

LIBERATOR



G.P. 1922-

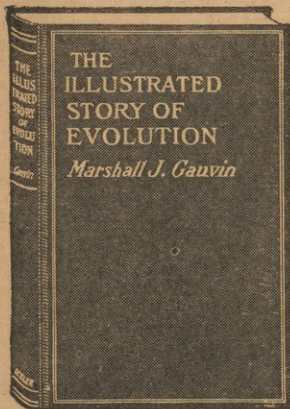
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Boardman Robinson

H. G. Wells

THE LIBERATOR

Vol. 5, No. 2 [Serial No. 47]

February, 1922

A Christmas Party

By Max Eastman

WHILE the international high-priests of capitalism are deciding how to kill us in the next war—whether to stand off and blow us into the air with big guns, or get up in the air and drop bombs on us, whether to drown us with submerged battleships, or stay on top of the water and merely submerge us, or whether just to wait until we have gone to sleep and put us away quietly by the townful with our night-caps on—while they are deciding these momentous questions of tactics, it seems fitting that we should meet also, and try to arrange some general scheme for staying alive as long as possible at least in principle. And I take it the convention of the Workers' Party was such a meeting.

The Workers' Party was born on Christmas day, 1921, and no date could be more appropriate. It is not that Jesus Christ was born on that day, although the chances are at least one to 364 that he was. And it is not that Christmas is the one day set aside by our highly specialized culture for the business of charity and the love of the neighbor — or at least for the mailing of an engraved neighborly formula to all the addresses contained in a card-catalogue. The reason why it was appropriate for the Workers' Party to be born on Christmas day, 1921, is that on that date, once in every seven years, the workers get two days of liberty in succession. They get that much opportunity to think.

The program of the new Party shows that some of them have been doing a little thinking, a little hard, quiet, practical thinking. There has never been a program of an American party that seemed so little occupied upon the one hand with political opportunism, and upon the other with romantic dogmatism, as the program of the Workers' Party.

The convention was scheduled for 10 o'clock Saturday morning, December 24th, and following the Russian fashion, it assembled five hours later. It assembled at the Labor Temple on East 84th Street, in a hall decorated with a very non-committal selection of colored bunting—red, pink, yellow, green, red-white-and-blue—all converging with a wonderful suggestion of internationalism upon a Japanese lantern. These decorations were old and faded; the windows were dirty enough to give about as much light as church windows; and the voice of J. Louis Engdahl, who called the convention to order, was very ministerial. A feeling that he ought to be reading the Bible, or distributing prizes to the boys and girls who had learned the largest number of verses by heart, rather dimmed my revolutionary ardor for the moment. It was revived, however, by James P. Cannon, who made the "key-note speech"—an eloquent and thoughtful pledge to the workers of America to give them a fighting

party, a unified party, a party free from personal malice and the spirit of divisionism, a party that will be "democratically centralized," and "solve its problems in the true spirit of Marxian science."

"The guarantee that the party will not be reformist," he said, "will be in the personality of the delegates, not in the phraseology of the platform"—a challenge to the die-hards of rhetorical extremism, which could only be improved by adding that there is no guarantee that a party will not become reformist. Human beings are changeful, and the associations composed of them still more so. We are not staking out the boundaries of a promised land. We are guiding a flux in which we ourselves are flowing. We can make clear definitions of the dynamic elements involved, and clear volitions as to the goal and present course of our action, but we cannot by any device whatever forestall new combinations and alignments, new problems of definition and volition in the future. There is no rest or ultimate finality anywhere. If the die-hards could realize this fact in general, they might find it easier to give up their hope of finding rest and finality—of finding the Absolute—in a rhetorical formula.

Those who feared that the revolution was becoming too parliamentary in its methods, were reassured in a timely way by the ejection of Harry Waton, who had asked to be recognized as a delegate from the Marx-Engels Institute, of which he is, I understand, the faculty and trustees. His credentials were rejected by the committee, and he rose to a point of information on the floor of the convention. It seems to have been understood that he had some remarks to make which the delegates considered perniciously irrelevant, and that if he started making them he might possibly have to leave through the window instead of the door. It was by way of assuring him the more dignified exit that the chairman refused to recognize him, and the delegates sustained the chair. It was not exactly an application of the steam-roller. It was more like the Mississippi river. The business of the convention simply flowed over him, and he stood there yelling, "I demand recognition," "I will be heard," "If you all go to hell I will be heard," until he was drowned. There were some cries of "Steam roller!" and "What are you afraid of?" in the gallery, some boos and cat-calls, energetically smothered, and followed by sounds in the hallway resembling the picture of a nude descending a staircase. But during all this uproar the convention flowed silently along, electing as chairman Caleb Harrison, who proceeded to read the program of procedure, opening with the statement that "Robert's Rules of Order shall prevail."

"Robert Fitzsimmons," I suggested to one of the delegates,

but he was a little injured at the implication. He was the one who explained to me that if Harry Waton had got the floor, he would also have got the ceiling and probably a portion of the furniture.

There were 146 regular delegates at the convention of the Workers' Party, 94 from the American Labor Alliance, 13 from the Workers' Council, and 39 from miscellaneous labor bodies. And there were 14 fraternal delegates, having a voice but no vote. These included George Hardy, representing the pro-unity group within the I. W. W., and Dennis Batt and H. M. Wicks, representing the Proletarian Party of Detroit and points west. These two delegates hung like a small thunder-cloud over the convention, threatening to join it if it was good, and give it a terrible and Marxian scolding if it was naughty. They did, as a matter of fact, explode at the final session, and denounce the program and the leaders, and the whole disposition of the assemblage, for not more explicitly declaring for a dictatorship of the proletariat, and for not describing the same in sufficiently Russian language. They said in effect that without the magic word, soviet, there was nothing to distinguish the Workers' Party from a party of yellow socialists.

It was here that the convention showed itself so much more mature and confident than any previous assemblage of its kind in this country. Two years ago such a theoretical thunder-storm would have struck fire and split the convention in forty places. Large blocks of earnest young Bolsheviks of the "hyper-thyroid" type would have withdrawn to closet themselves for a forty hours' debate in caucus, while the American working-class waited breathlessly to learn who were to be its leaders in the revolution. Today

almost everyone seemed to realize that the American working class will not pay any attention to a debating society, and that the leaders will be those who occupy themselves with organization, propaganda, and action in the current struggle. In consequence Batt's attack was not received with deadly seriousness by the leaders of the majority. A little very skilful and friendly humor was introduced into the argument, and the terrible thunder-storm sort of rolled away in a gale of laughter.

"The trouble with these comrades from Detroit," said Jim Cannon with his most genial smile, "is that they violate Rule 7 of the Book of Common Sense: Don't take yourself too damn seriously." He congratulated them a little upon the success of their speeches as an Eastern advertising campaign for the Proletarian Party, and in reply to their assertion that they alone had not altered their position in the past three years, he reminded them that in that virtue they could not compare with the Socialist Labor Party, which has stood still for forty years and will probably stand still forever.

"We are starting out," he said, "to build a real movement of the fighting workers. We invite everybody to join us for an open struggle against capitalism. Those who don't want to fight have our benediction as they retire to the library."

A like sentiment was expressed by Bittleman and Lovestone. In short the convention was unanimous in a good-natured opinion that if Batt and Wicks wanted to have a little party of their own, they were welcome to it, and if they wanted to come in and help mould the policies of the revolutionary party of the American working-class, they were welcome to do that also. They will come in, if they are disinterested and possessed of real political sagacity, for the



Adolph Dehn

Viennese Waltz

issues upon which they criticized the party program are neither fundamental principles nor points of divergence in immediate practical action.

It should be explained to those not in touch with the ramifications of the American movement, that the Workers' Party combines all of the leftward elements that have split off from the Socialist Party since 1919, a group in the I. W. W. which is not committed to the anti-political dogma, and the principal workers in the American Federation of Labor who are devoted to the policy of "boring from within." It comprises practically all the genuinely revolutionary elements in the United States, except the anti-political dogmatists, the romantics of the "Infantile Left," and Eugene Debs.

Whether Debs will have the clearness of mental vision to place himself where in his heart he belongs, with the genuine revolutionists, is a question of great importance to the American movement, and still more perhaps to Debs himself. He will no doubt have an opportunity to become the emotional leader of a movement towards a "labor party"—a movement which will occupy the center of the stage in the years immediately coming. The program adopted by the Workers' Party states that the attempt of the Socialist leaders "to unite the so-called progressive labor elements and the Farmer-Labor Party into some sort of moderate Socialist organization, has been a total failure." And that may for the moment be true. But such a union will occur nevertheless.

Such a "moderate Socialist" organization — whether so named or not — will be born, and will flourish, and probably pass through its political victory and disillusionment, before a Marxian party comes actually to the center of the arena in America. Debs may lend his voice and passion to the illusion, and so hasten the process of disillusionment. He will not be without value in that function. But a greater destiny is open to him. He can add his magnificent personality and prestige to the little group that is distinguished by its present understanding of the whole process. It will be, for some time to come if it stands to its principles, a little group—apparently insignificant in America's political life. But it has a good chance to become the true and ultimate standard-bearer of revolutionary change.

We can hardly expect Debs to realize immediately, after the years of confinement, that a complete, new, thorough, patient, flexible and dispassionate technique of agitation and organization has been worked out in the last three years, and that the perfect practicality of it must inevitably prevail. Through the mere pressure of their daily problems, the revolutionists will be driven to its standard. The exponents of intellectual dogma, of romantic emotionalism, of political compromise, will alike fall into a secondary and ineffectual place. The groups that comprehend the spirit of experimental science, and know how to use their brains as practical instruments, will constitute the authentic socialist movement of this generation. Debs belongs to that movement. His eloquence and humanity—his genius for feeling—are not the only gifts he brings to it. He has also a simple realistic common-sense, a kind of Americanism—if I may do that honor to a much dishonored word—at least a disposition to *be* where he is, that would be a most wholesome ingredient in these new beginnings in America. They are not new beginnings, but they are beginnings on a basis of new and wider experience, of the work to which Debs has devoted his life.

Wanderlust

MEN who have clung to homes, what do you find
 So warm, so friendly in a simple hearth,
 That you can turn deaf ears unto the wind,
 The wild wind calling from the ends of earth?
 Heard you no whisper of that luring cry,
 Had you no vision of a farther land,
 That here you rest, content to live and die,
 Housed in a cage your artifice has planned?
 How have you stilled the vagabonding heart,
 The vagrant feet, how coaxed you them to stay?
 Fear you not yet some wayward breeze may start
 Out of the night and bid you come away,
 And make you rise to follow where it calls
 And beat against the tyranny of walls?

Helen Bower.



Wanda Gág

Self-Portrait

So-Called

THE plutocratic press says there are "so-called political prisoners" in the United States.

It is true. They were dragged from their so-called homes, their so-called wives and their so-called children, tried before so-called hand-picked juries, bullied by so-called prejudiced judges, misrepresented by a so-called corrupt press, and denied their so-called rights under the so-called constitution of their so-called country. They are confined in so-called dungeons, shut off from the so-called air, oppressed by the so-called darkness, hung up by their so-called thumbs, and beaten with so-called whips on their so-called backs. They are forced to sew so-called labels bearing so-called lies on so-called garments. They are driven insane by so-called mistreatment, denied their so-called legal rights and deported in so-called ships across the so-called ocean. They have been lynched by so-called mobs, assaulted under cover of the so-called darkness by so-called cowards, placed in so-called solitary confinement and treated generally with so-called lawlessness. By so-called frame-ups they have been sentenced to so-called death and have been driven to leaping from so-called windows, ten stories above the so-called pavements, breaking their so-called bones and destroying their so-called lives. Indeed, there are so-called political prisoners in the United States.

FREDERIC RAPER.

To Our Friends

OUR ball was a huge success in every way. A big, happy, revolutionary crowd filled the hall and had a wonderful time. The Liberator ball every year seems about the finest thing of its sort in New York. We are thinking of giving them oftener, both for the sake of the magazine and the lonely people who come to them as to an oasis of friendship and joy.

By the way, there have been scores of friendly inquiries as to the reason why the Liberator ball happened on the same night as Art Young's. There was no reason. It was just hard luck. All the ball posters and tickets had been printed and distributed, and other expenses incurred, when Art called us up to break the sad news. There was no way of postponing our ball; we had to have the money for this February number. Art Young could not postpone his, and as New York is a big city, we both took a chance. Any dyspeptic, alcoholic or counter-revolutionary cynic who thinks there was malice in the matter can call on Art Young for corroboration of this statement.

We are planning to form Liberator Leagues all over the country. These leagues will consist of friends of the magazine, who will meet weekly, conduct some sort of free-and-easy forum and dance, and send the proceeds to support the magazine. It is quite possible to do this in every city, for we have subscribers in all of them, and any group of Liberator subscribers ought naturally to be fast and warm friends, with the same religion or lack of it, and the same sense of humor. Bruce Rogers is to start something in Seattle. Friends in Milwaukee and Chicago are working on plans there. And in New York City, Margaret Tucker, noted for her Irish temperament, and a friend of all humanity, is to organize these meetings, and boost our circula-

tion. Floyd Dell, Boardman Robinson, Robert Minor, Max Eastman, Gropper, Gold, Gellert, Giovannitti and all the rest, down to Y, are to speak. Watch the New York *Call* for the announcement of the first meeting.

Nancy Markhoff, noted for her Jewish temperament and beauty, is working valiantly as our advertising manager. We have an auditor who inspects our books. Our new treasurer is under bond now. Everything is being done that we can do. We are out to make the Liberator as useful to the movement as we can make it, and as fine a source of light and warmth to our readers as it can be. We have been receiving hundreds of splendid letters from our readers and friends. There is something affecting in these different testimonials as to what the magazine means in the lives of many people. More and more we shall try to make this magazine the expression of the intellectual and artistic life of the American worker. But you must help us. The financial problem is our only sore point. Once we get a good base under our feet, this co-operative magazine, out of which nobody makes any profits, and which nobody really owns but you, will grow like an upas-tree and cover the whole nation. Come along, boosters and friends, the future is still before us!

Keats 1821-1921

“WRIT in water,—”Aye,—

Such water as comes tumbling down the peaks
Of Alpine heights, full fed by mountain snows,
Whose voice, now soft, now loud and boisterous, speaks
Alike of avalanche and Alpine rose!
Such water as flows, sweetly singing, through
The fragrant meadows, strengthening as it flows,
Until a mighty river, fair and blue
And shining in the summer sun, it goes!
Such water as the ocean,—calm and deep,
Which, with a rage roused calmness only knows,
May break the spell that held it fast asleep,
And change to fury from a soft repose.
His name, so writ, in stream or sea shines clear,
To eyes that see, it doth itself disclose,
Or, to the listening, sympathetic ear,
From purling brook to ocean's grandeur grows!

Anna Nelson Reed.

THE LIBERATOR

Editors

FLOYD DELL
MAX EASTMAN
HUGO GELLERT

ARTURO GIOVANNITTI
WILLIAM GROPPER
ROBERT MINOR

BOARDMAN ROBINSON

Executive Editors: MICHAEL GOLD, CLAUDE MCKAY

Business Manager: LENA BOROWITZ

Contributing Editors

Cornelia Barns, Maurice Becker, Howard Brubaker, Eugene V. Debs, Crystal Eastman, Lydia Gibson, Helen Keller, J. J. Lankes, Maurice Sterne, Louis Untermeyer, Clive Weed, Charles W. Wood, Art Young.

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An Eclipse in Moscow

By Tom Barker

LAST summer as we were passing along Tverskaya street in Moscow we saw a large crowd gathered at the corner of the boulevard of the same name. We had become accustomed to the newspapers pasted on the wall, and the small crowds who gather around to read them. But this was a larger crowd, and a number of unattended stalls and boot-black outfits showed that business had been forgotten in the attention that was paid to a youth who was reading the contents of a colored poster to his audience. They were all straining their ears, and their eyes were open with wonderment.

The poster had been issued by Lunacharsky's department, and it explained in simple language, with a couple of diagrams, that an eclipse of the sun was to take place in a week's time. The youth was rough and shaggy, his reading was low and difficult, but his audience followed him, and occasionally helped him out.

"Tovarischi," he said finally, "you are instructed to view the eclipse by gazing at the sky with a piece of smoked glass, through which you will be able to see the moon against the sun."

Everywhere, for the next week, you encountered these audiences grappling with the description of the coming eclipse and the explanatory diagrams. Even the popes with their tattered frocks, their lank and tangled hair, did not disdain to gather in the crowds, as interested as the rest.

On the day of the eclipse, half an hour before the time mentioned, Moscow poured out into the streets and remained there. The churches emptied, and the perpetual bell jangling suffered a respite. Work and business were forgotten, and the beggar abandoned his trade to crane his neck skywards. Moscow might have been waiting for the Lord of Hosts, driving headlong earthwards for the Last Assize. Most of the people were armed with smoked glass, and with anxious eyes watched the clock in the vicinity. Some of the people were incredulous. Others discussed solemnly how it was possible that the Bolsheviks and Communists could have obtained this information from God, when they had deprived the servants of God of their living. It was strange, but they would see.

The clock pointed to the fateful minute. Tens of thousands of eyes gazed skywards through half as many pieces of smoked glass. A sigh escaped from the lips of a stout peasant woman standing near me. She had seen a tiny impingement on the face of the sun. Little by little it grew. A black arc took shape and continued to grow. Ah, so the

Bolsheviks were right! The crowds grew silent, a dilapidated tramcar stopped, and its passengers craned their heads.

The black arc on the face of the sun grew larger, the light softened and verged into twilight. The air became cooler, almost chilly. Some of the older people crossed themselves, stepped quietly indoors and crept praying into a corner. The popes crossed themselves, but they were as curious as the rest. They did not see, however, that thousands of people were slipping away from their clutch.

The world became almost dark as the eclipse reached its climax. Then slowly the dawn light began to grow again. Some of the people began to move, the tramcar slowly pulled away. The eclipse was almost over. Soon the sun was a complete circle again. The crowds placed their pieces of broken glass away for future use, rubbed their stiff necks and blinked their eyes. They seemed serious, impressed. An overwhelming fear had given way to a vague appreciation of Nature and a respect for the methods of the Bolsheviks.

The bells rang out a confused jangle and youthful iconoclasts began selling cigarettes and shouting "Papirosi, parirosi, ezdyes!" Russia was looking earthwards again.



Hugo Gellert

Up in the Air

The Vindication of Mr. Thomas

By Charles T. Hallinan

NO doubt some inkling has reached the United States of Mr. J. H. Thomas' great libel suit against the Communist over the events of "Black Friday," but how many Americans, I wonder, know that this is not Mr. Thomas' first libel action against a working class paper? It is not his first action, nor his second, nor his fifth! The English libel laws are very severe, and Mr. Thomas during his comfortable public career has, by appealing to them, repeatedly silenced those labor papers which, like the Daily Herald and the Communist, have ventured to criticise him.

Indeed, this seems to be a common practice among the "yellow" labor leaders of Great Britain. So far as I can learn, they have never sued the wealthy Times or the poor but respectable Morning Post. But they have successfully silenced and even mulcted for damages the working class journals which have grown restive under their leadership. Mr. J. Havelock Wilson, for example, has been the hero of several such enterprises—so much so indeed that Mr. Justice Darling once remarked contemptuously that Mr. Wilson seemed to be "one of those persons whose sole occupation lay in bringing libel suits in which he collects farthing damages!"

But Mr. J. H. Thomas is the leader in this sort of thing. The second point to notice is that most of these libel suits do not actually come to trial. If the directors of an English labor paper receive a sharp letter from Mr. Thomas' solicitors—and he employs the very best solicitors—the practice is to run up the white flag at once. At the very earliest possible moment you intimate to Mr. Thomas' solicitors that you would be glad to have a conference and at that conference Mr. Thomas tells you, through his representatives, just how injured and aggrieved he is and just how many pounds it will take of working class money to salve his wounds. Then you draw a check at once and for weeks thereafter you jolly well take care what you say about the secretary of the proletarian National Union of Railwaymen!

A great system, viewed any way you please.

So when the Communist declined to satisfy Mr. Thomas' injured feelings out of court, it departed from the more prudent precedent set by most English labor papers. It is quite likely that a promise to be good and the payment of costs and \$500 might have closed the incident, but this course was scarcely open to a paper which had challenged so completely Mr. Thomas' integrity. No matter how impoverished you are, you can scarcely temporize with one whom you have called a traitor to the working class. So the Communist accepted the challenge and went into court, and while it lost its case technically it has advertised Mr. Thomas' conduct and philosophy from one end of England to the other and greatly reduced his capacity for evil. This is really the chief significance of the trial—it marks the end of a period of temporizing with these false leaders. Those labor bureaucrats who appeal in the future to the courts for protection against plain speech will have to reckon with a more reckless, not to say pugnacious, spirit than has, perhaps, been exhibited in the past.

The trial itself has done Mr. Thomas no financial good.

His grievance was that the Communist had libeled him through cartoons and articles which contended that on "Black Friday" he had "betrayed" the labor movement of Great Britain which he pretended to lead. He named as defendants the Communist itself; Mr. Francis Meynell, its editor; Mr. Arthur McManus, its publisher; its circulation manager; and the National Labor Press, its printers. A "special jury" before the venerable Justice Darling awarded Mr. Thomas damages amounting to £2,000—roughly \$8,000, together with costs, which will bring the total up to \$20,000.

At this point the situation becomes piquant, for the Communist has no money and neither has Mr. Meynell nor Mr. McManus, so that if the damages are collected they will have to be collected from the printers, the National Labor Press. But the National Labor Press is the publishing company of the Independent Labor Party of which Mr. J. Ramsay MacDonald is the head. The National Labor Press has long ago cut loose from the Communist and expressed proper contrition, so that if Mr. Thomas collects his money it will have to be from those who are his own friends in the labor movement. An embarrassing state of things truly! Not a shilling has been paid to him by any of his victims to date. I believe our forefathers, with their taste for the classics, would call Mr. Thomas' a Pyrrhic victory. . . .

But the trial has not only done his purse no good, it has damaged his reputation even among the bourgeoisie, for when the trial opened early in December, with the press in full attendance, all the charges of "base treachery" confined hitherto to the 50,000 readers of the Communist were megaphoned from one end of the country to the other. Mr. Douglass Hogg, K. C., described to the jury—and the reporters, in turn, described to a gaping England—the issue of the Communist of April 9, 1921, with its repeated warnings to the members of the Triple Alliance to "Watch Those Leaders!" Then there was a famous paragraph which said:

They will make fierce speeches, those leaders, but watch what Thomas does, not what he says! Watch his hands; don't watch his mouth.

This, too, went all over England. It was printed in every Provincial paper in England and was read by railwaymen away off in remote railways towns who never saw the Communist. Then Mr. Hogg proceeded to describe a cartoon in the issue of April 16, 1921, which represented a miner lying dead. Standing above him was Mr. Thomas with a wreath in his hand, and below the cartoon was the caption:

I claim the right to lay the first wreath. I killed him.

And the press flung this broadcast into mining districts! Then Mr. Hogg proceeded to describe a third libel. It was a cartoon in that same issue, "one of the most wicked and deliberate libels it was possible to conceive." It represented six men playing cards, three men representing Labor on one side of a table and three men representing the

Government and Capitalism on the other side. Across the end of the table you could see a figure plainly representing Mr. J. H. Thomas slipping a card—the “joker,” the best card in the pack—to a figure plainly representing Mr. Lloyd George. And the attentive press strewed this broadcast through a land deeply interested in sports and gambling and easily moved by suggestions of unfair sportsmanship.

Then Mr. Hogg developed other points, such as the charge made by the Communist that Mr. Thomas had, just before the strike of the Triple Alliance, gone more or less secretly to Mr. Lloyd George to tell him the true situation within the ranks of the Triple Alliance. The truth came out somewhat lamely. Mr. Thomas, it seems, did not actually go to Mr. Lloyd George. No, it wasn't that way at all. What way was it, then? Well, he was at the House of Commons and the Prime Minister, it seems, called him out behind the Speaker's dais and asked him what the situation was within the Triple Alliance. The difference, obviously, between tweedledum and tweedledee! English newspaper reporting is far more accurate than that in the United States, and this little gem in casuistry was not lost in the report of the trial.

On the whole, then, Mr. Thomas and his friends can scarcely have relished the fulness with which the Communist charges were repeated by those very newspapers which applauded him for attacking the Communist.

An Irish barrister named Sergeant Sullivan represented the defendants and his examination of Mr. Thomas was about as relentless a performance as can be imagined. Sullivan's chief claim to professional fame in England is that he represented Sir Roger Casement at that famous trial. He was the professional barrister—no Communist, but a lawyer intent on proving a point. What little feeling slipped into his handling of the case was a merest touch of that disdain which a quick-witted Irishman feels toward a hypocritical and muddle-headed Briton. He despised the English railway leader, but he gave no sign of being especially stirred by the philosophy of the class war. His questions came out fast; they had that kind of deadly precision which worries the victim. His examination of Mr. Thomas brought out all that the Communist wanted to bring out—namely that Mr. Thomas was pretending to lead a great strike of the Triple Alliance when all the time he was fully determined to divert it or block it if he could. Mr. Thomas proved it all up to the hilt.

And it was duly reported!

I have been told that when Mr. Thomas was in the United States he went to Washington, and there he explained plausibly to Senator La Follette and others just why he adopted on “Black Friday” the course he did. His argument in Washington—so I am informed—was that the British labor movement was not prepared to take over the government at that time. He was asked why not, and he replied—this was in Washington, mind you—that a great crash was coming in England, and it was their definite plan to let the Lloyd George government go to smash in that crash. Then, he said in Washington, labor will step in and take charge! But if they had provoked the strike of the Triple Alliance, they would have had to take over the government at that time and would themselves have been the victim of the crash. From things I have seen I believe that while he was in the States he really impressed that view upon a great many people who are not familiar with the English situation.

It should be clearly understood, in the first place, that Mr. Thomas belongs, not to the British Labor party, but to Mr.



J. H. Thomas, Briton

Lloyd George's Coalition party. That Coalition is made up of Tories, of Liberals recreant to every principle of Liberalism, and of several so-called Labor members of whom Mr. Thomas is one. He is the tame bear in the Lloyd George menagerie. His electioneering expenses are looked after by the Coalition magnates. And when he talks in Washington about standing around and waiting for the Lloyd George government to go to smash, he is merely having a little fun with that simple American faith of ours in English labor leaders.

In Washington, when he is in contact with minds like that of Senator La Follette, Mr. Thomas is all for fighting, but before Justice Darling he piped another tune altogether. Here is a bit of the dialogue between Sergeant Sullivan and the witness:

Q. Are you by conviction a leader of the constitutional view of labor agitation?—Yes.

Q. Do you believe that it is absolutely wrong to have labor agitation diverted into any channel that will lead to revolutionary action?—Generally, yes.

Q. Would you consider it wrong to take up a position of leadership in a movement that was revo-

lutionary and subversive to the Constitution?—I think I would.

Q. If you found yourself in a position to defeat a movement you considered revolutionary would you not defeat it?—I would take steps to defeat it.

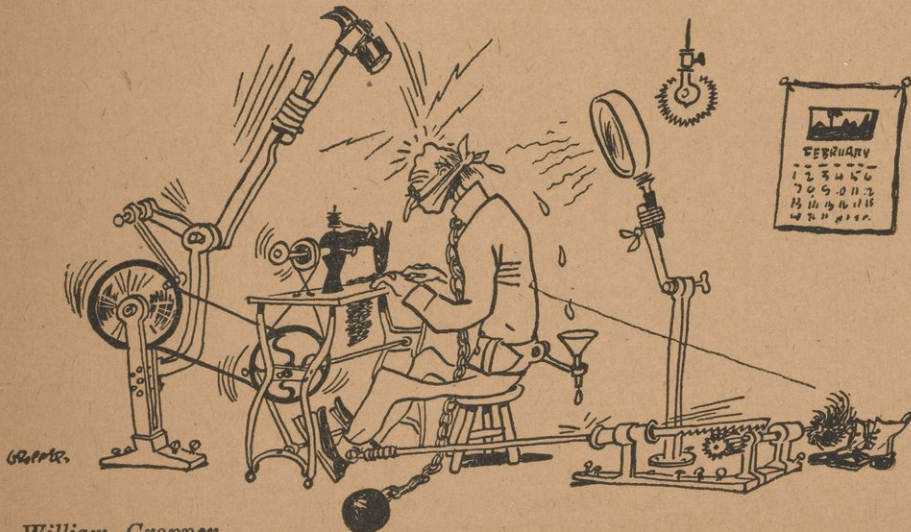
So you see, after this trial it is only in America that anyone looks to Mr. J. H. Thomas to lead the great industrial revolution. He has said as plainly as he can that he is opposed to it and that he will do all in his power to defeat it. But a government of labor skates and bureaucrats is, of course, another matter. He stands ready to dispute with his friend, Mr. 'Enderson, as he calls him, and with Mr. Clynes the question who shall be the first labor premier of Great Britain. But—as I reported in *The Liberator* after the collapse of Black Friday—there is no sentiment in the English labor movement for Mr. Thomas as Prime Minister. Even the *Labor Leader*, organ of the right wing, even the *Snowdens*, are agreed that he has killed himself. No \$20,000 damages and costs against the Communist can restore him to the place he held before Black Friday. He still has a job, and a nice home in the country, and he will never land in the breadline—that English school of endurance—but his day in the labor movement is over.

But the most satisfactory thing about the whole trial was the *London Times'* solemn editorial applauding Mr. Thomas for having so effectually removed himself, in the public mind, from the Bolshevik movement.

He (Thomas) has no sympathy with the cause of the Communists, which has now passed far beyond the tolerant, philosophical and idealistic doctrines of Karl Marx.

Is it not marvellous the way the press learns about these things? God bless them, they just can't help learning about things as time goes on.

ONE of our readers is anxious to learn the name of the author of a letter on birth control, that appeared in the *Masses* for May, 1915, signed with the initials C. S. B., and headed by a facetious editor "From A Disembodied Spirit."



William Gropper

Work like hell and be happy.

The Hero

I REMEMBER a curious patient who came to the hospital in France. He had a small, undeveloped head left naked by close cropping, and his screwed-up features were as fixed as a face carved out of a peach-stone. One felt that he was densely immured in some impregnable stronghold of stupidity or dazed by some great transplantation. He seemed the last of human creatures, something far less responsive than a dog. When he spoke it was in some barbarous and scarcely intelligible dialect; one was always surprised to find that he could answer questions at all.

But he had a nervous system, it appeared; in fact, it was for that he was there. In spite of his strange distraction, he would start and tremble like a rabbit if anyone spoke suddenly to him or came upon him from behind, as he wandered about the halls with insatiable restlessness. One night the orderly thought he heard him coughing and brought him some medicine in a glass. He stood by the side of the man's bed and put his hand on his shoulder to rouse him. But the patient woke up with a shriek that was like a green gash in the dark and dashed the glass across the room with a wild, panic-stricken gesture. "Vat's de matter? Vat's de matter?" he gibbered and crouched, racked with trembling, in the bed.

It appeared, when the doctors cross-examined him, that he had bayoneted a young German and it was impossible for him to forget it.

Now it is evident that this man was a weakling, some ignorant and cowardly foreigner, by no means a real representative of the American army. He had not the stout stuff and clear purpose which exalted our troops for their task.

Take the greatest of all our heroes, a representative of our best stock, a man of education and conscience and typical American fighter. Take the man who remained for five days cut off in the Argonne forest. For five days he held this position against overwhelming odds; the Germans were stronger than he; he had no way of getting supplies; of his command of four hundred and sixty-three, half were either wounded or killed. No horror and no privation could induce him to surrender his post.

No other American during the war won the romantic glory of this man. He became the symbol of our gallant endurance, of our Yankee defiance of danger; the newspapers clasped him to their bosoms; the Government decorated him magnificently.

Yet a little while ago Colonel Whittlesey threw himself into the sea.

Now will you be convinced, romantic Americans, who still believe in military glory, who cried out against Three Soldiers, though it was really less harsh than the truth, that there can be no real triumph of greatness in war for the civilized human spirit, when the deeds of heroism are too hideous for the heroes themselves to endure?

EDMUND WILSON, Jr.



A Suggestion for the New Peace Dollar

Febru-airy Nothings

BRIAND was not fired; but he snatched himself from the burning.

THE charge that France and Japan conspired to control Siberia has been denied, exploded, discredited and laid to rest. It will no longer be mentioned by intelligent people. Only believed.

ACCORDING to the British delegation, the only value of the submarine lies in its illegal use. Whereupon the Conference promptly obliged by making it more illegal than ever.

THE Senate's confirmation of the Newberry seat purchase puts trade upon a sound basis. No more *caveat emptor*; the buyer is entitled to a run for his money.

THEY are making a new sign for the lobby of the Senate wing: "Tickets bought of speculators will be accepted at the door."

IT is all right to dissemble your love for the leaders of the agricultural bloc in Congress, but it isn't nice to call them bloc heads.

"IAM convinced," said Edmund Burke, "that we have a degree of delight, and that no small one, in the real misfortunes and pains of others." Personally we have not in many years enjoyed anything so much as the suffering of the New York Times over the release of Debs.

ONE of Daugherty's most serious charges against Debs was that the Socialist leader expressed his sympathy for Rose Pastor Stokes. So did the superior judge—and he was never sent to jail at all.

THE past festive season was referred to by Don Marquis as "the wodalcoholidays." It was sad to see the mistletoes running through their bootlegacies.

THERE is an alarming report that the discredited Ku Klux Klan is threatening to steal the title, "National Civic Federation." It is hard enough already to distinguish between the two organizations without this added complication.

MR. HOOVER complains that American shipping interests raised the rate thirty per cent. on the grain cargoes to Russia, thus reducing the amount that can be spent in relief. Motto of the thrifty ship-owners: "A Russian starved is a dollar earned."

THIS, as Secretary Davis so beautifully puts it, is a land of opportunity. He came here in the steerage a penniless boy of eight, and look at him now; America's doorkeeper with power to bar anybody out with whom he disagrees.

THE papers are rejoicing day after day in the return of the five-cent loaf of bread. It is the year's best cereal story—"When Knighthood Was in Flour."

ON the other hand, the best movie will be the Prince's series of warm receptions in India. If the Liberator only had the moving picture riots—

NOR was the Burns-Lindenfeld farce comedy wholly without merit. To our notion the high point of the entertainment was the premature explosion of the bomb intended for J. P. Morgan—who was still in Europe.

MISSING a capitalist by three thousand miles is a new low record in karlmarksanship.

HOWARD BRUBAKER.

The Password to Thought--to Culture

By Michael Gold

THE factory of Shinster and Neuheim, Makers of the Hytone Brand Ladies' Cloaks and Suits, rushed along busily in its usual channels that sweet May afternoon; the machines racing and roaring; the workers gripped by their tasks; the whole dark loft filled with a furious mechanical life, hot and throbbing as the pulse of an aeroplane.

Outside the sunlight lay in bright patterns on the dusty streets and buildings, illuminating for two or three hours more the city crowds moving to and fro on their ever-mysterious errands. But the factory was filling with darkness, and the hundred silent figures at the sewing machines bent even lower to their work, as if there were some mighty matter for study before them, needing a sterner and tenser notice as the day deepened into twilight.

The pressers, at their boards at one end of the long loft, thumped with their irons, and surrounded themselves with hissing steam like a fog. The motors roared and screamed, and one of the basters, a little Italian girl, sang in a high voice a sad, beautiful love song of her native province in Italy. It ran through the confusion of the loft like a trickle of silver, but now and again its fragile beauty was drowned by the larger, prosaic voice of Mr. Neuheim, the junior partner, as he hustled about and shouted commands to one or another of his workers.

"Chaim, come here and take this bundle to Abe's machine!" he would shout in Yiddish, and a very old, white-bearded Jew came patiently and slowly, and took the huge bundle of cloaks on his brittle shoulders, and delivered them to the operator.

"Hurry up on this Flachsman job, boys!" Mr. Neuheim would say, rubbing his hands, as he stood behind one of the operators, and a few of them in the vicinity would frown slightly and murmur some inaudible answer from between closed lips.

Mr. Neuheim, a short, flabby man with a bald head and reddish moustache that was turning white, was the practical tailor of the firm and stayed in the factory and looked after production. His partner had been a salesman when they joined their poverty and ambition not many years ago, and therefore looked after the selling and business end now. Mr. Neuheim liked this arrangement, for he had sat at the bench for years, and still liked the smell of steam and the feel of cloth, the putting together of "garments." Best of all, he liked to run things, to manage, to bustle, and to have other tailors under him, dependent on his word.

He trudged about the factory all day like a minor Napoleon, and wherever he went there was a tightening of nerves, an increased activity of fingers, and a sullenness as if his every word were an insult. He was a good manager, and kept things moving. His very presence was like a lash lightly flicked at the backs of the workers. They did not like him, but they responded when they felt him near.

Mr. Neuheim trotted about more strenuously than usual on this afternoon. There was a big order to be delivered the next morning, and he was making sure that it would be on time. He sped from his basters to his pressers, from his

pressers to his operators, a black, unlighted cigar in his mouth, a flush of worry on his gross, round face.

"Where are those fifty suits in the 36 size of the Flachsman lot?" he suddenly demanded of the white-bearded factory porter.

"I brought them to David an hour ago, Mr. Neuheim," Chaim said, looking at him with meek eyes.

"Good. Then they'll be sure to get off to-night," said the Boss, scowling like a busy general. "Good."

He thought a moment, and then hurried on his short legs through the piles of unfinished clothing till he came to the door that led from the factory to the shipping room. There was a glass panel in the upper part of the door, and Mr. Neuheim stopped and looked through it before entering.

What he saw made him take the cigar out of his mouth, swear, and then open the door with a violent kick that almost tore it from its hinges.

"My God!" he cried fervently, "what is this, anyways?"

His shipping clerk, David Brandt, a Jewish youth of about twenty-three, was seated on the table near the open window, staring dreamily at the gray masses of building opposite, that now were flashing with a thousand fires in the sun. He was hugging his knees, and beside him on the table lay an open green-covered book that he had evidently put aside for a moment.

David Brandt was a well-built youth, with good shoulders and chest, a body that would have been handsome had he not carried it like a sloven; tense brown eyes, and a lean face with hungry, high Slavic features. He was shabbily dressed, almost downright dirty in his carelessness of shirt and clothes, and he stood up hastily as the Boss spoke and ran his fingers nervously through a shock of wild black hair.

Mr. Neuheim strode over to him, picked up the book, and read the title.

"Ruskin's Sea-same and Lilies!" he pronounced contemptuously. "My God, boy, is this what we're payin' you good money for? What are you here for anyway, to work or to stuff yourself with fairy tales? Tell me!" he demanded.

"To work," David answered reluctantly, his eyes fixed on the floor.

"Then work, in God's name, work! This ain't a public library, ye know, or a city college for young shipping clerks to come to for a free education! What sort of a book is this, anyway?" he asked staring again at the title. "What's a sea-same, anyway?"

"It's a sort of password," David stammered, a crimson wave of blood creeping over his dark face.

"A password to what?" the Boss demanded, looking at him sternly, with the air of a judge determined upon the whole truth and nothing but the truth. "Is it something like the Free Masons?"

David floundered guiltily. "It's used only in a sort of symbolical sense here," he explained. "Seasame was used as a password by Ali Baba in the story, when he wanted to get into the robbers' cave, but here it means the password to thought—to culture."

"To thought—to culture!" Mr. Neuheim mimicked grandiosely, putting an imaginary monocle to his eye, and walking a few mincing steps up and down the room. "And I suppose, Mr. Brandt, while you was learning the password to Thought and to Culture—ahem!"—he put an incredible sneer into these two unfortunate words—"you forgot all about such little things like that Flachsman lot! Look at it, it's still laying around, and Chaim brought it in an hour ago! My God, boy, this can't go on, ye know! I been watching you for the past two months, and I'll tell you frankly, you ain't got your mind on business! I didn't know what it was before, but I see how it's this Thought"—he sneered again—"and this Culture. Cut it out, see? If ye want to read, do it outside the factory, and read something that'll bring you in dividends—good American reading."

"Yes."

"What do ye want with thought and culture, anyway?" the Boss cried, waving his cigar like an orator. "Me and Mr. Shinster was worse off than you once; we started from the bottom; and look where we got to without sea-sames or lilies! You're wasting your good time, boy."

David looked at the plump little Jew, with his glittering bald head, his flabby face, and his perfectly rounded stomach that was like some fleshly monument to years of champagne suppers, auto rides, chorus girl debauches, and all the other splendid rewards of success in the New York garment trade.

"Do you ever read Shakespeare?" Mr. Neuheim said more tolerantly, as he lit his cigar.

"Yes."

"Well, ye know in his Choolyus Caesar, this man Caesar says: Let me have men about me that are fat, and that don't think; that is, don't think outside of business, ye understand. Well, that's my advice to you, my boy, especially if ye want to hold your job and got any ambition. The last feller that held your job was made a salesman on the road after five years, and the same chances are open to you. Now let's see whether you're smart or not. I like you personally, but you gotta change your ways. Now let's see you use common sense after this—not Thought and Culture."

He laughed a broad, gurgling, self-satisfied laugh, and passed into the factory again, where the machines were warring, and the little Italian girl singing, and the pressers were sending up their strange, white fog of steam.

David spat viciously at the door that closed behind him.

2.

He worked fiercely all that afternoon, in a state of trembling indignation; his hands shook, and his forehead perspired with the heat of the internal fires that consumed him. He was debating over and over again the problem of thought and culture with Mr. Neuheim, and his eyes would flash as he made some striking and noble point, and withered the fat little Boss with his scorn.

Six o'clock came at last; the factory motors were shut off, and died away with a last lingering scream. The operators and pressers and basters became men and women again. They rose stiffly from their seats, and talked and laughed, and dressed themselves and hurried away from the factory as from a prison.

The rage that sustained David died with the iron-throated wailing of the whistles that floated over the city, unyoking so many thousands of weary shoulders.

A curious haze came upon him then. He walked home weakly, as if in a debilitating dream. He hardly felt the scarlet sky above the roofs, the twilight beginning to fall upon the city like a purple doom, the air rich with spring. Mighty streams were flowing through the factory district, human working masses silent and preoccupied after the day's duties, and David slipped into these broad currents without thought, and followed them automatically.

He lived in a tenement on Forsythe Street, on the East Side, and the tides all flowed in that direction; down Broadway, through Grand Street and Prince Street and other streets running east and west and across the dark, bellowing Bowery. Then they spread again and filtered and poured out into the myriad criss-crossing streets where stand the tenements row after row, like numberless barracks built for the conscripts of labor.

It was Friday night, the eve of the East Side's Sabbath, and Mrs. Brandt, David's little dark, round-backed mother, was blessing the candles when he entered. She had a white kerchief over her hair, and her brown eyes, deep and eager in her wrinkled face as David's own, shone with a pious joy as she read the pre-Sabbath ritual from an old "Sidar" that had come with her from Russia. She looked at David's clouded face anxiously for a moment, but did not interrupt her prayers to greet him when he came in. David did not greet her either, but limp and nerveless went directly to his room and flung himself upon the bed.

There he lay for a few minutes in the darkness. He heard the sounds of life rising from the many windows on the air-shaft; the clatter of dishes and knives, the crying of babies, voices lifted in talk. He heard his mother move about; she had evidently finished her prayers, and was coming to his room. Some strange weakness suddenly assailed him; as she knocked at the door, David began weeping; quietly, reasonlessly, like a lonely child.

"David?" his mother inquired, waiting at the threshold. There was no answer, and she called his name again.

"David!"

David answered this time.

"I'm all right, mommer," he said, his voice muffled by the pillows.

"Supper'll be ready in five or ten minutes," Mrs. Brandt said. "Better come out now and wash yourself. And David—"

"Yes?"

"David, darling," she whispered, opening the door a little, "you should not do like you did to-night. You should always go and kiss your papa the first thing when you come home. You don't know how bad it makes him feel when you don't do that. He cries over it, and it makes him sicker. He's very sick now; the doctor said to-day your popper is worse than he's ever seen him. Be good, David, and go speak to him."

"Yes, mommer," David said wearily.

He washed at the sink, and ate the Friday night supper of stuffed fish, noodle soup, boiled chicken and tea. His mother chattered to him all the while, but David listened in that haze that had come on him at the end of the factory day, and answered her vaguely. When he had finished eating he continued sitting at the supper table, and was only aroused when she again suggested that he go in to see his father.

The elder Brandt was a sad, pale, wasted little Jew who had spent fourteen years in the sweatshops of America, and now, at the age of forty-five, was ready to die.



Muriel Hannah

The Seven Who Were Hanged

He had entered the factories a hopeful immigrant, with youthful, rosy cheeks that he had brought from Russia, and a marvelous faith in the miracle of the Promised Land that had come from there, too. The sweatshops had soon robbed him of that youthful bloom, however; then they had eaten slowly, like a beast in a cave gnawing for days at a carcass, his lungs, his stomach, his heart, all his vital organs, one by one.

The doctor came to see him twice a week, and wondered each time how he managed to live on. He lay in the bed, propped up high against the pillows, a "Vorwaerts" clutched in his weary hand.

His face, wax-yellow and transparent with disease, was the face of a humble Jewish worker, mild and suffering, but altogether dead now except for the two feverish eyes. He lay exhausted and limp, his whole attitude that of a figure noted down in the books of Death.

David's father was sucked dry, and there was only one spark of life and youth remaining in him—incredibly enough—his faith in the miracles of the Promised Land.

He put down the newspaper and looked up with a timid smile as David entered the room. David came over and kissed him, and then sat on a chair beside his father's bed.

"Well, David, boy, did you have a hard day in the shop to-day?" the sick man began in a weak voice, fingering his straggly beard and trying to appear cheerful.

"Yes," David answered dully.

"Are you getting on good there?" Mr. Brandt continued, in his poor, hopeful quaver.

"Yes."

"And did you ask the boss yet about that raise he promised you two months ago?"

"No," said David, vacantly, staring with lustreless eyes at the floor.

Mr. Brandt looked apprehensive, as if he had made an error in asking the question. He stroked the feather-bed quilt under which he lay imprisoned, and stole little anxious glances at David's brooding face, as if to implore it for the tiniest bit of attention and pity. Another difficult question hesitated on his lips.

"Davie, dear," he said at last, "why don't you come in to see your popper any more when you get home from work?"

"It's because I'm tired, I guess," David answered.

"No; it ain't that, Davidka. You know it ain't. You used to come in regular and tell me all the news. Do you hate your popper now, David?"

"No; why should I?"

"I don't know. God knows I've done all I could for you; I worked night and day for long years in the shop, thinking only of you, of my little son. I wanted better things for you than what you've got, but I couldn't help myself; I was always only a workingman. Some men have luck; and they are able to give their children college educations and such things. But I've always been a shlemozel; but you must try to get more out of life than I have found."

"Yes."

"David, don't hate me so; you hardly want to speak to me. Look at me."

David turned his eyes toward his father, but he saw him only dimly, and heard in the same dim way the feeble, high voice uttering the familiar lamentations. In the flickering gaslight his father seemed like some ghostly, unreal shadow in a dream.

"David, you hate me because I'm sick and you have to support me along with your mother. I know; I know! don't think I don't see it all! But it's not my fault, is it, Davie, and I've only been sick a year, and who knows, maybe soon I will be able to take my place in the shop again, and earn my own bread, as I did for so many years before."

"Don't, popper, for God's sake, don't talk about it!" David spoke sharply.

"All right, I won't. All right. Excuse me."

They sat in silence, and then David moved uneasily, as if to go. Mr. Brandt reached over and took his hand in his own moist, trembling one, and held it there.

"Davie," he said, "Davie, dear, tell me why you didn't come in to see me to-night. I must know."

"I was tired popper, I told you."

"But why were you tired?"

"I had a fight in the shop."

"A fight? With whom?"

"With the boss—with Mr. Neuheim."

"With the boss? God in heaven, are you crazy? Are you going to lose your job again? What is wrong with you? You have never stuck to one job more than six months. Can't you do like other boys, and stick to a job and make a man of yourself?"

"Let me alone!" David cried in sudden rage, rushing from the room. "For God's sake, let me alone!"

III

With both elbows on the sill, and with his face in his hands, David sat at the airshaft window again during the next half hour. His mind whirled with formless ideas, like the rout of autumn leaves before a wind. His head throbbed, and again a haze had fallen upon him, a stupor painful as that of a man with a great wound.

The airshaft was still clamorous with the hymn of life that filled it night and day. Babies were squalling, women were berating their children, men were talking in rapid Yiddish, there was rattling of plates and knives, and the shrieking of a clothes line pulley like a knife through it all. The airshaft was dark; and overhead, in the little patch of sky,

three stars shone down. Pungent spring odors mingled with the smell of rubbish in the courtyard below.

David's mother moved about carefully as she took away the supper dishes. She knew David's moods, and went on tiptoe, and let him sit there until she had cleaned up in the kitchen. He heard vaguely the sound of her labors, and then she came and laid her rough hand, still red and damp from the dish-water, on his shoulder.

"What's the matter, Davie?" she asked, tenderly. "What are you worrying about?"

"Nothing."

"Why did you fight with your popper? You know he's sick, and that you mustn't mind what he says. Why did you do it?"

"I don't know."

"You must be nice to him now; he feels it terribly because he's sick, and that you have to support him. Do you worry because you have to support us?"

"I don't know."

"It won't last forever, Davie boy. Something must happen—there must come a change. God can't be so bad as all that. Is that what worries you?"

David's eyes grew melancholy and his head sunk more deeply between his cupped hands.

"Life isn't worth living; that's what's the trouble, mommer," he said. "I feel empty and black inside, and I've got nothing to live for."

"That's foolishness," his mother said warmly. "Everyone lives, and most people have even more troubles than us. If there are so many poor, we can be poor, too. What do you think God put us here for anyway? A healthy young boy like you saying he's got nothing to live for! It's a disgrace!"

"Mommer," David said, passionately, "can you tell me why you live? Why do you yourself live? Give me one good reason!"

"Me? Are you asking me this question?" David's mother exclaimed, in a voice in which there was surprise mixed with a certain delight that her usually silent boy was admitting her on an equality to such intimacies.

She wrinkled her brow. It was the first time, probably, in her work-bound, busy life that she had thought on such a theme, and she put her finger on her lip in a characteristic gesture and meditated for a minute.

"Well, Davie," she said slowly, "I will tell you why your popper and I have gone on struggling and living. It is because we loved you, and because we wanted to see you grow up healthy and strong and happy, with a family of your own around you in your old age. That's the real reason."

"But supposing I don't want to grow up," Davie cried. "Supposing you raised a failure in me—supposing I'm sick of this world—supposing I die before I raise a family—"

"That's all foolishness. Don't talk that way."

"But supposing—"

"I won't suppose anything."

"Very well," said David. "You live for me. But tell me, mommer, what do people who have no children live for? What does the whole human race live for? Do you know? Who knows anyone that knows?"

Mrs. Brandt thought again. Then she dismissed the whole subject with a wave of her hand.

"Those are just foolish questions, like a child's," she said. "They remind me of the time when you were a little boy,

IRISH LABOR



John Bull to the Irish Bourgeois



Hugo Gellert

geois: "You Drive Him Now!"

and cried for days because I would not buy you an automobile, or a lion we saw in the Central Park, or some such thing. Why should we have to know why we live? We live because we live, Davie dear. You will have to learn that some day, and not from books, either. I don't know what's the matter with those books, anyway; they make you sick, Davie."

"No; it's life makes me sick—this dirty life!"

"You're a fool! You must stop reading books, and you must stop sitting here every night, like an old graybeard. You must go out more and enjoy yourself."

"I have no friends."

"Make them! What a funny, changeable boy you are! Two or three years ago we could never keep you at home nights, you were so wild. You did nothing but go about till early morning with your friends—and fine friends they were too, pool-room loafers, gamblers, pimps, all the East Side filth. Now you read those books that settlement lady gave you; and I don't know which is worse. Go out; put on your hat and coat and go!"

"Where?"

"Anywhere! The East Side is big, and lots of things are going on! Find them!"

"But I want to read!"

"You won't! I won't let you! I should drop dead if I let you!"

David stared wrathfully at her for a moment, stung into anger by her presumptuous meddling into affairs beyond her world of illiteracy and hope. He was about to speak sharply to her, but changed his mind with a weary shrug of his shoulders. He put on his hat and coat and wandered aimlessly into the East Side night, not in obedience to his mother, but because it was easier than to sit here under the impending flow of her nightly exhortations.

Shop-Talk

I 'LL have a Shop of Happiness,—
(Dear God, your folks are much too gray);
I'll print the notice more or less
And post it up to-day.

Vats of laughter,
Jars of joy,
Stuffs of sheer to-getherness,
Tear-urns bright with April tears,
Moments, threaded on a guess,
A case of solemn little vows,
Nods and
Sighs and
Pats and
Bows.
Odds and ends
Of sudden friends
And rows of thees and thous!

And all the dear uncaptured bliss
That lovers dare to miss;
And all the proud importances
That crumble at a kiss.

My shop will open up in May.
Dear God, your folks are much
too gray!

Anne Herendeen.

Reflection

IS this the little girl whose lovely eyes,
In other days, were sweet as summer skies?
Is this the girl who braided her smooth hair
And placed it round her forehead high and fair?

I stare into my glass—yes, it is she;
This tired woman who looks back at me
With paint upon her cheeks and shining tears
Was that sweet little girl in other years.

Gladys Bryant.

To a Dancing Partner

(Who Asked Me for a Poem)

SUPPOSE that in my poem you shall find
A wave so thrilled and lifted by the wind,
By him to her own sweeter motion moved,
And in that motion so with rapture loved,
That all the sounding round them of the sea
Became the music of their unity,
And warm light fell across them from the west,
And warm love from the beating in her breast
Touched him, but clasped him not, nor gave him rest . . .
When in your slender veins its verses sing,
Will you be dreaming or remembering?

Max Eastman.

April Evening

YOU would have loved the fragrance of tonight,
And the warm, quiet shadows on the street,
The even flicker of a distant light,
And the old mystery of passing feet.

Does spring come ever to you, any more,
In your small house beneath the bending grasses,
And stir you, as it used to do, before? . . .
Or is all beauty, too, a dream that passes?

Miriam Vedder.



LYDIA GIBSON.

Lydia Gibson.

Relief for Vienna

(Drawings by Adolph Dehn)

By Frederick Kuh

DECEMBER 1 will be remembered as the day upon which the patience of Vienna's workers was exhausted. Their endurance had already become a legend. The war left them a helpless unit, dependent upon the hostile Catholic farmers in Austrian provinces. The mad Allied treaties transformed them into European coolies, receiving a pittance as wages, while their products were sold abroad at fabulous profits. Yet they continued their twofold occupation of working and starving. Their organizations, the trade unions and social-democratic party, which had hitherto been futile, came to be enormous, powerful combines. In a nation with six million inhabitants, they counted one million organized laborers.

"In Austria," declared Otto Bauer at the socialist congress a fortnight ago, "the bourgeois government could not exist for one day, if the socialists decided to overthrow it!"

But the workers, obedient to their leaders, chose the certain peril of hunger, rather than the uncertain dangers of that decision. Viennese Labor became the exemplary son, always trotted out as a model to unruly proletarians in foreign lands. And none was so aghast as the parents when that son, thoroughly tired of his own "goodness," crept into the pantry and suddenly overturned pots and pans in a frenzied hunt for food.

It all began with a strike in some outlying machine shops, whence the laborers marched into the city to "demonstrate" against the system that condemns them to famine in the very sight of resplendent luxury. News of their hunger-parade spread from factory to factory; in every district, thousands dropped their tools and streamed toward the Ring Strasse. By noon, the gesture of a handful of machinists had led to a general strike. The snow-carpeted streets were black with tattered men and women; red flags flashed above the crowd; on some corners, groups collected to hear a social-democrat argue for revision of the government's financial program or a communist plead for the Third International. But to each argument, the throng had only one retort: "We're hungry! We're hungry!" For hours a hundred thousand throats shouted that refrain.

As the endless procession swept past the Viennese Wall Street, the walls of the Stock Exchange mockingly echoed, "We're hungry!"

From the midst of the crowd, a stone flew against the expansive window of a banking house; the faint tinkling of breaking glass was drowned by a sullen roar. More stones shattered more panes. Now the clatter of falling glass rose above the voices. A few hundred men rushed into a gilded coffee-house, which—in a moment—was half-wrecked. A coatless man with terrified eyes ran from a shop, clasping a bundle of motley neckties and shirts. Others had forced their way into the fashionable Hotel Bristol, and from a dozen windows there soared chairs, mattresses and tables, swiftly trampled to bits on the pavement below. They burst open the doors of the huge Military Casino, where Emperors and Staff Officers gave balls until the Republic transformed the establishment into a cabaret. Twenty policemen stood, impassive, across the street. A

little group of pleasure-seekers, who had been relishing Five O'clock Tea at the Casino, tumbled from the entrance; I saw one of them, his face scratched, trying to keep blood from trickling to his sealskin coat. Suddenly the great darkened rooms above were flooded with light; the velvet curtains were torn from the windows; a stool was thrown against the glass. When I looked again, the Casino's interior was a mass of debris. The twenty policemen had vanished.

By nightfall the Ring Strasse, the Kartner Strasse, the Graben and a dozen lesser thoroughfares were littered with glass and splinters of furniture.

In quavering terms, but with a fairly audible wheeze of relief, the Vienna capitalist Press on the following day announced: "Night Passes Without Incident. Order Restored. Further Anxiety Needless."

But the aftermath of the workers' outbreak of despair was not wholly negligible. The same papers that, a few years ago, were glorying in the havoc wrought by His Majesty's armies now published only interminable wails about "yesterday's outrages" and the "damages, totaling many millions." The communists' paper was suppressed for proclaiming that there might be no peace until the state confiscated foreign currency, mortgages and stocks, privately owned. Leaders of the communist party were arrested, and six Hungarian emigrant revolutionaries, presumably responsible for the cold and famine that had provoked the uprising, were ordered to quit Austria within three days.

But in the factories and shops, clusters of workingmen were chatting about the spontaneous rebellion, by which they, most of all, were taken by surprise. They had stumbled upon the discovery that they, who were ready to fight to escape from unbearable misery, were not alone—but that



Adolph Dehn

In Starving Vienna—Cabaret Parisien

thousands of their comrades in other workshops felt exactly as they did. That giant army of Labor in front of Parliament had been a magnificent spectacle. There was not one who believed that splinters of glass could assuage his hunger. But each had suddenly realized a new power, and had acquired fresh self-confidence.

"What couldn't we do," a metal worker said to me, "in a crowd like that, determined and unbending, with the police scampering away from us?"

"Order Restored!"

Is the tried and trusted patience of Vienna's workingmen really impregnable? On December 1, the accumulated despair and suffering of years broke through that wall of stolid submission. That day, I say again, will have its niche in history. "Further Anxiety Needless," indeed!

The Uncaging of Debs

IT was Christmas morning. By the President's order a man was to be released from prison in Atlanta some time that day and proceed to Washington—no one seemed to know just when. But at six o'clock we newspaper men were tipped off to go to the warden's house, where Debs was said to be having his breakfast. We waited. An hour passed and then Debs, in his blue denim prison raiment, was ushered out a side door of the Warden's house into a car and shot back to prison. We then were certain the President had not succeeded in getting his prisoner past our lines during the night. That was something, for few men have left prison supposedly free under circumstances as mysterious as these which attended the release of Eugene V. Debs. And, perhaps, no handful of reporters ever faced so strange a task as that of watching a prison so the President of the United States couldn't sneak a prisoner up to Washington without anybody knowing it.

Playing this curious game against Presidential secrecy, we had to chase every car that came from the prison, overtake it, look in, satisfy ourselves Debs was not there, and then return to our station in the road two hundred yards from the prison. And this all morning, until eleven o'clock, when we boarded the train that took Debs to Washington. And this, we learned, was what happened at the prison.

One by one they came to say good-bye to Debs. One man, a hospital patient, fainted in his arms. Sam Moore, the life-term Negro murderer made over by Debs, wept, and Debs kissed him and promised him he would constantly advocate his freedom. Moore has been in prison thirty years, since he was twenty. A lawyer, also a lifer, imprisoned for killing his wife in a fit of drunken jealousy, embraced the man he said was the best friend he ever knew. The way over from the hospital to the great prison building was choked with men in blue denim, all with outstretched hands. There were tears, and there were smiles, according to temperament. Up the corridors they blocked his way, crowded about him, followed him as he advanced. The warden had suspended all rules. All, all, could come to the front. On every tier they rushed forward to the great barred windows of the building that is as broad as a city block. From the outside, out beyond the prison foreground and beyond the gates, those windows now were pictures of bars and faces, faces, faces. Debs reached the end of the corridor by the warden's office and the big front door. It opened. Then the



Eugene Debs, Wien, 1921.

"Please Give For the Future!"

shout went up, and as Debs was going down the granite steps it resounded through the vast place and carried out over the free air to the ears of those away out in the road.

But it was no longer a shout. For it would not die. It steadily increased in volume. It was twenty-three hundred caged men crying to see the one who was loose. He walked away out over the grass foreground where he could see them all and they could see him. Cheers mingled with fanatical screams, and yells of his name. For a half a minute he stood with his hat high in air. Then his hand fell, then his head and he wept. He walked back to the warden's automobile, and away he went with the great noise in his ears.

We all got in the train with Debs and rode with him to Washington, and not yet do any of us know why it was that the President of the United States took so great an interest in this man, whom he does not think worthy of the rights of citizenship.

CHARLES P. SWEENEY.

Poems

POEMS are made of many-colored dreams
That spring in shadowy places of the mind,
And flow as cool and clear as mountain streams,
Until their sources are left far behind.

After the torrents of the April rain,
The streams run seaward brimming full and strong;
So after silence dreams shall rise again
And fill the poet and burst forth in song.

Lydia Gibson.

There is a Wood

THERE is a wood and a slow stream past it,
A grassy road where all the robins run;
Do you remember how dim it was and quiet,
How cool to lie there away from the sun?

The water ran so clear and smooth above the pebbles,
And the grass crept over the bank to see
The birds come down to drink and wet their feathers;
None ever went that way but we.

How tall the trees were—Do you remember?
How deep and far away the quiet skies
When we lay by a slow stream and looked at each other
And the laughter died from our eyes.

Bernard Raymund.

The Stranger

YOUR hair goes softly, fiercely, back,
Stranger, whose name I do not know;
With pride and pain your eyes are black,
Your foreign speech is chiseled slow.

Amazing thoughts you have that leap
To stir the sluggish soul in me;
And all last night I could not sleep;
God, what a lover you would be!

Anne Herendeen.

Love

LOVE, like the fabled vulture,
Gnaws his appointed part—
Not exactly my liver,
Not entirely my heart.

The happy dead are sleeping;
Peace to king and slave;
But the gods deny me quiet;
I shall love in my grave.

Joseph Freeman.

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—
And plunge into themselves.
They poise like swimmers clean and stark.

Hazel Hall.

Trees In Winter

LEAFLESS black trees standing against the sky,
Give me your strength; I do not want to die.
Teach me to sleep as you all winter through
Sleep and gather your strength for summer; you
Do not complain; your power is never lost;
Bending your branches drowsily to the frost,
You yield to winter, certain of the hour
When the new spring shall wake you into flower.

Lydia Gibson.

Indifference

THE seeds drop into the womb of time to grow,
Passionately warm with earth-devouring life,
But I have neither seed, nor wish to sow
A fruitless harvest for death's shearing knife.

So coldly, calmly, carefully, I walk,
Holding my empty heart in my still hand.
And dream no more, and sing no more, and talk
No more of things I dare not understand.

Marya Zaturensky.



Ghosts

The Little Lincoln

By Claude MacKay

"I REFUSE to serve you anything," she cried. "I know what you come round here for; and you shan't have it." Three negro women sitting at the first restaurant table facing the street rose simultaneously and stared at the little blonde woman who defied them. The youngest, a mere girl, fat legged and full-hipped, whose mahogany-brown face possessed a striking bold, whorish beauty, leaned over in the white woman's face and challenged her.

"You've got to serve us or we'll bust this place up. We make no disturbance, we got the money to pay, and we will eat here." The white woman averted her face, but talked back defiantly. "You won't get served here, you know what you are, a common hussy. You go with my man through the street as if he wasn't married and take him up to your damned flat. You wouldn't give a hang for him if it wasn't for his money—my money that I took to set up this restaurant and make him boss. You're not even a good one in your line of business. You're just a common slut."

Bertha, the challenged girl, screamed and grabbed for a water bottle. Her two friends noisily expostulated. The mulatto waitress dashed round the counter; the thick-set, black cook, pudding-faced, perspiring, his yellowing, dirty cap cocked to one side of his head, rushed out of the kitchen. The elevated train roared by; and at the moment a tall, broad-chested, bronze-faced man appeared in the doorway with packages under both arms.

"Now cut it out," he shouted, his voice dominating the row. The white woman reached out for his arm. And while she talked bitterly through her tears, he half-liftingly walked her to the rear, remonstrating meanwhile with her. "But you can't do that, Mary. We must serve the people whether you like them or not. We can't afford a lawsuit. It will only make things hot in this here city for both of us."

He spoke with gentle emotion. "It's all because of you, Martin," sobbed his wife.

"If you would leave those street women alone, they wouldn't come in here to insult me. I get on well with everybody else. The good ones like me. Reverend Hall was in here a minute ago with some nice church people. Why don't you get in with their sort instead of—"

They passed into the pantry. Soon after Martin came out in a white coat and proceeded to serve the colored women who were waiting immovably for service. The neat, black-frocked mulatto girl, setting silver and water for two elevator boys eating at the counter, shot daggers at the women from under her heavy black, disapproving eyebrows. The soft shadow of a smile played over Mar-

tin's amorous good-natured face. When he reached over Bertha's shoulder to set down the cold slaw, he murmured, "You had better lay off my wife, Bertha. She ain't bothering nobody in the world. And we've got to keep this restaurant clean for decent people."

"You tell her to lay off us," spat back Bertha, but a little humbled, a little nervous and apologetic now in Martin's powerful presence for, like nearly all the women of the trade in the vicinity, she liked him for reasons more than money. Martin leaned over to her again. "Well," he drawled quietly, "lay off Mary. She's better'n all your sort, and you know it, that's why you molest her. If you don't cut this thing out I'll—" And he hissed something into her ear. Bertha drew herself up angrily—then adjusted herself to eat.

It was late afternoon on Tuesday and the Little Lincoln was quite empty. Martin sat at a table near the pantry with a bunch of bills before him. His wife with sleeves rolled up and a colored pinafore damped with soap suds slipped into a seat in front of him. She was about thirty-eight years old. Her coarse, brownish hair let loose curls down about her thin neck. Her features were pale and sharp.

"I think it is best that we sell the restaurant out, Martin," she began. "If I felt you were getting fed up, that you really wanted to hurt me, I would leave you. But I don't feel that way, and you don't act that way, either. And it seems I could stand for anything, except your being with those brazen women, yet you're so good about everything else but that.



A Drawing by Maurice Sterne

If I didn't know, I wouldn't care. But I can't help seeing you in the street sometimes, and the impudent hussies bring the thing here, right under my nose. After all, I'm due some consideration, considering that I am cut off from all my relatives, but one brother, and all my old friends, since I married you. And it isn't so pleasant among your people, either. I think instead of us splitting up over this, when we do like each other, we could fix matters up and be like when we were in Pennsylvania, at the club. We didn't have any trouble then."

"Well, Mary," Martin said, calm and humble, and eager, in her presence, to yield and please her in every way, "I didn't like you for what you had. It was long after we got in with each other before I knew you had saved money. And the restaurant here was your idea, but if you want to sell it out, it's up to you. We can take a flat in Harlem and I will go to work. I can get a good, easy job any time—that is, if you really want to sell out, if you think that it's better."

"Yes, I do," returned Mary, with a sad but determined look. She knew what she wanted. She had made real sacrifices to get it. Now she would do anything to retain it.

But late that night Hay Martin stayed in the corner saloon drinking gin with a group of his admirers, until he was warmed up. And he told them how his wife was planning to get him away from that section. They all jeered at his weakness until he grew ashamed, and strong with new determination. Saloon Davis threw his belly up against the bar to convince Martin of his unwisdom. Was he not a boss, a proprietor, a business man who could command respect from black and white? Could he not set his own time for work? Had he not a good woman to help but not to boss him? Was he so thick that he couldn't see the big difference between that and working for a boss, however good the job might be?

It was about two o'clock when Martin reached home, stumbling three flights up the dim, gas-lit stairs. A great crash in the sitting-room brought his wife in her night-gown from the bedroom. The large mirror that used to be in place over the piano was in splinters on the floor, and Martin was stamping on the frame. His wife crossed over to him and shook his arm. "What's the matter, Martin? Drunk and crazy?"

"There! If I am," he said, slapping her thrice in the face, until she screamed in pain, and pushing her savagely away from him.

"You can't boss me in everything," he said. "If you sell out that there restaurant, there's going to be more trouble than you think. There'll be trouble going and trouble coming. I'm married to you and I've got a share in it."

Dazed and bewildered, Mrs. Martin, rubbing her cheek, answered huskily, half-choked by a fountain of tears. She and Martin had had their troubles. She had seen him in terrible fits of temper, but never had he ill-treated her this way before. "But you agreed to sell out. I don't want to boss you. You were willing to do it."

"And be laughed at by all my friends?" roared Martin. "Quit here and go back to work? Get up at six every morning and work till six at night? You want me to be a damned slave, to go to work every day and come home to bed with you every night. Be damned if I'll do it. I'll be a good husband. I'll keep those tough nigger women out of here, but I will be a man, too. Understand? Think I'm drunk? I may be, but I know what I mean. The restaurant is going to stay there, and we are going to run it decently for decent people."



Woodcut by J. J. Lankes

Sea Memory

DO you remember how we used to go
Down to the shore to watch eddying water flow
Under the grassy reeds and over the rocks?
This is a memory I shall always know.

Do you remember the silver dunes in moonlight,
The curving sea stretching out to a sandy bar?
Now, the nights are full of strange shadows—
Then the evenings wore a luminous star.

You have forgotten how the water lifted,
You have forgotten the grey moods of the sea;
I will remember, though time leaves me broken,
The beauty there and the words you spoke to me.

Harold Vinal.



Boardman Robinson

Hail, the Workers' Party!

Two Conversations

By Max Eastman

THERE is an adventurous intellectual curiosity in H. G. Wells that made it natural for him to pay a call on *The Liberator*, and delightful for us to receive him. He is probably as far off from our political attitude as anyone who ever dropped around—"a bourgeois, boys, a bourgeois, by the sacred whiskers of Karl Marx," as Mike Gold averred after he was gone. Nevertheless a very rebel zest and candor of mind twinkles in his grey eyes. They are mischievous eyes. And I think it was as fellow mischief-makers that Wells sought us out for a friendly evening before he went home—not as fellow socialists. He knows as well as we do the gulf that divides the revolutionary from the Fabian socialist. He knows the spaces between March and October. But there is in quiet times a certain fraternity among all those who have abandoned the mere rationalizing of primitive instinct and traditional belief and custom, and are learning the art of critical and creative thought. There is a fraternity of those who know how to doubt, and like to disturb the established inanities. And to this fraternity of disturbance at least we all belonged.

Having spoken of this larger fraternity, I cannot refrain from calling attention to its Constitution and Manifesto, Bible and Koran and Book of the Laws—"The Mind In the Making," by James Harvey Robinson. If you have some hide-bound and tribal-minded acquaintance who "simply cannot imagine what is the matter with you since you got hold of these radical ideas," give him this gentle, wise and lucid book to read. It should enable him at least to imagine the pleasure of free inquiry—the pleasure, say, of a conversation about revolution between *The Liberator* editors and H. G. Wells.

I do not believe either Wells or *The Liberator* editors learned much from that conversation. Wells conceded that we were "most of us normal," and we conceded that he has more candor and intellectual courage than most socialists who believe the revolution must "come from the top." He has the candor to say so. He is not trying, like so many who have called themselves socialists, to get on top by saying the opposite thing.

A gradual development of "the spirit of service" in those who possess power, is what will give us new worlds for old, according to Wells. And as for the class struggle, there are no classes—at least not in America.

"It is more proper to speak of phases," he told us. "A man may be described as in the capitalist phase, or in the proletarian phase, but a class is a group of people who possess certain privileges, no matter what economic phase they may pass into. We have classes in England, but you have none in America. Here anyone may become a gentleman."

"You don't know Mike Gold," somebody murmured. And somebody else said, "That is merely a matter of definition. We mean by the word class a group who have a common economic interest. Let's talk about what we mean."

But Wells would not be led away or distracted. Class means to him what it means in England to those who haven't got it. It means caste. And a real enthusiasm for the abolition of the British Monarchy and the artificial distinctions entailed by it was his most revolutionary expression.

The feudal system has refused to die in England. England is still socially a nation of Lords and "commons." Perhaps



"But really, you have no classes in America!"

that is why the British intellectuals—even when they are very radical and belligerent—cannot think in terms of Marxian science. They cannot see a struggle of economic classes as the dominant feature of our present civilization, because they are too obsessed from childhood by this residue from a previous civilization, the sense of social caste. Perhaps Wells is right in directing his antagonism against the monarchy and what it symbolizes. If he could get rid of that little big king, he might be able to see the industrial monarchy. He might see that essential struggle, which is not for place or privilege, but for the bread of life.

Fortunately we do not have to depend in the long run upon definition or dialectic to convince these intellectuals of the importance of the class-struggle. A time will come when it will be too obvious to deny. It will be there—wherever they turn—and nothing left to them but the decision which side to stand on. That was the position of Gorky, of Andreyeff, of Feodor Chaliapin. They were not prepared. They did not fully understand in advance. But they had to make their choice, and with some bewilderment, they did.

I talked with Chaliapin the other day, after one of his great tuneful, terrible, tragic-heroic performances as the mad Czar in Boris Godunoff. He is one of the greatest singers, and surely the greatest dramatic actor, in the world. And it has been a deep satisfaction in the news of recent

years that he remained true, at enormous personal cost, to the Russian people and to the revolutionary ideal.

"I come from the masses of the people, and I belong with them." That is what he said, when I asked him why he stayed in Moscow and Petrograd after the confiscation of his property and the reduction of his salary to that of a common laborer.

"I have always been a revolutionary—all intelligent people in Russia were revolutionary—and when the revolution came—well!" A gesture expressed the obviousness of his course.

I reminded him that most of the artists in Russia who were capable of earning great sums in the capitals of Europe had fled at the first suggestion of expropriation. "They were revolutionary, too, but they were satisfied with the overthrow of the Czar."

"Yes," he said, "that is true. I couldn't quite follow the course of events myself, for I have no technical understanding of Karl Marx, but I imagine that Kerensky would not have been overthrown if he had been right—if he had been expressing the will of the masses. My interest is in my art—that is the only thing I thoroughly understand. But I can see the reasonableness of what the Bolsheviks have done. As for my salary, so long as they take it away from everybody, they can take it away from me. I am no exception. I am one of the people."

I asked him how he felt when the bourgeoisie disappeared out of his audiences, and the workers took their place.

"I felt happy," he said, "I felt that I was singing to those whose hearts were thirsting for my song. They are more discriminating, too—at least they are more intolerant of every kind of charlatanism. They demand that you be simple and sincere."

"Really, though," he added, smiling, "I never pay much attention to the audience. I don't care who they are when I am singing. I think about the music."

I could believe that, for I had heard him sing in concert at the Hippodrome, and his childlike, or kinglike, genial freedom and unconsciousness upon the platform was as magnificent as his voice. Six feet four inches high—a gigantic, brave, loyal, beloved prince of the people—one of the little half dozen of great artists who have resisted the commercial spirit of these times.

"I came on this trip," he told me, "simply because I cannot stay so long in the same place. Seven years in Russia—it is too long for me—I had to move. I am a wanderer." His gesture surrounded the universe. "I feel that I belong everywhere."

Perhaps it is that deep and pure interest in the poetic adventure of life, more than a loyalty to the masses of the people, that enables a few artists to resist the pecuniary blight of this age. I think it is. I think it was in great part the love of life, the glory of being there, that kept Chaliapin in Russia, and is taking him back. For he is returning a month before his official leave expires, through sheer excitement about his plans for the four or five theatres under his direction.

"You know it is hard for art to flourish," he said, "where people are hungry for bread. There is no use denying that. But the Bolshevik government gives infinitely more money to art than any other Russian government ever did. It gives us money, and it leaves us free. We are free to do anything we want to—anything we want to do!"

That is the way he talks. He is very happy.

John Reed's Book

BONI and Liveright are bringing out a new edition of "Ten Days That Shook the World." The book will sell for a dollar, and Louise Bryant (Mrs. John Reed) has provided that fifty cents of this dollar is to go toward Russian famine relief, so that no one will draw any profits or royalties out of the book. This is what John Reed would have desired; the John Reed who threw every bit of his splendid, gifted nature into the Russian Revolution, and finally died for it.

It was Madame Lenin who translated the work into Russian, and Lenin himself has contributed the following brief introduction to the new American edition:

"With the greatest interest, and with never slackening attention, I read John Reed's book 'Ten Days That Shook the World.' Unreservedly do I recommend it to the workers of the world.

"Here is a book which I should like to see published in millions of copies, and translated into all languages. It gives a truthful and most vivid exposition of the events so significant to the comprehension of what really is the Proletarian Revolution and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. These problems are widely discussed, but before one can accept or reject these ideas, he must understand the full significance of his decision. John Reed's book will undoubtedly help to clear this question, which is the fundamental problem of the universal workers' movement."

Nikolai Lenin.



Arthur Henderson, Labor M. P.

Humor and the Revolution

By Floyd Dell

The Sense of Humor, By Max Eastman. (Charles Scribner's Sons.)

THE only thing I miss in this book is a chapter on Humor and the Revolution. Revolutionists, it seems to me, particularly need a sense of humor—and very often they haven't got any. Precisely because revolution is a serious matter, we need to be able to take it—upon occasion—lightly. The occasions on which we need to take it lightly are just those occasions when, if we take it tragically, we shall find it too bitter a dose. I believe that Franklin, when he signed the revolutionary document upon which our existence as a bourgeois state is founded, was reproached for his levity—he would insist on making jokes about the danger which, because they were secretly afraid of it, some of his companions preferred to ignore. They had pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to uphold the cause of independence; and they were talking about the necessity of sticking together. "Yes," said Franklin, "we must all hang together, or we shall all hang separately!"

But there are (I am persuaded) worse things than being hanged. To people who are in the habit of thinking in large social terms, what happens to a single individual comes to seem a matter of minor importance—even though that single individual may chance to be oneself. It is what happens to the cause that counts—its successes, its failures, its blunders. And it is most of all for the blunders of a revolutionary movement that one needs the solace of humor.

There is, perhaps, a veiled reference to the history of the American revolutionary movement in this passage—veiled, doubtless, so as not to give offense to the more sensitive of the Comrades.

"Mahomet boasted that with faith and prayer he could make a mountain get up and come to him. And when a great crowd of his followers had assembled, and all his incantations failed, he said: 'Well, if the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet will go to the mountain.'"

There is another reference in the book, equally veiled, to the accidents which may befall a revolutionary movement: ". . . when a man intends to drive a tack into the carpet, and drives his thumb in instead. . . ." It is upon just such occasions, says our author, that Nature "intended him to smile."

It is, I know, hard to smile upon such occasions. It is possible only, as this book carefully points out, if we are "not too remote from the mood of play." It is true that one cannot conduct or participate in a revolutionary movement, any more than one can tack down a carpet, in the mood of play. In order to do either with any hope of success, one must take the matter very seriously indeed. But for all that, there is such a thing as taking these matters too seriously. What is required for the serious tasks of life is a flexibility of disposition which will permit us to see the humor of those disappointments which would otherwise be too tragic to endure. The joke thus perceived may be a pretty grim sort of joke; and the smile with which it is greeted may be a very wry smile. I imagine that Lenin often smiles that way—but still,

he smiles. Humor of this sort is not a sign of insensitivity. Lincoln, you remember, was famous for his jokes. They made it possible for a very sensitive man to stick at a very terrible task. There is sadness behind this humor—and at the heart of all humor is some sort of tragedy. Even when a man sits by accident on his new hat and mangles it beyond recognition. Even when the waiter spills the soup down the bodice of a lady in evening dress. Even in sitting down on a chair which is no longer there to sit on. In all these things there is a defeat of what Max Eastman calls, in another passage, "life's transitory arrogant self-constitution of the ends for which it shall be lived." We assume, for instance, that soup is to be gracefully inhaled from a spoon; a very sensible, practical and pleasant assumption. But it is an assumption for the purposes of human life only, and an assumption moreover to which the law of gravitation has never given its consent. A time comes when the waiter's foot slips, and we discover how transitory and arrogant our assumption about soup is. For the purposes of gravitation, as distinguished from those merely human purposes of nourishment, the soup might as well take the shorter, outside route to the lady's lap—and it does. Nature finds nothing funny in this, because it finds nothing tragic in it. But we—"we laugh," as Byron and Art Young say, "that we may not weep."

Life is like that. Whatever our human purposes, however practical or however ideal, they are, as Max Eastman says, established by ourselves, and not by those mathematical forces which in their large, careless, indifferent way, rule the universe; and in contrast with these forces they are transitory and arrogant. I have no enthusiasm for the law of gravitation. I infinitely prefer a good sonnet. But if I happened to be walking along the street with Max Eastman, and in his silent thoughtful preoccupation with the sestet of an unfinished sonnet he failed to notice a banana peeling, and stepped upon it, my human scheme of values would suddenly be upset. And yet, such is the defensive mechanism of the human mind, that this victory of blind, indifferent Nature over the humanly constituted beauty of thought and feeling would afford me a certain gratification. I would laugh.

Humor, then, involves the recognition of the non-validity, except for our own special human purposes, of our most cherished values. This recognition is possible only if we are capable of the mood of play, which is precisely a mood in which we can take our ordinarily serious life-values lightly enough to enjoy seeing them overturned for a moment. Sometimes this playful enjoyment of pain is reinforced by the gratification of certain other emotions—malicious, combative or sexual emotions, which are ordinarily repressed in social life. Our adult humor is, as Max Eastman points out, largely colored by these incidental satisfactions. But humor is, as he makes very clear, fundamentally a playful acceptance of and pleasure in pain. The world, as we know, is full of pain; and happily we are enabled to enjoy a good deal of it through the psychic mechanism of humor. But in order to do this we must be able to play—to take lightly the

serious values of our lives and rejoice unreasonably in their very defeat.

Can revolutionists do this with their particular life-values? Can they play? And if not, how do they protect themselves from the discouragement of tragic accident?

There is another psychic protection against tragic accident, as Max Eastman points out, and that is religion—which performs a human service similar to that of humor, by an exactly opposite mechanism. They are contrasted in this passage:

"Humor is of all things most unlike religion. It fills a similar function in our moral economy, relieving us of the intolerable poignancy of our individual wills" in their perpetual clash with the vicissitudes of fortune. "But humor does this by a simple emotional mitigation, whereas religion seems to require a great and heavy process in the heart. Religion magnifies the seriousness of our passions, but finds an object which is impersonal, or merely ideal, or in some other way superior to the vicissitudes of fortune, to which it may attach (these passions)—binding them all, or many of them, together into one fixed habit of indefeasible satisfaction. From this great habit the mystic derives his fortitude. He declares that all the failures and imperfections in the bitter current of time's reality are a part of God's eternal perfection, and so he makes himself happy to suffer them. The humorist declares that they are funny, and he accomplishes the same thing."

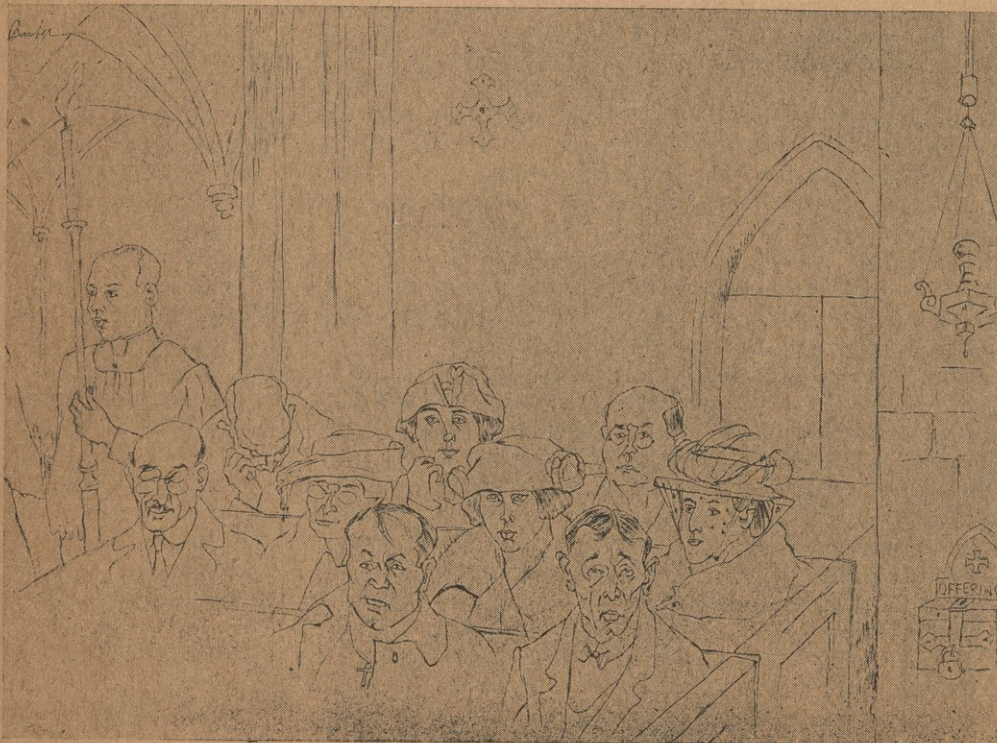
I think that these contrary habits of mind are found, more often than Max Eastman supposes, in the same mind. And it seems to me that the religious attitude comes to our rescue at just the point where the humorous attitude no longer suffices to make us endure the disappointments of actual life. There are, so far as most of us are concerned, disappointments too cruel to laugh at, even grimly. And when we take refuge, as I confess I do, in the bosom of a

theory large enough to admit of temporary defeat, we are, I think, falling back on the consolations of religion. We believe that the failures and imperfections in the bitter current of time's reality are a part of the perfection of the class-struggle, and so we make ourselves, so far as we can, happy to suffer them. But as to minor matters, small accidents like the imperiling of *The Liberator* through the absconding of our old and trusted friend Mylius with the money which was in these hard times to ensure our future for another six months, why we prefer to regard that as a pretty good joke—just as the editor of the *New York Times* does. We disapprove of the institution of private property. Mylius expropriates our private cash. Ha! ha! we might as well laugh about it, mightn't we?

And we on *The Liberator* are enabled to laugh about such things because we are in the habit of cultivating the play attitude. For that very reason we are supposed by our less playful brethren to be no true revolutionists. Whenever a difference of opinion arises between us and them, we are solemnly put in our place as mere Greenwich Villagers. It is true that some of us live in Greenwich Village; and it is very true that we all of us play. In Croton-on-Hudson, for instance, where a number of us live, our week-ends are markedly playful. Those whose idea of revolutionary purity is deeply colored by Puritanical tradition would certainly be shocked if they could see us—dancing, singing, laughing, playing charades, dressing up in ridiculous costumes, engaging in farcical debates, and generally disporting ourselves like happy children. I remember that we even managed to get a good deal of humorous satisfaction out of being on trial under the espionage act. Curiously enough, the fact that one may spend the next twenty years in prison only makes the preposterous character of a war-time trial for opinions more evident. I suspect that some of us privately found consolation in the thought that Atlanta Prison

was a part of the perfection of the class-struggle; but some people do not like to avow their quasi-religious convictions—and I know we all honestly thought the proceedings very funny.

There is a tradition of fanaticism about revolutionists; and I suspect a good many of them live up to the tradition. I am sorry to disappoint any one who may have thought of the editors of *The Liberator* as sitting continually, when off duty, in a grim and constipated attitude like that of Rodin's "Thinker," brooding over the wrongs of the poor and the injustices of the rich. No, we don't. These emotions are too poignant to cultivate deliberately, too painful to feel except as they can be expressed in action, real or symbolic, in words or pictures or poems, since that is all the means we have to express them at present. And just because we hate capitalism, we cultivate by a defensive instinct a play attitude which relieves us of the su-



John Barber

In the Cathedral

perfluity of an intolerable burden of emotion. Yes, even Michael Gold laughs.

I have wondered at times whether we ought to feel guilty about enjoying ourselves this way. Perhaps we ought to be "consecrated to the cause," and "never larf and never smile, and never joke or play." So I asked Albert Rhys Williams, the last time he was out at Croton, about how it was in Russia. He was in Vladivostok—as you can learn from his magnificent new book on the Russian Revolution—at a critical, a desperate time, and he associated intimately with revolutionists who, if any, have the right to be called consecrated to the cause. And these men, whose tragic deaths he describes in his book, had, even at such a time, moments in which they gave themselves up to play. I remember that he said he taught them to play "Simon says thumbs up"—a silly and delightful game which can make a child out of the soberest adult in five minutes. And I remember also that a year or so ago he taught the serious Socialist Party legislators who were on trial at Albany an absurd and childish game which I had taught him—the game called "Twenty questions." I remember also that when H. G. Wells spent an evening with The Liberator gang recently, a considerable part of the conversation was devoted to the subject of these absurd and joyous games, in which Mr. Wells proudly confesses himself an adept. I realize that I may have imperiled my argument by bringing in Mr. Wells, who is, as regards the True Faith of Karl Marx, a stubborn heretic, without the saving fact of having, like that other great Utopian, Plato, lived before the gospel of economic determinism was announced. I was shocked and pained to find that Mr. Wells did not believe we had "classes" in this country. But for the sake of "This Misery of Boots," and many an-

other earlier, if not later, book, I admit him to revolutionary fellowship. Which I think is very gracious of me!

But I am straying from my theme, which is Max Eastman's book on "The Sense of Humor." I have taken his thesis, and applied it as best I might, to the only sort of humor not specifically covered in this book. But I would not like anyone to think that his treatment of the subject is exactly like mine here. He unites a genuine scientific spirit with a playful and humorous tone in a manner unparalleled, save remotely, as by Veblen, in serious literature. I happen to have read the chief modern contributions to the philosophic and scientific investigation of humor, so far as they are accessible in English, and Max Eastman's theory seems to me not merely the best, but the only satisfactory theory of humor. I leave its details for the reader to discover in the book, hoping that I have done no great injustice to it by my rough application of it here. The thing about the book even more remarkable than its truth—for some humorless German professor might, after all, have excogitated such a truth—is its humor. Nothing, as a rule, is more devastatingly solemn than a book about humor. This one is deliciously funny.

I am reminded of Nietzsche's adjuration to Science: "Learn to dance!" And I suspect that if Science can dance, Revolution can, too. After all, wasn't there a saying that when people danced in the street something serious was about to happen, and in the red lexicon of Revolution isn't there something about a silly, childish dancing tune called "The Carmanogle"?

BOOKS

The Medicine Man of Pasadena

The Book of Life, By Upton Sinclair. (Macmillan).

THE book of life is a book of sermons on mind and body, ranging all the way from philosophic considerations of the nature of life, the use of reason, and the problem of immortality to practical considerations of how to prevent indigestion, obesity, and baldness. There are discussions of evolution, psycho-analysis, and laxatives; spiritualism, monism, Maeterlinck, and malaria; relativity, Roosevelt, and rupture; Mozart and milk diets, Jesus and germs; Dante, dandruff, scurvy, Shakespeare, and syphilis; all approached in a pragmatic spirit, and every chapter sprinkled with socialist propaganda.

This is a large order, and one could make merry over the apparent incongruities; but the incongruities of the book are the incongruities of life; and by accepting all of life in a broad spirit the author has been fairly successful in establishing, if not a harmony, at least a correlation.

The sheer ambition of the book would have something absurd about it if it were not for Upton Sinclair's humility. And Upton Sinclair is not only an humble but an honest man, and a devoted apostle of knowledge. He belongs to the family of encyclopaedists. He is related to Diderot and d'Alembert not only as a popular teacher, but even more as a believer in the power of the human mind to control human destiny.

Like them, he believes in reason, in knowledge, and in

3 Books For Liberator Readers

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progress. If he perceives that reason has its limitations, that the number of things to be known is infinite and all knowledge tentative, and that the shape of the line of progress is not straight but full of twistings and deviations, it is because he is living in the twentieth century instead of the eighteenth; and if his scientific approach to life is soaked in sentimentalities, it is because he is Anglo-Saxon instead of French. Practical races are almost always sentimental.

However, the fact remains that *The Book of Life* with its positive belief in man and its positive love of life stands out in luminous relief against the negations and dissolutions of contemporary bourgeois thinking. In itself it develops no new ideas. It is frankly a popular presentation of certain current discoveries, experiments, and notions.

The professional intellectual will find it a primer. But to the worker seeking contact with current science and philosophy, the book will prove an invaluable summary; especially as it is written from a socialist viewpoint, and in a style that flows with the ease and simplicity of a friend's conversation.

JOSEPH FREEMAN.

My Dear Wells: Being a Series of Letters Addressed by Henry Arthur Jones to Mr. H. G. Wells Upon Bolshevism, Collectivism, Internationalism, and the Distribution of Wealth. (E. P. Dutton & Co.)

BORED idlers, unfortunate copyreaders, and zealous psycho-pathologists who followed all of the letters recently indited by Henry Arthur Jones in the *New York Times*, must have wondered why that eminent English drama maker should have picked on H. G. Wells as a medium for attacking "bolshevism, collectivism, internationalism and the distribution of wealth," when the world is so rich in scientific communist writers from Marx to Lenin. The publication of these letters in book form makes it possible to read them consecutively, and thus to find the answer to the riddle. It is a simple answer: Henry Arthur Jones knows something about H. G. Wells and nothing whatsoever about "bolshevism, internationalism and the distribution of wealth."

Does Mr. Jones' opinion of Mr. Wells interest anybody? I'm not sure that it does; and I'm not even sure that the book, which its publisher calls "a searching analysis," could in a moment of the most exaggerated courtesy be called an opinion. It is overloaded with personal, malicious, and hysterical attacks on Wells not so much because the novelist leans toward Moscow, as because some London morning journal recently wrote that "Wells today is thinking for half Europe." These words seem to rankle in the breast of H. A. Jones. He remembers them as fiercely as if they were a personal insult to himself. He quotes them in letter after letter with the pathetic and delirious insistence of a complex. And if anything hurts him more than these words, it could only be the fact that Wells once proposed an international constitution for Mid-Africa; a fact which our author repeats with an insistence equally pathetic and delirious.

Now if it were true that Wells "thinks for half Europe," and if Jones' verbiage were really "a searching analysis" of this thinking, the book might have some interest—perhaps even some value. But Wells' absurd loquacity and impatient emotional generalizations—especially during the war—have long ago discredited him with revolutionary workers and thinkers; while Jones' only equipment for discussing communism is a vague distorted memory of stories in the reactionary press. The total effect of Jones attacking Wells is

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grotesque. It is a man of hay knocking down a man of straw. From such a battle of Tweedledum and Tweedledee the desperate proletariat has nothing to learn; and surely there isn't an intelligent bourgeois alive who, as a matter of dollars and cents, is not better informed on the Russian situation than Jones.

The most that anybody could hope to get out of "My Dear Wells" is amusement. It isn't difficult to poke fun at a prophet so unfortunate in his predictions as the author of the "Outline." Allan Upward has done it very charmingly in his autobiography, which I hope will come to America soon. It isn't even hard—for an exceedingly clever man—to poke fun at the Soviet Government. Communists have a sense of humor, and many of them have laughed at the burlesques of Arkady Averchenko in the Petrograd "Satirikon."

Jones must have realized these facts keenly, since all the letters are written in a vein which the publisher's blurb characterizes as "good-humored ridicule." Alas! poor Jones. His humor falls even flatter than his analysis. Only his most solemn declamations excite laughter.

JOSEPH FREEMAN.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Adam and Caroline, by Conal O'Riordan; Harcourt, Brace and Co.
 Civilization in the United States, An Inquiry by Thirty Americans; Harcourt, Brace and Co.
 Tales of Mean Streets, by Arthur Morrison; Boni and Liveright.
 Men, Women and Boats, by Stephen Crane; Boni and Liveright.
 What's What in the Labor Movement, A Dictionary of Labor Affairs; B. W. Huebsch.
 Modern Russian Poetry, Translated by Babette Deutsch and Avrahm Yarmolinsky; Harcourt, Brace and Co.
 Enter Jerry, by Edwin Meade Robinson; Macmillan.
 The Gay-Cat, by Patrick and Terrence Casey; The H. K. Fly Co.
 Marooned in Moscow, by Marguerite Harrison; Doran.
 The Bolshevik Theory, by R. W. Postgate; Dodd, Mead and Co.
 Language, by Edward Sapir; Harcourt, Brace and Co.



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 The Liberator—pah! It mistake
 Baroness Von Freytag Loringhoven.
 She—poem—MISTAKE! MISTAKE!
 In December number, we Liberator print—
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 running thrill
 NO!
 croak
 rending thrill!
 In January number print
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 No! No! No!
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 Carry me
 To that steep castle!
 Why do? Mistake? No—American pink purgative pills
 —pifflers—pot lickers. This is Passion Death—this is Dornroschen. This is Little Review—not Liberator college boy—rah! rah! rah! Bolshevik!

THE EDITORS.

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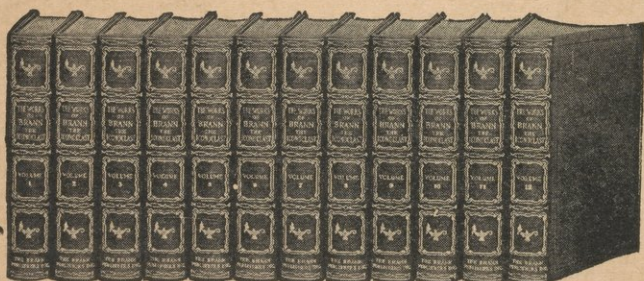
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