A Book of Persons and Personalities
Paragraphs and Essays

E. Haldeman-Julius

HALDEMAN-JULIUS COMPANY
GIRARD, KANSAS
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Bernhardt: Part I</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Bernhardt: Part II</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Bernhardt: Additional Notes</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham Lincoln</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Duke of Newcastle</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodrow Wilson</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randolph Bourne</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord Curzon</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Milton</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mussolini and Trotsky</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurence Sterne</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert G. Ingersoll</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Gompers</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Washington</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simeon Strunsky</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishop William Montgomery Brown</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Jennings Bryan</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Jennings Bryan: Additional Notes</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierre Loving</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus and Shakespeare</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Bernard Shaw</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rousseau and Voltaire</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Allen White</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherwood Anderson</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anatole France</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oscar Wilde</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur Schopenhauer</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Prince of Wales</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus Christ</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tut-ankh-Amen</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upton Sinclair</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Truthful Notes on the Life and Character of Voltaire</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Little Stroll Through America's Hall of Fame</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. W. Howe</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anatole France in Skull Cap and Dressing Gown</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham Lincoln, the Freethinker</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Escape of Eddie Guest</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charley Schwab, Philosopher</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Dempsey</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOREWORD

These various full-length portraits, profiles, and mere silhouettes of people more or less famous in the world which is, after all, made up of persons and personalities, have been gathered from the varied material which E. Haldeman-Julius has written, over a period of nearly three years, for his several publications—now limited, in precise concentration of effort, to the Weekly and the Monthly. Allowance must be made for the great diversity of time, and for a permissible difference of effort, in the various pieces; although very likely E. Haldeman-Julius himself, who inevitably appears diffused throughout his own pages, would scorn such an allowance.

Somewhere, clipped from the hundreds upon hundreds of columns which he has sent to the busy Girard composing room, there is this paragraph, which may reveal E. Haldeman-Julius’s method of reaching these men he has introduced in these paragraphs and essays: “When a critic reminds us that biography and autobiography cannot, or do not, tell the whole truth about a man, the critic has not made any peculiar, uniquely disparaging point against biography. The whole truth cannot be found in any book. The plain fact is that we can learn more about a man in a good biography, in which I include letters, diaries, etc., than we can learn through any other medium. Do we learn less (do we not learn more?) about Samuel Butler from a reading of the Note-Books than from a reading of the autobiographical novel, The Way of All Flesh?”

The arrangement of the ensuing material, it should be added, has no significance whatever; it is not chronological in any sense, least of all in the order of composition; and assuredly it is not in any order of importance.

LLOYD E. SMITH.
A BOOK OF PERSONS AND PERSONALITIES

SARAH BERNHARDT

PART I

ONE cannot really divide the artist into two personalities, one wholly private and the other given to the world through the medium of his art. It is a truism that personality is a fluent and permeating quality, that it flows silently and irresistibly into every corner of one's life, revealing itself most characteristically when it is thought to have been hidden. Yet personality has its high and its low point, its best and its worst side; and this much can be said, that the personality of the artist reaches its highest and best, as well as its most permanent, expression in his art. He may be careless in other affairs of life—but not in his art. He may have no other virtue, no other love—but his art he loves and serves faithfully. His life may be worthless save in rare creative moments—but in such moments it is nobly justified. One thinks of Benvenuto Cellini, rascal utter and unashamed, trampling with cruelty and without conscience upon all who crossed his path; yet as a maker of precious things, as a servant of beauty, Cellini was supremely devoted. Francois Villon, of whom it is ever a question whether he was more rogue than poet or more poet than rogue—this vagabond versemaker burned with a fire, divine or diabolical as you will, whose unextinguished flame casts a strange light across the centuries. Nearer to us is Oscar Wilde, whose life is a tale of wretched tragedy, the quintessence of whose rare personality lives for us brilliantly in his art.

These reflections are by way of general preface, and their implication should not be pressed in considering the life of Sarah Bernhardt—"the divine Sarah," as Oscar Wilde called her. Yet it is true that Bernhardt lived most greatly and nobly in her art; that this was and is her supreme justification; that reckless, erratic, morbid, pleasure-loving as she was in her private life, she was as artist and actress one of the most intense and tireless and conscientious workers who ever lived. The Sarah who threw money away as if it were so many worthless pebbles, nursed and husbanded her art with jealous care. The Sarah who took life lightly and gaily and selfishly, had the most serious attitude toward her art and in that art gave herself—her best self—to the world.

There is a more practical reason why it is advisable to consider Sarah Bernhardt from different viewpoints—as two personalities, one public and the other private. She had such a long, full, and active life—she was so changeable and complex a person—that one would be lost in a maze of conflicting detail, one would swiftly lose the threads of the story, did not one divide it in some fashion, arbitrary though such division may be. Finally, it may be said that Sarah's own life was thus divided. To the public, she was one person; to her intimates, another
person, or rather many persons in one. The world has not known until quite recently the Sarah Bernhardt who lived off the stage, and who so daringly lived her own life regardless of any sort of criterion or pressure. So it is that the story of Sarah Bernhardt falls quite naturally into two parts. This is the story of Sarah Bernhardt the artist.

I

Sarah Bernhardt's first appearance on any stage was at the age of eight, when she was a pupil in a private school in a suburb of Paris. The play was of course a children's play, a tale of fairies, and Sarah was given the role of Queen of the Fairies, which was not the principal role. It was one of those conventional school affairs; and the fact that Sarah was given a part in it did not indicate any recognition that she possessed dramatic talent. This talent was latent; she herself did not realize it even dimly. Little Sarah was stricken with stage-fright, chiefly because she knew that her mother (the star of a gay, fashionable circle of Parisian life) with some of her elegant friends, among them the Duc de Morny, were to be present. She was with difficulty coaxed upon the stage; but when she observed that her mother and party were not in the audience, she went ahead with her part fairly well. It happened that at the moment in the play when little Sarah had her most important cue—when, as Queen of the Fairies, she was to enact her very first death scene—she suddenly saw her mother in that embarrassing sea of faces, and at once she ran off the stage in tears. The play ended abruptly.

She feared, and yet longed for the love of, her mother. This mother had little affection for her first-born and illegitimate child. She would scold her with unreasoning severity, and occasionally fondle her with as little reason. The presence of her mother in the audience was always capable, at times, of afflicting Sarah with stage-fright and making it impossible for her to act creditably. We shall see later how, at a very important moment of her career, the mother played this same unfortunate and unsuspecting role.

Sarah's next dramatic attempt—this time successful—was not planned but was indeed punished. It occurred when, a girl of twelve or thirteen, she was living in a convent. In the midst of some ceremony, which had to do with the passing of prizes, Sarah fainted and feigned death—she had, one observes, a prophetic preference for death scenes. She actually frightened every one, who really believed her to be dead. This trick was punished by temporary exile in her bedroom. Later, when she was a celebrated actress, Sarah perpetrated a similar trick in her dressing room in one of the largest Paris theaters.

At fifteen, Sarah saw her first play. Unwillingly, be it added. At this time it was her absorbing, and morbid, desire to become a nun. When one day she was called before her mother and the Duc de Morny, her mother's very good friend, told her she was to be given a treat, she thought that she was to be returned to a convent. When she was told that she was to go with the party to see a play, she flew into a rage and there was much trouble to win her from this mood. Once at the theater, the Opera-Comique, she was fascinated. The play appealed strongly to her dreamy, imaginative nature. Thereafter she haunted the theater,
was a familiar little figure at the stage doors; and once she left the
school where she was studying painting and, instead of returning home,
went to the Opera-Comique, where she managed to slip in unnoticed;
the play over, she was afraid to leave the theater with the crowd, and
spent the night in the empty playhouse. She returned home the next
day, a frantic search having been conducted meanwhile.

Sarah was apt at painting (which she followed as a skillful amateur
all her life) and at the age of sixteen she won first prize at the art
school with a painting entitled “Winter in the Champs Elysées.” It was
on this occasion that she received her first press notice, a quite flattering
one, in the Mercure de Paris. She also showed a talent for sculpture,
which, however, she did not seriously take up until years later.

Still no one suspected that Sarah had talent for the stage. She
herself did not think of it, notwithstanding her fondness for seeing
plays. The incident that first definitely turned her thoughts toward
the theater as a profession was a unique one. It occurred when she
was within a month of seventeen years. It was a habit of Sarah’s to
learn by heart various parts in the plays she witnessed—she had always
a remarkable memory, that age never dimmed. One evening, having
been alone to the theater, she returned home and finding the salon
empty recited perfectly a long part she had committed to memory—
which, by the way, ended in a dramatic death scene. It chanced that
the Duc de Morny had been sitting concealed behind a screen in the
salon. When Sarah had finished, he emerged with much hand-clapping,
and, calling Sarah’s mother and aunt into the room, prevailed upon the
unwilling Sarah to repeat the performance. Then the Duc, who had
always been a very good friend to the otherwise friendless girl, declared,
“Our Sarah is to become an actress!” Sarah was not a bit pleased
with the plan. But the others, especially the Duc, would have it so;
and the latter, through friends, had Sarah entered for the Conservatoire,
a dramatic school. Although she had only nine weeks in which to prepare
for the entrance examination, Sarah, who recited a fable of “The
Two Pigeons,” gained admittance to the school. She did receive significant praise. Following her recitation, Professor Provost declared: “I
will put her in my class. The child has a voice of gold.” The “golden
voice” was afterward to become famous.

It was the custom for successful graduates from the Conservatoire
to be given apprenticeships at the Comédie Française, the premier theater
of France, under the patronage and control of the State, and dedicated
to Molière. Sarah did not win one of the certificates of merit, though
she received a second prize for comedy. She was heart-broken by her
failure, and thought of suicide. Leaving her room in the dead of night
with the thought of ending all in the Seine, she discovered this note:
“While you were asleep the Duc de Morny sent a note to your mother
saying that Camille Doucet has confirmed that your engagement at the
Comédie Française is arranged for. . . .” She was overjoyed. Her
career had begun. Camille Doucet, by the way, was the one judge at
the Conservatoire who had faith in Sarah’s talent.

The first play in which she rehearsed was Iphigenie. Shortly be-
fore her eighteenth birthday, she made her first professional stage
appearance in a minor role. She was noticed briefly and coldly by the
critics. Francisque Sarcey, the most powerful of the critics, said: “Mlle. Bernhardt is tall and pretty and enunciates well, which is all that can be said for the moment.” This critic pursued the struggling actress with deadly criticism for a number of years, and even after she had become the idol of the Parisian populace; and Sarah eventually won him to her side by a make-believe friendship. Sarah’s second part was in Valérie, again an unimportant part. The critics continued unfriendly, and her unsympathetic mother exclaimed for the ten thousandth time that she had a “stupid child.” Cut to the heart, Sarah, after her third role, swallowed poison in her dressing room and came near death. George Sand, the famous authoress, visited the girl and preached faith and courage to her. With all this, Sarah had fits of temperament, which chiefly manifested itself as temper, and it was due to one of these outbursts (justified on this particular occasion) that she left the Comédie Française after an undistinguished short period. On the anniversary of the death of Molière, all members of the company must join in a reverential procession past the statue of the great actor that stands in the playhouse. While this ceremony was in progress, Sarah’s little favorite sister, Régine, who was walking by the side of Sarah, stepped on the train of one of the oldest actresses at the Comédie. This actress turned fiercely upon the child, whereupon Sarah soundly slapped her. Because she absolutely refused to apologize, insisting that apology was due from the other side, Sarah received her dismissal.

There followed a period of hard struggle. She was forced to leave her mother’s home, and to exist uncertainly on small parts obtained here and there, and upon occasional loans from her few friends. Despite her circumstances, she became a familiar figure in the fast café life of Paris. Her strong determination was for the nonce at an ebb. She was in just the mood to become desperate. She was, too, in bad health. The birth of her son Maurice, by an unnamed Prince, changed all this. She determined to live and succeed for her son. She obtained work in this theater and that, and critics (the relentless Sarcey excepted) began to speak of her with some approval. Her first star part was a play at the Porte St. Martin, La Biche au Bois, in which she acted so creditably that she was offered a three-year contract. At the same time, the playwright Lambert Thiboust asked her to accept the title role in his play, La Bergere d’Ivy, to be produced at the Ambigu—that is, if the theater directors passed upon her as worthy. One of the two directors was Chilly, who was before long to be intimately connected with Sarah’s career. But Chilly had a mistress to whom he had promised the role; and when Sarah displayed her art before the two directors, both of them pronounced her quite unsatisfactory.

In her disappointment, Sarah went to see Doucet, her faithful friend of the Conservatoire. As she was entering Doucet’s office, she all but collided with a handsome young fellow, who apologized and inquired if she was not Mademoiselle Sarah Bernhardt. He said: “I have just been talking to Doucet about you. Come in, and we will see him together.” Upon entering, Doucet introduced the young man as Pierre Berton, a leading actor, who had a company at the Odeon. Sarah was told that Berton wished her to join his company. The one doubtful circumstance, Doucet told her, was that Chilly had just been
made a director of the Odeon. Berton assured her that the other
director, Duquesnel, was favorable to her and that they would prevail
upon Chilly. As they rode away in a cab, Berton told Sarah: "Since
the day I saw you in Les Femmes Savantes at the Comédie Française I
have believed that you would one day become a very great actress, but I
believe also that you need some one to aid you with the directors, who
do not understand your temperament. I have watched you for two
years, and I am prepared to help you at the Odeon, as far as possible,
if you will allow me to do so." Sarah kissed his hand in a passion of
gratitude. The story of their love affair need not be told here. At
the Odeon, Chilly proved to be obdurate, but when Berton threatened
himself to quit if Sarah should not be engaged, Chilly not very grace-
fully gave in.

II

With her engagement at the Odeon, in 1866, Sarah stepped across
the threshold of her great career, although she did not immediately
become famous. In fact, Sarah's first part, in a comedy by Marivau,
The Game of Love and Luck, was an absolute failure. Of course, Chilly
insisted that his judgment was confirmed, and that Sarah was no actress.
He would have broken her contract, had not Duquesnel and Berton
stood firm. Berton had the true word for this failure: It was simply
that Sarah had been burdened with a part not suited to her talents.
She was made for tragedy, not comedy.

One result of this failure was that Sarah worked harder than ever
before. Chilly would not consent for some months that she should be
entrusted with another important role, and she had to work as an under-
study. She was determined to win Chilly's good opinion, and she could
have chosen no better way than her unremitting labor to achieve per-
fection, for Chilly, a hard worker himself, admired industry in others.
He agreed on one point: that Sarah had a marvellous voice. "Oh! if
you could only act!" he would exclaim to her. Another thing in Sarah's
favor was her great power of memory. Between a night and an after-
noon, she could thoroughly master a part. "And," says Mme. Berton,
in The Real Sarah Bernhardt, "Once she had learned it, Sarah never
forgot a part, even though she might be playing two different pieces,
afternoon and night. When Berton wrote Zaza, the play for which he
is best known in England, she went over it with him, taking a whole
night to do it. The next day Berton was to read it to an audience of
managers and producers. While he was reading the third act, Sarah
objected to his way of interpreting one of the parts. 'It should go like
this' she said—and forthwith she recited for fifteen minutes words
which she had only read once. On comparison with the book it was
found that she had not made a single mistake." Before Sarah had
attained complete fame as an actress, and even when critics were saying
that she could not act, her "golden voice" put her in favor; and on one
occasion she was reluctantly persuaded by George Sand to meet Prince
Napoleon, who had fallen in love with her voice.

After she had been at the Odeon nearly a year, Sarah won her first
real success—and a remarkable success it was, under circumstances that
made it doubly significant. It was the first night of Kean, a play by
Alexander Dumas the elder. It should be explained that literary and artistic feuds were taken more seriously in Paris than political issues. For a long time all Paris was violently divided into camps of admirers of Victor Hugo and Alexander Dumas. At the date of the showing of *Kean*, Dumas was in almost universal bad favor. When he appeared with his mistress in a box at the Odeon on this opening night, the audience became so violent that the woman was forced to leave the theater and Dumas to take refuge in the wings. The moment the play began, there was such an angry uproar that the players could not be heard. Just when the directors were at the point of stopping the performance, Sarah Bernhardt appeared upon the stage, and with her first word, the tumult died. Her golden voice and perfect acting completely won the crowd. When she had done, there was a thundering ovation. Sarah, not understanding the nature of it, fled in terror to her dressing room. But Duquesnel came to urge her to show herself, persuading her with some difficulty that the noise meant she had put the play across. The next morning she was famous, in Paris at least. The success for which she had worked so hard was in her hands. It was not a one-night success. Sarah, in *Kean*, played to crowded houses night after night. Sarah was then twenty-four years old.

Nor was this a success of a single play. Its enduring quality was soon proved. Sarah was at last on the highroad. Furthermore, she was herself completely responsible for the success that immediately followed that of *Kean*. She chose her own play, that of an undiscovered genius, François Coppée, and induced the directors to take it up. Sarah met this shy, dreamy young man at a party. The hostess introduced Coppée to Bernhardt with the remark that he had written a play. “It was written for you,” said Coppée. She at once insisted that he read it. Thereupon she pronounced it a great play, declared that she would see it produced; and she did succeed in having a benefit performance arranged at the Odeon. Sarah of course had the popular role in this play, which was entitled *Le Passant*. At the benefit, its reception was so enthusiastic that it was taken as a regular production. So popular was it that the Emperor requested its production at Court; and upon this occasion Sarah received her first present from royalty—“a diamond brooch set with the Imperial initials.”

It was just after her triumph in *Le Passant* that Sarah first met Victor Hugo. The long friendship of these two must be reserved for a later sketch. It is pertinent, however, to say that after this meeting Hugo sent Bernhardt a note, beseeching her to play in his drama *Ray Blas*. That play having been put off, Sarah starred successfully in three very popular plays, one of them being *L’Autre*, a comedy by George Sand. By now her fame was beyond dispute, and not even the persistent enmity of Sarcey could affect it, though it did affect Sarah most unpleasantly.

It was at this period that Sarah played the somewhat grotesque trick of feigning death. While the play was in progress, she was discovered in her dressing room in a quiet, tragic pose which Mme. Berton has described: “Sarah was reclining, dressed completely in white, on a flat couch placed in the middle of the floor. Her hands were crossed over her bosom, which appeared to be motionless, and a red stain was
visible on her chin and neck. At the four corners of the couch were placed gigantic candles, like the cierges used in churches." Every one was grief-stricken, a call-boy ran through the theater, crying, "Bernhardt is dead! Bernhardt is dead!" and the directors stopped the performance. Then Sarah came to, laughing immoderately. Duquesnel, in a rage, immediately wrote out Sarah's dismissal, which she threw back in his face. She spent the night driving about the city, and, while Duquesnel had repented the next morning, Sarah characteristically forced him to plead with her that she return.

In July, 1870, came the Franco-Prussian war. The events of the war, even Sarah Bernhardt's personal part, have no place in this story. She was a conspicuous figure, indeed a central figure, at the Odeon the night of the fatal day, when she sang the "Marseillaise" to the warmed throng. And she sang nightly to large patriotic audiences. When the theaters were closed, Sarah's energies converted the Odeon into an emergency hospital, and throughout the war she managed this hospital and filled the role of nurse to wounded soldiers. The war was an interregnum in Sarah's dramatic career, although it solidified her affectionate hold upon the Parisian populace.

The war over, Sarah finally appeared in Hugo's Ruy Blas. Her success was sensational. She said herself that she never acted so well, before or after. She was called back twenty times to receive personally the applause of the literally jammed theater. It was five years later, in 1877, that Hugo, after seeing her play in Hernani, gave her his celebrated "tear"—a gold bracelet with a single pearl-shaped diamond. This note accompanied the unique gift: "Madame: You have been great and charming; you have touched my heart—mine, the old soldier's—and, at a certain moment, while the enchanted and overwhelmed public applauded you, I wept. This tear, which you caused to fall, is yours, and I throw myself at your feet!"

All the critics but one were at Sarah's feet. Sarcey remained obdurate and sneering. At length the famous journalist, Girardin, came to Sarah with the information that Sarcey's attacks were inspired by a personal grudge. Once at a party, Sarah (not knowing him then) had spoken slightly to him—a piece of deadly satire that the great critic had not forgiven. Girardin intimated that, as Sarcey was susceptible to beautiful women, he could easily be mollified. Sarah was especially anxious to get Sarcey off her trail. She was secretly planning to effect a return to the Comédie Française. Until she had starred in this, the greater theater of France, she felt she would not have reached the heights. And Sarcey was the critic to whom the directors of the Comédie listened. The upshot of it was that she arranged a meeting with Sarcey, became friendly with him (she denied a further degree of intimacy with the critic, who was a repulsive old man by all accounts) and before long she let him know her ambition to return to the Comédie. It was, it appears, very easily managed. With Sarcey favorable, the Comédie would of course be glad to capture the star of the Odeon—more, the star of all Paris. Sarah was offered twelve thousand francs a year. The directors of the Odeon were in consternation at Sarah's resolve to quit them. They reminded her of all they had done for her, begged and pleaded with her, offered to meet the Comédie's terms, but Sarah de-
manded the sum of fifteen thousand francs, which she knew to be impossible. She was determined, solely as a matter of ambition, to add to her glory in the famous house of Molière. At a dinner given by Victor Hugo, a week after Sarah left the Odeon, Chilly died suddenly of heart failure in the midst of the banquet. Sarah really had a great affection for him.

I have told how Sarah, as a little girl, had been thrown into stage-fright by the sight of her mother in the audience. This happened again when Sarah was playing her first role in her new position at the Comédie. For the first half of the performance, she played brilliantly—so well indeed, that although the title role she had was not the leading role, the actress who had the latter role was in despair. But in the middle of the play, Sarah noticed her mother in a box. The mother appeared to be quite ill, and as Sarah knew she was threatened with heart failure, this threw her into her panic and she bungled her part for the rest of the play. Famous as Sarah was, this failure was astonishing. Of course, when the truth became known there was sympathy instead of censure.

I am not to deal here with Sarah's private life, but that grew increasingly complex and significant during her engagement at the Comédie. Sarah understood the fine art of personal publicity in a day when that art was very little known. One thinks of Oscar Wilde as the only one who was so good a self-publicist. Sarah's incredible and unforeseeable escapades were the constant despair of Perrin, director of the Comédie. Her eight years at this theater was a bewildering succession of quarrels with this director. He continually remonstrated with the actress about the unusual mode of her life; and Sarah always had one reply, "I will resign." Instantly the director was all apology and pleading. Rarely Perrin would assume a more extreme position. Once, when Sarah had ascended in a balloon with the aerial novelty and hero of the hour, Louis Giffard, Perrin was so outraged by this sensational prank that he fined Sarah a thousand francs. He received, not the money, but Sarah's resignation, written out in black and white. The resignation was not accepted, and Sarah did not pay the fine.

Love affairs (and she was credited with many that she did not have) formed no small part of Sarah's notoriety. Again, she was always in trouble over money matters. No matter how much she earned, it was never sufficient for her endless demands. Then she was always doing bizarre, intrepid and often really scandalous things. But this is not the place to tell of these things. Nor is it needful to speak of all the roles in which Sarah starred at the Comédie. She went on from one triumph to another, and, whatever might be said about her private life, there was but one voice of tremendous tribute for her career on the stage. As has been said, Sarah was an indefatigable worker, and, while she knew full well the value of publicity, she realized that the final test was her acting, and this she never shirked. She was not content to be the idol of an hour. She must have solid, enduring fame.

At length came the break. The Gaiety Theater in London engaged the Comédie Française company for a six weeks' repertory season. The situation, as regarded Sarah, was embarrassing. Although the star, she
was not a full member of the Comédie; this was a national institution, very strict in its rules, and this full membership was difficult to obtain, being generally a matter of long and honorable service. Sarah declared she would not go to London unless she were given a full membership, with its salary and privileges: especially the privilege of prominent ranking on the theater bills. It was decided that Sarah should not go. Promptly word was received from London that if Sarah Bernhardt were not to be with the company, the engagement would be cancelled. So again Sarah won. She had a triumph of a sort, but nothing like that she had enjoyed in Paris. English society was scandalized by Sarah's behavior—though not so much by anything she actually did as by the reports of what she did. Queen Victoria refused to let her play at Court. Gladstone admired her and introduced her to King Leopold, with whom she went about a great deal. Leopold was well hated in Paris. All this had its reverberations in the French press, which, now that Sarah was away, criticized her more severely than ever. Sarah wrote to the Figaro that if the criticism did not stop, she would resign. The threat, so often repeated, was not taken seriously. On her return, however, Sarah again carried her Parisian audience by storm, despite all this criticism. But when Perrin refused to postpone a certain performance, although Sarah was really ill, the latter carried out her familiar threat, left Paris for parts unknown, and was absent five weeks. Returning she found a note from William Jarrett, the American impresario, offering her a contract for a second London engagement and a later engagement in America. She accepted, organized her own company, and returning to London, obtained a really great triumph.

One is hardly surprised to hear that New York was scandalized by Sarah's first play in that city, in Booth's Theater. It was a play written by Sarah, Adrienne Lecouvreur. Immoral, cried the papers. Send for the police, shouted one paper. Sarah, however, would not listen to talk of changing the program. The next play scheduled, La Dame aux Camelias, must be given. The dilemma was neatly solved by changing the name of the play to Camille, a strange name. Although this name did not deceive the critics, the tone of the next day's papers was extremely cordial. Mentioning that this play had been forbidden the Court by Queen Victoria, the papers actually scolded the good Queen for her "prudishness."

After seven months in the United States and Canada, Sarah returned to France the most famous woman in the world, and literally the idol of her own countrymen. Warships fired salutes as her steamer entered Havre, and that city was decked out for a gala occasion. From now on Sarah's career was a bewildering succession of grand tours, embarked upon principally because she needed the money. Philippe Garnier, a talented actor with whom she fell in love, urged her to make a tour of Europe while her American fame was fresh. She visited Spain, Italy, Austria, Holland, Belgium; Denmark, Sweden and Norway, and Russia. She triumphed endlessly. Hating the Germans because of the Franco-Prussian war, she refused for many years to visit Germany.

It was in St. Petersburg that Sarah became seriously involved with
Jacques Damala, with whom she had some passages in Paris. Damala was an aristocratic Greek, a budding diplomat but with very little ability or intelligence. He had a little talent for the stage, in which direction lay his ambition. Damala joined Sarah's company. He was a coarse, brutal fellow, with "the mind of a chimpanzee," although outwardly polished and with a cynicism that fascinated Sarah. Again, he was the only man whom Sarah had been unable to bend to her will and caprices, and this was perhaps the real attraction. She was madly in love with him. And when the company, recrossing the continent, was again in London, she married him quite suddenly. She had not a moment's happiness with him. He was continually disappearing with other women, and Sarah was continually begging him to return; a plea that was always costly, both financially and emotionally, for Sarah. Eventually, she was forced to get rid of him, but she did not divorce him and sent him regular payments. At the last of his life, when he was a sad wreck of a man, she was with him. He died in 1889. Her association with Damala was the supreme tragedy of Sarah's life.

We have seen Sarah Bernhardt's long, tortuous, and sensational climb to the topmost heights of glory. She remained on this lofty pinnacle of popular favor and fame until her death. And to her work as actress, she added the difficult labor of managership. She had managed her own company, with great financial success. It should be remarked that, lavish and careless as Sarah was in her private finances, as a business woman she was shrewd, careful and successful. She leased and personally managed several theaters in Paris at different times; and all the time, while she was managing these theaters, she was creating brilliant roles on the stage. She leased, among others, the Opera Comique, where she had seen her first play as a young girl, and rechristened it The Sarah Bernhardt Theater.

Sarah was a versatile woman, and she was proficient if not great in several arts. She wrote at least three successful plays—L'Acteur, Adrienne Lecouvreur, and Un Coeur d'Homme. She wrote two novels, another book entitled In the Clouds, and a thinly veiled satire called Marie Pigeonnier, aimed at a rival actress, Marie Colombier. It was understood that Jean Richepin had helped Sarah with this work, and that the author Bonnetain had been responsible for Colombier's attack on Sarah, entitled Sarah Barnum. Added to all this was her own Memoirs. Still more important, however, is the fact that Sarah was a considerable amateur of painting and sculpture. It is remarkable that Sarah could do all these things, when one thinks of the intense, crowded theatrical life, and of her tireless activities in private life. Sarah also had more than a hand in the composition or correction of various plays, notably by such playwrights as Pierre Berton, Victorien Sardou, Alexander Dumas the younger and Edmond Rostand. She knew intimately, and was an inspiration to, both the Rostands, father and son. Jean Richepin, still living and a celebrated French academician, also owed a great deal to Sarah. The names of the distinguished artists who were very close to Sarah, who acknowledged the charm of her personality and of her art, and who were influenced by her, make a brilliant list: Victor Hugo, Alexander Dumas, both father and son, likewise the elder and the younger Rostand, Sardou, Berton, Richepin, Georges
Clairin, the sculptor, Jules Lemaitre, Oscar Wilde—one simply calls the roll of the significant figures of Sarah's day, and of all her days.

The sad, brave dignity of Sarah's last days is generally familiar. After one of her legs had been amputated in Bordeaux in 1915, she continued to appear on the stage. This amputation was the ultimate penalty of an accident in 1890. While playing in Jeanne d'Arc, in the Porte St. Martin Theater in Paris, her leg, as she fell to the floor of the stage, was injured by a protruding nail. The leg gradually withered, until the growth of the malady could be stopped only by surgery. While on her deathbed, as we know, the aged actress, indomitable as in the early days of her struggle, insisted upon posing for an American film company. She died poor in everything but glory.

After all, perhaps the finest thing that can be said about Sarah Bernhardt is that she made the art of the theater popular, at the same time lifting that art to greater heights. The drama in France had tended, before the advent of "the divine Sarah," to be rather classic and exclusive, intensely and intimately appreciated only by cultured groups, to whom the poetry of the play meant more than the drama. Sarah, without sacrificing the poetry, put the drama in its rightful place and won the crowd. And she did this without stooping to the crowd. She raised the crowd to her own level, at least when the crowd was in her glorious presence.

Sarah is no more. But her divinity is deathless.

SARAH BERNHARDT

PART II

SARAH BERNHARDT lived a double life. On the stage, she was a tragedienne; off the stage, she was a comedienne. The public knew Sarah authentically only in her role—her innumerable roles—as actress; there they could see her as she was, not as rumor advertised her; and many, who came to the theater out of curiosity to gaze upon the Sarah whom scandal had wildly painted—came perhaps to jeer this reckless, crazy creature—were so captivated by her art that they were numbered thenceforth among her admirers. It is worthy of note that at the time when there was the greatest outcry against the supposed escapades of Sarah, when tongues wagged freely in condemnation, she never lost a shadow of her prestige as the veritable Queen of the Stage. The good citizen who was volubly outraged by Sarah's private conduct would bow with reverence, or applaud with enthusiasm, before Sarah's public presentation. This is, I think, a remarkable instance of the triumph of art in its own right.

Sarah Bernhardt in private life was not, of course, obscure. Beyond a doubt, more was printed about her than about any other character in history. Not a day passed but Sarah Bernhardt figured prominently in a newspaper story in some country of the world—for she had world-wide renown. But, if the journalists loved to
write about her and cast about eagerly for the merest scrap of copy; and if the crowd delighted in telling one another the latest story about Sarah, magnifying every incident with its own histrionic sense; yet in all this there was abundant error and exaggeration, and often enough not even a modicum of fact. So it is that while the public knew, or thought they knew, Sarah Bernhardt, they did not know the real Sarah. Their imaginations played about a fictitious figure, less real than the heroines that Sarah projected across the footlights.

I.

So little known were the facts of Sarah Bernhardt’s life that a number of false and contradictory stories about the circumstances of her birth appeared in the press from time to time. Periodically, some enterprising journal would come forward with a professedly true account, revealing for the first time the facts about Sarah’s origin. She herself was responsible for this curious situation, as she guarded most carefully the unconventional beginnings of her life. Yet she knew that some day, after her death, the truth was bound to come out; and she authorized her biographer, Madame Berton, to publish the truth. This was a wise decision, for the truth is never half so bad as curiosity, flying the kite of rumor, makes it out to be.

Sarah Bernhardt was born September 25, 1844, in a wretched old house in a poor quarter of Paris. Her mother was Julie Bernard (sometimes calling herself Julie Van Hard), a Flemish Jewess, born of a Berlin family situate in the lower middle class and far from prosperous. Her father was a law student in the University of Paris, who went by the name of Edouard Bernhardt, although the family name appears to have been de Therard and the young man’s own name Paul; his family was a well-to-do French family in the provinces.

Julie Bernard was thrown upon the world at the age of thirteen, when her father died virtually penniless, though leaving his daughter a small sum. She learned the trade of milliner, drifted from Berlin to Frankfort and thence to Paris; and she had several love affairs before she met Edouard Bernhardt. She was somewhat of a beauty, but without talent. Her ancestors on her mother’s side had followed the circus and theater business, and from somewhere in this genealogy one must vaguely conjecture that Sarah derived her talent. Until she met Edouard Bernhardt, Sarah’s mother must have had severe bouts with fortune; once she tried to throw herself under the wheels of a carriage, and it was the old story of an unsuccessful attempt, which probably meant an uncertain desire. The young law student established her in the flat where Sarah was born, but she herself continued to work at trimming hats. It is to be worthily recorded of Edouard Bernhardt that he did not coldly desert Julie, but sent money to her for the child, later provided for the child’s education and left her some money when he died. Sarah saw her father irregularly and briefly.

Julie, a girl of eighteen, came upon better days not long after
Sarah's birth. Sarah had been placed in charge of an old nurse of her father's, on a farm in Brittany. A relative in Holland left Julie a little money. After a sojourn of six months in Holland, she returned to Paris, contracted an intimacy with a member of the nobility and launched herself upon a gay and luxurious life. Two sisters, also in Paris, followed similar ways; but it was Julie who was the reigning beauty, and who gathered about herself a considerable court of gallant and generous men of means. She lived with a certain splendor in Paris, and traveled a great deal on the continent.

Julie paid little attention to her child. One wonders why she suggested, as she did, that the old nurse in Brittany should come to Paris with the child, to live in a cottage in a suburb, a cottage that had been taken by the Baron with whom Julie was then intimately involved. Certain it is that she saw her little daughter but once in the year after she was brought to Paris. And then it was just a hurried visit, prompted apparently by curiosity rather than affection. Eighteen months later, the nurse married a concierge, who tended a building in the busy midst of Paris; Julie could not be located, and the child perforce went along with the nurse.

Sarah was then about five years old. This new home was but one room, terribly crowded, with little light or air; and Sarah, a delicate child from birth, afflicted with anemia, was put to work by the concierge—work decidedly beyond her strength and years. She wasted rapidly in this ill place, and was threatened with consumption. Her removal to a better environment was accidental. One day she espied her Aunt Rosine, who was visiting friends nearby. She called to her aunt, and insisted vociferously that she be taken away from that dreadful place; the aunt promised to come for her another time, but Sarah was pathetically determined to go at once; and when the aunt started to drive away without her, Sarah attempted to leap from the window of the concierge's room into the carriage. She fell instead to the pavement, and sustained injuries that kept her an invalid for two years. Rosine took the sad, broken, neglected child to her own elegant apartment, and sent word to Julie, who was then in London, without a care for little Sarah.

All this while Sarah was absolutely without education. She reached the age of seven years without being able to read, write or count. Finally, when she was put to school, this change was chiefly prompted by her mother's desire to be rid of her. Julie, whose life was wholly given to pleasure, was irritated by the proximity of her daughter—not because Sarah reminded her of a shameful incident in her life, for the mother was still treading the path of easy joy; but simply because the child was a bother, and interfered with a careless boulevard, café and salon existence. Sarah was placed in a private school in a little village not far from Paris. It was while she was at this school that Sarah's father paid her a brief visit one day, and this was the first time she had seen her father. The father, if he saw his daughter but little, at least treated her kindly.

Two years went by at Madame Fressard's school, and they were
the happiest years Sarah had known. Play had entered into her life; before she had been without playmates. She knew steady and protecting kindness, to which she had been a pathetic stranger. But Edouard Bernhardt, then in South America, communicated to Julie his decision that Sarah should be removed from this school and sent to a convent. And Sarah, who had begun life with a lusty bawl of protest against the world, and who was congenitally equipped with a temper, had a notable fit of childish rage when she was told of the change to be made in her life. Perhaps—and no wonder—she vaguely resented being thus hauled about, put here and then there, so only she should be well out of the way. Sarah saw her father for the last time just before she entered the convent. He had returned hastily from South America, and shortly afterward went to Italy, where he died.

At the Grandchamps Convent, Versailles, Sarah proved to be a trial to the worthy sisters. In another place, it has been told how she once simulated death. On another occasion, she flirted with a young soldier, and, to escape from the hands of the scandalized nuns, clambered to the top of the convent wall and there stayed until long after nightfall. Atop that same wall, she shadowed forth her unconscious talent by aping a burial ceremony that had recently been conducted by the good Bishop of Versailles. She persuaded six of the girls to join her in a midnight escape from the convent—a successful flight for a day. Three times Sarah was expelled, and the third expulsion put a period to this phase of her life. Strange to say, despite her antics while there, Sarah longed to return to the convent. She affected a religious demeanor, prayed frequently, and lived a secluded brooding life. She had a very morbid nature. As a young girl, she used to visit the morgue in Paris, experiencing a grotesque fascination in looking at the rows of corpses. A great deal of this, without doubt, was due to the lack of real affection in her life. It is curious that Julie Bernard should have had such a deep-seated and lasting dislike for Sarah, the fruit of a genuinely passionate love affair; and that she should have chosen as her favorite a younger daughter, Jean, who came of a far more casual relationship. (Julie Bernard had four children, all illegitimate, one being a son who died. Regine, the youngest, was Sarah's favorite.)

Sarah, as a young girl of sixteen, attending an art school, had a number of suitors, but to all of them she was strangely indifferent. She was courted by a prosperous glove manufacturer, by a chemist, and by a young fop whom she despised—in fact, she despised them all. She revealed a flash of the mature Sarah when she dismissed the importune glove-maker by calling him a "fat old pig" and throwing a glassful of champagne in his face. She was, at this age, rather repelled by men. The atmosphere of her mother's apartment, which was continually full of male visitors, and where gaiety was the constant prevailing note, no doubt gave her this unfavorable impression of the opposite sex. The fact remains that sex was nothing in her life. She saw as little as possible of the gay parties arranged by her mother; the salon, where so many came and went, was a room in which she hardly ever set foot.
Sarah's mother was then a figure of considerable importance in the fashionable world, or half-world, of Paris. As fashion in later years often followed Sarah, so now it took its cue from the mother. Duc de Morny, court favorite of the Second Empire, was Julie's lover and benefactor. He was generous, and Julie was provided with a magnificent setting for her beauty. Her gowns were talked of, envied, and imitated. She created, or rather her dressmaker through her created, styles. In fact, dressmakers begged her to accept freely of their best gowns, simply as a matter of advertisement; just as they begged Sarah to do this when the latter was famous. And Julie Bernard added the final, the indispensable note to a reception or a first night at the theater. She was a celebrity in her way, and in her world. Was it jealousy because Sarah had excelled and eclipsed her that made Julie, in after years, blind to her daughter's greatness and to quote Sarah's own words, "her harshest critic"? Or was it simply a lack of understanding, due to the utter absence of affection? Certainly Julie marveled to the end that her "stupid" daughter should have mounted so high. There is no record that Julie was ever thrilled by her daughter's acting; nor that she ever referred to her as "the divine Sarah."

One likes the Duc de Morny, who was a good fellow surely. He had ever a friendly, cheerful word for Sarah. It was the Duc who gave the girl her first theater party. And it was he who first declared that Sarah should become an actress, and who made the necessary arrangements for her enrollment in a dramatic school, and later used his influence to secure her a place in the great Comédie Française. Again, when Sarah, early in her theatrical career, fell upon hard days, there is no doubt that the benevolent Duc proved to be a friend in need.

II

The story of Sarah Bernhardt, after she entered upon her real life and emerged as a free personality, is a story of extravagance, caprice, swift and brilliant pleasure, fits of temper alternated by demonstrations of affection and a succession of passionate and distinguished love affairs. That is to say, this is Sarah's private story. Always it must be remembered that in the world of the theater (and this included a great deal of time spent in preparation outside the theater itself) Sarah Bernhardt was a worker. In truth, one marvels that she did so much. That she could give so much time and study to her art, and still have time and spirits to enjoy a personal life of such fullness and variety, bespeaks an energy, a versatility, and an eagerness for life that were far beyond the average.

One thing that always characterized Sarah was her independence. Nor did this appear only after she had established herself as a success. From the beginning, when she was but a debutante in the Comédie Française, disparaged by the critics, as little privileged as any chorus girl, she asserted her individuality with a boldness that is admirable. It has been observed, in a previous sketch, how she threw up her position in the Comédie Française—the supreme theater of France—and bravely accepted a life full of struggle and uncertainty. It was always the same
story with Sarah. She was ever in trouble with the directors—and it must be said that this was generally due to the attempts of the latter to dictate her private life. As a star, with the crowd at her feet, it would have been folly to dismiss her; and the result was that she invariably won her point. There were threats of dismissal, but they were quickly followed by profuse apologies and abject pleas. Let go “the divine Sarah,” the most popular actress, whom all Paris came to see? No director would have been guilty of such a crazy action! He might storm, as Sarah stormed, but he did not mean it, or he meant it for the moment only. The trouble was that Sarah did mean it, and she didn’t change her mind.

Pierre Berton, also at the height of popularity on the stage and the head of a company at the Odeon, understood the temperamental Sarah. He realized, and told her, that she needed a friend and interpreter with the directors. And he offered himself in the role, when he invited her to join his company. It was inevitable that they should become lovers. Berton was a handsome, talented man; Sarah a beautiful, talented woman. Their affair dated almost from the beginning of Sarah’s membership in his company, and it lasted several years. It was broken once, abruptly and cruelly, by Sarah. This was at the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war, when Berton, who had republican tendencies and was convinced of the folly of the war, was denounced by Sarah before the company and the directors as a traitor. Sarah herself was an extreme and unreasoning patriot. She never quite lost her hatred of Germans, and for many years she refused to act in Germany. And once at a reception accorded her in Denmark, when the German ambassador proposed a toast to her, she astonished everyone by declaring, in heated tones, that she would not accept the toast unless it was extended to La Belle France. The ambassador, confused and chagrined, sat down with her toast unspoken.

Sarah’s love for Berton was renewed, as impulsively as it had been interrupted, when he enlisted in the army after the downfall of the Empire. Berton had his own fits of jealousy; this, like all of Sarah’s affairs, was tempestuous and erratic. She would be melting and abandoned one moment, cold or raging the next moment. This, no doubt, was one of Sarah’s most attractive points. She furnished excitement with her love. Love with her might be almost anything, but it would not be tame nor dull. If Berton helped Sarah in the first instance, she was of tremendous assistance to him later, and more than repaid his earlier favor. She was with him, as with all of the men of the theater whom she honored with her friendship or love, a shrewd, conscientious, unsparing critic. And it was Sarah, we are told, who persuaded Leoncavallo to make an opera of Berton’s not very distinguished play, Zaza. Berton’s affair with Sarah definitely ceased (though it had been drifting toward a close) when she made overtures to the hostile critic, Francisque Sarcey, and through the latter’s patronage returned to the Comédie Française.

It has been said that Sarah, in her profession, was a worker—a terrific worker, in fact. And to further remove the impression that she was wholly frivolous in character, there is the record of her labors as a nurse during the Franco-Prussian war. She arranged for the conversion
of the Odeon (the theaters having been closed as a war measure) into a hospital, and she herself took charge of it. She performed, day and night, all of the duties of a nurse. Here was not the gay, the reckless, the wilful Sarah, but a Sarah capable of great devotion and self-sacrifice. It was at this period that Sarah fell in love, briefly, with an Irish cavalry captain, James O'Connor. The manner of her falling out with him reveals another lovable side of Sarah. Riding with him one day through Versailles Park, they were shot at by one of the fanatics of the communist uprising that had recently been suppressed. Captain O'Connor shot the man, and would have left him. Sarah jumped from her horse, and held the wounded man in her arms until he died. Then she coldly gave her hand in good-bye to O'Connor, saying that she would ride no farther with an assassin.

Before Sarah's engagement at the Odeon, due to the friendly perspicacity of Pierre Berton, I have mentioned a period of struggle. It was in this period that Sarah's son, Maurice, was born. It is said that her lover was of royal blood—a Prince, who has remained nameless to the public. Motherhood was an inspiration to Sarah. It gave her an added spur to endeavor. She was callously thrown aside by her lover; she even went so far as to call him out from a fashionable party, beseeching him to recognize his responsibility, but he was immovable. One may as well add here that her son (who is still living in Paris, married and with children) never distinguished himself in any direction, and small wonder. Indulgence robbed him of the springs of character, as it has robbed so many others. A decent fellow, one who was a dutiful son, but a man without ability—such is Maurice Bernhardt. Sarah tried to make a theatrical manager out of him, but he was not equal to the task.

One of Sarah's lovers after she returned to the Comédie Française was the actor, Mounet-Sully. He was a singularly handsome fellow, a fine figure of a man indeed. He had also great talent as an actor. She finally threw over, Sarcey the critic (with whom, however, she always denied that she had more than friendship) for Mounet-Sully, who was, like all her lovers, addicted to jealous displays.

It was while she was still at the Odeon that Sarah met Victor Hugo. It was at a time when there was a tremendous rivalry between Hugo and Alexander Dumas the elder—and such rivalries, in Paris, always produced two groups of frenzied admirers, personally bitter one toward the other. Sarah had been influenced by the Dumas faction, and she believed the slanders that had been circulated about Hugo. So plainly did her aversion show itself when she took Hugo's hand that the latter sadly exclaimed, "Ah, mademoiselle, I see that my greatest trial is to come in your prejudice against me!" Sarah, much affected, instantly changed her opinion of the venerable writer, and they were thenceforth very good friends. They were no more than friends. Hugo was an old man, approaching the end: "a wonderful old man," Sarah called him. Perhaps Hugo desired to relate himself more closely to "the divine Sarah." He once invited Sarah to dine with him, and when she pressed him as to the nature of the occasion, he said he had invited Duquesnel, the director, to dine with them. Sarah, learning from Duquesnel that such was not the case, took four friends with her, and found the table
set for two. Hugo was good-natured about it, and was afterward fond of telling what a "smart woman that Bernhardt was!"

With Georges Clairin, the sculptor, Sarah had a love affair of a slightly different quality. The artistic bond that drew them together was not the art of acting, but the art of sculpture. Sarah, who was interested in all the arts, had intermittently tried her hand at this art. And, with Clairin's tutelage and companionship, she threw herself zealously into this new and fascinating avocation. They worked much together, and love-making went side by side with statue-making. Sarah was very frank in her loves. Madame Berton describes a visit with Sarah to Clairin's studio, when the great actress flew at once into her lover's arms, calling him her "dear Georges." As for Clairin, Sarah was to him an inspiration. He remarked that when work dragged, and he was a prey to jaded spirits, he would seek Sarah's presence, sit before her awhile, and then return to his work with fresh enthusiasm and ideas. Alexander Dumas the younger said: "She drives me mad when I am with her. She is all temperament and no heart; but when she is gone, how I work! How I can work!" It is noteworthy that all of Sarah's liaisons were with artists, or men who were doing something in the world, whose lives were useful and significant. She had no toleration for an idler. And every man who had an intimate share in her life was richly endowed thereby in an artistic way. Sarah had that elusive, indefinable, yet unmistakable quality that is called personality. And, being full of ambition and energy, she could not but impart these traits to others.

When Sarah felt that she needed a more expansive domestic sphere than an apartment, and had built for her a magnificent private residence, it was Georges Clairin who did the mural decorations. The head of the central figure (all the figures were in the nude) in the grand hall decoration was the head of Sarah; and the story was told about that Sarah had posed for the entire figure. Clairin neatly disposed of this tale. He said: "A professional model posed for the body. Sarah is much too thin."

Gustave Doré was another great artist with whom Sarah was intimate. They went on sketching tours together, and once, at a farm house, an amusing thing took place. Sarah, for convenience, was dressed as a boy. Taking her merely for Doré's servant, the folks at the farm house put her in a shed for the night. Doré all unknowing; and the next morning, when the latter looked out of the window of his cozy bedroom, he observed "the divine Sarah" performing her much-needed ablutions at the barnyard pump and gingerly picking the straw out of her hair.

Sarah was fond of saying that the woman should be the seeker in love—quite in keeping with her spirit of independence and self-reliance—and in one case she had to pursue her choice rather determinedly. This man was Edouard de Lagrenée, a young diplomat with a strong artistic bent, a very charming but shy fellow. It was no secret to certain of his friends that he adored Sarah; but, with all his ardent nature, he was too timid to meet her. When efforts were made to bring them together, he would always evade the sweet ordeal. And once, when he had been brought into the very drawing room where Sarah was
visiting, he jerked his hand from that of the friend who was on the point of introducing the two, and rushed in a very access of trepidation from the house. He was a regular attendant at the theater where Sarah was playing, but when she sent a messenger to his box, asking him to visit her dressing room, he courteously declined, representing that she was too divine for him to approach. Eventually Sarah, whom such a pursuit made only the more eager, laid a trap for him at a friend's house; and they had a whirlwind affair, de Lagrenée proving himself when put to the ultimate test, a grand lover indeed.

The only man who ever broke Sarah's glorious, free spirit was Damala, the young man of wealthy and aristocratic Greek family, in training for the diplomatic service, but really ambitious to become an actor, who had fair talent for the stage, though there was nothing of the artist in him and he was too given to idle dissipation ever to succeed in any field. Damala had a vivid, wicked reputation in Paris. He was a notorious seducer. He was cruel and cynical. It was inevitable that the minute she heard of him, Sarah should wish to try a lance with him. On Damala's part there was an equal desire to test Sarah's mettle; and each boasted to friends of how they would conquer the other. When they finally met, Sarah, with a lift of the eyebrows, said: "Damala?" And Damala, as coolly, said: "Bernhardt?" The hostess was mortified. "Sir!" she told Damala, "you are addressing the greatest actress in France?" "And I," said he, "am therefore the greatest man in France!" Irritated by Damala's daredevil demeanor, Sarah said: "You do not interest me, monsieur!" "Wait," he declared, "you have not heard all. I am also the wickedest man in Paris." "You sound to me a fool," Sarah flung at him, "and the poorest boaster I ever met!" But as Sarah moved away, Damala laughed with light insolence; and Sarah could not forget the laugh, and felt that she had come off badly from this exchange of amenities. She grew more interested in Damala, and the upshot of it was that he became a member of her company.

Damala had conquered Sarah, but his greatest conquest was still to come. His family, alarmed by his relationship with Sarah, arranged for his removal to St. Petersburg. Sarah was then preparing for a grand tour of Europe, and Damala urged her to include Russia in the tour. In St. Petersburg their affair was renewed, and reached, on Sarah's part, the height of passion. Again she took him into her company, and they left Russia together. Damala, who was consistently cruel to Sarah, took delight in forcing her to beg his forgiveness after each of their many quarrels. And he would tell his friends: "I had my proud Sarah on my knees last night, but I refused to forgive her; she has not yet been punished enough!" So madly did Sarah love him that in London, violating a principle, she suddenly persuaded him into a marriage, with a frantic desire to hold him to her. They had been married only a few days when he was openly unfaithful to her, and for the year or more that they lived together, he was continually going away with some woman, with Sarah regularly imploring him to return and sending him money for the purpose. Her association with Damala, from which she derived no single bit of happiness, left its tragic mark upon Sarah, although she was too big a woman to let it interfere with her career.
Sarah's many love affairs were, with a mixture of truth and falsehood, the common property of the public. And she, with her code of absolute personal freedom, would occasionally fly into a rage at what she regarded—and of course rightly—as the impertinent criticism of the crowd. She would exclaim:

"These canaille! They say that I am selfish—well, what woman is not? They say that I am greedy—but did you ever know me to have a spare franc I could call my own? They say that I am cold and haughty, but that is because I will not suffer the presence of fools! They say that I am indiscreet—it is they who are indiscreet! They say that I have never really loved, and I am cruel and ambitious, that I pull men down and climb over their bodies on my ascent to fame—it is not true! I am ambitious; yes, and I am jealous of a success won by hard work; but I am haughty only to those whom I despise, and I am cruel—never! It is they who are cruel to me! ... They delight in sticking knives into me! ... I hate them! I hate them! They tear down gods! All Paris is my enemy and all Paris is at my feet. ... Let them talk, these little people! They think they are throwing stones at me, but every stone goes to help in building the structure of my success!"

While Sarah took her stage work seriously, and never slighted her art in the least, her well known fits of temper sometimes coincided with her greatest acting. The divine and the diabolical Sarah, if one may use the term, were often simultaneously uppermost. Madame Berton tells an amusing story of a performance in Madrid of *La Dame aux Camelias*, in which she had the role of Nanine. In the labyrinth of back-stage she lost her way, having to make a hasty exit and re-entrance, and entered at the wrong door; furthermore, in her trepidation at the certain prospect of Sarah's anger, she forgot to speak her line. This was not all. In the death scene that was the climax of the play, it was her duty to throw a garment over Sarah as she lay dying. Upset by her previous blunder, she mistook the garment; and as Sarah represented the great death scene, she poured out a torrent of abuse upon the poor girl's head. "You ugly cow!" she exclaimed. "You have spoiled everything by your clumsiness! This is not the proper garment!" And a great deal more of like tenor. She prolonged the scene in order to fully vent her wrath at her assistant, until the latter although carrying out her role of grief at Sarah's death, bent over her and passionately declared: "You say another word and I'll smack your face here on the stage!" Meanwhile the audience, which could hear nothing, was transported by this supreme representation of a tragic death.

This unique and comical occurrence reminds one of an observation of Diderot's on the drama. Diderot held, contrary to the opinion of many critics, that greatness in acting was not the result of the actor's passionately losing himself in his role, in a very excess of emotion, but was the product of studied and conscious art. He told of having seen Garrick manage his countenance at will to depict successively various emotions, all within the space of a few moments. Certainly Diderot's theory was well borne out by Sarah's great double performance in Madrid.

Of the many stories about Sarah, all showing her in a different and
yet characteristic light, I think the best is the story of her meeting with
Vanderbilt, on the occasion of her first appearance in New York in
1880. The financier, although a power in Wall Street, was excluded
from smart society, and was an uncouth, bearish fellow. He called upon
Sarah in her dressing room, and Sarah thus describes the conversation,
aided by an interpreter, that followed:

"His first words to me were, 'You are a Jewess, aren't you,
madame?' I was offended at his manner and replied frigidly, 'No, mon-
sieur, I am a Catholic.' 'That's peculiar,' said Vanderbilt, 'I heard
you were a Jewess. However, it don't matter. I came to present my
respects. You're the only woman who ever made me cry!' I laughed
—nobody could resist him. 'Yep, by golly,' went on the multi-million-
aire, 'you made me cry! An' I've taken a box for every night you're
billed to play!'" And so on the following nights, whenever Sarah
would glance toward Vanderbilt's box he would put his handkerchief to
his eyes. The old financier was at the pier to bid Sarah adieu on her
departure from America; and he told Sarah he wished to give her a
present—anything she would name—in testimony of his regard for her
ability as an emotional actress. Sarah, always original and never more
so than in this instance, said: "Give me your handkerchief."

If courage and unconquerable spirits reveal the greatness in one,
Sarah was undoubtedly great. To the very end of her life she displayed
a sublime fortitude, regally unperturbed by any fate. She never whined.
In an old age oppressed by financial difficulties, with youth and beauty
flown, and racked by the pain of sickness, it is not on record that "the
divine Sarah" ever considered her past in any spirit of regret. She had
had her fun and her glory, and it was enough. And she was quite right,
for who has lived a richer life?

Maurice Rostand, the talented son of Edmond Rostand, wrote this
noble epitaph for Sarah on the day of her death:

"Since yesterday, Poesy and her Poets are in mourning. The muse
of Shakespeare and of Musset carries crepe upon his shoulder of gold!
Phedre has died a second time! And a Poet feels in the shadows above
him a thousand wounded heroes who cry; and their immortal verses,
like useless bees, search in vain for lips whereon to rest!

"Permit me, however, to render homage to Her who has taken with
her a radiant tomb all the lyricism of an epoch! Permit me to render
homage to the living poesy of Sarah Bernhardt!"

"Yes, she herself was the Theater Poetique! The heroes of poets
on the dangerous road of the centuries are in danger of succumbing,
and more than one disincarnated heroine would not reach the far coun-
try without the helping hand of genius such as Hers.

"To affirm their existence, it is necessary from time to time that
a heart of fire and passion cause their passions and their pains to live
again. Lorenzaccio, the young debauché, for having one night taken
this voice of crystal, is launched to more than eternity!

"The Poets are not so niggardly that they do not recognize to what
horizons a voice like that can hurl their songs. You knew it, Musset?
You knew it, my father! . . . Thou knowest it, my heart."
"I write on the first midnight of her death, her first glacial night, when shaken by Her I have contracted from her passage an insulation which is the proof itself of her astra. This insulation the whole of an epoch has received, and the trace of her passage has glorified the poets, even when she was not saying their verse. The beauty and the genius of Sarah Bernhardt made the shadow of Herself penetrate into all the arts she epitomized. Who knows in what measure the genius of Gabriele d'Annunzio has warmed itself at that Great Flame? I have recognized in more than one of these sisters of voluptuousness and of fever She who was Divinity in *La Ville Morte!* One finds her everywhere. Here in a poem by Swinburne; there in prose by Wilde, in an arabesque by Beardsley, in a motif by Claude Debussy, in a song of Maeterlinck.

"Burn, immortal tapers, before her great Memory!"

**SARAH BERNHARDT**

**ADDITIONAL NOTES**

Sarah Bernhardt, whose artistic career spanned two generations, became legendary at the last, being regarded, by a generation that had not witnessed her rise to fame, as one hardly of this world—the "divine Sarah" indeed. With her death there breaks loose a flood of vivid reminiscence of the brilliant scenes in which she figured as the real star. When the false stories of journalism, that incorrigible romancer, are finally separated from the true story of Bernhardt's remarkable career, there will be enough genuine glory left to justify her unique fame. Tribute will always be paid to her wonderful energy—working strenuously on a great motion picture at the age of 78, trying to beat Death in the last race. When stricken with her final illness, she was busily rehearsing in Sachy Guitry’s new play, *Un Sujet de Roman*, in the Edward VIII Theater in Paris. Not even the loss of a leg and the substitution of a wooden one could remove her from the stage; she simply chose roles that required a minimum of movement.

Sarah Bernhardt was born in Paris October 23, 1845. She was the daughter of a French Catholic and a Dutch Jewess, being raised in the Catholic faith and trained in a convent school until the age of 15, when she began to study for the stage in the Conservatoire, leading theatrical school of France. She played for a number of years in the Comédie Française. This theater she left in 1880, in a temperamental fit of pique, when an audience didn't receive her acting as cordially as she considered it should. The manner of her going brought on a suit with the theater authorities, which Sarah lost, with her rights as a member of the theater society, her share of the theater's profits and the round sum of $20,000 that she was compelled to pay in damages. Now she started on her celebrated independent tours, visiting most of the European countries and coming to America times without number, making indeed a record for "farewell tours" and always commanding vast audi-
ences. While on her first tour, through Europe, she married a fellow actor, M. Jacques Damala. Returning to Paris, she assumed charge of the Theater De L'Ambigu in the name of her son Maurice. In 1882, after creating the title role of Sardou's play, Federa, she bought the Porte Saint-Martin Theater, where she produced Camille, the play in which she had previously starred. In the nineties, as directress of the Renaissance, she appeared in a brilliant series of plays; Edmond Rostand, the celebrated dramatist, was her manager. In 1898 she performed a splendid act of generosity by inviting Eleanora Duse, her rival actress of Italy, to play at the Renaissance. As a rule, however, Sarah was extremely jealous, and it is said she would not permit another woman to sit at her table in a café—she herself must be the shining center of the brilliant, witty company. She was eager for fame, but it cannot be denied that she grandly earned it. During the war she continued to appear in the European countries and in America, devoting considerable time to patriotic benefits. One of the most amazing things Bernhardt did was to appear, shortly before the World War, in the role of Shylock in The Merchant of Venice.

Newspaper accounts of her death featured, of course, the usual apocryphal story that with her last breath she rehearsed scenes in Camille and other famous plays of her career. From Mansfield on down, I recall that reporters have presented dying actors and actresses thus grandly reminiscent in their last moments. But what will you? The public must have a good story. Bernhardt supplied it with splendid stories in her time.

Sarah Bernhardt is revealed in many different lights in Sylvestre Dorian's two volumes, Sarah Bernhardt As I Knew Her (Little Blue Books Nos. 666 and 667). There was never a more restless and curious personality, one who experienced life more variously, than Sarah; and one feels that Mr. Dorian is perfectly justified in calling her the world's most wonderful woman; certainly there can be no doubt that she was the most wonderful woman of her century. Any story of Sarah must, as its chief appeal, place considerable emphasis upon the woman, the artist in her personal life; for there was never a more artistic liver, one who brought more resources of temperament to the daily and nightly pursuit of pleasure and personal contact, than the amazingly and gloriously many-sided Bernhardt.

She was truly an adventurer in the most admirable sense of the term—and, indeed, one might say in all senses, for her life had its sordid and stressful side—it was not all a thing of glory that dazzles the beholder. As one approaches the end, and views this woman, as eager as ever for life in spite of her years but no longer capable of its gay abandon; dropping into rather regretful reminiscences of her merry and brilliant past—her regret being, not that she had lived such a life, but that she could not live it again; harrassed by debts, and undertaking on her invalid's bed the most strenuous sort of labor; with her wooden leg, and the faded memories of rich days and more voluptuous nights; as one sees Bernhardt thus, on the yonder edge of life, one is divided between pity and repulsion. Not moral repulsion, not repulsion for
Sarah herself, but rather that repulsion which one in the full, confident tide of life feels for the spectacle of physical pain and decay; and this is emphasized, it seems to me, in the case of Sarah, whose life was exuberant and flashing, and who lived so avidly in the elements of physical delight; and with all this, there is a rush of that profound pity which the contrasts of life (never more vividly exemplified than in the career of Bernhardt) always call forth. The story of Sarah's withered leg—of her jumping upon the table in the midst of one of her last parties, exhibiting with a grim humor her wasted member, and declaring to Barnum (who had proposed to purchase the leg when Sarah should finally be forced to have it amputated) that no one would believe that had been the leg of the world's most wonderful woman; and Sarah's brave, humorous comment, when her leg had been cut off in a New York hospital and dropped into the Hudson River, that part of her had now been buried and it would not be so long before the rest followed; these are very sad and pitiful glimpses.

There are other stories in Sarah Bernhardt As I Knew Her that have a more amusing side; the story of Sarah's jewels, for example. But with it all, whether Mr. Dorian has the spotlight on the public or the private Sarah Bernhardt, the thing that gives real significance and charm to the picture is the revelation of Sarah's mind and personality, and of her singular appreciation of art and beauty. For instance, one gets an interesting view of Sarah's possibilities as a writer, and there is especially the rather full draft of a short story whose plot Sarah, with her fine generosity, gave to her lover, Sardou, and which was found, on the latter's death, among his unfinished manuscripts. Mr. Dorian's two volumes are, in truth, so rich in material that one can but indicate the contents. His own first sentence shows the scope of his treatment: "My story is of the 'I' that was the inner part of Sarah Bernhardt's life, of its sensations, sorrows, joys and griefs, its loves that led her to great artistic achievement, and its foibles and follies that made her a bankrupt on one hand and a mother of illegitimate children on the other." Mr. Dorian has earned the gratitude of all Little Blue Book lovers for thus bringing the immortal Sarah within our intimate ken. Nos. 666 and 667 are numbers that no one can afford to miss.

* * *

Her friendship with Oscar Wilde was a strong—perhaps the strongest influence—in the life of Sarah Bernhardt, says Sylvestre Dorian in his edition of Oscar Wilde's Letters to Sarah Bernhardt (Little Blue Book No. 664). Sarah was captivated by Oscar's wit, and she absorbed readily most of his views of life and art. This is not to say that her relation to Wilde was sponge-like. It was not simply a case of imitation. The truth lies deeper: Sarah's temperament was uniquely and essentially in accord with that of Wilde, and it was simply that Wilde expressed most charmingly the attitude toward life that Sarah naturally came by and had confirmed in herself by many contacts. We have a delightful description of the first meeting of Sarah and Oscar. It is Octave Mirbeau whom Mr. Dorian quotes:

"Like something blown in by the wind, a delicate creature flew hastily in, looked around furtively, seated herself and commanded a vermouth in great haste.
The voice was so exquisitely soft and musical that Wilde and I turned simultaneously to look at the speaker. It was Sarah Bernhardt! Thirstily after her first act was finished she needed a little stimulation, and in her stage-robcs had slipped on a massive fur cloak coming almost to her feet, and come to the same café across the street as ourselves.

"'Sarah, let me present the famous English poet, Oscar Wilde,' I said. I remember that Wilde said: 'Madame, your voice is like singing stars.' I remember no more of that evening, for we parted in a moment or two and took our respective places at the theater again, Wilde and I in our stalls and Sarah on the stage.

"But two years later, when they had become friends, Sarah talked to me so ardently of Wilde, who had never married, that I asked her why she didn't marry him and have done with it. She told me: 'Certainly not: I love him too much for that. When one marries love wears out and one's dream is ruined. Friendship is far more durable than love. It is far more difficult to like than to love.'"

On Wilde's side, too, there was a disinclination or rather a disability. He was, as Mme. Bernhardt's executor remarked in a not very nicely chosen simile, "as incapable of loving a woman as a sponge is incapable of becoming a stone." The truth is that it was Wilde's remarkable feminine temperament, as much as anything else, that drew him and Sarah together. Their friendship reminds one of the strange and perfect affinity of two women. Wilde, we are told, "talked about the fashions with Bernhardt to her heart's satisfaction." Indeed, Wilde, in a letter to Sarah, reveals quite frankly, though with one of his characteristic flashes of wit, the feminine tendency within him. I quote:

"Even as a boy I had the most inordinate delight in putting on my sister's clothes and looking at myself before a long glass in feminine vestiture, fan in hand, like a capricious demoiselle or a grand lady, according to whether my clothes were from my sister's or my mother's wardrobe. In my dreams I have often played Juliet and gloried in the embrace of Romeo while silver starlight and beams from the moon enveloped me in the balcony, throwing an aureole of radiance and rapture in my heart and about my flowing hair. I have always wished that I had been born a woman. . . . Women have a much better time than men in this world; there are far more things forbidden them!"

Wit, as one should expect, sparkles on every page of these letters. Wilde regarded Sarah's marriage as a mistake, thinking she was too free a spirit to confine herself even slightly within the bonds of matrimony, although he takes heart with this observation: "Since modern legislation has so altered the relationship of parties in marriage that nowadays it is as difficult for a man to assure himself about the possession of his wife as it is to assure himself about the paternity of his child, I console myself, now that I know your rash intentions have been carried into the sphere of actuality, by thinking that perhaps after all you have not curtailed your lark-like freedom." He adds: "Perhaps you have acted out of the most charitable impulses in the world—many women do when they marry. They just use marriage as an instrument for helping a man whom they feel has become victimized by chance. But I have never understood why instead of marrying them, they do not just send them a handsome cheque and continue to send the cheque regularly; one may support a man without marrying him. For a man to share a woman's dividends it is not requisite that the woman share the man's name." In a postscript to this same letter, Wilde speaks of marriage in a more poetic strain: "Death itself to the reflecting mind is less serious than marriage. The older plant is cut down that the younger
may have room to flourish; a few tears drop into the loosened soil, and buds and blossoms spring over it. Death is not even a blow; it is not even a pulsation; it is a pause. But marriage unrolls the awful lot of numberless generations. Health, Genius, Honor, are the words inscribed on some; on others are Disease, Futility and Infamy.

There is little need to go to the pains of quoting witty sentences from these letters. Wilde and Wit are synonyms. These letters show Wilde at his best. They are full of his charm and thought—his wit, his poetry, his philosophy, his artistic views. There is one long letter, splendid in both style and thought, in which Wilde discusses most loftily and clearly the relation between poetry and the past. This book also contains a sonnet that Wilde wrote to Sarah. I should not forget to mention that it was Wilde who applied to Sarah the celebrated phrase, "the divine Sarah." Writing to Jules Lemaitre, the critic, he declared: "Were I king, I would give the half of my kingdom, the half of my sceptre, and the half of my crown, to know that divine Sarah, and I would make her known all over the world."

* * *

One of the most important, and withal fascinating, Little Blue Books that has issued from our press is Sarah Bernhardt's Love Letters to Sardou, edited by Sylvestre Dorian. Mr. Dorian knew "the divine Sarah" intimately during the last five years of her life. Sarah Bernhardt As I Knew Her follows, with Oscar Wilde's Letters to Sarah Bernhardt, written and edited by Sylvestre Dorian. The letters to Sardou are an entirely original and most colorful collection. They reveal Sarah (to her intimates, by the way, or to any one whom she wished to show favor, she signed herself "Sarah," while the full signature, "Sarah Bernhardt," was a subtle form of rebuke or rebuff—notice, in fact, of a friendship ended) in a diversity of moods—gay and passionate, idle and intense, wilful and whimsical—and wholly charming always. Victorien Sardou, the poet-playwright to whom these letters were addressed, wrote a number of plays (notably Fedora) for Sarah. And in these letters Sarah not only reveals herself, but affords us most interesting glimpses of the personality of Sardou. The affair, it might be said here, appears to have been whole-hearted on Sarah's part, not quite all-enveloping on Sardou's part. Of an occasion when Sardou had sent a friend of his to see her, Sarah writes:

"Thou art so kind and unselfish in things like that! I must say that if thou wert in countries where I knew all the wonderful women, I would not give thee one word to any of them!

"I rather dislike that sort of generosity in a way, for it shows an absolute absence of jealousy; jealousy is an unmistakable sign of a love that is merely physical; that is just the love that I appreciate most, and so, it looks as if I may not have it from thee.

"I cannot say that I could ever be brought to prefer a spiritual love, the love that is commonly called 'spiritual,' in preference to a purely physical love.

"The physical love is probably more genuine; it is based upon the visible; upon the things that we may see and analyze it is grounded, whereas, as far as we know, the spiritual love is a temple builded upon sand; we cannot see any foundation, and are likely to awaken and find our structure gone with less notice given than when the physical love departs!"
“Sarah falls often into such philosophizing moods, and she avoids platitude as she would the plague. If she is not profound, neither is she shallow—and she is delightfully shrewd and witty throughout these letters. Wit, set in satire, is the predominating note. One detects the influence of Oscar Wilde, but it is an authentic gleam and not a mere reflection; and wit here serves as a condiment, for the importance of these letters lies in their many revelations of Sarah’s own most intimate life and loves. There is epigrammatic stuff that, if very Oscar Wilde, is very good, as good as the best of Wilde. For example: “The love of a married woman is wonderful. Married men are the only ones who never know what that love is.” And here is the very accent of Oscar, “the amiable, the irresponsible, the esurient Oscar”!: “A thing that is worth saying twice is not worth saying at all.” Again: “Men never change. That is the tragedy of men’s lives. Women always change. That is theirs...” Writing from London, she complains comically of the charge that her husband had no visible means of support. She declares: “Now I make no pretense at being fat and conspicuous, but I certainly am visible!” And she adds: “A woman should never marry a man who lives beyond her means.” I repeat what I have said of these letters in an editor's note to the book: “Her frankness in dealing with this intimate love affair—in dealing with any affair—is perhaps not unexpected. But never before have her sublime scorn for the conventional, her scintillating wit, her unique and audacious philosophy had such free scope.”

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

LINCOLN is unique among great men. No other man in such high place and amid such serious conditions has displayed such an incessant humorous vein. He always had a story to fit the occasion. During his life in the rough, growing Illinois country he had collected an amazing fund of anecdotes and when in the White House, as President and Commander-in-Chief, he drew constantly upon this fund of homely, practical humor to meet and parry the many trying situations that confronted him. So far as is known, Lincoln never told a story idly. He was always “reminded” of a story that applied with delightful point and precision to the case in hand. The importune office-seeker he turned away puzzled but not displeased by a story that was kindly yet effectually dismissive. To Senators coming to him with unwelcome advice or annoying questions, he sketched a comical picture of some crude mischief of early life in Illinois, and there was an end of it. To delegations of important citizens, urging that he change his Cabinet or dismiss Grant or proclaim the freedom of the slaves before he thought the time ripe, he told a tale about some farmer out West which, by the simplest of analogies, revealed Lincoln’s position and showed the impossibility of the demands made upon him. The strong but sometimes obstructive traits of his Cabinet aides Lincoln would smilingly sum up in a story; but he would not dismiss a man who was genuinely useful, though their
relations might have much of personal unpleasantness—the active unpleasantness being always on the part of Lincoln’s associate, as Lincoln himself was a master of the art of getting along with people. He was not often witty—very humanly humorous rather—but there is real wit in his characterization of the Army of the Potomac as “McClellan’s bodyguard”; and in his remark that it was not necessary for him to be a swearing man, as he had Stanton in his Cabinet.

THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE

PROBABLY no man, raised to all the outward dignity of statesmanship, has ever been so ignorant and compounded more ludicrously of many of the worst qualities of mankind, than the Duke of Newcastle, a powerful member of the ministry of King George II, in the first half of the eighteenth century. He was a shambling, stuttering, servile old fool. He was as destitute of manly bearing as of manly principle. He was so obsequious that the trait deserves an even more despicable name; Horace Walpole represents him as kissing the plasters of the invalided Duke of Grafton. But, simple as the man was, he had a certain artifice that, pausing as it did at no ignominy or intrigue, and willing as he was to perform the most contemptible services where there was the slightest advantage to be gained for himself, succeeded in keeping him in powerful place for nearly forty years! Indeed, his contemporaries were too contemptuous of him; their contempt made them unwary; realizing his almost incredible ignorance, they failed to give him due credit for that lowest form of craft which is often the most successful. So the Duke, fool that he was, maintained his power in the midst of far wiser men. His ignorance, so unique and unparalleled, is illustrated by a couple of anecdotes that, I think, are the most amusing of the kind that have ever been recorded. “Oh—yes,” he said, on one occasion, “—yes—to be sure—Annapolis must be defended—troops must be sent to Annapolis—Pray where is Annapolis?” And on another occasion: “Cape Breton an island! wonderful! show it me in the map. So it is, sure enough. My dear sir, you always bring us good news. I must go and tell the King that Cape Breton is an island.”

WOODROW WILSON

O ALMOST the very last, so long as any hope of life and renewed activity was in him, Woodrow Wilson regarded himself as the leader of liberal thought throughout the world and considered how he might still make his ideals effective. So he confided to an old newspaper friend, James Kerney, not many months before he died. He was upheld in this consoling view by personal messages from liberals, in this and other countries, who never lost their high and ardent estimate of the man who sat,
an invalid and recluse, awaiting death in the shadow of the scene of his former glory.

Wilson, one can easily believe, saw himself (if, at times, through a glass, darkly) as a great man. He doubtless believed that he had successfully appealed to "the verdict of mankind," and that there could be little real question of that verdict. If, as psychoanalytical studies of the man have informed us, Wilson was secretly plagued, from the beginning of his career, by a certain sense of inferiority, he compensated for it by an egotism that was correspondingly keen and perhaps more consciously assertive. If he was inclined to be a little doubtful of his own proper place in life, he was not backward in putting others in what he thought to be their places.

An essentially lonely man, I have no doubt that Wilson cherished this very loneliness as a sign of greatness—a proud isolation, as it were. If he knew the extent to which he had fallen in the world's opinion, the completeness with which his glory had been eclipsed, that probably made no difference in his self-estimate. Therein he was, of course, exactly right. What the world, what the mass of mankind, thought of Woodrow Wilson in his last few years—what it thinks of him today—is worth nothing as a measure of his greatness. The fallen idol may become, once more, the object of men's worship; downfalls of this nature, of which history has many a record, may be only temporary. It is not generally known that the exalted Washington, the "Father of his Country," quit his high office amid a not inconsiderable storm of execration. This sort of thing happens far more often in the sphere of politics, where partisan emotions and interests are more active and intense than in any other sphere of life. So the mere fact that Wilson had lost his place in the judgment of the majority of his contemporaries does not infallibly indicate that he had lost his place in the judgment of posterity. One must examine Wilson the man, his acts and utterances, and, in short, discover what was the reason for the lost faith of mankind. Were men wrong when they hailed Wilson as a Messiah, or were they wrong when they turned upon him as having falsely led them?

A man's celebrity is very apt to deceive us in one sense. The period of his glory may shed a deceptive light of greatness upon his previous career. One tries to ascertain signs of greatness along every commonplace step of his way and to discern the gleam of genius in obscurity. It is hard to see how any one, even the most zealous admirer, can do this in the case of Woodrow Wilson. He began life as a failure, but of this I do not speak. If anything, it was to his credit that he so quickly realized his unfitness for the profession of the law. Many a man makes a false start in life, and the sooner he sees his error the better for him. The greater part of Wilson's life was spent as a college professor. And in 1910, at the climax of his career as a college professor, we need not inquire what would have been the answer to a question as to Wilson's greatness. We need not inquire, because such a question could not conceivably have been asked. He was simply a college professor who had written certain grave books on history and statecraft
that hardly any one read. In the academic world, where distinctive individuality does not flourish and is not as a rule kindly received, Wilson was of a pattern with his fellows of cap and gown. As President of Princeton University, he was conscientious and efficient—and with a creditable unpopularity due to his attacks upon the snobbish and too social tendencies of university life. But Wilson’s record was no better than that of many another college professor or college president who has no claim to fame or even the ordinary knowledge of men. Had he died in 1910, the name of Woodrow Wilson would have been meaningless and forgotten. I venture this comment, however, upon the academic career of Woodrow Wilson. He showed no tendency or ability to breathe life into the moribund body of academic knowledge. He did not attempt to infuse into education the eager, fearless, virile spirit that marks the difference between pedantry and animated wisdom. His class-rooms had closed windows. There was no sign of the free, wide-ranging elastic and eclectic mind in Wilson—no evidence of that modern spirit, which, far from being a thing solely of today, can be referred back to Voltaire and even farther back to Plato. Wilson, in other words, had a conventional and correct mind. Compare him with an educator of the type of Professor Alexander Meiklejohn, who recently attempted to invigorate and elevate the academic atmosphere of Amherst College, and you can see that Wilson was but an ordinary educator, colorless and remote from the realities of life as professors generally are.

In 1910 Woodrow Wilson departed from the classic shades of university life. He had been marked by New Jersey politicians for a more active role—an entirely new and strange role for the schoolmaster. It seems likely that the two reasons, by no means unknown to practical politics, for the selection of Wilson as Democratic candidate for Governor of New Jersey, were his obscurity and his unfamiliarity with politics. Quite often in politics a man’s best asset is the fact that he is unknown and therefore nothing bad is known against him; and one who knows nothing of politics, or of the practical side of politics, might reasonably be expected to listen willingly to the initiate. However this may be, Wilson was introduced as a new man to the arena of New Jersey state politics. His activities as President of Princeton had not excited any deep general interest. How little indeed was known of Wilson, and how little given he was to any sort of neighborliness or contact with even the immediate world about him, is illustrated by an anecdote he related to his friend Kerney. “I went into a shop one day after I became president of the university and said, “Won’t you be kind enough to send that up?” I had made a purchase of a man with whose face I had been familiar for many years, and he said, ‘What name, sir?’ That was my single mortification, and that is the keenest kind of mortification; because if there is one thing a man loves better than another it is being known by his fellow citizens.” But while Wilson was a machine-made candidate, the exigencies of the campaign swiftly forced him to declare his freedom from any private and questionable allegiance; and, with his declara-
tion for reforms and his gift of speech-making, he was not long in becoming a popular candidate.

Wilson's record as Governor of New Jersey need not be closely reviewed. When one says that he was a reform governor, and that, as far as he was able, he kept his promises of reform, one has said enough. It is important to mention, however, that Wilson's policies were in the main carefully drafted and guided by a circle of advisers who were much better versed in the game of politics. Other hands drew up the measures which he supported as Governor; his appointment of Tumulty as his secretary and his support of a United States Senator were adroitly maneuvered; and Kerney relates how Tumulty came to him and produced a list of state appointments—including "every kind of job, from justice of the supreme court to the most picayune nonsalaried state commissioner"—for which they were to select the likeliest names. And, says Kerney: "What have we been doing for Jones that he has been in here thanking me so profusely?" he (Wilson) asked one day, and was much amused to find that Jones—which is not the name—was occupying a fat berth in the State House, under the appointment of Woodrow Wilson." Again, when it was necessary to guide Wilson in the matter of his support for a United States Senator, it was discovered that he, the Governor-elect of the state, read only one daily paper, and that The New York Evening Post. So it was necessary for a New Jersey newspaperman to become for the nonce the New Jersey political correspondent of The New York Evening Post in order that Wilson's mind might be influenced in this delicate matter. These are interesting revelations of the technic of politicians, and of the utter lack of familiarity with politics in the mind of Woodrow Wilson. It may be added here that Wilson never became familiar with politics and that when he did take a hand in this peculiar and shifty game it was at the behest and under the guidance of others.

As the popular and successful Democratic governor of a Republican state, and with a group of intelligent promoters behind him, Wilson was carefully groomed for President. He was an able and persuasive speaker, displaying that gift for specious utterance that later was so abundantly displayed in creating the war psychology; and he had the reputation of a progressive, although he was generously backed by wealthy supporters like Cleveland H. Dodge and Walter Hines Page. No one can deny that he was tremendously favored by the accident of politics, if one may call accidental the situation that existed nationally in 1912. At any rate, it was exceptional. The schism between Roosevelt and Taft, dividing the Republican strength, made the election of the Democratic candidate a certain event. A victory for Wilson at Baltimore meant victory all the way. That victory, if it is due to any man, is undoubtedly due to William Jennings Bryan. It was never a secret that the Nebraskan's support gave the nomination to Wilson, albeit Wilson in other years had spoken of Bryan's being "knocked into a cocked hat." As reward, Bryan was made Secretary of State—as near, without doubt, as he ever came to that Presidency which
he so consistently coveted. Wilson's progressive declarations (later incorporated in The New Freedom, and proscribed in the patriotic days of wartime) rivalled those of Roosevelt. His election was widely hailed by the liberals.

I have no space here to examine in detail the legislation that marked the early part of Wilson's administration. It was not, I believe, startlingly progressive. It did not really correct a single one of those abuses which Wilson had severely characterized in his "New Freedom" speeches. Corporation rule did not perceptibly weaken, nor was government taken from the politicians and restored to the people. Democracy, in fact, waned under the regime of Woodrow Wilson, who carried presidential prerogative farther than any of his predecessors. He approached Congress with the dictatorial severity of a pedagogue; and, with a solid party machine behind him, he succeeded in establishing his supremacy. Nevertheless, to the popular eye Wilson remained the true and undiluted progressive. The workingmen acclaimed a measure such as the Adamson eight-hour law—and, so easily is public favor to be won, a solitary measure of this kind is enough to gain a man unshakable prestige with the rank and file. In general, liberals continued to beam upon Wilson because of his staunch pacifist attitude; and in particular, his resistance to intrigues and demands for war with Mexico was widely approved.

But, while Wilson did not get us into war with Mexico, and although on occasion he spoke with unusual candor and sternness regarding the attempts of certain interests to involve the country in war with our southern neighbor, his record is not unimpeachable, and is indeed not a little ridiculous. It is really somewhat of a marvel that he brought the country so close to war without actually taking the final irrevocable step. The Vera Cruz incident was a dangerous as well as a disgraceful thing; and the Pershing expedition into Mexico was a fiasco whose absurdity has seldom been equalled in affairs of state. And it cannot be forgotten that, while making his fine declarations with regard to the sovereignty of Mexico, Wilson was helping American financial interests to play out their hands in Haiti and San Domingo. Even while talking most pacifically, he was sanctioning imperialistic policies of the worst kind. Let who will explain these inconsistencies, these disparities between word and deed; I merely point to them as a necessary part of the record of Wilson's public life.

Many liberals began to be alarmed and to waver in their allegiance when Wilson turned his eloquence to the advocacy of "preparedness." The change was disconcerting. Wilson had set his face firmly against the "preparedness" crowd. Side by side with his injunctions of strict neutrality toward the European conflict, he had preached a pacifism of a simple and uncompromising type. It is always embarrassing when a leader leaves his followers with discarded slogans. However, Wilson still insisted upon calling himself a man of peace and he sought to present his new belief as a mere counsel of reasonable safety. His voice was still that of the pacifist, modulated and moderate, though his words were very dif-
ferent from those he had previously spoken. He was still able to go before the people, in the campaign of 1916, with the seductive slogan, "He kept us out of war." That slogan was a clever vote-getter, though it lived to mortify Wilson.

All this time Wilson had an increasingly busy but uncertain role with relation to the war in Europe—a role that was fraught with tremendous and tragic possibilities; and tragic enough it proved to be for Wilson in the end. Still the liberal, Wilson urged his countrymen to preserve a scrupulously neutrality of thought; America at least should remain calm, free from the passions of the conflict. As a matter of fact, Wilson did not for long keep his own admirable counsel of neutrality. Throughout all his celebrated and rather dreary diplomatic correspondence, although there were stern words to England regarding her blockade and its interference with American commerce, there was not a perfect holding of the balance between England and Germany. It is clearly in the record that Germany, throughout all the negotiations, displayed a greater and more genuine desire to be fair about the rights of neutrals at sea, especially America, than did England. Against Germany there was the grievance of submarine warfare; against England there was the grievance of blockade. Germany was willing to remove the one grievance if England would remove the other. But England was not willing.

In the end, England's policy was tolerated, while the dispute with Germany grew in severity and peril. Blowing up people and sinking them in the ocean is more horrible to the common imagination than starving people on land. This, of course, is not the reason why the American gaze was fixed upon the offenses of Germany rather than of England. With the enormous trade in war materials that sprang up and grew apace between America and the Allies, there was a strong self-interest that turned the more powerful elements in this country to the cause of the Allies. Then the loans to the Allies meant that American financial interests were, to put it bluntly, gambling on the success of the Allies. Germany was entirely without the pale of American self-interest. The newspapers did the trick with the public, whose sentiment must be brought into accord with the self-interest of those who were directly profiting from the situation.

Wilson apparently resisted the mounting war clamor—a clamor that, up to the very moment of our entering the conflict and even afterwards, was chiefly a newspaper noise. But many powerful newspapers can make a terrible noise; and they have, too, endless patience and ingenuity. When the Lusitania was sunk and Bryan dramatically resigned, there was a momentary fear that war would be the issue. But the note that followed that catastrophe proved not to contain any alarming significance; and it was charged and generally surmised that Bryan's action had caused a change in the note to Germany. With Wilson's departure from his erstwhile pacifist policy and his speaking tour in behalf of "preparedness," there were again thoughts of war. There intervened the 1916 election,
with the Democrats going before the people with the cry, "He kept us out of war." And following this, Wilson, safely established in a second term, delivered his "peace without victory" message, in which he pointed out that there was apparently no difference between the aims of the fighting nations, each side asserting that it fought for the same unimpeachable issues. Then, like a thunderclap, came the sndering of diplomatic relations with Germany; the struggle over armed neutrality; and finally the declaration of war.

With America committed to the war, Wilson shed every active pretense of liberalism, although for war purposes he made use of the most high-flown idealistic phraseology. Already Wilson, who had so eloquently advocated a return to the ways of democracy, had set his face against any popular vote on the issue of war. Now he threw all of his weight behind the conscription bill—and, with bold sophistry, declared that this was simply the nation volunteering as one man. Also Wilson, who had spoken strongly of the need of common counsel, was willing and eager to stifle free speech with the espionage act. And by his own stern pronouncement, all warlike or divergent thoughts must be put down, and the nation must be absolutely of one mind. (Vain utterance! Did Wilson really think that the profiteers who were making their thousand per cent out of the war, the politicians who were basking in the sunshine of their own safely patriotic oratory, the desk heroes to whom war was a life of glorious ease and freedom, and the "dough-boys" who endured misery and danger in the trenches, were of one mind about the war?) The barbarism that the war turned loose in America astonished observers abroad who had lived for three perilous years in the midst of the conflict. George Bernard Shaw wrote, in the preface to his Heartbreak House:

"Yet it was in the United States of America, where nobody slept the worse for the war, that the war fever went beyond all sense and reason. In European courts there was vindictive illegality; in American courts there was raving lunacy. It is not for me to chronicle the extravagances of an Ally: let some candid American do that. I can only say that to us sitting in our gardens in England, with the guns in France making themselves felt by a throb in the air as unmistakable as an audible sound, or with tightening hearts studying the phases of the moon in London in their bearing on the chances whether our houses would be standing or ourselves alive next morning, the newspaper accounts of the sentences of American courts were passing on young girls and old men alike for the expression of opinions which were being uttered amid thundering applause before huge audiences in England, and the more private records of the methods by which the American War Loans were raised, were so amazing that they put the guns and the possibilities of a raid clean out of our heads for the moment."

Even after the war, Wilson bitterly refused to free the political prisoners; and his attitude in this alone should render ridiculous the comparison of him with Lincoln. The truth is that Wilson never for a moment showed the statesmanship, the lofty and often lonely
policy, and the splendid, all-redeeming humanity of Abraham Lin-
coln.

But Wilson’s greatest test came after the war. Had he stuck
to his program of a fine and liberal peace, his sins of wartime might
have diminished in the perspective and he might have been justified
in a high degree. The great argument for America’s entering the
war, and the argument that seduced the majority of liberals to
its allegiance, was that America could throw her influence to the
making of a civilized peace. But we know how the “Fourteen
Points” dwindled to thin echoes of mocking sound. Wilson’s own
liberal supporters, who had done violence to all logic and language
in order to uphold almost his every word and act, were among the
first to declare that he had utterly failed and that the hopes of hu-
nanimity were driven to the devil. On August 6, 1919, The New Re-
public, that had been ardently pro-Wilson and pro-war, gave this
succinct and devastating recapitulation:

“His solemn warning against special alliances emerged as a
special alliance with Britain and France. His repeated condemna-
tions of secret treaties emerges as a recognition that ‘they could not
honorably be brushed aside,’ even though they conflicted with equally
binding public engagements entered into after they had been writ-
ten. Openly arrived at covenants were not openly arrived at. The
removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers was applied to
German barriers, and accompanied by the blockade of a people with
whom we have never been at war. The adequate guaranties to be
given and taken as respects armaments were taken from Germany
and given to no one. The ‘unhampered and unembarrassed oppor-
tunity for the independent determination of her own political devel-
oment’ promised to Russia, and defined as the ‘acid test,’ has been
worked out by Mr. Wilson and others to a point where so cautious
a man as Mr. Asquith says he regards it with ‘bewilderment and
apprehension.’ The righting of the wrong done in 1871 emerges
as a concealed annexation of the boundary of 1814. The ‘clearly
recognizable lines of nationality’ which Italy was to obtain has been
wheedled into annexations which have moved Viscount Bryce to de-
nounce them. ‘The freest opportunity of autonomous development’
promised the people of Austria-Hungary failed to define the Aus-
trians as peoples . . .”

Thus it came about that Woodrow Wilson, who was raised by
circumstances to the most glorious commanding height, proved un-
worthy of this exalted place and swiftly fell to earth again. He
had demonstrated that he had neither the courage nor the knowl-
dge of statesmanship. Wilson did not even know, save in the most
vague general way, what he wished to achieve at the peace confer-
ence. He was as unprepared as when he had been elected Governor
of New Jersey, and had to turn to others to draft his program. In
the latter case, however, Wilson would not even take the advice of
his friends, but listened to the wily voices of Clemenceau and Lloyd
George. They could not go too far for him to follow them along the
path of imperialism, sordid bargainings and cruel punishments.
Wilson revealed that he was utterly lacking in the simplicity that goes with greatness, and the prestige that came to him in European capitals completely upset his ego. He was arrogant, and by this arrogance he fell. As Lloyd George shrewdly observed on the occasion of Wilson's death, Wilson tried to trample little men—the multitude—underfoot; and, said the canny Welshman, there are too many of them for this arrogant policy to succeed. Mankind is much more easily fooled than flouted.

The handicaps of Wilson's personality were his coldness and stiffness, his unwillingness to accept the help and counsel of able and informed men; his bitter and unbending hatred of any one who opposed him, his disposition to take secret counsel with himself and going his own way stubbornly alone and aloof; his almost complete lack of sympathy and imagination. One thinks of the old adage: "Some men are born great, some men achieve greatness, and others have greatness thrust upon them." Woodrow Wilson had greatness thrust upon him. He proved unequal to it. Had he followed any policy through to the end—could one picture him steadily in any splendid or brave light—he might have some genuine claim to greatness. As it is, one can see only the pitiful drama of his failure. As his name is intimately and inseparably associated with great events, he will occupy an important place in history; but it is surely not rash prophecy to say that "the verdict of mankind" in the future will not restore Wilson to the high place that he occupied in the estimation of more than half of the world in 1918-1919.

RANDOLPH BOURNE

In years to come, when some honest historian goes over the records of America in the Great War, Randolph Bourne is a name he will not pass by. Little known as he was and is to the masses, it would have been infinitely better for these latter could they have known and followed Bourne instead of that master of quick-change sophistry, Woodrow Wilson. Of all men who found pen or voice in 1917, in those fateful days when the tide was turning from peace to war, Bourne, I believe, saw the issues of the war most clearly; his spirit shone most brightly; his mind was the most acute in seeing the war and its issues from every possible viewpoint. I am not forgetting Debs—who could forget that noble figure? But Debs' opposition to the war was humanitarian and proletarian; he opposed the war in the spirit of Jesus and according to the philosophy of Marx. His stand was fine and brave and true. To me he seems to have been the most dramatic American figure of the war.

The most thoughtful figure, I would add, was Randolph Bourne. He it was who analyzed, more ably than anyone else, the political, the ethical and the intellectual bases of the war policy. He, more clearly than anyone else, showed to America its soul and true destiny. He, more vividly than anyone else, saw the rich possibilities of American
life—of all life—that were threatened with destruction by the wave of hate. War would degrade values; it would thrust back the mind of man into the jungle; it would check the outreaching of the human spirit for a fuller, richer life; on these high grounds—the very highest—Randolph Bourne based his opposition to the fearful holocaust. When all around him the fair-weather liberals, the so-called intellectuals, the men who had stood for freedom and breadth in living—when these lights went out, and these supposedly great and daring spirits surrendered with scarcely a struggle to the war and, with characteristic intellectual agility, began to out-Woodrow the leader of them all in sophistry and fine-appearing theses of moral grandeur to grow out of the war—Randolph Bourne, almost alone, stood true to his convictions, remained crystal-clear in his vision. He knew it was folly for the liberals to talk of controlling America’s war policy, to beat the drum for, as he phrased it with delicious irony, “a well-bred and cosmically efficacious war.” War, he knew full well, called forth all that was evil and retrograde in humanity, and out of it no good could come; and he realized, too, far better than his erstwhile comrades in the struggle for intellectual liberty, the sinister and all-powerful forces that were back of the war program. Of the war, and all the degrading ideas that were the offshoots of the war, he spoke with the greatest profundity and spirit. He saw just what would happen—just what was happening—to America. His prophecies, the result of a farther vision and of a finer spirit than most of his contemporaries, came true before they had hardly flowed from his pen. Himself just embarking upon the adventure of life, with his one great desire to see the growth of new spiritual values in the vast depressing welter of materialistic America, Randolph Bourne saw the war come to destroy all this prospect of a fine, new, colorful, upstruggling life in America. He lived but a few weeks after the armistice, and saw all his worst prophecies dismally, heart-breakingly, fulfilled.

And of all the documents of the war period, the future historian will find the few essays of Randolph Bourne the most valuable. For those who wish to know better this noble character, there is a fine appreciative sketch by Paul Rosenfeld in The Dial for December, 1923. It was the reading of that which inspired the modest brief note I have here set down. A crippled body Randolph Bourne had, but a powerful and a beautiful mind; a short life, but one whose significance will last far beyond his own time, and will, to future generations, appear as a gleam of glorious light in the midst of the dark madness of the war.

**LORD CURZON**

AME has its little fling of irony with the late Lord Curzon. He was active and distinguished in the public, imperial life of Great Britain for many years. He just missed being Prime Minister, that eagerly sought pinnacle of political renown in the empire; and so important a figure was Lord Curzon that King George felt it necessary to call for him and privately apologize—sorry, and all that, but the honor must go to Stanley Baldwin. The fact that this lord failed of the highest honor, and the irony of the trivial,
sarcastic note that constitutes his most common fame, both are derived from an unfortunate, insurmountable tendency of the man: his snobbery. He could not enjoy the power he craved, because he could not win a shadow of popularity. It was ironical that hardly a newspaper or a magazine, commenting upon the death of this eminent lord, failed to reproduce a verse written about the man, by fellow students, in his college days. It is a verse that dogged poor Lord Curzon all his life. It is a verse that will probably be the chief if not the sole recommendation of Lord Curzon to the majority of Englishmen of the future. It is Lord Curzon's passport to fame. The verse follows:

“My name is George Nathaniel Curzon,
I am a most superior person.
My cheeks are pink, my hair is sleek,
I dine at Blenheim every week.”

JOHN MILTON

CRITIC (Denis Saurat in Milton: Man and Thinker) thus states the philosophic viewpoint that is embodied in Milton's Paradise Lost:

"It is an attempt to give a precise answer to a metaphysical question which arises both from personal anguish and from universal suffering. It is a voice singing of mankind at a loss to understand its repeated failures in its struggles against Fate. . . . God's plans are well constructed; men's wills get carried out and destiny brings catastrophe to corrupt men and nations through the weight of their own deeds. Man is responsible, not only for his deeds but for his destiny, for his destiny is but a translation into events of the psychological drama in man's free soul."

This fiction of "man's free soul" is on a parity with the pronuncia-
mento that "All men are created equal." The most interesting thing about it is that it isn't true. Glance, even idly, out of your window and you will see men who are distinctly unequal—and men who are not free in a world that is full of conditions and circumstances which man im-
perfectly understands, let alone creates. It is so obvious—this lack of freedom deriving from the very state of relative being—that man dislikes it and prefers to ignore it and finds it very convenient and com-
forting to forget it. He may get comfort out of the Miltonian creed; but he cannot get freedom out of it. Facts do not fly out of the window just because fancy comes in at the door. It's a very realistic world, no matter how idealists and metaphysicians may deny it with solemn phrases and philosophies. Two men go different ways, seek different things, reach different conditions and views of life. Say that one man wills this, and the other wills that—what, then, have you proved? Not that man is free. Simply that he is possessed by desires, general and par-
ticular, that he does not create and, quite frequently, cannot understand. Milton was not free. He was John Milton, and therefore had to think and write like John Milton, not like anyone else, not even like somebody else named Milton. It is perhaps true that Milton's greatest mistake was that "he never clearly perceived that the world was not made of Miltons."
MUSSOLINI AND TROTZKY

LOOK at this dizzy world may cheer you or amuse you or excite you or depress you, according to your temperament. I try to be amused by the queer spectacle of life without permitting myself to be indifferent. What one can't help one may as well enjoy. It is impossible for me to make over "this sorry scheme of things entire." I realize that, as one little individual, I am not big enough to go into competition with God in the business of world-making. I can be only a voice, an influence, a phrase of protest in a foolish world. Meanwhile I can look at the spectacle of life, the unfolding drama of human events and get a series of purely purposeless, momentary, artistic thrills. Truth to tell, I can be sad and amused simultaneously. I can be really cut to the quick by seeing the world (as I think) going to the devil; and at the same time appreciate the comedy, the vast comic absurdity, the irony of it all. In that direction lies sanity. The thinking man would go crazy if it were not for his sense of humor.

For example, one can see Mussolini only as a great comic actor in the human play. He started out to make Italy work and he ended by making Italy fight. Now we are told that Mussolini is on the downward path. The boasted glories and sound usefulness of Fascism are beginning to be seen in the true light as a mere talent (not so uncommon) for tyranny and discord. Italy has lived in fear and hate for several years and now she is awakening from her debauch to a civilized state of mind. She is realizing that the years with Mussolini have been largely wasted, and that instead of climbing to the heights she has slipped into the depths. Now, too, seeing Mussolini lose his apparent virtue as a ruler, the leaders of Italian life turn upon the man in a most amusing way. They even accuse him of the worst thing of all: they assert that he is a Communist in disguise. And Mussolini, you remember, came into power as the foe of Communism; has always held up the Bolshevik menace as his chief reason for being in power; and to this good day represents himself as the king of red-baiters. Also there is sharp comedy, and an unmistakable element of sham, in the praise that American Babbitts have lavished upon Mussolini. They have eulogized him as the savior of Italy, the great man of the hour, utterly forgetting that Fascism has represented that force and class rule which they have condemned in Bolshevism. What sort of reasoning is it which reviles a Communist dictatorship, with self-righteous talk of democracy, and on the other hand has nothing but words of approval for a Fascist dictatorship? If one believes in dictatorship, let one frankly say so and base one's preferences (or admit the reality of such a basis) in out-and-out class interests. It is a good thing, if true, that Mussolini is tripping in Italy. He never appeared to me as much more than a boasting bum—more a slugger than a statesman: and if he can claim that he has not been implicated personally and directly in the worst of the Fascist excesses, he cannot evade a very genuine responsibility for the crimes of his regime. He has never tried to lead Italy to culture, to toleration, to reason—but merely to the pugilistic ideal of the hit in the eye.
Soviet Russia, after all, has shown something better for its effort than Fascist Italy. Russia under the Bolsheviks has achieved a movement of education and culture, and has especially shown little mercy to the superstition and exploitation of priest-craft; it has, in truth, put all energy into the course that will lead to the downfall of a strict party or personal rule, and that, for good or ill, will inspire the masses to more democratic demands and sympathies. Watch the Russian people. They will do great things. (By the way, Soviet Russia has also issued a translation of Dust, by Mr. and Mrs. Haldeman-Julius. I am told that it is a good translation. Certainly it is a very good-looking book. There is something nicely fitting in this, as Harry Hansen once introduced me to the Press Club of Chicago as the Dust-jevsky of Kansas.)

Glancing at the world picture in another light, there is something funny in the recent agitations that have thrown the figure of Mr. Trotsky into the limelight. The thought that one gets from it is that the ideas of the average man are not based upon reality but upon desire. We see life and ideas and people as we want to see them. Our philosophy is simply the reflection of our preferences and prejudices. Nowadays the American Communists go after Trotsky in no light mood of criticism. They aver that, after all, he was never the best of Communists: that he is just a little too personal in his way of seeing things and cannot resist the thrill of the revolutionary phrase. They see in him, as a latter-day advocate of more democracy and less discipline, one who has forgotten the essence of Leninist philosophy and tactics. On the other hand, Trotsky is more respectable among the liberal, democratic and capitalist groups. Those who used to curse Trotsky as a demagogue are now ready to put in a good word for him as a statesman. He is hailed, by haters of Bolshevik Russia, as one who has seen, if not partially, the error of his ways and one who is more of an American than was suspected.

LAURENCE STERNE

The moral mind is unable to keep its poise in face of the success of the immoral man. It is not enough that the sinner will burn in another life. It must be insisted that he will come to bitter grief in this life. To be sure, much depends upon a sense of values. One must, for instance, rid oneself of the notion that years measure success in life. Years are good only if they are well lived, not in the sense of mere conforming and timid morality but in the sense of full experience. Laurence Sterne did indeed fail to live to a ripe or futile old age; but the honest man who reads of his life will recognize that, ethical values aside, Sterne was a success. Indeed it was his very lack of morality that made him swift in the race of life. He was absolutely immoral, although a preacher. He drank, and never felt at his best unless his skin was full of wine, bringing dreams and a feeling of triumph over the limitations of the clay. He loved to get with John Hall Stevenson and the bunch at Crazy Castle and burn daylight, mock shadows and east winds, and enjoy the artistic possibilities of tales not
meant for tender ears. He was very skeptical of the religion that he preached—regarded it, in fact, as little more than a way to get a living before a very unchurched and unpuritanical art showed him the way to better fortune. He loved women—not one woman but several; and he did not love too carefully. All his life he was seeking the opportunity for adventure in love. He was a wit—and that, in fact, is the sin of all sins in the estimation of sour-faced, sober-minded Puritans. Bad man that he was, Sterne rode the crest of the wave. He was in his day a Lord of Life. He got what he wanted, forced men to come to him, and reduced life to his own simple, sufficient terms.

The chief word that the moralist can utter is that Sterne died comparatively young. Suppose that Sterne had lived until seventy or eighty as a steady, sober, moral man? Had he lived so, he might have realized less in life—certainly less of what Sterne wanted and of what made life attractive to him. He might have sat quietly in the chimney corner, with a book of holy exegetics in his hand, and preserved his body while letting his spirit (bad or good is not the question) die. Sterne lived to the full. He tasted the joys of life and drank deep while the wine lasted. A wine-illuminated evening, with wit and tales and the great urge of living, was more to him than ten years of ordinary, respectable plodding. Then Sterne won fame—and, whether it be a bauble, Sterne loved it dearly. Finally, we must admit that had Sterne been more moral he would have been less interesting.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL

OUTH is an enthusiast rather than a critic; it has capacity for intense emotion, but the very complete and fervid quality of its enthusiasm makes the full vision impossible. A single brilliant or unique or perhaps very simple aspect of a writer impresses itself upon the youthful mind with such irresistible force that the writer's personality and message cannot be seen clearly as a whole. Youth is like a sponge, which absorbs tremendously and indiscriminately. It seldom classifies or compares. Ideas come to it as inspirations from the very heart of divine wisdom; it is filled with the thrill of discovery, as it goes along the familiar, age-old path of self-development. This is a happy and helpful attitude. It is the propelling force that supplies youth with endless energy and purpose, that carries it successfully to the vantage point of mature judgment. A young man without these fine enthusiasms is absolutely worthless; without this enormous, eager intellectual impulse he will not go far or high enough to see much of life; fullness precedes reflection; it is good that one should have an amplitude of material to which later critical faculty can busily apply itself. The process by which one's enthusiasm is tempered by criticism is of course a gradual, often an imperceptible one; the more one reads, the wider becomes one's range of comparison; one's impressions settle with the years, one's thought deepens, one's vision becomes more sharply conscious, more balanced and coherent. Many readers will recognize themselves in this short note on mental habits, just as I recognized myself. Barring difference of temperament and accidents of circumstances.
all of us go over much the same ground to reach an adult intellectual stature. These thoughts were suggested to me as I glanced over a volume of Ingersoll the other day. I recalled vividly, and in a rather wistful reminiscent spirit the ardor and avidity with which I read Ingersoll fifteen years ago. He was to me almost a prophet, a man inspired, uttering verily creative and cosmic truths. He led me into a new world of thought and feeling. He was incomparable, peerless, loftily wise and original—not only the world's most eloquent orator, but the world's most profound thinker. He had the last word on life and death. After reading him, everything was crystal-clear, I had the same vast egotistic certainty that Ingersoll (and by the same token myself) was utterly and absolutely right that distinguishes the religious proselyte who is convinced of the final universal truth of his peculiar gospel. I think it is the very simplicity of Ingersoll's message that makes such a swift and sweeping conquest of the youthful mind that comes within the circle of his influence. Those beautifully simple, direct, epigrammatic sentences do not conceal any troublesome or treacherous complications of thought. There is no subtlety to perplex one, no uneasy feeling of having failed to grasp the man's whole thought. It is all as simple and self-evident as the statement that two and two are four. It is negation; but negation expressed with the same full confidence as the most positive philosophy. "We don't know," said firmly enough, has a satisfying finality, an air of vigorous verity, a sense of something definitely decided. Ingersoll's agnosticism does not teach one humility, does not fill one with a sense of the vast unknown. The true Ingersollian is sublimely self-assertive.

As I say, Ingersoll is very simple. He is full of sonorous and redundant truisms. With a solemn gesture, he declares: "From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead, there comes no answering word. . . . Life is a narrow yale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. . . . There is no light but intelligence. . . . Laughter is the divine daughter of joy. . . . The time to be happy is now, the place to be happy is here; the way to be happy is to make others so. . . ." Here is beauty of expression, but not depth or originality of thought. Other things he says, that are equally self-evident: A cruel God does not deserve man's worship; no man knows what life or death is; man's mind was made to reason and he should use it for this purpose; no man should dictate another's thought, conscience is individual and supreme, we should be tolerant toward the opinions of others. These are not rare gems of wisdom dug from the difficult, secret places by the solitary and daring intellectual prospector. They are the common media of honest intellectual exchange. Whosoever denies these things brands himself as a narrow ignoramus; whosoever accepts these things earns merely the title of an honest and sensible person.

But if these simple truths that constitute the bulk of Ingersoll's utterance are obvious, they are important, too. They are the necessary groundwork upon which a real intellectual life must be builded. Their casual acceptance as the merest self-evident fundamentals of thought is possible only among intelligent people, it is the long view that comes with the years of self-development. After all, the world is full of people who pretend to have the solution of life's mystery, who refuse to use their reason, who do not respect the conscience of others, who
are the propagators of a malign and sinister intolerance. In the days of Ingersoll, this atmosphere of intolerance was even more prevalent than it is today. Looking back, one can hardly credit the fact that the mind of man was dominated by such a dark, harsh, aggressive theology. The dark ages are not to be confined to one period of man's history. We are just beginning to emerge from the night of ignorance. The light of truth is just beginning to extend its rays over vast areas that were formerly given over to darkness. It is to Ingersoll's infinite honor that he greatly lessened the domain of superstition and intolerance. With a magnificent courage, he defied the incredibly narrow and insolent and cruel theology of Puritanism. We cannot fairly judge Ingersoll's contribution to the progress of intellectual life in America without comparing the spirit of his day with that of our own day. The freedom we now enjoy with regard to religious beliefs is due in great part to the earlier propaganda of Ingersoll. Ingersoll's defects, too, were inseparable from the nature of his mission as the popular foe of superstition. He could not have been so enormously effective, he could not have impressed himself so dramatically upon the American mind, had not his message been simple and direct and full of positive suggestion.

The man who aspires to quick results in changing the thought of a people must concentrate upon essentials that can be easily and clearly comprehended. He must avoid subtleties, circumlocutions, involved and intricate reasoning. He cannot wander aside from the main path of his attack to subdue the scattered provinces of the public mind. Like an invading army, he must direct his forces toward the one vital and vulnerable spot. An array of logic may serve only to confuse, whereas a succession of simple truths stated with simple eloquence will often destroy the stoutest barriers of prejudice. The artist can be subtle and fanciful and a little remote; the philosopher can lead one into austeres and rarefied regions of thought; the scientist can minutely explain the processes of life. But neither the artist, the philosopher nor the scientist is likely to make rapid, dramatic, sweeping conversions of public thought. One must have a delicate and sensitive fancy to follow an essayist like Charles Lamb; a faculty of profound and steady concentration to follow a philosopher like Herbert Spencer; an inexhaustible patience to follow a scientist like Charles Darwin. Upon individuals, these men have a powerful influence, but they do not immediately and irresistibly impress themselves upon the mind of the mass. This collective mind is, after all, most easily stirred by a great show, it is attracted by the beating of the drum. It ignores the quiet, earnest workers and rushes to give ear unto the man who strides the platform with tremendous gestures and vast, stentorian lung power. It is a sad commentary that it will rush as eagerly to hear a charlatan as it will to hear an honest man.

But when there arises a man both honest and eloquent, who combines the histrionic abilities of the charlatan with a message of true human liberation, it is a supremely fortunate moment in human progress. Such a man was Ingersoll. He was a great actor, he knew perfectly how to dominate the stage. He had a precious gift of eloquence that brought men magically under its spell. He had the intuitive knowl-
edge that his message must be simple in order to be effective. He could tell a happily appropriate story, support his theme with illustrations drawn from common life. He had an extraordinary personal power of oratory, the power which enables a man more quickly than any other to gain the attention of the crowd. With these gifts, Ingersoll dominated his generation. He was constantly in the center of the stage. Friend and foe alike paid him the tribute of a vastly interested attention. Great audiences flocked to hear him, the newspapers devoted columns to his lectures, Ingersoll interviews appeared abundantly, controversies between Ingersoll and the clergy (in which Ingersoll was always the witty victor) engaged the interest of the whole nation. Personally, he was a picturesque figure, bluff and lovable, with a perennial genial humor and a nature that was captivatingly couvivial; mentally, he had the nimblest wit, the liveliest fancy, the most resourceful polemical weapons of any one on the American platform. If he was not original in the truest sense, Ingersoll was intellectually free; if he did not bring America any new thoughts, he brought it many of the best thoughts of the free thinkers of the ages. His message was new in the very real and important sense that it was heard by thousands of people for the first time from the lips of Ingersoll. It may be truly said that Ingersoll gave to the American people their first vivid conception of the progress of the human mind. He rendered articulate the brave voices of the past, made forgotten messages live again in the thoughts of men, forced upon the American mind the realization that many thinkers dead and gone had brilliantly assailed the hosts of superstition. He linked his age with the liberal traditions of the past, brought the spirit of Voltaire to life and familiarized Americans with their own slandered and suppressed Thomas Paine. One could use large phrases without fear of exaggerating the vast liberalizing influence of Ingersoll. He brought not only liberal thought, but also a certain poetry and passion, to unimaginative and hence intolerant Puritan America.

As a liberator, then, must we regard Ingersoll. He struck fetters of fear and prejudice from many minds. He opened a door, as it were, from which one could emerge in a free intellectual life. But one should not stand idly in the door. One must go forth into the world. Too many remain stationary where Ingersoll leaves them. They do not use the freedom he has offered to them. They stop in a rut of rationalism which is just as deadly-dull as the rut of religion. Formerly proselytes for religion, they now become proselytes against religion, wasting their energies in one direction as they did in the other. They merely fume about, they do not step forward. The fact is that they are not really emancipated from superstition, it continues to be a very real force in their lives. They permit it to absorb their whole energies, to color and dominate their thoughts to the extent that it becomes a huge obstacle in the way of real intellectual progress. After Ingersoll had cleared one's mind of the rubbish of superstition, what does this signify unless one puts something in its place? If you accept the view that theology is full of fairy tales, why magnify them beyond the importance of fairy tales in general? Dismiss them and go on to constructive things. Why should you worry about the mistakes of Moses? or Cain's wife? or Joshua and the sun? or Jonah and the whale? If you get a genuinely
rational view of these things, it will lead you to a spirit of philosophic indifference, not to a spirit of petty polemics that is simply the reverse of religious fanaticism. Suppose that when you had reached the age of discovery that there is no Santa Claus, you had devoted the remainder of your mental activity to propaganda against Santa Claus. One perpetrates the same folly when he spends his efforts in fighting any sort of myth. Myths are to be brushed aside to make room for realities. Ingersoll’s war upon myths was tremendously useful in its way, but after all one cannot help feeling that the man wasted brilliant forces, that his gifted personality was confined by a struggle with petty things much as Gulliver was tied helplessly to the ground by the swarming pigmies of Lilliput.

But if Ingersoll was not creative, if he was mainly useful as a destroyer of superstition, let us really profit by his labors. Let the myths lie where Ingersoll left them. Instead of going to the trouble of killing them again, let us merely point to their dead bodies. In other words, do not waste time in this sort of argumentation, but let Ingersoll himself do for others what he has done for you. Take a hint from Samuel Butler, who said: "Religion and science are reconciled in the minds of amiable and sensible people and nowhere else."

SAMUEL GOMPERS

HE heart of Samuel Gompers, not very strong, was badly affected by the high altitude of Mexico. It was necessary, his physicians realized, to rush him to a lower altitude, which happened to be in Texas, in the United States. But the reporters were patriotically on the job. They wrote that Mr. Gompers was hurried to Texas simply and affectingly in the wish that he might die on American soil. Now, any one who knew Mr. Gompers, knew that he was a fighter with plenty of will and desire to play the game of life to the end. He was turning back to America, not that he might die, but that he might live. A low, heart-easing altitude, not a high gesture of dying patriotism, was the desideratum. Mr. Gompers lost his fight, and the reporters won their case in the dispatches. They quoted him: "God bless our American institutions. May they grow better day by day." Mr. Gompers, who was certainly a patriot, would have approved the sentiment. It was not original, perhaps; but the last words of public men need only be in the right tone—as completely beyond common criticism as the man himself.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

LORY blinds one—glory in retrospect, in history, in the lives of men dead and gone these many years. Yet these saints, sages and statesmen moved in the light of the common day, condescended to the usual notions and offices of human life, and had their minds frequently otherwhere than on the stars. There is George Washington, for example: the Father of
his Country—the Fabius of the American Revolution—the first of our Presidents, serene and dignified, a “steel engraving” that awes the beholder. As Bill Nye observed, we patriots do not like to think of Washington as “a man with a large mouth made to fit an old-fashioned pumpkin pie.” Yet in truth there is more than this to be said of Washington’s illustrious mouth. Crudely and not comfortably inside that mouth were false teeth—“two solid blocks of ivory, hand-carved to fit the mouth, and held in place by metal springs.” These teeth rudely took the great man’s mind from thoughts of glory, and regardless of Revolutionary hopes and the opinions of mankind then or later, the General applied to his dentist in Philadelphia “for a pair of pincers to fasten the wire of my teeth.” Other thoughts of Washington (connected indeed with “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” but not for the purpose of revolution, politics or fame) were such as to enable the Father of his Country to pop out at us human-like from his “steel engraving.” He forgot the oppressor’s wrong and the future Daughters of the American Revolution long enough to send certain more or less anxious inquiries to his friend Lund Washington, respecting the number of lambs and colts on hand at the General’s Virginia estate and the intention of L. W. to “repair the pavement of the “piazza”: whether “the decayed trees at the end of the house, or in the hedges,” have been put in shape: and there is finally the laudable desire to obtain for Mrs. Washington (better known as the inventor of the Martha Washington chocolate) “a horse belonging to Mr. James Cleveland,” provided L. W. “can get him in the way of barter, and if he is the color of the set she drives.” After this we shall not be surprised to learn that Washington had a good appetite, that his feet hurt him at times, and that he thanked his stars he would not live to see the modern garter come into fashion.

SIMEON STRUNSKY

SIMEON STRUNSKY is not a bit advanced, and is almost a barbarian (or should I say a heedless, sybaritic, cynical old Roman?) by the side of a thoroughly up-to-date fellow like Heywood Broun or even a mincing skeptic, with a dash of eclecticism, like Christopher Morley: notwithstanding this, and fully realizing that the simple Simeon is almost if not quite a Victorian (or if a Georgian, is certainly not a W. L. George-ian), I apostasize and say that he is the cleverest, the entertainingest (and, according to mood, the mellowest or the bit- ingest) of the New York journalistic literati. He’s a reactionary—a “carbuncle,” as a demagogic friend of mine puts it, on the Ship of Progress—but that isn’t as bad as it appears to the slightly shaded eye: it means, on the whole, that this fellow Strunsky has certain sound if sluggish instincts and that he appreciates many old things that are so old they are practically as good as new: and the wisdom of the race, the cultural catechism of the centuries, the bits of truth and taste that have just been nicely polished by the
kindly process of time, never have the dull sound of platitudes when Strunsky slams them upon the counter. They have a pretty, genuine ring, and though you may not prefer the metal, it isn't counterfeit: you can safely carry it around today and exchange it at full value on the morrow for something fresh out of the mint, with the stamp of the current frisky year. Not all that's old is decayed, corrupt and useless: and not all that's new and glittering is of golden-wise quality. If Strunsky misses some good, new things, he is quite contented to play with the fistful of good, old things that he has surely but not over-anxiously (serenely rather) grasped. He hasn't moved on with the procession, but he has pitched his tent where there is a fine view: and the fool who hath said in his heart there is no God nor Truth nor Progress (whispered it just once, to enjoy the daring sound of it) may feel at times that one view is very much like another and that the chief value of motion is to keep the blood more briskly in circulation: and that the next hundred miles or the next hundred years is largely exercise and change of scene.

Strunsky is always charming, adroit, as a rule imperturbable—and such heaven-sent qualities have the effect of softly concealing the rough edges of perversity. One feels that Strunsky is a man of taste and that any other man of taste could agreeably hobnob with him: that, while you would not vote alike nor at all coincide on crucial matters of state, you would perhaps laugh and cry and thrill over the same things. When Strunsky forgets to be logical, he does not therefore forget to be amusing nor does he neglect the soul of truth that redeems error. His most illogical assaults upon the modernists have an intellectual humor—a gay humor too—that is beyond one's power of resistance: and they command one's respect by their evident basis in a love of the timeless things that can be called neither ancient nor modern: that are as ancient as Socrates and as modern as Havelock Ellis, or vice versa. (Mencken has said that Havelock Ellis is the "most civilized Englishman of today": Socrates was the most civilized Greek of his day: both civilized men, and infinitely superior to Bryan, Coolidge or the Wild Bull of the Pampas, or the author of "Yes, We Have No Bananas.") I never wholly agree with Strunsky and I never disagree with him in a violent, complete way: and, right or wrong, I wouldn't have him any different for the world, not even to save the world, badly as it needs saving. He's too much fun as he is, without one plea for progressivism. He's a shock absorber—an electric fan—a shower bath—a smacking pull at the little brown jug—and often the shadow of a great rock of common sense in a weary land of Buncombe. . . . Strunsky's arguments are frequently very weak—audaciously so—I believe: and a little second thought is disturbing to their trim and jaunty alignment. One of his favorite themes is the futility of human ideals.

Now it is comparatively easy for a man with a good flow of language and an idea or two beyond the average to make out a strong case on the theory that progress is a matter of opinion
rather than of grand, unimpeachable fact: that change is illusory and not synonymous with progress. I have, in wicked and weary moments, attempted to maintain this myself. But Strunsky sometimes tries to swiftly reach this conclusion (which may be logical) by a short-cut of fallacy. In the first place, what is implied by the phrase, “human ideals”? If it is a question of the ideals of a minority (and what else can it be?) there is little point to the argument, as it is merely a confirmation of the obvious fact that might and majorities win. On the other hand, if it is held that the majority of men clearly envisage ideals that they are powerless to realize, one entertains a doubt. It is not in the record, in the history of ten centuries ago or in the newspaper of yesterday, that the majority has ideals—genuine, coherent, dependable views of life, generally or particularly, of what should be today or what may be tomorrow. It may be that if the mass of human beings knew what they wanted, if they are soundly agreed upon what would be a desirable world, they could obtain such a desideratum. Again, what is the proof that ideals can never be realities, or have little chance of being thus gloriously transformed and justified? What of a particular ideal? that of internationalism and world peace?

For example, Strunsky has recently had a gay time calling our attention to the fact that the circulation of Wells’ Outline of History has not regenerated mankind, destroyed narrow nationalistic concepts nor given the populace a new sense of history. The net result in America, he points out, is the Ku Klux Klan: Wells produces his magic, healing brand of history—whose purpose he emphasizes by calling it a plain story of life and mankind: all life and all mankind, not this race or that nation or certain forms of life—and these two volumes, cast upon the waters of public opinion, return in the form of a pillow-slip and a fiery cross. This is clever of Strunsky, but we cannot follow him in the notion that the Ku Klux Klan proves the absolute ineffectiveness of Wells’ history. That would be true only if all or a majority of the American people—and specifically, if the night-prowling knights of the K. K. K.—had read Wells, following him along the high-and-bypasses of evolution from the slime of the prehistoric seas to the mud of the modern trenches and the oil-smeared modern politics: and then, after this lesson in history and biology, had turned and unteachably prostituted themselves to the sorcery of the blatant, crafty kleagles and prehensile wizards. As a matter of fact, the Klansmen—and Americans of other clannish tendencies no less—are not only ignorant of Wells’ history but of any history. They know almost nothing about even the history of their own nation. They know that George Washington chopped down a cherry tree and, when as good as caught in the act, confessed to save a whipping: they know that it is written in the Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal—excepting Jews, Catholics and Negroes—and that this sounds attractive as a campaign slogan: these and one or two other little things mark the limit of their knowledge of history.

Whether reading Wells would affect their intelligence is an idle question. It is certain that they haven’t—they wouldn’t—read him.
If one could induce them, by false pretenses, to open Mr. Wells’ admirable work, they would quit in disgust after the first few pages: when they discovered that Mr. Wells had not begun his history of the world with Adam and Eve, they would throw the book into the fire. And if they should get as far as to find that Mr. Wells had devoted good space to the heathen Buddha, who was a dark-skinned foreigner on top of his other vices—they would send a party of patriots to England to kidnap and crucify the English un-Christian, un-American heretic. (To be sure, Jesus and Buddha would be equally ineligible to membership in the Klan, but that can be waived for the moment.) And what do the Kluxers care how big the earth is compared with the sun, moon and stars, so long as there is a spot on the earth large enough for the erection of a fiery cross? Will they believe that mankind has one common history and that race is largely a delusion? insignificant in view of the age-long mingling of the human blood stream? Will they read or believe or care? The K. K. K., the anti-Japanese antics, the stubborn refusal to recognize Russia, the lingering German hatred, the Nordic nonsense in toto—all this does not prove that Mr. Wells’ history has been read and forgotten. It proves that the history has not been read: and whether this is proof or not, the fact is that the Outline of History is familiar to a limited circle only. Wells had a large audience, but this is a still larger world. For the thousands who read him, there are the tens and the hundreds of thousands whom he never reached. This is tragic, but true. It is not simply that there is a formidable portion that will not read, will not think, will not learn. That is the larger obstacle that is not so easily removed from the path of human enlightenment and advancement: the remedy for this sort of apathy must be slow, though it may not be hopeless.

But Mr. Wells’ history suffered from a handicap other than that of human indifference. Its form was unfavorable to a reading as wide as its immense significance deserved. It was a big book—two big books, then one big book—and the average reader, sufficiently well-meaning but unheroic, shies at the size of such volumes. He feels that they are not for him. It’s a stiff physical job to hold and handle such a book, and it seems a much greater mental task than it really is to read it. There is perhaps no good reason why people shouldn’t read sizable, heavy volumes, but they will not and there is stubbornly posed the fact, which reduces the area of mental cultivation that may be covered by many an excellent work. And Mr. Wells’ history was (and is) rather expensive, even as books go that are not cheap. Psychologically, its size repelled prospective readers; economically, its price kept it out of the hands of many more thousands who are forced not only to read as they run but as the family budget allows. (The public libraries, I believe, are frequented largely by fiction readers: and the majority never enter them.) Do not imagine that, because I am a publisher of little books, this is but a silly interested preachment. My self-interest is a fact: but the disadvantage, the inevitably restricted audi-
ence, of the big book whose price runs into the dismaying dollars—this is equally a fact.

The thoughtful person cannot avoid the important and fascinating speculation of what influences would have flown from the well-nigh limitless circulation of the *Outline of History* in the form of little books: books that could be bought at a nickel a volume—five cents for several thousands years of history—and that could be read in those chance, purposeless, deadly empty moments when one is glad for a scrap of anything to read, even an old soiled almanac. I reflect, too, that hundreds of thousands who most needed the influence of the *Outline of History* were denied the possibility of reading it. For the most part, Mr. Wells was enthusiastically read by cultured folk who stood in no need of emancipation from the grosser delusions of nationalism, race and religion of the blighting, bigoted brand. But there are countless others who are not indifferent nor vicious but who, lacking the poise and the broad vision that is to be gained from a knowledge of history, are all too easily led into fatal paths of error and by impulses that they may flatteringly regard as most worthy.

There are men and women who have somewhat of the spirit of progress (often a great deal of the vague, uninformed spirit), who have caught glimpses of the truth, who wish to move in the direction of the light: but who, in the unsoundness and incompleteness of their intellectual equipment, are lured by false slogans and banners. That a man utters certain of the catchwords of progressivism, that he is modern in a belief or two, that he is a convert to this or that solitary "ism" does not assure that he is a broadly and safely civilized man; he may shout for industrial democracy—sincerely, too—yet join the hooded fly-by-nights because he thinks the Catholics are a dark, terrible menace or the Jews a world-plotting crew or the Negroes an element that must be fearfully kept down in order that white civilization shall endure. A Klansman may be lacking in humanity or ethics or intelligence—or in all three. Many Klansmen are simply lacking in intelligence. I believe I have no exaggerated notion of the possibilities of mass education. I know that many people learn slowly and that many refuse to learn.

On the other hand, I am certain that others are too inclined to underrate the opportunities of making dents in the mighty wall of human ignorance. I am familiar with the ideas that the human race learns and forgets and must be repeatedly retaught: but the truth is that the mass of mankind have never learned. They have not had access to the knowledge that is in the world, that has been in the world in any age. There has not been a moment in the history of civilization when contemporary knowledge, had it been fairly and widely available to man, could not have produced, on the whole, a sensible and happy world. There have been philosophers in every age who knew what constitutes a joyous and noble life. The people have not been philosophers, nor could one imagine such a race of philosophers existing outside of one of Mr. Wells' novels. But neither is it in the nature of things—at least, may we
hope that it is not and labor splendidly to prove that it is not—
that we should have a race perpetually bogged in the black depths
of Ku Kluxism. A little of the spirit of philosophy—a little intelli-
gence—a little tolerance: just a little is enough. I should say that
one good, sizable, active idea in the head of a Klansman would be
enough to drive the folly of Ku Kluxism out. Little books will
help, if I do say it who publish them. And I didn’t dream of falling
upon the subject of little books when I began this dissertation. All
I had to go on was Simeon Strunsky, the name and little more—just
a funny, fortuitous streak in the brain. “H’m, Strunsky,” I mused,
“bright fellow—a bit reactionary but thoroughly civilized—charm-
ing even when wrong, perhaps especially when wrong; and what
wit, what style, what poise!” So it went, and I found myself by
force of habit in front of my typewriter, and I proceeded to sur-
prise myself, no less than the reader, on every blank, adventurous
page.

BISHOP WILLIAM MONTGOMERY BROWN

His is the last heresy trial in history, says Bishop William Mont-
gomery Brown, Calion, Ohio, who has been found guilty
of heretical propositions by a court of his fellow bishops—
who, it appears, are not a little embarrassed by this somewhat
anomalous fellowship. Bishop Brown’s dramatic valedictory to heresy
is more than interesting, if it is true. But is it true? Oh, no. The day
is not yet when man will cease to call his brother a heretic and expel
him from the midst of his various doctrinal groups. If one belongs to
a group, one must be pure in its articles of faith; I am sure that the
Communists (Bishop Brown, although merely a “symbolic” Christian,
is a simon-pure Communist) guard the purity of their movement no
less vigilantly and zealously than the Episcopal church. I am not fa-
miliar with the subtleties of doctrine and the peculiarities of organization
within the Episcopal church; but to an outsider it appears to be much
ado about nothing to speak of. The strange thing is not that the church,
finding that Bishop Brown has wandered from the strict path of Epis-
copal belief, wishes to publicly disavow his new beliefs and show him
politely to the door; but that Bishop Brown, disciple of Darwin and
Marx, whose slogan is, “Banish the gods from the skies and the capita-
lists from the earth,” should wish to remain in the church. To my
simple lay mind, it seems that Bishop Brown and the bishops who are
still firm in the faith might shake hands, say good-bye and agree to
disagree. If Bishop Brown isn’t wanted in the church, there is plenty
of room and plenty of good companionship outside. As it is, we have
the curious, diverting spectacle of a heretic, who admits the essence of
his heresy, but who cannot bear to be separated from the atmosphere
and the symbols and the fellowship of the heresy-hunters. The heretic
would a Christian be. Or can one risk the metaphor that he wants to
cut his cake and have it too? It is encouraging to observe that this
modern heresy trial is a formality, the mere action of a group seeking
to protect its doctrinal virginity—or that it would be only this were it
not for Bishop Brown's somewhat queer and disconcerting attitude. There is no question of Bishop Brown's being burned at the stake, or boiled in oil, or tied up in a sack full of serpents and thrown into the waters. He will not even be effectively or picturesquely damned. There is no general uprising of the faithful to rend and destroy him. Perhaps there are even good Episcopalians who take the affair casually. Bishop Brown may be plain Mister Brown instead of Bishop Brown or even Brother Brown. That is all. When this greatest government of all the ages took Eugene V. Debs' American citizenship from him, Debs rose in spirit far above those who sought to punish him and made their punishment look ridiculously ineffective by saying: "Now I am a citizen of the world." If it is decided that Bishop Brown shall be no longer a member of the Episcopal church, he can say with a good conscience that he is still a member of humanity.

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

[Note: It is obvious from the tenses in this essay that it was written before Mr. Bryan's death. Not a word has been altered.]

WILLIAM LYON PHELPS suggested not long ago that William Jennings Bryan should write his memoirs. It could hardly fail, he added, to be a most interesting record of the past quarter of a century. If I am not mistaken, he averred, in the very spirit of caution, that it would be highly advisable for Mr. Bryan to confine himself solely to reminiscences and forego his favorite pastime of hurling brickbats at Darwin and the theory of evolution. Certainly this is most wise advice, and saves Mr. Phelps' suggestion from utter fatuity. I have not a little admiration of Mr. Phelps, as a worthy man of books, and an avid taster of life, although our literary opinions are somewhat apart. But, in this instance, I waver between the opinion that Mr. Phelps has unforgivably offended mankind by making himself the possible instrument of loosing upon the world such a terrible commentary as Mr. Bryan's memoirs would undoubtedly be, and a sort of wicked delight in the anticipation of what a cosmically comical thing it would be to behold Mr. Bryan's reflections upon himself and the universe—for assuredly Mr. Bryan, as a religious man, an earnest and enterprising theologian indeed, would take the universe piously into consideration.

One thing is certain: Mr. Phelps' warning to beware of the subject of evolution is sadly wasted. Imagine Mr. Bryan addressing himself to the multitude in any guise without putting in a lick for God and the creation and beginning of man as recorded, in black and white, in the Book of Genesis! No, indeed; if the Commoner opes his lips at all, there is bound to issue forth a fervid anathema against the evil theory of man's simian ancestry, that has done more than any other idea (though of wicked ideas philosophers and scientists have been plentifully productive) to subvert the morals if not the manners of the human race.

What, possibly, could life in the last decade of the nineteenth cen-
tury and the first quarter of the twentieth century, look like to Mr. Bryan? One is aided somewhat in this conjecture by recalling that the sum and substance of the Nebraskan's political activity was a struggle to turn back the hands of the clock, to oppose his quixotic idealism to the basic and remorseless processes of social and industrial development. It is not at all rash to infer from this circumstance that Mr. Bryan would display no real understanding of the period in which his light shone.

One must, I suppose, turn to theology for a hint of the manner in which Mr. Bryan would picture the years that have, in most ways, dealt with him very kindly. Kindly as they have dealt with him, one knows that Mr. Bryan, with the impersonal zeal of the crusader, would not permit the personal element to unduly influence his view. In spite of his own fortunes in this period, he could not withhold one jot or tittle of the horrid truth; he could not see the times through the lens of his own success or happiness. I am not so much of a gambler that I would stake my all upon a single throw; but I think I am safe in venturing the opinion that Mr. Bryan would see the theater of life, as he has viewed it, with a strictly theological frown. We all know that it is an essential tenet in his theory of life that man was created in perfect goodness, that he fell into desperate evil, and, if there is the least grain of truth in this explanation, has been growing in wiles and wickedness ever since. This being the case, I have not the slightest doubt that Mr. Bryan would see the past quarter of a century as, superficially at least, a period of progressive journeying to the devil. No doubt the only bright spots in the picture would be the direct primary and prohibition. These Mr. Bryan would not fail to set down as reassuring evidence of progress. Surrounding these proofs of the valor and pertinacity of the American Puritan and pure-in-heart, would there not be total darkness?

It is the dearest theme of the theologian that the world is going to the devil, and man, by his manifold iniquities, is inviting the wrath of God. This theme Mr. Bryan could hardly ignore. It would seduce him, as alcohol seduces the drunkard. Industrial development, of course, would be, in Mr. Bryan's version, a gradual deglutition of the common people by the ogre of Capital. He would see this, not as economic evolution, with the working out of scientific progress on the farther side, but as a very personal and satanic conspiracy. Until there cometh the fear of the Lord, mankind is to be at the mercy of the octopus. Politics would be presented (and this more truthfully than other features) as a steady decline toward the very bottom of evil, chiefly due to the persistent exclusion of Mr. Bryan from participation therein. With all that, Mr. Bryan could surely give us some very interesting and wholly reliable information regarding the practical, inside workings of politics. Whatever his faults, it has never been alleged against Mr. Bryan that he was not an ingenious and delicately ambidextrous politician. One would like to see his report of conferences and conventions, and no doubt endless subtle and fragile situations, in which he has resorted to other arts than that of oratory.

Turning from his special field (but has he any special field, this man who has offered to his fellows such a bewildering variety of ethical nostrums?), Mr. Bryan, although no literary critic, would be impelled
to remark upon the passing of that Victorian reticence, that chaste rectitude, of literature as it was in his early days. The literary developments of the past decade could not appear to him as other than horrible and an offense to the angry eye of God. The indecent discussion of life in this literature was never sanctioned in the Book of Books. (Solomon's Song got in through an oversight of the proofreader.) This bold, thorough and withal adroit and shamefully subtle revealment of the real everyday life of men and women—this picturing of God's children exactly as He made them—is surely too piping for the moral taste of Mr. Bryan. But perhaps I am falling into a great error. It may be that Mr. Bryan is entirely unaware of this deadly literature, and will hear of it for the first time from me. Suppose the only reading in which he indulges, outside of the daily papers, is the Congressional Record? If so, and if I shall have suddenly and shockingly pointed out the true nature of current literature to Mr. Bryan, it is likely that the Comstockians will have an able recruit, and that Mr. Bryan's next great moral and religious issue will be a crusade against the publication of literature that is stimulating rather than uplifting. Maybe he would be guided by that outburst of the temperance ladies and call for the suppression of Omar Khayyam on the ground that the blasphemous and bibulous Omar is the means of undermining the Volstead Act. Of course, I may be doing Mr. Bryan an injustice. Prophecy is always a risky business. And I am only going by the exterior of Mr. Bryan in judging the possible direction in which his surprising mind may travel.

The younger generation? Ah, you may be sure that boys and girls are not as they were in William's day. Evil has descended like Sennacherib upon the hearths and dovecotes of this Christian land. Girls are no longer young ladies, but flappers or their just as evil equivalent. Boys, instead of looking forward to being President, look forward to becoming bootleggers. Immorality is rampant. Drink is actually dispensed in spite of the formidable union of the laws of God and man. Sex is a fact. Male and female are still driven by the immemorial curiosity and desire. Due homage to parents is not accorded as freely and as utterly as it once was. Church attendance has sadly fallen off. (Out of loyalty, Mr. Bryan may suppress this latter fact.) And, last and possibly worst of all, while the government at Washington still lives and God is securely in his heaven, Mr. Bryan is not President.

Who can doubt that a picture, not greatly different from the one I have outlined, would find its way into Mr. Bryan's memoirs? I believe that if Mr. Bryan should write this book, it would exceed the popularity of the novels of Harold Bell Wright. It would rest proudly on the center-table in every good Christian home. Preachers would find in it many a fearful text. Mr. Bryan might also be mistaken for a humorist.

It is hard to believe that Mr. Bryan was ever taken seriously. (To be sure, he is still taken seriously by many persons, but not so seriously as he once was, his true presentiment as a comic figure having dawned to a great extent upon the public mind.) Yet so he was. It is a fact—the books attest it—that away back in the hectic nineties, Mr. Bryan was really a popular idol. It was possible for Brann, in his Iconoclast, to refer to the Nebraskan as "an intellectual Titan." (This is terrible!)
"The Boy Orator from the Platte," after the delivery of his celebrated "crown of thorns and cross of gold" speech in Chicago, in 1896, was regarded as the great hope of the masses—the harbinger of a glorious new era in American politics. It is odd how such immense enthusiasm can be kindled by such limited issues. That Mr. Bryan should appear as a Moses or a Messiah due to his advocacy of bimetallism, that "sixteen to one" should be received as a magic phrase pointing men to the heights, is indeed a tremendous irony.

One has little patience in reviewing the political issues with which Mr. Bryan has identified his name. His has been the merest opportunistic reformism—not even a philosophic presentation of reform as the gradual advance and amelioration of human society. Furthermore, as might have been expected, Mr. Bryan's reformism was without scientific basis. He has never shown the slightest understanding of the principles of development in society. He has been a queer mixture of evangelist and politician, with now one and now another of these elements predominating. Lately we have seen him as the evangelist pure and simple—especially simple. It is quite fitting that he should climax his career with a crusade against the theory of man's evolution from lower forms of life, that after a quarter of a century of active and wide experience the sum of his wisdom, his learning from life, should appear as a defense of the Garden of Eden myth. But experience, one reflects, is not simply having things happen to one, as many things have certainly happened to Mr. Bryan. True experience comes only when one absorbs and interprets events, when one is stimulated to fresh thinking and a broader outlook and a deeper personal life by the contacts of life. Nothing of this can be observed in Mr. Bryan. His mental development is at precisely the same stage as when he came, breathing apostolic eloquence, from the Nebraska prairies more than twenty-five years ago.

This mental development is, if one must say so, that of a child. Mr. Bryan is credulous, superficial, naive; he is governed and guided almost entirely by emotion, very little by what can be denominated reason. And his emotion is not the fine emotion of the artist, that sees to the heart of things, but the ordinary emotion of the child that reacts unthinkingly to the obvious aspects of the life around him. Search as carefully as you will through all the recorded utterances of Mr. Bryan, and you will not find one wise or original or charming thought. When he is not the mouth of fallacy, he is the mouth of platitudes. He is either fatuous or obvious. One is not encouraged to believe that, if Bernard Shaw's vision could be realized, and Mr. Bryan could be given several hundred years in which to grow up, he would ever grow up. His last state, one believes, would inevitably be worse than his first; just as today, with the burden but not the ripeness of the years upon him, Mr. Bryan is a less vital and significant personality (if one may speak of him at all, even comparatively and reminiscently, in such terms) than he was twenty-five years ago. Bimetallism was futile enough; opposition to the growth and closer organization of industrial life was unscientific enough; but actual and direct warfare upon science itself surely represents the nadir of Mr. Bryan's mentality.

And this man, so essentially puerile in his attitude toward life, has lived, outwardly, a full and varied life. He has lived in the midst of
important events. He has been one of the leading public figures of his country for a quarter of a century. He has mingled intimately with men of affairs, public and private, and he must have known well a number of interesting men. He has been engaged almost continuously in both the open warfare and the strategy of politics. Yet, while he knows his way about and has a certain aplomb, this man is not really sophisticated. Mentally, he is a very child and creature of naivete.

Mr. Bryan is an example—a shining example, if you will—of the worst sins or defects of oratory. Oratory, at its best, is not one of the really great arts, appealing as it does to man's emotions at the expense of his reasoning faculties. In Mr. Bryan, oratory has been used to appeal to the most shallow emotions of the multitude. It has been simply a beating of drums, exciting his hearers as unintelligently as military music. Great audiences have been raised to the very pitch of perspiring frenzy over the most trivial, childish issues by Mr. Bryan's sonorous elocution. Nature was very unfair to Mr. Bryan. She bestowed upon him the single gift of oratory, but she did not give him a balanced and sensible equipment of other faculties. And oratory, in the hands of a man with a commonplace mind, and one whose mind is entirely befogged by a pack of sentimental notions, is by turns a menace and a mockery.

Mr. Bryan, I suppose, will go down as one of America's great orators. I would not absolutely deny the tribute. In the mechanics of oratory, he is certainly well versed. He has a splendid voice and knows precisely how to use it with the best effect. He has, physically, an imposing appearance—unless one notes, with a critical eye, the puerility that beams in the man's countenance. I suppose he has a certain physical magnetism for the multitude, though he hasn't for me. But where are the other gifts that should adorn and vitalize oratory, and without which oratory is but "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal"? Oratory, to have any greatness, must be an intelligent borrower from the other arts. Where, for instance, is the divine gift of language? if not the magic phrase of the artist, then the stately and cogent language of the statesman-orator? Mr. Bryan has it not—in the least degree. One reads a speech of Mr. Bryan's, and one marvels that such lifeless words could possibly create a living influence. To confine comparison at home, put a speech by Mr. Bryan by the side of one of the speeches of Webster or Clay. Observe how much more impressive, how much more finely studied and shaded, is the language of Webster or of Clay. See how much more compact and closely reasoned, how much fuller and weightier, is a speech by one of these early American orators. And note how there is a certain sense of great issues, a certain statesmanlike tone, in the oratory of a Clay or a Webster that one altogether misses in the best of Mr. Bryan's efforts. And one finds little or nothing of the embellishment of true wit, of the adornment of learning or culture, in the oratorical effusions of the Commoner. He has no background, save that of the Garden of Eden.

When Benjamin Franklin went to Paris as the ambassador of the revolutionary Colonies, he was welcomed cordially and admiringly as a citizen of the world. One cannot imagine any such welcome, anywhere in the world, for Mr. Bryan. Living in an age far advanced in communication and all the material things of civilization beyond that in which
Franklin lived, Mr. Bryan is a citizen of Nebraska and of Florida, and at least once every four years, of the United States, while Franklin was in the truest sense a citizen of the world. Mr. Bryan, a number of years ago—at the beginning of the century—raised the issue of anti-imperialism; and in the mere outward political aspects of that issue, one can agree that he was on the right side. However, one is convinced that Mr. Bryan's opposition to imperialism, to the broadening of American empire and the increasing vitality and complexity of foreign affairs that must result, was at bottom provincial. Mr. Bryan's vision and culture has, it seems to me, been bounded by the prairies of his Nebraska habitat. They are broad prairies, as prairies go, but they are not the world. To have one's mental horizon defined by them, is to be condemned to narrowness and futility. Such has been the fate of Mr. Bryan.

If there is one good thing to be said about Mr. Bryan, one would be churlish not to say it. He did deliver himself of one true and somewhat dramatic and courageous gesture. When he resigned as Secretary of State, as the result of disagreement with President Wilson regarding the note to Germany on the sinking of the Lusitania, Mr. Bryan touched reality for a moment and gave us a glimpse of character. But alas! a moment of manly decision cannot redeem a quarter of a century of fatuous mediocrity. I should say another thing for Mr. Bryan: He is, beyond a doubt, an astute and thoroughly experienced politician. And he has succeeded, if not in realizing his political ambitions, in persuading a large number of people with the notion that he is a disinterested, altruistic politician, instead of a self-seeking politician. This is sheer delusion. Mr. Bryan has not for one moment failed to show a primary and quite lively sense of his own personal interests. Throughout all his changing issues, he has been for Mr. Bryan most loyally. But, like most public men, he has a considerable following to whom he appears as a champion and apostle. He has succeeded in creating a false public picture of himself, and that is no small achievement. Yet, for all intelligent observers the true outlines of the picture have fully emerged. Mr. Bryan's crusade against Darwinism, his revivalist staging of the sham battle of angel against ape, has put the final touch of definition to the man.

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

ADDITIONAL NOTES

YEARS ago, says Edgar Lee Masters, a friend urged William Jennings Bryan to read and reflect, to develop his mind. It was useless. Bryan didn't have a mind to develop. And the Commoner (the very commonest) was anxious to peddle his oratory, to rake in the shekels and to become the moral leader of the great American herd. Writing in the American Mercury, and admitting at once the horrid fact that in other, almost incredible days, he was a brief Bryan admirer, Mr. Masters mentions a few traits and tricks that Bryan revealed in his career as substitutes for mind.
He had a very cheap trick of words. For example: "It is better to study the 'Rock of Ages' than to study the age of rocks." He was the ideal popular orator, who could talk endlessly without uttering an idea. His sheer lung power was never disputed and, as prosperity followed in the prophet's wake, his corpulence helped to impress the mob. A mobocrat, Mr. Masters aptly calls him. Whatever the greatest number of yokels can be persuaded to vote for, that is truth and righteousness. The majority is the multi-headed tyrant to which Mr. Bryan professed to be loyal. They may regulate habits and ways of thought. They may call black white, and who shall deny them? Bryan would not.

Of all the things that, God helping him, Bryan did not believe in, liberty is first. He hated liberty because it enables men to publicly disagree with Bryan and to live in ways that Bryan did not approve. The man had the very spirit of John Calvin. In this age, of course, he had to use modified Calvinistic methods. He could by his idiotic Chautauqua oratory stir up the ignorant populace, here and there, against the thinkers. He could howl early and late for laws to be passed that would embody the Bryan notion of goodness. He could fight to drive science out of the schools and to legislate the Bible as the lawful, true Word that all men must believe. If he couldn't be a witch-hanger, he could be a Kluxer. Whether or not Mr. Bryan belonged to the K. K. K., he was preeminently a Kluxer in spirit. Mr. Bryan, we are told by Mr. Masters, was not only a Kluxer, but a calculating Kluxer who knew what scheme of tyranny he would further. He was malicious. There was a sadistic joy for him in making the other fellow walk the chalkline. The triumph of the mob over the individual thinker tickled Mr. Bryan as much as a knockout by Jack Dempsey tickles a fight "fan." Not being able to operate the thumbscrew, he advised the use of the economic screw: "Kick the teachers of evolution out in the street—take away their salaries—starve them, and then see whether they still feel like disputing God's word as Bryan has read it."

There was malice of another sort, too, Mr. Masters intimates. Mr. Bryan's religious-moral attitude toward strong drink was helped along by his resentment against the liquor interests for opposing his efforts to reach the White House. There was a time when he believed the liquor question to be one for the local Demos to grapple with. He saw stars and a great white Christian light when he had repeatedly hit the concrete head first and his bandwagon had been upset into the ditch. So the man communed with himself and reasoned that if he couldn't have power in one way, he'd enjoy it in another way. He'd use the tricks of the mob orator and the fanatic to punish his pestiferous enemies—his and God's. And when he had the drinkers settled, he'd attend to the thinkers. He had always hated the thinkers. No yokel could hate and fear an idea more fervently than Bryan. Nietzsche, for example. Wow! In 1908, Mr. Masters did a terribly funny thing. A gap yawn ing (as one inevitably would) in a private talk with the Commoner, Mr. Masters actually had the nerve and the naiveté to ask him if he had read Nietzsche. The face of the Stuffed Prophet turned red, his jaw set in Calvin hate and malice, and he replied: "He died crazy." With this proof that the hand of God blasted Nietzsche for his errors,
how could Bryan read the man? Being sane, by the grace of God, he'd
stick to Revelation and the calm, clear-thinking Saint John.

* * *

Was W. J. Bryan, Judas-like, betraying his Lord for "thirty pieces
of silver?" I wonder when I hear that the rotund and rotund W. J.,
who sweated and shouted himself hoarse in many a struggle on the side
of Adam and the angels, was recently engaged in the silver-tongued
salesmanship of real estate on the palmy reaches of the Florida coast.
The principal industry of Florida, aside from being a point of departure
for thirsty U. S. citizens toward Cuba bound, is the sale of climate and
land: and Miami realtors, booming their balmy acres, subdivisions and
lots, put up Mr. Bryan as a beautiful, pompous decoy—a noon-day
speaker—at $5,000 per each week of six days (W. J., like the Lord,
resting on the seventh day), I do not know what Mr. Bryan's subjects
were. Perhaps he was taking advantage of this unique opportunity to
conduct a Christian crusade—sell mansions in the skies while the Miami
realtors are selling lots that are more visible if not so valuable. Yet
am I sad when I remember Mr. Bryan in this business. It is written:
"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." And Mr. Bryan
was a party to base and unholy traffic in the Lord's property.

* * *

"God is not a modernist," declared W. J. Bryan recently. This
means, I suppose, that God has not learned anything since he wrote
the Bible; that God still believes that the earth is flat and motionless—
that there is an ocean above the sky—that the sun can be and should be
made to stand still for the purposes of pious slaughter—that war and
slavery and wholesale rapine are good things—that the dead can recover
life and ascend to heaven as Jesus supposedly did—that three times one
is one—that asses and snakes can talk in human language—that the
majority of the human race is going to hell. In short, God not only
quit working after six days, but his mind stopped working. He is, if
what Mr. Bryan said about him is true, even more of a back number
than was his accuser.

PIERRE LOVING

ARNET BRAVERMAN, whom I used to know in the old
days in Chicago, when I was a reporter on a Socialist daily,
writes me a postcard from Vienna. In his abrupt, effective
manner this occasionally radical artist says: "On my way to
Munich for a visit, I met a lot of Americans and litterateurs over here
who are full of bull. But Salzburg is beautiful." That settles Salzburg,
the litterateurs, the Americans and the bulls.

I remember the last time I saw Barnet in Chicago a few years ago.
We threw dice with several bums and Barnet lost seven dollars. When
it came to settle up he looked at us in amazement, and asked, chokingly:
"Why, we weren't playing for real money, were we?" Imagine asking
such a question. We all gave him a cut-throat look and he settled up.
If he hadn't one of us would have ended his existence then and there.
And now Barnet is in Vienna, on his way to Munich, after having visited beautiful Salzburg. The lucky rascal. While in Vienna I suppose he met Pierre Loving, who also is in Europe. He writes me from the Wiener Bank Verein, enclosing a manuscript entitled _Revolt in German Drama_, which I shall soon issue as a Little Blue Book. He is going to do several other things for me. He is a good critic and a fine writer, but my objection to him is that he wastes his fine mind and wide knowledge in endless talk about art and literature and drama. I hold that artists should not talk too much. They should be hard workers and poor talkers. Pierre Loving visited us here in Girard for about six weeks last year, and "a good time was had by all." Pierre is a perfect guest. He is always welcome because he knows how to get away from everybody for so many hours a day. Having Pierre Loving as a guest is good fortune, I assure you. But the fellow was always ready to stay up until four in the morning conducting major operations on great writers, critics, artists, philosophers and people in general. All of which is very good, but only about 10 per cent of that wonderful talk gets into his work. His output is surprisingly small, going to very short articles, reviews, good introductions, forewords, and marginal notes. He is too full of good stuff to hold himself down to such limited jobs, even though they are first rate. The man has the stuff in him for great books, but he talks them out instead of writing them out, which tries my patience. But he is still young and there is plenty of time for solid work. Meanwhile he has a sure instinct for the most important people and he is gathering impressions that will serve him well when he comes back to America for real work. He will get over his passion for talking hours at a stretch on some fine point in poetry. Of course, it is wonderful for the listener. I feel fortunate that I heard his brilliant talk, but that isn't writing books. Pierre Loving writes me "for the last two months (except for an occasional trip to Vienna) I've been working on the top of Sonnagsberg in an old cloister next to an old pilgrimage church, a picture of which I enclose. Austrian farm life is not at all like Kansas farm life—no tractors, no threshing machines, very primitive in fact. . . . Well, old chap, you're a lucky dog and a clever one who knows how to temper his cleverness with depth. That's a rare combination. How hard you work to get the things you want, you and a few of your closest friends alone know. I think you are more of an artist than some people think, and finer, really finer, than your publicity lets people know. Do you like to be esteemed and admired outside your public character?" Then Pierre Loving goes on to tell me how he wishes he could go to Paris and "talk to James Joyce, Ford Madox Hueffer and others. I could steal into Anatole France's backyard. When you get away from things, as I have done, you long for talk with self-controlled spirits (more or less). Fellows like Schnitzler give you the courage to be simple."

I think Pierre Loving is wrong when he says I am clever, even though he says I temper cleverness with depth. "No, not clever. Just honest, or rather, a simple attempt to be honest. I don't see where I have ever shown any particular cleverness. As for the publicity about me, I am sick and tired of it and wish it would quit. I prefer to have my character and personality show in my work, the only place in which
it is worth a penny. Publicity used to appeal to my vanity, and I liked it. But no more. It takes too much of my time living up to it. One has to give interviews, and that takes a great deal of time from writing or reading. One has to answer many impertinent or irrelevant questions. One gets thoroughly fed up and prays to be let alone. Giving the interviews that helped make up the article for the August (1924) number of McClure's took about three of my working days and left me worn out. I hope it will be the end of that sort of thing. Pierre Loving thinks I am more of an artist than some people think. No, not an artist. Just a good craftsman, a hard worker, who gets there because he puts all that's in him into the job at hand.

COLUMBUS AND SHAKESPEARE

A MAN in Louisiana asks me to write something about Columbus, and a woman in Alberta, Canada, wants me to say a piece about Shakespeare; and I shall try to please both of my customers in this little article. I appreciate the achievement of Mr. Columbus. He discovered America, therefore making possible the Little Blue Books. He was, I believe, a courageous fellow, with faith and a vision. Yet his vision (no blame to him) was limited. He could not foresee what America would become. All he could do was to discover it, then leave it to the circus, the political convention, and the Ku Klux Klan. Columbus discovered a world: now passed entirely out of his hands and the sphere of his imagination, something so different as to be not at all the same, a spectacle that would astonish and dismay him were he suddenly to become alive. Shakespeare created a world: and see how it is imperishably and immutably his own, and ours to enjoy with the sense that it is a perfect, timeless thing. This is the meddling of fate. Fate has been sardonically unkind to Columbus, whom we must rate as an unfortunate but innocent man. But the facts are startling and indisputable: Columbus, an alien, dimly realized figure in the midst of modern turmoil, extravagance and iniquity; Shakespeare, lord eternal and serene of a world that he fashioned in his own intellectual image and that defies the imbecilities of Time. Thus it is that Shakespeare receives my homage. He wears the authentic crown. Columbus—pity him!—is dethroned and figuratively cast into the outer darkness.

It was a noble country that Columbus discovered: a country of magnificent rivers, broad lakes, pathless forests, mountains towering in taciturn majesty. Nature was virgin and supreme, and the red man's virtue was his knowledge of and shrewd, simple adaptation to Nature. This was a fresh, untired, bountiful land, in which old Ponce de Leon could with a show of reason seek the Fountain of Youth. It was a big, generous land, where one could draw a full breath—not infrequently a fearful breath we may allow, adding, however, that civilization has its own peculiar perils. One thinks of it as a quiet land: and contrasted with the clatter and roar of modern industry, the noise of the impertinent radio, the metallic hoarse cry of all the jumbled agents of progress, the land that Columbus joyfully hailed was presided over by the very
spirit of silence. There was the Indians' dance and whoop; but it was intermittent, sporadic and feeble compared with the shriek and rumble and blather of this proud age. There was the muted harmony of Nature's sounds: the voices of birds and animals echoing musically in the vast theater of forest and stream, the wind in the trees, the solemn beat or placid ripple of the waves, the thunder's unmolesting roar. One could hear oneself think, and one did not have to think of the bills and taxes unescapable, nor of where one should go for the annual dull vacation, nor of how the country should be saved: one could sleep without being awakened by the neighbors or by the telephone or by the 2:40 train. One might, of course, dream of being scalped: and a footfall might be as terrifying as an explosion or a fire alarm is today. Still, one can imagine an atmosphere of great peace and quiet in the country as Columbus found it: and, after all, the chief element of trouble was, in a lesser degree and on a less complicated and bewildering scale, the same as today—that is to say, the presence of human beings. One need not idealize the red man: but he had a certain simplicity and with his hunting and fishing and canoeing and wanderings in the forest, he took life with a sort of receptive, fatalistic leisure that seems strange to us today. He loafed and looked at the stars and soaked his bones with the warm, virile currents of Mother Earth. He was not ambitious; his mind was not vexed by a multitude of problems and recondite cogitations, and he did not sweat and hurry and wear out his nerves in the throng that filed between the grim, frowning cliffs of a modern city. He did not have expensive diseases and he did not have to worry about an intricate diet. He did not have to get out of the way of the parade, or go through an undignified and irritating session at the tailor's, or contribute to the upkeep of the dentist, or witness the wild antics of a political campaign. He did not have to gaze upon the fully developed spectacle of man's insanity.

Of course, civilization is a good thing, and because of it we have the Little Blue Books: and, being children of civilization, we would be lost and terrified and uncomfortable to say the least in the world that the red man knew. Yet, with this admission, one can still be pardoned for occasionally viewing with some anxiety and distaste and humiliation the country that Columbus discovered: and certainly one cannot but recognize that it has passed completely and grotesquely beyond the limits of its discoverer's imagination. Columbus could not imagine the smoke and blasts of factories: the ugly scars and rips and excrescences on the exploited earth: the feverish ineptitude of offices in skyscrapers, prisons for toiling mites: the haste and clangor and peril of city streets: the endless, perspiring, clamant, urgent, hollow-eyed human stream, following the narrow, littered paths of routine, seeking now a little diversion in the midst of universal distraction, trying vainly to amuse itself, snatching at life in hot, exigent moments and seeing the world hurriedly and haphazardly in the headlines of the daily paper. Columbus, though we must suppose that he knew something of human beings, could not quite glimpse beyond the gray Azores the febrile, chattering, menacing mob that fills the country in packed, driven multitudes today. He could not foresee that several millions of human beings would press themselves tightly on a narrow island, hurling themselves meaningless
miles between work and sleep under and above the earth's surface, straining at play as fiercely as at labor: and, seeking a breath of air, pass heedless by his statue. Nor could Columbus know that the solitary cynic, pausing abreast his statue but passing by on the other side, would say, though not unkindly, Why the devil did you go and discover this country, anyway? It is true that Columbus is not responsible for the radio, the traffic jam and the musical comedy. But, unjustly or not, they distort his fame.

Shakespeare stayed at home and with pen and paper turned out a world that is a noble, unchanged spectacle to this day and this very moment of going to press. It is a world dominated by great, unforgettable figures, heroic and comic: a world of significant action, in which life is raised to the last high degree of realization. There is individuality in this world and not the herdlike anonymity of the mob. Hamlet stalks and broods and cries to high heaven: Lear wanders on the heath, tragic and alone beneath the unregarding storm: Macbeth kills and shudders at the unsuitable deed: great Caesar falls, Brutus, vain and stolid—"a plain, blunt man"—plays the patriot, and Mark Antony sways the crowd of Roman citizens with immortal demagogic artfulness; Falstaff philanders and piffers, guzzles and gulls—a figure of poetry and mirth and bravado and withal a deep, designing fellow beneath his seeming simple surface—the most human and unmatchable figure in this tremendous world of Shakespeare's. At one end of the stage, Hamlet: at the other, Falstaff: and in between, all the lovers and villains and heroes and fools—smart, notable fools, mocking the terribly sane—that the heart and mind of man can desire for a world that shall never lose intensity, variety and significance. Hamlet, "blasted with ecstacy," the melancholy-mad young man, thoughtfully sick of life, to whom "the bright, o'erhanging firmament" is but a "foul and pestilent congregation of vapors," to whom man, though so "infinite in faculties" is but a sorrow, cozened creature: Falstaff, a huge fellow blasted with an immense and insatiable humanity, a lover of wine and women and wit, a man of the earth earthy yet with the spirit of a sensuous poet: and, for all his comic mould and manners, with a suggestion of the tragic about him, a man with whom one sympathizes no less than with the noble, soliloquizing Hamlet, a man who "babble d o' green fields" on his sordid bed of death. And Hamlet and Falstaff, Lear and Macbeth, Romeo and Othello, Iago and Cassius, the elegant and resourceful Antony and the deformed, fierce, brainy Richard—prince and peasant, poet and plowman, tragic high-hearted Man and the Fool who is methodically mad, man of action and man of thought—all these pass endlessly across the stage of Shakespeare's world: and they are today what they were when things were rotten in Denmark and Caesar was something more than the leading citizen of Rome and Cleopatra smiled her fatal smile and Romeo uttered the eternal heart of youth beneath a certain balcony on a certain moonlit night. No foolish tricks of man, no freak of the nimble imps of Time and Progress, no crowding and sweating and gesticulating of the mob can reduce to pettiness or ugliness the greatness of Shakespeare's world. Its splendor is not marred by the mechanics of our civilization: its tragedy is not less profound and thrilling, its comedy is not less broad and dashing and on occasion heroic, its appeal is
not less universal and poignant: and it is a world in which there are still cakes and ale as well as great designs and fantastic capers. It is a world upon which you can place the utmost fine dependence. It is solid and real and changeless.

Columbus, poor man, is an unnaturalized American in the midst of the country he discovered. Shakespeare is a citizen of the world—lord, indeed, of the sublime world that he created.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

THROUGH George Bernard Shaw, we are shown again the ripe productiveness that the years bring to men of genius. As in Back to Methuselah we had the farthest reach of Shaw's thought, so in Saint Joan we have the loftiest exhibition of his dramatic powers. In this, his latest play, we see what will undoubtedly remain for a long time as the supreme picture in literature and on the stage of the wonderful Maid of Orleans. Indeed, it is hard to imagine how the picture can be excelled. For Shaw has given us this great historical drama in its simplest elements; he has mined and minted the pure gold of Joan's saintly story. He has wrought so perfectly—has recreated such a simple and true and heart-thrilling Joan—that one feels in it a full realization of the possibilities of art. Shaw has often been charged with making his characters in his own image; but surely no one will assert that he has done so with the Maid. He has simply blown the long-accumulated dust off the covers of history, opened its sickly, yellow pages to the light and air, and it has blossomed forth with the instinct of nature and truth. Shaw tells us, in his characteristic, direct style, his attitude toward Joan. In "A Dialogue on Things in General," between Archibald Henderson and Shaw, in Harper's Magazine for May, Henderson asks Shaw: "Would you mind telling me why you chose Joan of Arc as a dramatic subject?" And Shaw answers:

"Why not? Joan is a first-class dramatic subject ready made. You have a heroic character, caught between 'the fell incensed' points of the Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empires, between Feudalism and Nationalism, between Protestantism and Ecclesiasticism, and driven by her virtues and her innocence of the world to a tragic death which has secured her immortality. What more do you want for a tragedy as great as that of Prometheus? All the forces that bring about the catastrophe are on the grandest scales and the individual soul on which they press is of the most indomitable force and temper. The amazing thing is that the chance has never been jumped at by any dramatic poet of the requisite caliber. The pseudo-Shakespearian Joan ends in mere jingo scurritude. Voltaire's mock-Homerian epic is an uproarious joke. Schiller's play is romantic flapdoodle. All the modern attempts known to me are second-rate opera books. I felt personally called on by Joan to do her dramatic justice; and I don't think I have botched the job."

Yes, Shaw has made Joan nobly his own simply by letting her be nobly herself. He has confounded those critics who, when it was announced that he was at work on a play about Joan, expressed the foreboding that he would not do the proper reverence to her figure, that he was too materialistic, too much the rationalist, to understand the
spiritual tragedy and greatness of the Maid, that he would be witty at the expense of Joan and her Voices. Nothing of the kind appears; Saint Joan is a saint indeed, a true child of faith and courage, in the hands of Shaw. There is wit in the play, but not too much of it; a genial and appropriate wit—an intelligent wit, too, that serves to light up the tragedy. And Shaw is also the clear-eyed historian—thinker as well as artist. Joan’s individual tragedy is revealed as an inspired, illuminating point in the broader social drama. The ultimate downfall of Feudalism and the Church is foreshadowed in the martyrdom of Joan. We see the nationalism that Joan preached—“for King and Country”—as a revolutionary gospel in that day. The scene between the Bishop of Beauvais and the Earl of Warwick, contemporary and prophetic, is history in the very flesh. There is, further, an impressive and significant picture of the Catholic Church in its day of power. The viewpoint of the Church is clearly expressed in the speech of the Inquisitor to the most holy judges who are about to try Joan; expressed, too, without satire, save that which is implicit in the sophistry of that viewpoint as observed from the intellectual vantage ground of five hundred years later. How would Shaw regard a miracle? was one question the critics asked. No point in Saint Joan is so finely treated. It is but touched upon, lightly and revealingly. When the Constable of France asks the Archbishop of Rheims if he believes in miracles, the suave Archbishop, with a mingled air of benevolent Father and man of the world, replies with this subtle but not at all flippant definition: “A miracle is an act which creates or confirms faith.” And if the soldiers believe in Joan, then Joan is a miraculous agent. There is both rationalism and reverence in the remark. Miracles are divested of their supernaturalism, without being divested of their wonder. This stroke is at once deft and profound. I suppose Shaw has a right to his epilogue; but for me the play ends when the executioner informs the Earl of Warwick that Joan has been thoroughly burned—all but her brave resisting heart—and that he has heard the last of her; and the Earl replies: “The last of her? I wonder.” The after-discussion in the epilogue seems out of place, mechanical, worse than an anti-climax—a curtain lecture. There is a note of levity, too, that is in ill keeping with the beautiful spirit of the play itself. And Joan’s ghost is not fine and thrilling as is Joan in the flesh or in disembodied memory. One prefers that she live tenderly and gloriously in memory, and not “revisit the glimpses of the moon” in such awkward and unconvincing guise.

ROUSSEAU AND VOLTAIRE

It is so easy to be wrong when one falls into comparisons. I am told, for instance, that Rousseau was a man of feeling and Voltaire a man of thought. Now the truth is that Rousseau, on the whole, thought wrongly and Voltaire felt rightly. No one who is at all familiar with the life of Voltaire can speak of him as not having been a man of feeling. He was, however, a man of true feelings; a man in whom feeling was sensibly helped by thought.
Rousseau was sentimental; Voltaire was sensitive—and sensible. We see the true, the noble man of feeling in Voltaire, who loved the drama with its great emotional appeal; and the man of false, foolish feeling in Rousseau, who spoke out passionately against the drama and thus aligned himself on that issue with the forces of darkness. The famous controversy on optimism, which inspired the briefly devastating *Candide*, revealed Voltaire as the man in whom feeling was not less, but rather more intelligent. A Voltaire would not be deluded by the selfish, comfortable philosophy—the philosophy of those who led sheltered lives of ease—that “all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds.” He would not be impressed in the least by a Rousseau writing rhapsodies on Nature and arguing that (*apropos* the Lisbon earthquake) if men lived in deserts and not in cities there would be no buildings to fall upon them. It was certainly feeling, fine and true feeling, in Voltaire that led him to suffer at observing the evils and injustices of the scheme of life; and it was good, clear thought that prevented him from trying to gloss over the spectacle with a sentimental or Christian philosophy. He did not run from life; he had always serious work to do, and he could be gay too when all was dark; a bad world, gentlemen, but we must make the best of it. Only to a Voltaire that best was not lying to oneself, flying into the arms of cant, selfishly refusing to see the fate of his less fortunate fellows. A great man of feeling was Voltaire, but he did not let his feelings run into false sentiments. A sharp and terrible wit had Voltaire, but it was directed against hypocrisy, meanness, stupidity. He would not revere what was false and contemptible; he would not shed tears over the corpse of a lie. He was full of sensibility, but not lacking in sense.

**WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE**

**HERE is a jingle which sets forth in a facile, engaging manner the kind of man who bulks genially in the foreground of the broad prairie scene “out where the West begins.” He is the kind of man who seizes your hand with the grip of glad fellowship and declares, “Well! well!” in the booming voice of Nature forthright and unashamed. He is very unlike the man who languishes in old tired cities, and who is bored and aloof and formal; or, if you prefer another version, he does not resemble the fellow who rushes madly about in the brassy, hectic metropolis, with its six million strangers, neither friendly nor formal. This man, whose voice, accent and gesture signify infallibly that the West has begun, keeps open house, open heart, open hand, and his countenance is as open and clear as the sky. He belongs to the simple category of “just folks”—is a family man, a neighbor and a leading citizen—is the very breath and soul of the valley of democracy, where the aroma of the soil penetrates even into the elegant office suite in the midland city and the banker’s lovely daughter marries the fifteen-dollar clerk. He is the kind of man who sits on the front porch in his shirt-sleeves, borrows his neighbor’s paper and knows his Congressman. It may appear, at first glance, that he is the Main Streeter to whom Sinclair Lewis introduced us with**
an equivocal shrug and a knowing lift of the eyebrows; but, while there is an undoubted external similarity, a moment’s scrutiny reveals him as the heartier and more hopeful creature of William Allen White.

Sinclair Lewis left Main Street. William Allen White stayed and became its most popular interpreter—some critics say, its truest interpreter. A young man out of college, eager for the journalistic fray, he bought an unpromising newspaper in Emporia, Kans., jumped into bright, approving prominence when he helped to avert a crisis in the life of the Republic by editorially informing the wild-eyed Populist citizenry of his state that it should “raise more corn and less hell,” and since then has gradually taken on the full proportions and significance of the oracle of the nation’s middle class—of the folks back home—of the jovial, boundless Middle West. Mr. White’s innate, steadfast folksiness, his loyalty to his native soil, have endeared him to those who love the American tradition of small-town simplicity. There is a fine stability about him in the eyes of his admirers. Ed Howe goes off to Miami and plays with the aristocrats. White sticks close to Emporia, and when he makes a flying trip to the East he hands it a few words of wisdom from the West, straight from the shoulder. He is never backward in announcing that the voice of Kansas is, for all practical purposes, the voice of God. He tells New York quite frankly that it is stepping on thin ice when it flouts the prohibitory law; and that the producing masses out in the hinterland may be inspired with an analogous disrespect for the Constitution, which protects the financial fabric of Wall Street no less than the moral fabric of the home.

Mr. White’s physical stability in Emporia lends him an appearance of solid, dependable character as well. As people say, you know where to find him. He has not only a permanent postoffice, but he has a background and a viewpoint that are reassuringly proof against change. Politically the form of his allegiance may change. He may decide now to ride roughly with Roosevelt, now to keep cool with Coolidge; his more public utterances, from time to time, may describe the dizzy arc from conservatism to radicalism and back; he may give alternate aid and comfort to the younger generation and to the old guard. But through all these minor shifts there is the more essential fact that “Bill” White is speaking as a man of the people, that he is reflecting the sane and kindly intelligence of Emporia, and that he is walking in the way of the righteous. His radicalism, despite his tendency to forceful expression, has always been delicately pink and not a little reminiscent of the honest, patriotic Populism that he once denounced. White’s radicalism, in fact, may be summed up by saying that he believes in the rule of the people. He is a genuine Roosevelt-Harding-Coolidge Democrat. He is, one might say, a Republican by conviction and a democrat by instinct.

Again, “Bill” White is never cynical. He does not cut strange “intellectual” capers. He is not a harsh or rabid or Bolshevistic or disdainfully “artistic” critic of American life. He talks as neighbor to neighbor, and his criticism is the privilege of loyalty to the American ideal. When he refuses the demand of his friend Henry Allen, who happens to be Governor of the state, that he withdraw a placard stating his sympathy with railroad workers who are striking in defiance of the
industrial court law—when "Bill" White makes this bold, manly gesture, his admirers everywhere can see plainly that he is upholding the pure American ideal of free speech. It is not as if he had opposed the war. When he tells the "wet" New Yorkers that the law which ordains respect for property may be as logically assailed as the law which ordains respect for the principle of complete sobriety, no one accuses him of subversive intentions or of being in the pay of the Third International. Everyone knows that he is speaking for Emporia and not for Moscow. He is not declaring for the red flag, but against the red nose.

Perhaps Mr. White's greatest appeal is his unfailing optimism and good nature. He is never in a really bad humor, and he has an inexhaustible fund of the Anglo-Saxon faith in progress under the law. He never doubts that the world is growing better. He believes in the soundness of American institutions and their infinite adaptability to the common good. Although he is intelligently aware of the evils that infect American life and threaten the pristine vigor and virtue of its institutions, he does not indulge in lurid fancies nor see with a black, pessimistic vision. At bottom, the American mind and heart are good, the forces of righteousness are quietly but surely augmenting and all will yet be for the best in this world of the best possibilities. Not that the millennium will arrive, that there is to be literally a new heaven and a new earth. White knows the world, and all sorts of human beings, too well for that. The fact that he is not a cynic doesn't absolutely imply that he is not a man of the world. But, if he finds the world a good place by and large, he does not look for an impossible perfection.

But Mr. White is first and last a sentimentalist. He is indubitably American in that. A reviewer stated recently that Mr. White knows the underside of life in the small town quite as well as any of the younger group of fictionists who have seemed to concentrate their gaze upon this side. I doubt it. Not that Mr. White is fatuously blind to the uglier aspects of life. It is not that he fails to see the bad; it is the way in which he sees it. He regards it superficially and conventionally. The bad man in his novels is too simply and objectively bad. He succumbs to drink, or he is shiftless, or he is greedy, or he is hypocritical quite in the obvious stagey manner. And one may add that White has the attitude of the sentimentalist rather than that of the Puritan toward this badness. It is admittedly a preferable, a kindlier, a more gracious attitude; but still it lacks force and genuineness. The reality of evil, its subjective reality, its secret and complex roots in the human character, does not appear in Mr. White's fictional scheme. He paints the evil as romantically (not, of course, attractively) as he paints the good. He regards iniquity somewhat in the fashion of the revivalist, to whom the pecadilloes of mankind do not offer themselves as a psychological puzzle but as a mere wandering from the path of holiness. The sinner must be called to repentance instead of being subject to that spiritual scrutiny which is the business of the true novelist as distinguished from the story-teller.

One feels that the good people are handled as inadequately as the bad people in the White novels. Their virtue is so transparent, so proper, so well-groomed. They lack the breath of originality—not
novelty, not any aspect of uniqueness that can be glibly catalogued, but that original unmistakable touch of vivid personal life that makes one human being essentially different from another. This originality is not to be found in surfaces. Externally people are very much alike, notwithstanding their little peculiarities. One must surprise the secret of the soul—and that, I believe, Mr. White has never approached. The sentimentality that lends a consistently mellow flavor to his romances is not to be mistaken for the authentic note of the spirit. It is all too facile and too typical. We have types, not characters. And we see these types just as clearly, and no more so, than if we were to take a stroll down the main street of one of Mr. White’s little towns between trains. We should indeed observe their motions and their appearances—the tilt of a hat, the cut of a coat, the angle of a cigar, the peculiar one-sided springiness of a stride—but what of the real man or woman underneath these habits and habiliments? Mr. White’s captain of industry, his philosophic shoemaker, his sacrificial woman, his improvident, poetic Southern colonel, his patient, long-suffering idealist, his younger generation that is but a copy of the older—these people do not quite convince us. They are not uninteresting. They are often quite admirable. The soft haze of romanticism, which mitigates even the unlovely outlines of evil, gives us the semblance of a scene that is not altogether unattractive. Mr. White is the novelist of a twilight world that is never wholly revealed in the sunlight.

This sort of writing has its place. It is peculiarly effective when employed in giving a reminiscent picture of days that are gone. This picture, while it may not be true and certainly is not wholly true, is sincere and appealing. It is here, I believe, that Mr. White is at his best. Sketches and stories like those collected under the title, In Our Town, have a delightful flavor of the near past—near but not too near, far enough removed indeed that it is recalled in softened, dreamy, tender outlines, and with a suggestion of sadness and regret, the old, old melancholy of the past. The writer looks backward in these sketches, he is dealing with village traditions, and it could hardly be done in a more affecting manner than Mr. White’s.

But when White enters the field of contemporary reality, he fails precisely because he is a sentimentalist and not a realist. In A Certain Rich Man, for example, he had a great American theme, that of the captain of industry and the growth of an enormous, intricate industrial machine out of the rude beginnings of pioneer life. This story reveals, with an illuminating effect of direct contrast, Mr. White’s weakness and his strength. The earlier portions of the narrative, which are retrospective and supply the simple background of a vanished era, have just that romantic half-light of the picturesque and the gently melancholy, that feeling of the flight of time and of “old, unhappy, far-off things,” that sense of affectionate wonder, which is Mr. White’s fine and characteristic trait as a novelist. But as the tale progresses, as the teller of the tale catches up with time and rubs his eyes to find himself in his own present, bustling world of prodigious change and conflict, there is an immediate and wholly evident fumbling. The novelist becomes hardly distinguishable from the journalist, and one feels that John Barclay is little more than a front-page feature.
White describes too swiftly—suggestively rather than strongly and convincingly—the rise of his financier to power. One who desires a measure of his failure need only read Theodore Dreiser's story of Frank Cowperwood, in *The Financier* and *The Titan*. Dreiser's epic is complete, authentic, vivid. You see to the heart, not only of Cowperwood's inherent qualities of power, but of the ways and courses by which he reaches his position of ultimate command. Barclay lacks this vigorous and veritable embodiment. The picture of the private John Barclay is not badly drawn; but John Barclay, the public and sinister figure, the malefactor of great wealth, lacks the body and the breath of reality. One stands as little in awe of him, and is as little impressed by his performance, as was Wat McHurdie, the little shoemaker with transcendental proclivities. The shoemaker-philosopher, if I recall aright, looked upon Barclay's power as a sham power because it was spiritually baseless and empty. Another, less religious-minded, may view it as artistically without verve and substance.

Worst of all, Mr. White ends his tale with a miraculous change of character, a change that is far from sufficiently explained by the mere telling of it; and by an episode of self-sacrifice that is, from an artistic point of view, scarcely above the trivial. Melodramatically, John Barclay throws the stock of his great corporation (all of which he has personally bought up) into the fire; and then, as the fitting end to a misspent life, he drowns in an endeavor to rescue a child of the people. And the younger generation is happily united to the sweet, familiar refrain of wedding bells.

When Mr. White turns to the other side of the factory epic—the labor problem—he fails more distinctly. He draws, not a dim and unconvincing picture, but a grotesque and impossible picture. John Barclay, the capitalist, was fairly accurate as to externals. Mat Adams, the labor leader, assuredly resembles no agitator or walking delegate or union official that ever wielded pick or gavel. Half-saint and half-fanatic, he is but a lawless product of Mr. White's imagination.

One tends to feel, when one approaches the close of a study of this kind, that one has been perhaps unjust. Each of us is more or less the victim of a point of view; and if Mr. White has his point of view, I have my own, which faces almost entirely in an opposite direction. But in truth I regard Mr. White as one of the most respectable (using the word in its precise rather than its polite sense) of the school of American novelists that immediately antedates the present group of younger novelists, who are engaged in studying American life less in its traditional surfaces and more in its deeper realities. Mr. White has facility, and often charm, of style. His narrative goes along with a lively and fanciful air, and one feels gratefully that he is wholly interested in the tale he is telling, sometimes exuberantly so. He has the journalist's eye for a good story, a broad, picturesque effect, and more than the journalist's ear for a good phrase. Writing editorials for the *Emporia Gazette* has not spoiled Mr. White for writing novels—but then his editorials are far from the ordinary stereotyped product that is turned out by the bale in newspaper offices. Finally, Mr. White does inject
a certain air of reality into his novels. There is an element of verisimilitude, a faithfulness as to externals, a happy catching of accent and gesture, that are not without their value. One sees, although dimly and in the refraction of romance, a section of American life as it appears to one who has observed it at first hand.

After all, Mr. White's chief defect lies not so much in what he tells as in what he neglects to tell. It is not that his characters are absolutely unreal, but that they are accurately portrayed only on the surface. The drunken lawyer who is good at heart, the erring sister who is similarly virtuous under her vestments of sin, the prosperous judge with easy conscience, each no doubt staggers or slips furtively or strides jauntily along Main Street exactly in the manner and guise that Mr. White describes; but the true inwardsness of these people remains a mystery.

Mr. White, to say a last word, has in his own proper person the virtues that he bestows upon his characters. One might say that he is the only real character in any of his novels. He is kindly, generous, tolerant. He is liberal in spirit, however he may perplex one with his incongruous opinions and affiliations; and somewhat of the shadow and promise, if not the full light, of the new day has fallen upon him.

SHERWOOD ANDERSON

SHERWOOD ANDERSON enjoys a neat little joke on the criticasters who superficially "place" an artist, consigning his work with professional apomb to the pigeonholes of schools and methods and influences, thus saving themselves the effort to understand fundamentally the artist's message and the actual stuff of life with which he has wrought. These efficient fellows say, "Oh, he's a romanticist . . . a realist . . . a mid-Victorian . . . a post-Volstedeanean"—and with the pulling of the proper string, pop! goes the artist into his box. When Anderson appeared as a new literary phenomenon on the horizon of the Middle West, there was bewilderment for a space. The string-pullers could not fail, however. They found the correct, the indubitable, the brilliantly absolutely string. Jerk—"He's influenced by the Russians." And Anderson went snugly into his box.

It is true that those who read him with reasonable care gathered that Anderson had been influenced more or less directly by life. It was a thing not easily to be escaped that he had a certain authentic basis in American experience. Happily, we need no longer depend upon conjecture or mere critical impressions. Anderson has divulged with explicit and admirable candor the real source of his art. And, strange to say, the string-pullers were not far wrong. We find that, if Anderson was not actually influenced by the Russians, he was influenced by a similar thing. And that similar thing is—cabbage soup! Anderson explains the matter in his autobiography (A Story Teller's Story) which is running in the new literary magazine, Phantasms. As he tells it, he
was curious to know something about the Russian writers who were said to have moulded and oriented him. He read a number of Russian novels and was impressed by the discovery that the characters ate largely of cabbage soup—and Anderson inferred that Russian novelists also ate cabbage soup. And: "'What the critics say is no doubt true,' I told myself, for—like so many of the Russian writers—I was raised largely on cabbage soup." Then Anderson pictures for us his economic and artistic background:

"The little Ohio farming community where I lived as a lad had in it, at that time, no factories; and the merchants, artisans, lawyers and other town people were all either owners of land, which they rented out to tenant farmers, or sold goods or their services to farmers; and the soil on the farms about the town was a light sandy loam, that would raise small fruits, corn, wheat, oats or potatoes, but that did particularly well when planted to cabbage.

"As a result the raising of cabbages became a sort of specialty work with us, in our country, and there are now, I believe, in my native place, some three or four prosperous factories devoted to the making of what before the war was called sauerkraut—later, to help win the war, it was called 'Liberty Cabbage.'

"The specialization in the raising of cabbage began in our Ohio country in my day and in a good year some of the fields produced as high as twenty tons of cabbage per acre.

"The cabbage fields grew larger and larger and, as we grew older, my brothers and I went every spring and fall to work in the fields. We crawled across the fields, setting out cabbage plants in the spring, and in the fall went out to cut cabbages. The huge, round, hard heads of cabbage were cut from their stalks and pitched to a man who loaded them upon a hay wagon, and on fall days I have often seen twenty or thirty wagons, each bearing its two or three tons of cabbages and waiting its turn to get to the cars on the railroad siding. The waiting wagons filled our streets as tobacco-laden wagons fill the streets of a Kentucky town in the fall, and in the stores and houses every one for a time talked of nothing but cabbage. 'What would the crop bring on the markets at Cleveland or Pittsburgh?' Pittsburgh, for some reason I have never understood, had a passion for cabbages and why Pittsburgh hasn't produced more so-called realistic writers, in the Russian manner, I cannot understand.

"However, one may well leave that to the modern psychologists."

Anderson tells how cleverly his mother managed to get cabbages enough to last the family through the winter. It was the custom at Hallowe'en for the country boys to drive into the village with loads of good, big cabbages, which they threw huskily at the doors of the cottages—especially the darkened cottages, where there was the prospect of rudely waking sleepers. And if a good dame or householder showed fight, there would be repeated catapultings of cabbages. On these occasions, Mrs. Anderson would put out the lights very early and calmly await what the gods should provide. She would chase the cabbage-hurling merrymakers with mock-furious threats; and at the end of an exciting evening, there would be several hundred cabbages to be safely buried in the back yard. And thus it was that, on the solid basis of intensively consumed cabbage soup, Sherwood Anderson developed into America's leading Russian novelist.
ANATOLE FRANCE

I

ANATOLE FRANCE, wise old fellow, is not the man to be blinded by illusion. Not long ago a Communist said to me: "Anatole France was not a Communist when he wrote *When the Gods Are A thirst*, or else his Communism was never very revolutionary." I replied that Anatole France might be a philosophical Communist, or a philosophical Anarchist, or a philosophical most anything, but that he certainly was not a propagandist and could never be swept by the all-consuming, all-destroying passion of a Danton or a Robespierre. As Anatole France is an intelligent man—one of the two or three supremely intelligent men alive today—I have no least doubt that he is very much disillusioned and disgusted with things as they are. It is rare when the intelligent man has not this attitude: though I take this opportunity to say, for the benefit of my radical friends, that it is very possible for a man to have every facet and resource of intelligence, to be subtle and many-sided and fascinating and a friend of logic and all methods of the mind, without being in the least radically inclined. There have been brilliant and thoroughly lovable reactionaries. The fact that a man is not radical does not label him as an utter fool, or as a fool at all. It may be said, with exactly the same truth, for the benefit of the reactionaries, that a man's radical views do not imply poverty of intellect. To return to Anatole France, that completely civilized and versatile Frenchman, if he be a Communist or what not, he is not enveloped in any concealing folds of propaganda. He looks at life with clear, unclouded, honest eyes. He is not dealing in the business of optimistic prophecy. Recently Anatole France has strolled the streets, and used his perfectly good eyes, and this is what he saw and thought:

"As I walked in the street this morning I saw a house in process of building and masons heaving up stones like the slaves of Thebes and Nineveh. I saw a bride, a bridegroom, and their guests coming out of church on their way to their wedding breakfast; they accomplished as a matter of course the many secular rites. I met a poet who recited to me his verses, which he thought immortal; and in the meantime riders passed wearing a casque, the helmet of the legionnaires and the hoplites, the brass helmet of the Homeric warriors, from which still hung, to terrify the enemy, the moving mane that so frightened the child Astyanax in the arms of the nurse. These riders were Gardes Republicaines.

"Watching them, and thinking, too, that the Paris bakers still baked their bread in ovens as in Abraham's time, I whispered the words of the Book: 'There is no new thing under the sun.' And I was no longer surprised at being subject to civil laws which were already old when Caesar Justinian compiled them into a venerable whole."

In other words, Anatole France is a man who knows history. He has seen, with the eye of his intellect if not with the eye of his body, the generations come and go. Today, to him, is, in the poetic language of Omar Khayyam, as yesterday's seven thousand years. But, while the millennium is not a promising present prospect to this grand old man,
it is to his undying glory that, seeing life with utmost clarity, his eyes are not dimmed to its absurdities and cruelties. If he sees the present as history, he sees it, as he does the past, as very mixed and unsatisfactory history. If he is not a prophet, neither is he a sophist.

ANATOLE FRANCE

II

One of the best appreciations of Anatole France is a brochure by Georg Brandes—Brandes, who towers grandly in the company of the great and wise, even as the recently deceased, greatest of the Frenchmen. In that study of France as man and artist, Brandes pointed out a significant, supreme quality of the artist: that in his historical tales he does not impress his own thought upon an age—interpreting the past in deceptive terms of the present—but faithfully renders the atmosphere and psychology of the period that he depicts. For example, he does not make Pilate talk of Jesus as a modern Christian judge (nor even as a modern skeptical judge) would talk: Pilate, a number of years after, has simply forgotten the obscure, incendiary Jewish vagabond-savior whom he surrendered without malice to the mercies of the mob. France had no intention of belittling Jesus. He had no purpose of upholding either the modern or the ancient view of the Nazarene carpenter. It was his sole wish to see the contemporary Jesus—the lately crucified and not yet universally deified Jesus—through the eyes of Pontius Pilate. This reveals also a certain fine quality in the man—the artist reflecting the man.

As the term and its theme are uppermost in my mind just now, I shall call this quality of Anatole France toleration. He could tolerantly realize in art, and in his own private daily thoughts, another's point of view, another's peculiar angle of vision. Lofty-minded, he could see broadly, yet with the artist's eye for significant and striking detail, the field of human thought. Anatole France was a classical scholar, without being less the genuine modern. He dwelt much upon the past—or, artist-like, in the past. He knew history, and the rising and falling of the tide of man's thought and activity. And what better can produce the mental state of toleration than a knowledge of history? It is the man who is ignorant of the past who is most likely to be intolerant. He has indeed inherited the intolerance of the past—the crude ideas of half-formed, crooked minds in former generations—but he fatuously regards it as the wisdom of the present: or, as he might put it, eternal wisdom. But the man who has an adequate (it need not be a brilliant or profound) vision of the past of mankind—the ideas men have held: both the fanaticism and the skepticism of other ages—the curious and sublime and cautiously laborious ways in which the human intellect has operated, in the fields of fact and fancy—the civilizations that have come and gone, the prelates and princes who have enjoyed a glorious day and died ingloriously, the thinkers and dreamers who appear as points of light, reflected in pale erudition, in the haze of history; such a man, realizing the ways that his fellows have trodden, can hardly
escape the attitude of toleration. As a historian, Anatole France was a tolerant, if benevolently satirical, student of mankind; as an artist, with somewhat of the poise and clarity of a Goethe, he observed men with a mild and muteless eye: as a man, he took his fellows as he found them, did not expect the impossible and was not surprised by the incredible.

Anatole France wrote perhaps the best line about Voltaire. "In Voltaire," he wrote, "the pen runs and laughs." Without attempting to compare the art of the two men, one thinks of them both as magnificent, solid exemplars of civilization. Voltaire was more the fighter. He had more to fight—was confronted by a more powerful and personally threatening foe. Yet Anatole France fought in his way, and—let us observe for our present guidance—he fought primarily to preserve from its ancient enemies that modern enlightenment of which Voltaire was the spectacular champion. France was more artist and philosopher than propagandist. He could see clearly the follies and imperfections of a movement to which he himself belonged—to which he belonged because it led in the general direction of progress. He was no less the foe of injustice than Voltaire, though he did not hate it so intensely. He had for it the steady, half-amused, earnest contempt of the master of irony, with a willingness to direct well-aimed blows at the mockers of justice.

Anatole France was the most civilized Frenchman of his age. He belongs with the authentic, slightly austere yet radiant, immortals. Already, before he died, he had passed into history, sedately occupied his classic niche, was a name of names to conjure with. One thinks of him as of other "master spirits": of Shaw, Hardy, Gorky, Brandes, Hauptmann, Sudermann—an unequal or varied list, yet starred with the same magic wand. The literate citizen of the twenty-first century will see Anatole France as a lofty, serene, wholly civilized figure of this our age. He will perhaps see in him the greatest representative of toleration, as we see Voltaire in his age. Anatole France is dead. But the toleration that he exemplified shall not die. It shall live, so that we may live wholly and more wholesomely.

OSCAR WILDE

Two volumes of the letters of Oscar Wilde, recently published in England, contain a number of characteristic witty things. These letters were written after Wilde left prison: one volume covering the short period at Berneval, in France, during which Wilde was attempting to create a new life for himself; the other dealing with the beginnings of his old life under—alas!—far less brilliant auspices. But if Wilde's life, after Berneval, was sordid and difficult and infinitely pitiful, his mind retained a good deal of its former brilliance. And both at Berneval and later, we see Wilde flashing forth in his old gay whimsical and ironic humor. Just out of prison, he comments on certain mysterious hints from friends that he must beware of the possible seduction of old associates, and he says: "I hate mystery:
it is so obvious." Equally Wildean is the remark, in another letter, that "Nowadays everybody is jealous of everyone else except, of course, husband and wife." He adds: "I think I shall keep this last remark of mine for my play." Here is an extract that one can imagine being turned into a typical Wilde essay: "I am going to write a Political Economy in my heavier moments. The first law I lay down is: 'Whenever there exists a demand there is no supply.' This is the only law that explains the extraordinary contrast between the soul of man and man's surroundings. Civilizations continue because people hate them. A modern city is the exact opposite of what everyone wants. Nineteenth-century dress is the result of our horror of the style. The tall hat will exist as long as people dislike it." How one regrets that Wilde didn't elaborate this paradoxical viewpoint in an essay!

Wilde felt that Berneval was the environment for him, that here he could peacefully rebuild his life. For a time there was a reaching out for nobler things, and if his character had been a little stronger, one cannot doubt that Wilde would have turned to greater achievements. But he was too weak. "I simply cannot stand Berneval," he writes—"I nearly committed suicide there last Thursday, I was so bored." The old life called, and he was off to Naples. One sympathizes deeply with this restless, tortured spirit. He writes: "I want peace, that is all. Perhaps I shall find it." Pity that he looked for it in ways that had brought him agony and shame!

He was always in need of money, and his letters are full of requests for remittances. He is greatly displeased by the proposal of his publisher, Leonard Smithers, to print only six hundred copies of The Ballad of Reading Gaol. Wilde sees wider possibilities in it. He remarks: "Smithers knows all about bad wine and bad women, but on books he is sadly to seek." When Smithers at length printed only four hundred copies of the Ballad, Wilde wrote: "I fear he has missed a popular 'rush.' He is so fond of 'suppressed' books that he suppresses his own." There is grief and a keen thrust in this romance to Robert Ross: "I do think you make wonderfully little allowance for a man like myself—now ruined, broken-hearted, and thoroughly unhappy. You stab me with a thousand phrases: if one phrase of mine shrills through the air near you, you cry out that you are wounded to death." He meets some old friends in Paris, but others shun him, and he writes of one avoiding him "with the artificial modesty of the debtor." He refers to a chance, momentary meeting with Whistler: "Whistler and I met face to face the other night as I was entering Pousset's to dine with the Thaulows. How old and weird he looks—like Mag Merrilies!" Of Rodin's Balzac, which is all the talk, he remarks: "Superb—just what a romancier is, or should be—the leonine head of a fallen angel, with a dressing-gown." Speaking of his poverty—once he was "broke" for two days—he says: "It was really like journeying through Hell. I was in the 'Circle of the Boulevards'—one of the worst in the Inferno."

Wilde as a letter-writer was no less brilliant than Wilde as a playwright or an essayist or a talker; but the chief sensation one gets from these dying flashes of genius is one of vast pity, and of the loss to literature of one of its "bright, particular stars."
ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

PESSIMIST is more interesting than an optimist: and when one thinks of pessimism, one thinks of Schopenhauer. Certainly one can scarcely imagine a more interesting figure than the Schopenhauer who is revealed—philosophy and personality—in Dr. Will Durant's essay on Schopenhauer (Little Blue Book No. 700). This is a great study: and just think that here is Schopenhauer, from A to Z, in fifteen thousand words! The reader sees clearly into the man's life and observes the impress of bitter, lonely experience upon that philosophy of despair. And Schopenhauer's view of life—his carefully reasoned rejection of life—is given in a complete, orderly and brilliant form. Here is Schopenhauer in a nutshell: in an essay just long enough to be interesting while short enough to be read easily and fitted snugly into a niche of memory.

Again, Dr. Durant paints the age of Schopenhauer for us in quick, sharp, unforgettable lines. We see the social background, the conditions of nineteenth century Europe, which influenced the thought of Schopenhauer and his contemporaries. The reader learns that the German was not a solitary voice of pessimism—not he alone was crying out in darkness, or in painful excess of light, as one may interpret it. In other countries, other men exclaimed gloomily against life. What of Byron? asks Dr. Durant. And of the French De Musset? the German Heine? the Italian Leopardi? the Russian Pushkin and Lermontof? And what of those who expressed disillusionment in terms of harmony, the composers, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin? Even Beethoven, at last, was a pessimist—"a pessimist trying to convince himself that he is an optimist." Yet after we consider the age, was there not enough in Schopenhauer's personal life to rankle and drive him to that profound, terrible indictment of the world and the flesh and that devil back of it all, the Will? Fallen victim to the darker phase of sex in his youth; estranged from his mother; leisureed and isolated—a bachelor with not too much to do; a sufferer from ill health; neurasthenic; unrecognized as a thinker of any consequence until the last few years of his life: was there not enough in all this to make Schopenhauer feel badly toward life? These questions Dr. Durant asks—and answers. You may agree with Schopenhauer, after all: or you may agree with Dr. Durant, who for the sake of criticism and contrast sketches the optimistic outlines (not the trite and trivially optimistic, however), of another picture of life. Whatever your reactions to this essay, they will be vivid and strong: you will be stimulated as you have rarely been.

There was never a philosopher who wrote better than Schopenhauer: he had clear, compelling ideas: he was no closet philosopher, but applied his philosophy to life. Those who have had a dread of philosophy as something arid and remote from life will, I daresay, want to read more of Schopenhauer after reading Dr. Durant's study of the man. They will find here a philosopher who is real and passionate. This is not cold pessimism, final and forbidding as it may appear: it is warm with feeling
and conviction. Schopenhauer believed that Will is the great controlling factor in life—and force, he said, is but a form of Will. He sees man living, "not in entire forgetfulness," whose ultimate state is the Nirvana of the Eastern philosophers, but trailing always clouds of painful and evil desire, never able to master this Will and stand apart from the demands of life. The Intellect, declared Schopenhauer, is the servant of the Will: yet it may become the master, and in this there is hope. But Schopenhauer's great remedy was death: not the individual death of the pagan philosophers, but the death of the race. Woman, whom he had known briefly and unhappily, Schopenhauer represented as betraying, through Nature's universal lure of sex, the human race to the perpetual reproduction of the struggle and misery of life—this vicious circle of desire, that ever returns upon itself, that is never satisfied, that rages or sighs empty in the fulfillment. A philosopher is misled by his philosophy: and Schopenhauer, who started out by despising religion, came to regard it as a wise recognition of the evils of this life. He thought he saw a philosophic truth in the Christian doctrine of original sin and its preachment of asceticism. Yet better did he like the Oriental religion of Buddhism, with its doctrine of calm and complete withdrawal from life. Nirvana was best of all, and Schopenhauer desired Nirvana for the whole human race. But so long as the race lives, Schopenhauer will live.

THE PRINCE OF WALES

With all its touchiness about democratic appearances, the British public exhibits a strangely inconsistent regard for the forms of royalty. It supports the King loyally—paradoxically, because he does nothing. If he attempted to interfere with the government, he would probably lose his sinecure. As it is, he is an ornamental and admired parasite. A symbol, like Curzon, but not an offensive one. Now, in connection with royalty, we are told that the British public has a worry hanging about its neck that makes the selection of a prime minister look small. This worry is about the future of the Prince of Wales. Not so long ago the Prince had the title of the "most popular young man in the world." He was supposed to be the idol of the British populace. The papers were full, not so much of his exploits which were inconsiderable, but of his personality. He was described as a charmingly good fellow, jovial and democratic, a regular "he-man," to use an Americanism. His trip around the world, to the tune of Rule, Britannia, was an elegant and puissant procession. Without a doubt there are many young Englishmen who are far more charming, more talented, more fitted in every way for admiration than the Prince; his personality is press-created largely, and the fan-faronade about him has been due to the fact that he also is a symbol, and that he would, in the natural order of things, become the King of England and her possessions.

But here is where the worry of the British public has its source: the dreadful rumor has gone abroad that the Prince is cold on the King business. He is not training for the job of monarch—little training as
this job requires. The main dereliction of the Prince seems to be that he does not get married, nor make any motions toward matrimony. We are told that he positively shies at the hymeneal altar. He likes the ladies—but his regard for them is catholic and collective. He likes sport and the theater and a gay time generally; and he seems to have forgotten that he is primarily a public figure. It is said that he doesn’t want to be King. So the British public worries; it hates to see this attractive symbol, this lovely bauble of royalty, disappear into thin air. It has little human sympathy with the Prince, or it would realize that the young man is tired, bored to death. He has been so much of a public figure, has been so frequently on exhibition, that he has broken under the strain. Looking ahead to the King business and a dull lifetime of being a symbol, he turns his head with a shudder. He is “fed up,” as the English say, with being stared at by crowds and hauled about the world for this purpose; he has a fellow-feeling with the fat lady in the circus. This leads us to suspect that the Prince is, after all, really human. One could not think this, of course, when his life was a perpetual pose; no human being would enjoy being constantly on exhibition; when the Prince was being posed daily as such a human fellow, the very pose belied the claim. But if it is true that the Prince rejoices in his emancipation from the front page, is trying to dodge the boredom of being King, and wants nothing so much as to have a good time and be let alone, then his human nature is asserting itself. The British public will support him luxuriously just the same; and he will be no less useful—or no more useless, as you please—than he would be in the King job.

JESUS CHRIST

IT IS impassably strange that it should have happened in Georgia—in the very heart of a Fundamentalist region: that, in this penetralia of piety, the divinity of Jesus the Christ should be discussed doubtingly. The situation is worse: it is in The Red and Black, student paper of the University of Georgia (Athens, Ga.), that I read an attack on superstition, most irreverently entitled “Concerning Trifles.” A mere bagatelle, this, question of whether Jesus was crazy or divine or a good man misrepresented by devotees—or whether he ever really lived. One can see it quite easily in the light of a trifle: but it is not trivial that a numerous multitude believe intolerantly in the sacredness of this trifle, and are ready to commit the worst acts of intolerance in behalf of it: one cannot be indifferent when superstition rules the mind of a nation, is able to dictate stupid and stifling laws, and can intimidate or terrify numbers who do not themselves believe in it.

Trifle or titanic issue, let us for a moment observe the spectacle of John D. Allen (presumably arrogant with the collegiate spirit) belaboring one Mel Trotter, whose name may indicate him to be a peripatetic soul-saver. Orating in the chapel of the University of Georgia, Rev. Trotter delivered himself of the defiant statement that Jesus "was the
biggest humbug the world has ever seen or else what he claimed for himself is to the last word true and must therefore be accepted as true." This is supposed by the clergy to be a "clincher," as, like the triumphantly produced alternative that Jesus must have been crazy or divine, it is regarded as ridiculous and beyond belief. Those who cannot view Jesus as a god are so greatly under the influence of the "meek and lowly Nazarene" story that they insist upon blessing the memory of Jesus as having been an infinitely, well-nigh impossibly good man if not the best of all men. And so, when a Trotter rises and says that Jesus must have reported truthfully of himself or have been a humbug, the critic of the Jesus legend is expected to hang his head in shame. On the other hand, the modernist friends of Jesus come to his rescue with the assertion that he was a good man whose name fell among theologians. This is the view nicely and plausibly urged by Mr. Allen, University of Georgia. It is a theory that is not impossible, and, I should say, far more reasonable and respectful than the Trotter type of fanaticism. The Trotters uphold a conception of Jesus that is indefensible by reason or experience or ordinary, good sense—and if they are right in holding that Jesus claimed to be a god, a Messiah, a miracle-monger, then men who soundly judge are driven to brand him as a humbug. In other words, the Jesus of the Bible, insofar as one can get a fair picture of the man out of a mass of contradictions, belonged to the type of evangelistic fanatic and lunatic which is familiar to us today. He was simply one, and not the only, mad Messiah. It is beyond doubt that the Trotters are quite unfriendly to the memory (or myth) of Jesus when they present him in the crazy light of the Scriptures. Mr. Allen, though he may be damned as a heretic (which, Fundamentally speaking, he is) by the best Georgia circles of Christianity, is really trying to save Jesus from the wreckage left by modern criticism. It seems to me, however, such a very little bit of Jesus that he saves, so tenuous and remote an image of a man, that it is unimportant. Why bother to waste emotion upon a man who, if he possibly existed, fades all but imperceptibly to our gaze into the shadow of a myth? Why seek to build a philosophy or a system of ethics around a figure that is less real than many a character in fiction? Why not forget this hazy, suppositions Jesus? the contradictory tales and theories of his life? and the superficial (when not utterly impracticable) ethics attributed to him? It appears that Mr. Allen, in defending Jesus, destroys him—a very satisfactory result, too. The historical Jesus that he suggests for our contemplation, as a matter of kindly theory, is less real if less crazy than the Jesus of the Trotters. Mr. Allen writes:

"There exists pretty good historical evidence that a man calling himself Jesus once lived. The exact period is not indisputably settled. Very little of what the man actually said has been recorded, and the words attributed to him, the assertions afterward made about him are spottily contradictory. Moreover, there is the best of reason to think that nothing, certainly nothing extant, was written about the obscure Jesus until some forty or fifty years after his crucifixion, a harsh punishment then customarily meted out to dangerous disturbers of the settled order. And of the flood of writings during the second and third centuries, many works were excluded when the original of the present Bible was compiled.

"These are simple facts—one may verify them in any library worthy of the
name. What conclusions do they, and others, approve? For one thing, they justify a cautious acknowledgment of the probable sincerity of Christ. That a man firmly and very insistently may believe what the real situation awkwardly refuses to bear out, is an item of common knowledge. There are, indeed, such things as hallucinations. (And so Mr. Trotter will continue to ask: 'What will you do with Jesus?')

"But it is not needful to assume that Jesus was markedly pathological. Perhaps those who came after have imposed upon his memory. A simple, kindly and lovable man, living the life of an ascetic among the stern hills of Galilee and preaching, in the feverish atmosphere of the rebellious Jewish nation, a not too original doctrine of brotherly love, he was an anomaly quickly to be subdued by Romans with a province to govern, by quite sincere public men with a religion threatened and a society to preserve. Jesus may not have believed in his divinity, no more than in the divinity of Mary Magdalene. He may not have advocated social change by force; and probably he did not. He seems to have been rather mildly than aggressively disposed. But he was out of step with his day. He paid the usual penalty—for the cross is merely a detail of method. And about a meek poet-prophet disciples built up a legend of godhood!

"Yet that is not so very strange. The thing on major or minor scale has occurred again and again in the tooth-and-fang history of mankind. What at first sight does appear strange is that men and women who know better should persist in efforts to perpetuate the Christian fable. Jesus himself, if he could, would likely be first to repudiate it."

Thus presented, Mr. Allen's little essay justifies its title and the subject of Jesus appears no better than a trifle. It is really a matter of indifference to me whether such a futile, pale man ever lived, and achieved a vague notoriety (sufficient to call for the attention of the police), by the Galilean fish-pond. The theory advanced, tentatively and slenderly, by Mr. Allen is a possible one, as contrasted with the wild belief of the Trotters: but still it is only a theory which—at the best and admittedly—is surrounded by obscurity. Again, Jesus may have been a crazy man pretending (sincerely but not the less madly) to be a Son of God: and it is in this light of pathology that one is forced to view the Bible Jesus. But, as one can only by an unconscionable effort of credulity, accept the Bible story of Jesus, why should one even slightly be willing to believe in the historicity of this Jesus? The simplest way to regard Jesus—and dismiss him—is as a myth: not merely as one whose life and teachings were juggled by the jazzy myth-makers, but as a mythical creation pure and simple, imposed upon mankind by the primitive witch doctors of theology. This, I believe, is the "real" Jesus, the "true" Jesus: and any other Jesus is a fancy suitable to the self interest of propaganda. The Christian propaganda of the theological Trotters finds it to the interest of superstition to maintain the legend of the divine Jesus: radicals enforce their appeal by talk of the revolutionary Jesus the Carpenter: certain ethical propagandists, pseudo-poetic rather than realistic, entertain us with hazy laudations of Jesus the "poet-prophet" and the meek preacher of a simple but unlivable kind of life. One may as well look for the "real" Jesus in George Moore's novel (The Book Kerith) as anywhere else. The Jesus of the novelist is at least more interesting, as an object lesson in the psychology of Messiahs and martyrs, than the Jesus of the theologians or the sentimentalists: and Moore is kind to his Jesus—he lets him regain his sanity and live a quiet, useful life.
TUT-ANKH-AMEN

CONFUSED by the present age, with its many problems that seem to have converged to an insoluble point, people have shown a curiously revived interest in other ages—turning from the problem of the present to the picture of the past. A picture can be enjoyed without vexing one's thinking faculties; we can thrill to the spectacle of the past without being called upon to solve any of its problems. To this fact of psychology may be partly due the remarkable vogue of works such as *The Outline of History*, by Wells, and *The Story of Mankind*, by Van Loon. Great events, too, stimulate the historical sense; and the magnitude of the World War, of history on a high scale, has reminded mankind of history in general. Then, under the influence of the universal feeling that the race has reached another turning point in progress, men everywhere are impelled to glance backward along the road that has already been traveled. The excavations in Egypt, while they would have been striking at any time, came at a moment when the public imagination was unusually stirred by such things. Aside from the profound scientific importance of this greatest of all archeological finds, it was with a hearty exhalation of relief that we left the dust and din of the arena of actual events and viewed with a pleasant sense of awe and mystery the long-peaceful dust of thirty-five centuries ago—the wonderful tomb of Pharaoh Tut-ankh-Amen (pronounced Toot-ankh-ah—Amen, with the accent on ah).

A simple catalog of the things revealed by the opening of the tomb is fascinating. The room in which the royal sarcophagus lies is fourteen feet square and very high; the walls of this room are covered with inscriptions in the weird sign language of that day and with paintings that represent the ancient gods of Egypt accompanying the soul of the king in his shadowy journey; the paint has been marvelously preserved, being like new in its brightness. In the center of the room is the sarcophagus, inside it a second and third coffin, in the last of which the body of the king is presumed to lie; precious vases, urns, statuettes and boxes surround the sarcophagus, which is of solid gold. To the right of this room is another room, in which is an amazing collection of objects that perfectly represent the life of Tut-ankh-Amen; chief among these objects are three war chariots, deposited there by the burial party, like the innumerable other accessories of the Pharaoh's physical life, for the use of the departed shade of Tut-ankh-Amen; a box of ivory and ebony is another valuable find.

At the bottom of a linen-covered box were discovered pots of perfume, hardened by the centuries, but which melted when placed in the sun, and were distinctly odorous. The art of perfumery was quite advanced in old Egypt. For example, one writer states that "At banquets a spike was placed at the top of the wig on which was speared a cone of sweet smelling unguent. As the banquet hall became hotter the unguent melted, sending a pleasant stream of perfume and coolness through the wig to the shaven head of the wearer." Paintings abound
in which Egyptian girls are to be seen inhaling the scent of lotus buds. Queen Hatsheput, who reigned fifteen hundred years before Christ and two hundred years before Tut-ankh-Amen, was passionately interested in perfumes and conducted an historic expedition to the "Ports of Incense" to obtain incense trees, oils and gums. An ancient hieroglyphic record states of this queen that "her majesty made an aromatic essence with her own hands with which to anoint her person. She exhaled the odor of divine dew, her skin shone like gold and her eyes and face were like stars in the large festival hall."

Until the treasures of the tomb are completely catalogued by science, one can only hint at the immensity of the discovery. Certain it is that it will throw a flood of light upon these remote times. It is possible, however, to explain the presence of these treasures; the explanation is to be found in the peculiar yet simple views of death held by the Egyptians. They believed that the physical life of the dead continued in some vague way in the tomb. Obviously this life would need to support it precisely the same materials that were used in real life. The dead would need food, drink, clothing, weapons, chariots, beds, chairs, vases of ointment, jewels; and some of the tombs were even supplied with bathrooms. Thus a dead king of Egypt was surrounded in his tomb with the same objects that surrounded him in real life; his tomb was a perfect reproduction of his material life; one can easily see how, in the light of such discoveries, it has been possible to picture this ancient life.

Most Egyptian tombs had a burial chamber, below ground, while above ground was an "offering chamber" where the objects necessary to life for the dead were kept and where the relatives of the dead would bring food daily. In the Pyramids this "offering chamber" is a great temple of many rooms. In the Valley of the Kings, the "offering chambers" were set apart from the tombs—erected as chapels outside the valley; few of these chapels remain. It was believed that the dead king came regularly to this chapel to partake of the food offerings; often there was a false door cut in the stone at one end of the chapel and standing before this door a statue of the dead king, pictured as having just come through the door in his quest for food. Visitors to these chapels, and to the tombs, came not for the purpose of worship, but to bring food. Statues, too, were placed in the burial chambers in the belief that if a tomb were rifled and the mummy destroyed, this statue in some obscure manner would carry on the physical life of the mummy. The dead were also guarded by blocking up the entrances to the tombs, thus either hiding the entrance or preventing any one from forcing his way into the tomb. We are told that "in the Pyramid of Cheops the small entrance passage, completely concealed under the casing blocks, was placed, not in the dead center of the west side, but a short distance out of the true, with the result that the Arab ruler who broke open the pyramid in search of treasure never found the entrance and only forced a passage by tunneling through solid masonry."

Curiously, while believing in the continued physical life of the deceased in the tomb, the Egyptians also held the obviously contradictory belief that the deceased went to live in the sky, "where he either became a star or crossed the heavens daily with the sun-god in his barque, or went to live with the god Osiris in the west." The Egyptians were not
given to logical analysis of their beliefs, but could, in their simple, unphilosophic minds, entertain without question, and with equal faith, two exactly opposite beliefs. This delightful simplicity of the Egyptian mind is amusingly illustrated by the manner in which two gods, whose political conflict raised a delicate question of choice about 2000 B. C., were neatly reconciled. These gods were the old sun-gods, Ra, and Amon, the local god of Thebes; with the ascendency of the Theban dynasty, there came the necessity of deciding on a ruling state god; the Egyptians, with opportunistic dexterity, simply combined the two gods into one god, who was called Amon-Ra. Presto, change! (How many modern problems, essentially unimportant, could not be settled by a similar simplification?)

There is a colorful story about Amenhotep, the father of Tutankh-Amen, which gives us that "touch of nature" which "makes the whole world kin" and reveals in a vivid glimpse the humanity of this ancient ruler. The story is traced on a marriage scarab (an image of a beetle, which is so closely associated with Egyptian lore) which is in the possession of the University of California. Amenhotep was in love with Tii, the daughter of a captain and a lady in waiting at the Egyptian court. When Amenhotep became king, he had the courage to marry Tii, the daughter of a commoner, and the splendid candor to tell fully on their marriage scarab this tale of defiance of royal caste. Tutankh-Amen was the son of Amenhotep by another and later wife (as was the custom, Amenhotep maintained a well-supplied harem) and married the third daughter of the son of Amenhotep and Tii; that is to say, Tutankh-Amen married the daughter of his half-brother. It was quite common in ancient Egypt for sister and brother to wed—another illuminating instance of how each age has its own peculiar ethics. Akhenaton, Tutankh-Amen’s father-in-law, was a king of daring and originality, as he announced his belief in one god instead of many; and this belief Tutankh-Amen, too, held for a time.

Thirty centuries is a phrase that comes easily to the lips; but how difficult for the imagination to visualize this incredible lapse of time! One can only feel intensely, yet with the dimness of an emotion that cannot be concretely embodied, this tremendous, arbitrary phenomenon of time; a sense of history is, after all, a color of thought that is quite apart from a grasp of the mere facts of history. The life of Tutankh-Amen’s day, while romantically strange, is quite understandable to us; what staggers us is at once the awesome remoteness of this life and its stupendous continuity down to our own time. It is a long trail from Tutankh-Amen to Calvin Coolidge. It is a tortuous trail, too, along which the soul of man has alternately fallen into the depths and risen to the height of experience. It is easy enough to trace the events of thirty-five centuries, to follow the tracks of progress; the expansion of the human intellect, the actual achievements of this intellect, marvels that would probably shock Tutankh-Amen into heart failure if he should suddenly come to life, are impressively visible to us. We have progressed materially, we produce and enjoy many wonderful new things; we are more analytic in our attitude toward life; we have refinements of thought and art, subtleties of emotion, unknown to Tutankh-
Amén's day; above all, we have the sense of historical unity and scientific evolution of life. But there are the sands of the desert, unchanged in their shining, shifting expanse; here is life, in its essence, in the heart of its maddening mystery, how little altered!—the same drama of love and struggle and death in which Tut-ankh-Amén played his royal role.

UPTON SINCLAIR

I really believe Upton is the most perfect man in the world. He doesn't smoke, drink, chew, swear, stay up late of nights, play poker, chew gum, look at the ladies or eat anything that doesn't have the exact number of calories which he thinks his system must have. I always apologize humbly when I light a cigarette in his presence. Once I said "damn" and his look made me blush quite noticeably. The first thing Sinclair says when he wakes up in the morning is: "Capitalism, I hate you." When he goes to bed at about eight-thirty, after he has cleared away the supper dishes and put out the cat, he turns to a portrait of Karl Marx and murmurs: "I have no feelings of personal hatred for any individual capitalist, but I do despise the system." He makes an ideal husband. I don't believe there's another man like him anywhere else in the world. When you meet Upton he is interested in only one thing about you: What is your position on revolutionary economics? If you believe in the collective ownership and democratic management of the instruments of production, distribution and exchange, if you accept the Marxian theory of surplus value, if you say you want the working class to have the full social value of its labor—if you say all these things in a good, loud voice and bang the table twice—well, if you do all these things and have the right gleam in your eye, Upton may like you. But if you don't—beware!

SOME TRUTHFUL NOTES ON THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF VOLTAIRE

Among free thinkers, Voltaire stands out preeminently—the most striking, the most significant figure of his age: the Great Skeptic, who with reason and ridicule, sense and satire and sentiment, attacked the superstition of his age until he actually put thought "on the front page" (to venture a phrase of journalistic lingo) and raised the act of thinking into a sensational and exciting and fashionable practice—and withal won for it no small credit as a noble, true function of the mind: who introduced civilization to Europe—was certainly the leader and admittedly the brilliant, supreme representative of the movement toward an intelligent life: the man of his age, Voltaire has generally been called and it is seldom that even a bitter foe of his memory, hating his thought and significance, goes so far as to deny his importance.

The age of Voltaire was imperfect—one makes the admission
gracefully; it was an age of changing values; it was an age that was *striving* for civilization; it was an age, let us add, in which the Church and State combined, and upheld by force malignant and craft insidious, the worst traits of human nature. The eighteenth century has been described, with as good a measure of truth and justice as an epigram will hold, to have been a century in which the best and the worst faculties of man were boldly displayed. And Voltaire, living in that age, did not reach human perfection—or, let us say, inhuman perfection: possibly men in other ages have attained this perfect stage, although we have no record of them; but Voltaire did not—and this singular, amazing failure is still urged against the man. Naturally, the greater his fame, the more readily is the man selected as a target for attack; had he been less important, he would have had fewer critics; had he been a smaller man, a minor and mediocré figure, his weaknesses would have died with him, having no strength to uphold them. As it is, Voltaire is too big to ignore; so great that the urge to belittle him is correspondingly acute; and trifles, when they concern a Voltaire, invite more attention than the whole sum of the character of another man.

It hardly needs to be added that those most interested in attacking Voltaire are the believers in religion; and, whether consciously or not, they are prone to give a very false, a partial or a misleading view of the man. I have yet to see anything written about Voltaire by a religious critic, which conveys a fair and adequate impression of him; fairness to Voltaire is seemingly impossible to one who regards him as the cynical destroyer of hope and faith. It might seem difficult to evade the facts of Voltaire's greatness, power, versatility: that, even if one calls him a wicked man, one must admit that he was a wonderful man: but, even so, it is alleged with an ease and certainty that are quite irresponsible that Voltaire was simply clever—well, *superhumanly* clever—but not profound, not truly a thinker; that he was intellectual and therefore limited, rather than spiritual and therefore boundless; that he was a cynic and therefore barred from a lofty view of truth; that he used ridicule as a weapon, and therefore was the less able to use reason; and even that he depended too much on reason and not enough on faith. It cannot be granted simply by the religious critic that Voltaire, if he had a mind of his own that was different from other minds, he had a great mind; that if he didn't know everything, he knew a great deal; that if he was not able to accomplish all things in eighty-four years of life, still he was wise and strong enough to accomplish many things; that if he could not attain to a vision of the perfect whole of Truth, neither has any man, his critics being among the number who see life darkly and partially—and who do not impress us when they offer their Certainty as synonymous with Truth, when they praise Faith as a kind of higher Wisdom.

So full and active a life was Voltaire's, so many are the aspects of his career and personality, that even the careful critic must despair (especially when he is held within limits of brevity) of drawing a picture that will be anywhere near complete. One can only know Voltaire (as well as one can ever know any man, living or dead) when one has read Voltaire thoroughly—including the twelve thousand letters that he wrote. This is a labor which few will undertake; and one can
fairly if not fully appreciate Voltaire without having a specialist's knowledge of the man or his age. Yet the critic of Voltaire, friendly or not, should at least avoid common and crude blunders; he should be equipped with certain leading facts, facts that are not obscure nor disputed; he should have a general and candid view of the man, not a narrow, prejudiced view that leans toward reckless statements. This much, if no more, one can ask of the critic of Voltaire.

Evidently Edward J. Browne (Philadelphia, Pa.)—the latest reader of the Weekly to write me in criticism of Voltaire—does not agree with me regarding the qualifications of a critic. At any rate, he ignores them and lets himself deliver statements about Voltaire quite freely, unembarrassed by facts. Starting off with the assertion that Voltaire was a "false alarm," he goes from bad to worse, misstating, misrepresenting and misjudging the facts of the man's life. A little truth—a very little truth—is caught and distorted in a mass of error. Mr. Browne gives such a very wrong, such a very irresponsible picture of Voltaire that it attracts me as a well-nigh shocking example of its kind. It is, par excellence, the type of religious criticism of Voltaire that is so often heard and read, and that appears frequently in the correspondence that overruns my desk. As briefly as I can, and having regard to facts rather than elaborate criticism, I shall note the errors which luridly distinguish Mr. Browne's running—very swiftly and blindly running—commentary on Voltaire.

THE CHARACTER OF VOLTAIRE

Facts are indeed scarce in Mr. Browne's letter; and he is even chary of references to the life of Voltaire. He has a marked preference for opinions; and largely he is concerned with the attempt to weigh Voltaire's mental characteristics, his methods of thought and style, and his significance. However, Mr. Browne offers a direct challenge to fact when he says: "His friends and foes agree that his moral character was despicable. He had practically every bad quality. . . ." Let us see how such extreme statements—ridiculously extreme on their face—are dashed to earth by the facts. If Voltaire "had practically every bad quality," that means that he had practically no good quality. What were his good qualities? He was generous. No man who reads the life of Voltaire can forget this aspect of the man. Although by nature a thrifty man, he was free with his money when anyone appealed to him in distress, and sometimes bestowed it where it was not deserved; he never deserted, but frequently helped, his youthful friend, Theriot, although the latter betrayed him on one occasion. He arose from a sick bed to use his influence in behalf of one Desfontaines, a Parisian journalist whom he barely knew—but the man was in trouble, his life threatened by the authorities, and Voltaire saved him though perhaps he was not worth saving: certainly, in later years, he repaid Voltaire's kindness with a mean enmity. Young, struggling writers did not appeal in vain to Voltaire: notably Marmontel, he brought to Paris and gave him of his sympathy and purse. He kept with him for years, until his death, his stupid and irritable niece, Madame Denis. He adopted and carefully educated the great-niece of Corneille; edited Corneille's works for the benefit of this girl whom he had taken under his protection, and
put his remarkable energy into raising a subscription for the edition. His latch-string was always out, and his purse-string always loose, for the support or aid of poor relatives. His hospitality was famous, and Ferney was deluged with a constant flood of visitors from all of Europe. Foes, as well as friends (even false friends), touched the heart of Voltaire when they were in distress. He would drop a fight to aid his unfortunate opponent.

Voltaire's strong sense of justice, which impelled him throughout his life to rush to the defense (often at great expense, not to say personal danger, to himself) of anyone who was persecuted, who was wrongfully used, is well enough known to all who are familiar with the man's life. He spent three years in helping the family of Jean Calas, and in clearing the memory of this victim of bloody Catholic intolerance; and, greatest result of this drama of justice in which Voltaire played the chief and initiative role, he dealt a powerful blow at intolerance from which it was not to fully recover.

Voltaire had a genius for friendship, and a fine respect for the obligations of friendship—even the smallest of these obligations. To name Voltaire's friends is to call the roll of the finest characters in France, in Europe, of his day. Such men as d'Alembert, Marmontel, Vauvenargues, Condorcet, the d'Argensons, Damilaville, Grimm, Diderot were among his friends. (Diderot, although intellectually a friend and correspondent of Voltaire's for years, did not meet him until the close of his life.) They did not "agree that his moral character was despicable." He was honored by his age, and by the best thinkers and the truest humanitarians of his age, which speaks rather better of his character than Mr. Browne recklessly charges. Dr. Tronchin, his personal physician—himself a devout man of religion—was warmly attached to Voltaire. "Longchamp, Collini, Wag niere, who were in turn the servant-secretaries of Voltaire," says S. G. Tallentyre in his very good biography, "have all painted his picture as most generous, hasty, and kind, with the sensitive temper of genius and the forethought and consideration for others, even for dependents, which genius too often lacks."

Other things are, I believe, accountable as virtues in Voltaire. He had a profound, abiding respect for thought and knowledge: and he devoted intense, unending labor to communicate that respect, and the actual knowledge to soundly uphold it, throughout Europe; that he succeeded beyond what is ordinarily the fruits of one man's labor, no student of the man and his age will deny—and, indeed, the immense civilizing influence of Voltaire is familiar to casual readers of history. It was Voltaire who put all energy into the noble work of bringing the advanced, free thought of England into medieval France. It was Voltaire who, side by side with Madame du Chatelet, toiled strenuously in scientific study and experimentation—that the mind of France, and of Europe, might be freed. It was Voltaire who was always working, always writing, always making full use of his talents in the cause of human enlightenment: who could not bear to be idle, who resented the enforced interruption of sickness and would not seek his bed until he was very ill, who had so much to do that even one lifetime was all too short, he thought, for its accomplishment: who had frequently five
different works, on as many desks in his study, going forward: yes, this Voltaire had the virtue of industry, of a tremendous heroic conception of his life’s work. And Mr. Browne, with a complete indiffERENCE to the record, says this man “had practically every bad quality”: i. e., hardly any good quality. Truly this is Voltairean criticism, minus Voltaire. It is the way of a religious critic with a skeptic.

So far, Voltaire’s character has been shown as far from “despicable.” Yet I suspect very strongly that I have not touched upon the circumstance that is most vital (barring skepticism itself) to Mr. Browne. He says “moral character,” and that, with the religious critic, is more than likely to mean sex. And I am left in little doubt when Mr. Browne says that “for years his private life had been a public scandal.” That is to say, Voltaire lived, for some fifteen years, with Madame du Chatelet as his mistress, although Madame had a husband living. If this fails to move us to pious exclamation of censure, it is simply that we do not regard sex in quite the sinful light of Christianity or the Puritan mind or the police power of a moral, monogamic State. We admire Voltaire no less, and the nobility of his character and the force of his intellect, are not diminished to our sight, because he entered into a domestic arrangement that was common in his age: so common indeed that Voltaire’s single affair, to which he held with fidelity during fifteen years, shows him as very much more moral—i. e., less interested—in the sexual life than others were.

We cannot throw around Voltaire the picturesque and glamorous character of a splendid, daring, eager lover. He was a very poor, a very cold lover—but a very good friend. He admired the mind of Madame du Chatelet. They studied together; they worked out scientific experiments together; their association was more that of thought and work than of philandering. And if faithfulness he a virtue, Voltaire was steadily true to Madame, even when she was most trying as a partner—and when only friendship and intellectual admiration, not passion, held him. And as Voltaire was fair, generous, honorable, true with others, so was he with Madame du Chatelet. The truth is that Voltaire nowhere shows in a better light personally, as a man, than in his relations with Madame. To say that “his private life was a public scandal” is to speak most foolishly indeed, and without knowledge of the age, if by the statement Mr. Browne means the du Chatelet affair. He should know that these arrangements were the custom of France in the eighteenth century, and did not scandalize anyone. And they were arrangements, strictly speaking: the husband, knowing that his wife had no love for him and perhaps being himself without love for her, quietly con- nived at her role as mistress of another. Voltaire had one affair, when it was no scandal, and not uncommon, and not particularly immoral to have a dozen. Indeed, Voltaire was far less bothered with sex than many of the priests, who, between prayers and jests, enjoyed freely what pleasure God vouchsafed them.

THE FRENCH COURT—AND FREDERICK THE GREAT

Now it behooves Mr. Browne, after damning Voltaire with such an air of finality, to inform us what bad qualities (that is, to name a few of the many, of the innumerable, of the total sum of iniquity)
blackened and blasted the character of Voltaire. It turns out that they were few, and not very important, and further that they were not what Mr. Browne represents them to have been—although he introduces them with a vivid moral tone nevertheless. Voltaire, says our critic, although he regarded himself as “a crusader for right, truth and liberty,” was so untrue to himself that “he basked in the warmth of the most licentious court in Europe, and his boon companion was the greatest militarist of modern times, Frederick the Great.”

Mr. Browne is conveniently vague. For example, he deems it unimportant to state that the French court was by turns warm and cold to Voltaire; that while the court, or someone with influence at court, often favored him, it was ever suspicious of him, ever afraid of him, and frequently raised its hand against him. Hardly would Voltaire get well into the good graces of Louis or Louis’ mistress or Louis’ minister, than he would forfeit this standing by some bold stroke against the abuses of Church and State. Mr. Browne says that Voltaire “basked in the warmth” of the court, as if to imply that he was the type of idle, truckling, un-self-respecting courtier, and that he was given to much hanging about the throne. As a matter of fact, Voltaire spent few of his days at court. He was too busy, and he always disliked a sojourn near the royal presence, as it kept him from matters that were to him—always—far more important. Voltaire spent years away from Paris, and away from Versailles, and the last twenty years of his life, at Ferney, were passed in the freer court of art and thought that he established about himself; and most of this time, which spans very important periods of his life, Voltaire was in stern disapproval, if not disgrace (for being a civilized, thinking man), at court. Voltaire was in favor and out of favor, and never quite safe. He simply would not play safe. He tried. He was a shrewd, practical man and he realized the value of a friendship at court, of a power and prestige that could in many ways smooth his path and enable him to work at a better advantage. Voltaire wanted to reach a position in which he would be well-nigh unassailable, and at last he did reach pretty much the desired state of independence: it cannot be doubted that, from the very first, the honors and the wealth that came to Voltaire, or that he cleverly obtained, did increase his effectiveness.

And why did Louis or anyone about his court honor or recognize Voltaire at all? Mr. Browne neglects to explain this even slightly, even inaccurately, and yet the true position of Voltaire cannot be understood without such an explanation. For instance, Mr. Browne does not bother to state that Voltaire, and other philosophers of the eighteenth century, had genuine friends of conviction in the atmosphere of royalty: that noble lords and ladies were not wanting who sympathized with the ideas of Voltaire and who, secretly and openly, busied themselves in his behalf. They helped obtain perquisites and privileges for him, and they were active most promptly and ingeniously when Voltaire, because he had spoken too freely (which, favor or no favor, he could not for long keep from doing), was in trouble. Again, Mr. Browne ignores absolutely the attitude of the French court toward art and artists. Voltaire was, among other things, a dramatist and poet—the foremost indeed of his age—and Louis and his courtiers and the fashionable circles dearly
loved the drama and poetry. They were ready to forgive Voltaire a
great deal—any man a great deal—who thrilled and entertained them,
and lifted them out of bad thoughts and boredom, by way of these
charming mediums. Voltaire could make them laugh and cry—and for
this they were grateful enough sometimes to let him come dangerously
near to making them think. They would not, of course, tolerate him
without reservation. There were limits to the privileges of a poet. And
because he was so irresistibly tempted, time and again, to go beyond
those limits and scandalize or electrify Paris with daring thoughts, with
smashing blows at intolerance and stupidity—for this, Voltaire was often
enough in flight, in hiding, or in the shelter of Frederick’s court.

Did Voltaire submit himself to be a mere lackey of Louis’ court?
Did he renounce his ideas or betray his purpose in life that he might
“bask in the warmth” of the court? No; never; not at all. He would
flatter, but he would not weakly or basely fawn; he would turn pretty
verses, but he would not turn traitor to what was truth for him. He
would entertain Paris with a play, but usually he had a bombshell up
his sleeve, which he would throw at superstition, at the follies of Church
and State, when his play had brought him, not simply prestige, but an
attentive audience.

The friendship with Frederick is referred to by Mr. Browne in
equally careless fashion. He does not fatigue his pen with the details
of explaining that the bond of interest in ideas, of intellectual pursuits
(distinctly more genuine on the side of Voltaire than on the side of
his royal friend), was that which drew the two men together. He does
not state, what should certainly be added, that there was at once a curi-
ous attraction, and a curious repulsion, between Voltaire and Frederick.
They loved one another, respected one another, disagreed with one an-
other—and feared one another. That Voltaire praised Frederick at one
time, and spoke less warmly—cuttingly indeed—of him at another time,
simply reveals this strange, dramatic contrast in their relationship. At
first, Voltaire overestimated the genuineness of the king’s noble senti-
ments, and cherished too high hopes of a humanitarian, philosophic,
enlightened throne; but when Frederick showed his warlike intentions,
Voltaire remarked philosophically, “After all, he is only a king.” That
Frederick was a militarist does not make Voltaire one. That Voltaire
stayed for several years at the court of Frederick does not mean that
he thought differently about life or that he approved of every idea and
policy of Frederick’s; as a matter of fact, his sojourn in Prussia was
not without much discomfort and unhappiness; and that he left the
court, proves that Voltaire was too big a man for Frederick.

Mr. Browne says that Voltaire “suggested to the premier of France
that he would spy upon the Prussian king for pay.” The facts are that
the wittiest monarch in Europe urged the wittiest man in Europe to
visit him; that the idea of persuading Frederick to accommodate his
royal plans with the plans of French royalty, was proposed to and not by
Voltaire; that Voltaire—a diplomat, not a spy—was paid, not a salary,
but the expenses of his journey; that Frederick, a professional diplomat
where Voltaire was an amateur, was shrewdly and fully aware of the
mission of his philosopher-friend; that Frederick, eager to keep Voltaire
by him at whatever cost and by whatever means, schemed to involve the latter more deeply in controversy in France so that he would be con-
strained to remain in Berlin (which Voltaire knew, as well as Frederick knew of the friendly approach to his confidence); and, looking at the situation honestly, one sees what value is to be placed upon Mr. Browne's crude characterization of Voltaire as a common, mercenary, treacherous "spy."

Better reasons than those of State made Voltaire's days in Berlin tolerable. It was something to be present at the very private and very philosophic and very free-spoken, talkative suppers of Frederick the Great, and to be in an atmosphere where, said Voltaire, "God was respected, but those who deceived men in His name were not spared." And it was not likely to do harm to the great Voltaire that the great Frederick should write a compliment to France on her Louis XV, and to Louis XV on his Voltaire for all Paris to read.

VOLTAIRE—THE TRUTHFUL LIAR

It has been said that "All men are liars": American patriotism would except George Washington from the indictment: but not even a "worshipper" of Voltaire, as Mr. Browne oddly accuses me of being, would deny that the archfoe of Church and State was capable of opportunistic mendacity in an age when the worst crime in the eyes of Church and State was to tell the truth. As may be expected, however, Mr. Browne puts even this fact in a false light. Quoting Brunetiére—"Nobody in the world ever lied like Voltaire"—Mr. Browne adds that "he consistently denied the authorship of most of his works because of the danger of admitting it; knowing the possibility of their author's being hanged or burned, he fastened their authorship upon other men." This is charging Voltaire with an inhumanity and lack of honor that is belied by the whole record of his life; and that in truth exists wholly in the imagination, unfriendly and unfair, of Mr. Browne. The facts, upon which Mr. Browne lays all the imputation of evil that the traffic will bear, are that on two occasions Voltaire used the name of another as the author of works by himself: a Chevalier de Mouhy, who seems to have been agreeable to the deception, who was in no wise endangered, and who was never really believed to have been the guilty wit and philosophic mock-romancer—for, notably, de Mouhy was formally credited with the authorship of Candide. Voltaire did not let other men suffer for him, nor run into danger for him: far from getting others into trouble, he was more often found in the role of getting others out of trouble.

Voltaire lied. Yes, let us say that he was a truthful liar; that is to say, in an age when exile or imprisonment, if not worse, might be the punishment of him who uttered his honest thought, who wrote in behalf of truth, who shed a ray of light in the darkness of religion and tyranny. Voltaire lied, most cleverly and cheerfully, to escape the consequences of his truth-telling: Then he proceeded to write another honest book: and, in turn, to lie about it. So did Diderot, the most honorable and high-minded, lie when confronted with certain works of his pen under circumstances that made confession a folly and a playing into the
hands of the enemy. Voltaire put his message into circulation, and that was his chief desire. And the religious critic of Voltaire is in a poor position when he urges that we consider these denials: for the holy men of religion, working in conjunction with the "licentious court," were responsible for Voltaire's lying in behalf of truth. When Falsehood is in power, Truth must dodge and deny, survive and say on, as best it can. "It is necessary to lie like the devil," wrote Voltaire, "not timidly or for a time but boldly and always. Lie, my friends, lie." Thus he wrote to friends in Paris, urging them to deny his authorship of a play. He confessed quite candidly that he had a "moral aversion to prison," adding: "The more liberty one has, the more one wants." Again, when pressed by friends to disavow his English Letters and Thoughts on Pascal, he exclaimed: "I will say that Pascal was always right . . . that all priests are disinterested: that the Jesuits were honest . . . that the Inquisition is the triumph of humanity and tolerance: in fact I will say anything they like, if they will but leave me in peace. That "Leave me in peace!" means, "Give me time to strike another blow in behalf of truth!"

Voltaire would do even more than assert his authorial innocence. He would flatter the Pope. On occasion, whether from expediency or from a spirit of mockery, he could go through the rigmarole of pretending to be a true Catholic. Once he preached a little sermon on the conduct of life, in the church that stood on his estate at Ferney. Yet one familiar with the record of the Catholic church, realizing what a powerful and unscrupulous foe it was in Voltaire's age, will not be scandalized that Voltaire mocked and outwitted the priests and the most pompous Pope himself. And, with all his bold and ingenious acting—the deceptions that seemed wise for his protection or that intrigued his cynical, mocking fancy—Voltaire never retreated from his real position, never proved unfaithful to his noble convictions. He was Voltaire, and all that the name magnificently implies, to the very end. His religion was brief: he believed in a God—but not in a God with "human affections" or attributes, only in a vague overruling power, which he did not attempt to describe and which he was too busy and sensible to worship or indeed to think very much about. For all practical purposes, Voltaire was an atheist: he left God out of his life, reducing him to a mere assumption. And when he died, Voltaire was the skeptic still, and still the foe of superstition. His God was still only "a power necessary, eternal, which animates all Nature." He was "resigned," would make the best of death as he had made the best of life. And he wrote, at the request of his secretary Wagniere, shortly before his death: "I die adoring God, loving my friends, not hating my enemies, and detesting superstition. February 28, 1778. Voltaire." Also Voltaire wrote a profession of faith, declaring that he died, as he had been born, in the Catholic religion; and "if he had scandalized the Church he asked pardon of God and of it."

Religious critics call his repentance, and consider that this last dying stroke of policy by Voltaire outweighs in significance the volumes that he wrote in his long life. The motive of Voltaire's spurious confession is simple and evident. He had a horror of being "thrown into the gutter like poor Lecouvreur"—Adrienne Lecouvreur, the actress,
who because of her irreligious profession had been "refused Christian burial, and taken without the city (of Paris) at night and 'thrown into the kennel' like a dead dog." Voltaire did not wish his body to be treated similarly: he had the human desire for a decent burial. And so, as it was for the Church in that day to decide whether the gutter or a good grave should hold one's bones, Voltaire summoned a priest and bade him confess the unrepentant skeptic, not for the good of his soul but of his body after death. Not the Church, but Voltaire, was the victor at the end. The Abbe Mignot, nephew of Voltaire, left for his Abbey of Scelleries immediately upon Voltaire's death; and, armed with the designing confession, he obtained consent from the prior for the proper burial of his uncle the skeptic. The corpse of Voltaire was quickly and quietly taken from Paris to Scelleries; the business was attended by great secrecy; and when the bishop of the diocese wrote to forbid the burial, it was too late. Voltaire had, even at the last, outwitted the Church. Having dodged persecution nearly all his life, he dodged the fancied ignominy of the gutter in death. But, gutter or grave, Voltaire's fame and mighty works were beyond the power of the Church to injure by any deed. "Why bury him?" it was said. "Refuse a tomb, but not an altar."

Finally, in his catalogue of sins, Mr. Browne bids us look with a bad eye upon Voltaire as a man who built a church—arch-hypocrite that he was! "The truth was," says Tallentyre, "that the old church at Ferney was not only very hideous and tumbledown, but spoil a very good view from the chateau. If churches there must be to enslave men's souls, thinks Voltaire, why, they need not offend their eyes as well. I will build a new one!"

Voltaire was not concerned about the view of Heaven that might be seen from a pulpit: but he wanted a good view from his study window. And hereafter let no Christian denounce Voltaire as wholly destructive. He was constructive. He built a church.

A LITTLE STROLL THROUGH AMERICA'S HALL OF FAME

WELVE Americans, from among the sainted or doubtful dead, will be honored this year with election to the country's Hall of Fame. As only one hundred and seven electors, men and women of more or less public prominence and of celebrated or academical position, are empowered to adjudge formally in this matter of greatness, it follows that objections (sound and reasonable ones) are easily to be made. One hundred and seven Americans, of the most independent and critical judgment, would fail perhaps to carry out this solemn and delicate choice to our complete satisfaction. Picking a list of the greatest men or the most famous men is like picking a list of best books—no two judges can altogether agree. Critical as well as popular opinion will find ready complaints to urge. Still more is this true (as to critical opinion) when the one hundred and seven electors include educators, public figures and preachers who seem to be poorly
fitted for the role—whose judgment, we more than suspect, is not of the finest nor freest. Oscar W. Underwood, for example, is not quite the man we should select as a judge of peculiar or noble merit; Elbert H. Gary is a doubtful appraiser and appreciator of greatness; Alice Robertson, the “wild woman” from Oklahoma, is still worse; we suspect the ability and fairness of preachers in such a business; General Leonard Wood makes one gasp—this “wooden soldier” and uninspired drillmaster; we cannot enthuse over the qualifications of such men as John W. Davis, Myron T. Herrick, Morris Shepard of Texas, Reed Smoot, and Charles E. Hughes. In short, the electors to the Hall of Fame are on the whole conventional judges—more respectable than erudite or finely appreciative—and are the kind of judges from whom one does not expect a sympathetic or just attitude toward free spirits nor the unconventionally, perhaps scandalously, great. This was shown in the long and ridiculous struggle over the admission of Edgar Allan Poe to the Hall of Fame. That any one could doubt Poe’s genius, greatness and true title to fame, seems incredible: but Poe had a bad name, and while the Brahmins of New England, the uninspired, literati, like Longfellow, Lowell, Whittier, Bryant were adjudged great without question (though a great deal of question is in order). Poe—mightily and dazzlingly their superior, the superior indeed of all of them together—was crowned with the bays only after a struggle.

It is curious to note the omissions, and the suggested additions, to the Hall of Fame. Thoreau and Whitman are still cooling their immortal heels on the outside. Yet Harriet Beecher Stowe, the supreme sob sister of our letters, is in the Hall. The highest vote that has been received by Thoreau is six—believe it or not, it’s true: only six men out of this eminent assemblage of pundits and politicians are impressed by the beautiful and solid greatness of Thoreau. Whitman has not got beyond 20 votes—while Horace Bushnell, preacher and theologian, stands as high as 42, “Stonewall” Jackson, the praying general, has 38 votes (whether for his prayers or his prowess, I do not know), and one Adoniram Judson, a missionary, is 36 strong—officially outranking the Good Gray Poet by 16 votes. Highest in the list is General Sheridan, who will probably ride into the Hall of Fame on his noble steed. On the other hand, the name of Sidney Lanier has just been suggested this year—and, not being a trite, moral, schoolboy poet like Longfellow, it is doubtful what his fate will be.

One honor, unique and exceptional, paid by the electors was finely appropriate. Mark Twain was admitted, the electors agreeing to waive the rule which excludes any one from the Hall of Fame until twenty-five years after death.

This reminds me that Robert G. Ingersoll, who died in 1899, is eligible to the Hall of Fame. Can there be any honest question that Ingersoll deserves the honor? He was a great American. He looms head and shoulders above such a stuffy, gloomy, uninspired theologian as old Johnathan Edwards. Yet Edwards is in the Hall of Fame, and one can be in no doubt as to the prejudice that would greet the nomination of Ingersoll.

The most flagrant omission from the Hall of Fame is that of
Thomas Paine. It is a shame, a reflection upon American intelligence and fairness, that Paine is not placed by the side of Washington, Jefferson and Franklin. On the ground of patriotism and public service, not to speak of his literary and intellectual qualifications, Thomas Paine has in truth a splendid title for admission to the Hall of Fame. Thomas Paine, indeed, was a Revolutionary patriot before Washington or Jefferson or Franklin had reached that daring stand. It is agreed by honest historians, and the record is plainly written for any one who cares to see, that Paine's pen was equally potent with Washington's sword in winning American liberty. It was Paine who first wrote "the United States of America." It was Paine who, with his Common Sense, a classic masterpiece of political-revolutionary writing, created a decisive sentiment for independence in the minds of the American people. It was Paine who, with his periodical pamphlet, The Crisis, issued whenever the cause of the Revolution was in danger, helped keep the Revolution safely and steadily in its course: it was a pamphlet of Paine's, beginning with the famous words, "These are the times that try men's souls," that Washington had read to the ragged, dispirited troops just before the victorious battle of Trenton—the spirit of Thomas Paine being called upon in the crisis, by the great Washington himself, to reanimate the spirit of the Revolution. It is Thomas Paine who shares with Benjamin Franklin the individual honors for obtaining French assistance in the American struggle. It was Thomas Paine who first suggested a stronger union of the colonies.

Yet, although a leading and noble patriot, Thomas Paine's memory has been beggarly—indeed vilely—treated. The fact that he published religious sentiments held by Jefferson and Franklin and Washington and Adams, and by most educated Americans of his time, has won him the vindictive hostility and vicious, lying execration of the preachers. School histories barely mention Paine: few Americans realize his importance as a Revolutionary figure: yet that importance has never been in doubt, and the student of the records has always been familiar with it. It is no less absurd and unjust to exclude Thomas Paine from the Hall of Fame.

Myself, I am not much impressed by this business of officially selecting an honor roll of great men, this pompous conventional institution of the Hall of Fame. It can neither add to nor detract from a man's real fame. A certain number of votes does not reflect the appreciation of the really great. The most popular figures are not, by that token, the greatest—usually the opposite is true. Great thinkers, great artists, are appreciated by only a few. A Longfellow is not greater than a Thoreau, a Harriet B. Stowe greater than a Whitman, because one is in the Hall of Fame and the other is not. One lover of art speaking the name of Lanier is more significant than a hundred men singing the praises of Lowell. And Robert G. Ingersoll will continue to stand erect at his full stature of greatness, and Thomas Paine no less, regardless of stupid prejudice and timid respectability and the Hall of Fame.
ONE of my admirations dropped in on us—E. W. Howe, his niece, Adelaide, Mr. and Mrs. Thayer, and their daughter, Virginia, motored the two hundred miles from Atchison, Kans., down to Girard, where we received them with shouts of satisfaction.

I like to meet my admirers (there are a few here and there), but for good fun, bring me one of my admirations. Ed Howe is high up on my list, and the longer I know him the higher he goes. Ed Howe, if I may boast frankly and simply, is both an admiration and an admirer, which makes happiness doubly potent. He says he admires me, and he is not the kind of man who says what he does not think. Every mortal is entitled to at least one admirer (as Howe himself put it), so why not revel in him? Why be hypocritical? Falsely modest?

We could found a perfect Mutual Admiration Society, only we would both have to be President in order to keep peace, but that is a matter we could arrange easily.

Yes, Howe likes me (I know it), and I like him. So a good time was had by all. One of the first things I said to him as one writing man to another, was: "I know your game! You are going to write about me, and about Marcet, and the little Haldeman-Juliuses. I am going to write about you, and Adelaide and your friends. And, I suspect, Marcet is going to write about both of us."

He smiled—as much as to admit that I had hit the right spot. Here am I at my typewriter only an hour after his departure. He'll probably be before his little Corona a few hours after he gets back to his roost in Atchison. And thus turn the wheels.

We all strut our stuff. When we meet one of our admirers, we must put on a show, because it is expected of us. It isn't always easy. Not long ago I was visited by about fourteen Freethinkers, who piled out of four automobiles. I met them affably—was glad to see them, in fact—but I had to get to work immediately and put on a show. I told them what was the matter with the world, and how to fix it. And they seemed to like it.

It is much easier, and pleasanter, when one meets a person who is a combination of admirer and admired. Howe is such. So we had a better time of it, for when I got through putting on a show, Howe put on his, and when he laid off, Marcet got busy and put on her show. The three of us kept the show going full tilt for twenty-four hours, which made it quite a continuous performance. I hope we didn't wear the old man out.

Naturally, I am curious about what Howe will write for his Monthly. I believe I could write his story (barring his inimitable personal touch), just as he could write mine. I suspect he will mention a lot of inside facts, for I noticed he knew how to nose around and pick up little "personals." I suspect his story will tell about my shoes and my neckties. He will tell about my fifty-odd ties and my hundred pairs of shoes. In truth, I wager you my shoes
and neckties will take up more room than my Little Blue Books, albeit he is a vast admirer of the publishing enterprise. He couldn’t get over my wardrobe, and Marceet seemed to take a malicious delight in piling on the local color. She told him I have a mania for collecting shoes, and that I neither wear them out nor throw them away.

As for my fifty-three ties, he remarked that he felt such a quantity was in perfect taste and that he would take steps to follow me. Then, after a mysterious pause, he announced that he would not miss his first opportunity to purchase the additional fifty-two ties necessary to equal my store of fifty-three.

When he got through with our house he knew every piece of furniture, how many towels we kept in each bathroom, where Henry slept and Alice did her lessons, where Josephine received her callers and for how long. Howe found out I use the Corona and told me he has one himself, on which he turns out his copy for his Monthly. He observed my Duofold fountain pen and showed me he had one of the same kind, though he had an additional argument that I could not meet—his pen was given to him by Mr. Parker himself. I had to keep silent there, for I was beaten and knew it. Mr. Parker never went out of his way to supply me with one of the pens, though I have said a good word about them in print. (I even put them in my list of admirations.) When I got my pen I had to pay United States money for it. If this should happen to meet the eye of Mr. Parker I hope he will take care to put me on an equal footing with Mr. Howe.

It really is a marvel how much Mr. Howe could find out, and do it without causing discomfort. He learned when we built our house and how much it cost. And that it cost too much, which I agreed was an accurate observation. He got the name of our table plates, where they were made, how much they cost, and when I gave them to Marceet for her birthday. He even said he would mention them in his Monthly, for both Howe and his charming niece agreed they were beautiful, which pleased Marceet to the roots of her curly hair.

He commented on the kind of wood we burn in our fireplaces. I believe it is Osage hedge. I am not sure. But whatever it is, Marceet nodded her head and said he was right. I’ve been burning that wood for years (it comes off our own farm in some mysterious way) and never was interested enough to find out its name—never knew it had a name. All I knew was that it burned, looked pretty, and gave a sufficient volume of heat. But Howe knew its name and something about its history and character.

When he first got out of the car and walked up our terrace, I rushed to him and took his bags in charge. I saw at a glance that he looked just as I expected him to look. He is seventy-two years old and looks his age. He hasn’t an ounce of excess flesh on his bones, his figure is straight and his mouth is sensitive and humorous. He looks like an old newspaperman—one who has worked long and hard, has done some work of which he is not ashamed and has seen something of life and its ways.
I am not very good at describing people. Marcet does that sort of thing much better. I get a general idea of a person—he is fat, or thin, or tall, or short, or bearded, or clean shaven, or gray, or bald, or one-legged. I never notice whether the eyes are blue or gray, or whether they are close together or far apart. I never make mental observations about a man’s head—whether it is round or long. I just don’t see such things.

About the only kind of eyes I see and remember at once is a pair of black eyes. I know Marcet has brown eyes, because I have been looking at them for a good many years. But I really don’t know what kind of eyes Henry has. I have a vague idea that they are a cross between brown and gray, if you get what I mean.

However, I did notice Howe’s tie. It was an artistic piece of work, the kind of a tie artists used to wear in the movies and on the stage. You know—those flowing, loose, black affairs that look emotional. Socialist soap-boxers used to wear such ties, and once, in my teens, I had one along with the rest. But in my old age I turn to more conservative things.

The tie is the one thing that is different about Howe. It is nice to see it around his neck. It looks good, because it sets him off. I shouldn’t care to follow him in this, but I can appreciate originality when I see it. It is an easy-going tie worn by a hard-working, but easy-going artist in words. It is a light touch, like irony. Howe uses it both in his clothes and his writings—not too much of it, but enough of it to touch things off.

The first thing he said to me on the terrace was: “You’ve got a classy house here, and you yourself are absurdly young.” Turning to his niece and the Thayers, he asked: “Isn’t Mr. Haldeman-Julius absurdly young?” They all nodded their heads and agreed that I am absurdly young. I like to be absurdly young.

“How old are you?” he asked. The man started finding out things before he even crossed our threshold. “Thirty-six?” he repeated. “How absurdly young!”

Marcet joined us. He took both our hands and remarked something about the nifty floor tile and then: “You are both children—absurdly young—mere boy and girl. I like you both.” That was his greeting and we were at home from the beginning. It is not the usual thing for hosts to feel at home in their own home when entertaining guests. I have noticed this before. One’s home becomes strange and distant when one has certain kinds of guests. But Howe did not make us feel that way. He made us expand several notches.

We chatted a while in the sun-room. He called attention to the overstuffed couch, the bird cages and the dog’s long head. Then he said he wanted to see the plant where the Little Blue Books are made. We drove down and I guided them through the numerous departments, explaining things as we went along. Howe, an old-time printer and publisher, knows a lot about the industry, but I believe I managed to show him a few things that were new to him. He was loud in his praise for the plant, found out how much money I took in, how many employees I have and what I paid for certain
presses. He saw everything and said many nice things. He sees
the importance of these little volumes and he is proud of their
success. A man likes to see his work appreciated.

Then we came back to the house, where I took him in my
library. It took him ten minutes before he finished inspecting every
nook and notch. He estimated the number of books on my shelves,
and, seating himself in a large and inviting chair, he began to talk
about books. A great reader, though he doesn't seem to know it,
he complained that he had to do his reading all over again each
spring, because he would forget what he had read. "If I could
remember everything I've read during the past sixty years I would
be the smartest man in all history. I would know everything. But
I forget."

I explained that it may be he really does not forget. He writes
a great deal, and, like a battery, he draws on his impressions for his
writings. They get into his work, where they belong. So why keep
them in his head? A selective worker doesn't try to remember every-
thing he learns; he uses it and then puts it aside for something else,
which in turn will be pigeonholed after it has been transferred from
his mind to his typewriter. He thought a moment and then muttered
something to the effect that there might be something in this, though he
wasn't sure.

Howe, like all good workers, knows the value of his work. He
is not a child who doesn't know what his hands have made. He
is not afflicted with a false and fatuous modesty—a lack I admire
in him. If it is good, rest assured Howe will know about it, even
though he did it himself. And he will not hesitate to tell you about
it in a simple, direct manner that will win you over to his fetching
frankness. It isn't conceit any more than it is modesty; it is an
old, experienced workman criticizing something he knows about. A
first rate worker does not need to employ critics to tell him his
work is good; if he is a good workman he will know this himself
without being told. Howe knows his work. He told me, in a
manner that seemed impersonal, that he felt that he was doing
better writing now than ever he did in all the decades he has given
to the craft of the penman. I agreed with him wholeheartedly and
told him quite minutely why I thought so. He listened carefully
and was not displeased with my friendly estimate of his work—an
estimate that was sincere and honest.

I am not trying to write a formal essay on Mr. Howe. Life is
not an orderly affair. I meet a man, we talk and live together for
a few hours, a few days, or even years—we live in snatches, and we
catch our impressions on the wing. I am jotting these random
reflections down as they come to mind. Imagine yourself at my
side, listening to me talk about this delightful and extraordinary
character, "the Sage of Potato Hill." A formal essay would spoil
my material. The best way to write about chatter and patter is a
pattering style. That is why I am wandering aimlessly in this
manner. I hope my readers have followed me this far.

But to return to the library. I know I cannot catch the raciness
of his talk, his original expressions, his quaint observations, his
colorful speech. Here is a remark I remember: "Did you ever notice how blind a man is on his blind side?" Here is another: "All men lie so much that I just tell the truth for the novelty of it." And: "Did you ever notice how many dull people there are in the world?" Some more: "Of late I notice that women are taking to kissing me, which shows I am harmless at last, with one foot in the grave. Their kisses are attempts to shove me over." "I am the only man who has ever been praised by both Dr. Frank Crane and H. L. Mencken." "When I started publishing The Aitchison Globe if I'd lost three dollars at any one time I'd have gone broke; now my son is running a paper in Amarillo, Texas, where he is losing three thousand dollars a month and having a great success."

Then Mr. Howe began telling me about his lecturing. With pardonable pride and convincing emphasis he told me how he had delivered one talk in Chicago, for which he had been paid $600, followed by another talk in Iowa the next day, for which he received a check for $200. I know he got it, because he opened his wallet and showed me the check, duly signed by the officers of the association before which he delivered his talk.

My eyes opened wide. "Congratulations, Mr. Howe," I exclaimed. "I have quit talking in public—for good, I believe, because I found it cost me days of my time and at least a hundred dollars for each speech. I got tired of paying people to hear me talk."

"It used to be that way with me, but now in my old age things are working out the other way."

"Don't deliver too many speeches," I advised him. "Your job is to write."

"I'm to talk in Florida this winter, for which I'll receive a thousand dollars."

"That argument is unanswerable. Go ahead and talk."

The subject switched to his memoirs upon which he is working for The Saturday Evening Post. "I'm trying to tell the truth," he said. "It's hard for one to write the truth about himself. All biographies and autobiographies are usually a batch of lies. Take Cellini—he wrote a lot of things that were true but an awful mess of lies. Did you notice that he was never beaten? He always won. No man always wins. Cellini was a liar. The usual story of a man's life begins by telling about his mother's nobility and his father's greatness. I can't do that, because my father wasn't a great man. I'll have to tell the truth about him. He was a preacher and edited a little weekly. My job was to set two columns of type a day—a real day's work—or take a licking that night. Let me tell you about the time the circus came to town. My father not only said that I could not go but began to bawl out the circus as a demoralizer. He wrote columns about the terrible, immoral circus, advising the people of the county to stay away. He was just that narrow. Of course, when the circus came the people turned out by the thousand. They had the biggest crowd that ever showed up in our section. All because of my father's moralizing.

"But he was determined to keep me from the circus, and
promised me a whipping if I went. I went. Not only did I stay away from the shop in the afternoon, but as I knew I was to get a licking anyway, I stayed away for the night show. During the night show two clowns got off a gag about my father. They bawled him out for being so good that he wouldn’t accept the advertisement of a circus because it was so immoral. Imagine such a thing. And the crowd howled with delight.

“When I got home—I waited until the circus got loaded and left town—it was after midnight. I saw a dim light and knew my father was waiting for me to give me my whipping. It was coming to me, so I went into the house through the back door and let him see me. He looked up at me and said: ‘You’ve been to the circus.’ I said I had. ‘Did you like it?’ I lied, saying I thought it hadn’t been so good, that I really hadn’t liked it—much. He then asked me if anything had been said about him at the circus. Then I got a great idea. It came to me like a flash from heaven. I decided to make the most of it.

‘Yes,’ I said, ‘they did mention you.’ ‘What’d they say?’ ‘The clowns started abusin’ you for abusin’ the circus, saying you were too good to even take a circus advertisement for your paper.’ ‘Then what happened?’ ‘The sheriff he got down from his place and rushed out in front and started to yell that he wouldn’t stand for a great and good man like Mr. Howe being abused, that you was one of the finest men that ever lived and that this here community would go to ruin if you wasn’t here among us to lead us in the right direction away from sin and wrong. And the crowd just yelled and yelled for you and said the sheriff was right and that the clown had no right abusin’ you that way and that they wouldn’t stand for it anyway. And then the clowns quit their abusin’ for they was afraid of the anger of the crowd. They all showed themselves to be your friends and that they liked you for being a kind and good man.’ The old man said to that: ‘Well, we gotta lot o’ typesettin’ tomorrow—run along to bed.’ Seems he forgot the whipping he’d promised me!”

At about six o’clock the editors began coming in. We had sent out invitations to a number of country editors, in honor of Mr. Howe. This was the Sage’s first visit to southeastern Kansas and the small town editors were anxious to see the dean of all Kansas editors and writers. One was Mr. George W. Marble, editor of the *Fort Scott Tribune*, a good paper edited by a first-rate man. Mr. Marble is the best type of small town editors. The editors came from near and far, some of them from about fifty miles away. Ed Howe likes country editors and they love him. Marcut, assisted by Cora, our new and capable cook, outdid himself. The dinner was a masterpiece, and for a while conversation lagged dismally while the hungry penmen stowed away the victuals.

Every time Howe tasted a new dish he would burst into loud and enthusiastic praise. “This is a masterpiece!” he would exclaim, and Marcut would beam. The expert’s report would be carried into the kitchen by courier, where good will raged.

Dinner over: I got up and spoke briefly about our great guest,
the best man of us all. I spoke of his splendid craftsmanship—a really good writer who took an impish delight in spoofing literary men. I told how I did not understand how he could everlastingly praise business men and belittle writing men. It was admitted that men in business serve useful ends, and that we could, if necessary, get along without penmen, but what kind of a world would this be if we were to be deprived of our Ed Howes? I granted that there is a great deal of bunk about writing, particularly the jargon of the critics. But writers who draw on life, who tell the truth, who are honest with themselves and the world—such men are needed.

I told about Howe's simplicity, his candor and his humor. Then I introduced Mr. Marble, who spoke for the country editors, welcoming Howe to this part of the State. Mr. Marble made a short, good-natured talk, which we all liked, and when he was through I got up again and said we were ready for Mr. Howe to growl, grumble, complain, allege, advise and meander, not forgetting to make us laugh, for we did want to laugh.

Mr. Howe was in delightful form, and he went at it for almost an hour, entertaining us with amusing anecdotes, laughable incidents of our beloved profession, with numerous reflections on the passing parade of life. It was a good talk and we enjoyed it to the last word. It was intimate, informal and amusing. What more could one expect?

One thing particularly impressed the editors present. Mr. Howe proceeded to debunk the personals that clutter up most of our smaller papers. He analyzed them, showing how dull and forbidding they are, and that editors could make no mistake in throwing them out. This came as a revelation to many of our guests, for small town editors have come to look on their endless columns of personals as sacred institutions.

Ed Howe's Monthly comes to my desk regularly. It is the one periodical over which Marcet and I quarrel. Neither can wait patiently until the other finishes with it. I told Mr. Howe about this and he took it as a great compliment, which it was. He told me he wrote all his copy for the Monthly directly on his machine and that he made few corrections. In this, we work practically the same way. He writes only when he feels like it, but as he writes a great deal it follows that he must feel like working most of the time. He jots down his notes of idle curiosity as they come to him, using the notes for further elaboration when he gets back to his workroom.

Ed Howe has not a great audience of readers. He doesn't try to work up circulation. Unlike me, he refuses to send out circulars. He doesn't advertise. He accepts subscriptions, but they must come from readers who want his paper without any particular urging on the editor's part. His job of writing his entire Monthly is a labor of love. He has made his money and now writes his reflections for his personal satisfaction, independent of what the readers think about it. If any reader gets offensive and writes him a troublesome and annoying letter, he doesn't argue with him.
—he sends back his money and informs him that he doesn’t care to continue him as a reader. I know of no other editor who does this. I fight with my readers; I insult them; but I never send back their money. Howe lets them know that he is boss of his own paper and that his readers are to take just what he cares to give them, and nothing else. Howe knows from long experience how readers like to boss editors. Most editors knuckle down to them, catering to their whims, their prejudices, their notions, their foolish ideas and their all round boneheadedness. Howe is above such pandering. The reader’s job is to read what Mr. Howe writes, not to tell him what to say or what not to say. In this Howe is perfectly right, and I am in complete accord with him. I try always to let my readers know that I welcome their opinions, but they cannot expect me to be tyrannized by them. I, like Howe, want to be boss of my own paper. The only difference between us in this matter is that Howe sends back their money, while I keep it.

In his quiet way, Ed Howe keeps up a running fire against the church and religion. One frequently comes upon paragraphs in his Monthly—pieces that speak frankly about the church quacks. Mr. Howe is a Freethinker. He has always preached a simple code of morality—behave yourself, work hard, save your money, don’t get drunk, don’t steal, mind your own business, be kind and have pity, do not lie or deceive—a simple, workable morality that is intended for this life and this world, without threats of punishment in the hereafter. His morality is the code of common decency and honor, not the morality of a religion based on supernaturalism and rewards and suffering in a heaven or a hell. Not a god in the sky, but man with his feet on the earth has worked out this morality. That is why I spoke of him, when I introduced him to the Kansas editors, as a Kansas Confucius. “My father was a preacher,” he said to me, while in my library, “and I have always heard religion preached. I feel about religion this way: If the best minds of the world, the thinkers and the scientists, decide that religion is a failure and that it won’t work, that it is full of bunk, then the sensible thing for us to do is to throw it out.”

A little later we began talking about agnosticism. He admitted that he didn’t like the people who always said “I don’t know.” “I know about this life we are living,” he said.

“True,” I broke in, “but you do not know about the creation of Life, nor do you know about the hereafter, whether there is a God, or a soul, or immortality.”

“I do know about an after-life,” he said, emphatically a humorous gleam in his eyes. I pricked up my ears. “There isn’t any!”

“We are agreed,” I added, laughing. “We know that the preachers know nothing, and when they say they know, they lie like hell.” In the back of my head I knew that I was quoting Ingersoll in some manner, but I did not stop to try to figure out just how.

There is a great deal about Ed Howe that I like (as even a
casual reading of this issue will show) but one thing particularly admirable is his position on the late World War. He has written in his Monthly about Mr. Wilson's private war, so when I had my first chance I got him to talk about our recent blood bath.

Howe told me that in his opinion there was not a single reason why we should have gone into that crazy house in Europe. It was the most criminal act in history that Wilson committed when he set the stage for our entrance into the slaughterfest. Wilson was a demagogue, a hypocrite and a mass murderer. He was a liar and a scoundrel. It is a blessing that he is no longer able to rule us.

The war was a gigantic swindle. We were lied into it by Wilson, Page, Northcliffe and every profiteer that wanted to line his pockets. We were propagandized, hypnotized, browbeaten, threatened, enslaved and bunked into the war. We had no business going into it on either side. We should have let them fight it out, which, of course, would have meant a great victory for Germany. Had Germany won the war the world could not have been so badly off as it has been as a result of the victory of the pirate Allies. The Germans are an orderly, practical, constructive, intellectual, cultured people. They are far superior to the English and the French, who deluded us into fighting their battles. The French particularly are a parasitic people, anxious to live without doing productive work, looking forward to a Utopia in which others will do their work for them.

Howe says, and I agree with him, that another Wilson could come along tomorrow and get us to go through the same paces. We never learn by experience. We are always ready to be misled and deceived by any glib-tongued mountebank and charlatan of the Wilsonian caliber. We have learned absolutely nothing from our ghastly war experience. If anything, we are more stupid. So expect the same tragic farce to be played all over again—with the same lies, the same propaganda, the same brutality and the same hypocrisy.

The world is full of fools. And so long as the world is loaded with simpletons, expect its Wilsons and its Pages to use that bone-headedness to their own ends.

ANATOLE FRANCE IN SKULL CAP AND DRESSING GOWN

ANATOLE FRANCE was privileged to wear the academic cap and gown and awe lesser mortals with the regalia of genius officially recognized. He preferred to a formal public glory the very private freedom of his skull cap and dressing gown, in which he could be unconventional and cynical and witty and truthful—in short, wholly himself. Genius is apt to be talkative. It talks best to an intimate or when a few understanding, agreeable spirits listen. The charm and the significance of an Anatole France are not in the views and the rhetoric that are deliberately and deftly arranged to satisfy the worship of admirers,
crowding into the great man's study and hanging on every word. Infinitely more delightful is France talking in a random, sincere flow of thought, light and profound as the mood happens: and always profoundly light or lightly profound.

Free as his writings are (and Anatole France, in any appearance, is not for the shallow and timid and mentally enslaved), they do not match the bold, gay, dashing freedom of his talk. He wrote for the world. He posed for that unescapable circle which addressed him as Master and demanded lofty, exhibitory speech of the Immortal. He talked, with the audacity of genius, for his secretary, who, with a skill that would have drawn praise from the Master, has revealed to us the Anatole France of mocking skull cap and whimsical dressing gown.* There has been no more genuine conversation (and no more brilliant) preserved in the printed page. He spoke with no considerative or checking thought of the public or posterity.

He was momentarily severe with M. Brousse when he learned that his talk was going directly into a notebook. On a day at dinner, he flew the storm signal of courtesy—as usual, expressing his displeasure in a scrupulous and extreme politeness. ("Take some more of this chicken, my friend. It is delicious. It is worthy of you. Would you have the great kindness to pass me the mustard?") Thus France, full-armed to delicately destroy. He exclaims: "What pleasure can you find in picking up the careless words that trickle down my old beard? A sadly perverted taste." The secretary defends himself. He has courage. He is candid. "I share a banquet fit for kings," he says; "it is only charity to pick up the crumbs for the poor who are outside—for posterity." Posterity? "It is you. It is I. It is Madame. We are all some one's posterity." At any rate, M. Brousse will please see to it that the drippings of this honored but indiscreet beard are saved for what he calls posterity. The Master craves peace, and reminiscences of youth and love, in his last years: he does not wish to argue or to quarrel, but simply to meditate aloud without hindrance. "When I am under the sod, make me say whatever you will. Now, it would be indiscretion. Then, it will be erudition."

It is the indiscretion of the erudition that appeals to us—the frankness of it—the spontaneity of it—the undisguised Anatole France of it. It is not that Anatole France lived a double life; that he had one philosophy for the world, and another for his study and bed chamber; for, seen from any point, France was the skeptic and the rebel and the free thinker. But when he talks, eruditely and formally, in the role of Master (a term of adulation that he dislikes, and which he interprets to mean, "You poor old pedant, your chatter is sheer drivel! Mere head-wagging! Tedium redundancy! You think you're the equal of the gods. Then don't delay in this low world. You have lasted long enough. It's high time to make place for the young.")—when he talks for the curious groups which gather in his "den transformed into a medieval gallery" as before.

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*ANATOLE FRANCE HIMSELF, by his secretary, Jean Jacques Brousse; published by J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia and London.
a shrine, Anatole France is less himself than the actor for his audience: a good actor, of course, and an honest actor, but not the man whom we see and hear with the greatest delight. Those who admire genius will force it into a pose, although it is more admirable without the pose. "The fact is that the illustrious author had two kinds of conversation, one for show purposes, the other for private." His showy conversation was rare and magnificent, but it "could be classified like pieces of music." It was art, not the artlessness of talk inspired freshly by the moment. We read with a smile, of appreciation and amusement, of the Master's manner when surrounded by devotees greedy, not for careless drippings, but for careful distillations:

"Those who are frequent spectators could easily foretell from the first selection what was coming. Some edifying tale of lily-white purity from the 'Golden Legend' would lead by antithesis to the blackguardly prowess of Casanova. This celebrated libertine takes us to Italy, where we meet with Vasari and the great painters at the Grand Duke Cosimo's. There will be anecdotes about Benvenuto Cellini and Michael Angelo, and the recitation of a sonnet by Barbier on the latter.

'Sad was thy visage, wasted thy forehead.'

When France reaches the last lines:

'Slowly didst thou die, full of glory and of grief—'

he seems deeply moved and blows his nose. There is a short entr'acte for applause. The spectators uncross their legs.

"Now we are in Rome in the era of Marcus Aurelius, then in that of Rene the diplomat under Cardinal Fesch. We are present with Chateaubriand at Madame de Beaumont's deathbed. Thence we dash back post-haste to Paris in time to throw ourselves at the feet of Madame Recamier at the Abbaye-aux-Bois. A certain physical imperfection in this divine creature brings the conversation back with a jump to the Maid of Orleans, who, it seems. . . . And this goes on as long as you like or, rather, as long as Madame likes. She plays upon Anatole France as upon a spinet. It is enough to murmur certain names—Chateaubriand, Hugo, Corneille, Rodin—to set him going. These show conversations are the delight of paragraphists and journalists short of copy. However the wind blows, whatever the banner under which they are ranged, they always—since the Master professes every opinion by turn and all with equal fire—find something to keep the pot boiling."

This is Anatole France dressed and displayed, filling only too well, only too perfectly, his role of Immortal for those who gappingly hold incense before the man who does not wish to be an "old idol." Anatole France, himself, is quite different. He is not less erudite, but he is more human, more vivid with the glow and accent of life. He "knows very little of the real Anatole France" who does not know him as the talked for talk's sake and without any proper, punctilious purpose. We prefer readily this other, undirected, unstaged kind of conversation.

"It is laborious, uneasy, grating, breathless, discordant, full of contradictions and of what painters call 'repentances' with—'Don't you think so?—All the same—It's possible that—You must not think—After all, we mustn't exaggerate—No doubt that is true, but so is the contrary—' This conversation, full of intellectual confidences, is the exact opposite of the 'official' fireworks. If it lacks the majesty of the latter, at least it escapes its monotony. You never know where he will go next: no more does he. But he does not care to indulge in this style with chance acquaintances. One person is enough to make his audience, a part, moreover, which is easy to play. Almost
all the time it is a soliloquy. Anything will do as a starting-point: some trivial remark on a visitor or a woman passing by, some phrase culled from the papers or a book, the name of some public man or woman of fashion, a curio bought the day before or awaiting purchase.

M. Brousson permits us to see the Anatole France who had no gesture of nice, meticulous reverence for sham; who enjoyed as an artist the beautiful relics of Catholic superstition, but who regarded religion as a disease like diabetes; who spoke disrespectfully of his contemporaries; who was a sensuous lover of the flesh, of the fundamental thrills of life, who envied the vigor of amorous youth as better than the fame of his crowned old age; who, avid of life and loveliness, avoided the atmosphere of suffering and pain and ugliness, rather seeking the good, wholesome presence of health and beauty; who was utterly foreign to moral, academic, conventional considerations; who professed to be very, very unhappy, but who —the cynic with such an appetite and such a virility!—drank the joys of life with a thirst that was genuine and quenchless.

"There is not in all the universe," he says, emotionally clasping the hand of his secretary, "a creature more unhappy than I. People think me happy. I have never been happy for one day, not for a single hour." Yet it is plain, to the reader of M. Brousson's engaging notes, that Anatole France's days, his hours, his moments were stimulated, excited, colored, amused and moved to quiet, pleasant thought by the continuous adventure of living. Cynic he truly was, however, and one does not doubt the sincerity of his epigrammatic reference to the state and destiny of man: "In all the world the unhappiest creature is man. It is said: 'Man is the lord of creation.' Man is the lord of suffering, my friend. There is no clearer proof of the non-existence of God than life."

The pity of Anatole France was general and philosophic—pity for life indeed—but the immediate, personal spectacle of sickness and decay repelled him. One day Brousson fainted; and the Master inquired whether the weakness were habitual. Frankly: "I must tell you something, my young friend, and you, think what you will of it. I do not like sick people. Suffering is repugnant to me. It is a sort of instinct. . . . Ah, kisses for lepers—that's not for me, I promise you. And what is the use of such visits to the sick? . . . When a man is suffering, he wants to see nobody. It is far better not to be seen. I admit the doctor, the nurse, and the attendant; but others are a nuisance. They are either ghouls or hypocrites. One of the qualities that I prize most in my friends and intimates is health and gaiety. . . . Yes, people say that suffering ennobles. There is a whole literature about it. Suffering disfigures, my friend, and we should flee from it."

The wife of his friend M—— came to him, an emissary intended to beguile the Master of a literary favor. The mission was a failure, as the lady, although youthful and attractive, had a complexion "white as a winding-sheet!" She was a Camille—"Not a drop of blood under her skin." And, says France, "completely unromantic" in this phase, "No consumptive loves for me!"

Ill health he did not like; and, by the way, it was a point with him to describe chastity as a kind of defect, a disease, as it were tuberculosis.
Thus: "She is a woman without pity, hard towards herself and hard towards others. We must have compassion on her. She is a prey to the most cruel of the divinities: to Chastity." His view is summed in candid phrases by Brousson: "Virtue, in the fair sex, is an infirmity. . . . He suspects the innocent among them. Modesty is only found in the badly made. Chastity exists perhaps in the torpid who have no temperament. It ought to be treated, like anemia or tuberculosis." Kind Anatole, he speaks always of prostitutes as "God's creatures." He laughs at morality—a full, robustious laugh. Is a friend rated as immoral? His "morals are unorthodox, but he is so witty." There is a burst of praise for the voluptuous-loving Louis XV. "No matter which of them!" said he to his valet. "But take her first to the bath and to the dentist." Says Anatole, with ardor: "That monarch was a great man. Whatever may be said of him, he deserves the title of 'Beloved.' The bath and the dentist! There you have the whole thing. The bath spells hygiene, the only moral code of love."

He is more drawn by the life of love than by its literature. "Erotic writers generally cool their heels pretty badly in real life. Their gallantries are of the ink-pot variety." He says regarding the novelist B———, his "pet aversion": "He is always speaking of women. Why, he doesn't know what they are! His famous psychology is that of a etnuch fingering underlinen in a shop during a white sale. His adulteries invariably remind me of the models and catalogues at the Louvre. [The shop, not the museum.] There is everything there:—embroidered sheets like altar cloths, and lace, and bows—everything—except the passion, the warmth, the spasm."

He refers to love as a science, an art, a splendid use of life. He would rather be sixteen than be the Immortal. The girls who visit him on worship bent ("charming little birds, fascinated by the flashing crown of the Academy, . . . come fluttering at me, like larks at an old owl!") are naively eager to discourse of literature; but Anatole protests that literature, to put it bluntly, is his job, at which he has been scratching away these forty years. "Down with literature, and long live love!" It is not (or should not be) a reproach to speak of the profession of love, but actually a tribute, a phrase of supremely admitted, artistic merit. To be great in love, a woman must be best in love. Youth and love? There is nonsense talked here, says Anatole. "To confound love with youth is a great absurdity. Youth is drunk with itself. All the world is a mirror to it. Now love is a science where great erudition and great application is needed. Before the age of fifty, let no man talk of love. Among women some of the elect possess the art when they are about forty." Still, old Anatole, with a flip of his dressing gown, protests that he would gladly be sixteen. A little less art, perhaps, but how much more ardor!

He has a call from "a female Pandarus," who aids in a very business-like way the practices of love. She informs him that she has kindly arranged these little affairs for "several of my colleagues in Immortality, and even two or three former ministers of Education and Public Worship." This Madame S——— has a book (a "fat, solemn-looking, black book . . . a sort of album, bound in morocco") which contains data for the guidance of lovers. Anatole and his significant
visitor examine the book, Madame the while calling attention to the merit of No. 2, who is an agreeable blonde, the wife of a Cabinet minister; and No. 3, who is a beautiful brunette, temperamentally Spanish, whom mistress of an ambassador; and No. 5, an actress with a future, which is assured by a rich benefactor, a damsel who knows Latin, Greek and Italian and who can boast of a degree from a university. But Anatole interrupts the well-informed Pandarus. “Madame S——! Madame S——!” he exclaims. “Less facts! Less facts, if you please, and more figure.”

Anatole France was a lover of life and love. He knew the importance—the basic, vital importance—of the physical facts of life. He relished the taste of life in a grand, gustatory mood. He felt in every nerve the thrills of life. He looked upon the solid, concrete, tangible experiences of life as precious. Ideas do not satisfy unless they are reactions from the authentic substance of life. The spirit that is not rosiely and vigorously physical robs of life rather than gives life. The beauty and the value of thought are at their highest when thought is most keenly stimulated, enriched, invigorated by the senses. Anatole France was sensual, and that sensuality was a breath of life to his genius. He was, in short, a realist who refused to delude himself with vain, bodiless abstractions.

He preferred the cleansing power of physics to the clogging, unhealthy influence of metaphysics. Almost the first question with which he surprised Brousse, in the latter’s first days as his secretary, was “Have you been freed?” The young man was in doubt of his meaning, but was quickly informed: “Have you been liberated from religious beliefs? Oh, the question is not in the least indiscreet. I say that to you, just as I would say: ‘Have you a good digestion? Is your liver all right?’ People are born churchy or unchurchy, just as they are born with a tendency to arterio-sclerosis, cancer, or consumption. Not all the preachings or all the proofs make any difference. Are there more unbelievers today than in the fifteenth century, for instance? I do not think so. But then people feigned devotion from fear of the stake. He who is born an unbeliever remains one all his life, and vice versa: he lacks the organ of superstition. In relation to heaven he is an eunuch. I had that infirmity or, if you like, advantage. That is why I inquire with such sympathetic interest about you. Anatomists will, I trust, one day discover the cause and seat of the religious spirit.”

He opens a volume of La Bruyère and reads: “He who is in perfect health doubts the existence of God, but, when he gets a dropsy, leaves his mistress and sends for the priest.” This is good—this is true—and Anatole clearly elaborates the thought: “He sends for a doctor at the same moment. Decay of the body induces decay of the mind. Faith and credulity are infirmities, and most often they are congenital. Sometimes a man lives with them without being too much harassed, just as one does with consumption, arterio-sclerosis, or cancer. But the downward turn comes and he gives himself to drugs and the Deity. A few extra grammes of sugar in his urine and the libertine goes to mass.”

He is not so pleased, however, with La Bruyère’s platitude: “It is a very serious thing to die.” This, avowedly, is foolish: it is as easy to
die as to be born. Death is simply "the end of the curve." The dull and the brilliant, the defeated and the successful, die much alike. "Everyone is successful at that. It may be longer or shorter, more or less harmonious. We come from the womb to go and rot in the earth." Thus it is described, not nicely, but the fact is not lovelier for the imagery of choice words.

The Master is overwhelmed with letters—yes, he would be, but he does not let them overwhelm him. They are disposed of easily—in the fire. The secretary hesitates at the command of destruction. "Into the fire!" says Anatole firmly. "Into the fire, I tell you. Unless you insist on replying to all those bores. After all, that's your affair." One epistle is saved, obviously "from a madwoman," the address written in blue, (Monsieur), crimson (Anatole France) and green (de l'Académie Française). This madwoman beseeches Anatole to meditate prayerfully on the salvation of his soul. "My case then is not past pardon," comments the skeptic, who has not yet risen from his bed of wicked ease. "How much more cruel was Renan's correspondent: she wrote to him every day—'Hell exists.' Poor crazed thing! The earth exists and that is enough. . . ."

Books are handled as summarily as letters. Imagine the books from mediocre and obscure but vain authors that an Anatole France would receive: But, "To the bath! To the bath!" he cries, carelessly dumping the books upon the floor. He has a bathroom that is a wonderful contrivance, the bath being larger than the bathroom, a masterpiece of architecture, "a bathroom, most dainty and practical, but a bathroom in which it is impossible to take a bath." Very well, it must be of some use, and what better than a receptacle for these unwanted authorial loads that are imposed upon the Master? A second-hand bookseller obliques the master, when the bath is full, by emptying it of this laboriously prepared rubbish: and he pays France for the privilege, fifty francs a bath regardless of authorship or whether the books be verse or prose.

The subtle Anatole could be abrupt whether in disposing of books or the foolish, impertinent notions of men. A visit to Huysmans by Brousson brought forth senile lamentations by the former concerning the Master's lack of religiosity, although he had been "brought up piously by Christian parents." A bad case, thinks Huysmans, and, "Not for all his fame would I be in his place." He sends a message by Brousson, urging France to pray in a church, and: "There, alone with God, under the shadowy light of the stained glass windows, ask if we were created and sent into the world and redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ to write mere insolence?" Anatole France listens to this spasm of piety. He says: "Poor Huysmans, he is in a sad way. His bigotry is a lamentable sign of his age. When you see him—one attention deserves another—tell him: 'France recommends you to have your water analyzed.'"

He was a collector of Catholic relics. He confessed that his domicile was in the way of resembling a sacristy. The skeptic amused himself, and pleased his artistic soul, by surrounding himself with the figures of the saints. He said: "I shall end by giving refuge to all the saints of Paradise. It will be the devil if they don't remember, in the next
world, the hospitality I have given them in this. So you see I am certain of salvation. There will surely be some Virgin to hold out her hand to me, and to say to the Everlasting Father: "I know him. He is not so black as he is painted. For years I lay in his bedchamber."

He liked the note of voluptuousness in Catholicism, but not that of asceticism. The term of greatest anathema for him was "impotence." Any one whom he wished to devastate with a word of contempt, was branded forthwith as an impotent man, biologically less than a man. Concerning impotence, he had something to say of Napoleon, who "was a perturbed spirit and set the world by the ears because he was incapable of enjoying his own bed." There is a great deal of social significance in natural inequalities. There is happiness that depends upon physique rather than the statutes. One man is "ugly, feeble, and deformed." Another is "born with charming features that open all women's hearts to him." Potent ideas and great, world-shaking events may arise from bodily defects, from the inequalities through which nature plays the devil with society. "There," says Anatole, "you have the origin of the Contrat Social. It's because Jean Jacques was a cold fish that he set the whole earth on fire. In the East most revolutions have been made by eunuchs."

We are told that Napoleon never felt what Plato images as "the horses bolting with the chariot of the soul." The English surgeons who viewed his body in death were astonished by the effeminate physique of the man. "The man's activity was prodigious to the point of being unwholesome and doubtless sprang from a physical defect in him. Great man as he was, you know, Napoleon—how shall I put it? He was, yes, he was distinctly reserved with the fair sex. He certainly loved Josephine, and had two or three other little affairs; but that's not much for a man, especially an emperor. We are not to suppose that opportunities were lacking. Well, he not only did not seek them: he fled from them. . . . At bottom he did not like women. He despised them. He was lacking in the capacity for love. Oh, I know that it is said: 'He had not a lover's disposition, because he had not time for love.' How very simple to be sure! He had not a lover's disposition, because he was physically incomplete and because, just as in the case of Jean Jacques, his infirmity was the cause of his ambition and his genius. The doctor who performed the autopsy on him before embalming the body has left us no doubt on the point. When the body was stripped, it had an almost feminine appearance. Napoleon was plump—delicately fat. His breasts were developed beyond the normal. . . ."

In bed (to slip from larger themes into ordinary) Anatole France was quite human. He was slightly querulous at the not witching hour of getting up. He complained, of the lateness of his chocolate, of sleeplessness which led him to the reading of Tacitus and Casanova by the light of two church candlesticks, "their pious light illuminating the orgies of Casanova!" He was a trifle fussy about starting the day, especially about his skull caps of which he had a bewildering number and variety. After Josephine, the maid (who privately informs the secretary that the Master "spends all his time scratching out and beginning again"), has assisted him in dressing, she produces a little basket full of the strangest caps. The great man takes
them, holds them out on his fist, tries them on, looks in a Venetian
mirror, rejects them, hesitates. . . . There are skull caps of silk, of
velvet, of Jouy cloth. Large caps, coming down over the ears like a
papal bonnet. Others of sugar-loaf form like a fez. Others recall
the dainty little cap, stuck like a scarlet wafer on the heads of choir-
boys. Finally he chooses one in red-currant Jouy stuff. There are
Chinese caps, mandarin caps, caps like pagodas."

Death is our destiny. Anatole France enjoyed life and saluted
dearth with an air. Walking by the side of the omnipresent Brousson,
he lifted his hat to a funeral procession. The secretary observed
curiously this action.

"Who are you taking off your hat to? To the priest? To the
cross? You are an atheist. To the dead? Would you have taken off
your hat to him in his lifetime? Has he only to become a part of
nothingness to gain your sympathy?"

"He reflects dreamily, hat in hand. Then, twisting the brim about
with an air of embarrassment, he says, 'It is my own destiny that I
have saluted.'"

"Now we are before a butcher's, all hung with quivering flesh.
I make bold to say to him: 'Why do you not salute the meat shop?
These muscles here will be the prey of men, as the corpse we saw just
now will be of worms. It is the same destiny.'"

"'Your wit is too specious.'"

He would die beautifully. "Let us live in peace," he said, "that we
may die in peace. The difficulty is not to die, but to live. Let me have
no tedious priest at my deathbed, but a pretty woman, and may the
hands be fair that close my eyes for the great sleep!"

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, THE FREETHINKER

GREAT men, whose position is beyond the power of the Church
to challenge, great men who were skeptics but whose memory
is unalterably fixed in the regard of humanity, are claimed by
the Church to have been Christians. Had Thomas Paine been
the third President of the United States, the Christian detraction and
downright abuse of the man would have been difficult: in such an
event, it would have been urged that Paine was inspired by the motive
of defending true religion and that, at heart, he was a Christian:
indeed, Christians would have gone much further, and would have
shown the same industry in lying Paine into the arms of God that
they have shown in lying him into the arms of the Devil. But our
third President was Thomas Jefferson, who held exactly the belief of
Paine on religion: and so it is Jefferson who is represented as having
been a godly, Christian soul: while Paine, a patriot standing in truth
equal by the side of Jefferson, but not so signally honored by his con-
temporaries, became a target for the hatred and falsehood of the clergy.

Abraham Lincoln is another American whose exceeding fame, and
whose place in the hearts of his countrymen, forces Christians to
recognize him respectfully: and so they have made the very best of
the circumstance and brazenly appropriated the figure of Lincoln for
the Christian gallery. Yet Lincoln was a freethinker, even as Paine and Jefferson. He was as far removed from being a Christian as Clarence Darrow. The making over of Lincoln into a Christian has ranged from silly, false interpretations of the man to ridiculous and deliberate falsehood. The truth about Lincoln can easily be ascertained; and one book alone, the biography written by William H. Herndon,* Lincoln’s law partner and intimate, reveals clearly the truth of Lincoln’s utter lack of religion. However, the chief points in the strange case of “Lincoln the Christian” have been reviewed carefully by Joseph Lewis in a brief study, *Lincoln the Freethinker* (The Lincoln Publishing Co., New York). Mr. Lewis has conveniently assembled enough material to convince anyone (who is at all willing to be convinced) that Lincoln was not a believing man, not a praying man, not in any sort or sense a Christian.

The fact is that Lincoln, when a young man was even a propagandistic anti-Christian. He wrote a pamphlet against Christianity and the Bible: but Samuel Hill, his employer and also a freethinker, took it upon himself to destroy the manuscript out of regard for Lincoln’s political future. He knew the bitterness of religious prejudice; and it is true that great political issues are obscured by this prejudice. Even so, Lincoln did not entirely escape attack as an un-Christian man. When he ran for Congress against Rev. Peter Cartwright, the circuit rider who is one of the heroes of Methodism, Lincoln was accused in the campaign of being an infidel and of having expressed the opinion that Jesus was an illegitimate child. No denial came from Lincoln. Why? He told a friend why: “First, he knew the charges to be true; and second, they could easily be proved.” The Church opposition to Lincoln is described by him. Speaking of his race for the nomination to Congress in 1843, Lincoln wrote to a number of his constituents at the time:

“The strangest combination of church influence was against me. Baker (his opponent) was a Campbellite, and therefore got all that church. My wife had some relations in the Presbyterian church and some with the Episcopal churches, and therefore whenever it would tell, I was set down as either ONE OR THE OTHER, while it was everywhere contended that NO CHRISTIAN ought to vote for me because I BELONGED TO NO CHURCH and was suspected of being a deist.”

Even Christians do not attempt to deny that Lincoln always remained outside of the church. Although Mrs. Lincoln was a faithful member of the Christian Church and regular in her attendance, rarely did Lincoln accompany her. And Mrs. Lincoln herself confessed to her husband’s unbelief. She said: “He never joined a church. He was not a technical Christian. He had no hope nor faith in the usual acceptance of those words.”

Lincoln did not believe the Bible was an inspired book: and he could have had little respect for it in that day, when the defenders of the cruel system of chattel slavery were quoting Bible texts in an endless stream to prove that slavery was a divine institution ordained and upheld in Holy Writ. The significance of the God of battles and the Bible warriors, Lincoln thoroughly appreciated, as his words bear witness:

“Both (North and South) read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other.” There is no evidence that Lincoln regarded the Bible as a specially great or important book; but of course unbelief in, if not indifference to, the Bible is a serious obstacle in the way of making a man out to have been a Christian. According to familiar habit, Christians have remedied this defect in the picture of Lincoln the Christian by attributing to him incredibly foolish, childish, nonsensical words. It is related that, when a group of Baltimore Negroes presented Lincoln with a five-hundred-dollar copy of the Bible, the Great Emancipator uttered this testimony in behalf of the Book: “In regard to the great book I have only this to say, that it is the best gift which God has given to man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this book. But for this book we could not know right from wrong. All those things desirable to man are contained in it.” This miserable lie bears enormously the stamp of the clerical mentality. These are the words characteristic of a preacher, and not even of a fairly intelligent preacher but of a Holy Roller shouter in East Tennessee. As his friend and professional associate, Herndon, says, those who ascribe such a statement to Lincoln make him out to have been the worst kind of a fool. Herndon wrote:

“I am aware of the fraud committed on Mr. Lincoln in reporting some insane remarks supposed to have been made by him, in 1864, on the presentation of a Bible to him by the colored people of Baltimore. No sane man ever uttered such folly and no sane man will believe it. In that speech Mr. Lincoln is made to say, ‘but for this book we could not know right from wrong.’ Does any human being believe that Lincoln ever uttered this? What did the whole race of Man do to know right from wrong during the countless years that passed before the book was written? How did the struggling race of Mankind build up its grand civilization in the world before this book was given to Mankind? What do the millions of people now living, who never heard of this book, do to know how to distinguish right from wrong? Was Lincoln a fool, an ass, a hypocrite, or combination of them all? Or is this speech—this supposed, this fraudulent speech—a lie?”

Another bit of Christian trickery is the circulation of a picture in which President Lincoln sat, with his son Tad standing beside him, turning over the pages of a large book: and the picture has been repeatedly shown with the title: “Lincoln Reading the Bible to His Son.” The very thing, as it happened, which Lincoln humorously foresaw! According to Ida M. Tarbell, Lincoln (knowing only too well the methods of the clergy) declared at the time: “Now don’t let anybody entitle this picture, ‘The President Reading the Bible to His Son.’” The story has been told again and again, and the true circumstance given in denial, but Christian lies apparently gain strength (among the credulous and uncritical) by refutation. Among other debunkers of this piece of mawkish legend, The Boston Globe had occasion to explain: “The pretty little story about the picture of President Lincoln and his son, Tad, reading the Bible, is now corrected for the one hundredth time. The ‘Bible’ was Photographer Brady’s picture album which the President was examining with his son while some ladies stood by. The artist begged the President to remain quiet and the picture was taken. The truth is better than fiction, even if the recital conflicts with a pleasing
theory." It is also untrue that Lincoln derived wisdom and mental training from a narrow, exclusive perusal of the Bible and Pilgrim’s Progress. He read Voltaire and Paine and Volney: he was familiar with the literature of freethought.

"Lincoln was an avowed and open infidel," we are told by his first law partner, John T. Stewart, "and sometimes bordered on atheism. He went farther against Christian beliefs, doctrines and principles than any other man I ever heard."

Lincoln’s use of the word God, like Jefferson’s use of the word, was so far removed from the Christian conception and usage that it bore no resemblance to the latter. He spoke of Providence in a vague general sense, less definitely indeed than did Thomas Paine. "No man had a stronger or firmer faith in Providence than Lincoln," says Herndon, "but the continued use by him late in life of the word ‘God’ must not be interpreted to mean that he believed in a personal God. In 1854 he asked me to erase the word ‘God’ from a speech I had written and read to him for criticism, because my language indicated a personal God, whereas, he insisted, no such personality existed." That Lincoln was genuinely a skeptic is proved by Herndon’s statement: "If Lincoln were asked whether he believed in God, he would have said: ‘I do not know that a God exists.’" The truth is that Lincoln had the realistic attitude of mind. An intimate, lifelong friend of Lincoln was Judge David Davis—circuit judge in Illinois in the days of Lincoln’s early law practice, a member of the Supreme Court of Illinois, a United States Senator, a Vice-President of the United States and finally a justice of the United States Supreme Court. Davis knew Lincoln if any one did, and, says Judge Davis: "Lincoln had no faith in the Christian sense of the term—he had faith in law, principles, causes and effects." It is characteristic of Lincoln that he himself humorously expressed his attitude toward Providence, when he said in the trying moments of the Civil War: "Friends, I agree with you in Providence, but I believe in the Providence of the most men, the largest purse and the longest cannon."

So little did Lincoln think of God that, both in the original draft of the famous Gettysburg speech and that of the Emancipation Proclamation, he left God entirely out of his consideration and recognition. It was Secretary Seward who suggested to Lincoln that God ought to be mentioned in the Emancipation Proclamation; and the President said: "No, I overlooked it. Won’t you make a draft of what you think ought to be inserted?" Great issues were in the balance, so Lincoln agreed that God should be interpolated as an afterthought. Probably God was in like manner called to his attention regarding the Gettysburg address, which appears in original facsimile as godless.

Revelation, a word on which Christians lay a mighty and particular stress, was scouted by Lincoln in precisely the attitude of Thomas Paine. In the White House, Lincoln was continually pestered by those who claimed to be bearers of the authentic word of God on the issues of the war. "I am approached with the most opposite opinions and advice," said Lincoln, "and by religious men who are certain they represent the Divine Will. I hope it will not be irreverent in me to say, that
if it is probable that God would reveal His will to others, on a point so connected with my duty, it might be supposed He would reveal it directly to me.”

The Christianity, the religiosity, of Lincoln is wholly a fabrication of propagandists for God. It is manifestly the unsoundest part of the Lincoln legend that has grown with each generation. “While Lincoln was alive,” says Mr. Lewis, “no one presumed to call him a Christian. His enemies took particular delight in referring to him as an infidel.” Lincoln expressed clearly enough his skepticism, which was not a mild but a forthright skepticism. In the midst of war and death, and after his own son Willie had died, Lincoln “uttered the most important and striking testimony to his lifelong disbelief.” An old friend, Judge J. A. Wakefield, wrote to inquire whether Lincoln had abandoned the anti-Christian beliefs that he had held. Judge Wakefield, a Christian, hoped that Lincoln had been “converted.” But Lincoln replied: “My earlier views of the unsoundness of the Christian scheme of salvation and the human origin of the scriptures, have become clearer and stronger with advancing years and I see no reason for thinking I shall ever change them.” He never did change them. But Christians have changed, or tried to change, Lincoln from an intelligent, human skeptic into a man who could say that if it were not for the Bible “we could not know right from wrong.”

THE ESCAPE OF EDDIE GUEST

As one recognizes the inevitable with slight or well-modulated surprise, so one greets the appearance in The American Magazine of a confession by Eddie Guest, telling what he learned at his mother’s knee. Mother’s knee and other such dear, heart-touching propinquities—the hearth and the cradle and the old armchair—are the starting points of Eddie, not merely in his sentimental but in his philosophical ventures (synonymously simple and the same) into the cold, untried world. One can say, essentially with truthfulness, that Eddie has never wandered a greater distance from his mother’s knee than the parlor window, by which stands the little table that holds the family album and the family Bible, and that Eddie’s view of life consists of all that he has been able to see from that coign and observatory. Standing by that window, and seeing the man of the world hurry by without mother or wife or sweetheart or child leading him gently by the hand, Eddie has shuddered with a realization that the fellow was headed for the devil, as are all men who go in too recklessly for thought and adventure in this world. As for Eddie, safely he dreams and cheerfully he muses at mother’s knee, wondering a little, but not with a really wicked degree of curiosity, what the great world is like.

Not long ago Booth Tarkington filled The Americans’ pulpit, entertaining us with a suave homily on religion; but Mr. Tarkington grasped the bright blade of metaphysics and played ingenious, though scarcely convincing, tricks with it. Eddie is not, so to say, up to such intricacies of intellectual legerdemain; his mind—his mind, figuratively speaking—is of a homelier, lower cast; he simply tells what religion
has meant to him in the way of holding him to the mark in paying his grocer, obeying the traffic regulations and the laws, and, in general, keeping out of the dives and jails that lie in wait for sinners. It appears that religion has indeed been the salvation of Eddie, his sole means of escaping from the depths of unmentionable, even unimaginable errors, frailties and iniquities. It is truly with a singular and affecting candor that Eddie confesses himself to be or to have been at heart a bad man: without religion, no man knows what a record of pauperism, vice or crime Eddie might now display to the world instead of his simple faith in simple things expressed in a simple way by a very simple mind. We rely upon no less authoritative a word than Eddie's that religion has rescued him from the consequences of a character inherently weak and bad. He says (and we can see him shudder at the yawning pit over whose edge he has fearfully looked and from which Hymn No. 99 has drawn him back):

"Without my religion, I should have made enemies where I have gathered friends. Without my religion I should have gone down, where I have climbed up; I should have been sordid, where I have found joy in being sentimental; I should have been shunned, where I have been welcomed, and although I might have made money and saved some portion of it, I am sure that I should have done many things which would have been to me a shame and a regret. Without my religion, I should have suffered a loss in self-respect and in the esteem of others."

Viewed in this light, it is not for me to say that religion has not, perhaps, been a good thing for Eddie. It is better, on the whole, that he should be wasting paper on poor rhymes than that he should be wasting the energy of society in taking care of him and keeping him out of mischief. It is not charitable for us, who fortunately have characters that are able to stand alone and who are not so naturally at the mercy of evil, character-destroying impulses, to scorn Eddie's weakness and demand of him greater strength of character. God, as he would say, made him what he is; and if God did a bad job it is perhaps true, as Eddie firmly believes, that only God could have redeemed his own inferior workmanship.

Yet, while we can have charity for Eddie, still we are not unreasonable in asking that he be fair with the rest of us. Surely it is not fair for him to assume that, having himself a character so weak that it requires the artificial support of religion, all other men are constructed on as faulty a principle or model as he. Eddie should fairly give the rest of us credit for possibly better natures; and not only should he recognize that morally (or in the vital tissues of our glandular parts) we may be stronger, but also that mentally we may be capable of the perception and practice of ethics that do not depend on any religious rigmarole; that, in short, we can be decent and honest and amiable, we can be friendly and make friends, we can intelligently and successfully perform our labors in this world, and we can escape the shameful garb of prison without being, like Eddie, Swedenborgians by birth and Episcopalians by marriage.

But Eddie, for all his religion, is not as charitable—or, let us say, not as truthful or not as good an observer—as we. He insists that religious people are good, and that irreligious people are bad. "The best
people are in the churches, and the worst people are out of them." Religion, says he, is a certificate of character (although, by his own confession and example, it is a certificate of a naturally weak and bad character). Yet it requires no very profound understanding of life—it requires only the simplest, straightest kind of observation—to know that people cannot be thus separated, by a religious criterion, into good and bad or better and worse. A man’s attendance in church, or his belief in God, or his interest in religion is absolutely no guaranty, not the slightest proof nor indication, of what his character may be. Eddie, I suspect, has not got from religion all the lessons in character that he needs. Apparently, he has not learned how to be truthful: for it is giving even him credit for too much ignorance to believe that he is entirely unaware of the fact that atheists and agnostics and unbelievers of all shades have led, and do constantly lead, not simply decent but even noble lives. And while many Christians lead decent and even noble lives, experience shows (and, in any case, reason would suggest) that it does not necessarily follow that because a man is a Christian, because he holds to any one of the fifty-seven grotesque or whimsical varieties of religion, he is therefore to be numbered among the best or even among the ordinarily good, men. Eddie himself admits that bigots and hypocrites may foregather in the most respectable pews; but he does not seem willing to admit the other side of the truth, that men without the least tincture or religion can be, and are, tolerant and sincere.

Eddie himself assures us that he is the soul of toleration—toward Christians. He is so idealy broad in his thinking that he will not damn a man for not being an Episcopalian: this philosopher, soaring loftily above petty distinctions, is prepared to admit with a fine, large grace that a man can be a Methodist or even a Baptist and still be honest and deserving; but for the man who is not a Christian, and who is not even slightly nor casually religious, Eddie apparently has no manner of use nor respect, while he has for them a very doubtful and grudging toleration.

The division of mankind, according to religion, into good and bad is asserted even more extremely by Eddie. He tells us that the rogues’ gallery and the hall of fame are filled on this peculiar principle: that “crooks and highwaymen and gangsters and rioters, and all the lowest elements of mankind, are seldom or never religious. But Presidents, and statesmen, and great lawyers and great artists, and the leaders in all the trades and professions, usually are.” Such a rule has the merit, as it were, of a vast and unreflective simplicity. Not to consider the many degrees of religion or irreligion, and the maze of distinctions and definitions into which one is led by the process of judging men in this fashion, one can say that “Presidents, and statesmen, and great lawyers and great artists, and the leaders in all the trades and professions” who have been without religion (and surely Eddie himself would not deny that men of such various eminence have been irreligious) stand as examples to demonstrate the possibility of great character without religion—of the very greatest, the strongest character without religion—of the very greatest, the strongest character indeed, if religion, as Eddie views it, is the bulwark, the safeguard, the lifeline of poor and weak char-
acters. Two Presidents of the Republic have been definitely irreligious, not to mention others who have taken their stand at a considerable distance from the Throne.

The significant fact, however, which will at once occur to anyone of passable intelligence, is that the majority of mankind, whatever their professions or abilities or characters, are religious. "Crooks and highwaymen and gangsters and rioters," contrary to Eddie's naive assumption, are religious frequently and even, I believe, as a rule; the thief and the murderer will defend the idea of God, and the superstitions of mankind, often as zealously as any clergyman or the conventional pious Eddie himself. When I say that most men, including crooks, are religious, I mean, obviously, that they have a belief in religion. Few men, of course, practice what they call religion. The point is that belief in God will not infallibly prevent a man from turning highwayman (even though it has, in Eddie's case, held him back from nobody knows what deeds); and atheism will not so demoralize and pervert a man's character (assuming that he has a character, and one strong enough to be trusted without the leading strings of religion) that he will be thrown into a life of sordidness or shame or crime. One can be skeptical without being a rake or a cheat or a homicide.

Simply enough, Eddie in his very own words lets slip a recognition of this truth that a man's religious beliefs have nothing to do with his character. At least, that is the plain logic of his words, which we do but carry a step farther in quite the same broad direction. Eddie says:

"What a loss would be mine if I should let religion build a wall of prejudice about me! What if I were to live my life only among Swedenborgians or Episcopalians? What if I were to restrict my friends to those of my own particular little faith? I might as well determine to walk only with people who wear bow ties like myself, or gray suits. I don't like pumpkin pie, but if I shunned all the people who do I should have to give up the company even of my wife and children, who are very fond of it."

Can we escape the logic that, if being a Baptist or an Episcopalian signifies no more in the way of character than wearing a bow tie or a gray suit or liking pumpkin pie, then any belief in religion is similarly a matter of taste or habit? Certainly, it would be as sensible for Eddie to assert that people can be separated into good and bad according to their choice of ties or pies as to claim that belief or disbelief in religion is the sharp, infallible test of character. Anatole France said wittily that a man's religion depends on the condition of his kidneys—that piety indicates an excess of sugar in the urine. He was, to be sure, a skeptic. But Eddie, a religious man, suggests the view that the form taken by a man's belief in religion is on a humble level of significance with the fact that his sartorial taste runs to gray or brown. Then let us say that what his religion has meant to Eddie Guest is of the same high order as what his preference for bow ties and gray suits has meant to him. He has liked it, and it has satisfied him.

But the greatest thing that religion has meant to Eddie, which he finally tells with a rather deprecating but still appreciative air, is that it has made his verses virtuous, popular and profitable. "It has actually
paid me in dollars and cents.” “I should say that we sell many thousands more of your books,” says Eddie’s publisher, “because you are, at heart, deeply religious, than we should sell if you were not.”

Had Eddie Guest not been a religious man, he might have been—God knows—both as great a rascal and as great a poet as Villon.

CHARLEY SCHWAB, PHILOSOPHER

What the late Harding would have called “the best minds” of the American industrial world met the other day at the University of Chicago to philosophize about the problems of our age. In this assemblage of intellects, side by side with Charley Dawes and J. Ogden Armour, was Charley Schwab, who was tagged by The Chicago Tribune reporter as “a homely philosopher.” It is a fairly good phrase, for while the world has been blessed with a great deal of philosophy of one kind and another, perhaps no homelier brand than Schwab’s has ever been offered to a world waiting for words of wisdom and trembling for the touch of thought.

Man to man, Charley frankly said that Ivy Lee, well known press agent of the plutocracy, had written a fine speech for him; but the great man, wishing to be original, threw away Ivy’s lucubration in which this age was referred to as The Age of Man (which age? as according to Shakespeare there are seven); and, discarding alike finesse and ponderosity, Charley spoke in plain “he-man” fashion without any frills. He said, inspirationally:

“Unless a man loves his work nothing is accomplished.
“I keep going ahead and building, because I can’t help it. I never had any real pleasure in anything else.
“True economy is to take each detail and study it to finality.
“Success comes to the man who makes a thing as well as anyone else, and who makes it cheaper.
“Keep in a happy frame of mind. My motto is just laugh. No matter what the troubles.
“Teach a man to think and to concentrate. The great men in industry are not university men. They have had to push forward in life themselves.
“My idea is to be happy and fearless in business. I don’t believe in Ben Franklin’s advice about saving pennies. Look after the big things and the pennies will follow.
“It is personal effort that counts. All the dollars in the world are as nothing to the thrill of successful accomplishment.”

You will observe that Charley Schwab, as a philosopher, is worthy of a place beside Eddie Guest, Dr. Frank Crane, Herbert Kauffman, Bruce Barton and other homely thinkers. What a depth of philosophy is there in the words, not apparently profound but deceptively simple: “My motto is just laugh.” Beside that, Emerson looks pretty cheap. It is original too, because Charley Schwab said it, although the leading druggist in Village Corners recently said the same thing at a meeting of the Kiwanis Club.

Of the first aphorism in the foregoing collection, reminiscent of the superbly simple and wise reflections of Marcus Aurelius, The Chicago Tribune reporter, fully conscious that he was writing about one of “the best minds,” wrote with an impressive genuflection of his pen: “Books have been written on that single idea, for it touches the springs of
human emotion, the driving force of all work.” And that reminds me of a fine, large, scintillating epigram by the Kiwanis philosopher of Village Corners. He said: “It takes all kinds of people to make a world.” Books have also been written about that “single idea”—novels, plays, poems, essays, philosophic treatises, histories, political works, etc.

POOR DEMPSEY!

I AM beginning to pity Jack Dempsey! A few months ago, he had me mad at him every time I saw his picture, but now it seems to be a case for sympathy and pity. The poor fellow married the wrong kind of a woman. Estelle is too beautiful, too refined, too feminine for the great and mighty bruiser. He is trying to live up to the almost impossible job of being the successful husband of a super-beauty.

We have a champion pugilist who won’t fight. Shades of John L. Sullivan, Corbett and Fitzsimmons! In those wonderful days a champion fought bloody and manly bouts, until he met a better man. Dempsey, a greater fighter than any man in pugilism’s glorious history, is wasting his time trying to be a movie actor, a realtor and the husband of an exquisite female.

Dempsey has every right to be proud of his wife—she is a beauty. What there may be beneath her beauty I know not, nor is it important that I should know. In this world, to be beautiful is a great deal; one might say it is enough. But when one is a pugilist—the world’s champion—he must not unclench his fists because he has met and fallen for an entrancing siren. His job is to fight, hard and fast, and Dempsey used to be able to do that with a happy and singing heart. He loved fighting, until he fell in love with Estelle. Then he made a job of loving her. Which was treason to his right job.

I blame Estelle. She has taken a great fighter and made a great lover of him. The world has never been lacking in great lovers, but it has never had anything to equal a Jack Dempsey, and we lovers of the sport hate to see him ruined.

Jack Dempsey will beat Wills, in my inexpert opinion. I shall, most likely, bet good United States money on Dempsey. But it is plain to even this enthusiast that even if he were to whip Wills he will not re-establish himself as a pugilist true to the traditions of the ring. A victory over Wills isn’t enough for a Dempsey. He should be fighting at least three times each year. And he won’t, because Estelle is back there in the boudoir telling Jack not to be common, not to set himself down as a person of low character, and all that sort of holism. She made him renovate his face, and then she made him primp for the movies, and now we have a champion who is entirely acceptable socially but impossible as a bruiser. The mighty Dempsey has become a shrinking violet.

Dempsey is in love with Estelle, and all the world loves a lover; but what about his great and noble mission? Is he going to continue Estelle’s policy of one fight in a long, long while—just enough to tell the world that he still knows there is such a thing as a set of boxing gloves? Lucky is the man who finds himself a wonderful mate, but unlucky is the champion whose woman will not let him fight for fear he may have to renovate his face all over again.