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December, 1921

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SENTIMENTALISM

War and His Companion



# THE LIBERATOR

Vol. 4, No. 12 [Serial No. 45]

December, 1921

## EDITORIALS

By Max Eastman

TO a reporter for the *New York Herald* the Government outlined its Far Eastern policy as follows:

"It is desired in the Far East to obtain the complete separation of politics and economics. This policy is not only favored by the administration but it has the entire support of Wall Street."

In other words, it is the policy of the administration to "kid itself to death," and invite Wall Street to join in the sport. Economics and politics are as inseparable as substance and appearance. That is not a matter of policy or hypothesis. That is the given fact—the principle datum upon which any intelligent policy must be based.

### The Importance of Being Unknown

SENTIMENTALISM might be defined as imputing to things in abstract contemplation an emotional value which in concrete reality they do not possess. And there never was a better example of it than the spectacle of all these mighty war-generals and ministers-plenipotentiary rushing round the world pinning medals on the coffin of an "unknown soldier." They have no such impulse and no such emotion towards any actual soldier, nor towards all the soldiers put together, as the bread-lines and employment agencies eloquently attest. And if this soldier should by some mysterious accident suddenly become known—become, that is, a real individual—they would have no such impulse or emotion towards him. Suppose he should poke a woolly head up over the side of the coffin and murmur, "Why for you-all reckon you's makin' dis big fuss ovah me?" The bubble would be pricked, and the mighty generals and ministers-plenipotentiary would retire in cold confusion.

### Facts

ANOTHER thing that must remain unknown if we are to sentimentalize successfully, is the motivation of our entrance into the war. For this reason the American Legion—a society for the perpetuation of sentimentality and the status quo—has passed a vote of censure against Colonel Harvey for giving the public a little glimpse of the true facts. Harvey said at a Pilgrim's Day dinner in London that America went into the war to protect her own interests, and because she was afraid of the consequences if she stayed out. If by America we understand primarily American business, that is a simple fact which any honest historian a hundred years hence will have to record. If we had gone to war for the

rights and ideals we professed, we should have gone when Belgium was invaded by the Kaiser's armies. We went to war primarily to protect the interests of American business, and our soldiers were not heroic in going because they had to go whether they wanted to or not. Those are the facts. And because they will not sustain or justify any of the magniloquent emotions with which the world has agreed to flatter its conscience, they must remain unknown. Harvey will restrain himself, and our little voice will not be heard in the eternal glorious chorus of sentimental self-deception.

### Using Ideals

THERE is an impulse towards ideals in every man. There are two ways of satisfying it. One is to idealize the facts, and the other is to try to change facts in the direction of an ideal. People who are trying to change facts in the direction of an ideal can bear to see facts in their naked reality. They seem "cynical" to the people who satisfy their idealistic impulse in the other way. But they are not cynical, they are intelligent.

There is still another way of using ideals. That is to tell yourself that you are striving towards them, but locate them far enough in the future so that no actual efforts or discomforts are necessary. They then serve the purpose of accommodating you to the facts just as well as they serve the sentimentalist, and give you at the same time the appearance of being intelligent. That is the way of the social traitors, the "centrists." That is the distinction, in a psychological way of speaking, which has split the international socialist movement.

### The Capitalist International

ALTHOUGH the manifestoes of the Third International seem to me in general to contain the best wisdom there is on the international situation, I cannot make my mind agree with their offhand dismissal of the present assemblage at Washington, as a thing without any possible significance or result. I think the disarmament conference, and the conference on Far Eastern questions, and even the League of Nations—in short, the general disposition toward an alliance of imperialistic powers to prevent war among themselves—is an authentic movement of bourgeois society. The significant fact about war between these powers is not the extent of its horror—the murder and hate. The significant fact is that it has grown to such proportions as to be bad business even from the standpoint of the possessing class. Inter-imperialist wars have got into the same position that "free competition" got into. And the formation of an alliance of the Big Business Nations for the more tranquil exploitation of the peoples of the earth, is a movement similar to the formation of trusts within the different nations. It is a movement which in the economic field is already well under way, and we see here in



the newspaper dispatches from Washington only the political shadow following along.

The mistake of the Moscow Manifesto, it seems to me, is in regarding nations as entities too absolutely fixed. Nothing is fixed when it gets in the way of the necessities of successful business. And while the Moscow analysis of the difficulties faced by this conference is valid, and makes it sure that nothing final or very momentous will be accomplished immediately, its assumption that the whole enterprise means nothing and foretells nothing, seems to me a little casual and superficial.

Our attitude to an approaching alliance for peace and prosperity among the great capitalist nations should be somewhat similar to our attitude toward big business combinations. We should not deride it as a phantom. We should get ready for it as a possible and perhaps very ominous fact. We should make the workers realize the necessity of strengthening and enlarging their own international union in face of the enlarging union of the capitalists.

## A Response

A CRITIC of my "Opinion on Tactics" tells me it would be more useful to the revolution if I should "confine myself to trying to write poetry and leave proletarian politics alone." He makes it plain in the sequel that he ought to have confined himself to religion from infancy. His ex-communication is a testimonial. Anyone who really understands that science, and not theology, is the hope of the working class, must be glad to find himself in flat opposition to the rabbinical bigots of esoteric communism who are wrecking the American movement.

I said in my article that "since the Chicago conventions, except for deepening and confirming the split, nothing of appreciable value to the cause of communism has been done

by the revolutionists."

My critic advances no facts to the contrary, but pretending I meant to imply that it was not of great value to deepen and confirm the split, he calls me a "politically near-sighted sentimentalist." If he will read my articles on Morris Hillquit and my answer to Robert Dell in the *Liberator* for November, 1920, and January and May, 1921, he will find that I gave all I had to the cause of deepening and confirming that split.

Of the premise of the Third International that "This is the period of the breakdown of capitalism," I stated that it "is not true of the United States in the same immediate sense that it may be true of Europe."

My critic condescendingly explains that by capitalism in this statement the Third International meant "world capitalism." Another far more intelligent critic offers me the same information. I know what the authors meant. I know that world capitalism is contemplated in that sentence, and generally in the Marxian literature, as a unit. I was not discussing theories or ways of talking. I was stating a fact. And it makes no difference whether the Marxian text-books and the executives of the Third International, and all the wise men in the universe choose to speak of world capitalism as a unit, and mean by the word "period" a sufficiently long time to include the collapse of the whole institution. It does not alter or contradict the fact that the statement quoted "is not true of the United States in the same immediate sense that it may be true of Europe."

I was aware that in pointing to this fact and drawing the conclusions from it I incurred the risk of being regarded as a pacifist or identified with the social-traitors and "centrists," for they make a voluminous use of the same fact. I am willing to incur the risk. The distinction between a revolutionist and a yellow socialist does not appear to me so fragile that it has to be preserved by refusing to perceive and state facts.

It is natural that my attacks upon the extreme exploitation of the idea of discipline should also call forth a bitter rejoinder from the Bolshevik priesthood, because that idea is the backbone of their church. Nevertheless, my attack is in the spirit of Marxian science and their rejoinder is not. The revolution will not come, or coming, it will not survive, if it depends fundamentally upon discipline. It will not survive if it depends fundamentally upon anything but the physical conditions of production and the hereditary instincts of men. A recognition of that fact is the essential distinction between Marx as a practical engineer and the Utopian socialists who preceded him. And we ought not to let the peculiar situation which has arisen in Russia distract us from such essentials.

Two pieces of news have come out of Russia which were intellec-



Clara Zetkin, German Delegate to the Third International,  
Conversing With Andrés, Spanish Syndicalist.



# Who Will Help the Liberator?

WHETHER you are who opens this magazine, here is the essential fact about it. It stands for a revolutionary alteration in the manner of distributing wealth. For that reason it gets practically no advertising from the business community, and it competes with magazines which live by their advertising income. Therefore it has to be supported by money contributions. In the past—both for *The Liberator* and *The Masses*—the bulk of these contributions has been raised by Max Eastman, and for the most part from well-to-do people. Whether because of hard times, or because our opinions have acquired a more serious meaning since the revolution in Russia, the money can no longer be raised in this manner. It is impossible. That phase of our existence has come to an end.

We were prepared to make this announcement last June, when the government very tactfully stepped in and paid us eleven thousand dollars which we had advanced for excess postage under the third-class rates. This enabled us to pay our debts, and lay our plans for continuance until next March. We expected then to make this announcement next March.

Early in October, however, while the business manager was away on sick-leave, our long-trusted bookkeeper and advertising manager, E. F. Mylius, author of "The Socialization of Money"—departed with four thousand dollars. We have made every effort to apprehend him, short of instituting proceedings which

would result in his being put in jail, and that we do not want to do.

The result is that this announcement comes now, instead of next March. It is not only an announcement, but a frank and final appeal to our friends in the revolutionary movement.

What we ask is that some person, or some group or committee, come in and take charge of the business of raising money for *The Liberator* by means of balls, concerts, debates, plays, picnics, circularization, and all the other devices by which the revolutionary press in all countries is supported.

There is no one of us who feels able, even if he were willing, to quit his artistic or literary work in order to assume this task.

We are ready to produce the magazine—without remuneration if necessary.

Is there not some person, or some group, who will take charge of the financing and promotion of it?

Pending an answer we shall bring out another number, better than this—the best you have ever seen—for our enthusiasm and devotion to *The Liberator* were never warmer than they are now.

In that number we shall announce the result of this appeal, and tell you what to expect.

Max Eastman, Michael Gold, Boardman Robinson, Claude McKay, Floyd Dell, Arturo Giovannitti, William Gropper, Hugo Gellert, Art Young, Maurice Becker.

Emergency Committee of the Editors.





Fort Leavenworth

tually shocking to scientific socialists. One was the enormous role played by the moral will of a few consecrated idealists organized in the communist party, a role of increasing rather than decreasing importance. The other was the statement of Lenin that electrification and communism are one and the same thing. Certainly the Marxian science does not contemplate the salvation of the world by a consecrated brotherhood, and certainly it did not depend for its validity upon the discovery or exploitation of electricity. The significance of both these surprising pieces of news is the same. The conditions of production in Russia are not such as to make a communist economy possible—production is not “socialized”—and yet the proletariat has captured the power. To hold on to that power until revolution occurs in a country where production is socialized, or until Russian production can be socialized in a hurry by the accidental help of a plan of electrification, is the effort of the leaders of the Rus-

sian revolution. It is a temporary effort, depending for its success not upon the present instincts of the masses of mankind, but upon the will of a few who understand the future and the past. Hence the extreme emphasis upon morale, the disciplinary cult, the dictatorship of an ethical organization. It is the inevitable and right thing in that peculiar situation, and all intelligent revolutionists should support it to an extreme. But it cannot be generalized. We cannot rest the hope of the international proletarian revolution upon the acquired characteristics of the devotees of a cult. We might as well go back to Fourier and St. Simon. And that reactionary and Utopian emotional tendency is actually at the heart of this peculiar American brand of “Leftism.”

Another thing that excites these priests of the Bolshevik church of America is my assertion that it is not so much the ruthlessness of American capitalists as the romanticism of American communists that accounts for the party's being underground. “Let Eastman tell this,” says one of my correspondents, “to the score of communists now jailed for incredibly long terms of torture, to the hundreds, nay thousands, of revolutionary fighters that have been brutalized and terrorized at the hands of the most barbarous gang of bourgeois bandits that have ever appeared on the horizon of class history—a gang with which the most ambitious white-terror government on the continent can hardly vie in the violence of its class vengeance.”

*Roderick Seidenberg*

It is true that revolutionary fighters in this country are jailed for incredibly long terms of torture. That, and not any marked difference in the law or the frequency with which they are jailed, is the distinguishing feature of the White Terror in this country. They are jailed practically for life and they are treated in jail like ordinary criminals. Every labor agitator with any force, and every outspoken revolutionary organizer and journalist, has this fate hanging over him. He knows that he may be cut off in the prime of his energy, and not only his personal life, but his life-work stopped, and permanently stopped, at any moment. That is the fact that is peculiar about the American situation. And if any sane and sensible deduction is to be made from this fact, it is that revolutionary fighters who have any common prudence, either personal or political, are not going to increase their liabilities gratuitously and for no other purpose but emotional expression, by joining an organization which convicts them of “criminal anarchy” through the mere fact of membership, when their actual duties in behalf of the revolution do not constitute the crime. The peculiar character



of the White Terror in this country, therefore—considered calmly and in relation to the kind of work to be done—offers an additional reason for not trying to organize the revolutionary leaders in a theoretically illegal underground party.

These remarks are enough to make it plain that I am not disturbed in my opinion on tactics by the attacks of the Infantile Left. I am disturbed, however, by one or two mild commendations from members of the Socialist Party. And I want to call attention to the fact that my article was in the nature of an appeal to the membership and the scientific leaders of the Communist Party. Hillquit's followers never could understand the principle upon which the Communists split from them—the principle that the political state, whether democratic or feudal, is to be regarded as a weapon in the hands of the class possessing economic power, a weapon so formidable that an equally formidable weapon must be forged by the class in revolt, a "soviet" state capable of enforcing its dictatorship. Hillquit's followers were trained to believe that a kind of anarchistic emotional expressiveness was what distinguished the Left Wing Movement. In that way they have been blinded to the absolute divergence of belief and method between them and those who follow the science of revolution. It is natural, therefore, that a criticism of the Communist Party for substituting emotional expressiveness for the practical tasks at hand in America should appear to them a vindication of their counter-revolutionary innocence. Their comments ought not to deflect us, however, from a clear definition and accomplishment of our present tasks.

## To My Little Son

I CANNOT lose the thought of you;

It haunts me like a little song;

It blends with all I see or do

Each day, the whole day long.

The train, the lights, the engine's throb,

And that one stinging memory:

Your brave smile broken with a sob

Your face pressed close to me.

Lips trembling far too much to speak;

The arms that would not come undone;

The kiss so salty on your cheek;

The long, long trip begun.

I could not miss you more, it seemed;

But now I don't know what to say:

It's harder than I ever dreamed

With you so far away.

Fort Leavenworth.

Ralph Chaplin.

## Four Sonnets - By Claude McKay

### America

ALTHOUGH she feeds me bread of bitterness,  
And sinks into my throat her tiger's tooth,  
Stealing my breath of life, I will confess  
I love this cultured hell that tests my youth!  
Her vigor flows like tides into my blood,  
Giving me strength erect against her hate.  
Her bigness sweeps my being like a flood.  
Yet as a rebel fronts a king in state,  
I stand within her walls with not a shred  
Of terror, malice nor even a word of jeer.  
Darkly I gaze into the days ahead  
To see her might and granite wonders there,  
Beneath the touch of Time's unerring hand,  
Like ancient treasures buried in the sand.

### Thirst

MY spirit wails for water, water now!  
My tongue is aching dry, my throat is hot  
For water; fresh rains shaken from a bough,  
Or dawn dews heavy in some leafy spot.  
My hungry body's burning for a swim  
In sunlit water where the air is cool,  
As in Trout Valley where upon a limb  
The golden finch sings softly to the pool.  
Oh, water, water, when the night is done,  
When day steals grey-white through the window-pane,  
Clear silver water when I wake, alone,  
All impotent and stupefied of brain;  
Pure water from some forest fountain first,  
To wash me, cleanse me, and to quench my thirst!

### Through Agony

ALL night, through the eternity of night,  
Pain was my portion, though I could not feel.  
Deep in my humbled heart you ground your heel,  
Till I was reft of even my inner light,  
Till reason from my mind had taken flight,  
And all my world went whirling in a reel,  
And all my swarthy strength turned cold like steel,  
A passive mass beneath your puny might.  
Last night I gave you triumph over me,  
So I should be myself as once before  
I marveled at your shallow mystery,  
And haunted hungrily your temple door.  
I gave you sum and substance to be free,  
Oh, you shall never triumph any more!

### II

I am not afraid to face the fact and say,  
How darkly dull my living hours have grown,  
My wounded heart sinks heavier than stone  
Because I loved you longer than a day!  
I am not ashamed to turn myself away  
From beckoning flowers beautifully blown,  
To mourn your vivid memory alone  
In mountain fastnesses austere and gray.  
The mists will shroud me on the utter height,  
The salty, brimming waters of my breast  
Will mingle with the fresh dews of the night  
To bathe my spirit hankering to rest.  
But after sleep I'll wake with greater might,  
Once more to venture on the eternal quest.





Maurice Becker

## Sunrise in Russia



# The Yellow Quilt

By H. E. Fraenkel

PYOTR SIRMONOV sat sullenly by the cold stove, knees apart, great torso bent forward. Over in the corner by the bare table Mania was feeding their youngest boy some of the thin soup Pyotr had just brought from the rationing station. To-day the mixture was more unpleasant than usual. On his way home the father had licked up from his hand a few drops spilled in the ladling, and so he knew. But as he watched the child he saw that it gulped as eagerly as always. Soon there would come a spoonful that must be the baby's last; and then the weak wail that never failed, and that hurt Pyotr like a blade scraped along his spine.

There were others yet to be fed out of the rusty can: Maria, Mania's mother, and Pyotr's father, Stepan. Next came always the two older children, Pyotr thought heavily, eleven-year-old Ivan and blond Lizaveta of seven — little Lizaveta, whose unsteady legs were bowed and whose abdomen hung pendulous from the rickets, but whose pale blue eyes shone unchanging with the gaze of the gentle. Last there would be Pyotr himself and Mania.

Lizaveta had shambled into the room, rubbing together in the cold December twilight her oyster-white, small hands. Now Ivan came shuffling at her heels, eyes on the battered can, lethargic. Mania's mother followed.

Maria was near eighty and monstrously white and fat. Hers were the clammy pallor of the frog's belly and an uncanny expanse of strangely unwrinkled, aged face. Only a perverse freak of nature—or God—could have kept her puffed so fat through these pinching years, Pyotr thought resentfully. Behind his red beard he clicked vindictive teeth.

Silently he watched her, as he did every day, while she lumbered about, serving the two children and herself and setting aside a portion for the grandfather. No fear, indeed, that she would give either lean child a drop too much and so stint herself or the bedridden old man, his father. To be sure, Pyotr had never seen her take more than her proper share, and to that he must allow she was entitled. They were entitled to some things, these derelicts of a preceding time, he said to himself. But not to much. No longer could one afford to pamper age, as in the old days. One acquired different standards now.

Momentarily his mind veered, as it had veered so often during the past months, to God's callousness. The government appeared to ask nothing of God nor indeed of the devil. It was doing its unaided best. Those visionful, hoping men had had to choose their stern and brutal means. If only they were in the right! They must be—they were! Pyotr would have liked to see any other government without supplies handle better this sick beast that had been Russia.

But as for God! A sudden rush of heat passed through his body. He was growing used, now, to these heat waves. They came with the constant hunger. God! Pah! He would have liked to spit upon God, to pull his nose. All Catholics were imbeciles and had always been imbeciles and he was an imbecile among them. They prayed and fasted—*fasted* when there was no need! His tender-fleshed children were allowed to starve while aged frog-women grew always more bloated, and senile men verged nearer desiccation. God!

They owed God a grudge, those centuries of worshipping Catholics. Ah! how he would set about to insult God, if he had the chance, to tell him what manner of swine he was! The wave of heat passed from his body. He shivered a little.

It was at this point in his thoughts that Pyotr had stopped short the night before. Rising now he yawned and trod slowly to the table. Mania had drunk her portion of the soup and had left him his. He looked into the can and saw that more than his actual due remained. That was Mania, stinting herself again. He grunted and took three long draughts. Somehow it tasted better than when he had tried it before sundown, and he would have given a good deal to finish it.

He crossed the room and caught his wife by the shoulder. "Some left for you," he said shortly, and resumed his seat by the stove. She answered nothing. She was a quiet woman. Quickly she drank the soup.

"How hungry she must be!" he thought with a contraction of the throat. It was the first time she had failed to slip over, regardless of herself, with some gleanings to the baby or Ivan or Lizaveta.

Now the children would go to bed. On the way they would be washed. But not with soap. Except for the tiny bit that Mania was hoarding, and which was used on Sundays only, there was no soap. Well, the poor, cold, little bodies might be more comfortable in bed than here. Not much more comfortable, of course. But they *would* have been more so, much more so, if they could only have had the yellow quilt.

The yellow quilt. It was the one warm covering the Sirmonovs had left; but no little Lizaveta might lie beneath its weight; it was in constant use for the enfolding of the ugly, thin limbs of senility!

Why, the father thought painfully, might it not be this sleeping, night after night, with body growing colder and colder toward morning, that had so warped Lizaveta's legs? Whenever he thought of Lizaveta's legs, and her long belly, something in him revolted. Lizaveta had been born the prettiest of the children.

He thought he would go up to see his father. In spite of the fact that the old man was often, somehow, in his mind, this would be only his second visit that week. He would like just to feel the yellow quilt, to see whether it was standing wear, whether it was still as thick and warm as ever. Perhaps before the winter was out his father might be dead and the children free to get the use of it at last.

On the stairs he encountered his mother-in-law. As a rule she was in bed by now. How she labored to sidle her unctious bulk between the bannister and the damp wall!

"Eh, Pyotr," she said in her croaking, deep voice, "I have been thinking it over for several weeks." She could hardly talk for puffing. "And now I am giving you this." She placed something in his hand. "You can trade it in for some wood, maybe, or a bag of potatoes, perhaps."

Pyotr stood silent, while she turned around by degrees, and began to remount the steps. He looked at the small package. It was five whole years since he had had anything



with which one could trade. His heart beat. All his neighbors had traded more recently, illegally, but as a matter of course. Even the luckiest of them all would be about sold out by now, however. In the opened paper lay a good-sized topaz. As he felt it, he pursed his lips for a whistle. It was heavy. Not rare, but good. Slowly he rewrapped it and put it into his pocket. For a moment he had almost been side-tracked by a wave of gratitude. Now his mind recommenced its labor that was like the chewing of her cud by a cow. Maria was good, of course, to sacrifice her only treasure, the stone her father had given her sixty-five years ago. Pyotr was rather glad that in the old days of decency he had never really disliked his mother-in-law. Here, for a wonder, he half-smiled to himself, was one of the old ones actually being of some real use for a change. An unusual condition of affairs, unprecedented and undoubtedly never to be repeated.

As he reached the landing some of the sullenness flared into heat. Why hadn't she produced the stone long ago, he thought, when he could have gotten more for it than now? And why had he and Mania forgotten its existence? That was like Mania. Still, old Maria had been generally decent and just, and he sometimes was ready to forget that fact. "Too bad," he said aloud, "that she was choosing to be decenter than usual just now, when it was already too late."

"Now. Already too late."

On the verge of an unknown, half-realized thought his mind meandered vaguely off. Entering his father's room, like a shaggy, half-awake dog, he shook his head, that felt a little clouded.

The old Stepan was a wisp of a man. His ninety-year-old face looked like a giant walnut. Painfully from under the yellow quilt he drew five stiff talons to signal to his son he was aware.

Pyotr seated himself by the bed. In a calm that seemed strange and foreign, almost like a sleeper's walk, he looked contemplatively at his father. It was twelve years, he thought, since the old man had been alive, a human being. He had been a good enough man, as they went. A bit grasping, a bit suspicious. All told, however, he had been quite fairly just and decent, decent and just.

The old man was making a feeble sound. Mechanically Pyotr bent to listen. He paid no real attention; in actual fact he hardly noticed what he himself was doing.

"They are used to having to give me rations for seven," he was thinking. "Over at the rationing station I always get food for seven. They are used—"

Quietly after a moment, then, Pyotr sat erect. Now like the suddenly immersed blue-prints of the old days at the works, everything stood out before him. A clear, finished picture, a plan. Some one or something during these past weeks must have gotten it prepared in there behind his mind; and now here the whole thing was. Strange that he had never once had the complete idea before. Very strange. Incomprehensible.

He turned quietly and felt the yellow quilt. It was soft and beautifully thick. The covering, he remembered, was stuffed with sheep's wool sheared long ago from old Stepan's own farm outside the city. And here was a spot where the stitches were coming loose, the stitches old Maria herself had worked in.

Rising, he took the cover off his father and began to fold it across. The old man, startled, clawed and made a guttural sound; but Pyotr hardly heard him and listened

not at all. When he had laid the yellow quilt over into six thicknesses it approached the shape of a large, oblong pillow. All at once, as though he, too, had seen a sudden picture, the old man craned his head forward. He made a shrill sound like a doomed bird; his claws fluttered. Pyotr hardly heard and did not see. "When he was human father was just and decent," he was thinking. He grasped the simulated pillow at both ends. Then quietly, like a man working out a simple link in a planned chain, he brought the yellow quilt down and back over his father's walnut face. A short affair, it appeared.

In time Pyotr raised the quilt. It was just a little wet just here, where the mouth had been, and he brushed it against his sleeve. Then he went out to sit on the top step. He would wait before continuing in his plan, until the frog-woman should be asleep. So, it would be a simpler matter.

An hour later, when Pyotr descended, Mania was mending Ivan's breeches by the stove. She had a tiny candle, a mere stump, and she plied her cherished needle like the treasure it was. "You are up, Pyotr?" she asked, astonished and wondering.

He seated himself on his chair by the cold stove. Several minutes passed before he spoke.

"If your mother and my father died," he said slowly, "we could still get seven rations a day. You know that, do you not?"

"I have sometimes thought of that," she said, and averted her face to thread the needle. "We could, if no one knew. But it would be more than our share. It would not be just and decent."

"You are wrong. It would be just and it would be decent," he answered with slow emphasis. Even his arguments, arguments which he had never gone over before, seemed ready, prepared, he thought.

"In Russia to-day," he said, "everything should be equal. We should all have started over equal. But it was not possible. What with the old ones here to look after, and even the work I got in the Palace gardens after the factory closed, stopping so long ago, we started off poorer than our neighbors, and we never hid anything away, either." "We weren't able to," she said. "Well, lots of them were able; and lots of them have no children left, now, to feed. Ours were always the healthiest in the neighborhood. But some people have hidden away stuff with which they trade. Maybe the devil helps them. They seem to get more, somehow, than we do."

He paused. "Well," he went on, "so if our old ones were dead we could take the two extra rations for the children."

He raised a heavy fist towards the ceiling.

"Under God's nose I'd wave the seven-ration can!" he cried in a sudden, thunderous voice. A wave of heat passed over him. Mania shook a little. "How does one—how do people keep deaths in a house quiet?" she asked. "That can be arranged," he said, and struck the shovel that stood against the wall.

She turned as if for relief to her sewing. After a little: "Well," she said slowly, "maybe before winter is out, one of them, maybe your father, might—" He leaned over: "Mania," he said firmly, quietly now, "they are both dead." Mania gave a low, abortive cry and crossed herself.

In a moment more, tears had begun to slip down her cheeks. She sat quite still. But she was not grieving. It seemed to her as though her mind had somehow, without her knowing, been already prepared.





"We could not strike against the government." --L. E. Sheppard,  
Head of the Conductors Union



# Hope for America

By Michael Gold

**A**BOUT three weeks ago, by one of those strange combinations that are possible only in New York, I, a battered, "foiled revolutionaire" of the type common in this disorderly metropolis, found myself in the company of a certain young self-made millionaire. His name is well-known; he is a cultured and capable individual; he would be a loved leader under any regime, and his unquenchable intelligence has led him to a deep and permanent interest in the revolutionary world. But he is sad, as are most millionaires, for their money makes them suspicious and selfish and mean, whatever their native characteristics may have been, and he was telling me that men were too vile for any improvement, that there was no hope for America, and that the ardent youth of the movement was throwing itself gallantly and foolishly under the wheels of an eternal Juggernaut.

We were walking through the bright, rushing streets, in the procession of the city's millions, and I was trying to prove the contrary to him, that there was hope for the world. He listened quietly, and then sighed.

"Ah!" he said wistfully. "But you have so much more optimism than I have!"

I could not help smiling. He had a million dollars and a million friends; the world was his wonderful, pearl-crowded, submissive oyster; while I, at the moment, a free-lance journalist, near-novelist and ex- and perhaps soon-manual laborer, was intensely occupied with the problem of raising the mighty sum of \$25 for a new and absolutely necessary overcoat. The contrast was sublime. I felt like giving three cheers; this was a perfect episode in the glorious melodrama of Life. The millionaire is a pessimist; the pauper an op-

timist; and perhaps it is the only possible attitudes for them to take now; perhaps it is how nobility and beggarmdom felt on the eve of the French Revolution; the one striving upward, the other slipping down. *Ca ira!*

No, I am not an optimist, dear millionaire friend; I can be as sad and sick about the life I see as any of your gloomy comrades in his darkest hour. There is no perpetual sunrise over my world. Too many of my friends, the finest boys under the heaven, clean, freedom-loving, generous big men, who spent themselves like antique heroes, and not like modern, self-constricted millionaires, are rotting in the jails of America. There is a famine in Russia, and sometimes I cannot sleep at night as I think of those hollow-eyed millions of simple human beings, the dumb men, the broken-hearted dumb mothers, the marrowless, withered children, who suffer, under the divine justice, for the sins of the capitalist statesmen. Soon the winter will come, and Death will run amuck among these victims and will crush them like insects. *Yet the whole world does not rise en masse to save them!* I think of this, and I think of all Europe at the present hour, a vast field of wars, strikes, riots, starvation, chaos, immeasurable suffering, the Europe that bled itself almost to death. I think of the chemists perfecting gas-bombs in their laboratories for the next war; I think of the parliamentarians making speeches, and the premiers plotting alliances; I think of policemen and detectives, and big business men, the pillars of this unholy system; I think of ministers and other hypocrites. And I think of myself and my intimate friends (you see, I am selfish, too) and how we scramble about every day for a bare living, and are insulted, and degraded, and how we squeeze and pinch out the essentials and take no thought of the morrow, because the morrow will be like to-day, forever and ever, since we are the life-prisoners of poverty; and my heart aches for all of us, and I assure you that this is no food for optimism, either.

No, I live in no cheerful world; nevertheless I live in a hopeful one. The world of labor is built on foundations of despair, but its columns and pinnacles are of strong granite hope. What keeps me sane is that I have studied a little in Marx, and have thrown myself a great deal into the dangerous whirlpools and rapids of the labor movement. I can be gloomy, tired, bitter, sordid, selfish, cynical and disgusted with the world, but I can never despair. I know too much for that. I know that there is something greater than myself and my moods that is making for righteousness; that it is greater than all the moods of all the men in the world; that we can grow tired and old, corrupted and melancholy, but that the great thing will always be there. It will always be there while capitalism is there; it is the modern labor movement, that has been created by capitalism, and that by the laws of capitalism must go on fighting for its life, fighting on the defensive against the beast that is ever-hungry, fighting because it must conquer or die. And it will conquer, for the war spelt the failure of capitalistic production, and with its conquest of the world, labor, which is communistic, will replace capital, which is competitive, and



Before the war this guy stood on his veranda and cheered his head off for the boys going to the front—



we shall see great things; there will be all that we have dreamed of, it is certain as the sun.

Marx has never been heard of by immense multitudes of workingmen; and certain layers of the intelligentsia find a parasitic pleasure in crawling over the colossal figure and "criticising" it with their little jaws; Marx made some mistakes, but was it not he who pointed out the tropismatic actions of humanity in the face of its economic needs, and was it not he who showed us that hope lay not in the thousand Utopian impulses toward goodness and reform of fallible men, but was in the strong-flowing, permanent mass-needs of labor? It was a great lesson; and many have not yet learned it. For them Marx should be a bitter and bracing tonic during these dark days, more wholesome than the intoxicating, yet depressing, draughts of "humanitarian" poetry. Read Marx and study the labor movement closely, I would say to my sad millionaire friend, you will suddenly discover that there is room for grief, but not for despair. The Revolution is here, and capitalism is doomed, as surely as absolute monarchy was doomed when the Bastille fell. There is still a long, bloody fight ahead for the next century, perhaps, but at least revolutionists know that they are fighting on the winning side, and not on the losing.

Hereditary monarchism seemed woven into the fabric of the universe, but any thinker knew that it was doomed when the people began jeering at Louis the Magnificent. Capitalism seems firm as the mountains; in America, especially, the great machine reaches to the skies and awes us with its immensity, but it is doomed, also; it has failed in Russia and Europe, it will fail here. It is not absolute, and only the absolute does not change. It cannot bear criticism or attack. If one nation has repudiated it, all the nations will. God himself does not exist while there is one man to deny Him.

The labor movement cannot die, because it is the sole shield of the workers against capitalism. And the labor movement is fundamentally a revolutionary fact, though at any given moment all who carry it on may be reactionary in thought. Its very existence is a criticism of capitalism, a threat, a menace, a dissent and disobedience to the laws of the competitive society. Gompers is a revolutionist, for he fights the open shop. He cannot help himself, and the labor movement cannot help drifting everywhere towards its logical conclusion — which is, the world for the workers.

Things look bad here in America for the revolutionary forces. Imperialism is in the saddle; the reactionaries still maintain their death-hold on the A. F. of L.; unemployment has put a powerful labor-smashing weapon in the hands of the employers, which they are not slow in using; the Socialist party, after committing all the errors possible to it, is breaking up; Debs and the "wobbly" boys and the Communists are still in jail, and we have not been strong enough as yet to get them out.

But the labor movement is going on, and under the superficial veils of defeat new forces are preparing, new seeds are germinating in the harsh, dark native soil. I shall refer to but one new impulse that is gathering itself in our dark America, and that will ultimately flower in great events. It is the work of the Red Trade Union International to unite the unions outside the A. F. of L. There are almost a million organized workers in this country who have been kicked out, or have had to separate themselves from the A. F. of L. and its corrupt and reactionary leadership. They have been

drifting along, each union fighting its own battles, insurgent organizations like the I. W. W. setting up tremendous propaganda currents through the nations, unions like the Amalgamated building up a machine that no employers' drive will ever break down. But these unions have fought solitary battles. They have not given each other the necessary support in emergencies; they have not combined on some platform that would have become a national factor with their backing.

These unions cannot go back into the A. F. of L. even should they desire it, and the Red Trade Union International, which has no wish to break up any labor movement before as effective a one is ready to take its place, is concentrating in America on a unity program for them.

There is something beautifully practical about the whole plan of reorganization; the Russian Revolution has taught revolutionists everywhere the wisdom of serpents; and the plan is so carefully detailed and minutely specific that it reads like the labor of some shrewd engineering genius who had set his masterly mind to the work of revolution, and was putting into it the same vision and ability that go into the building of bridges and the management of billion-dollar corporations.

George Hardy, ex-general secretary of the I. W. W., who has recently returned from Russia, and has been on a speaking tour through America, is in favor of the plan, and has been trying to swing the I. W. W. organization behind it. I saw him soon after his return from Rochester, where he had gone to address several meetings of the United Shoe Workers on this subject.

"I told them up there that no independent union could put up a real fight by itself; it must have some national support behind it," he said. "Why, the shoe workers had to take a 10 per cent decrease in wages recently even though the industry is as busy as ever; and it is all because they are putting up a lone fight. They saw the point, and I think my whole talk found a highly favorable reception."

"How have the workers everywhere you have gone taken to the idea of unity?" I asked him.

"I will say positively," Hardy told me, "that so far as I can judge, the rank and file in all the independent unions is extremely favorable to the idea. I was prepared for opposition, and was surprised to find almost none, except from



—But to-day the same heroes are bums:  
"Tell 'em there's nothin' doin'."



a few of the irreconcilable leaders."

"Is the rank and file of the I. W. W. favorable to such unity? Will the members, who have gone to jail and suffered danger for the organization, now let it lose its identity and merge into a greater organization?" I asked.

Hardy is a cautious, blue-eyed, strong type, a slow-spoken Englishman, who has been through many battles, and measures his words out with the scrupulousness of one who knows how dangerous or helpful words can sometimes be.

"Well," he said slowly, "I will repeat again: I have no figures, no definite data, but in my judgment, from all the meetings I have spoken to among I. W. W., I would feel confident in saying that the rank and file is converted to the idea.

"It seems to me there is no other way out for the I. W. W. According to the government figures, it had a membership of 300,000 at the height of the war period. The membership has now dwindled down to some 50,000. Thousands of migratory workers through the west, rebellious and the finest material in the world for a revolutionary union, are drifting about in an unorganized state. They have attended our meetings, they have read our literature, but they won't join now, because of the criminal syndicalist laws that have been passed in seven of the western states. Under some new scheme of reorganization, we could take out of the hands of the prosecution all the old material, the sabotage pamphlets and wobbly songs they convict us on. We could start with a clean slate, and we could grow as never before."

"But the old I. W. W. would die?" I said.

"Yes, the name would, but the movement which the I. W. W. started would be reborn, and would go to greater and greater accomplishments. It seems to me this unity movement is the culminating point in the I. W. W. progress. We began as an international movement, but have been able to do little in that direction, and have become a little provincial. Now comes the chance to really affiliate with the rest of the unions of our tendencies in this country, and at the

same time link up with the trade union international that is undoubtedly destined to dominate the future. It is the finest chance we have ever had, and I am sure we will take it."

"What other unions are there who would come in on this scheme of reorganization?"

"Well, there are the Shoe Workers, three independent unions having a membership of 50,000; there are the Lumber Workers of Canada, with 16,000 members; the One Big Union of Canada, with an affiliated membership of some 10,000 men; the Amalgamated Foodstuff Workers of the East, with some 25,000 members; the Amalgamated Textile Workers, who have just reorganized themselves with a membership of 500,000; the Auto and Aircraft Workers of Detroit, the only union in its field; the Marine Transport Workers, who are putting Andy Furuseth's bunch out of business; and many others. I haven't a complete list with me. And then, of course, there is a big union like the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, with a membership of 400,000, but of course, they would come in last, and perhaps it would be best if they did. We must be able to match their forces before we can ask them to throw in their lot with us."

"Won't some of the bigger unions, like the I. W. W., or the One Big Union, want to impose their name and identity on the new organization?" I asked.

"Yes, that is a problem that must be faced. We might have a loose federation of the unions, each keeping its own identity, and this might or might not work. Or we could ask the O. B. U. to merge into the I. W. W., or vice versa, but neither organization is prepared to do this, nor is it desirable. The only way out, it seems to me, is to get together under a new name altogether, and to lay down, as a beginning, only two fundamental planks for a platform—the class struggle, and affiliation with the Red Trade Union International. I think we could all get together on that."

"How about the A. F. of L.? What would be the general policy of the new federation towards the old?"



William Gropper

"I'm sorry your stuff won't do for our magazine — it needs pep, life, vigor."



"We would not go out to smash it blindly, as did the I. W. W.," said Hardy, with the same cautious, canny light in his blue eyes. "That is one of the mistakes we made in our impulsive and generous youth in this country, and it must not happen again. We are not out merely to fight, we are out to win. And we cannot afford to blunder or waste our forces. I know I am departing from the traditional I. W. W. policy when I say this, but experience has convinced me that we have made serious mistakes, and must find ways of rectifying them. We would not set out to break up existing unions. Our aim is to unify the working class. I have seen the I. W. W. take in a teamster's branch union that had broken from the A. F. of L., and then I have seen that whole branch dwindle away. The Western Federation of Miners, with a membership of 75,000, came out with Haywood to form the I. W. W., and it has dwindled away. We must not repeat such mistakes. It is better to have a big, self-dependent labor movement than a weak, ineffective but pure minority. We must use new methods."

"And what are they?" I asked.

"Well, the opinion seems to be that the attitude of this new federation toward the A. F. of L. should be much the same as the attitude of the Red Trade Union International at Moscow toward its rival, the Amsterdam International. Moscow has not gone out to compete with the other international; it does not set up new unions where it enters, but under tactful leadership, it forms propaganda leagues to revolutionize the old unions instead of trying to smash them.

"We would use the same methods in connection with the A. F. of L. We would have minority groups in all the unions, who would function much as the shop stewards did in England, in spreading revolutionary propaganda among the workers there. They would have their fraternal relations with us, but they would be A. F. of L. men boring from within. The only difference from the old boring-from-within days would be that they would not bore themselves out, as I did, when I was an A. F. of L. man. The tactics would be organized, the men would not be working at loose ends, as they are now.

"We would also use infinite discretion in deciding when an insurgent union would be admitted to our federation. We would not be over-hasty in taking in the disgruntled groups. For instance, if the Machinists' International wanted to expel ten per cent of its membership, and the men came to us and asked to be admitted and recognized as the regular union, we would not grab them hastily, as we do now. We would first decide whether they ought to fight for reinstatement in order to keep up the fight from within for control of the whole union."

"It sounds fine to me, Hardy," I said. "It sounds like the real thing; it sounds as if at last we may get some solid rock beneath our feet in America. But why is there any opposition to it? Why does any one who wants a decent, effective labor movement in this country, stand against this project? Why do some of the I. W. W. leaders oppose it so bitterly, as I have been told?"

"Well," said Hardy, looking cannier and cannier every second, "people always have good reasons for opposing anything. Sometimes a man opposes himself and has darn good reasons, too. There is some legitimate opposition to the plan, and we must face it. Some of it comes from the independent unions—they are a little cautious, and want to be shown what they can gain by this affiliation before they

come in. I am sure we can show them. And the I. W. W. and syndicalist opposition comes from an obsession that the Trade Union International will be dominated by the communists. There is a clause in the I. W. W. constitution that was passed at the time of the split with Daniel De Leon, forbidding the organization from ever affiliating with any political party whatsoever. The opposition in the I. W. W. will base its fight on this clause, but I am sure they will lose. They have not learned the lesson of the Russian Revolution, that every workers' movement is a political movement, that a railroad strike or a milk strike is regarded by the government as an act against itself, and that we cannot simply shut our eyes to the political capitalistic state and say it does not exist. It's there, and we must take it into account somehow.

"Affiliation with the Communist parties does not mean domination by them, either. I would be against such domination myself, but I see no means whereby they could achieve it. We would conduct our own affairs in our own way, and the only point of contact would be on the General Executive Board at Moscow, where three communists would sit, in a committee of 27 elected by ourselves. We would also send, in exchange, three of our men to sit on the communist executive board. It would not be domination, but a beneficent contact of the two working class forces in the world, for the purpose of quick and harmonious action in emergencies. Any one who is against such harmony is either not fully class-conscious, or he is a partisan bigot."

"What are you?" I asked Hardy.

He smiled for the first time and answered: "I'm a practical man. The workers are practical, too, and they're rallying to this program. We've sent out an informal call for a unity conference—it will be held soon—and all the independent unions that have answered so far have been in favor of it. I think something big is going to happen—wait and see."

Does it all sound dull and technical, brother millionaire? Does it sound like a poor sort of medicine for the jaded emotions, sick of this brutal, chaotic, war-racked world? When a man's body is sick, a doctor is called in, a dry, emotionless technician. He knows his job. The leaders of the revolutionary working class know their job. They know that there is hope for America, for the world. The future is in their hands, their strong, capable hands, their sane, shrewd brains, their warm hearts. Let us help them all we can as we wait and see.



Rear View of the Author of "The Socialization of Money," bound for some place



RUSSIA

CONCESSIONS

HUGO  
GELLERT

Doing the C



CAPITALISM

SESSIONS

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# The House of the Dead

(A Memory of the Revolution)

By Albert Rhys Williams

THE émigrés on our train had many points of conflict. But on one point they agreed: the grave danger lying ahead of us in Cherm, the great penal colony of Siberia.

"Fifteen thousand convicts in Cherm," they said. "Criminals of the worst stripe—thugs, thieves and murderers. The only way to deal with them is to put them in the mines and keep them there at the point of a gun. Even so, it is too much liberty for them. Every week there are scores of thefts and stabbings. Now most of these devils have been turned loose, and they have turned Bolshevik. It always was a hell-hole. What it is now God only knows."

It was a raw bleak morning on the first of May, when we rode into Cherm (Chermkhovo). A curtain of dust, blown up by a wind from the north, rung over the place. Curled up in our compartment half asleep, we woke to the cry, "They're coming! They're coming!" We peered through the window. Far as we could see nothing was coming but a whirling cloud of dust. Then through the dust we made out a glint of red, the gray of glittering steel, and vague, black masses moving forward.

Behind drawn curtains, the émigrés went frantically hiding jewels and money, or sat paralyzed with terror. Outside, the cinders crunched under the tread of the hob-nailed boots. In what mood "they" were coming, with what lust in their blood, what weapons in their hands, no one knew. We knew only that these were the dread convicts of Cherm, "murderers, thugs and thieves"—and they were heading for the parlor-cars.

Slowly they lurched along, the wind filling their eyes with dust and soot, and wrestling with a huge blood-red banner they carried. Then came a lull in the wind, dropping the dust screen and bringing to view a motley crew.

Their clothes were black from the mines and tied up with strings, their faces grim and grimy. Some were ox-like hulks of men. Some were gnarled and knotted, warped by a thousand gales. Here were the cannibal-convicts of Tolstoy, slant-browed and brutal-jawed. Here was Dostoevsky's "House of the Dead." With limping steps, cheeks slashed and eyes gouged out they came, marked by bullet, knife and mine disaster, some cursed by an evil birth. But few, if any, were weaklings.

By a long, gruelling process the weak had been killed off. These thousands were the survivors of tens of thousands, driven out on the gray highroad to Cherm. Through sleet and snow, winter blast and summer blaze they had staggered along. Torture-chambers had racked their limbs. Gendarmes' sabers had cracked their skulls. Iron fetters had cut their flesh. Cossacks' whips had gashed their backs, and Cossacks' hoofs had pounded them to earth.

Like their bodies their souls, too, had been knouted. Like a blood-hound the law had hung on their trail, driving them into dungeons, driving them to this dismal outpost of Siberia, driving them off the face of the earth into its caverns, to strain like beasts, digging the coal in the dark and handing it up to those who live in the light.

Now out of the mines they come marching up into the light. Guns in hand, flying red flags of revolt, they are loose in the highways, moving forward like a great herd, the incarnation of brute strength. In their path lie the warm, luxurious parlor-cars — another universe, a million miles removed. Now it is just a few inches away, within their grasp. Three minutes, and they could leave this train sacked from end to end as though gutted by a cyclone. How sweet for once to glut themselves! And how easy! One swift lunge forward. One furious onset.

But their actions show neither haste nor frenzy. Stretching their banners on the ground they range themselves in a crescent, massed in the center, facing the train. Now we can scan those faces. Sullen, defiant, lined deep with hate, brutalized by toil. On all of them the ravages of vice and terror. In all of them an infinitude of pain and torment, the poignant sorrow of the world.

But in their eyes is a strange light—a look of exaltation. Or is it the glitter of revenge? A blow for a blow. The law has given them a thousand blows. Is it their turn now? Will they avenge the long years of bitterness?

A hand touches our shoulder. We turn and look into the faces of two burly miners. They tell us that they are the Commissars of Cherm.

## The Comrade Convicts

At the same time they signal the banner-bearers, and the red standards rise up before our eyes. On one in large letters is the old familiar slogan: *Proletarians arise! You have nothing to lose but your chains.* On another: *We stretch out our hands to the miners in all lands. Greetings to our comrades throughout the world.*

"Hats off!" shouts the commissar. Awkwardly they bare their heads and stand, caps in hand. Then slowly begins the hymn of the International:

*"Arise, ye prisoners of starvation!  
Arise, ye wretched of the earth!  
For justice thunders condemnation,  
A better world's in birth.  
No more tradition's chains shall bind you;  
Arise, ye slaves! No more in thrall.  
The world shall rise on new foundations.  
You have been naught: you shall be all."*

I have heard the streets of cities around the world, ringing to the "International," rising from massed columns of the marchers. I have heard rebel students send it floating through college halls. I have heard the "International" on the voices of 2,000 Soviet delegates, blending with four military bands, go rolling through the pillars of the Tauride Palace. But none of these singers looked the "wretched of the earth." They were the sympathizers of representatives of the wretched. These miner-convicts of Cherm were the wretched themselves, most wretched of all. Wretched in garments and looks, and even in voice.



tune they sang, but in their singing one felt the pain and protest of the captive, the moan of the galley-slave lashed to the oar, the groan of the serf stretched on the wheel, the cries from the cross, the stake and the gibbet, the anguish of myriads of the condemned, welling up out of the long reaches of the past.

These convicts were in apostolic succession to the suffering of the centuries. They were the ex-communicate of society, mangled, crushed by its heavy hand, and hurled down into the darkness of this pit.

Now out of the pit rises this victory-hymn of the vanquished. Long bludgeoned into silence, they break into song—a song not of complaint, but of conquest. No longer are they social outcasts, but citizens. More than that—Makers of a New Society!

Their limbs are numb with cold. But their hearts are on fire. Harsh and rugged faces are touched with a sunrise glow. Dull eyes grow bright. Defiant ones grow soft. In them lies the transfiguring vision of the toilers of all nations bound together in one big fraternity—The International.

"Long live the International! Long live the American workers!" they shout. Then opening their ranks, they thrust forward one of their number. He is of giant stature, a veritable Jean Valjean of a man, with a Jean Valjean of a heart.

"In the name of the miners of Cherm," he says, "we greet the comrades on this train! In the old days how different it was! Day after day, trains rolled through here, but we dared not come near them. Some of us did wrong, we know. But many of us were brutally wronged. Had there been justice, some of us would be on this train and some on this train would be in the mines.

"But most of the passengers didn't know there were any mines. In their warm beds, they didn't know that way down below were thousands of moles, digging coal to put heat in the cars and steam in the engine. They didn't know that hundreds of us were starved to death, flogged to death or killed by falling rock. If they did know, they didn't care. To them we were dregs and outcasts. To them we were nothing at all.

"Now we are everything! We have joined the International. We fall in to-day with the armies of labor in all lands. We are in the vanguard of them all. We, who were slaves, have been made freest of all.

"Not our freedom alone we want, comrades, but freedom for the workers throughout the world. Unless they, too, are free, we cannot keep the freedom we have to own the mines and run them ourselves.

"Already the greedy hands of the Imperialists of the world are reaching out across the seas. Only the hands of the



Hungry Boys in Saratov Deserted by Parents

workers of the world can tear those clutches from our throats."

The range and insight of the man's mind was amazing. So amazed was my companion, Kuntz, that his own speech in reply faltered. My hold on Russian quite collapsed. Our part in this affair, we felt, was wan and pallid. But these miners did not feel so. They came into the breach with a cheer for the International, and another for the International Orchestra.

The "Orchestra" comprised four violins played by four prisoners of war: a Czech, a Hungarian, a German and an Austrian. Captured on the eastern front, from camp to camp they had been relayed along to these convict-mines in Siberia. Thousands of miles from home! Still farther in race and breeding from these Russian masses drawn from the soil. But caste and creed and race had fallen before the Revolution. To their convict miner comrades here in this dark hole they played as in happier days they might have played at a music festival under the garden lights of Berlin or Budapest. The flaming passion in their veins crept into the strings of their violins and out into the heart-strings of their hearers.

The whole conclave—miners, musicians and visitors, Teutons, Slavs and Americans—became one. All barriers were down as the commissars came pressing up to greet us. One huge hulking fellow, with fists like pile-drivers, took our hands into his. Twice he tried to speak and twice he choked. Unable to put his sentiments of brotherhood into words he put it into a sudden terrific grip of his hands. I can feel that grip yet.

For the honor of Cherm he was anxious that its first public function should be conducted in proper fashion. Out of the past must have flashed the memory of some occasion where the program of the day included gifts as well as speeches. Disappearing for a time, he came running back



with two sticks of dynamite—the gifts of Cherm to the two Americans. We demurred. He insisted. We pointed out that a chance collision and delegates might disappear together with dynamite—a total loss to the International. The crowd laughed. Like a giant child he was hurt and puzzled. Then he laughed, too.

The second violinist, a blue-eyed lad from Vienna, was always laughing. Exile had not quenched his love of fun. In honor of the American visitors he insisted upon a *Jazze-Americane*. So he called it, but never before or since have I heard so weird a melody. He played with legs and arms as well as bow, dancing round, up and down to the great delight of the crowd.

Our love-feast at last was broken in upon the clanging signal-bell. One more round of hand-clasps and we climbed aboard the train as the orchestra caught up the refrain:

*It is the final conflict  
Let each stand in his place;  
The Internationale—  
Shall be the human race.*

There was no grace or outward splendor in this meeting. It was ugliness unrelieved—except for one thing: the presence of a tremendous vitality. It was a revelation of the drive of the Revolution. Even into this sub-cellar of civilization it had penetrated—into these regions of the damned it had come like a trumpet-blast, bringing down the walls of their charnel-house. Out of it they had rushed, not with bloodshot eyes, slaving mouths and daggers drawn, but crying for truth and justice, with songs of solidarity upon their lips, and on their banners the watchwords of a new world.

### The Emigres Unmoved

All this was lost upon the émigrés. Not one ray of wonder did they let penetrate the armor of their class-interest. Their former fears gave way to sneers:

"There is Bolshevism for you! It makes statesmen out of jail-birds. Great sight, isn't it? Convicts parading the streets instead of digging in the mines. That's what we get out of Revolution."

We pointed to other things that came out of Revolution—order, restraint and good-will. But the émigrés could not see. They would not see.

"That is for the moment," they laughed. "When the excitement is over they'll go back to stealing, drinking and killing." To these émigrés it was at best a passing ecstasy that would disappear with our disappearing train.

Leaning out from the car steps we waved farewell to the hundreds of huge grimy hands waving farewell to us. Our eyes long clung to the scene. In the last glimpse we saw the men of Cherm with heads still bared to the cutting wind, the rhythmic rise and fall of the arms of "Jean Valjean," the red banner with "Greetings to our Comrades throughout the World," and a score of hands still stretched out towards the train. Then the scene faded away in the dust and distance.

Two years later Jo Redding came back to Detroit after working in Cherm and watching the Revolution working there. He reports its permanent effects. Thefts and murders were reduced almost to zero. Snarling animals became men. Though just released from irons, they put themselves under the iron discipline of the Soviet armies. Men who had so many wrongs of their own to brood over, now assumed the wrongs of the world. They had vast programs to release their energies upon, vast visions to light their minds.

To the rich and the privileged, to those who sit on roof-gardens or ride in parlor-cars, the Revolution is the Anti-Christ. But to the despised and disinherited, the Revolution is like the Messiah "coming to proclaim release of the captives and to set at liberty them that are bruised." No longer can Dostoevsky's convict mutter, "We are not alive, though we are living. We are not in our graves, though we are dead." In the House of the Dead, Revolution is Resurrection.



Soviet Station for children at Syzran

### Crowds

NO wonder they who pass all day,  
Like maskers in a masquerade,  
Are always hurrying away  
To where walls hold out quiet shade.  
(Or else how poor were they!)  
No wonder they would rest their eyes  
Where only sightless shadows stir,  
Flinging aside their thin disguise.  
(Or else how poor they were!)  
No wonder when the silence lies  
Like secret pools, untouched and dark—  
Where only 'vagrant memory delves—  
They poise like swimmers clean and stark,  
And plunge into themselves.  
Hazel Hall.



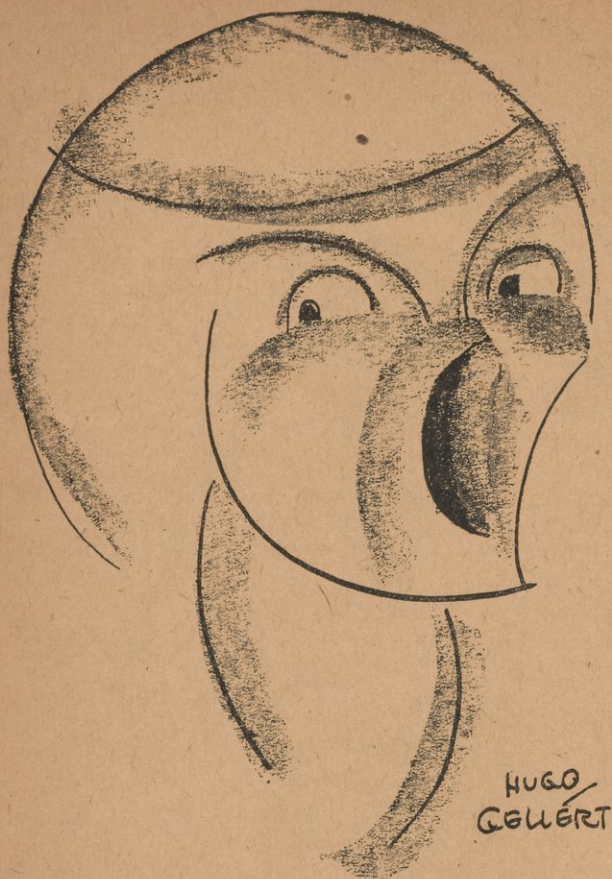


Emancipated Woman: "Why keep on imitating him? That isn't my idea of freedom"



# A Negro E

By Claude Mc



Florence Mills Singing "Gypsy Blues"

THERE are shovelfuls of humor and barrels of joy in the Negro Burlesque playing at the Sixty-third Street Music Hall. Despite adverse and pointless criticism, the comedy has survived the summer and should sweep along through this season. A burlesque show is a burlesque with its inevitable commingling of grain and chaff and overdoing of the obvious. And the metropolitan notational critics who have damned "Shuffle Along" for not fulfilling the role of an Italian light opera are as filmy-sighted as the convention-ridden and head-ossified Negro intelligentsia, who censure colored actors for portraying the inimitable comic characteristics of Negro life, because they make white people laugh! Negro artists will be doing a fine service to the world, maybe greater than the combined action of all the white and black radicals yelling revolution together, if by their efforts they can spirit the whites away from lynching and inbred prejudice, to the realm of laughter and syncopated motion. After the ugly post-war riots between white and black in the big English ports, George Lansbury of the Daily Herald brought the American Southern Orchestra from the West End of London to sing in Poplar, the very heart of the trouble. And soon all the slums of London, forgetting the riots, were echoing with syncopated songs.

Although so far apart apparently, the ready-to-wear comment of white and black Americans on "Afro-American" artistic endeavor is really very similar. It rises from the same source—colorphobia and antagonism on both sides. The American public is dimly aware of a great storehouse of Negro Art in this country. But with its finer senses blurred by prejudice, it turns to Yankee-Dixie impersonators and Semitic imitators for the presentation of Negro Art. And from these bastard exhibitions the current standards are set. The Negro critics can scarcely perceive and recognize true values through the screen of sneering bigotry put between them and life by the dominant race. So against the worthless standards of the whites, the black intelligentsia, sensitive and pompous, would oppose such solid things as the aristocracy of St. Phillip's Church, the compositions of Cole-ridge-Taylor and Mr. Harry Burleigh, the painting of Mr. Tanner, the prose of Mr. DuBois, the critiques of Mr. Braithwaite and the poetry of Mr. James Weldon Johnson, as the only expression of Negro Culture. For such a list would earn the solemn approval of the *New York Times*. Negro art, these critics declare, must be dignified and respectable like the Anglo-Saxon's before it can be good. The Negro must get the warmth, color and laughter out of his blood, else the white man will sneer at him and treat him with contumely. Happily the Negro retains his joy of living in the teeth of such criticism; and in Harlem, along Fifth and Lenox avenues, in Marcus Garvey's Hall with its extravagant paraphernalia, in his churches and cabarets, he expresses himself with a zest that is yet to be depicted by a true artist.

"Shuffle Along" somewhat conflicts with my international intelligence and entices me to become a patriotic barker for my race. It makes me believe that Negroes are not civilized enough to be vulgar, nor will they ever express themselves through the medium of respectability.

"A cheap imitation of Broadway"—this is what some



"Shuffle Along!"



# o Extravaganza

laude McKay

critics say of it. And it is superficially true. Negroes of America, who by an acquired language and suffering, are closer knit together than all the many tribes of Africa, alien to each other by custom and language, cannot satisfy the desire of the hyper-critical whites for the Congo wriggle, the tribal war jig, and the jungle whoop. The chastisement of civilization has sobered and robbed them of these unique manifestations. American Negroes have not the means and leisure to tour Africa for ancestral wonders. And those carping whites who are in a like quandary might well visit Coney Island and the circuses to get acquainted with the stunts of Savagedom. Or they might take a look into themselves. The conventions of "Shuffle Along" are those of Broadway, but the voice is nevertheless indubitably Africa expatriate. It is this basic African element which makes all Negro imitations so delightfully humorous and enjoyable. It is this something that always sent me to see the Lafayette Players at 131st Street and Seventh Avenue in white plays after they had been passed up by Broadway. To me the greatest charm is that the erotic movements are different.



Steve Jenkins, Candidate for Mayor



"If you haven't been vamped by a brown skin,  
You haven't been vamped at all!"

And besides, "The Negroes make their eyes talk." Such eyes! So luminously alive!

How deliciously appealing is the mimicry of Miss Florence Mills, the sparkling gold star of the show. She can twist her face in imitation of a thousand primitive West African masks, some patterns of which may be seen at the American Museum of Natural History. Her coo-cooing and pooh-poohing tintinnabulate all over the hall. She is prettiest in her vivid orange frock. She might have been featured more. She is like one of those Southern rarities that used to bowl one over in the cabarets of Philadelphia and Baltimore during the wonderful wet days. Noble Sissle knows his range and canters over it with the ease and grace of an antelope. The Harmony Kings are in the direct line of the Jubilee Singers, whether they give a plantation melody or syncopate a Tyrolese or Hawaiian song.

The show is built on an excellent framework: the lines and measurements just crazy enough to make everything funny. Black Jimtown is like any other town; the business of governing is graft. Sam Peck and Steve Jenkins are uproariously in the game, and also the perfect "Onion" Jeffrey.

But the ensemble is a little disappointing and lacking in harmony. Instead of making up to achieve a uniform near-white complexion the chorus might have made up to accentuate the diversity of shades among "Afro-Americans" and let the white audience in on the secret of the color nomenclature of the Negro world. For, as the whites have their blonde and brunette, so do the blacks have their chocolate, chocolate-to-the-bone, brown, low-brown, teasing-brown, high-brown, yellow, high-yellow and so on. The difference on our side is so much more interesting and funny. It is whispered in some circles that the "Blue-vein" Societies among the Afro-American elite bar the black girls from the stage. But this can hardly be true; for I have rarely seen any social gathering of American Negroes where there were not very dark damsels through whose skin the blue veins could not show! However, there is a dearth of black girls in Negro theatricals whose presence would surely give more distinction and realism to the stage. I believe that the colored actors





## The Factory School

(Corporations may deduct what they spend on "Education" from their income tax.)

prefer the lighter-skinned girls. The latter are vivacious, pushing and pretty, but prettiness is always plentiful, while beauty is rare and hard to find. If black men in general favor the lighter women of their race, it is a natural phenomenon beyond criticism. The Negroes of the western world are producing and fostering new types. The deep-rooted animosity of the lily-white and the bombastic mouthings of the "sable-ites" against miscegenation are both but foam on the great, natural, barrier-breaking current of interracial contact. Still, despite this fact, Negro artists ought not to ignore the variety of material at hand.

### THE LIBERATOR

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## Detestimonials

**J**UDGE ANDERSON has taken a firm stand against heat. He asks us to throw off the shackles of the tyrant who digs coal out of the ground. The freedom of the freeze!

**T**HE fight between the railroads and the brotherhoods proved to be only a paper war. A scrap of paper.

**O**N the other hand, red headed girls of a Maryland college have organized a club and are conducting propaganda for auburn locks. Attention of Mr. Coolidge.

**H**YLAN may not be the worst mayor New York ever had, but the opposition of William Travers Jerome in the closing weeks of the campaign was better luck than he deserved.

**B**LANTON'S remarks must have been pretty bad to have brought unanimous censure from the House of Representatives. Perhaps in his simple Blantonish way he was trying to boost the circulation of the Congressional Record.

**S**OMEBODY played a sorry joke upon Senator Tom Watson. The alleged hanging outrage in the A. E. F. proved to be only a Negro. Probably some homesick Georgians having some innocent recreation.



**SENATOR SWANSON** of Virginia arose one day and sang the following swansong: "The continuance of civilization depends upon the success of the arms conference." It looks like a hard winter for civilization.

**OF** fifty-seven unemployed men arrested by the New York police for sleeping in Bryant Park all but one were released the next day. Maybe he is the only one who could be proved to have enjoyed a good night's rest.

**OUR** newspapers have ridiculed at great length the illogical folly of trying to draw attention to the Sacco-Vanzetti verdict by demonstrations before American consulates all over southern Europe. It cost a lot of ink and paper to prove this point.

**SINGING** was forbidden this fall on the Princeton campus after ten o'clock because it kept the football players awake. There is a grave danger in this procedure. In the quiet hours of the evening the students might be tempted to fool with books.

**"SUCCESS** is still operated on the self-service plan." Kingston Whig via *Literary Digest*. Maybe it is that way in Canada, but on this side of the line success consists entirely in getting waited upon.

**SO** the irritation of many patriots, Capt. Paxton Hibben, secretary of the relief commission in Russia, was pictured placing a wreath upon John Reed's grave. It is now explained that this was a personal matter and not an act of deliberate official friendliness.

**FROM** a recent editorial in the New York Times: "The government carried on by Lenin, Trotzky and the Soviets is near a collapse." It seems wasteful to set up this sentence constantly year after year. Why not run it in the box on the front page instead of that motto, "All the News That's Fit to Print?"

**"CONFERENCE** on Idle Ends Without Clash."

**AND** the idle end without cash.

HOWARD BRUBAKER.

### Neglignee

**A NEGLIGEE** for our cow I now design.

Petite, soft gray-brown

With slow delicious movings

Of redundant jaws

And langorous tossings of black tipt horns

Is she.

Burlap in dark brown tones

With slashings where potatoes burst the fabric thru

When it was used as sacking—

Revealing bits of soft brown hide and hair,

Shall be her barnyard gown.

Cabbage leaves shall I applique

All round about the hem thereof

And fool the flies and please our cow

With careful ingenuity.

Robert Snedigar.



U. S.: "Quit laffin at me!"

(The Press is requested to refrain from prohibition jokes.)

### They--

**YOUR** kisses—

Impersonal creatures

Without features—

Pounded and tugged tonight

At the curtain that hangs between people.

The painted curtain

That looks so silken and yielding

But really is wrought,

They say,

Of eternal stone.

Anne Herendeen.

### Damn It All

Drop your troubles for one night  
and come to the

### Liberator Costume Ball

All the Artists, Poets, Rough-Necks, Profiteers,  
Wobblies, Pretty Girls and Greenwich Villagers  
Will Be There!

WHEN? TRY AND GUESS



## With Child

NOW I am slow and placid, fond of sun,  
Like a sleek beast, or a worn one:  
No slim and languid girl, not glad  
With the windy trip I once had,  
But velvet-footed, musing of my own,  
Torpid, mellow, stupid as a stone.

You cleft me with your beauty's pulse, and now  
Your pulse has taken body. Care not how  
The old grace goes, how heavy I am grown,  
Big with this loneliness, how you alone  
Ponder our love. Touch my feet and feel  
How earth tingles, teeming at my heel!

Earth's urge, not mine—my little death, not hers;  
And the pure beauty yearns and stirs.

It does not heed our ecstasies, it turns  
With secrets of its own, its own concerns,  
Toward a windy world of its own, toward stark  
And solitary places. In the dark,  
Defiant even now, it tugs and moans  
To be untangled from these mother's bones.

Genevieve Taggard.



"Himinine"

Lydia Gibson

## A Sonnet for Poets

THE ancient tyranny is with us still  
With duller costume but with stronger hands;  
A newer jargon masks the old commands;  
The Bastille looms no more—but there's the mill.  
Shelley abhorred the priests; the priests are dead;  
But journals lie to us of other things,  
And merchants rule as certainly as kings,  
Drinking sweet wine, throwing us crumbs of bread.

Then what have we, however words may shift—  
Lovers of light and freedom, what have we  
To do with lords, whatever lords they be,  
Crowned or uncrowned, when we have still to lift  
On high the golden banners of romance,  
And wake the world to freedom with our chants!

Joseph Freeman.

## Ancestry

THIS singing blood that pulses in each vein,  
Warm with the life it treasures to the last,  
Holds in its fleeting motion the proud strain  
Of unnamed heroes lost in the dark past,  
A thousand cohorts girded up with steel—  
Armies of beauty, clear as pointed flame—  
These ground their sharpest sorrows under heel,  
And stood them firm, in honor of a name.  
So for the name of these, the valiant heart  
Beats on in darkness or in shrinking fire;  
Strong with the past, it owns itself a part  
Of a lost race that could not fail nor tire.  
So in the strength of these, and their unrest,  
I start anew upon their ancient quest.

Bernice Lesbia Kenyon.

## River Song for a Red Deer

WHEN mullein pods ripen and burst,  
And the long grass fades in the sun,  
When upland fields are athirst  
Come down, oh lovely one!

Come where the river is wide  
And the ranks of the cedar sweet;  
The waves will talk at your side,  
They will whisper about your feet;

Come where under the land  
The shadowed waters creep,  
With brown limbs stretched on the sand  
Lovely one fall asleep.

Bernard Raymund.

## The Snow Again

THE snow again; a peace-white curtain where  
The wall was yesternight, repellent, bare . . .

A creeping silence in the prison yard;  
A plaintive light at windows blackly barred . . .

The snow again. . . . And it is better so:  
I think the dead rest better under snow.

Alan Breese.



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# BOOKS

*"Seeing Things At Night," By Heywood Broun; Harcourt, Brace & Co.*

I HAVE about come to the conclusion that there is no such thing as impersonal and unprejudiced literary criticism. I like Heywood Broun's criticisms because I agree with them. There are other reasons for liking them, but first of all there is a community of enthusiasm. I say "enthusiasm" and not "taste," because I don't believe, upon mature consideration, that there is any such thing as "taste." There are likes and dislikes—and here is a man whose likes and dislikes are fundamentally the same as mine. To come across a critic of whom that is true is like finding a friend. It is finding a friend. And in a friend, unreasonably enough, one cherishes not only the fundamental community of enthusiasms, but also the minor discrepancies in enthusiasms. It would be monotonous if your friend agreed with you about everything. And so it is with a critic: as long as Heywood Broun is enthusiastic about H. G. Wells, I find it merely piquant that he should like "Jurgen"; it puzzles me, this liking for "Jurgen" in a critic who likes H. G. Wells; it half persuades me that there is something in "Jurgen" that I have failed to see.

There is nothing very critical in this reaction to the critical writings of Heywood Broun. And for the life of me, I cannot be critical, in the sense of pronouncing judgment, upon a man who likes the things I like, and expresses his enthusiasms in so interesting a way. I cannot even be sure as to just what, in addition to this community of enthusiasm, makes his writings interesting. And I am not the only one who is puzzled as to just what it is that makes Heywood Broun's writings so interesting. Dozens of times in the past two years people have asked me that question; they asked it with an annoyed expression as if the question had been bothering them; sometimes as if they resented the fact that they could be so interested and not know why. And the nearest thing to an answer came from a man who had been a fellow literary critic of mine in Chicago:

"You and I," he said, "when we set up in business as critics, were aware of our youth and ignorance, and tried to disguise it. We were terrified whenever we thought of our unpreparedness for our task; we hadn't read all the literary masterpieces of all times, we were just brash young men who had something to say. So we pretended to a sophistication which we

did not possess. We had the air of omniscience. People were always surprised, when they met us, to find how young we were. We wrote like greybeards. And the public, which respects age and wisdom, respected us; but nobody likes to be made to feel ignorant, and that is the way we made our readers feel. Heywood Broun, for all I know, may be able to recite the Five Foot Shelf of Classics backward; but if he can, he is wise enough to conceal the fact, and write like an ordinary human being. The reason you and I and everybody else like Heywood Broun's criticism is that he doesn't pretend to be God. He allows us to retain our self-respect. He doesn't try to overawe us by authority. He gives his opinion, he doesn't lay down the law. You can call it good manners, if you like—putting his readers at their ease. Or you can call it candor."

I prefer to call it candor. I don't think Heywood Broun can recite Dr. Eliot's Library of Classics backwards, and I don't think he is concealing from us a profound and useless erudition; at least, I should be disappointed to learn that he was. I take it that Heywood Broun is what he seems to be, a person much more interested in the Dempsey-Carpentier fight than in the Bhagavad-Ghita. But to my friend's analysis I would add one more remark: Heywood Broun is interested in books as a part of life.

He is not alone in this; it is characteristic of the new period in the world's affairs to regard ideals and art not as if they existed by themselves, but with reference to ordinary human life. I do it myself; but I fear I have a tendency to do it rather solemnly—and the delightful thing about Heywood Broun is that he does it so gaily and naturally.

Take H. 3d, for instance. In the old criticism there were no H. 3ds. A critic might be married; he might have a child; but what had that to do with the business of criticising



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books? And yet, obviously enough, being the parent of a child is quite an exciting adventure. If the books one read were really so detached from life that they never reminded one of that adventure, they would be poor things. As a matter of fact, the books one reads, and the plays one sees, do remind one of one's own life—of one's adventures in work and play, friendship and love. They are interpretations of life, most acutely interesting when they are most near to one's own experience. The real question about a book is not how does this compare with Turgenev, Dickens and Anatole France? but rather, how does this compare with what I know about life? I suspect that there are two kinds of people: those who are so sick and tired of life that they turn to books as an escape from its pain; and those who are so much in love with life that they turn to books as a further extension and enrichment of life; not as if books were something better, but simply something more of the same kind. I feel that Heywood Broun is distinctly one of those who relish life. To him a new book, and a new remark of H. 3d's, are not two different kinds of experience; and he can turn from one to the other with complete ease and naturalness. I was talking one day with an art critic who was gloomily writing an essay on Botticelli. He handed me a colored reproduction of a Botticelli Venus and said, "That picture always reminds me of a certain girl—a beautiful and cussed creature that I was crazy in love with. I shouldn't wonder if Botticelli's girl was just like her, in temperament as well as in looks. If she was, it would explain a good many things about Botticelli—including why he was converted by Savonarola." I said, "Why don't you write that in your essay?" He looked scandalized and said, "But that isn't art-criticism!" He felt that he had to pretend to be interested in "essential form," or "tactile values," or something of that sort. He couldn't discuss his ex-sweetheart in an art-criticism. It would have revealed him as a human being with human interests—and that would never do!

Heywood Broun seems to me to be very much a human being, and his criticism very much a record of his human interests—and H. 3d is naturally one of them. The ordinary parent likes to talk about his young son—and so does Heywood Broun. The ordinary parent is likely to be somewhat of a nuisance with his stories of the latest thing Tommy said; and Heywood Broun is always interesting—the difference being perhaps that his parental pride is mitigated by his sense of humor, as well as by the large cismic views to which his H. G. Wellsian reading has habituated him. At any rate, there is a way to talk about one's child which sort of takes for granted that there are other children in the world to be talked about, and other parents who want to talk about them. There is a way of writing about the play one saw last night, or the book one has just read, that makes it seem not the last word, but rather the first. Heywood Broun has always an air of opening a conversation. The reader goes on to

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finish it, and is pleased with Heywood Broun for giving him the chance. Every reader of these criticisms has the feeling that he is just across the room or the table. It is not Old Omniscience that addresses you—but a young and earnest voice, saying easily and good-humoredly something that you feel, as soon as you have heard it, you would like to have said yourself. You didn't think of it—but you feel you might have!

There is a penalty attached to this happy quality. You may get to identifying your own opinions with Heywood Broun's to such an extent that when he fails to like some play or book that is a pet of yours, you are shocked—you can't understand how it happened! Some time I suppose I shall feel that way about Heywood Broun. . . . I must hasten, then, with what I have to say. . . . He represents for me the happy criticism of the future—a criticism not for pedants, but for people, a criticism that does not need a special jargon to express itself in, but is content with common words that refer to common emotions, a criticism that has got down off the high horse of special revelation and become healthy and human, a criticism that is not biliousness in disguise nor yet the attempt to exhibit the critic before the public as a superior being, but simply the exuberance of a sane and sympathetic intelligence. FLOYD DELL.

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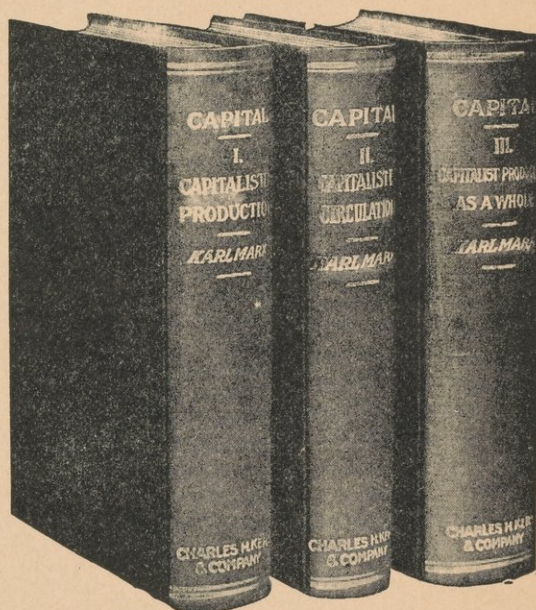




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