter how good an approach you have made, regardless of how clever or how perfect your Selling Talk may be, it is all of no avail unless you close the sale. Therefore, you should have a Reserve Talk in readiness if the need should arise. In large letters the salesman is told that "many Prospects must be led; others driven. The closing argument must be directed at the Prospect's *weakness*. Tie your Prospect up so that he must act. The majority of salesmen make it too easy for him to slip away. Tie him up so that he cannot *possibly* back down."

Many a Prospect, after he has taken the fatal step, has glimmering thoughts, it appears, of payday or of the needs of his customers. This sometimes brings him cold feet and a sinking sensation at the pit of the stomach. He wishes that he hadn't. Here the well equipped, thoroughly trained master of psychology is prepared.

No matter how great the advantage won in a purchase, there nearly always comes an instant after the decision when the purchaser grows cold and "sorter wishes he hadn't done it," and that is the time when the good salesman puts one final long, strong tooth into his talk. He must keep the customer's interest going until he gets into some other subject. The salesman in a large cut-price tailoring establishment had suffered much from cancelled orders

and has now been trained in this knack of speeding the customer's interest up after a purchase. As the customer's measurements are finished, the salesman again picks up the selected goods and pats them affectionately.

"I wanted a suit off this piece myself," he says regretfully, "but the buyer wouldn't let any of us boys have it. It's an unusual piece of goods and they don't waste such a piece on any of us fellows in the shop. Yes, you'll never regret *this* suit," and then he goes on to make out the sales ticket.

After the sale, be brief, remind the purchaser of the excellence of his bargain, make some complimentary remark about his business, his home or whatever concerns him most, and as he leaves, shake his hand. In a word, be courteous, calm and confident.

It is obvious that these astounding books on salesmanship are symptomatic of the age. In literary quality, they are crude to the last degree. The motive back of all of them is not even veiled. The reader is simply urged to get the money and get it quickly. Alluring advertisements are sent broadcast to the struggling and the dull-witted, asking them to part with their cash to buy books and take courses that they may get money from others even more dull-witted than themselves. They are told that they need only learn a few tricks, and they can at once overmatch the credulous Prospect. I am informed that less than 50 percent of those who buy the books and make their first payments ever finish the course of instruction, and that of those who get through only a few ever ride in Pullman cars, "live at the best hotels, and enjoy the companionship of Prosperous Business Men." They simply have a dream, and then go back to work.

Of course, no one could make money out of a school to educate Prospects in resisting the wiles of the Prospector. Still, some philanthropist might endow such a school. Better yet, our existing institutions of learning might lay out courses to teach the public what to buy, where to buy, and how to buy, including instruction in what not to buy, and where not to buy it. Every one knows how many hard-working men and women, in the hope of getting relief from toil for themselves and their families, have invested their money in fake oil stocks, mining stocks, patent rights, real-estate subdivisions, and all sorts of similar frauds. Many of these are now toiling in their old age, many are receiving alms from their relatives and friends, many others are in poor-houses and in jails. Something might be done for this ever-growing army of Prospects. These are the victims of the new High-Power Salesmanship.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

By E. Haldeman-Julius

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WHO'S AFRAID AND WHY?

Governments, or individuals having the power to speak for governments, can be peevish sometimes. It is hard to see any better explanation for the refusal of the Soviet government to grant visas to members of a Senate Appropriations Committee, on a visit to Europe which may be more or less of a sight-seeing tour with a weather eye on the possibilities of propaganda, but which doesn't appear to be a serious threat to anyone. Assuredly Stalin and Co. could have let the senators in but kept them harmless. It is absurd to think that the Kremlin walls would begin to tremble like the mythical walls of Jerico the minute the senators crossed the border. No; it seems more reasonable to assume that somebody was sore and said, "You're not welcome here. How do you like that?"

Granted that there is some justification for resentment, in view of the "warmongering"—Vishinsky used the correct term there—in the United States and the vicious, unintelligent attacks upon the Soviet Union. Even so, it would have been smarter to admit the senatorial party, instead of furnishing one more incident for the abusers of Russia to pounce upon.

There is similar foolishness on our side of what some call the iron curtain, what Henry Wallace has called the silken curtain and what lately has been called the golden curtain (i.e., the Marshall plan). By no stretch of the imagination could it be called statesmanlike to place restrictions upon Pierre Courtade, who was sent by *L'Humanite*, French Communist paper, to report the proceedings of the United Nations. Courtade can't step outside a certain zone nor write about anything but UN; if he should sneak across to Hoboken for beer and clams, he would be hustled out of the country on the next ship, spending the interval in jail so that Truman wouldn't have to look under the bed every night; or if Comrade Courtade, though staying within the lines of the little *cordon sanitaire*, should include in his copy a subversive complaint about the Manhattan subway service, the cell door would slam with similar celerity for the safety of the republic.

It all seems childish. Surely no one in Washington thinks that if Monsieur Courtade were permitted to travel wherever he wished and to write whatever he pleased for his paper—all of which would be in the older and nobler and braver tradition of a free America—surely no one, in his sane and sober moments, actually fears that Courtade could put this government in jeopardy or slice even a splinter out of one of the props of our plutocratic-democratic republic. Probably this particular incident only means that President Truman or Secretary Marshall or someone in the State Department is sore because American correspondents at the Moscow conference of foreign ministers were restricted in their movements and messages and Courtade was limited in the spirit of tit for tat.

There is, of course, a much graver significance in the whole trend of our foreign policy as uttered by the voice of Jacob (Truman) but guided by the hand of Esau (Wall Street). Under our present irresponsible leadership, we are embarking upon a new program—a more vast and terrifying program—of American imperialism. Capitalistic greed and arrogance and fear of Communism, which can only mean lack of belief and confidence in democracy, is swaggering dangerously with a pocketful of atomic bombs. This lust for power, this vision of a capitalist world with its headquarters in Wall Street, is driving us straight toward a third World War and the dreadful possibility that H. G. Wells was right when he warned that “the story of mankind, which began in a cave, might end in the disease-soaked ruins of a slum.”

All the world may be a slum if the politics of power rather than humanity continues to dominate the councils of Washington and, let us add, Moscow. At the moment it is Washington that is more important. It is more important to American citizens, because we can try to influence Washington to a more reasonable course; we can try to stop the threats of war from our side of whatever curtains there be. America, too, being the strongest country in the world and the most secure at the moment (though resting on a most insecure economic system) can afford to make every effort to lead the world in the direction of peace. Indeed, we cannot afford to do otherwise. Warlike talk and action is the greatest threat, not simply to Russia, but to us—to our own welfare—and to the near future of civilization. Nothing is clearer than that Russia does not want war. Who does and why? Let Truman—and Wall Street—tell us.

* * *

ESCAPE INTO THE FUTURE

World War II “brutalized” the American people, says Dr. Bernard Iddings Bell, Episcopal chaplain at the University of Chicago. *The Chicago Sun* reports Bro. Bell as making this serious though not startling charge in an address to the Sunday Evening Club in America’s second city. The assertion is not startling because, in so far as it is true, it is a statement of the obvious with which thoughtful observers have been sadly familiar through the centuries. War has always had a brutalizing effect. It stirs up the worst impulses of men. Even the impulse of well-grounded fear is a bad one. Men may perform deeds of heroism, but they do not show their nobler nature, when they are lashed by the hateful whips of fear.

The recent war has, of course, had another kind of effect, which regrettably is perhaps not commensurate with its effect of brutalization. It has aroused thousands of men, all men with any capacity for thoughtfulness, to the terrible danger in which civilization stands so long as it must suffer from what Joseph McCabe in one of his Haldeman-Julius books has called “this cancer on the creative vitality of the race.” Intelligent men and women realize more and more clearly that war, which is itself the outgrowth of more basic evils in our social organization, endangers not only the further progress of the race but its actual survival in a civilized (and the only important) sense.

It is true that this realization is not enough if it merely takes the form of a horror of war and a protest against it. The social organization must be changed so as to remove the causes of war. There must be world-wide democracy, world-wide cooperation, in the economic and the political sphere. It is not, as is so often loosely said, a change in human nature that is needed; what we must have is a change in human institutions; human nature must be given new incentives, new opportunities and a new direction. These may come from the force of events, from the operation of causes that are greater than the individual, or they may come from—at least they may be helped by—scientific and humane thinking which will provide a spur and guide to the making of a world we can decently, safely live in. This effort must be a con-

tinuation, not a denial, of those movements which have made for progress. In the light of this thought, we glance with suspicion at another remark made by Bro. Bell:

What the world needs right now more than anything else is a lot of awakened rebels who can look our modern civilization in the face, laugh it to scorn and escape from its clutches.

Escape where? We don't suppose Bro. Bell was suggesting mass suicide. Could he have meant that we should return to some earlier civilization or some earlier, not so civilized age? Suppose we could "escape" back to medievalism. Man was more brutalized then; in fact, the brute predominated. A century ago, even half a century ago, when men were merely on the threshold of modern civilization, they had all the faults and their way of life had all the dangers that we see about us today. Events have greater speed today and their scope is wider, tendencies quicken as we near the climax of the age of capitalism, but there has been no break in the continuity of history.

Our modern civilization is the product of many forces, both good and bad. How can we separate the good from the bad? Suppose we divide them into the constructive and cooperative forces and the destructive and divisive forces. If these forces seem to intermingle, let us not be misled. All things intermingle in life. Sun, wind and rain, which carry life, also bring death at times. What counts is how man uses the forces of nature in the conduct of his own affairs. No one can deny that science, which under the *unscientific* pressure of war has brought the atomic bomb to horrify and threaten us, is the greatest constructive force (one might say the sum of all constructive forces) in the history of the race. Freedom of thought, the spirit of social justice, the love of knowledge, the vision of the possibilities of life with all its arts and amenities—all have had their meaning only as they have helped in the development of science and as they have been helped by that development to expand the frontiers and widen the horizons of human thought and effort.

Without some science, human survival would have been impossible. When primitive men learned how to make fire, to fashion crude tools and to erect rude shelters, they began the story of scientific development. From the Stone Age to the Atomic Age, man has been raised above the rest of nature by his knowledge and nothing else. The brightest ages of history are those in which knowledge was most free and therefore most progressive.

The destructive forces are obvious. Greed is destructive. So is hate. So is fear. So is ignorance. A creed that limits the mind of man is an influence which destroys the spirit of progress—or stifles it—or retards it. Whatever opposes knowledge is destructive. Anything that stands in the way of human progress, anything that misuses or misdirects progress, is a force that destroys. The great principles and productions of science, which are essentially constructive and potentially beneficent, have been swerved from their true aims and abused for destructive ends by men whose motives, narrow and corrupt, stem from the pre-scientific age. We are destroyed or threatened with destruction, not by what is modern and civilized in our age, but by what we inherit from the unscientific past. Old creeds, old habits of thought, old institutions and frameworks of ancient policy: these are destructive agencies.

Our age, in spite of what Bro. Bell and other short-sighted obscurantists may cry, is the brightest of all in its possibilities, as well as the most challenging of all in its dangerous issues, which all intelligent men recognize. But it is only with knowledge, which is to say with science and free thought, that we can meet these issues and solve these problems.

Let us remember that science did not produce only the atomic bomb (which it produced only at the command of *unscientific* political and military leaders) but that it has given to mankind the secret of atomic energy which, in a sane social system, freed from the *unscientific* leadership of greedy and narrow-visioned and selfishly ambitious men and

the *unscientific* compulsions inherited from the past, can at last provide mankind with a free and abundant and intelligent life.

Only science, guided by a social conscience and used within the protective framework of free, democratic, humane social institutions, can give us the power to escape from what Bro. Bell inexactly and insinuatingly calls "our modern civilization." Science is the only thing about it that is modern. Science is also (including the freedom of thought and the sense of social justice that accompany it) the only good thing about our civilization. The evils of this civilization have come down from the long past—the past of greed and superstition and intolerance and narrow, self-serving power in irresponsible hands—from which science has not yet been able to emancipate us. That emancipation will not be furthered by any such escape as Bro. Bell suggests—unless it is by an "escape" into a future still more modern, still more civilized.

* * *

GIVE THE A.D.A. CREDIT

Credit Americans for Democratic Action for blasting the idea of the Marshall Plan for relieving distress in Europe being used or abused for the purpose of forcing Europeans to subscribe to what we are so fond of calling "our free enterprise system." It declares that confusionists in Congress and elsewhere have proposed that aid under the Marshall Plan be withheld or drastically limited unless democratic Europe foregoes all forms of socialization. "This is the perilous formula of America's new isolationists which would deny to Western Europe, as surely as the Communists would, their free choice of economic and social institutions."

* * *

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

If a mosque could have stood on the site of St. Paul's, had Charles Martel not conquered the Moslems at Tours, by the same token Napoleon might not have died at St. Helena if he had not dismissed Fulton's plan for propelling warships by steam power as visionary. Nelson and the British fleet put a crimp in Napoleon's ambitions, but while the Little Corporal used more artillery than hitherto had been employed in land battles, he had the "military mind" when it came to anything really novel. Apropos of that military mind, Denis de Rougemont, who has written a little book entitled the "Last Trump," ridicules our advocates of universal military training, and adds: "The stout-hearted captains and armies in fine array advancing undaunted against the atomic bomb would return in a few moments in the form of light vapor."

It might have been. Suppose Brunel, of Britain's Great Western Railway, had triumphed over Stevenson in 1869 and had gotten a track gage of seven feet made standard instead of four feet, eight inches, what more roomy trains we might have to ride in today? Jacques Martial, in *Mechanix Illustrated*, suggests a gage of 10 feet which would allow coaches 18 feet wide, or virtual traveling hotels, but don't imagine American railways with four-track lines convertible to two 10-foot tracks will hurry to adopt his suggestion for making rail travel pleasant and capable of competing with planes and automobiles. The old Normandie used to remind one of a floating Waldorf-Astoria, but one can't see railways reaching that sort of estate at this late day.

* * *

DE ROUGEMONT'S BIG THREE

Has Denis de Rougemont got the right idea? "From the middle of the 20th century," he says, "our world has been governed by the so-called Big Three. They are composed of a wolf in sheep's clothing and two

sheep in their true garb." Having made this observation, he asks "are we insane? Are we to go on with this game until the world is blown up? Are we going to entrust the fate of the planet to three over-burdened, harassed men?"

* * *

HOTTER THAN HADES!

Dr. Philip Morrison believes the internal temperature of an atomic bomb reaches 55 million degrees centigrade, which is more than double and nearly three times that assigned to the center of the sun by the latest revision of the carbon cycle theory of solar heat and radiation. The surface temperature of the ball of fire produced by that bomb has been set at from 3,000 to 9,000 degrees centigrade compared with the 6,000 commonly assigned Old Sol. A bomb 1,000 times the power of our Nagasaki Model T could, from theoretical considerations, be expected to have 10-fold its temperature, which means that it would radiate 10 to the 4th power as much heat in a given time. Hence, if that sort of bomb fell on Chicago, unprotected skin would be burned 100 times as far away as at Nagasaki—250 miles at least—while the heat accompanying the destruction of the Windy City would be felt 500 miles, or as far away as Buffalo in the east and as far as Omaha, Kansas City, and Girard in the west and southwest. Judging from Nagasaki experience, Patsy O'Bang wouldn't lose all his hair if he were in Kansas when Chicago was blotted from the map, but such might well be his fate if he were visiting in Davenport, Iowa; Terra Haute, Indiana; or Milwaukee, Wisconsin. There might be a little satisfaction, of course, in thinking that the radiation surface of that bomb would fall short of the 40,000,000 temperature of Sir James Jeans's hypothetical penny, which he said would kill all life in 10,000 miles. Also that it wouldn't have quite the expansion force of Dr. Langmuir's hypothetical quart of disassociated electrons equal to what the explosion of a cube of TNT might deliver in 600 miles on a side and reaching from Illinois over into Kansas. True a possible atomic bomb might split the crust of the earth all the way around to a depth of 40 miles if properly applied, since in the term of dynes that Nagasaki bomb did better than the San Francisco and Charleston earthquakes, despite occasional detractors of atomic energy who wishfully say the contrary, but do no figuring on their own account.

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RUSSIAN LOSSES TOPS IN BOTH WORLD WARS

Can you altogether blame the Soviet Union being sour on her former allies in the second World War? According to General Marshall, Russia furnished 7,500,000, or half of the 15,000,000 accounted dead or missing in the last war. She lost one in every 22 of her population, while we only lost one in 500. Other losses, according to Marshall, are as follows: Germany one in 25, Japan one in 46, Italy one in 150, Great Britain one in 150, France and China one in 200. Great Britain's far-flung empire, taken as a whole, lost only one to 1,200 of its population.

Those, incidentally, who doubt if the atomic bomb is an "absolute weapon," might observe that Germany quit on a 4 percent loss including 1 percent of civilians. Would Great Britain and the United States keep right on fighting after an initial attack on either one of them with atomic rockets causing a loss five or six times 4 percent in a few hours or minutes? A loss, if you please, 100 times greater than we were called upon to sustain? If General Groves imagines the United States or any other country would have any fight left after an atomic rocket Pearl Harbor, President Frank B. Jewett, of our National Academy of Science, apparently cherishes no such illusion.

Writing in the fifth series of "Science in Progress, 1947," Dr. Jewett

discusses the "abject fear" which the atomic bomb would create, a "fear that is completely destructive of morale." In TNT bombing, such as Britain and Germany were subjected to in the second World War, Jewett declares that although morale was seriously affected, it did not altogether vanish because "Men knew that in such bombing only a fraction are killed in each operation and each knows that he may be among the lucky survivors." When man knows, however, "that all life or nearly all life within a great lethal area will perish in a single blast and that the area of destruction may be anywhere, anytime, the case is quite different and his fear becomes abject fear." Which is to say that panic following a plutonium destruction of Washington, New York, Chicago, etc., would be absolutely uncontrollable.

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EUGENE V. DEBS: THE REAL AND THE IDEAL

Irving Stone marked out for himself an extremely difficult task when he decided to try to bring the flaming personality of Eugene V. Debs to life in a biographical novel ("Adversary in the House"). His success is only partial. The book lacks the final touch of creative magic. On the whole, it is adequate; it is sincere; it is readable; but it is not inspired. Wherein lies the difference? I suggest that one reads a *good* book as an interested observer, a *great* book as a self-forgetful participant. As I followed Stone's well-arranged narrative, I found that my prevailing mood was that of one who was looking AT Debs and his career and only half sharing the great adventure WITH Debs. Yet I hasten to acknowledge, in all fairness, that my own incomplete response may have arisen less from any failure of Stone's than from the vividness of my own memories of Gene Debs. I don't suppose any novel or biography or combination of the two could have the glorious vitality of the Debs I knew.

Those who didn't know America's greatest Socialist leader, particularly those of a later generation, ought to find "Adversary in the House" a moving story, strange and poignant in its doubly dramatic theme: for side by side with the wide social conflict that raised Debs to challenging leadership and to fame and martyrdom, Stone reveals the unceasing personal conflict that the leader had to face in his own house, with an unsympathetic wife, who saw her husband as absurd and impractical rather than heroic and who even went the length of taunting him as insincerely practicing and presenting to the world a "Christ-like pose."

"Our Gene," as his Socialist comrades called him, touches our hearts and wins our admiration in both of his ordeals: as one who with tender strength remained steadfast before the adversary in his own house and as one who, rising above the tragedy of his personal life, could still continue year after year and decade after decade to pour out an unexampled energy and enthusiasm in the fight for justice to the workers and for the spreading of the Socialist message.

I am glad that, alongside the glamorous picture of Debs which is most familiar to those who see him chiefly as a figure in history, Stone has given us a view of Debs as the patient, humble, self-sacrificing worker and fighter, enduring privations, suffering humiliations and overcoming obstacles that would have broken the spirit of a lesser man. We see not only the Debs who spoke eloquently to applauding thousands but also the Debs who, far outside the warming circle of the limelight and the heartening sound of the cheers, did infinitely more than his share of the hard, dusty, grinding—and virtually thankless—work of Labor and Socialist organization and agitation. We see Debs, as it were, using pick and shovel in the ranks as well as waving the banner of his bright genius.

Stone has another fine achievement—definitely an artistic achievement—to his credit. He has made Katherine Debs a real person. In the

conflict between husband and wife we are, naturally, always on Gene's side; but we understand Katherine's side, too—understand rather than condemn. We are permitted to see Katherine much as Gene himself saw her. There is presented for our intelligent comprehension, not a crude moral for the easy and simplified satisfaction of indolent minds, but that far more difficult thing: the profound drama of honestly clashing personalities and points of view. There was love between Katherine and Eugene but it was the love of sad, often bitter disagreement. This intimate conflict is, of course, the heart of the novel—together with the story of the woman whom Gene should have had for wife, who shared his ideals and who loved him (chastely, we are told) until the end. The greater theme—that of Debs the spokesman and leader—is unfolded conscientiously, over the long, tempestuous span of Debs's incomparable career; the details and the broad outlines are given adequately, too, if not with that indefinable art transcending art which would make Gene Debs completely live and breathe and move with full-bodied and bright-eyed splendor on the printed page.

Yet it is not the greatness of Debs that is altogether missing here. One sees much of that—and one sees much of the intimately human side of Debs, too, but not, I think, all of his easy and joyous naturalness. Stone tends to portray Debs too much in the role of the leader, the prophet, the saint and the martyr. These aspects of the man are valid; but it would have been better if the gay, fun-loving, rollicking, sometimes reckless Gene Debs had been brought more often and more fully to view. It is not that Stone has ignored this side of Debs's nature, but he has not given it the attention it deserves. Gene was not always sorrowing for humanity nor carrying the burdens of the world nor dreaming of an ideal society. At times he had a happy, heedless, hilarious gusto—I would say, admiringly, a vulgar, earthy gusto—which does not appear in this book. For instance, Debs didn't always drink, as Stone represents him, because he was sad; sometimes he drank because he was merry, from sheer sociability, or because he wanted to have a high old time. George Brewer could tell stories about that—stories that make one love Debs more and admire him none the less. I am sure that "Adversary in the House" would have gained a gay point in humanness if Stone had shown Debs and Brewer, having a few days free in the midst of an *Appeal to Reason* lecture tour, going from Buffalo to Cleveland for a brief spree because Gene was seized by the whim that it would be much more fun to clink glasses in Cleveland.

Also, better than most men, Gene could tell a brilliantly vulgar story; but unfailingly his selections (as Henry Watterson said of the tales he and Joe Jefferson exchanged) had a content of wit outbalancing the dirt. There was a letter, inspired by a slight but ludicrous typographical error, that Debs once wrote to Brewer when the latter was editing a Labor paper in Pittsburg, Kansas—a letter that might worthily rank with Mark Twain's "1601, or A Talk With the Tudors." Gene was much of a man among men. He had red blood in his veins and the plain, rugged stuff of the earth in his bones and much of the essence of Rabelais and Voltaire, along with that of Shelley and Wendell Phillips, in the marrow of him; and the stars of idealism that glittered always in his beautiful mind did not prevent him from seeing, appreciating and sharing the common sensations that are scattered along the pathway of life. He enjoyed common things in the common way, simply and naturally; yet there was something uncommon in his approach and response to everything, because Debs was a superior person even though he didn't seek to appear in that light; his greatness could not be hidden even in the most prosaic moment and while he met his fellows easily and unpretentiously in all moods and on all occasions, there was always some essential part of him that was on a higher plane, an aura of peculiar and winning nobility that was inseparable from this splendid man whether in a public or a private view.

I mention this side of Debs not to dim his glory or tarnish his

fame—no one, of course, could do that—but the more frankly to humanize him. Those who knew the complete and natural Debs, all that I have told and much more, loved and admired him wholeheartedly. Ingersoll complained that George Washington had been so idealized that he was only “a steel engraving.” No such lifeless portrait of Debs is given in “Adversary in the House.” But the picture does, I think, need a bit of rounding out. All great men, I make bold to say, have some of the compost of vulgarity in their makeup. As Kipling wrote, they can walk with kings but not lose the common touch. I remember writing many years ago that “Debs can look in a gutter and see stars.” He could also look at the stars and see the reflection there of the human gutter. He could stand on the heights, understand the depths and identify himself with the mixed, uncritical camaraderie of the general level where men are simply Gene and George and Fred, or Tom and Dick and Harry, and “the weather and the woodpile” offers as ready a subject of conversation as the burning issues of the day or the ultimate destiny of mankind. In a word, Gene Debs lived almost every kind of life: though he did not think of himself as a hero and here Stone is faithful to the man’s character, showing that he had a modest estimate of his own importance in relation to the movement he led.

Debs was as free from vanity as he was from selfishness. He never posed. He was always, to the hour of his death, as natural as a child—or as a poet. For as J. A. Wayland said, “At heart Debs is a poet—only so can one appreciate him.”

Not enough of Debs the poet, not enough of Debs the hail-fellow-well-met, is presented in “Adversary in the House.” Yet if Irving Stone hasn’t reached out to Gene Debs the resurrecting hand of genius, at least he has touched him truly with the fingertips of talent. The Gene Debs I knew doesn’t live—fully, flamingly live—in this book. It would be too much to ask. But a great man does live: a noble Gene Debs: a heroic and a human figure. Here, if not the complete Debs, is a Debs we can recognize and love and admire.

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OR “GET THEE TO A NUNNERY”

Mencken-Nathan’s “Americana” of 20 years ago never had a juicier windfall than this bit of Britannia which appears in *The Literary Guide and Rationalist Review* (London, England): “P. L.—No, it is not possible for ‘two devout Catholic girls’ who are ‘very much in love with one another’ to have ‘a matrimonial service.’ The Church’s matrimonial service is restricted to those who, in accordance with God’s holy institution, choose a partner of the opposite sex. Are there no eligible young men in your parish?—*The Catholic Times* (Inquiry Bureau).” Possibly it’s a small parish. The few “eligible young men” may have been rendered ineligible by the thoroughness of their indoctrination: all of them may have decided to become priests or monks. I don’t suppose I ought to hint that this would still give the girls an off chance or at least an off-the-record chance. That might be construed as “Catholic baiting.” So, unless they want to take St. Paul’s grouchily alternative of “burning,” they may have to take Hamlet’s advice to Ophelia.

* * *

CHURCH SERVICES FOR PETS

Odd reflections are suggested by a news item from Hereford, England, where in Holy Trinity church the Feast of St. Francis, patron saint of animals, was celebrated in a service uniquely designed for children and their pets. “In the church,” we read, “were five ponies, scores of dogs and cats, a number of rabbits, a guinea pig, and some pigeons. The Rev. H. Mayward read the lesson holding a pekinese in

his arms." It is remotely possible that this is a new wrinkle in Col. McCormick's anti-British propaganda, for we take the item from the Chicago Tribune Press Service. Accepting it as true, however, we mildly wonder if the different species of pets accompany their masters to the Moses heaven, or to a separate heaven for each species. Also we wonder about the Protestant pets. Unblessed by—or shall we say uninstructed in?—the only true Catholic faith and theology, what will happen to them? The thought of a heretic dog or a heathen cat is truly terrific.

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"Minister Wins Liars Contest" is the headline over a light anecdotal item in the *Chicago Daily News*. It was all in fun, of course—not in the rev. brother's official capacity. There the competition would have been much greater.

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A suggestive note on the sabbatarian aspect of theology is provided by the *Glasgow (Scotland) Forward* in its column, "Rob Ray Reports":

"Joe Westwood has been getting into hot water with some of the pundits of the Kirk for breaking the Sabbath by addressing the Labor Party's Highland Conference in Inverness last Sunday.

"I was stationed in the Inverness area during the war, but never noticed much objection to the Air Force's activities with bomb and gun. Apparently it's all right to blow the world to Hell on a Sunday—it's just putting it to rights that's a sin."

Could this clerical attitude be due to the fear that, in a world put to rights, the preachers would be out of a job?

* * *

THE LIVES OF BURTON RASCOE

One life, as ordinarily measured, could never have satisfied the curiosity and vigor of this lusty chap. The title of a popular book of the latter 30's ("Days of Our Years") can be reversed for him. Rascoe has crowded years into days and decades into years. The first and enduring impression one gets from his second volume of reminiscences—"We Were Interrupted," a sequel to "Before I Forget"—is that of an enormous capacity for both work and play. He tells us that he has begrudged the few hours he has had to yield to the unawareness of sleep. Where other men have rested, he has found a revival of his spirits in turning from one form of activity to another. And as shown by his large output of intelligent writing—writing both solid and brilliant—he has combined thought and action, has been mentally as well as physically eager for experience.

Rascoe, of course, has been most familiarly known as a literary critic: or, as doubtless he would prefer to have it, a writer about books. Here his viewpoint has always been free and inquiring, broad and hospitable. For 30 years he has been among the few critics who have welcomed new and honest talents. He has discussed books in relation to life; for him, they *are* life; he has lived in and through them, along with his dozen other activities, and he has not separated his reading from his living. Naturally there is much about writers and the literary scene, about editors and the inner sanctums of newspapers, in the vivacious, racing pages of "We Were Interrupted." There are also near and sometimes quite odd views of many other kinds of interesting people, including most of the celebrities, in and out of night clubs, who skipped across the front pages in the 1920's.

It is of this now fabulous decade that Rascoe writes in the present book and he makes those garish and gorgeous years live again in a panorama that is breath-taking. He doesn't waste much space in moralizing about them. He describes, delineates and reanimates that strange pageant: strange to us now, yet then, as Rascoe points out, most people accepted it as natural enough and lived through it more zestfully than

critically. It is the zest that Rascoe now emphasizes, with an irresistible and inimitable verve, yet though he disclaims a critical (at least a hypercritical) attitude the text shows that he perceived clearly enough much of the folly and the false thinking of the period. One understands and respects his feeling in not wanting to review it now from the toplofty, preachy vantage point of hindsight. He enjoyed those years thoroughly and he is honest enough to admit it.

There is nothing in Rascoe's delightful book that we would have wished left out. No doubt we—I, at any rate—could spare most readily his comments on economics. The nature of the economic system, he tells us, doesn't matter; any system will work as long as people have faith in it. I would put it the other way around: people will have faith in any system as long as it works. The followers of Ma Eddy would go Rascoe one better. They would deny that there is any economic system at all.

* * *

PAIN OVER DISUNITY

Rosamond Bennett, Worldover Press correspondent, quotes a delegate at the international conference of Christian youth (Oslo, Sweden) as saying: "The very pain we suffer over disunity is testimony to our sure knowledge that God wants unity." Pain over disunity is not necessarily a good sign. Bigots have suffered so much from the disunity of heretics that they have resorted to thumbscrew, rack and stake to enforce unity. Let's grant, however, that this modern Christian youth has a finer spirit and longs for brotherhood with toleration. But where does he get his "sure knowledge that God wants unity"? Assuming that God is really a *supreme* being, the Almighty God so often piously invoked, the strife-torn evidence of history would seem to be that he prefers disunity.

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THE OTHER SIDE OF GENEROSITY

When Henry Cabot Lodge, GOP Senator from Massachusetts, returned from a trip to Europe he told reporters he was shocked at the prevalence of "untruths" in the interpretation of American foreign policy. "We know how generous our intentions are," he declared, "but the worst possible intentions are being ascribed to us."

Possibly those Europeans have been reading American history. After all, there has been and there still is such a phenomenon as American imperialism. Like any major power in a competitive world, we have usually taken what we wanted and were able to take (*e.g.*, Mexico, the Philippines, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Nicaragua and recently the far Pacific islands, telling the UN to like it or lump it). Our record has been pretty bad at times and in some respects it has been, at least in the long run, rather better than the records of other imperialisms.

Today the Truman-Wall Street combination seems to be generous in sending billions of the American people's money to Europe. But what's the other side of it—the side which it distresses Sen. Lodge to hear mentioned with such cynical realism? Actually, we are trading money for power. Those who are now leading us on a reckless path want political and economic supremacy and to obtain it they are willing to risk—indeed, frequently it seems that they invite—a third world war (which means an atomic war). Our aim in Greece and Turkey is surely not benevolent. We (Truman and Wall Street) have an eye on the Near East oil pools. We want western Europe kept open for the profit-seeking operations of "free enterprise." It doesn't seem that it would be worth the price that may be paid; but that's the meaning of the Marshall plan.

Russia is the power that, according to the present view of Washing-

ton and Wall Street, threatens to block our "generous" and grandiose plans. As *PM* says (in line with what The Freeman has repeatedly said), "no casual reader of the American press and no one who knows the spirit of official Washington today can deny that far too many persons, inside and outside the Government, are deliberately whipping up public opinion in order to prepare for war—even in some circles an undeclared preventive war—against the USSR." *PM* goes on to point out:

"We have no doubt that the Russian general staff is preparing as busily for war with the U.S.A. as the U.S. general staff is preparing for war with the U.S.S.R. We have no doubt that there are elements in the Kremlin who are as skeptical as their opposite numbers in Washington and Wall Street of the possibility of permanent peace between Capitalism and Communism.

"But certainly neither our correspondents in Moscow nor the copies of *Izvestia* and *Pravda* and other government-controlled Russian publications which arrive regularly in this country show comparable evidence of any intention to whip up Russian public opinion for an attack upon the U.S.A. We do not believe that any responsible official in Washington or London thinks that the U.S.S.R. is contemplating any such attack. This is a bogey and a criminal bogey, designed to provide some more justification for an attack from our own side."

This is the other side of our seeming generosity, which not only Europeans but many Americans see and from which they shrink with horror. Other Americans hope that they may be successful in opposing, while there is yet time, this mad race toward an atomic war. Surely Senator Lodge wouldn't consider a rain of atomic bombs a desirable final expression of our "generous intentions." Or would he?

* * *

McCABE AND H-J EXAMINED

A student at the University of Buffalo submitted a questionnaire to some professors (the majority of them in the Arts, Sciences and English Departments, but none of them in Engineering), in which they were asked to express their opinions on E. Haldeman-Julius and Joseph McCabe. All were familiar with both E. H-J and J. McC and said they considered them intelligent men. The main objections, though not forcefully pushed, are:

1. Over-use of emotional language which destroys the value of any objective language used;
2. Excellent material for uneducated minds on high-school level, but a far cry from suitable material for the intelligentsia;
3. Both men do good work but debase it with petty slander which is below their dignity;
4. Their writings are a rehash of old ideas found among the masters and may not be considered as authoritative (in the sense that only those who delve deeply into one field for a lifetime are authorities.)

These are familiar criticisms. I will try to comment on them unemotionally. Not that I believe emotion should be kept out of discussion. Even professors, though their jobs usually dictate a dry and cautious manner of expression, cannot entirely avoid the use of descriptive language: and, after all, terms of description convey some feeling about the nature of the thing described. What the profs really mean, I suppose—what they object to in the present instance—is that McCabe and I sometimes use strong, vivid, picturesque language. So did Voltaire. On that score, we are proud to be associated with the masters, who couldn't have written tamely if they had tried. Ideas were vital to Voltaire. So they are to McCabe and me. We are militant and we don't mind admitting it.

What is bad is for one's opinions to be wholly the product of emotion.

Just because a man feels something ought to be true, or would be nice if it were true, doesn't make it true. Think carefully. Consider the facts. Take pains to form a thoughtful, realistic view of life. Then express yourself with strength and liveliness. Use ideas as weapons. That's my way. If I didn't feel that what I write is important, I wouldn't bother to write it, let alone put it in dull and lifeless terms, equally inoffensive and uninteresting.

I would be pleased to think that what McCabe and I write appeals generally to minds on a high school level. It would be a happy omen and would mean that we were advancing more rapidly than we are in bringing enlightenment to the people. As it is, we are not doing badly, but unfortunately we are not doing that well. We want to attract more inquiring minds at the high school level or at any level. Age doesn't matter. A high school student who really thinks, whose mind is open, whose interests are intelligent has an attitude that might well be emulated by those older in years who have never thought, or who have ceased to think, who have become mentally lazy and have fallen into a conventional, complacent rut. On this point I might remark that if McCabe and I provide "excellent material for uneducated minds," that means we are carrying on a work of education—and that's all to the good. It's what we are after.

I don't know what the pros mean by "petty slander"—that is, I don't know precisely on what instance they base this accusation. They'll have to be more specific. Whom have McCabe and I slandered? In fact, when and where and how have we been petty? We deal with major ideas, not with anything petty as regards either principles or personalities. I suppose I *have* been impolite, while McCabe in his somewhat more dignified way has been scornful, when discussing some ideas and, by parallel, the men who promote such ideas. Yet Voltaire and Paine and Ingersoll could, at their best, surpass both McCabe and me with the grand, inspired "emotionalism" of their attacks upon superstition.

Sadly enough, the struggle for Freethought, widely successful as it has been, is yet far from wholly won; and so it is still necessary to present again and again "a rehash of old ideas." They are important ideas. I make no apology for keeping them alive.

As for being an expert, I make no pretense of that: unless I might call myself an expert in what *The New Yorker* gently characterizes as my "peculiar" kind of publishing: and, of course, I am an expert on the subject of what I think about life. I do consider Joseph McCabe an expert—several kinds of an expert. For one thing, I would call him an expert on the experts. He is familiar with and is able to interpret in a popular way what the leading experts have to say in their different fields. He is, I should say, an expert on the general trends and meaning of history. He can't write with exhaustive authority on the styles of medieval armor or the use of cosmetics at the court of Louis XIV or the ulterior significance of the penultimate syllable in the middle of the 16th century; but he can discuss with a wide and illuminating authority the history of the major movements of human progress; he can explain with a broad expertness, and with the help of narrower experts specializing in a score of separate fields, how certain forces have helped mankind forward and certain other forces have held back the onward march of the race.

These are suggestions of mine. McCabe himself, in his autobiography which I have just published ("Eighty Years a Rebel"), gives a careful statement of his position as he sees it. "It is, of course," he writes, "absurd to suggest that I ever professed to be more than a camp-follower of science, though I might claim a few modest discoveries." McCabe claims only to be a popular interpreter of science as a whole; and with regard both to science and history, he makes one claim and one claim only to specialism or expertness: he is, he tells us, not a specialist "except on religion and all knowledge that bears upon religion." There are certain sciences—biology, for instance, and anthropology—which

bear closely and vitally upon the subject of religion: this significance has been studied deeply by McCabe and he does claim to speak with authority on it—on what these sciences have to tell us about religion. Also McCabe has made a special, careful, lifelong study of history with particular attention to the origin and evolution of religion; and here, too, he has gathered and compared and interpreted knowledge with a thoroughness which entitles him to the name of expert.

I think it is perfectly correct to say that Joseph McCabe knows more about religion—take it from any viewpoint you will—than any man living. I think he has a more complete and scholarly grasp of this subject than any man, in any age, has ever had: more knowledge is available today and of this knowledge McCabe has availed himself most thoroughly. I would be interested to see how the professors at the University of Buffalo would go about the job of challenging McCabe's expertness in this broad field: a field in which, after all, my philosophy of life must have its roots.

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"TWO IS COMPANY—"

After all that has been written on "the economy of scarcity," the best thing pops up in the form of a casual note—what might be called a "society" note, unintentionally illuminating—in the *Topeka (Kans.) State Journal*. That paper quotes as follows the view of a Topeka man who had just returned from a trip to New York:

"The hotel situation is worse than ever. Better have your accommodations arranged far ahead—and get your room the day before if you want to get into it before the following night. Restaurants crowded, as usual—and the shows, too. Don't figure on enjoying yourself in New York until the depression hits."

In other words, capitalistic "free enterprise" is designed to provide the elbow room of prosperity and a good time for only a relative few. When money is plentiful, the things that money buys are scarce, because too many people are in the market for them. When money is scarce, when a depression thins out the crowd of spenders, then the lucky fellows with bank rolls can enjoy themselves in expensive and leisurely style. There are not enough luxuries, let alone necessities, to go round. "Conspicuous waste" a la Veblen must be a class, not a mass, phenomenon: it isn't conspicuous—and it isn't comfortable—when there are too many hands reaching out in an eager, impatient display of folding money.

It is the hands of the middle classes that are too full and forward in this demand ruefully recorded by the returning Topekan. There may be rare exceptions but on the whole it is not the workers who are crowding the theaters, restaurants and hotels of New York. They are business and professional people from the 48 states—and certainly, too, from Hawaii and Alaska which want to be the 49th and 50th. The "free enterprise" they worship can't even take care of them in the style to which they would like to be accustomed.

All people, of course, should be able to enjoy the luxuries as well as the necessities in a spacious way. Life should be pleasant without jostling and without many being left to stand unserved without the door. This economy of abundance (and plenty of room) cannot be achieved without the intelligently socialized use of mankind's resources, machinery and labor power. Under capitalism, the old saying will always hold irksomely true: "Two is company, three is a crowd."

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LO! THE "PAGAN" FARMERS

Midwest farmers are becoming pagans, says the editor of *Successful Farming* (Des Moines, Iowa). What apparently he means, judging from

the sedately regretful editorial he writes, is that the farm folks are showing signs of materialism. They care more for substantial possessions and enjoyments in the here and now than for what St. Paul called "the substance of things hoped for." This editor says:

"Frankly, we are quite depressed at the church situation throughout the Midwest. A woeful lack of good business judgment, rather than a lack of religious fervor, marks many church failures. But in numerous instances we find ample money and resources; the thing missing is sufficient desire to make a going religious center possible.

"Worship of fat cattle and big crops—yes, even a shiny automobile—may be sufficient inspiration for some folks. Will the same be true in another generation or two?

"We have inherited from our grandparents and our parents the basic principles of Christianity. Unconsciously perhaps, those principles have ruled our lives. Just what kind of a farm philosophy may we expect when those principles have been forgotten completely?

"Frankly, the trend toward paganism concerns us far more than the hint of a business depression."

Twice frank, this editor makes me his debtor for his disarming candor. It is from such reports that I am able to learn more and more about what is going on in our America—and in the minds of our fellow Americans. Partly, of course, this "news" lacks the informative touch. Farmers in Iowa and other midwestern states haven't suddenly, in recent years, become impressed with a regard for material things. Pa and grandpa, zealous Christians as they no doubt were, didn't neglect the accumulation of worldly goods. More than one tidy estate handed down from grandfather to father to son testifies to their acquisitive, thrifty materialism.

The dying out of interest in religion is, however, a modern and interesting tendency. It isn't due to prosperity. Piety and prosperity went hand in hand with the progenitors of the present-day Iowa agriculturists. It must be that these modern farmers in the Middle West, with machines to lighten their labor, have more leisure for reading and thinking. Undoubtedly many of them have been reading *The American Freeman* and settling down for many a cozy, cogitative evening with the books of Joseph McCabe and other Haldeman-Julius publications. And they haven't been harmed by it—not even in their farming. Modern methods of tilling the soil are far more productive than in the days of godly grandpa and pious papa.

Even the editor of *Successful Farming* admits that paganism has paid well. Science has always been a better guide to life than superstition. It is this success, indeed, that seems to alarm the Iowa editor. There is even a hint that he would welcome an economic depression if it would humble the flourishing farmers and revive their interest in the moribund churches.

Here the editor is dealing with dangerous things. When this temporary prosperity ends, when the harsh logic of capitalism comes to the conclusion of its relentless syllogism, the Iowa farmers may still ignore the church and turn to the methods—still materialistic—of democratic Socialism.

But so far, so good. Today the midwestern farmers are pagans. They are materialists. They are staying away from church and, we trust and in some part believe, are reading *The Freeman* and the books of Joseph McCabe. That means they are waking up. And when people wake up, they begin to live.

* * *

A LUMP OF SUGAR OR A LUMP IN THE THROAT?

Though not of international importance, and far removed from the problems of the present age, the question of the difference between

verse and *poetry* has sometimes interested me. The difference is great, though it may hang upon a word or the turn of a phrase. It is hard to explain yet easy to recognize—at least, the cultivated reader will instantly recognize it and even one who has read little may sense, while he may not quite realize, the contrast between lines that only present the facile agreement of technical rhyme and lines that reach higher levels of imagery and thought. What is better, I finally tell myself, than a precise and vivid illustration? I present a thought, expressed by two poets—exactly the same thought, yet how different the expression! Our American poet, Whittier, who wrote some lines that were almost great, also gave us this tepid truism:

Of all sad words of tongue or pen
The saddest are these, It might have been.

Does that give you a thrill? No—I'm sure it doesn't. It's merely the statement of a fact, put into the form of rhyme. Now turn to a quatrain from Omar Khayyam, as imperishably rendered into English by the sensitive and patient genius of Edward Fitzgerald:

The Moving Finger writes and, having writ,
Moves on; nor all your piety or wit
Can lure it back to cancel half a line
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.

Do I need to explain the difference? It leaps to the eye. Whittier gave us *verse*. Omar (Fitzgerald) gave us *poetry*.

* * *

CRIME AND THE JEWS

Rarest of all accusations leveled against the Jews is that they are inclined to crime. Many who dislike the Jews, for no good reason or because of unpleasant personal experiences from which they generalize carelessly, will admit—albeit, sometimes, in a rather grudging tone—that “After all, they are law-abiding.” This does not apply, of course, to your typical anti-Semite. Always vicious and usually ignorant, this spreader of racial hatred will urge any slander in the hope that if it is odious enough and is repeated often enough it will find credence among the unthinking.

Just for the record, therefore, let me pass on some specific, official figures. Take New York state, where in a population of 12,959,000 for the whole state the Jews number 2,234,400, which amounts to a percentage of 17.24. Yet in New York penal institutions (1940-42) among a total of 36,972 prisoners the Jews numbered only 746 or only 2.02 percent. According to the most recent statistics, in the eight American states which have 80 percent of the Jewish population, the total percentage of Jews is 7.50 and the prison percentage of Jews is 2.09. Thus we see that, while, of course, there are some criminals among those of Jewish ancestry, they are not only actually but *proportionately* few in number.

Now, not being anti-anything except anti-intolerance and anti-ignorance, I will not jump to the invidious conclusion that other so-called racial groups have “bad blood” or are mysteriously worse than the Jews. Groups as well as individuals exhibit in their patterns of behavior the influences both of their heredity and their environment. There is an explanation, other than inherent wickedness, for every crime. Ironically enough, one of the traits that is most often held against the Jews—their alleged acquisitiveness, that is, their industry and ability to get ahead in the competitive race—is probably the strongest reason why they so seldom turn to crime. Given a fair chance, which on the whole they still have in America, they seem able to prosper without breaking the laws.

As for crimes of violence, it is well known that for centuries the Jews have been a particularly peaceful class. Until the recent clashes in Palestine (in which only a minority of the Jewish residents are ac-

tively involved) one had to go back to the Old Testament to read about Hebrew deprecations. No doubt this peaceful attitude was developed in self-defense. As a frequently persecuted minority, in the midst of a hostile Gentile world always on the lookout for an excuse to injure and oppress them, the Jews would naturally perceive that a quiet and orderly way of life made for survival.

Whatever the causes, let the fact again be fairly noted: among the Jews, relative to the general population, there are strikingly few criminals. Of course, full-fledged anti-Semites, inspired by hatred and thriving on it, will go on spreading the lie about the criminal Jews. But honest, well-meaning people will welcome the truth about the matter and will remember it.

* * *

FIGURE IT OUT YOURSELF, THOMAS!

If there are readers of The American Freeman who are as incredulous about the power of the atomic bomb as the farmer of that story who saw a giraffe and wouldn't believe his own eyes; if you are as doubting as St. Thomas is alleged to have been when he wanted to feel the scars of the nails in the resurrected body of his Savior, get out your pencil and do a little figuring yourself. You won't need a slide-rule or have to resort to calculus to estimate just what an atomic bomb or rocket would do to your own city or town. Knowing the area of your own municipality, and that the area of total destruction at Hiroshima was approximately four square miles, take the cube root of power for the radius of the area of blast effect. Take the square root of power for the radius of area of radiation or heat effect. You'll find that a bomb 1,000 times the energy of one which exploded above Hiroshima would blast to smithereens the whole area of cities as large as New York and Los Angeles and scotch areas with infernal and lethal heat nearly 10 times as great. Areas as great as three of our states would be seared, while one as small as our national capital would virtually dissolve in white-hot flame.

Yet plutonium fission yields only a 10th of 1 percent of the possible energy called for by Einstein's equivalence of matter and energy formula. Knowing that the average period of this print weighs on an average only two millionths of a gram, and that such Einstein equivalent is 900 quintillion ergs, while the energy released by an explosion of nitroglycerine is about 48 billion ergs per gram, it's not hard to estimate that the potential energy in each period of this print is about the same as 85 pounds of detonated nitroglycerine delivers. If you'd like some comparison of TNT and Plutonium, let a sheet of writing paper represent the former and keep on piling those sheets until you top Pike's Peak for some idea of the energy of the latter. It would be a year's work, it is true, but what of it!

* * *

SUCCESS OR WASTED EFFORT?

Were the efforts of the convention of World Federalists, Inc., which was held in St. Louis wasted? Is there any chance that Yale University's Bernard Brodie, who apparently deems world government as fantastic now as does Russia's Ilya Ehrenberg, is correct in declaring that "world government is something we cannot have in our lifetimes or the lifetimes of our children"? Isn't Brodie merely calling for "nationalism" in his lifetime, just as Neville Chamberlain fatuously deemed he had "insured peace in our time" after conferring with Hitler? Come to think of it, Auguste Comte, philosopher of Positivism, affirmed a belief that man would never know the chemical composition of the heavenly bodies barely two years before the spectroscope was successfully applied to that problem by Huggins. And didn't astronomer and mathematician

Simon Newcomb "prove" that men could never hope to fly in machines heavier than air just before the triumph of the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk? Be sure of one thing, we'll either achieve world government or there won't be many of our children who will live to grow up. If they do, they'll find themselves back in the Stone Age with practically all the wealth man has accumulated for 10,000 years destroyed. Either world government or hari-keri, Prof. Brodie.

* * *

JOSEPH McCABE: 1867-1947

(AND, WE HOPE, AT LEAST 20 MORE YEARS)

In his autobiography ("Eighty Years a Rebel") Joseph McCabe tells how, in keeping Freethought lecture engagements in England, Scotland and Wales, he would often carry sandwiches in his pocket because he couldn't afford a meal in a railway diner. He would travel many miles to speak on Rationalism, carrying the torch to distant and obscure places, for as small a fee as \$5—or, as frequently was unfortunately the case, for nothing. "Often," he says, "I was out of pocket."

Touching as this glimpse is, there were larger sacrifices which McCabe cheerfully, consistently made. Greatest of all, running through all his career, was his refusal to modify his message for the sake of a conventional career. As a popular historian, McCabe could have won wealth and so-called respectable acclaim. That is, he could have done so had he been willing to be less outspokenly the Rationalist. For a time, indeed, he combined non-Rationalist and Rationalist writing: that is, along with his militant works on Freethought, he wrote historical and biographical books in which the viewpoint of Rationalism was incidental or implicit rather than particularly pronounced. Success, as most men regard it, was before him. But his non-Rationalist publishers begged, urged and at length insisted that, for their mutual profit, McCabe should retire from the lists as an ardent, too well known champion of Freethought: not give up his convictions nor write contrary to them, but keep his Rationalism in the background. This, Joseph McCabe would not—could not—do.

I think we all owe a debt of gratitude to McCabe greater than we can hope to pay. He asks nothing himself—he has always been modest and self-sacrificing: personally modest, while intellectually having the bold certainty of his immense and exact knowledge; but while McCabe asks nothing and has never done so, I suggest that readers of *The Freeman* will be glad to show their appreciation of this great Free-thinker, this fine self-sacrificing scholar of Rationalism, by helping in a tangible way to add security to his venerable age. He was 80 years old on November 11, 1947. You can celebrate his birthday in a heart-warming fashion by sending a remembrance in the form of U.S. paper money to *Joseph McCabe, 22 St. George's Road, Golders Green, London, England*. Or, if you prefer, send it to E. Haldeman-Julius, Girard, Kansas, and all gifts will be forwarded to McCabe at one time.

* * *

FAITH VERSUS PLUTONIUM

Listen to the Rev. William Ward Ayer, of the swanky Calvary Baptist Church, on West 57th Street, New York. Infidels and Freeman readers take notice! This reverend gentleman, who shortly after Hiroshima suggested that it would have been better to have relegated scientists who knew how to split the atom to lethal chambers, spoke both of "enemies without and enemies within" in a recent sermon. He declared, according to a report in the *New York Times*, that there "are those who feel that the only development that can possibly keep democracy afloat is a revival of religion." Meaning, of course, go to church next Sunday

and every Sunday and chip into the collection as you never did before.

People like the Rev. Ayer and Father (of what?) Sheen would save you from a world upset by godless devils, who not only have split the atom but are now even interfering with the rain which Elijah summoned by prayer, rain which the Holy Bible says "falls on the just and the unjust alike." Dry ice pellets for seeding the clouds and precipitating rain are disrespectful to "God's word." Such devices would have been held blasphemous by former generations—yes, later than the one in which an umbrella-carrying man was mobbed for "interfering with God's rain." How could rain fall on an unjust man, according to the reasoning of the simpletons of that mob, when he put an umbrella over his head? Of course, clergymen mouthing democracy see no inconsistency in appealing to the totalitarian dictator of a cosmos infinitely bigger than the U.S.S.R.

* * *

IS THERE FREE WILL IN NATURE?

By Victor S. Yarros

Prof. Paul Weiss, of Yale, a disciple of Whitehead, and declared by some philosophers to be a brilliant scholar, has written a book on "Nature and Man." It is the work of a bold and self-confident thinker who claims to have evolved a sounder theory of the universe and our place in it than that of the Rationalists and Determinists. His ethical views will be presented in the third volume of a trilogy, of which the book above named is the first. Weiss is a Jew and in some sense, still quite obscure, is said to be "orthodox."

What pleases the religionists is his belief in Free Will. Not only are we humans free, he asserts, but everything in nature is free. However, he fails to give us a clear or adequate definition of freedom. His reasoning is hardly scientific. Are we free to disobey gravity if we choose? Are there effects without causes? Is there anarchy anywhere in nature? If law doesn't prevail in the cosmos, what explains the observed uniformities and inter-relationships? Man is, of course, a part of nature, and nothing he does can possibly violate a law of nature. He has passions and appetites that force him, in certain circumstances, to commit what we consider evil deeds, but nature is red in tooth and claw, in Huxley's phrase, and man is evidently not free to resist some of his anti-social drives. But we punish him for acts which we outlaw as crimes or misdemeanors. Do we break any natural law in so doing? Obviously not. We could not if we would. Just where does Free Will come in? There is no such faculty as "the Will." The strongest motive determines action, in any given case, and there is almost always a conflict of motives prior to the decision which leads to action.

* * *

WHAT CAN WE BELIEVE?

By Victor S. Yarros

The November, 1947, *Atlantic* carried a most remarkable article entitled, "What the Modern Man Can Believe." The writer is a professor, a Quaker, and a scholar—Rufus M. Jones. To three-fourths of this exceptionally fine piece the Rationalist will take no exception. Indeed, he will be deeply grateful for it. Mr. Jones exposes the ignorance, blindness and stupidity of the Christian ministers and theologians, who have bitterly fought science and truth in the supposed interest of religion, and have failed dismally. He is candid in characterizing the attitude of the intelligent laity, from high school up, toward the dogmas and superstitions of the churches. It is a neat and courageous job.

But the last fourth leaves much to be desired. Mr. Jones remains a Christian and a devout one. He believes that modern man can accept a purified and enlightened edition of Christianity. He can believe in a Supreme Being, in the Bible as in a certain sense the word of that being, in the divine and spiritual side of man, the unique and progressive creature who is far from perfect but who will continue to evolve and some day reach the high ideal he dreams of.

Mr. Jones is strangely unaware of the work of the Rationalists and Agnostics of the last century. He never mentions the thinkers and philosophers who have fashioned the modern man, the skeptic and infidel, so-called. Modern man dislikes meaningless terms and what Herbert Spencer called pseudo-ideas. The term divinity is not found in his vocabulary. He knows that his science does not answer ultimate questions, and may never answer them. He rejects explanations that do not explain, and only substitute one mystery for another. He no longer finds any utility in the god-hypothesis. He has outgrown intellectual babyhood. He does not admit that ethics needs the prop of religion. The principles he lives by and desires to spread are based on experience and reason. He rejects miracles and revelation. Society is impossible without decent regard for certain restrictions upon individual conduct. The categorical imperative is the inner voice of those who understand the necessity and value of cooperation, solidarity, reciprocity and mutualism. Altruism is just as natural and human as egoism. Love is as much a fact as hate. We love but few, but we can be just and decent to many—to all indeed, without sacrificing any legitimate advantage to ourselves.

In short, modern man is outgrowing religion. He has causes and ideas which are dear to him, and for these he will work and fight. He is bound to grow, and he may succeed in building up a truly great, peaceful and free society. He learns, however, in the hard way. He may require several more depressions and wars—atomic and bacterial wars of appalling destructiveness—in order to realize the insanity of tariff walls, nationalism, sovereignty and the like. Progress is not steady, not certain, for man is prone to blunder and commit suicidal acts. But the chances are that he will learn, that he will use his reason, that he will rise to his potentialities. He will not need any supernatural or "divine" aid.

* * *

FATHER WALSH VERSUS GENERAL GROVES?

Father Walsh, of Georgetown University, thinks Russia has the atomic bomb already, while General Groves recently thought she would not have it for 15 or 20 years, if ever. Last year, Nobel Prize Winner Irving Langmuir thought Russia could have the bomb in three years. Isn't Groves encouraging, though, to our "after us the deluge" old fogies, not to mention our patriots who are going all out for universal military training? If Russia will only hang off 20 years, there'll be lots of good jobs still for generals and admirals.

* * *

IS EVANGELISM PASSE?

The Chicago Congregationalist Association, making a survey of the belief of preachers preparatory to putting on an evangelist drive, has been appalled to discover that only eight of 100 ministers deemed the Holy Bible authoritative. And, just fancy, it found eight pastors who denied the doctrine of original sin, besides seven who disbelieved in the Resurrection and two who even denied that Christ came to the earth. Yea, the fat days of Moody and Sankey, Billy Sunday and Gipsy Smith are apparently gone for good.

Britain is short of a million or so houses or apartments and families are living in damaged buildings in which the roof of a bedroom has sometimes to be propped up. Builders are urged to vie with public authority to run up at least temporary homes. One builder has angrily written to the press that he and his like periodically get from the government, delivered by hand, batches of technical publications on their trade in one or other foreign language. One touch of civil service makes the whole world akin. Another wicked jibe at the civil service is that in a certain government office there is this motto, nicely framed, on the wall: "Never put off to tomorrow what you can put off until the day after tomorrow."

* * *

A Royal Commission on Population has made a scientific inquiry in Britain into "the social and economic problems of child-bearing." One of its findings is that "three out of five wives of professional men in Britain get relief from pain in childbirth against one in five wives of manual workers." It's another way of saying that, as we all know, the poorer get less of the comforts of life, but such a difference in matters like the pains of parturition is a different matter from the difference between drinking wine or drinking beer. It's one of the evils which the nationalization of hospitals in Britain is expected—in fact is certain—to remedy and to help the social welfare.

* * *

Speaking of the observance of Lent, would it blasphemy for a Catholic to ask his parish priest or confessor if anybody had ever had a chemical analysis made of that blood of St. Januarius? Precisely how many fragments of the "true cross" are there in existence today? And finally, must good Catholics reverence that alleged milk of the Virgin? As a matter of fact, shouldn't any Catholic born and educated in the 20th century repudiate a church which doesn't purge itself of humbug and impossible relics? It ill behooves Roman Catholic prelates to reproach Communists for subscribing to a vicious adage that the "end justifies the means," when cardinals, archbishops

and bishops know well that their church deliberately perpetuates humbugs such as that milk of the Virgin and blood of St. Januarius.

* * *

Harold John Vetter, Jr., Buffalo, N. Y.: "The Freeman is passed from student to student here at the University of Buffalo, among a small group of people who, despite the most intense efforts on the part of 'crusading' Catholic authorities to suppress all but a tiny whisper of it, regard destruction of dogma an essential adjunct of a college education. At the present time, although the instructors who refuse to bend under the dictates of these 13th century inquisitors are in the barest minority, the University campus has been called 'a Devil's Workshop,' 'a hotbed of heresy,' and other such odious epithets, at which these pious slanderers are especially adept. Even our Chancellor, one of the wisest and humane men whom I have ever known, has not escaped their vilification. But then, this is an old story wherever the Catholic Church is concerned. Their record of this sort of thing is as long as it is black. In view of this, and the tremendous power which they are able to exert, publications such as yours are to be especially commended. Crusading is an un-avoidable and hazardous occupation, but you may be assured that as long as there are persons who believe that every question has two sides, you will receive more support than mere lip service. It is significant that a large number of your supporters are, like myself, returned service men, who were privileged to take part in a great experience in practical democracy."

* * *

Preacher Brown was presiding at the congregation's monthly testimony meetin'. Brother Jones had been testifying for the past hour about how he was saved from the evils of women, and the congregation was becoming restless. Finally Preacher Brown interrupted him. "Brother Jones," he demanded, "are you testifyin' or are you braggin'?"

* * *

A high school class was studying Russian geography, and the teacher asked members of the class to name

mountain ranges in that country. One student named the Carpathians, and no other answers were forthcoming. Finally the teacher called on a pretty but not bright girl, who frowned unknowingly. The boy sitting behind her leaned forward and furtively whispered something in her ear. She brightened and said: "I know—the Urinals."

Two men sat in a bus behind a man who was reading a newspaper. The paper was folded so that the men could see a large picture of a female movie star on the first page, but weren't able to read any of the text. After straining his neck in vain, one of the men said: "I wonder what she did to deserve that." "That's easy," the other answered casually, "she's either married, divorced, had a baby or committed suicide."

It was Voltaire who suggested that the holy wafers (really the divine body, you know) when eaten went the way of other foods and was finally deposited where such things usually are deposited.

A charter subscriber: "I enjoy The Freeman's short quotes."

It's remarkable how many pious ladies get hold of a copy of The Freeman and, when they recover from the nervous breakdown, write to tell us what they think of it. You'd be surprised at the language these good people can ladle out. The latest writer threatens to bring us to the notice of the police. Strangely these people think that liberty means complete freedom for themselves and chains now and brimstone later for the other guy.

We are not strong on poetry but seem to remember a line about a beautiful lady of whom it was said that flowers sprang up wherever she trod. Among the flowers that have bloomed since the American army crossed Britain are 1,700 colored babies—black, pale-black, chocolate, and mud-colored—who are a problem to the British authorities. It's said that they're asking permission to appeal to the colored people of America to adopt them. The mothers are in nearly all cases married women whose husbands

were in the army. But don't begin thinking about rape. We have it from eye-witnesses that outside camps of colored troops the women formed queues in the evening.

King Ibn Saud of Arabia gave a banquet to 500 Arab and American guests in his son's palace on January 26, 1947. The reason is not stated but it smells of oil. The food served up included 280 whole-roasted sheep, 2,000 roasted chickens, 5,000 eggs, and one roasted camel. Our arithmetic is not up to the Einstein standard but that looks like four chickens, 10 eggs, half a sheep, and a fat slice of camel each. In Europe at least 100,000,000 people were only half-fed in the bitterest weather they ever knew and 200,000,000 further people were undernourished. All men are brothers.

A conspiracy to reestablish the Nazi regime is announced. The announcers have "definite evidence" of a far-reaching organization in Germany and vast accumulations of funds in Sweden, Switzerland, and South America. As the leaders of the group that warns us insisted stridently from V-Day onward that this is just what the Germans would do and gave the public false versions of what the Germans did in 1919—24 we trust their "evidence" will be closely examined. It looks too much like a mixture of wishful thinking on the part of michievous fanatics and a desperate effort to find reasons for maintaining the costly occupation of Germany. Events have fully vindicated what we said from the start: that if an administration of Socialists, Communists, and Jews—the German Liberals had supported Hitler—under Anglo-American civil supervision had been set up Nazism (which is definitely sheltered in the American zone) would have been more thoroughly eliminated and the present misery of the country avoided.

Scientists have discovered that it's not the bite of the gadfly that sends cattle tearing about. It's another insect which terrifies but doesn't bite them. As we're sometimes called gadflies we want it understood that this doesn't apply

to us. We bite. But we don't sting any innocent cow that browses in the meadows. We select our victims carefully.

* * *
In 1946 the Soviet government spent 6 billion roubles, or about 2 percent of their total expenditure, on the promotion of science, although it had to spend 23 percent on defense against the assault which was threatened and large sums on reconstruction.

* * *
Britain still has its old reputation for moral hypocrisy, so it's interesting to compare the experiences of such a film as "The Outlaw" there and in our own country. Not only has the film had an exceptionally long run—10 weeks to date—in one of the chief cinemas in the heart of London, but it was pictorially advertised, and still is, with great boldness. Pictures of Jane wearing enough clothing to wrap up a pet dog in summer and reclining in an attitude that provokes thought occupied most of the advertisement in the papers and were broadcast in posters two or three times life-size.

* * *
"Next time you are away from school, Johnny," said the teacher, "you will bring an excuse from your father." "From my father!" said Johnny, "you should see what mother makes of his excuses."

* * *
The most impressive type of warning is the one that doesn't state its grounds because they are too serious. Cardinal Spellman seems to know this. He says:

"It is my firm faith that the first step in America's safety and unity is to break the conspiracy of silence enveloping and endangering her. What I state here about Communism is known not to me alone nor is it news to many in high places and in low but most of those who know the facts speak in fearful whispers or in private round-table talks."

These protectors of conspiracy ought to be exposed. The cardinal must from the nature of the case mean the press (in which he writes these things), the broadcasters, and officials in Washington. Let's have

a dose of common sense. The papers, the radio oracles, and the officials at Washington would pay the highest price in the market for definite, provable evidence of Communist plotting in America. The rumors are most nearly pointed when they speak of Americans taking instructions from Moscow. Does he know that there are evil-minded folk who whisper that he and other prelates take instructions from Rome?

* * *
Serious readers often wonder what value they may attach to that modern means of enlightenment, the quiz or probe of public opinion. Two polls were taken in Britain on the question who is the ablest man in the country. In one case 75 percent voted for J. B. Priestly, and Churchill was hardly mentioned. In the other, 75 percent voted for Churchill, and Priestly was far back among the "also ran."

* * *
Where, many ask, "do flies go in the winter time?" Perhaps this will help. A British church had, like many others, its spire (170 feet high) bombed during the war. In December, 1946, a gang of workers were set to demolish it for rebuilding, when they found "millions of flies, all very much alive, between the outer board and cross pieces of the steeple."

* * *
Big Bill Haywood, after attending some parlor meetings of Christian Socialists: "They are drunk on religious fanaticism and are trying to sober up on economic truth."

* * *
Voltaire: "One day some mice said to one another, 'How charming is this world! What an empire is ours! this palace so superb was built for us: from all eternity God made for us these large holes. Do you see those fat hams under that dim ceiling? They were created there for us by Nature's hands. Those mountains of lard, inexhaustible aliment, will be ours till the end of time. Yes, we are, great God, if our sages tell us the truth, the masterpiece, the end, the aim of all thy works. Cats are dangerous and prompt to devour, but it is to instruct and correct us!'"

* * *
Cicero: "What a man sees often

he does not wonder at, although he knows not why it happens: if something occurs which he has not seen before, he thinks it a marvel."

Billy Rose: "I take free speech pretty seriously and do not think that the Republic will totter because somebody says what he thinks."

Patsy O'Bang, distinguished litterateur: "Paul Eldridge's new novel, 'The Whip and the Rose,' will divide readers into three groups—those who are hilariously amused, those who are shocked, and those who have the double titillation of amusement and shock."

From the manuscript of a beginning writer: "a fresh-born baby."

Visitor at an insane asylum, to an inmate who had announced, gravely, that he was God: "Of course, you're God. And I'm glad to talk to you. But tell me—I've always wanted to know—is it true that you worked six days to make the world and then rested on the seventh?" The inmate looked at him coldly, and said: "I never talk shop."

Headline: "Bacteria Avoid Dimes but Flock to Nickels." It sounds like anti-Little Blue Book propaganda.

Frank Swancara, in his new book, "Bad By-Products of Religion": "Religionists have coined the phrase 'Cult of Atheism,' well knowing that there is no such 'cult.' An Atheist is a member of a group only in the same sense that a believer in the rotundity of the earth belongs to a class. He is not a follower, but, as one of a multitude, acts on his own inclination to be, and is, indifferent to theology."

Six-year-old: "A skeleton is a man who is dead and you see his bones, but they ain't going anywhere."

Patsy O'Bang: "Hildegard may not be beautiful, but then she has no talent."

Groucho Marx: "Those who care to develop a sophisticated, sardonic chuckle can best practice by listen-

ing to Gabriel Heatter."

Heywood Brown: "Anthony Comstock may have been entirely correct in his assumption that the division of living creatures into male and female was a vulgar mistake, but a conspiracy of silence about the matter will hardly alter the facts."

Old deacon: "Sin is like a big dog. There's the big dog of envy, and the big dog of gluttony, and, finally, there's the big dog of sex. You've got to kill those dogs before you're ever gonna get to heaven. It can be done—I know—because I've done it. I killed the big dog of envy and the big dog of pride, and the big dog of gluttony—but when I came to the big dog of sex dadblast it if I didn't find that dog had died a natural death."

Overheard: "That fat lady over there is trying to diet, and that spinster near her is dying to try it."

Pretty girl, to boy friend: "What have I got on for tonight? Darling, nothing I couldn't get out of for you."

Overheard: "We've cut out saying prayers before our meals ever since we got a cook that's pretty reliable."

On a sunny bench overlooking the waterfront at Long Beach, California (where anything can happen), old pensioners sat discussing their various troubles. A pair of lissome blondes pranced by, arm in arm. Clad in halter-top bras and the shortest of bright green shorts, they were fetchingly rouged and lipsticked, and each enjoyed a full complement of properly-distributed curves. Permitting his rheumy eyes to follow appreciatively until the cuddle-cuties had lost themselves in the crowd, the elder of the two old fossils turned back to his companion with a doleful shake of his head. "That's what I mean," he whined, in a quavering falsetto. "You'n me just didn't get the breaks! Why couldn't there have been women like that when we still had enough teeth to whistle?"

James Laver, authority on clothes: "No fashion is ever success-

ful unless it can be used as an instrument of seduction."

Julian Huxley: "Darwin made it possible to dispense with the idea of God. For justification of our moral code, we no longer have to have recourse to theological revelation. . . . Freud in combination with Darwin suffices."

Overheard: "You'd never believe it because it doesn't even happen in the movies, over the radio, or in comic strips."

Fred Allen, to a male celebrity who went to church one midwinter morning wearing sun glasses: "Are you afraid God might recognize you and ask you for an autograph?" . . . To a snooty Hollywood character traveling with a convenient "secretary": "Are you traveling *a la tart*?" . . . Allen's rural character, Titus Moody: "Is my wife happy? I don't pry into her business none." . . . "My farm is somethin' like Communism. Nobody's got nothin', but everybody's workin'." . . . I don't care for radio. "I don't hold with furniture that talks." . . . "I'm anemic. If I'm cut, I won't bleed; the wound will only hiss and pucker." . . . Allen, on radio censors: "During the war I was forbidden to refer slightly to the Ubangi—because, the censors explained, the Ubangi might be holding captive some U.S. airmen, and take offense." . . . "If radio ever gets a Pulitzer Prize, it'll be pinned to the censor's wastebasket." . . . "The scales have not been invented fine enough to weigh the grain of sincerity in radio." . . . "Everything in radio is as valuable as a butterfly's belch." . . . "Conferences of network vice presidents are meetings of men who singly can do nothing, but collectively agree that nothing can be done."

Thomas De Quincey (author of Little Blue Book No. 95, "Confessions of An Opium Eater") in his famous essay, "On Murder as One of the Fine Arts" (Little Blue Book No. 1659): "For if once a man indulges himself in murder, very soon he comes to think little of robbing; and from robbing he comes next to drinking and sabbath-breaking,

and from that to incivility and procrastination. Once begun upon this down ward path, you never know where you are to stop. Many a man has dated his ruin from some murder or other that perhaps he thought little of at the time."

W. C. Fields: "Champagne makes me see double and feel single."

Sally Rand: "New York, which is going through a severe attack of purity, won't allow poor people to see naked women at burlesque theaters, but permits rich men to see nudity in expensive night clubs. It's things like that which encourage Bolshevism. Why should anybody get excited over my artistic performances? It's the same old fans and the same old fanny."

Billy Rose: "Without the sense of humor, life would be one long Bette Davis picture."

Radio announcer (heard by *The New Yorker*): "And so, may God bless you all until next week, same time, same station."

The Milwaukee Journal: "He knows what hardships mean. A native of Madison, Wis., he was born in a log cabin which he helped build with his own hands."

D. O. Cauldwell, Vida, Alabama: "I have never ceased to marvel at how you have accomplished such a monumental work, and how, after these years of editing, publishing, managing and creating, your zest seems keener rather than duller."

Joseph Lewis, director, Freethinkers of America (370 West 35th st., New York 1, N. Y.): "Lee L. Dodd has submitted a clipping in which it is reported that a dog owned by a priest is not exempt from taxes, the Kentucky Attorney General's office has held. A priest who asked the ruling, contended that the dog was the 'property of the church' and therefore tax exempt."

Patsy O'Bang: "If you haven't a voice and can't play the guitar, you qualify as a hill-billy musician."

Diamond Jim Brady: "Dissipation is a full-time job."