QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
By E. Haldeman-Julius
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Questions and Answers

A proposed California law would empower public-health officials to compel children more than 14 years old to submit to treatment for venereal diseases, even when their parents don’t consent. I consider this an enlightened effort at social protection, yet the Christian Science Committee on Publication is fighting this proposal. Can you tell me why?

Christian Scientists hold the law would interfere with their right to treat syphilis and gonorrhea by means of prayer.

* * *

Culture Gets Its Death-Blow

For 10 or 15 years one of the Sunflower State’s minor poet—a tall angular woman afflicted with the mortal disease of baby-talk—has been flitting in and out of the H-J menage. Now and then she’d chase some neutral tunes—of her own creation—out of an ancient piano. Sympathetic guests would be shunted into a remote bedroom, where they’d throw themselves on a newly-made bed, suck on cigarettes (coffin nails), and listen to her pomes about Spring, love’s bower, and the expectant mother who’s carrying something precious under her heart. Such sessions have caused several gaping holes in prized spreads, but no accusations were made because one shouldn’t be petty when called on to make sacrifices for culture. She likes to spread out on a couch in the sun-room, literally let down her long tresses, and talk about the delicate souls who’re saving our civilization from vulgar materialism and crass commerce. All this made the H-J farm a happy haven, for plenty of eats were thrown in and high-balls were generous and frequent. She once promised to write a poem to the Haldeman-Julius Special, a highball which contains two and a half jiggers of Canadian rye, in iced coke, in a 14-ounce glass. She has been known to do well by as many as four or five in a long evening. Once, years ago, when there were a couple of colored servants, she had her breakfast brought to her in bed. This was the final demonstration of the H-J brand of culture. Here was one place where one didn’t have to move a finger, where one ate ample meals, drank plenty of hooch, dropped cigarette ashes in vases, decorations and flower-pots, wiped lipstick on towels and napkins, burned holes in bedspreads, caused beds to be made two or even three times a day because of the need for naps, read rare and fine tomes out of the H-J library, and in other ways enjoyed a damned good time at practically no expense and no sweat. Life had been cut up into numerous sweet portions that were tooted on bright trays by members of the lower serving-classes. The H-J dump was quite a joint and its praises were sung in places as remote as Topeka and Wichita. Her background was pure corn. Our thrush’s pa was an honest veterinarian in a village in a neighboring county, where 50 years of useful service to the community had rewarded him with two houses, $3,000 in life insurance, a washing machine, an electric refrigerator, and an office in a remodeled stable near the main street of the town. When he died all went to his only child, which left her fixed to the extent of $6,000, more or less. She quit her job and rushed to her boy-friend, who shared her love for free eats, free booze and free verse. Last Friday afternoon my phone rang. It was she. Her palsy-walsy was with her at a hotel in a nearby town. They were ready to make the pilgrimage to the H-J oasis. Sure, I said, the house is wide open, but remember two things, I warned. We’re working overtime in the plant (the vulgar public has gone in for a spurt of book-buying) and there are no servants. The last cook we had went to a war plant, where she got a job making salads at $55 per. Plenty of guests drop in for a few hours, a day or a weekend, and we all get along because we know the situation. All help
Questions and Answers

The war has broken up a beautiful friendship. Hitler has given art and beauty mortal blows. The OPA has put practically every stomach on its own bottom. Servants get $35 a week slapping together salads in a munitions plant cafeteria. Art is out for the duration—and maybe longer. A minor bard has kicked Haldeman-Julius in a private part of his anatomy. Esthetics is on the bum. Delicate souls have been reduced to frying (and spoiling) pork sausage.

Bertrand Russell, Malvern, Pa.: “I very much like writing for you, because I can say what I like. I am glad of your existence on public grounds as well as for my own sake. Your work is a most useful one.”

What’s a lypogrammatist?

The ancient Greeks produced lypograms. A lypogrammatist is a letter-dropper. Pindar wrote an ode omitting the letter “s.” A Latin work, comprising 23 chapters, is composed without “a’s” in the first chapter, “b’s” in the second, and so on. I don’t know of any modern lypograms. I’m surprised that the great Patsy O’Bang, the world’s greatest literateur, has passed up this trick. I’m fond of another kind of letter-dropper—the kind that goes through my catalogue, picks out hundreds of titles, buys a money order, puts the necessary papers in an envelope, and addresses it to me, after which he drops it in the nearest mailbox.

Edward Clodd: “The ground of duty rests on no ancient code, but solely on the experience of what, after long ages of sore testing, man has come to feel to be best for man.”

I am sending you copies of the oaths of allegiance of soldiers entering the German and the American armies. You should print them, for I believe your readers will be impressed by their differences and will want to paste the quotations on a corner of their desks in order to make occasional comparisons. Your readers will notice that Germans swear for a man, while Americans swear to support an ideal.

GERMAN... for a man!

I swear by God, this holy oath, that I will unconditionally obey the führer of the German Reich and the German...
people, Adolf Hitler, commander-in-chief of the army; as a brave soldier I will forever defend this oath at the cost of my own life.

From The Soldier in the New Reich, an official German handbook.

AMERICAN...for an ideal!

I, ________________________, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the United States of America; that I will serve honestly and faithfully against all its enemies whomsoever; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of officers appointed over me, according to the rules and articles of war.

—The Oath of Enlistment in the United States Army.

Does a receding chin mean a person has a weak character?

Nonsense. Some of the strongest characters in history have had such chins. The worst we can say about such a condition—affliction, I call it—is that it's unsightly, and that's a matter of esthetic opinion. I've heard some artists say they liked women with receding chins. Another—famous writer—said women with buck teeth appealed to him sexually. Another—well-known writer—confessed she was attracted by male hunchbacks. So when we get into questions of esthetics we don't know where we'll land. As for myself, I run with the crowd that doesn't like receding chins or heads.

I have put my money on a bet that we have decided to let you pass on. I claim that it's bunk to hold that food left in an opened tin can will turn poisonous. Am I right?

Yes. An opened tin can is just as good a food container as any dish. But habits of bunk are powerful. I know it's all right to leave food in its tin can but yet something always tugs at my subconscious and makes me dump the contents onto a plate. Bunk dies hard.

In an article on bigotry and militant orthodoxy you say that during the last century people in England have been sent to prison for failing to attend church services. I thought this happened prior to the 19th Century. Can you give me any supporting evidence?

The London Times, on February 12, 1842, printed an article on the 1841 report of theInspectors of Prisons, from which the following is quoted:

“Nothing less than 11 persons, beside the prisoner designated as J. C., had been imprisoned between February 1839 and May 1840 for the offence of absence from church on Sunday.”

In one of your volumes of "Questions and Answers" you say that Jack London was a Materialist and an Atheist. Can you give me a direct quotation to prove this?

In a letter to Ralph Kasper, written in 1914, Jack London said:

“I have always inclined toward Haeckel's position. In fact, ‘incline’ is too weak a word. I am a hopeless materialist. I see the soul as nothing else than the sum of activities of the organism plus personal habits, plus inherited habits, memories, experiences, of the organism. I believe that when I am dead, I am dead. I believe that with my death I am just as much obliterated as the last mosquito you and I smashed.

I have no patience with the fly-by-night philosophers such as Bergson. I have no patience with the metaphysical philosophers. With them, always, the wish is parent to the thought, and their wish is parent to their profoundest philosophical conclusions. I join with Haeckel in being what, in lieu of any other phrase, I am compelled to call ‘a positive scientific thinker.’

H. V. Kaltenborn, Westbrook Pegler, Eddie Rickenbacker, and other men who reach wide audiences through the radio and press, keep up a steady attack on American labor. Some months ago it was strikes, but when the cold facts exploded that argument they turned to ‘absenteeism.’ Now labor is getting it from all sides. What are the facts? Is absenteeism a serious menace to our war effort?

To listen to our anti-labor racketeers one would imagine that this war was being conducted to destroy unionism instead of Fascist aggression. Every effort is being made to paint labor as a gang of thieves, pirates, profiteers and traitors. At the same time even the enemies of labor have to admit that the output of our war industries is greater than ever before and increasing by the hour. Who's doing all this work? The radio and newspaper reporters can't hide the fact that labor is getting the job done, and yet they continue to harp on absenteeism. Absenteeism is just another red
herring across the trail, dragged by labor-haters who want to see American labor degraded to the standards of the slaves in Nazi land. A report issued by the War Manpower Commission, released recently, was practically ignored by the standard press and passed over in silence by verbal racketeers like Kaltenborn. The report was the result of a survey of 45 plants in which 210,000 workers were engaged in Michigan, Ohio and Kentucky, where it was found that absenteeism accounts for the loss of the services of from 3 to more than 6 percent of the total list of employees. Eleven reasons were found for absenteeism as follows:

1. Illness.
2. Job swapping and piracy.
3. Lack of information on the relation of an employer's work to the finished product and the importance of the product in winning the war.
4. Long hours and excessive overtime.
5. Wages and wartime prosperity.
6. Inadequate housing or transportation, or both.
7. Lack of carefully planned production.
8. Women workers remaining home to perform household duties.
9. Lack of good supervision.
10. Hiring in excess of immediate needs (labor hoarding).
11. Accumulation of finished goods, leading workers to assume erroneously that what they are making is not urgently needed.

Of the 11 reasons given above, only one applies to labor—No. 8. The rest are the result of managerial inefficiency, except No. 8, in which women workers stay home to do necessary work for themselves and their families. After all, a woman who has a husband and children can't work steadily without regard for home duties. No. 8, therefore, can't be looked on as a serious charge against labor. The remaining nine reasons are up management's alley. And by management, in this issue, is meant private and governmental war agencies. But try to get Kaltenborn and the other labor-baiters to give fair publicity to these facts!  

Last month I praised Virginius Dabney, editor of The Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch, for kicking out Westbrook Pegler's anti-labor and generally reactionary column. Now I must pull it back. According to several readers who take Dabney's paper, Pegler's smear-column is back again, after hundreds of subscribers had protested against the editor's decision. The great god of the standard press, despite the paper situation, is still Ol' Man Circulation. I'm sure it wasn't Dabney's fault. He's an honest, forthright fellow, who had to bow to the czars in the business office.

How far does one's eyes travel in looking at a book?
In reading the average novel, your eyes hop half a mile in short jumps.

Is gold the most malleable metal?
Yes.

THE NEW YORKER “TURNS 18”

[The New Yorker magazine, editorializing its 18th birthday, finds nothing much to light candles about. One of the things the magazine would vote for, if the voting age were lowered to 18, would be for “digging up the Time Capsule, putting Ham Fish in it, resealing it, and burying it again.” Further comments:]

Deeply do we admire Mr. E. (for Emanuel) Haldeman-Julius of Girard, Kans. Eighteen years ago he had the brash, blind audacity to become one of the few people who took an ad in our first issue. Sight unseen, and before he knew what we were up to, he took a whole page to advertise some hundreds of his Little Blue Books at 5 cents each. He then called them Books of Love, Life and Laughter and made no mention of their size or color, but they were little, all right, and blue. In gratitude we ordered a batch of them and we still have a few, turned now to a rusty pink in the gloom of our desk drawer. They are “How to Love,” “What Great Men Have Said About Women,” “What G. W. Have Said About M.,” “Is the KKK Destructive?” and “Was Poo, Immoral?”

We happen to bring this up because Mr. Haldeman-Julius, although he no longer favors us with his trade, is now taking double-page ads in some of our local daily newspapers to announce a special offer of his books... We have scanned his list and intend to place an or-
der. To take advantage of the price, we must buy 20, he says, and making a selection of this number will not be difficult. We've made a start already: “How to Get Ahead,” “How to Live 100 Years,” “Exercises for Nervousness and Indigestion,” “Has Life Any Meaning?” “Wit and Wisdom of the Japanese” and “Book of the Best Ford Jokes.”

I am enclosing the February 17, 1942, issue of “The Answer,” a church publication printed in Jacksonville, Fla. Please answer the marked item, in which it’s said that Ingersoll, on his deathbed, recanted and became a Christian.

There are two clerical lies about Ingersoll’s “deathbed.” One has him recanting and going to heaven; the other insists he hurled blasphemies at Jehovah, died while screaming at the Lawd, and then went straight to Hell, where he belonged. The facts show that Ingersoll didn’t die in bed, and he didn’t recant. Mrs. Ingersoll and other members of the family, who were with the great Agnostic when he died, finally prepared a sworn statement in answer to an endless stream of clerical falsehoods. It follows:

County of New York  
State of New York  
ROBERT G. INGERSOLL
The True Story of His Illness and Death

On November 15, 1896, while on a lecture trip at Jamestown, Wisconsin, Colonel Ingersoll had a cerebral hemorrhage. He continued to lecture for a few days, but at the solicitation of his family went to Chicago and consulted Dr. Frank Billings, who advised him to return home and rest for two months, which he did. He then, January 24, 1897, resumed lecturing, which he continued up to the time of his death. It was at this time, early in 1897, that he developed angina pectoris, from which he suffered greatly and which was the cause of his death. Since his death we have learned that he knew exactly his condition. In other words, his physicians had told him that he was likely to die at any moment, but acceding to his earnest entreaties they did not tell his family. In spite of the fact that death was ever beside him, he was always very cheerful, and when asked as to his health invariably replied “all right.” During the night of July 28, 1899, he had an attack of acute indigestion and slept very little, but he came to breakfast the next morning and afterward sat on the piazza, as he was wont to do, reading and talking with the family.

At about ten thirty he said he would lie down and rest a little and would then come down and play pool with his son-in-law. Mrs. Ingersoll accompanied him to their bedroom and remained with him while he slept. At about 11:45 he arose and sat in his chair to put on his shoes. Miss Sue Sharkey came into the room followed by Mrs. Sue M. Farrell. Mrs. Ingersoll, “Do not dress, papa, until after luncheon. I will eat upstairs with you.” He replied: “Oh, no. I do not want to trouble you.” Mrs. Farrell then said, “How absurd, after the hundreds of times you have eaten upstairs with her.” He looked up laughingly at Mrs. Farrell as she turned to leave the room, and then Mrs. Ingersoll said, “Why, papa, your tongue is coated: I must give you some medicine.” He looked up at her with a smile and as he did so closed his eyes and passed away without a struggle, a pang or even a sigh. No one else was present. It is said that he recanted. This is a cruel and malicious falsehood, without the slightest foundation in fact. His convictions on the subject of religion remained absolutely unchanged. He died as he had lived—an Agnostic.

Eva A. Ingersoll,  
Sue Sharkey,  
Sue M. Farrell.
Severally affirmed to before me this 17th day of March, 1906.

John H. Hazelton,  
Notary Public,  
New York County, No. 59.

Why do women like to knit? Knitting gives women something to think about while they're talking.

Is the individual drinking cup a modern innovation?
No. Marco Polo, in 1298, wrote in “The Great Province of Maabar” that in Southern India he found the individual drinking vessel was not only prevalent, but its use compulsory. He wrote:

“So also they drank only from drinking vessels, and every man has his own, nor will anyone drink from another's vessel. And when they drink they do not put the vessel to the lips, but hold it aloft and let the drink spout into the mouth. No one would on any account touch the vessel with his mouth nor give a stranger a drink with it. But if the stranger have no vessel of his own they will pour the drink into his hands and he may thus drink from his hands as from a cup.”

Readers who aren't familiar with the writings of Marco Polo are ad-
What is a "block-buster"? Block-busters are the new giant bombs the British are using to flatten Hitler's industrial machine. Here are some facts about them:

The block-buster bomb is a black and ugly object, 8 feet 4 inches long, 2 feet 1 inch thick. About 2,200 pounds of its 4,000 pounds are TNT and newer, secret explosives, the rest are shell and fuses. Dropped from 20,000 feet, it hits the ground at a speed of almost 600 miles an hour. It pulverizes whatever it strikes and buries itself deep. Then it explodes. The blast lasts .9 of a second. First there is a tremendous outward pressure of hot gas expanding at almost seven times the 1,089 feet a second that sound travels. That lasts .005 of a second. Then the gas cools, contracts, sucks everything back. That lasts .0025 of a second. The bomb case shatters into more than 6,000 fragments that fly at 4,000 to 7,000 feet a second, may spray for 7,000 feet. The explosion itself will smash everything within 120 yards of the bomb. Ground tremors may cause brick walls blocks away to collapse.

Can you suggest an easy form of exercise? Go to horror movies and let your flesh creep.

Your articles on consumers' problems, scattered throughout your 26 volumes of "Questions and Answers," have saved me many dollars. False labeling, as you say several times, is one of the bad forms of consumer-deception. Can you list some of the names consumers must understand if they are not to be gypped? There are hundreds of ways of misbranding, which limitations on space won't permit me to list, but here are some of the more common ones:

"Flannel" means wool, unless qualified, that is, "cotton flannel."

"Suede" fabric should not be described as "Suede," which denotes leather.

"Solid Walnut" or "Solid Mahogany" should be just that. If other woods are used in some places, or if any part is veneered, Federal Trade Commission rules require that this be stated.

"Fleece" means wool unless otherwise stated.

The term "Camel" or "Camel Hair" should not be used to indicate the color of a fabric.

"Pigtex," "Pig Sued" and similar terms should not be used to describe a leather other than genuine Pig Skin.

"Split Leather" should not be called "Solid Leather" or "Genuine Leather."

There is no such thing as "Semi-porcelain" or "Semi-china."


Such terms as "Dirigold," "Duri-gold," "Gold Ray," "Mir-a-Gold," should not be used to describe products not made of gold.

"Hand-Tailored," unless qualified means an article completely made by hand.

Thanks for scattering quotations from James Joyce and Gertrude Stein through your volumes of "Questions and Answers." These literary figures puzzle, interest and amuse me, but I wonder if you have ever noticed how, now and then, some untutored and illiterate person will achieve equally picturesque verbal effects. I am sending you a paragraph from a letter written by a farmer to a medicine company.

My reader's quotation is perfect Joyce and Stein literature. It follows:

"It was an old sick life in me. My nerves were sick and troubled. I had a very tired feeling; that I knew when I was a little boy. The liever was a very dark feeling; and uncom-fortable and heavy pains in the lowns. The plies sickness is sometimes poore and rough."

While reading "The History of the Foundling Hospital," by Nicholas and Wray, I came on a passage which will interest critics of Christian churches and which will provide Freethinkers with ammunition. The passage, which I've copied for your readers, tells how children were kept in slavery in 1786.

Thanks to an alert and intelligent reader—who has helped me with numerous passages that I've used in my 26 volumes of "Questions and Answers"—we are given the text of a resolution passed by the Committee of the Hospital, the purpose of which dealt with the religious education of foundlings placed out as apprentices. Notice the crude admission that religion is a ready weapon to keep "the lower classes" in mental and physical bondage.

The resolution:

"That the children of this hospital are placed out, each shall have the copy of the prayers they use in this hospital, the same to be printed on small portable twelves on parchment with a thin pasteboard
cover, and another shall be delivered to the master or mistress of the child, with the preamble as follows:

"As it is of the greatest moment to breed up children in the fear of God, as the best means of keeping them in proper subjection to their master, mistress and superiors, and as prayer is the most effectual means to promote such fear and to enforce obedience to the laws of God, you are hereby informed that it is expected of you to take care that this child (name and age) says his or her prayers constantly every morning as well as every evening, and you are to give him or her due sense of what he or she is about, and to this end you must be careful that he or she repeats prayers in a slow, serious and solemn manner, and you are further to take care that this child do frequent the public worship on the Sabbath Day in a sober, pious and orderly manner."

How would you define a smart man?

He's one who hasn't let a woman pin anything on him since he was a baby.

I agree with your opinion that Sinclair Lewis' characters are taken from life, some of them, as you say, being composite pictures. Has he ever come around to writing about his ex-wife, Dorothy Thompson? It would be something of an experience to get his impressions.

Sinclair Lewis doesn't label her as anyone but Winifred Marduc Homeward (in his new novel, "Gideon Planish") but this is a free country and no one can stop us from thinking. The passage about her characteristics gave me several fancy laughs, for it's a certain important lady down to the lint in her navel. Here 'tis:

"Winifred Marduc Homeward ... that was a woman, THE woman, the American woman careerist, and it is a reasonable bet that in 1935 she will be dictator of the United States and China. Winifred Homeward, the Talking Woman. She was an automatic, self-starting talker. Any throng of more than two persons constituted a lecture audience for her, and at sight of them she mounted an imaginary platform, pushed aside an imaginary glass of ice water, and started a fervent address full of imaginary Information about Conditions and Situations that lasted till the audience sneaked out—or a little longer. She was something new in the history of women ... as handsome as a horse, a portly presence with a voice that smothered you under a blanket of molasses and brimstone." ... The same important lady gets this said about her by one of the characters in the Lewis opus:

"Oh, it isn't that she's always giving her own version of the Sermon on the Mount, but that she always carries her own portable Mount right with her and sets it up even at a cocktail party. She's the first Lady Messiah, and I'm afraid she's going to get the entire Messiah industry in wrong. After the third scream of righteousness whenever she attacks Hitler, Winifred almost makes me tolerate Hitler, and I don't like that!"

If Hollywood turns this story into a movie, the bosses had better underscore the usual line about similarity to characters, living or dead, being entirely coincidental.

I can't get over the simple common sense of the responsible officers in our Armed Forces in attacking the problem of venereal infection with so much realism. When the decision was first made to distribute rubber contraptions to the men in order to keep them clean I sincerely believe that a minor revolution was achieved, considering the puritanical elements everywhere. Do these people ever howl?

They howl, but it doesn't do them any good. The sensible work goes on, with the result that venereal infection in the Armed Forces has fallen to a new low. Our soldiers never were healthier. This reminds me of what Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt did when she first heard about the Army's efforts in behalf of sexual hygiene. Bishop Beerbelch filled her with fears that the rubbers and health-preserving services would result in orgies, with the result that women like herself wouldn't be safe from attack. Being the kind who always does something about things, Mrs. Prissy-Pratt approached a sergeant and asked him why he tolerated such conduct. "Do you realize," she warned, "that you are exposing these men to new temptations? What possible reason have you for permitting the distribution of these gadgets of Satan?" "Lady," said the sergeant, "them things is great for morale." Baffled by his use of a word that's close to the one she uses endlessly, Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt turned to a new field. She had been told by Bishop Beerbelch what
awful things strip-teasers do in public, so she decided to leave this tough sergeant and, as an exercise in dynamic morality, seek a bump-grind expert and convert her to right living. After working on Ma-bel for an hour, the strip-teaser retorted: "Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt, you don't understand my art and my control of the situation. I'd have you understand that I've been stripping for 12 years and never lost a spangle."

What did you think of William Saroyan's "The Human Comedy"?

Saroyan knows how to line up an assortment of human odds and ends, and sometimes makes them say a line or two worth hearing, but most of his stuff belongs on the counters in the bargain basement. "The Human Comedy" has its moments, like the one that has the little idiot (who impressed me as being the brightest character in the movie) standing in line outside a cinema, without a dime to buy a ticket, yet standing there because he's lonely and wants to be near people. After an hour of this, he says he's beginning to get tired of standing in that line. Saroyan has made a career of the human race. He has gone in for a dozen variations on the theme that people are wonderful. Well, he's a human being. You're a human being. So'm I. That makes it unanimous. We like to be flattered. That's a part of the human comedy, though one doesn't find that point stressed in the picture. After all, the movies, the press and the radio belong to people, and who's to stop them when they tell a lively young fellow to use their media to make people feel good by congratulating them on how wonderful they are. There's nothing new about that. Eddie Guest's been writing pomes on that theme for 30 years. The Bible says Gawd was made in man's image. We wonderful people fail for that kind of bunk. Another thing that came through Saroyan's story was his immense appetite for spookology and supernaturalism—in short, plain, old-fashioned Fundamentalism. I don't remember any other picture that had as much piety thrown at me as during the two hours or more of Saroyan's hodge-podge. I never saw so much food mumbled over in order to get Gawd to take the curse off it. I never heard more church hymns sung in choruses or solos. I never heard so many "Gawd bless you's."

Maw, of course, prayed, and read the Good Book. I forget how many other characters prayed. Gawd was mentioned several times. Churches got soft words. And the old man, dead for two long years before the picture opens, busts through the grave and returns for a visit, during which he does some lecturing, sermonizing and planting a husbandly kiss on his widow's head, which she felt sure enough, though she couldn't see the kisser. I wonder if this Saroyan isn't an archbishop in civvies. If this guess is right, Archbishop Saroyan should read the Bible that he uses as a prop in one of his tender scenes. Jesus called our ancestors "O generation of vipers." But they nailed Him up, which shows how shrewd Saroyan is in collecting tens of thousands of dollars for singing. "O generation of wonderful people." Schopenhauer and I would delete "wonderful" and insert "lousy." Saroyan has a talent for words, but hasn't anything to say. His verbiage, at times, is lively, but a writer who has the depth of tissue paper is still superficial, regardless of his gabbiness. Now, take Patsy O'Bang. True, he's gabby, and sometimes he blows up a lot of wind, but underneath his spoofing, ribbing and razzing is a mind that delves below the surface of things ranging from the 40 sciences to the next steps in the improvement of toilet paper. Back in 1912, Patsy O'Bang and I worked on the Milwaukee Leader. I mean it, literally. Skeptics can check this by looking into the early files of that child of the superior brain of Victor L. Berger. They'll see Patsy O'Bang's name in a hundred issues, for the city editor, Chester M. Wright, thought enough of O'Bang's stuff to give it a by-line. Most of it was about funny or eccentric doings of people along the police run. But he did do interviews, theater and music reviews, feature articles, political reporting—in fact, everything but sports and sassyety, both of which he hated. And all for $18 per week of seven days, though there were only six issues to the week. For months,
Patsy O'Bang tried to get a hike to $20, but Mr. Wright always answered with additional assignments, which kept him working from 7:30 in the A.M. to 10 at night. Once, Mr. Wright beamed and whispered, man-to-man style: "Patsy, I've got something extra special for you tonight—an interview with the Nation's Sweetheart, the great and beautiful movie star. She's here for a personal appearance—a good-will trip—God knows she needs plenty of good-will—and I want you to take her aside, open her up, see what makes the wheels turn, and pen a feature story that will win first place in the anthologies for the next five generations." Patsy O'Bang, anxious to please, nodded. This meant he had his usual runs—police, sheriff, coroner, fire department, district court, criminal court—until 5 o'clock, after which he was to turn his mind to glamour and charm. But it would be no use asking again for his raise at this time. The city editor had the strange idea that handing Patsy a movie star was compensation enough. So, Patsy O'Bang did his duty and turned in a two-column piece that made the right noises from lead to close. "Well," leered the city editor, before he'd read so much as a line of Patsy O'Bang's copy, "didjamaker?" "Mr. Wright," said O'Bang, stiffly, but politely, "you know I'd never do a thing like that—on your time." The next time he covered the police court, O'Bang came on a mental case that attracted him. He already was known in the scientific world as a great psychiatrist. The case had to do with a little, wan fellow—the Whimple type—who had been caught with two wives—one a sensational red-head, the other a gorgeous blonde. To the judge it was plain bigamy, but Dr. Patsy O'Bang, leaving the press table, asked the Court's indulgence. "As a friend of the court," said Dr. O'Bang, "as one who has degrees in both law and psychology, and amicus humani generis, let me speak briefly in behalf of this poor victim of a malady new to medical science. The prisoner at the bar is a schizophrenic, which, let me add for the enlightenment of the Court, means he has a split personality. That being his condition, wasn't it natural for him to marry a redhead for one split and a blonde for the other split?" "But the judge wasn't to be shunted from clear, harsh duty, "I order both splits in the defendant's personality to be held without bail for the Grand Jury," he decided. "And as for you, Mr. O'Bang, you're nothing more than a hoochomaniacs, which means your personality isn't even split—it's shattered, and all because of too much hard liquor." Giving the judge, who wasn't above the vile stuff himself, a withering look, and with a sigh that seemed to say, "whatinhell's the use of trying to save the damned, lost human race," O'Bang said: "In all my law studies I've never come on anything that makes it possible to charge a judge with contempt of his own court, but there's need for something along that line. "I fine you $100 for contempt," yelled the judge, "and Mr. O'Bang, you won't leave until you pay." "I'll take it to the Supreme Court of the United States!" cried O'Bang, in a rage. "I raise your fine to $25!" The time had come for constructive action. Lawyers and reporters got their heads together. A couple of doctors joined them. After all, Patsy O'Bang represented three great professions—journalism, the law and scientific medicine. Something had to be done. One, assuming leadership, approached the bench and said: "Your honor, please, may we suggest that the Court appoint a committee to investigate this whole incident and report back? I need not tell you that Mr. O'Bang has been honored not only in your great profession, but by the world's greatest journalists and psychiatrists." "I accept the suggestion," said the judge, glad to get out of putting O'Bang in the noosegaw, for he was certain the great scientist, writer and lawyer didn't have more than $2 to his name. "You newspapermen, lawyers and doctors, including Coroner Murphy, are named to the committee and you are to report back after a careful inquiry." Later, near the elevator, O'Bang stood his ground. "I refuse to recognize the committee. I refuse to appear before it, unless I receive advance assurances that the judge will be compelled to publicly apologize for having compelled me to
endure a most humiliating experience." "But," said one of the committee, "the meeting's to take place tonight, at 10 o'clock, in the backroom of Shultz's Saloon. The Press Club's Sick and Death Benefit Fund has $9.85 for flowers at funerals and in sickrooms, but this is an emergency, so the $9.85 will be used for such merchandise and commodities as will enable us to better pursue our investigation." Thinking fast, O'Bang, who can also drink fast, felt certain that no matter how large the committee might be, he could account for at least a third of the available money, so he consented to attend. After the last dime had gone to the bartender, including personal contributions that were brought out after the Flower Fund had been exhausted, the committee decided unanimously (and this included the judge's vote, for he had attended, albeit reluctantly) to have the charges dismissed and that the record be made to show that O'Bang had done nothing untoward, that he was only an innocent seeker after truth and justice, and that the judge never again would lose his temper in the presence of Patsy O'Bang.

Damon Runyon says Jim Tully is among the first five writers in America. Please comment.

Runyon flunked in simple arithmetic.

My wife keeps everlastingly at me with the question, "Why don't you love me as much as you did when we were married?" How would you answer such a question, considering that you specialize in questions and answers?

I don't know anything about your wife, but as a general thing I'd suggest asking the complaining woman, "Are you as lovable now as you were then?"

Only the other day I learned that you, for many years, followed the hobby of compiling puzzles and brain-teasers. I also like to tussle with all sorts of problems. Where can I get your material?

You will find many of them in "A Book of Puzzles, Problems and Brain-Teasers," which my office can supply for 15c, prepaid. I believe it's the best book of its kind, for I was careful to collect only interesting ones. Some of them are amusing. Prof. Patsy O'Bang, the world's greatest mathematician—the Universal What-a-Man who taught Bertrand Russell everything he knows—has handed me many brain-teasers, which he likes second only to strip-teasers. Recently he tried to stump me with a mathematical poem that he had worked out on his own. O'Bang, an expert in this field, assured me there aren't many to be found even in the best libraries. Here's how the O'Bang piece goes:

U O a 0 but I O thee.

0 0 no 0 but O O me.

Then let not my 0 a 0 go,

But give O O I 0 thee so.

I tussled with it for 20 minutes without getting anywhere, so after blackmailing me out of three Hal-demann—Julius Specials (the ingredients of which are well known to my readers), Prof. Patsy O'Bang interpreted his clever masterpiece, as follows:

You sigh for a cipher, but I sigh for thee.

Oh sigh for no cipher, but oh sigh for me.

Then let not my sigh for a cipher go,

But give sigh for sigh for I sigh for thee.

Clever rogue, that O'Bang. Whenever he works out a new brain-teaser, O'Bang throws it at me with the remark, "Diddle over this for a while." Once he intoned: "Yasha Helfitz, Kreisler and Mischa Elman like to fiddle, while I like to diddle." And with that he handed me a dozen new puzzles, which I moved on to delighted readers. Those, like hundreds of others, went into my 26 volumes of "Questions and Answers," which, along with the book mentioned in the first sentence above, contain hundreds of valuable and bemusing specimens of this entertaining science. Those that O'Bang supplied contain much humor. Once, when I asked him how he manages to find humor in so many fields, he replied: "When I was a schoolboy, we debated on which was more important for human life, water or air; now I argue with myself, which is more important, alcohol or women. And, while I think of it, let me say, in all candor, that I'm the first social philosopher to discover the humor of the belly-button, as may be seen by anyone who refers to the 26 volumes of your "Questions and An-
swers, books that never would have been written hadn't I been at your side, to help with bright pieces." Before he had time to turn this neat plug into actual sales by giving the price, Prof. O'Bang was handed a telegram from the Office of War Information, which read:

"We turn to you in our hour of need because we know you are the world's greatest authority on the English language and that you are always ready to serve the Republic. There is urgent need for a definition that will enable us—and the public—to recognize the difference between an order and a directive. We are using both words all over the place, which tends to make Washington more confused than it normally is, which is plenty. We appeal to your patriotism. Help us out of this jam. Down with Hitler."

Prof. O'Bang—world's greatest lexicographer—smiled and waved me to a typewriter. "Take down this prepaid telegram, for I can't fall my country in its hour of crisis," he said, thinking fast. "But," I insisted, "a Collect would be in order; for the O.W.I.'s directive orders a reply, and naturally you shouldn't be expected to meet that expense." "I don't intend to," he intoned, "you're to charge this to the account of E. Haldeman-Julius. A prepaid telegram to the O.W.I. will give its morale an immediate lift. But, enough of this persiflage. Take down what I dictate:

"When you seek to issue a simple order and want it to sound democratic and anti-Nazi, you call it a directive. A directive is the same as an order, but it sounds better under a pretense. However, when a previous day's directive hasn't been carried out, you kick the directive out and issue an order, which holds until the job is done, after which you return to directive. Down with Hitler."

After giving the wire a final reading, O'Bang announced: "This service to Uncle Sam helps redeem the O'Bang name, which only yesterday suffered deep humiliation. My uncle—the one who works for the municipality—responded to the Red Cross's appeal for blood-donors. Like a good patriot, he gave a pint, but—and here I am deeply embarrassed—he passed out. There was nothing for the Red Cross to do but give him an immediate transfusion. It took a quart to bring my uncle back on his feet. We're never going to win the war that way."

In one of your volumes of "Questions and Answers" you say that in the light of the events of the past five years, Heinrich Heine's "famous warning to France, with its uncanny prescience, is well worth studying." I have looked into your cumulative index and can't find the warning, so let me suggest that you give it to us. I'm sure your readers will appreciate such a service.

In 1834-35, Heinrich Heine contributed a series of articles on religion and philosophy in Germany to the Revue des Deux Mondes, later to be reprinted in book form in both French and German, under the title, "On Germany." Below, from the second volume, is a remarkable prophecy of the course that a German revolution would take, an uncanny anticipation of the Nazi cataclysm. In one respect, Heine missed the mark. It did not occur to him that such a revolution would come, not from the same elements as those leading the French Revolution, but from a combination of reactionary forces seeking to destroy all liberal and democratic ideas. When this was written, the leading schools of philosophy in Germany were the Transcendental Idealists of Fichte, the Absolutists of Hegel and the Nature-Philosophers of Schelling, all three claiming to stem from Kant. In Heine's famous warning to France he tells what a German revolution would do to Western civilization. Heine's words follow:

German philosophy is an important fact; it concerns the whole human race and only our latest descendants will be able to judge whether we are to be praised or blamed for having developed our philosophy first and our revolution afterwards. As I see it, a methodical nation such as we are, necessarily began with the Reformation, could only busy itself with philosophy after that and having completed this, then pass on to political revolution. This sequence I consider most logical. Heads, which philosophy has used for thinking, the remnant of the cut off for its own purposes. Philosophy, however, could never use heads cut off by a preceding revolution. Be not afraid, however, ye German Republicans; the German Revolution will not turn out to be milder and gentler because it was preceded by Kantian Criticism, the Transcendental Idealism of Fichte or..."
by the Philosophy of Nature. Through these doctrines, revolutionary forces have been developed which only await their time in order to break forth and fill the world with dismay and amazement. Followers of Kant will come to the fore who will set aside all reverence in the world of phenomena as he did in the world of thought. Followers, who will mercilessly demolish the foundations of our European life with sword and axe, in order to destroy all remaining roots of the past. Along with them, armed adherents of Fichte will appear on the scene, not to be curbed in their fanatical will by fear or self-interest; for, living through the mind, they defy matter, as did the early Christians, who also could be restrained neither by torture nor by pleasure of the flesh. Indeed, in a social revolution, such transcendentalist idealists would be even more unyielding than were those early Christians, because these set forth earthly martyrdom in order to attain to heavenly bliss, while the transcendentalist idealist regards martyrdom as mere seeming and is not accessible in the stronghold of his own ideas.

But still more terrible than all others would be the Philosophers of Nature who would take an active part in a German revolution and would identify themselves with the work of destruction. Because, though the Kantian hand would strike with a hard and well-aimed blow, his heart unmoved by any traditional reverence; though the Fichtian courageously faces every danger because in reality it does not exist for him, the Nature-Philosopher will be frightful because he will call to his aid the primal sources of old German Pantheism and thus awaken within himself that fighting spirit which we find in the ancient Germans and which does not fight in order to destroy, in order to win, but only in order to fight. Christianity—and this is the most beautiful thing to its credit—has somewhat mitigated this brutal German fighting spirit but it could not destroy it. And if ever that moderating talisman, the Cross, should break, the ferocity of the old warriors will break forth again, that insane Berserker rage of which the Nordic bards sang and told so much. As a fact, that talisman is decaying and the day will come when it will collapse lamentably. Then the old stone gods will arise out of the forgotten ruins of the dead past, rub the dust of a thousand years out of their eyes and Thor will at last spring up with his giant hammer and smash the Gothic Cathedral.

When you hear this din and clat-ter, look out for yourselves, you neighbors, you Frenchmen, and do not mix into these affairs which we are carrying on at home in Germany. You might fare ill by it. Refrain from fanning the fire, refrain from extinguishing it; the flames might scorch your fingers.

Do not smile at my advice, as the advice of a dreamer who warns you against Kantians and Nature-Philosophers, and who expects, in the world of reality, the same revolution that has taken place in the world of intellect. Thought precedes action, as lightning precedes thunder.—To be sure, German thunder is German and not very nimble and comes rolling on somewhat slowly, but come it will. And once you hear crashing as never there was crashing in the world’s history before, then realize: German thunder has at last reached the goal. At that sound, the eagle will fall dead out of the sky and the lions in the remotest desert of Africa will put their tails between their legs and will crawl into their royal dens. In Germany, a play will be enacted which will make the French Revolution appear a mere harmless idyll. At present, to be sure, it is rather quiet and if one or another here or there, is a bit lively, do not imagine that these are the ones who will some day be the real actors. These are only the small dogs that run about in the empty arena barking and biting one another before the hour comes when the troop of real gladiators will arrive, who will fight to the death. And that hour will come!

As on the seats of an amphitheatre, the nations will group themselves around Germany in order to witness the big contest. I advise you, Frenchmen, to be very quiet then, and for God’s sake, do not applaud. We might easily misunderstand that and command silence a little rudely in our impolite manner, for if we were able in the past, in our servile, low-spirited state, sometimes to overpower you, we could do so far more readily in the audacity and intoxication born of our new liberty. You yourselves know what one is able to do in such a situation. Beware! I am your friend and therefore tell you the bitter truth. You have more to fear from a liberated Germany than from the entire Holy Alliance combined with all the Croats and Cossacks. For, firstly, you are not beloved in Germany, which is almost incomprehensible, since you are so charming and tried so hard during your present in Germany, to please at least the better and lovelier half of the German people. And though this half may have loved you, nevertheless, it is the half
that does not bear arms and whose friendship therefore benefits you little. I have never been able to understand what people really had against you. Once, in a beer-cellar in Goettingen, a young Alteutscher contended that revenge should be taken on the French on account of Konrad von Hohenstaufen whom they beheaded in Naples (1268). Of course, you have forgotten this. We, however, forget nothing. You see, once we become desirous of a fight with you, we shall not lack valid grounds. In any case, I advise you, therefore, to be on your guard. Whatever may happen in Germany—always be armed, remain calm at your post, stand at attention. I mean well by you and it almost frightens me when I heard the other day that your ministers intended to disarm France.

Since, notwithstanding your present Romanticism you are born classicists, you are acquainted with Olympia. Among the naked gods and goddesses who there enjoy themselves at feasts of nectar and ambrosia, you find a Goddess who in the midst of such joy and diversion, is nevertheless always in armor, with her helmet on her head and her spear in her hand. She is the Goddess of Wisdom.

What's there about a grass widow that's characteristic of the species? After each divorce she feels like a new man.

Patsy O'Bang, the world's greatest expert on political slogans, wrote as follows to President Roosevelt after studying his program of "cradle-to-the-grave" legislation: "'Cradle-to-the-grave' sounds too spooky. I suggest: 'Ladle to the gravy.'"

How long has Patsy O'Bang been working for (and with) you? Have his works ever been collected in book form?

Patsy O'Bang and I have been like that for 35 years. Like Socrates, O'Bang talks, leaving others to pick up the pearls he scatters with such a lavish hand. Hundreds of pieces about the great Patsy O'Bang, the universal what-a-man, will be found in my 26 volumes of "Questions and Answers." When I showed the above to Dr. O'Bang, he smiled modestly and said, "I like to see people's curiosity satisfied. Curiosity is one of the most important mainsprings of culture, knowledge, science, invention, and progress in general. I once knew a fellow who put his hand in a mule's mouth to see how many teeth the mule had. The mule closed his mouth to see how many fingers the man had. Thus was the curiosity of both man and beast satisfied."

What's the specific for bunkitis? The Little Blue Books.

Is there any dust-free air in the world? Only over the ocean, more than 600 miles from shore, which shows how rare is perfection and how far we must go for it. As for humans, only Dr. Patsy O'Bang, the mighty what-a-man, is perfect. And that almost goes for his tribe, too. Recently, after reading how his niece, a great track star, won a race while in her practicing shorts, he commented: "My! What she could do naked!" Examining the girl's picture that accompanied the flattering news report, O'Bang pointed to her shoulder straps and said: "Those narrow pieces of ribbon keep an attraction from becoming a sensation."

From press reports one gets the idea that the Soviet Union is restudying its policy with regard to religion. What are the facts?

There's no evidence to show that the U.S.S.R. is preparing to turn to ways of plety. The Russian leaders and most of their followers continue to scorn religion. At the same time they call for tolerance. The attitude is in complete harmony with the traditional attitude of Freethinkers toward religionists. I have a fair knowledge of the entire library of Freethought and I'm still to come on anything suggesting persecution for those who retain religious notions. No recognized leader of Freethought has ever taken the position that followers of religious organizations should be forced to give up superstition and supernaturalism. Freethinkers are liberals who believe people should be protected in their right to freedom of choice in matters concerned with the God-idea, church ceremonies, dogmas, and the like. All the Freethinker asks is that education be made available, on a voluntary basis, to the victims of the clerical obscurantists. It's only when the hierarchy indulges in political activities, or conspires to undermine freedom, democracy and
liberalism, that the enlightened and progressive Freethinker springs to action. With regard to the Soviet Union, the best expression on this problem will be found in a speech delivered by Mikhail Kalinin, President of the Soviet Union, and published in the “Agitators’ Guidebook,” organ of the Moscow Communist Party, in which Kalinin said that while religion is a misleading institution to be struggled against by education, religious practices must be tolerated. Here are Kalinin’s words:

“We are often told that among our soldiers, especially those of older age, that there are believers who wear crosses and recite prayers whom the younger people ridicule. We must remember that we do not persecute anyone for religion. We believe that religion is a misleading institution and struggle against it by education. But since religion still grips considerable sections of the population and some people are deeply religious, we cannot combat it by ridicule. Of course, if some young people find it amusing, that isn’t so terrible. But we must not allow it to develop into mockery.”

In this Kalinin shows he understands the traditional position of Freethinkers when they’re in positions of power and come into contact with people who insist on retaining their religious practices. Kalinin gives no hostages to religion, he restates his intellectual rejection of all forms of supernaturalism, but he warns against placing obstacles in the way of those who accept religious dogmas, except in the single matter of enlightenment through educational media. This shows the difference between Freethinkers and clerical-fascists in the seats of power. Clerical-fascists invariably conspire to use the full powers of the State to crush religious heterodoxy and favor their own brand of religious ideology. They do not hesitate to torture and murder Freethinkers, Rationalists, Agnostics, Atheists, Skeptics, and other dissenters. Persecution is the favorite device of clericalism when elevated to positions of power. But Freethinkers, on the other hand, respect the right of their intellectual enemies to follow their own impulses in matters religious. In fact, they use the powers of their State to protect them in their attitudes, however fallacious they may be and however offensive they may be to the educated portion of the population. The world will never be truly civilized until it catches up to the enlightened policies of the leaders of Freethought.

I believe you have said that your set of 26 volumes of “Questions and Answers” is outselling everything you are publishing. It should, and if it isn’t, it would seem to show that Sgt. A. M. Paschall was right in thinking you should write the entire contents of The American Freeman, as back in the old days. The Haldeman-Julius Special is better than A-1 whether you read it or drink it.

I never said my “Questions and Answers” collection is outselling anything published in the H-J plant. I said it’s outselling any other of my published works, which is something else entirely and even somewhat dissimilar. Of course, I mustn’t kid myself. One reason why these seven-pound packages are going out at such a lively clip is because I’m giving them away. Persons who send me $4 for a 4-year subscription (or renewal) to The Freeman get this huge set of books free, prepaid. It’s the bargain that makes the project irresistible. By a happy coincidence it happens that the 26 volumes are crammed with an immense amount of useful and entertaining reading, if I do say it myself, which I’m doing. And now that I’m well started on handing myself bouquets, let me go whole hog and quote a few paragraphs from a letter from Miss Caroline Nations, of University City, Mo.:

“It’s not pleasant to bump into my own ignorance, but I can learn the hard way. And it’s right that I should feel ashamed of myself, for most of the stuff in ‘Q’s and A’s’ is must information. One can’t be wide-awake and remain ignorant of the points you discuss. Nor does it offer much consolation to know that lots of college professors are as rusty or maybe rustier on those points than I am. I long ago discovered that some of those boys are sadly deficient in numerous ways. On the big, vital questions their knowledge is generally very sketchy.

“H. G. Wells is absolutely right: we need an era of pamphlets that will ventilate ideas. Most of our presses are ‘kept,’ and the obscurantists seem to be ‘blue penciling’
them all. The schools and colleges keep silent on the big, controversial issues, and they thus turn out thousands of young people as blind as bats, but under the delusion they are educated. 'The problem then is how to make a sufficient number of people look straightly and simply at reality before it is too late,' as Wells has observed. That is: the problem you have been busying yourself with all along, and it looks like it is pretty much up to you to do something about it. You say: 'During the past 24 years I've distributed more than 200,000,000 pamphlets, the greatest achievement in the history of printing. It's my ambition to reach the billion mark.' That's big stuff, big stuff in every way. Why don't some of those chaps out fearing their panditry or subject to write about do you? But it would require the combined talents of a George Jean Nathan and a Joseph McCabe to be equal to the job. But we have the very boy on tap, the one and only, Patsy O'Bang. Stop and think, will you, what a whale of a story Patsy has up his sleeve? Tell him to turn it loose! Have him tell the world about the significance of your work, and in a way to wake up even the old stodgy profs. Some of them are sleeping right through this war. There's not enough of the right dope written about Haldeman-Julius. Since Patsy O'Bang is the boy who taught you HOW-TO all the way around the clock, and has the lowdown on your stepping on bunions and busting gizzards all these years, he should be able to dish it up in great style. Maybe the tall blonde could give him a lift.

"You have put up a magnificent fight for social justice, and if we win the peace after the war, the people must be awakened by men like you. 'The rotting corpse of the old world' must be made to stink to high heaven. Its stench must blow full in our faces until we rise up in a body and find the right way of escape. You have taken the right way to ventilate ideas, and while you have been astonishingly successful, you should be better known for what you are. Those poor deluded students, when will they get around to making your acquaintance? People like to pigeonhole you as this, that and the other, I have met very few who realize you are doing an exceedingly important work. You may not care a damn, but it is important that your work be known for what it is.

It seems to me that C. A. Lang might very ably do the work. He fully appreciates what you are doing, and I think he would enjoy that sort of thing. Some of his letters to me are too good for private consumption. They belong in The American Freeman. If Patsy O'Bang is too busy stooging for H-J. to take time out to tell the world about the importance of his work, then I think Lang should tackle the job.

Miss Nations goes on to praise Florence Eipper Stout and her husband, Paul R. Stout, for turning out that immense index to my 26 volumes of "Questions and Answers." As I've mentioned before, these two friends (I've never seen them in the flesh) did all the work of compiling that index, which fills 128 large pages, all set in small type. They did the hefty job out of a friendly interest in the work I'm doing, refusing to accept a penny for their prodigious labors. Says Miss Nations:

"I can't appreciate a job like that all at once; only by turning to that Index again and again as I did, does the consciousness of its value grow upon me. . . ."

"If this war teaches anything, it shows that the civilized attitude has deadly enemies on every side. The truly civilized man must be a fighter. Complacency should be on reserve for those who are unawakened and can't be awakened. And so the educated man must strive for that all around alertness and for the awakened outlook which you set forth in "Questions and Answers." Not only do our schools and colleges fail to awaken young people after the manner of "Questions and Answers," but they offer no inkling that such alertness is required. In the main, the teachers and professors have never been exposed to such strong medicine. Young people are sent to school to learn how to escape life, not how to face it. They go in for 'success,' or for culture that can be pursued without bothering about such 'extraneous' matters as social justice."

And now, since such a good start has been made, let's turn Miss Nations loose again:

"You have it on the other bright boys in being able to be serious without being solemn. You discuss the most important problems, and give a steady stream of information on serious matters of all kinds, and you do it with the ease, grace and charm of a George Jean Nathan.

"Those who go in for whimsical and careless charm, usually offer nothing more substantial than a lettuce leaf to go with their fancy mayonnaise, as, for example, Walter Winchell and his endless series of
blessed events, but you are fighting for the things that matter most, and you do it with an ingenious devilishness as captivating as Nathan's. Angling for major and minor rackets is really quite a game, also serious business! What's African big game hunting compared bringing down Father Coughlin, Rev. Winrod, Herb Hoover, and Henry Ford? When out gunning for bunk, you hit the jack pot with a priceless precision, but in such a careless manner as to make it seem accidental. One rarely comes across that sort of thing outside the pages of The American Freeman, so don't let those Big Shots muscle you out of the picture.

As Joseph McCabe has said, 'The greatest social question of all is justice to the mass of the people.' From the beginning you have gone all out for that big fight. You have set the problem clearly before your readers in its large and full dimensions. It seems that nothing connected with it has escaped your attention. And not only have you delined its scope and analyzed it with thoroughness, but you have proceeded to attack injustices with unifying force and intelligence. At the same time you have held fast to all true cultural values, and while fighting for justice for the masses, you have upheld those rare and splendid things which can be appreciated and understood by only the most developed and highest type of human being. I wish you were more widely recognized for what you are—a man who is trying, in a spirit across a thoroughly civilized attitude towards life. You have said this of George Jean Nathan, but it applies more aptly to yourself. Nathan is not putting up a fight for the civilized attitude, but you are. Nathan merely expresses the civilized attitude, you get out and get under regarding it, you chase its enemies to hell and back. And you do all this dirty work with the charm of Nathan at his best.'

All this will impress some of my tougher readers as being so much self-exploitation, and it's hard to answer the argument. I'm still too learn how to disguise a plug. But why not approach that part of one's job in the spirit of frank commercialism or self-advertising? The ultimate aim isn't anything to be ashamed of. All I'm trying to do is to sell some good books at bargain prices. Here I'm reminded of the madame of a popular establishment who decided to enlarge her Los Angeles clientele by inaugurating a system of business-like methods.

Following the method of many businessmen, Maud called her staff together for a pep talk. From then on, once each week, her numerous associates grouped around her for morale-building dissertations that brought out new wrinkles in the ancient profession. With her in command, the forceful talks worked wonders. Business boomed. Even Dominic, her faithful talent-scout, was beginning to get better results because of her lectures. Inspired by her constructive arguments he decided to improve his department, and as a result he reached out for better and more gifted associates. Maud beamed. One day he burst in and panted, "Maud, what'll I get for bringing in Greta Garbo, Dorothy Lamour and Mae West?" "You genius, you, don't bother to haggle about money. Just name your price," Dominic." "I want a grant for each of them and a percentage of the take," "O.K., Dominic, it's a deal." "Hurrah!" shouted Dominic, "That's out of the way. Now I have to rush to Hollywood to sell Greta, Dot and Mae on the idea."

* * *

I want a list of the Army's enlisted ratings and their base pay?

Here are the latest pay scales:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Monthly Base Pay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master or First Sergeant</td>
<td>$188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Sergeant</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Sergeant or Technician 3d</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergeant or Technician 4th</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporal or Technician 5th</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private First Class</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you think war stimulates science?

I've heard even scientists claim that war stimulates science, but no real proof is forthcoming. This popular notion deserves to be debunked. Most of the inventions used in war—I'd say to the extent of 95 percent, though this is only a guessimate—are peace-time discoveries that are adapted to war uses. It doesn't take an immense amount of creative skill to apply or adapt inventions to the purposes of war. The inventions produced by wars are distortions of real science for they are intended to hurt rather than benefit humanity. Scientists have plenty to do in times of peace and manage to keep busy. Of course, our scientists must bend their energies to winning the war—
and they're doing a good job, to say the least—but I predict that the 10 years that follow the downfall of Hitler will be many times more fruitful than 10 years of his brutalitarian regime. It will take real science to remake the world so that bandits like Hitler, Mussolini and Japanese aggressors will be held down and sterilized.

How’d you react to the cries of anguish emitted by those who were shocked by the dirty words in Noel Coward's “In Which We Serve”?

The Priscilla Prissy-Pratts always baffle me. I’ll never know their minds. I saw the film and liked it, especially the work of the minor characters. I vaguely recall a couple of hell’s demons, but they belonged so naturally to the dialogue—they were so in character—that I gave them no thought, but I confess that when one of the sailors used “bloody” in mixed company, I took notice, not because the word upsets me but because I know how it tangles the innards of England’s Prissy-Pratts. I recall the excitement caused two decades ago by Bernard Shaw when he had one of his characters—a woman, at that—use the word on the London stage. There was a tremendous outcry, but the country survived. I suppose it’s “bloody” that caused the Kingston-on-Thames Youth Council to reject the Coward picture at a youth parade. The Daily Mail, of London, touched this off neatly with these lines:

The English, who bring children up with care, Won’t let them see a film in which men swear.

Obediently, children find another— And see a U.S. gangster shoot his mother.

The Prissy-Pratts are everywhere, they are always articulate, always on guard for virtue and righteousness, and everlasting as the guts of Dr. Patsy O’Bang, the world’s greatest liberal.

I want to know how many Americans died for their country in our seven wars.

Two hundred and fifty thousand Americans lost their lives on the battlefields and sea fronts of this nation’s seven wars. Up to May 30, 1943, we lost 13,641 in the second World War—army casualties, 6,318; sailors, 5,644; marines, 1,601; coast guardsmen, 78. The Civil War’s men killed in battle number about 75 percent of all men killed in battles to date—110,070 Union men and 74,524 Confederates. American lives lost in combat during the first World War numbered 50,510; the Revolutionary War, 4,044; the Mexican War, 1,721; the War of 1812, 1,877; the Spanish-American War, 700.

The old Nazi tactic of blaming everything that’s bad on the Jews didn’t work out in the case described in the enclosed clipping. Your readers will find it revealing.

The clipping is from a Nazi newspaper in Bratislava, which complains:

“One of the reasons for expelling the Jews was the fact that Jewish innkeepers ruined rural municipalities with alcohol. Now the Jewish innkeepers have disappeared but the people drink more alcohol than before.”

What’s the origin of the phrase, ”mad as a hatter”?

Dr. Alice Hamilton, in her book, “Exploring the Dangerous Trades,” says:

“Mercury is used in the making of felt hats, and the poison resulting from its use over a period of years eventually caused the unfortunate victims’ muscles to jerk violently and involuntarily. The hatters’ friends drew false conclusions.”

Bertrand Russell’s essay, “An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish,” is a gem of the purest ray, but why not give its source? When you reprinted it in the June, 1943, Freeman, you should have said so.

Bertrand Russell’s magnificent essay was written at my request. It appeared first in The Freeman, after which the type was used to issue the material in pamphlet form. I’m sure my inquiring reader hasn’t a shred of evidence to support his assertions. Joseph McCabe, after reading Russell’s essay, wrote that he doesn’t like his “general and undiscriminating pessimism—it reminds me too much of Shaw.” So much for Russell. Now, for a bit about myself. Samuel Chugerman, of Brooklyn, N.Y., who wrote an important book on the great Lester F. Ward, says he’s rereading “your past glorious stuff, as I am working on a book which will treat, for the common, average man, of the greatest menace in the world—past,
present, and I hope not, future—viz. the lack of the scientific attitude of mind.” Mr. Chuferman then asks:

“Why in hell have you put your labors under a basket? We need you, so come out, and in spite of the grand labors you have done in the cause of Rationalism, Freethought and just plain truth you can get a publisher. Don’t publish it yourself for that wouldn’t be anywhere near as effective as having the enemy broadcast your words. I mean this.”

I’m as vain as the next guy, and would like to see my works in impressive, dignified, weighty, expensive tomes, because I know they’d look important on my shelves. But would Mr. Average Fellow pay for such library furniture? Maybe. But this I’m sure of, they buy—and read—my cheap editions. It’s more important to me that I should be read than that I should be dressed up like a circus horse and lit up like a Polish church. I’ve always held that format isn’t important. It’s the stuff that counts. To repeat myself, if one’s stuff is good it’ll find its public even if it’s printed on toilet paper. I’ll take pamphlets every time, because I know they’re read.

Please comment on Bishop Noll, of Indiana.

He’s the country’s most fanatical advocate of Thought Control.

I want a couple of toasts to a maiden.

Here’s to the maiden who suffers from fallen archness . . . Here’s to the girl men toast and women roast.

How did the custom of wearing mourning originate?

This question is answered in Robert Briffault’s “Europe,” as follows:

“The origin of mourning lay not in a desire for the bereaved to show sorrow over the departed, but in a desperate attempt to prevent the ghosts of said departed from haunting them in the days that followed. They figured that by dressing completely in black, they might escape the attention of presumably near-sighted ghosts entirely.”

Newspapers frequently report that defendants in the Federal courts have entered pleas of “nolo contendere.” What does it mean?

Nolo contendere, or non vult con-
tendere, is a defendant’s plea in a criminal action which, though by no means an admission of guilt, has the same legal effect as regards the proceedings of the indictment.

Knowing how you and your readers enjoy a good laugh, I’m sending you a clipping from a recent issue of “Current Religious Thought.”

Thanks to a thoughtful reader, the following sentences are lifted from the Rev. Dr. E. Stanley Jones’ article:

“We know now that anger and resentments will create stomach ulcers. In other words, you have a Christian stomach . . . Some doctors have told us that there was a physical basis for morality; that the secretions of the glands determine character. But the opposite is also true: the character determines the secretions of the glands . . . The conclusion that we must come to is that we have Christian glands. Live in a Christian way, they will work normally; in an un-Christian way and they will be upset.”

I have an infidel stomach that’s been digesting Freethought, Rationalism, Agnosticism and Atheism for decades, and I know it’s as pure and sweet as the breath of an angel. It can take any kind of vittles, along with Haldeman-Julius Specials, and I defy anyone to find even the hint of an ulcer. Truly a heterodox stomach. It works like a charm, as does every inch of the bowel, without the aid of mineral oil, calomel, kidney pills, slippery elm bark, or suppositories. Maybe it’s only my head that’s guilty of heresy, while the stomach functions according to the higher dictates of Methodism. I’ll put my stomach against the stomach of Bishop Beerebelch or Mrs. Prisella Prissy-Pratt any time and I’ll outpoint them. As for my glands, knowing the way they behave I’m ready to admit they’ve always been in the control of Satan. But they’re lots of fun.

Can you tell me how many species of animals are known to exist? About 900,000.

What’s the name of the army’s legal bureau?

The Judge Advocate General’s Department.

I have just come across a piece of literature that puzzles me. It goes, “Here I
stand, forelorn and grey, while my city
cousin gets a nickel a play.” Can you
tell me what it refers to?
Sorry, but I don’t know. Maybe
there’s a reader who can tell us
what it’s all about.

I am sending you a copy of the prophecy
of the Swiss historian, Jacob Burckhardt,
on which please comment. To me, this
prophecy is uncanny. I’m a Rationalist,
like yourself, but when I come on a per-
fect thing like this, I’m left bewildered.
In about the year 1800, Jacob
Burckhardt turned to the 20th Cen-
tury and penned this prophecy:
“In this pleasant Twentieth Cen-
tury, authority will raise its head,
and a terrible head. . . . My mental
image of the terrible simplifica-
tors who will come over our old
Europe is not an agreeable one. . . .
“It has long been clear to me that
the world is driving toward an alter-
native between complete democracy
and absolute, lawless despotism
which latter, however, will no long-
er be exercised by dynasties, for they
are too weak-minded, but by alleged-
ly republican military commandos.
We do not yet wish to imagine a
world whose rules would entirely
disregard law, well-being, enriching
labor and industry, credit etc., and
instead would merely rule absolutely
and brutally . . . .
“I feel it in all my bones that
something will break loose in the
West as soon as Russia becomes
completely confused by further forc-
able events. Then the times will
open . . . (when) a real force will
come into existence which will have
desperately little consideration for
the right to vote, the sovereignty
of the people, material well-being,
industry, etc., . . . and this force can
almost only spring from the most
evil, and its effects will make one’s
hair stand on end . . . .”

Yes, clever—that’s the word.
Amazingly so. So what? Max East-
man, who has seen the above quo-
tation, adds that too much fuss “is
made over prophecies that come
true.” He adds, sensibly:
“In order to justify the fuss,
you would have to compute the propor-
tion between those which do and those which do not
come true. If a hundred people
each made a guess, in very general
terms, about the state of things in
the year 2000, several of them would
probably get it right. But it would
not prove that they knew any more
than the others. It would only prove
that the laws of probability are still
working.”

But such good sense will move
few people from grabbing for any-
thing written by men who claim
they can look into the future. Only
the other day a soldier told me the
world shouldn’t be surprised over
the doings of Hitler, Mussolini and
Hirohito “because their actions
were all foretold in the Bible. Even
this war was foretold in Holy Scrip-
ture. And the outcome—victory
for the United Nations.” It would
have been a waste of time to ex-
plain to him the sane, rational atti-
dude one should take towards so-
called prophecies. But this won’t
move Rationalists to abandon their
intelligent, logical position.

What shall I do? I am engaged to a man
who just simply cannot bear children.
You mustn’t expect too much of
a husband.

Please comment on the meaning of Edsel
Ford leaving his vast estate in such a
form that his fortune will suffer an in-
heritance tax of only $12,000,000, when
the tax would have been $150,000,000 if
the property had been put through
in the usual way.

Under the terms of Edsel Ford’s
will his vast holdings in the Ford
Motor Company have been be-
queathed to the Ford Foundation,
which he described as “an institu-
tion for the promotion of scientific,
educational, and charitable pur-
poses.” It is assumed that Henry
Ford’s will carries the same pro-
visions. This doesn’t mean that the
Fords have gone over lock, stock
and barrel to education and hu-
manitarianism. The main objective
is to retain industrial power, which
our lax estate laws permit. With
Edsel and Henry Ford dead the
Government could, under usual
conditions, get enough in taxes to
compel liquidation of perhaps 80
percent of the Ford properties. The
Ford, and other industrialists, get
around this by organizing so-called
philanthropic organizations which
are related to the industries they
controlled during their lifetimes. In
the case of Edsel Ford, the Govern-
ment is getting a mere $12,000,000,
instead of $150,000,000. This will
mean that the Ford family will see
part of its industry’s profits go to a
Ford organization while the family
remains in economic mastery of the
business. The whole scheme is
nothing more than a legalized de-
vice to gyp the American people.
Congress should pass a law to prevent such trickery. An income taxpayer who donates to charity is limited in the matter of exemptions to the extent of 15 percent of his income. The same could be applied to estate taxes. Such a law would make it possible for economic power, in time, to rest where it belongs—in the hands of the American people.

What other potables do you recommend along with the Haldeman-Julius Special?

Nothing can go along with an H-J Special—a 14-ounce glass blessed with two and a half jiggers of Canadian rye, four cubes of ice, and koke for the filler. When there’s good company and excellent things to eat, champagne makes friends friendlier. At our table we always call for, or give, toasts when pouring champagne. The other week we had some R.A.F. fliers in for the week-end, and champagne was in order after two or three H-J Specials—spaced properly by a couple of hours between the hard likker and the gassy, brittle, palate-tickling, esthetic wine. Soon I was drinking to His Majesty the King. Then Dr. Patsy O’Bang saved the day for democracy by proposing a toast to F. D. R., Eleanor, Ma Perkins and Sour-Puss Ikeves. The British boys took it like men. Hands across the seas, cousins, and all that, you know. Here I’m reminded of how these boys were reduced to several painful silences, which I understood because of my vast knowledge of the quirks of genus homo, including the British. Whenever my wife wants to call someone a bum, she lets it be known that he’s just a “bugger.” As she hasn’t much use for the damned human race (she prefers animals), the word “bugger” comes from her lips at least a dozen times in an afternoon. When the R.A.F. boys heard her, they acted as though some one had goosed them with an electric charger. After the third shock I tried to assure them that her word was a pure Americanism, and if “bloody” should pop out now and then, not to give it any mind. My words helped clear the atmosphere. But to return to the drinkables. When there isn’t good company there isn’t any champagne. A bottle of beer does the job now and then, but one is enough for me because more than that gives me a 3 A.M. sour stomach—one of the few things able to put that capacious organ out of whack. Milk always agrees with me—sweet, sour, buttermilk, and every kind of cheese. And juices—tomato, orange, lemon, grape, grapefruit, and so on. Readers used to send me crates of oranges from Florida, Texas and Louisiana, but no more. I used to squeeze from six to a dozen at a time, and to hell with the expense. Now I have been reduced to what’s called an “Orange Drink.” Notice that it isn’t even called orange juice. Its label says only pure orange juice is used—which I believe—but lower, and in smaller type, are the words, “diluted for the sake of better taste.” Of all the bunk, and that two-quart bottle costs 29c, after the deposit on the bottle is picked up. Imagine being told that a certain amount of water has been poured into my orange juice in order to cater to my taste. It’s bad enough to be gypped; it’s worse to be kidded about it.

Please put into scientific language the following words uttered by Adolph Hitler: “You Germans have learned fanaticism from me. Accept my assurance that the same fanaticism still inspires me and that it will never leave me.”

Translated, it means: “I’m nuts, and I’m proud of it!”

I noticed that all your immaculate farm buildings are as white as snow. You must have original and efficient ways of applying paint. Can you give me a hint?

I always insist that the first coat shall be mixed with the second. I then have both coats put on at the same time. Efficiency is my motto. Speed is my goal.

How much are we spending on vitamin pills?

The vitamin pill racket is costing us almost $1,000,000 a day, which makes it one of the country’s major rackets. It’s getting so I shudder whenever I hear the damned word “vitamins” over the radio or in print. Mark you, I’m not saying vitamins aren’t important, for they are, but it’s a fact supported by scientific evidence that every vitamin and every mineral necessary to human alimentation is found in a well-balanced and economical diet.
For instance, dandelion greens have about 10 times the essential vitamins and minerals found in the best head lettuce. Taking vitamin tablets is just playing into the hands of a lot of clever racketeers. The only time a person should swallow vitamin pills is when he's told to do so by a good doctor. In most cases vitamin pills aren't necessary. The vitamin racketeers have created a profitable fad and they intend to continue cashing in. My advice to my readers is to look to their food for their vitamins and minerals and keep away from big-name pills.

I'm hunting for a Bible quotation which tells how idiotic it is to try to catch a bird that's on the alert. Can you help me?

Proverbs 1: 17: "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird."

One of Alfred Hitchcock's writers, who also had authored scores of goosepimpily whodunits for the pulps, landed in the army, where he lived through a scene that throbbed with suspense and drama. Impressed by his weird experience, he jotted down his impressions while they were fresh in his mind, as follows:

I shall never forget that horrible night in the trenches. There we stood, frozen and horrified. The soft-eyed kid—hardly more than a fuzziest lad in his teens—kneeled reverently on the ground, his right hand raised, asking the help of the gods. Shells burst overhead casting eerie shadows on the drawn faces of the panic-stricken men below. It could not happen! "For God's sake," whispered one of the men hoarsely, "shoot!" "Give him time!" cried the sergeant, "take it easy, soldier!" The kid with the soul of a poet drew back his arm slowly, so slowly. The unbelieving eyes of 10 men were riveted on his white, trembling hand. Suddenly his arm shot forward! His fingers opened, and by the light of the enemy's flares in the melancholy skies, they saw the most ghastly impossibility happen! There it lay before their strained, hurt eyes, eight passes in a row!

One of my fellow-professors here at Yale, Maurice R. Davie, was thrown off the air recently by WTIC because he "criticized the Red Cross." A paragraph in the Yale professor's speech didn't please the New Haven, Conn., station, so he was told to delete it, or cancel. He preferred to cancel, remarking: "I refuse to kowtow to the Red Cross or any organization that interferes with my freedom of speech." Your readers may want to read the paragraph that WTIC wouldn't broadcast, so I'm enclosing it. Pass it on to your pious readers.

The "offensive" paragraph (every word of it true) follows:

"Perhaps no single incident has done more damage to Negro morale than the gratuitous insult to the race by the American Red Cross in first refusing to accept the blood of Negro donors and then in segregating it, for no scientific reason whatsoever."

Another reader sends me a clipping reporting the hearing by the Postoffice Totalitarians of a request by the Police Gazette for reinstatement of its second class mailing privilege, without which no publication of any circulation could long remain in business. The Police Gazette now 98 years old, has at last been exposed as a medium for the dissemination of "obscenity." It seems that the first 100 years in magazine publication are the hardest. The Department's Solicitor, William O'Brien, objected to the partly undressed dolls who give the periodical its flavor. Pointing to the public (note to printer—it's public, not public) area of a gorgeous cutie, O'Brien said certain parts are obscene. He used the original and delightful expression, "the dread areas of woman." "What," he asked of the Postoffice officials who were hearing the evidence, "what do pictures of the dread areas of woman contribute to science, the arts or public information?" As a publisher I've never made artistic or commercial use of the "dread areas of woman" in any of my publications, but it's my notion that they're pleasant to look at and anything that's pleasant is esthetic—to certain people, always. Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt and Bishop Beberlech, along with Solicitor General O'Brien, would suppress "the dread areas of woman," in print, but how is one to understand physiology if the "dread areas of woman" are to be suppressed. That's a blow at science. Artists
throughout the ages—even the most plious—have adored the female figure. That takes care of art. And the whole wise world agrees that anyone who isn’t hipto the “dread areas of woman” is a sap and a dope. The knowledge is necessary. That takes care of public information. It’s my theory that there’s much more information to be picked up from studying the curves of Betty Grable. If the second class privilege is to go only to publishers who exploit the lusterless aspects of science, the arts and public information perhaps Solicitor O’Brien can tell us how we are made moral and intellectually by the immense comic sections in our Sunday newspapers, all of which enjoy the subsidy of the department’s second class mailing privilege, one service that causes the government a greater loss than any three other postal services combined. What about the pulp magazines that circulate around 10,000,000 monthly? How much science, art and public information do they impart? But because the old, splendid, warm, human Police Gazette plucks the female form divine it’s compelled to answer to the charges of “obscenity” and “indecency” and defend itself against the department’s determination to suppress it. Anyone who gets a thrill out of a picture of a beautiful woman’s “dreaded areas” deserves that kick and shouldn’t be denied the pleasure it gives him. Hiding beautiful women’s figures won’t make us “good.” That’ll only make us neurotic, and the Lawd knows we’re suffering from too many suppressions as it is without striking out at one of the most harmless explorations a male can indulge in. I hold to the bold theory that a look at a woman’s “dread areas” won’t send mobs of men into the streets looking for cowering females and dragging them to a fate worse than death.

How much dentist gold do the graves hold?

In every 100,000 graves in this country is $650,000 worth of dentist gold.

I’m familiar with your ideas, having read many of your books, including the 26 volumes of your “Questions and An-

swers.” I know what’s inside your head pretty well, and from your frank, intimate pieces, I know about many of your habits, but I don’t know what you look like. Why do you hide your mug? Bring it out in an early issue of your paper.

I’ve explained my position before. I don’t care to exploit my handsome, manly features in my own organ. Some Hollywood talent-scout might spot it and begin tempting me with a contract, his purpose being to have me fill the gaps left by Clark Gable and other cinema Apollos. But, I’ll tell you what I’ll do. If you, or any other reader, will send me a stamped, addressed envelope, I’ll send out my photograph, autographed. But you must promise not to let any Hollywood director see it or he’ll begin bothering me to emote before the camera. I work better before a typewriter.

I know, from your writings, that you couldn’t say a good word for the Southern aristocrats, but you’ll have to admit that they treated their slaves humanely, fed them well, and got mighty little work out of them. Chattel slavery was an economic failure because of the happy-go-lucky attitude of the slaveowners.

My reader grows sentimental over the South, with its fair ladies, magnolias, mint juleps, goateed colonels, easy living, and soft manners. Having studied some of the literature of the South (I don’t get my facts from Abolitionists) it seems to me that even intelligent Southerners dislike to face the facts candidly. Chattel slavery was a brutal, hateful, inhuman system, and a mountain of sweet, sentimental music and polite poems won’t cover its stinking ugliness. In “The Journal of Philip Vickers Fithian: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion, 1773-1774,” published by Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., we get the diary of an observer who lived with one of the great slave-holders of the South, Robert Carter, one of the grandsons of “King” Carter, who acquired 333,000 acres of Virginia land, owned almost 600 slaves, and ran his own textile factories, salt works, grain mills, bakeries, blacksmith shops, owned a fleet of ships, and was a merchant and banker. He was, in addition, a good churchman and a musician. His main business was tobacco. Fithian says
his employer fed his slaves a peck of corn and a pound of meat a week. Carter's overseer, one Morgan, tells Fithian how slaves were treated, as follows:

"For Sullenness, Obstinacy, or Idle-
ness, says he, Take a Negro, strip
him, tie him fast to a post; take then
a sharp Curry-Comb, & curry him
severely till he be well scrap'd; & call
a Boy with some dry Hay, and make the
Boy rub him down for several
minutes, then salt him, & unloose
him. He will attend to his Business
(said the inhuman Infidel) after-
wards!"

Why he called Carter's man an
"infidel" I can't make out, because
he was, like his boss, active in the
church. It was among the Aboli-
tionists in the North that one found
great numbers of Infidels, Agnos-
tics, Rationalists, Skeptics and
Freethinkers. After telling us about
Carter's allotment of a peck of corn
and a pound of meat per week to
each of his slaves, Fithian gives his
readers a fascinating picture of life
in the vast Carter house, Nominy
Hall, where 28 fires were kept burn-
ing steadily all Winter. As for what
came from the kitchen, listen to this:

"Mrs. Carter informed me last
Evening that this Family one year
with another consumes 27000 Lb of
Pork; & twenty Beeces. 550 Bushels
of Wheat; besides corn—4 Hogs-
heads of Rum, & 150 gallons of
Brandy."

Yes, life was charming and pleas-
ant—for the plantation owners.

Is it possible to win a contest by buying
entries from ghost-writers?

A "Contest Expert" advertises his
willingness to ghost-write five con-
tests for the bargain price of $10,
in U. S. cash on the barrell-head.
"Look," cries the professional prize-
winner, "if you win only ONE Good
Prize it will Repay you." How true!
A $5,000 prize will take care of one's
$10 payment and leave a profit
comparable to the returns adver-
tised by wild-cat oil promoters in
the loudest days of the gawdy Cool-
idge boom. Stop and think for a
moment. A big contest that's ad-
vertised nationally may bring the
professional contestant hundreds of
bids for his peculiar services. He
sends them his solution. All pop in
with the child of his super-brains.
So what? You're one of an army.

Besides, if the professional thought
he had a chance of winning the big
prizes do you think he'd waste his
time and money selling his genius
to small-time goofs at $10 per? This
is an amazing opportunity it'd be
wise to miss.

I am the leader of a minor religious
group and as such I conduct publicity
work for our organization. I feel that
your mailing list contains open-minded
men and women who would be willing
to examine our doctrines. Could we pur-
chase part of your mailing list for this
purpose? This may sound strange to
some of my associates who know you to
be a Freethinker.

I can see no reason why I
shouldn't rent my list to such a
group. Naturally, I reject its the-

tistic notions, but this doesn't hinder
me from recognizing the simple
fact that it has a right to be heard.
The test of a free press comes when
one's intellectual or cultural oppon-
ents ask for a hearing. It would be
different if this reader's ideas were
along Fascist lines, with appeals to
the ignorant elements who promote
the dark policies of racial persecuc-
tion. Then, needless to say, I would
refuse to have even commercial
dealings with the group. For ex-
ample, if rotten-minded Father
Coughlin and his Jew-baiters and
Fascists were to offer to pay me
for my mailing list I would have
nothing to do with them. But if
certain individuals with legal and
non-Fascist principles were to seek
the opportunity to propagandize
their theological dogmas, I wouldn't
move a finger to stop them and,
what's more, I'd be willing to have
purely commercial dealings with
them. However, I would reserve the
privilege of discussing their ideas
in my own writings, as before.
That's the true American spirit. I
don't have to agree with them, but
I mustn't put obstacles in the way
of legitimate, legal endeavors.
That's the meaning of fair-play, as
I see it. For example, I don't ac-
cept the supernaturalism of the
Bible, but if some Bible house want-
ed to buy space in The Freeman to
advertise its publications (the Bible,
sermons, tracts, etc.) I would accept
their money and let them have the
space they stand ready to buy. I'd
be a hypocrite if I complained when
standard publications reject my ad-
vertisements and at the same time
sought to suppress the advertisements offered me by religionists interested in spreading their principles or dogmas. The proper way to approach this situation is to agree to meet their intellectual spokesmen in open, candid, honest discussions, not in the spirit of the inquisition. Just because I disagree with a mouthpiece of religion it doesn’t follow that I should gag him. Only the other week I received a manuscript from a religious writer who wanted me to do a job of pamphlet printing. He ordered and paid for 10,000 copies of a 128-page large-sized pamphlet, for which I received a draft for $1,080, a nice piece of business. I read the Ms., and was amazed at the writer’s muddleheadedness and lack of logic. I couldn’t find 10 words that I might agree with. But that didn’t stop me from taking his money and scheduling the job for production. The author’s a screwball, but it’s my theory that even fools have a right to be heard. Of course, here let me say again, had this author gone into race-baiting or Nazism, I’d have turned the job down, for here are two ideologies I’ll never use my presses to disseminate, even on a commercial basis. But this author couldn’t be charged with being on the vicious side. He was just on the damned-fool side, poor booby. I noticed, to my vast amusement, that he averaged five miracles per page. After the first chapter it occurred to me that the greatest miracle of all was howinhell such an idiot could make up $1,080. Having no answer, I smiled—and banked the draft.

Can you give me the line of poetry that follows, “Here I sit all broken hearted…” I’ve searched my newsclip filing system in vain. Maybe some reader can give me the answer.

What’s the difference between a confidence game and a swindle? I claim they’re both the same thing. There’s a difference. A confidence game is the trick of “secur- ing money under pretenses of friendship through false promises of gain.” A swindle is “to cheat grossly and deliberately under pretense of fair dealing.” George M. Husser, manager of the Kansas City, Mo., Better Business Bureau and author of the important Haldeman-Julius book, “Rackets that Get Your Money,” insists that victims of “con games” often are victims merely because they have “larceny in their hearts.”

One pleasing feature of your 25 volumes of “Questions and Answers” is the generous space you give to the libertarianism of Thomas Jefferson. You’ve done a magnificent job in covering Jefferson’s opinions on democracy, liberty, Free-thought, republicanism, and related subjects. I see that you have failed to reprint Jefferson’s letter that calls on all men to break their chains, written only 10 days before his death. I enclose a copy and suggest that you reprint it.

Thomas Jefferson’s letter, written on June 24, 1826, when he was 83 years old, was addressed to Roger C. Weightman, printer and bookseller who had served New York City as mayor and commander of the local militia. The sentences quoted below may be said to be Jefferson’s final utterance on the cause of freedom. At the time this magnificent letter was written, Jefferson’s health was shattered, but his mind was still clear and vigorous. The letter:

The kind invitation I received from the citizens of the City of Washington to be present with them at their celebration on the fiftieth anniversary of American independence, as one of the surviving signers of an instrument pregnant with our own and the fate of the world, is most flattering to myself. It adds sensibly to the sufferings of sickness to be deprived of it on a personal participation in the rejoicing of that day. May it be to the world what I believe it will be to (some parts sooner, to others later, but finally to all), the signal of arousing men to burst the chains under which monastic ignorance and superstition had persuaded them to bind themselves, and to assume the blessings and security of self-government. That form which we have substituted restores the free right to the unbounded exercise and freedom of opinion. All eyes are opened, or opening to the rights of man. The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately by the grace of God. These are grounds of hope for others. For ourselves, let the annual
return of this day forever refresh
our recollections of these rights, and
an undiminished devotion to them.

Jefferson’s Freethought and anti-
clericalism were with him right to the end, as shown by the words,
“the signal of arousing men to burst the chains under which
monkish ignorance and superstition
had persuaded them to bind them-
selves,” etc. No wonder today’s
clerical-fascists continue to malign
the great libertarian.

Buy bonds till it hurts—the enemy.
The newspapers report that during the
hearing in the Jackie Coogan divorce
trial his wife testified that “Coogan’s
behavior made me so nervous at times I
was paralyzed from the hips down for
10 to 15 minutes.” What does this mean?
I didn’t see the story, so I have only
the above quotation to work on. It’s possible that Coogan, who is
known to have a fiery temper, let
loose with terrific tongue-lashings,
which easily could induce nervous-
ness.

Is it possible for a guy to make money
following the races?

Yes, says Patsy O’Bang, if you’ll
invest in a broom and shovel. (He
got that idea from Elbert Hubbard,
but couldn’t stop to develop it be-
cause he’s busy in his laboratory
working on the onion, which he
wants to stop making us cry by
grafting it on some growing thing
that will make us laugh. It’s his
theory that a laughing race will
make a better world. He likes to
quote that wisecrack, “He who
laughs, lasts.” And with Robert G.
Ingersoll, Patsy O’Bang, the world’s
greatest Freethinker, calls atten-
tion to the fact that “laughing has
always been considered by the theo-
logians as a crime.” The theologians
are right. They know too well that
their bant can be swallowed only
by people with straight faces.
Laughter is a weapon in the fight
for truth. Laughter is the mind’s
way of breaking wind to blow away
the cobwebs. But there’s a dissenting
voice in the camp of the Freethinkers. The poet Shelley, who
was an Atheist and wrote boldly in
support of the anti-Theists, wrote
this devastating and bewildering sentence (which I’ve quoted be-
fore): “I am convinced that there
can be no entire regeneration of
mankind until laughter is put
down.” Fortunately, few Skeptics
and Rationalists will endorse Shel-
ley’s paradox. Josh Billings came
to the point quickly when he de-

ned laughter as the sensation of
feeling good all over, and showing
it principally in one spot. Back in
the 4th Century, the great church-
man and author of “Homilies,” St.
John Chrysostom, wrote a sentence
that may have been the source of
Shelley’s absurd notion: “Laughter
does not seem to be a sin, but it
leads to sin.”

How do you like Sicilian wine?
I haven’t had any in decades, but
I remember vividly the times I had
my share. Back around 1914, when
working on a newspaper in Pearl
Street, N.Y.C., I used to go into
Little Italy for some of my meals.
One restaurant, located in a cool
basement, was run by a Sicilian,
whose wife, as was to be expected,
did the cooking, and an artist she
was. A spread that included soup,


ed before his eyes. I had fried spinach and fish. The small fish, hardly more than six inches long, was fried en toto, which gave me a few shudders. Up to then I'd always eaten fish that had been cleaned of its innards. But, no, this Japanese walter-cook fried all of it, in goose grease. I liked it. I'm one of those guys who can eat almost anything, and go into spasms of delight if it's done better than usual. The other evening, just after the 10 P.M. news broadcast, I robbed the ice box, eating four hardboiled eggs, a half cucumber in a bowl of cold sour cream (sметана, to Jews), a slice of watermelon, a banana in another bowl of sour cream, chunks of American cheese, pickled beets, olives, a pickled cucumber, two slices of raw bacon which I used in place of butter on a chunk of bread, a bottle of beer, and cottage cheese. After which I smoked a cigar, caught up on some of my reading, wrote an article for this organ of piety, and went to bed for a refreshing sleep, which wasn't disturbed during eight hours and 20 minutes. In my time I've given jitters to at least a half dozen waiters, of whom I requested oysters and ice cream, two dishes that aren't supposed to go together, but which, when they get inside me, shake hands and strike up a beautiful friendship.

Do you know why the moron sat up all night on his wedding night gazing out of the window?

Because his ma had told him it'd be the most wonderful night he ever saw.

What did the needle say to the nudist while she was taking her sun bath?

So what?

Several times, according to your 26 volumes of "Questions and Answers," you pay your compliments to the hog, who, in your opinion, is "smart." Have you any evidence?

One of my sows was being bothered by swarms of horseflies, and any farmer can tell you that such insects cause no end of misery. This particular sow fought the pests until she got tired. Then she went over to the hog-wire fence that separates part of the chicken range from the hog lot. Throwing herself down, she waited. Soon a dozen chickens poked their heads through the fence and picked off horseflies as fast as they could gobble them. Later, when the old gal thought she was rid of the insects for a while at least, she got up and returned to one of the hog-houses.

What's the meaning of the term, "bear a hand," as used in the U.S. navy?

It means "hurry up."

From several comments in your volumes of "Questions and Answers," I take it that you are an admirer of George Santayana, who, as you know, has been termed "the most consummate living literary artist in the English language." While reading his essays in "Soliloquies in English," published in 1922, I came on a valuable passage which gives the philosopher's thoughts on wars. I have typed it off for your readers, if you care to pass it on to them. Santayana was born in Madrid, of Spanish parents, 70 years ago. In 1888, he graduated from Harvard, and subsequently taught several subjects in that university, which, I notice from your writings, is one of your favorite educational institutions.

Here are Santayana's thoughts on war:

Since barbarism has its pleasures it naturally has its apologists. There are panegyrists of war who say that without a periodical bleeding a race decays and loses its manhood. Experience is directly opposed to this shameless assertion. It is war that wastes a nation's wealth, chokes its industries, kills its flowers, narrows its sympathies, condemns it to be governed by adventurers, and leaves the puny, deformed and unmanly to breed the next generation. Interminable war, foreign and civil, brought about the greatest set-back which the life of reason has ever suffered; it exterminated the Greek and Italian aristocracies. Instead of being descended from heroes, modern nations are descended from slaves; and it is not their bodies only that show it.

After a long peace, if the conditions of life are propitious, we observe a people's energies bursting their barriers; they become aggressive on the strength they have stored up in their remote and unchecked development. It is the unmutilated race, fresh from the struggle with nature (in which the best survive, while in war it is often the best that perish) that descends victoriously into the arena of nations and conquers disciplined armies at the first blow, becomes the military aristocracy of the next epoch and is itself ultimately sapped and decimated by luxury.
and battle, and merged at last into the ignoble conglomerate beneath. To call war the soil of courage and virtue is very much like calling debauchery the soil of love.

Will Hitler use germ warfare as a secret weapon?

Col. Leon A. Fox, U. S. Army Medical Corps, says:

"There are practically insurmountable technical difficulties in preventing the use of biological agents as effective weapons of warfare."

This opinion is accepted by most military experts. The July 17, 1943, issue of The Journal of the American Medical Association contains an editorial on germ warfare which is based on Col. Fox's report. The Journal's job of debunking contains conclusions which should prove reassuring to all of us. Here's a summary of the case against bacteria as a war weapon:

The big military pests of the past—enteric fevers, typhus, bubonic plague, smallpox, influenza, malaria, etc., have often been considered particularly effective as potential military weapons. The causative agents of these diseases, however, cannot be prepared in large enough quantities, or introduced in adequate doses into the bodies of unprotected and non-immunized enemy populations.

While contamination of reservoirs and city storage tanks is militarily feasible, routine filtration or chlorination of drinking water would render such sabotage largely ineffective. Modern sanitary methods are good counter-measures against bacterial warfare.

The infective agent of such epidemic respiratory diseases as influenza and meningitis could not be prepared in sufficient quantities, virulence or stability for military use.

The use of insect-borne diseases has often been mentioned, bubonic plague (carried from infected rats to humans by fleas) is advanced as the most frightful example. Low-flying airplanes might drop recently infected rats on enemy terrain, but it is highly improbable that it would start a human epidemic, although it might create a rodent epidemic.

One of the commonest scares concerns the spread of "deadly bacterial toxins," mainly food-poisoning bacteria. True, an airplane can carry sufficient food-poisoning toxin to destroy an entire city—provided a carefully-measured deadly dose could be administered through the mouth, rectum or under the skin of each inhabitant. Bacterial toxins are readily destroyed by heat; hence food poison can be inactivated by cooking.

Now that Hitler is on the run, there isn't anything he wouldn't do if defeat could be staved off. But knowing his ruthlessness as we do, we can say that he would have used the weapon of germ warfare long ago against the Russians, had he felt it would get him anywhere.

What do you think about double features?

As something of a movitgoer, I usually try to avoid double features. If I'm stuck, I make inqueries in advance to make sure I'll see the picture I happen to be interested in and avoid the one that's pure poison. But my printed protest (see my 26 volumes of "Questions and Answers" for a batch of fiery exhortations) don't get anywhere. Recently a theater manager said to me: "There are lots of people like you who don't like double features, but we know that the rural customers love them, especially in the East and Middle West, the South, the North, the West and the South-west, the Northwest and all points between." The jingle of coins in the boxoffice is the voice of God.

Your comments on the orthodoxy of the radio are to the point. Does this condition prevail everywhere?

The above question was inspired by material that appeared in my 26 volumes of "Questions and Answers." In several places I showed that if one were to judge our culture by the radio one wouldn't have the least notion that there is a vast library of Freethought literature easily available. The parsons and Bishop Doerbelch have the radio in their clutches. Rationalism, Agnosticism, Skepticism, etc., are ignored. True, of late even the press is surrendering to this intellectual blight. It wasn't always like that. Back in the days when Robert G. Ingersoll thrilled hundreds of thousands of Americans with his oratory and sound Freethought, the press gave generously of its space to his magnificent lectures. For example, if Ingersoll spoke in Chicago, the papers next day would give a report that covered at least five columns. Many times his lectures were reported in full. In these days of obscurantism, the press,
because of the pressure of our cultural reactionaries, wouldn’t give more than 10 lines to an Ingersoll lecture, were the great Agnostic with us today. There isn’t a radio station, let alone a network, that would allow him 15 minutes. But many hours each week are given to troops of pulpit-pounders whose intellectual pablum would insult a Hottentot. But it isn’t that way everywhere. Recently I came on a report of a broadcast delivered in Australia. The speaker, who was reviewing one of Ingersoll’s collections of lectures, actually treated the great thinker with fairness and intelligence. The thing is so unusual—so unlikely to happen in our land of piety and righteousness—that I want to quote the passage:

A timely publication for war-days is a reprint of R. G. Ingersoll’s essays on the Liberty of Man. His glowing appeal for the protection of liberty, Freedom carries a vital message to the world of today... The essays in this particular volume are devoted to humanist subjects, but it is important to bear in mind the conditions under which they were produced. Ingersoll was an orator, and he belonged to a country and a period in which oratory had wings. Phrases and metaphors which seem flambouyant when scanned in cold print by a critical eye were accepted as wholly appropriate when delivered in a resonant voice by a tall, commanding figure to audiences eager for words of color and fire. On the other hand, it is not difficult for the intelligent reader to discern behind the glowing embroidery the solid framework of logical argument. Ingersoll’s rhetoric is never empty, never insincere. His fundamental appeal is to reason. Though the spell of his personality and eloquence has passed, the power of his marshalled truths and unassailable logic remains. The message he felt impelled to deliver over 50 years ago is in its essence as much needed today as then. Certain of the abuses against which he thundered have been remedied, at least in part. A greater measure of liberty, for example, has been granted to man, woman, and child, and our treatment of the criminal is somewhat more enlightened than it used to be. But the goal of human liberation has not yet been reached; we are still a long way from achieving the free and peaceful world of which Ingersoll dreamed. His plea for rational humanism sounds less as an echo from a half-forgotten past than as a call to the builders of the future.

The men in control of the American radio have a ready answer when asked why Freethought and related subjects are suppressed. Religious controversy, they insist, is undesirable. It makes for dissension, for scolding letters, for cries of horror from the good people. Such nincompoops mustn’t be offended. Better to gag the people who would rid the people of supernaturalism and superstition. They are yet to learn that controversy is the foundation of a free culture. Suppress controversy — religious, economic, historical, scientific — and you commit violence against civilization’s most precious asset — the right to seek and voice what appears to be the truth. Such a situation shows how important it is to give moral and material support to editors who have the courage and intellectual sincerity to use their presses for purposes of mass enlightenment. The press is mostly gone, but there’s enough left to enable Freethinkers to begin again the important task of building a movement that will nurture and protect intellectual liberty and freedom of expression. That fraction that’s still with us — and here I include The American Freeman — deserves generous help from those who still hold to the right to inquire into controversial subjects in order to make progress in the direction of truth. They can help in several ways. First, they can use their money to help dispose of the almost inevitable deficit. Next, they can help introduce the paper to their friends, thereby giving the paper an opportunity to serve a wider audience. I’ve always felt that it was a part of my job to educate thousands of men and women to a realization of this important fact. Some progress has been made, but not enough. But, an end to this messianic propaganda. Let’s get back to the radio. Now I want to anticipate letters from readers who’ll be sure to ask me what the situation is in England. When it comes to the printed word, England is now ahead of us in freedom, but the island’s radio is just as bigoted and intolerant as ours. The British Broadcasting Corporation
is always on the side of the angels. Recently, in one of its broadcasts, Canon Cockin and Father Beck put up imaginary Atheists, heard their "arguments," and then tore them to shreds. Naturally. If they had wanted to air the reasons Atheists give for rejecting the assumptions of Theism they could have brought in one, of a half dozen intelligent and informed Atheists from the London district alone, including Joseph McCabe, who, after 50 years of service in the cause of Freethought, certainly is competent to voice the case for Atheism. But can you imagine these theocratic worthies inviting a thinker like Joseph McCabe to join them in their program? It's to laugh until the pippik is ready to bust. To get right to the point, Canon Cockin and Father Beck were smart in refusing to invite Joseph McCabe for a statement on the logic of Atheism. They know he'd steal the show from them. That's why the theologians don't try to cross swords with an informed Rationalist. Something along the lines of the above was presented to the B.B.B., which drew the following reply from the director:

"I must explain that the policy in this matter is that, as far as broadcasting hours allocated to religion are concerned, only those who hold traditional beliefs of Christendom should be invited to broadcast."

That puts it in plain, simple words. That's what I've been saying all along. And that's what's the matter with the radio. It's the private club of the traditionalists.

I am surprised at your surprise that Edgar Saltus is out of print, a fact that you describe as "incredible" in seeming. On the contrary, you ought to know without being told that Saltus is out of print. He would be. Good books, man, the best books of far more well-known figures than Saltus are out of print: James Branch Cabell, for instance, or Gilbert K. Chesterton. I could probably make a very extensive list of both fiction and non-fiction books of first importance which have been out of print for years.

There's a bit of a difference that my reader doesn't seem to have considered. True, there are items by Chesterton and Cabell that are out of print, but not all their books. On the other hand, the entire list by Saltus (more than 25 books, of which about a fourth are important) are out of print. And the man hasn't been dead more than 20 years. That's unusual. But, as I've said before, I hope to have the honor of giving Saltus's genius a new lease on life by bringing out his first two books, when I can get around to the job. Right now my schedule is rather crowded. I have on tap about 20 manuscripts by Joseph McCabe, Bertrand Russell, John H. Burma, Vance Randolph, and several others. Besides, I'm at work on almost a dozen pamphlet jobs for authors who are hiring me to print their manuscripts at their own expense. These writers asked for my free pamphlet printing circular, liked the propositions outlined in it, sent me their manuscripts and remittances—and now I'm as busy as a cat trying to do business on a marble floor.

Your remarks about vitamins as a racket do not go well with the particularly objectionable advertisement of vitamin pills in your classified ad section. Or is your own paragraph against the racket supposed to be your method of neutralizing the ad and so satisfying your conscience?

It happens that I believe we should take vitamin pills only on the advice of a good doctor. Otherwise we should look to our diets for vitamins. But does it follow that I should deny a seller of vitamin pills the right to follow his trade? I don't think so. If the person who's selling vitamin pills in classified ads is not on the up-and-up the Federal Trade Commission will give us the facts in one of its numerous bulletins, which I've been getting for years and which I study carefully, as my readers know. A glance through my 26 volumes of "Questions and Answers" will turn up scores of articles based on reports issued by the FTC. If a person's business hasn't been condemned, then I have the right to assume that he has a legal right to advertise. And as I sell advertising space, I'll take his business. I don't think I have the right to suppress an advertisement merely because I don't care for what the seller is offering. The reader who sent me the above roost is George Weaver, of Brooklyn, N. Y. Mr. Weaver, who is so bright on so many subjects,
is, like Upton Sinclair, an enthusiastic believer in spookology, judging by some of his pieces in *The Open Road*, where he turns out columns of matter in support of the notion that there's something worthwhile about "parapsychic phenomena." I've already entertained my readers on several occasions (see my 26 volumes of "Questions and Answers") with pieces on Upton Sinclair's greatest of all experiences in this field—the time he had a spiritualist come into his library, go into a spasm and order the writer's desk to sail out of the room. Which it did. Right in front of Sinclair. Yes, it actually sailed through the window and tore up some of Mrs. Sinclair's roses or cabbages, I forget which. All this the great Sinclair saw with his own two eyes. Fancy that. But enough of this. Back to the vitamins, which I didn't intend to leave in the first place. Mr. Weaver, who can be readable and helpful when he isn't bamboozled by the spirits from spookland, sends me this valuable comment:

"You write recently that vitamins have become a racket, and that all necessary vitamins may be obtained from a well-balanced diet without the need of any vitamin pills. Both statements are correct. But how many people get a well-balanced diet that supplies all needed vitamins in needed quantity? Not one in thousands. You must remember that there are two vitamin requirements, the optimum, necessary for the very highest degree of health and efficiency. According to the latest authoritative standard nutritional textbook, optimal vitamin requirements may be obtained without the need of any vitamin pills, by a well-balanced diet containing, each day:

- 1 quart of milk
- 2 tablespoons of wheat germ
- 1 tablespoon of cold-pressed linseed oil
- 1 ounce of onions or clove juice
- 1 serving of cheese
- 1 or 2 eggs
- 1 serving of meat, fowl, or fish
- 3 or more green or yellow vegetables
- 3 or more fruits
- Whole grain bread and cereals."

Why do you change the titles of some of your Little Blue Books? Is it necessary for a title to be lurid? I never try to make a title lurid. I seek only for accuracy. I want the title to describe the contents of the booklet as much as possible, considering that space limitations forbid sub-heads or descriptive sentences. For example, take No. 416, which I published 22 years ago under the title of "The God of Vengeance." Some readers ordered it under the impression that it had something to do with the Old Testament. Instead, Sholom Ash's great play dealt with life in a brothel. To remedy the situation I made the title read, "Life in a Brothel," and put "The God of Vengeance" under it in smaller type. Lurid? I don't know, but I'm sure the new title served readers better. I never hesitate to tinker if that means my readers will have an easier time finding out what I'm up to. This reminds me of the perfume manufacturer who marketed a fragrance which he called by the polite, respectable name of "Lady." It was a flop. Then he got a bright idea, changed its name to "Hussy," and sales soared. There's a moral in it which I'm sure even my dumbest customer can catch.

How much did it cost the U.S. Government to finance the great Lewis and Clark expedition?

$2,500.

If Judas had taken $1 from his pieces of silver and invested it in sound securities at 4 percent, compounded semi-annually, what would the total amount be now?

Ten thousand octillions of dollars, which you write by putting a dollar mark and a figure 1, followed by 28 zeros.

There is only one thing that constantly worries me—concerning you and the paper. I often wonder if you are making provisions for the future when you will, in the words of some of our metaphysical friends (?), go through your "transition." I don't like to think of such things, but I'm a realist and they must be thought of. Who is going to have the courage and the intelligence to disseminate the truth the way you do? And who will hold out against the "powers that be" to carry the torch of Freethought? You had better start training some bright young guy, or gal, to think your way. Meantime, I intend to enjoy each and every one of the caustic, biting, witty, brittle but non-the-less pithy paragraphs you turn out.

I'm not in my dotage. Barring accident or violence from some gun-totin' husband who has been outraged by the behavior of Dr. Patsy O'Bang, I should be able to mutter my verbiage for at least 30
years A.H.—After Hitler. How does one go about training a boy or girl to pick up from where one leaves off? I don’t know. The Devil’s been kind to me thus far; maybe he’ll continue to shower his blessings on his modest advocate. At that, Dr. Patsy O’Bang could grab the torch before I let it drop. He’d be able to keep the fires of enlightenment burning if the readers would see to it that he never found himself short of Canadian rye.

As you are a scientific farmer of worldwide reputation, perhaps you can tell me why the air is so much purer in the country.

That’s because we farmers keep our windows closed.

I read in one of your volumes of “Questions and Answers” the poem about tobacco, but I still think a man of your intelligence should have all power enough to quit the filthy habit.

Maybe so, but I have since received a better poem, attributed to the prolific Mr. Anon:

Tobacco is a dirty weed.

I like it.

It makes you thin, makes you lean

It takes the hair plumb off yore bean

It’s the worst damn’ stuff I’ve ever seen

I like it.

What do you say when you have thrown at you Voltaire quotation, “If God did not exist, the world would have invented him”?

I repeat a wit’s reply: “Which is precisely what the world has done.”

Why do you give so much space to Joseph McCabe, Mark Twain, and others who ridicule the ministry? Why do you never mention Edgar Allan Poe, a man who stuck to his writing instead of criticizing God’s servants?

My volumes of “Questions and Answers” mention Poe several times. The popular belief that Poe was not critical of the clergy is not founded on fact. In his writings may be found the following ironic criticism:

“Con tal que puras y castas,” says the Catholic Don Tomas de las Torres, in the preface to his ‘Amatory Poems,’ “importo muy poco qui no sean igualmente severas sus obras,” meaning, in plain English, that provided the personal morals of an author are pure, it matters little what those of his books are.

“For so unprincipled on idea, Don Tomas, no doubt, is still having a hard time of it in Purgatory; and, by way of most pointedly manifest-

ing their disgust at his philosophy on the topic in question, many modern theologians and divines are now busily squaring their conduct by his proposition exactly reversed.”

(Source: Comp. Works V9, 50 Suggestions.)

I’ve noticed that your 26 volumes of “Questions and Answers” give lots of space to Arkansas hillbilly humor, hundreds of such jokes being scattered through their pages. I know of no other writer who gives so much attention to this rich source of American humor. But nothing is written about the great speech made when an attempt was made to change the name of Arkansas. Surely you don’t intend to pass up this classic.

First, let me quote one of my authors, Vance Randolph, on this matter of Arkansas humor. This student of the Ozarks, who has lived in the section for decades, says:

“The reader of backwoods anecdotes should remember that the ‘Arksansaw’ of the story-teller is not identical with the State of Arkansas. It is a caricature, a distorted reflection, and the fact that many ‘hillbilly’ comedians live in the Ozarks has nothing to do with the case. Some people say that the ‘Arksansaw’ of the humorists is pure myth; others admit that perhaps there was such a region in pioneer days, but it has long since ceased to exist; a few stubborn souls contend that remnants of ‘Arksansaw’ may still be found in certain isolated hollers and up-the-creek settlements. Some of the stories are true, but many are fantastic fabrications.

“One peculiarity of the Arkansas people is their bitter resentment of all ‘Arksansaw’ stories. In this they differ from their neighbors in more progressive states. Texans do not object to outrageous yarns about hot sand and rattlesnakes, Oklahomans laugh at a whole cycle of ‘sooner’ anecdotes, Kansans enjoy jokes about cyclones and grasshoppers, but many people who live in the Ozarks are enraged by hillbilly stories. It is not the real backwoodsmen who are most violent about this, but the second-growth hillbillies who have put on shoes and moved into town—people of the Chamber-of-Commerce type.

“Probably most of the hillbilly stories known to city people are tall tales, items that the hillfolk call ‘windies.’ But it is a mistake to assume that ‘Arksansaw’ humor is merely a matter of grotesque exaggeration. The backwoods story-teller appreciates understatement also,
writes Mr. Randolph, "in barrooms and bawdy-houses, and many expurgated versions have crept into print."

Mr. Fred W. Allsopp, of Little Rock, after eliminating its "unprintable profanity and obscenity," once published the text, which follows:

"Mr. Speaker, you blue-belied rascal! I have for the last 30 minutes been trying to get your attention, and each time I have caught your eye, you wormed, twisted and squirmed like a dog with a flea in his hide, damn you! Gentlemen, you may tear down the honored pictures from the walls of the United States Senate, desecrate the grave of George Washington, curse the Goddess of Liberty, haul down the Stars and Stripes, and knock over the tomb of U. S. Grant, but your crime would in no wise compare in enormity with what you propose to do when you would change the name of Arkansas! Change the name of Arkansas — hell fire, No! Compare the discordant croak of the bullfrog to the melodious song of the nightingale; the classic strains of Mozart to the bray of a Mexican mule; the puny arm of a Peruvian prince to the mighty muscles of a Roman gladiator—but never change the name of Arkansas. Hell, No!"

As many readers know, the above version is a milk-and-water travesty of the real thing. Allsopp's attempt to deface the speech amounts almost to evisceration. The original is a masterpiece. I've heard it a hundred times in the best saloons from N.Y. to L.A., and never got tired of its tremendous profanity. Print it here? No, that's out of the question. Imagine what would happen to this organ of piety if I printed the speech in its true form, when the Postoffice Department, under the thumb of Bishop Noll, of Fort Wayne, Ind., is cracking down on magazines like the Police Gazette for merely printing pictures of beautiful women who happen to be only 25 percent clothed. The "dread areas of woman" are now taboo, in these moral days,
so picture what these protectors of virtue would do to anyone who dared deal with the creative masterpiece under discussion. But, according to Mr. Randolph, the reader who's not afraid of honest four-letter words will find the unexpurgated text hidden away in the appendix of a book entitled "Tall Tales from Arkansas," by Dr. James R. Masterson, published by Chapman and Grimes, Boston, 1843, pp. 353-354. You may be able to see a copy at a good public library. It'll be worth the time and effort, I guarantee you. According to Mr. Randolph, Professor Masterson is, so far as he knows, the only man who has ever had the courage to print this great masterpiece of Arkansas humor in its complete and original form.

Arkansas humor includes numerous specimens of amusing speeches by pioneer lawyers and politicians, but none, naturally, can hold a candle to the work of genius hinted at in the above paragraph. Though almost illiterate, many of these worthies went in for big words and high-sounding phrases, a form of oratory admired by hillbillies, even when they didn't have the least idea what the man on the platform was talking about. One such speech was delivered, in 1836, by a legislator who held forth in defense of an augmented state militia, as follows:

"Mr. Speaker, I say the militia are the grand criterion of the world, the bulwarks of nations, and sulphuric in themselves!"

Then there was the Washington county lawyer, who, in the course of a murder trial, assured the jury that his client was drunk at the time he committed the crime, and therefore should not be held responsible. "Gentlemen of the jury," said he, "it is a principle congenial with man from the creation of the world, that has been handed down from posterity to posterity, that in case of murder, drunkenness always goes in commiseration of damages!"

Mr. Randolph says that perhaps the best of these illiterate elousionists was a shadowy character known as Peter Whetstone, who was stumping the state against Martin Van Buren in the campaign of 1837. Here is one of his speeches as reported by Colonel Charles Noland, himself a prominent member of the Arkansas bar:

"We are shut out from the candle of light by the cloud capped hills that surround us;—though we drink of the purling streams that flow at their foot,—though we are sown in the whirlwind and reaped in the storm, yet, fellow citizens we are the true democracy of the land. Who is this Martin Van Buring, who comes from the State York, riding on the suburbs of posterity in the open atmosphere? I ask him no boot; and if he does not let us have land for paper money, we will make him smell hell! You have known me from the time I killed the wild cat on Devil's Fork until now,—you know I am the real grit. Well, now I say publicly and aboveboard, that when the lark rises on his rear, and soars aloft, before the sun has dried the dew on his feathers, I generally make him fling up his tail. A wink is as good as a nod to a blind man;—so look out, Martin Van Buring! It is my treat, boys, so come up."

While we're on this sort of thing, let's look into an excellent book, "Back Yonder," by Wayman Hogue, a native of Arkansas. In it he quotes a speech delivered in the early days by Newt Shafer, who was opposing one Cal Johnson for election to the Arkansas Legislature. Said Mr. Shafer:

"Now, who is this man Johnson? Why, he's an upstart uv a lawyer that lives in town an' never done an honest day's work in his life. He wuz sent to the legislater the last term, an' what did he do? Why, nothin' cep' drink whisky an' play kyards an' galavant aroun' with furriners.

"Now, gentlemen, here is a few things he wants to do. He wants to build a new court house. That ar ole court is a better house than I'm livin' in. Hit's better'n you air livin' in, an' hit's good enough fer many a year yit.

"He wants to build an ar'n
bridge acros Devil's Fork. Now listen here, men. I've swum that ar creek on my hoss many a time. My father swum it before I was born; my grandfather swum it; an' my boys can swim it atter I'm gone. Nex', he wants to enlarge the free schools. Listen here, fellers, the Devil has never quit laffin' yit at gittin' the free schools in Arkansas. Now, feller citizens an' gentlemen, all these thangs that Johnson wants to do means more taxes an' bigger taxes fer you to pay. If you send this man back to the legislator, hit won't be long till this county will be dreened uv ever loose dime in it.

'Men, listen to me. The corn that you work an' raise in your own field is yourn, haint it? If you take that corn an' grind it into meal an' make bread outen the meal an' eat it, hit's yourn, haint it? If you feed that corn to your hawg, an' kill an' eat the hawg, hit's yourn, haint it? If you make lye hominy outen that corn an' eat the hominy, hit's yourn, haint it? Now fellers, hear what I got to say. If you take that corn an' make a gallon uv whisky outen it, an' drink the whisky, why in the name uv God haint it yourn?"

What is the average height of a newborn infant? 20 inches.

I have a chance to marry a girl with a picture face? Please comment.

That's all right, but it wouldn't hurt any to take a good look at the frame.

The house I've rented is horribly draughty. I've spent a lot of money on heating arrangements, but wherever I sit my hair is blown all over my head. Would you advise me to take my complaint to the landlord?

First I'd suggest an easier and cheaper thing—get your hair cut.

Do you like to hear people yodel?

Only yokels yodel.

What will Satan do when Hitler dies and knocks for admission?

The Devil will hand him a box of matches and a bundle of firewood and tell him to start a hell of his own. There's a limit to what even Satan can stand.

Since reading the “Subaiyat” I have become a hound for culture and now want to read “Omar Khayyam” and join the Literary Glide. Am I on the right road? Keep goin', brother. But first take a stab at Isbarn's “Gauts.”

What effect does the war have on the eating habits of soldiers?

The average soldier hikes his food to five and a half pounds daily, which means an Army of 5,000,000 men will eat 27,500,000 pounds every day. Civilians eat more, too. The workers who build one bomber eat the produce of 155 acres. The men who build one medium tank eat the produce of 43 acres, and the workers who build a 35,000-ton battleship eat the produce of 42,000 acres.

I'm about to marry a beautiful girl who has a twin sister. Please tell me how to tell them apart.

Don't try. Take the position that it's up to the other one to look out for herself.

My father is as bald as a billiard ball, while I have a wonderful head of hair. What is the scientific explanation?

Patsy O'Bang, the poor man's Spinoza and the world's greatest authority on Eugenics, says you probably inherited your father's hair.

Which is richer, the man with a million dollars or the one with seven daughters?

That's an old Arabian conundrum. The answer: The man with seven daughters, for he has enough, and he knows it.

Do you believe that our new battleships, which are being built secretly, are so big that the officers will have to go around the deck in jeeps?

Yes, and don't forget the kitchen, which is so large the cook has so go through the Irish stew in a submarine to see if the potatoes are cooked.

I am delighted with your remarks on art and how you are adding to your collection of oil paintings. Ah, it's good to know you too are an esthete. You are a lover of the beautiful. Have you seen the golden fingers of dawn spreading across the eastern sky, the red-stained, sulphurous islets floating in the lake of fire in the west, the ragged clouds
at midnight, blotting out the shuddering moon?

No. You see, I usually quit after the third highball.

I notice articles on music and composers in your volumes of "Questions and Answers," but nowhere do I find even a sentence about the banjo, mandolin and guitar. How come?

The guitar is an authentic art instrument. I've heard Spaniards do magnificent jobs on this instrument, which Berlioz, I believe it was, described as a little orchestra in itself. The banjo is effective in certain forms of entertainment, especially vaudeville and the old minstrel shows, of which I was an ardent admirer in my boyhood days in Philadelphia, where I heard the biggest and the best organizations in this now-dead medium. The banjo used to set off the mood of the old-time minstrels in song and dance. And that's about all I can say for the banjo. The mandolin strikes me as a maker of tinkle-tinkle music, a thing without depth, beauty or feeling. It's more of a toy than a musical instrument. I place it a notch below the organ, an instrument I don't like even when it's well handled, though I'll tolerate it when it's part of a great orchestra. The mandolin belongs with the juvenile elements of the community, the kids who are just beginning to feel horny and find that a mandolin advertises one's desire to indulge in the eternal pantomime. Such use isn't to be frowned on. I've always been a friend and supporter of romance, glamour, moonlight necking, and other expressions of the spirit that springs from the biological urge. But that doesn't make the mandolin a musical instrument. So far as I know, no composer has ever included the mandolin in his symphonies. I'm yet to see a mandolin in a first-rate orchestra. And yet, imagine my surprise when I learned that Beethoven wrote especially for the mandolin, having done three pieces—the adagio, the sonatina (Nos. 295, 296 in the supplement of the Breitkopf and Haertel editions), and a second sonatina.

Paganini, the greatest violinist of all time, also played the mandolin and guitar. Shubert spoke well of the mandolin. And despite all this, here's a layman who stands pat on the assertion that the mandolin isn't a serious art instrument. It's pretty; it makes a fetching picture when played by a love-sick lad who's on the prowl for females. I developed my prejudices when I was a kid in Philadelphia. There was a strange character on the loose—a Mr. Benjamin (correct me, Philadelphians, if I haven't the man's right name)—who made a handsome living conducting musical classes on a mass production basis. I saw that eccentric genius sitting on a platform and beating time for 150 or 200 children, all tickling mandolins or scratching violins. It was an amazing sight and sound. I believe the lessons cost a dime per student, so nobody was robbed. I'm sure Mr. Benjamin never produced a single musician, despite the fact that his students were scattered all over the big city. During his career he must have "taught" upwards of a quarter of a million young Americans how to take lessons on an instrument without learning anything about music. I doubt there's anybody like Mr. Benjamin in the Republic today. He was the only one of his breed, and like the mule he was denied the profound joy of preserving the species. Once a year Mr. Benjamin put on a vast show in the Broad Street Theater. Each student paid a dime for the privilege of performing in the concert. There were 500 artists on the stage. There were at least 1,500 papas and mammas, aunts and uncles, in the audience who paid a quarter per seat. You should have heard what happened when 300 fiddles and 200 mandolins burst loose on the "Poet and Peasant" overture. If only it had been possible to record a few of those concerts! I—one of the violinists—showed up minus my dime, having spent it for ice cream and caramels while on the way. As the seats were numbered, and as I had no ticket, I was stopped by one of the ushers, who referred me to Mr. Benjamin himself. He scowled. "Why do you have to be different?" he asked. "There are 500 musicians, and 499 tickets are sold. You just have to be different. You can take that last seat in the last row, but next time you come for your lesson
you'd better bring that dime. It isn't the money; it's the principle of the thing. There has to be discipline, if the world's to get anywhere. You can't go through life on your own, out of step." He never got the dime.

I have been warned that reading your literature will send me straight to Hell. I don't want to lose my immortal soul. I don't want to burn eternally. I want to go to Heaven and join the angels when I die. I want to pluck a harp and sing heavenly songs and walk the streets of gold. Why risk losing all these good things by reading your sinful writings.

I'm sure the fellow who wrote the above isn't as plious as he lots on. But, granting that he's the way he says, he should read what suits his fancy and not worry about what's in store for him after death. Instead of quoting infidels and Agnostics on immortality, let's turn to the Bible. In Holy Scripture he'll find excellent quotations on the side of those who are skeptical about life after death. Here are a few:

"The dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward."—Eccl. ix 5

"As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more."—Job vii 9

"For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth the beasts ... as the one dieth so dieth the other. . . . All go unto one place."—Eccl. III, 19, 20

"There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."—Eccl. ix, 10

The Bible (Mark 9:48) describes Hell as "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Who believes in perpetual fire and immortal worms? How can a decent man worship an Eternal Torturer?

Is Bob Burns' humor typical of the Ozarks?

It was, early in his career. But he's been adapting stories from hundreds of sources since he took to telling so many jokes in his broadcasts. One of his yarns about Grandpaw Snazzy, of Van Buren, Ark., is at least 75 years old. It tells of a big timber-wolf who forced a hillbilly to climb a tall tree, where he felt pretty safe. But the wolf went down to the river, where he picked up a smaller ani-

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The old wolf had fetched a beaver, to cut the tree down.

Another Van Buren character, according to Bob Burns, was telling of a great crop of apples he had once produced. "Them apples growed so damn' big," he said, "that it took only four of 'em to make a dozen!"

And here's what a boatman on the lower White River said about the really big frogs he'd caught in his day:

"When I was a young-un, the croakers in these here bottoms was big as full-grown steers. We used to butter 'em like hawgs, an' salt 'em down for Wintertime. They was so Gawd-awful big we had to slice up their legs like a quarter o' beef, an' cut through the bone with a buzzsaw. When they got to bellerin' of a night, they'd rattle the winder-glass 10 miles off! Them big 'uns could jump 200 yards, easy. I've saw 'em jump 100 yards, straight up in the air, to ketch a chicken-hawk!"

Bob Burns is yet to use that one. Burns hasn't paid enough attention to Ozark stories about echoes, of which they are dozens. Echo stories are numerous in a country that's full of caves and rugged cliffs. Here's a popular one:

There was a farmer in the Ozark hills who used an echo as an alarm-clock for years. Just about dark he'd go out behind the house and holler at a flat-rock bluff across the valley. "Time to git up!" he yelled. Then he would read his paper a while and go to bed, knowing that the echo would wake him promptly at five the next morning.

Bob Burns will surely want to tell his listeners about a certain shiftless family near Conway, Ark., which moved so often that when they backed the wagon up to the door, so as to load the cookstove, the chickens all lay down on the ground and held up their feet to be tied.

As this has also been told about gypsies in Central Europe, it's possible the thing's a thousand years old.

And, of course, let's not forget an ancient tale that's been told about the rural people in every section of America and I don't know how many other countries. It runs this way:

A traveler spent the night in a backwoods cabin where they had
green beans for supper, but the stranger didn’t get as many beans as he wanted. He watched regretfully as the half-emptied platter was put back into the cupboard. There was only one bed, so the visitor slept with his host and hostess, the host occupying the middle of the bed. Late in the night all three were awakened by a commotion among the poultry. The hillman sprang out of bed, snatched his shotgun, and rushed out shouting something about chicken-thieves. The wife whispered, “Stranger, now’s your chance!” So the traveler got up, went out into the kitchen, and ate the rest of the green beans!

Vance Randolph claims he heard this story about 1900, in camp on the Cowskin River, and it had whiskeys on it then. “But,” says Mr. Randolph, “as recently as 1931 George Milburn sold the same yarn to Conde Nast’s Vanity Fair, at that time one of the snootiest periodicals in America. Milburn lived in the Ozarks then, near the Missouri-Arkansas line, and I rode over to see him one day. ‘George,’ I said, ‘How did you ever happen to send that green beans yarn to such a magazine as Vanity Fair?’ Milburn turned a guileless hazel eye on me, ‘Why,’ he said slowly, ‘I thought it was a pretty good story.’ He was paid about $150 for it.” Mr. Randolph now invites Vogue, Esquire or The New Yorker to pay him $150 (in coin or stamps) for the one about the traveling salesman and the farmer’s daughter.

I see from the enclosed clipping that an organization of newspapermen, the Atlantic Fleet Correspondents Association, decorates its outstanding members with a strip of red and black typewriter ribbon. What’s the meaning of the colors?

The red stripe is significant of a typical correspondent’s financial condition, while the black stripe indicates his probable future.

How much does it cost to feed a soldier?
$190 a year, or about 52c daily. Each soldier’s daily meat ration is nearly one pound.

Can you tell me how exact a science is blood-testing? For instance, can tests prove conclusively that Charlie Chaplin or Henry Fonda are innocent or guilty of the paternity charges brought against them?

Experts agree that blood tests may conclusively prove their innocence, but they can’t conclusively prove their guilt. This assertion is supported by a great mass of scientific data, but it’s so complicated that I prefer not to attempt to summarize it. Besides, I don’t understand it.

I have been much enlightened since I first discovered The Freeman. Unfortunately, however, my environment is such that I rarely, if ever, get the chance to meet and discuss things with other Freethinkers. Can you tell me how to avail myself of the opportunity of mingling with a few persons who share views similar to mine? You can appreciate the lift this will give me.

Let me suggest that you run a small ad in the Classified Section of The Freeman. Other readers who wanted to correspond with Freethinkers have established interesting and constructive contacts by means of these personal ads. The urge to meet intelligent people is commendable, but the job isn’t easy. It takes much less effort to get in with buggers from the jutterbughouse.

In one of your volumes of “Questions and Answers” you write about “contemplating one’s pippik in rapt admiration.” What does “pippik” mean?

It’s my polite, refined way of saying “navel.” As many of my readers know, I’m a delicate, esthetic soul who’s always looking for ways to express himself in language that’s as pure as the breath of an angel and as sweatless as the feathers on a duck’s rear. Pippik is tender, artistic and high-toned, while navel is coarse, vulgar and Rabelaisian. Pippik, let me say for the benefit of students of language, is from the Yiddish. “Belly-button” is a little masterpiece, but it can’t stand up against pippik. It’s common knowledge that I was the first man, five or six years ago, to discover the humor of picking lint from one’s pippik. Now, at long last, the author of that rollicking book, “Life in a Putty-Knife Factory,” introduces a character who’s set on gathering enough pippik-lint to fill a cushion.

Did Huxley ever explain how he happened to coin the word “Agnostic”?

Prof. Thomas H. Huxley, in his “Christianity and Agnosticism: A Controversy,” tells how he “took thought, and invented” what he
conceived to be "the appropriate title of 'Agnostic.'" He hit on the word as perfectly opposite to the "Gnostic" of Church history "who professed to know so much about the very things of which I was ignorant, and I took the earliest opportunity of parading it at our society, to show that I, too, had a tail like the other foxes. To my great satisfaction, the term took; and when The Spectator had stood godfather to it, any suspicion in the minds of respectable people that a knowledge of its parentage might have awakened was, of course, completely lulled." Bertrand Russell, who, as my readers know from the magnificent essays he's been writing for me and which I've issued with vast enthusiasm, is an Athlete as well as an Agnostic, Skeptic and Rationalist. In one of his essays, Russell quotes William James "the will to believe," and adds that for his part he wishes to preach the "will to doubt." "What is wanted," says our Freethinker, "is not the will to believe, but the wish to find out, which is the exact opposite." It's such sentiments that have brought down on his head the abuse of the supernaturalists and obscurantists, so that this great philosopher, mathematician and logician now finds himself unwanted in American universities that previously had expressed satisfaction on being privileged to have this valuable and creative teacher lecture their students. I understand that before long Dr. Russell will return to England, where, needless to say, the foremost institutions of learning will avail themselves of his important and useful services. Only the other day a prominent bookseller asked me why I persisted in issuing works by Bertrand Russell when the man's been given such a "bad press" since the time he was ousted from New York University. I replied, quite simply, that I published Russell's essays because I considered him one of the best minds in the world and didn't feel that I should join the yelping pack just because his ideas are unpopular with those elements that thrive on the dissemination of dogmas and superstitions. He shook his head sadly, as though to say I must be some sort of a nut to let a few principles stand in the way of sound, good business. I didn't bother to tell him I couldn't do otherwise, that I didn't know how to follow the line of expediency when serving the causes of truth, education and culture. This small-town printer happens to think that ideas are important, which brands him as an eccentric among the respectable elements. At the moment I was talking with the bookseller, I was putting through for early publication a new and splendid essay by Dr. Russell, "How to Read and Understand History," and which carries the subhead, "The Past as the Key to the Future." I wouldn't mind publishing such a masterpiece at a financial loss, though I believe I'm businessman enough to know that this booklet will, in time, pay its cost and perhaps leave enough of a profit to enable me to pass on a bottle to that other great philosopher, Dr. Patsy O'Bang, who, by the way, has always been a warm admirer of the works of Bertrand Russell. Yes, rather such pamphlets at a loss than fat profits from the usual tripe and drek of the average commercial publisher. This Russell essay on history, which will be ready in a few days, contains wit and humor, along with hefty chunks of sound thinking. My readers have a great treat in store. So far as I know, I'm the only American editor who's standing by Russell in these dark days when he's nursing the bruises given him by the reactionaries and theocrats. They hate Bertrand Russell because he's an effective leader in that best of causes, Freethought, and not because he wrote liberal sentences on sex and marriage in some of his books. Those books were ignored for years while he was lecturing in the world's finest universities in Europe and in American institutions like Harvard and the University of Chicago. When New York University hired him for lectures on philosophy, the obscurantists organized quickly to head him off. They succeeded, and in this they were helped by Mayor LaGuardia, which is something to his dishonor. Politicians don't mind dishonorable behavior when faced by the opportunity to line up tens of thousands of Church voters. Not a word was
sated about Russell’s Freethought. It was his “free love” that was turned into a club with which to beat him down. This ancient and handy ruse usually works. I’ve shown in other articles (see my 26 volumes of “Questions and Answers”) that Bertrand Russell’s ideas on sex are scientific, humanistic and idealistic, but it happens that they don’t jibe with the sexual superstitions of the obscurantists, and that’s a crime. We’re soon to lose Bertrand Russell, one of the world’s most distinguished thinkers. But I promise to keep in touch with him and use his talents. His pen mustn’t be silenced. His voice mustn’t be gagged. My presses will do their share of the important work of giving men like Bertrand Russell the hearing they deserve. The doubters mustn’t be strangled by the elements that profit on incredulity. It was another great Freethinker, Denis Diderot, who said that “the first step towards philosophy is incredulity.” “By doubting,” said Cicero, “we come at the truth.” Shakespeare called that same doubt “the beacon of the wise.” Bertrand Russell, one of truth’s most gifted and honest torch-bearers, has been steam-rollered by clericalism, but the victory is only a temporary one. The cause of Freethought will continue to move forward, despite setbacks. The truth will triumph, not because of the martyrdom of its leaders but because it’s the truth. It was Voltaire who warned us to love truth but avoid martyrdom. That’s sound advice. One live Freethinker is worth a dozen cremated martyrs. Russell, nursing his bloody nose, is withdrawing from the range of his bitter and malicious enemies. But that won’t be his finish. He’ll be heard again, and the powers of superstition and dogmatism that hounded him from our land will yet hear his voice and shudder when they read the thoughts set down by his brilliant pen. And those words won’t be erased by the leaders of the blind. Those books won’t be burned. They’ll start their own bonfire, and into the flames will go every lie that the theocrats have used to their conspiracy to keep the minds of man in chains. Such works, written by Russell and many others in the years to come, will de-

stroy the shackles of intellectual slavery.

You ought to be down here in the South Pacific and meet some of the wonderful natives on these islands. Their pidgin English has done an amusing job on the Ten Commandments, which I am enclosing. The Second Commandment is missing.

Here are the Commandments after being translated:

1. I be God your master. No get other God, only me.
2. No talk God name for nothing.
4. Hear for your father and your mother.
5. No kill.
6. No make bad.
7. No thief.
8. No lie.
9. No want other man his woman.

I wonder what they’d do with the well-known versions of the 11th Commandment: Mind your own business. Thou shalt not be found out.

What’s your opinion of Carl Sandburg’s column in The Chicago Times?

Larly, dull tripe.

In one of your volumes of “Questions and Answers” you mention “The American Credo” of H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan and then go on to give your own idea of the average American’s notions. Can you give your readers the Mencken-Nathan version?

“The American Credo,” issued by Mencken and Nathan in 1920, fills a pamphlet, so I can’t quote more than a part of the list:

That all one has to do to gather a large crowd in New York is to stand on the curb a few moments and gaze intently at the sky.

That the postmasters in small towns read all the postcards.

That all theater box-office employees are very impolite and hate to sell a prospective patron a ticket.

That all newspaper reporters carry notebooks.

That, when shaving on a railroad train, a man invariably cuts himself.

That the jokes in “Punch” are never funny.

That nicotine keeps the teeth in a sound condition.

That the wife of a rich man always hopefully looks back into the past and wishes she had married a poor man.

That the quality of the champagne may be judged by the amount of noise the cork makes when it is popped.

That all French women are very passionate, and will sacrifice everything to love.

That beer is very fattening.
That the cloth used in suits made in England is so good that it never wears out.
That Philadelphia is a very sleepy town.
That if one swallows an ounce of olive oil before going to a banquet, one will not get drunk.
That the worst actress in the company is always the manager's wife.
That milking a cow is an operation demanding a special talent that is possessed only by yokels, and that a person born in a large city can never hope to acquire it.

I'm looking for some quotations which I'm sure you'll be able to dig out of your inexhaustible Newsip Filing System. I want some of the nice things said about Mussolini and Fascism before the Second World War.
This is going to be unkind of me, but duty to truth calls. Let's start off with Cardinal O'Connell, of Boston, who, in 1936, accepted a huge Fascist decoration and said:

"Mussolini is a genius in the field of government, given to Italy by God."

In the same year, Pope Pius XI described Mussolini as "the man sent by Providence."

Otto H. Kahn, speaking to the students of Wesleyan University, in November, 1933, said Italy had been remade "by a great man, beloved and revered in his own country." President Nicholas Murray Butler, of Columbia University, said that Italy's national vigor is being re-born with fascism" and predicted that "just as Cromwell made modern England so Mussolini would make modern Italy."

In December, 1939 (after the war began) Lord Lloyd told the House of Lords that "the Italian genius had given his country Fascism "which threatens neither religion, nor economic freedom, nor the security of other European nations."
And, let's not leave out Winston Churchill, who, in 1927, said, "If I were an Italian, I would don the Fascist black shirt." In December, 1940 (when the Second World War was well on its way) Churchill called Mussolini "a great man."

No wonder so many liberal, freedom-loving Americans are suspicious about the intentions of our leaders with regard to the future of Fascism and the spread of democracy. They may give no hostages to anti-Fascism.

What's the meaning of "Cincinnati oysters"?
About 75 years ago, pigs' feet were so much in demand in Cincinnati that people began calling them "Cincinnati oysters." This shouldn't be confused with the "mountain oyster," which is something else entirely.

In how many possible ways can the 26 letters of the alphabet be arranged?
62,044,840,173,323,943,936 000 possible ways, according to a London statistician, but I haven't checked for accuracy. I invite my readers to look into this problem and let me know if the figure is right. It seems a little high. But my suspicion can be allayed by any good mathematician. After all, this isn't a statistic; it's a piece of mathematics, which is an exact science. I trust mathematicians, but I'm suspicious of statisticians, because they often use figures to suit their own ends. A little emphasis here, a blind spot there and, presto, you have a statistic that looks impressive but can't stand up. Havelock Ellis noticed this and said, in "The Dance of Life":

"The methods of statistics are so variable and uncertain, so apt to be influenced by circumstance, that it is never possible to be sure that one is operating with figures of equal weight."

At the same time he pays a just tribute to the mathematician, who, he says, "has reached the highest rung on the ladder of human thought."

And now, to show how my mind works, let me switch to another Havelock Ellis book, "Impressions and Comments," where the great scientist and humanist shows his Freethought philosophy with this amusing and devastating passage:

"Had there been a Lunatic Asylum in the suburbs of Jerusalem, Jesus Christ would infallibly have been shut up in it at the outset of his public career. That interview with Satan on a pinnacle of the Temple would alone have damned him, and everything that happened after could but have confirmed the diagnosis. The whole religious complexion of the modern world is due to the ab-
sence from Jerusalem of a Lunatic Asylum.

Since I’ve wandered so far, let me close with an orderly, practical note: Havelock Ellis is the author of six excellent Little Blue Books.

Many years ago I read or heard what might vaguely be called a parody of “To be, or not to be.” It made frequent use of “that” and “is.” Do you happen to know the passage?

The sentence, by the great and distinguished Mr. Anon:

“That, that is, is; that, that is not, is not; but that, that is not, is not that, that is; nor that, that is, that that is not.”

Can you give me the text of the piece, “I Am the Printing-Press”? Who wrote it? You ought to know, for it’s right up your alley.

Robert H. (Bob) Davis wrote “I Am the Printing-Press” in July, 1911. It follows:

I am the printing-press, born of the mother earth. My heart is of steel, my limbs are of iron, and my fingers are of brass.

I sing the songs of the world, the oratorios of history, the symphonies of all time.

I am the voice of today, the herald of tomorrow. I weave into the warp of the past the woof of the future.

I tell the stories of peace and war alike.

I make the human heart beat with passion or tenderness. I stir the pulse of nations, and make brave men do better deeds, and soldiers die.

I am the laughter and tears of the world, and I never die until all things return to the immutable dust.

I am the printing-press.

What is the main tenet of Marxism Socialism? The collective ownership of the instruments of production, distribution and exchange.

Does God take sides in war, or is He nonbelligerent?

Judging by His behavior in the past, God always starts out neutral until He gets a hint of how things are going. Then He turns nonbelligerent. Later, when He’s sure about who’s to win, He always joins the side of the victors.

What does it cost to destroy a great German city from the air?

According to an estimate by Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau, it cost $346,000,000 to reduce Hamburg. He says it will cost $2,076,000,000 to destroy Berlin, or “pretty close to $18,75, the price of a $25 war bond, for each man, woman and child in the country.”

How much water does a tree need? “The Nature Library—Trees,” by Julia E. Rogers, says:

“The average oak tree in its five active months evaporates about 28,000 gallons of water—an average of about 187 gallons a day.”

Perhaps you can help me line up some material on the subject of damned fools down the ages. Can you point to instances in which new ideas were given the brushoff?

You can write a couple of books on that amusing theme, for there’s a wealth of material on the way saps react to creative ideas. For example, when Morse first put up his telegraph wires, wise-guys laughed at the absurd contraption. One boof in Baltimore took off his shoes, tied them together and hung them on the wire. “Maybe this Morse lunatic can send these boots to Washington the way he says he can send messages,” he said. In Constantinople, in 1727, permission at last was granted to establish a printing press, but even then it was ordered that the Koran shouldn’t be printed, the reason being that it would be blasphemy to touch the name of Allah with a cleaning brush made of hog bristles. When Alexander Graham Bell got a patent on his telephone, March 7, 1876, he offered the invention to the Western Union company for $100,000, but was turned down cold. The head men of Western Union took the view that the telephone was just a “scientific toy.” Besides, the telephone could never be used for long-distance communication. This could be done only by the telegraph. In England, in 1306, a man was executed for burning coal. Edward I didn’t like “sea cole,” as it was then called. Coal was held to be “a great nuisance, corrupting the air with its stink and smoke, to the great detriment of the health of the people.” Queen Isabella, of Spain, hated bathtubs, admitting she had taken “only two baths in my life.” Catherine the Great of Russia lived in
a 1,000-room palace that had only one bathtub. Thomas Jefferson, while President, was laughed at by the wiseacres because he asserted, "I am convinced that, some day, the country west of the Mississippi river will be valuable." Newspapers throughout the East abused Jefferson for his "ridiculous statement." When Thomas A. Edison, in 1882, gave the world the electric light, critics and rumor-mongers delayed public acceptance of the invention by circulating the report that "electric currents running around the house are mysteriously unhealthy." General Winfield Scott, in 1852, admitted in an unguarded moment that he liked soup, and that helped lose election to the White House. Soup, in those days, was considered a sissy dish. No red-blooded American cared to risk his reputation by eating such an effeminate mess. Some years before he died, E. W. Howe, author of a half dozen Little Blue Books and the best paragrapher of his time, told me in all seriousness that he believed the airplane to be a worthless toy, and that it could never be turned to practical uses. Ed Howe, the Sage of Potato Hill—witty, intelligent and able—really believed that until he died.

Recently, while visiting the Thomas Jefferson Room in the Library of Congress, I copied the inscriptions from the murals in that room. Several of them deserve to be reprinted in your columns. I feel you will want to do this because a reading of your volumes of "Questions and Answers" shows a deep admiration for all that Jefferson was and stood for.

From the mural:

**EDUCATION**

Educate and inform the mass of the people—enable them to see that it is their interest to preserve peace and order and that they will preserve them. Enlighten the people generally and tyranny and oppression of the body and mind will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day.

**FREEDOM**

The ground of liberty is to be gained by inches. We must be contented to secure what we can get from time to time and eternally press forward for what is yet to get. It takes time to persuade men to do even what is for their own good.

**DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT**

The people of every country are the only safe guardians of their own rights and are the only instruments which can be used for their destruction. It is an axiom in my mind that our liberty can never be safe but in the hands of the people themselves, that too of the people with a certain degree of instruction.

☆☆☆

Court Asher is an Indiana Fascist, Jew-baiter and Hitler-lover who has been exposed in your columns many times. When last you wrote about him you reported that his paper, "The X-Ray," was barred from the mails for following the precepts of Hitler and printing seditious material. You may not know that Mr. Asher is continuing his literary endeavors—and how! He has gone in for the James Joyce style of literature. I am enclosing a sample of his new line. Please comment on it.

Here is a piece of Court Asher's writings, taken from the July 24, 1943, issue of The X-Ray (which, by the way, has been readmitted to the mails):

"I sat at my typewriter watching a fly put bobby pins in her hair when a Jew appeared at an open window and shot me through the heart. I took a tweezer from my shirt pocket and extracted the bullet. The Jew yelled 'Qui, quit,' and dived 35 stories to the street, where he hailed a taxidermist and vanished.

"An alluring woman dashed in and kissed me vehemently. I vehemently right back at her.

"‘No soap,’ she whispered.

"I drew her closer and closer until I had her completely stuffed into the telephone with only her slip showing.

"The phone thundered and light- ninged, then blew its top. Out came the Jew, the taxidermist, the alluring girl, Roosevelt, Willkie, Winchell, Chaplin, 24 U. S. destroyers, nine air-raid wardens, Whirlaway, Mickey Mouse, John Hampton and Lass Howell.

"Two of my legs were off.

"I woke up under the stand in the bathroom."

The man who wrote the above is as crazy as a bedbug. He needs the immediate services of an expert on brain ailments.

☆☆☆

I enclose a picture of what the Arizona desert Indians call an "olla." It keeps water cool in the hot, dry desert country of the Southwest. Please explain by what principle water can be cooled in such a hot atmosphere.

The "olla" works like a charm, for it shows a complete under-
standing of nature. An olla is a porous earthen jar, filled with water, and hung in the shade of a mesquite tree. As the water seeps through the sides of the jar, the hot desert winds sweep against it and the water is evaporated, chilling the sides of the jar and cooling the water it holds.

Is it true that the New Zealand army has a free and easy atmosphere?

Yes. In many ways it's like our own Civil War army—informal, casual and not much for the showy side. A story has a New Zealand Colonel announcing to his men that he's expecting a visitor to inspect the troops. "Boys," he warned, "don't spit, don't smoke, and for Heaven's sake, don't call me Herb."

Why do planes fly in Vs?

Wild geese, cranes and other large birds that fly high and in flocks use the line or V-formation. Collisions are serious to larger birds. Ernest Thompson Seton, in his autobiography, "Trail of an Artist Naturalist," says:

"Recently several of my friends in the aviation service have told me that, when flying in squadron formation, the airplanes copy the wild geese. When so marshalled, each airplane is behind the leader; and yet every pilot has a clear view of him as well as of the course ahead. If one plane should, by accident, fall back, there is no danger of collision. And, finally, none of them are flying in 'churned air.' Just so, the geese."

Put. Henry E. Langen, in a letter in The Freeman, says that when he first came across the "Prayer" by Herbert Spencer he was shocked, but upon a second reading he began to grasp Freethought. I suggest that you do your readers a service by giving them the text of this famous prayer.

Herbert Spencer's Prayer:

O Lord, you know that I do not believe in you as you are described in the Bible and believed in by the Church. You know that I do not believe the Bible as the word of God. If it be true, as affirmed, that you created the universe, it follows that you have created all that is in it. You have created evil as well as good, the devil as well as the angels, hell as well as heaven. If you have made men at all, you made them as they are. If they are good, it is because you have made them so; if they are wicked, it is equally your work. If you are omnipotent and universal, as you are said to be, there can be no evil or wicked deed that is not the result of characters and conditions which you have created. If there is a hell and men are to be burned, it is because you have wished it to be so. It has pleased you to make them evil and wretched. You are not, then, good, nor do you love your creatures.

It is evident their sufferings give you pleasure or you would make them happy. Could I believe in you, I could not worship you except through fear, the meanest of emotions, but the only one you seem desirous to excite. We cannot love you for the good you have done, for it serves only to render us more miserable in contrast with the evil you have forced us to endure.

And so, O Lord, if the Bible be truly your word and you are as the Old Testament describes you, I can only hate you and be thankful that I do not believe.

And now, O Lord, if I am wrong, it is because you have made me so, for you can make me believe and do what you please. Created by you, I am a mere creature in your hands and am responsible for nothing. I have not the power to choose between good and evil, as I am told I should do, for I can judge of right and wrong only through the use of a brain created by you in the full knowledge of the conclusion it would lead me to; with you and not with me lies the responsibility.

I can only be thankful that I am not cowardly enough to fear nor weak enough to worship so horrible a creature as the God of the Church.

—Amen.

I have always thought it more or less cowardly to take one's own life. I have read, however, a good deal lately and have altered my views. Provided that I can commit suicide in such a manner that I would die immediately and cause less trouble to my friends, be certain of dying and not living an invalid to bother these friends, then I intend to do so. But I want to be sure that I will not fail. I want to be certain of doing this job efficiently. The Jap general can have his son with him when he kills himself, so that if he should fail his son can kill him. Of course, we cannot do this here in America. If you can suggest where I can get information on how to efficiently commit suicide, or can send me some volume, I should greatly appreciate the favor. I shall remit at once any charge.

I have no literature on the technique of suicide, and I doubt I'd ever issue such a book even if the
opportunity presented itself. I don't look on suicide as an act of cowardice, nor do I believe an individual should be denied the legal and moral right to end his existence and go winging heavenward for eternal life with the harp-strumming angels if that's what he wants. It happens that I already have an excellent essay, "The Psychology of Suicide," (Little Blue Book No. 374), by Hugh Russell Fraser. However, it's only fair to warn my Texas correspondent that this volume tells why people commit suicide, not how to do it. I've received some strange letters in my 35-year career as writer, editor and publisher, but this one tops everything. It's my notion that a good psychiatrist could straighten out the kinks in my reader's brain. Mark you, I'm not saying he's crazy, for I know nothing about brain ailments. The late Don Marquis' literary creation, Archy, the cockroach, has this to say about those who would rub themselves out:

"A suicide is a person who has considered his own case and decided that he is worthless and who acts as his own judge and executioner and he probably knows better than anyone else whether there is justice in the verdict.

That, after all, is only one cockroach's opinion. A better authority is Havelock Ellis (see his Little Blue Books) who, speaking as a scientist, says:

"The prevalence of suicide, without doubt, is a test of health in civilization; it means that the population is winding up its nervous and intellectual system to the utmost point of tension and that sometimes it snaps."

Baruch Spinoza, back in the 17th Century (see Little Blue Book No. 520, "The Story of Spinoza's Philosophy"), wrote:

"Those who commit suicide are powerless souls, and allow themselves to be conquered by external causes repugnant to their nature."

Recently I turned to a book written a half century ago by W. C. Brann, the iconoclast. In it I found a sharp paragraph on the missionary fake. Please pass it on to your readers. It will give them something to think about.

Brann on foreign missions:

"In 1893 I spent several days at El Paso in the company of two learned Hindu priests who had attended the World's Fair and were making a tour of this country, studying our institutions and occasionally giving lectures explanatory of their own religion... The younger of the priests declared that Christianity's name was an obelisk, and that Christians and missionaries had been the curse of Asia. "Wherever they go there are followed by dangerous disease, by drunkenness, murder and wretchedness. I do not say that they teach evil, but evil follows them. The Asians do not seem to grasp the good in your religion, but are quick to assimilate all the bad in your civilisation, all the barbarism of your God. Strange that you have made such wonderful progress in all things else and have not been able to civilize your Deity. We will listen to your preachers, but they will not listen to us. We seek knowledge, that we may the better teach. For that we come from the Antipodes. We admire your Government, we stand worshipful before your science and your industry, but your religion causes us to laugh. It must have been made by children. Your ministers do not want to learn—they dare not. Their religious education is finished—bound by one book, and it is simply a cheque for the cast-off garments of the world. Your Bible is the religious rubbish heap, upon which grow, I am told, 500 different kinds of weeds—each trying to crowd the others off. You are a great people, but your God seems to delight in ignorant worshippers rather than the praise of wisdom."
noon, 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. The hour glass was shelved long ago, but the bells are still in use. To get the schedule straight, let me put it this way: it’s “eight bells” at each of six different four-hour periods. In each case it’s “one bell” a half hour later, “two bells” at the end of an hour, and so on until eight bells are struck.

Somewhere in Voltaire’s writings is a passage that lists the advantages animals have over humans. As you are a life-long student of Voltaire, I turn to you in the hope that you can give me the thoughts I’m looking for.

Voltaire, in a letter to Count de Schomberg (August 31, 1769), wrote:

“Animals have these advantages over man: they never hear the clock strike, they die without any idea of death, they have no theologians to instruct them, their last moments are not disturbed by unwelcome and unpleasant ceremonies, their funerals cost them nothing, and no one starts lawsuits over their wills.”

C. L. De Montesquieu, in his great book, “The Spirit of the Laws,” (1755), wrote, in similar vein:

“The lower animals have not the high advantages which we have, but they have some which we lack. They know nothing of our hopes, but they also know nothing of our fears; they are subject to death as we are, but they are not aware of it; most of them are better able to take care of themselves than we are, and they make a less evil use of their passions.”

I am a lover of animals, which anyone can see from my writings. I not only love them; I respect them. They’re all so beautiful. And here I know no exceptions. The other day I was shocked to hear an intelligent and art-loving soldier speak admiringly of my lovely, soft-eyed calves and then spoil it all by remarking, “Isn’t it a pity they have to grow up to be ugly cows?” I asked him, in amazement if he really considered cows ugly, and he nodded. I shook my head mournfully. “But,” the young man argued, “you yourself have described some woman as being as ugly as a cow.” I didn’t recall ever having said such a thing, but the point is that we who claim certain esthetic sensibilities don’t like to see women who look like cows (or horses, or sheep), because a woman’s supposed to look like a woman, not like some other mammal. A horse has magnificent beauty, but it doesn’t follow the horse becomes ugly in our minds when we say some person appears to be horse faced. A horse’s face on a horse is an artistic masterpiece. Later, this same young man asked, “How can it be that you, who love animals so sincerely and profoundly, give so much time and effort to raising chickens, pigs and the like when you know they’re to be killed and eaten?” That struck me as a fair question and I answered it as best I knew how. I presented the argument that domestic animals that are raised for our tables would never have been born if we hadn’t planned their birth. It would be different if we lived off wild and free animals. I’m yet to kill my first free animal. Yes, I’ve eaten them, but I wouldn’t if they hadn’t been available through commercial channels. I’ve eaten my share of rabbits and shrimp, which brings me to H. W. Beecher’s question why a rat isn’t as good as a rabbit or why men eat shrimps and neglect cockroaches. I don’t know. I do know that when men become hungry enough rats are delicious; and cockroaches, for that matter. When we realize that humans can eat just about anything, one wonders why rats and cockroaches never became fads. The other day a judge in New York City said a good word for cockroaches, calling them “the Chesterfields of the sink.” That gave me a smile. His argument seemed quite sound. Cockroaches, he noticed, seem to listen to him when he calls to them. If he tells them to withdraw, they stop in their tracks, hesitate a few moments, and then turn around to leave. I admire their brisk way of walking. But I’d hate to use them as part of a shrimp salad. How these prejudices settle in our bellies I don’t know, but they’re there, though some leave in time. I remember, when I was a boy in Philadelphia how we hoodlums hounded a schoolboy whose family, according to gossip, ate frog’s legs. We’d yell “frog-eater” and shudder, much in the way that wafer-snatchers yell “Christ-killer” at a
Jew. Later I tried out some frogs, liked them, and have been eating them ever since. Of course, I've told all this before, even going so far as to quote famous authorities on the place of the frog in man's diet. You'll find all that in my volumes of "Questions and Answers." I'm still to eat my first cut of horse meat, and doubt I ever will, unless driven to it. Cannibals say human meat is tasty, albeit salty. Taking time by the foreskin, and returning to the great Frenchman with whom I opened this piece, Voltaire, in a letter to Frederick the Great (October, 1737) says almost a good word for man-eaters:

"Cannibals have the same notions of right and wrong that we have. They make war in the same anger and passion that move us, and the same crimes are committed everywhere. Eating fallen enemies is only an extra ceremonial. The wrong does not consist in roasting them, but in killing them."

Perhaps he didn't know that cannibals are shocked by civilized warriors who kill and let dead bodies go to waste. A cannibal doesn't believe in killing too much—just enough for a feast. To kill thousands of men when a dozen could do just as well disturbs the conscience of the crudest cannibal. Waste not; want not. Wiltful waste is antisocial. What does a cannibal do after he has left his banquet table, his belly, including the pippik, bulging with cuts of a fat, juicy missionary? Does he go to sleep right away or does he, like the white man, yell for women?

**

Being uncircumcised, I am worried about my chances for getting into heaven. I have this fear because of Genesis XVII, 11, which says plainly, "Ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you." I know you don't believe in the Bible as divine revelation, but you know the Bible, so I am asking you what my situation is regarding the Hereafter.

I'm sure the Lawd Gawd Jehovah will tell St. Peter to O.K. your credentials when you appear at the Pearly Gate and knock for admittance. I say this on the authority of Galatians V, 2: "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." Keep this quotation in mind if anyone challenges you. However, this may be unnecessary as it's assumed that the angels and other heavenly officials are familiar with God's Word. If the subject comes up, keep cool, for you stand on firm ground. If a debate develops, try to ring in this sentence from Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay, "The Poet": "The Circumcision is an example of the power of poetry to raise the low and offensive." If you make the grade and get a pass, put in a good word for me.

My client, A. Hitler, recently employed me to draw up his will, which I did to the best of my ability as a lawyer of long experience, but when I presented my bill for payment I was told to go jump into the lake. As I kept a copy of this will, I'm sending you the text with the suggestion that you print it. Please ask your readers if I didn't serve my client well.

The last will of A. Hitler:

I, Adolph Hitler, being of unsound mind and misery, and considering the possibility of a fatal accident known as assassination, declare this to be my last (you hope) will and testament.

To ENGLAND, I leave the original manuscript of "Mein Kampf," which their RAF spoiled. I had written a different finish, but their flyers got me in the end.

To POLAND, I leave a 16x10 gold-framed photograph of myself to hang in their public schools to scare the hell out of any kid who might think along Nazi lines.

To AMERICA, I leave Walter Winchell, who always said: "To Hell with Hitler." I know he'll be very busy on my funeral day so he'd better not come. Business before pleasure.

To MUSSOLINI, I leave my Chaplin mustache which he is to make into a toupee for his ivory dome. He will need a disguise to hide from Italians who know what a mess he got them in.

To RUSSIA, I leave all my frozen assets. I never would warm up to Comrade Stalin or get near enough to Moscow to even smell vodka.

To JAPAN'S (land of the Rising Scum) HIROHITO, I leave all my medals which will help him sink quicker when he goes down in the Pacific.

To HIMMLER AND GOERING, I leave the final execution of my will as they are experienced at executions.

To THE ENTIRE WORLD, I just leave and will they thank God!
My final wish is that I be buried in an asbestos suit as I will need it where I am going.

ADOLF HITLER.

Dated: Very soon.

* * *

I want to thank you for the pleasure received from Housman's "A Shropshire Lad," Little Blue Book No. 306. This is poetry at its best. Was Housman religious?

In an autobiographical note written for a French translation of his poems A.E. Housman said:

"I was brought up in the Church of England and in the High church party, which is much the best religion I have ever come across. But Lempliere's 'Classical Dictionary,' read when I was eight, made me prefer paganism to Christianity; I abandoned Christianity at 13, and became an Atheist at 21."

* * *

Who invented high heels?
A woman who got tired of being kissed on the forehead.

* * *

Your passing reference to Henry Ward Beecher's "clinical theology" puzzles me. What does it mean?

When the Rev. Beecher was at work saving souls he asked his prospective converts about their eating habits, how much exercise they took and whether their bowels moved regularly. This routine came to be known as Beecher's "clinical theology." It helped him distinguish in his penitents between a pain near the pippik and pitly. . . . Beecher liked Mark Twain, despite the great humorist's outspoken Freethought and skepticism, and it's said he enjoyed Mark Twain's account of the small boy's story of Elijah:

"There was a prophet named Elijah. One day he was going up a mountainside. Some boys threw stones at him. He said, 'If you keep on throwing stones at me I'll set the bears on you and they'll eat you up.' And they did, and he did, and the bears did."

A wicked sinner took this yarn to heart and decided to get his sins washed away while he still had the chance, so he had the job done in Beecher's church. When he told a pious Baptist what he'd done, he was told sternly: "You ain't been washed. You just been dry cleaned." . . . And now, for no good reason I want to tell about the Irish maid who, despite her being a devout Catholic, attended services in a Christian Science church. Later, when asked how she liked the Christian Science services, replied:

"Faith, it was mighty queer. After a time a man on one side got up and told what Mary Baker Eddy had done for him; then another man told what Mary Baker Eddy had done for him; next a woman in front of me told what Mary Baker Eddy had done for her. So I got up and told what Lydia Pinkham had done for me."

And now, since I'm well into my store of ancient wheezes, let me tell about the teacher of a class of Divinity students who was trying to impress on them the importance of making facial expressions harmonize with the speech in delivering sermons. He said:

"When you speak of Heaven, let your face light up and be irradiated with a Heavenly gleam. Let your eyes shine with reflected glory. And when you speak of Hell—well, then your every-day face will do."

Here I'm tempted to tell again a story used by the Rev. L.M. Birkhead, author of numerous Little Blue Books. Dr. Birkhead, at the time, was the Unitarian preacher in Kansas City. His story:

"Bishop Beerbeltch was preaching on sin in high places. 'Do you know what they do in society and Hollywood? A beautiful, wanted person comes out on the stage. She undresses while several lustful men fill a portable bathtub with champagne. When she's naked, she crawls into the tub and sits right down in the champagne. Then the men dip a silk stripper into the champagne and use it as a drinking cup! A horrified little fellow in the congregation sprang to his feet and shouted, 'Unsanitary!'"

Bishop Beerbeltch is always sure to see Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt anywhere he happens to be preaching. The other day, Mrs. Prissy-Pratt told him, in a tone of appreciation:

"Bishop Beerbeltch, you'll never know what your service meant to me. It was just like water to a drowning man."

About 30 years ago, Robert Carlton Brown and I used to have us a time in New York, after which we'd land in Fleischman's Baths, 42nd street and Sixth avenue. Once
while we were being rubbed, he read a poem, which later appeared in one of his books. There's no doubt in my malicious mind about Bishop Beerbelch being the inspiration of Brown's little piece:

I like long prayers,  
The kind that stretch  
Like elastic bands.  
I always sit around,  
Holding my breath,  
Hoping they'll snap back  
And hit the preacher  
On the nose.

Bishop Beerbelch is a wonderful character who lives by Gawd's Word and prayer. But, like Ingersoll's praying preacher who lived by prayer, Bishop Beerbelch always eats considerable besides. He knows he does a better job of praying when his pippik is distended. When Bishop Beerbelch opens his mouth to pray, every chicken within miles shudders. He presses to his lordly pippik Cervantes' sentence, "He preaches well that lives well."

What is the American per capita consumption of pepper? About one-third pound per year.

I suggest that you reprint Lincoln's words on labor, written more than 75 years ago. Lincoln had the courage to speak for the workingman at a time when the worker was considered just a notch or two above chattel slaves. Now, of course, the status of labor is much higher. In the words of the great French Socialist, Jaures, "The majority of suffering labor is no longer dumb; it speaks with a million tongues." True, and the Great Emancipator spoke for the toilers at a time when it wasn't considered popular to champion their cause. Unionism was hardly more than a word in those far days. But it was words like Lincoln's that prepared the way for labor's magnificent advances.

Lincoln on labor:

It is assumed that labor is available only in connection with capital; that nobody labors unless somebody else, owning capital, somehow by the use of it, induces him to labor. Now, there is no such relation between capital and labor as here assumed: Labor is prior to and independent of capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration.

Inasmuch as most good things are produced by labor, it follows that all such things ought to belong to those whose labor has produced them. But it has happened in all ages of the world that some have labored, and others, without labor, have enjoyed a large proportion of the fruits. This is wrong and should not continue.

To secure to each laborer the whole product of his labor, as nearly as possible, is as it manifestly should be a worthy object of any good government.

If you didn't have religion our prisons would be jammed.

My reader forgets that our prisons already are jammed, and with believers in religion, not Atheists and other unbelievers.

"Can you recommend a honeymoon song? "All Through the Night.""

I invite you to discuss the relative importance of heredity and environment. I happen to be strong for environment. Breeding isn't everything.

I agree with you, but it certainly is a lot of fun.

How much will the average "10-gallon hat" contain? One and four-tenths gallons.

You have foisted on Isadora Duncan a story that was about another lady. I refer to the love proposal made to Bernard Shaw.

My reader is right. The story, which appears in my volumes of "Questions and Answers" is a good one, even though I dragged in the wrong woman. It was a Swiss woman who wrote to Shaw, as follows: "You have the greatest brain in the world, and I have the most beautiful body; so we ought to produce the perfect child." Shaw replied: "What if the child inherits my body and your brains." It's a good story even with Isadora Duncan left out.

Was Abraham really born in a Kentucky log cabin? I've heard tell it was a modern bungalow, with all conveniences, including inside plumbing.

Not only was Abraham Lincoln born in a log cabin, but he actually helped his father build it.

I don't want none of your Little Blue Books.

Not even a few of my grammars?

How much gasoline would a plane con-
The German underground is circulating a leaflet, entitled “Ich Klag an” (I Accuse), which I have translated for you. Please pass it on to your readers.

“I Accuse!” reads as follows:

“I am the voice of thousands of dead.
“Let my cry reach deep into the interior of the country.
“Even the thunder of cannon cannot drown out my voice!
“In the name of all my comrades in death:
“For all the blood that Germany has spilled,
“For all the tears that Germany has wept,
“I accuse our direct enemy—Hitler!
“I accuse him of treason! I accuse him of murder!
“Here’s to liberty and justice! I accuse him of having lied! I accuse him of deceit against an entire generation!
“He who began his reign with blood,
“Who created, tortured of our people, an inhuman hell,
“Him, I accuse; I accuse him before the entire world, he who, instead of peace, liberty, bread.
“Has brought us only war, shame and misery,
“Him, I accuse him!
“The sentence has been pronounced, and it is Death.
“In the name of Germany, execute him! You are the executioners! Destroy him!”

Your articles on composers in your 25 volumes of “Questions and Answers” give numerous facts to support the assertion that most great composers were Freethinkers. However, I notice that you don’t even mention Sir Edgar Elgar, the distinguished English composer, who’s claimed by the Roman Catholics as one of their own. Please comment.

When Hesketh Pearson asked Bernard Shaw (who knew Elgar intimately) whether the composer was a “devout Roman Catholic,” Shaw replied:

“Good heavens, no! He avoided the subject with a deliberate reluctance which convinced me that he was a 19th Century unbeliever, though he wouldn’t have admitted...”
pressed isn't entirely given over to our droolers of reaction.

Is it true that the new admiral Hitler has put at the head of Germany's submarine warfare was for a time an insane asylum? Grand Admiral Doenitz was for many months a mental patient in an asylum. I don't know anything about his present condition, but it's revealing that Hitler, himself a madman, wasn't satisfied with the methods of his submarine commanders. They weren't brutal enough. So he elevated a former inmate of a hospital for the mentally sick to a position of complete control over Hitler's subs.

Would you say that the human race's total weight exceeds that of any other organism? The human race is nothing more than a light smear on parts of the earth's surface. The insects certainly weigh more than the total weight of all other land animals put together. Take any average square mile of the earth's land surface, barring deserts and ice caps, and you'll find about 2,000,000,000 insects in or on the ground. The human population of the entire world (prior to Hitler) wasn't much over 200,000,000,000. In addition to the 2,000,000,000 insects in or on the ground, there are about 5,000,000 insects flying above each square mile. Yes, the earth belongs to the insects, on the basis of numbers, but the nice thing about that—from our viewpoint—is that the insects don't know it. Insects do us great damage, and we hardly seem to be winning more than a measure of relief from their depredations. About all we can do is to keep on fighting. If we didn't, they might starve us in a few generations or centuries. If our six-legged neighbors had brains enough to press their advantage, they could do a blitz that would soon be our finish. What saves us is that insects can't reason. They do wonderfully intricate things, but they don't reason, and that means that we can at least hold our own until the human brain thinks up a totalitarian war that will really dispose of unfriendly insects. I say unfriendly insects, mark you, for if we ever disposed of the suicide. Think of the food we'd be friendly ones we'd be committing deprived of if bees weren't pollinizers. And look at the useful silkworms. Another point to remember is that if there weren't insects our fresh-water fish and birds would starve. Game birds and song birds get one-third of their food from insects. Insects are two-thirds of the diet of fresh-water fish. Termites are terribly destructive, I know, because only a few months ago an entire section of my warehouse collapsed because of their ravages. About a million Little Blue Books were dumped into an awful mess, compelling me to scoop up tons of them for packaging in 10-pound grab-bags, which I've been selling to my customers at a dollar per package, plus a half dollar for carriage charges. (What a chance for a plug! And didn't I grab it!) You have the termites to thank for that wonderful bargain. If there weren't any termites, the tropical forests would be choked with fallen wood. The common fly does us great harm because it spreads disease, but let's be fair and record the fact that it also removes carrion, thereby helping us to keep some of our health. But there's one insect that has me puzzled. It's the creature that bores into a Mexican bean. The Mexican bean beetle makes the bean act like a jitterbug, but why does it do that? Search me. All it does is to help pestmen sell packages of Mexican jumping beans to passer-by who are amused by such nonsense. The behavior of the beetle doesn't make sense, even from the point of view of the insect. Maurice Maeterlinck, who wrote a famous book about insects, says: "Something in the insect seems to be alien to the habits . . . of this world, as if it had come from some other planet, more monstrous, more energetic, more sensate, more atrocious, more infernal than our own." In short, the insect world is almost as bad as Hitler.

Let's see a picture of the great Patsy O'Bang.

Patsy O'Bang, the universal what-a-man, is an imaginary character, which means his portrait will have to be created by inspired artists who are familiar with his magnificent behavior and therefore in a position to make a stab at his looks. Readers who have talent
with the pen are invited to submit pictures of the dazzling head, sharp, piercing eyes, broad, round nose, sarcastic lips, pugnacious chin, impressive ears, broad shoulders and manly chest of this modest superman. If a picture catches his magnetic personality I'll reproduce it in these columns.

In several of your volumes of "Questions and Answers" you classify George Washington as a Deist, along with Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin, Voltaire, and other important men of the 18th Century. You say that Washington, like other Deists, rejected revealed religion, though he believed in the idea of a Supreme Being. Your ammunition of facts, supported by documents, is impressive, but I'm still puzzled by the fact that religious literature makes effective use of a bronze plate on a wall of St. Paul's Church, in N.Y.C., in which Washington's prayer is quoted, including a closing line in which the great Founding Father accepted Jesus Christ. I know you have discussed this prayer several times, but nowhere do I find it quoted in full. Please comment.

The bronze casting contains a flagrant fraud, as I've shown several times. Here I intend to present the actual quotations, thereby proving once and for all that the so-called prayer is a doctored affair in order to make the propaganda efforts of organized, theocratic religionists easier. Of course, this won't stop the fake. It'll go on as long as there are gullibles within the hearing of vociferous pulpiteers. But informed Freethinkers insist that the truth shall be made available. Here is the concluding paragraph of Washington's Circular Letter of Congratulations and Advice to the Governors of the Thirteen States (pages 83-84, Vol. 19, Putnam's Knickerbocker Nugget Series, "The Ideals of the Republic"): "I now make it my earnest prayer that God would have you, and the state over which you preside, in his holy protection; that He would incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government; to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another, for their fellow-citizens of the United States at large; and particularly for their brethren who have served in the field; and finally that He would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of the mind, which were the characteristics of the divine author of our blessed religion; without an humble imitation of whose example, in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation. "I have the honor to be, with much esteem and respect, sir, your excellency's most obedient and most humble servant, G. Washington."

It's plain from the above that George Washington was expressing the religious ideology of one who accepted Deism. But look at the thing after the pious brethren got through with Washington's letter (written at Headquarters, Newburg, June 18, 1783):

"WASHINGTON'S PRAYER" "Almighty God, we make our earnest prayer that thou wilt keep the United States in thy holy protection; that thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government; to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another and for their fellow citizens of the United States at large. And finally that thou wilt most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility and pacific temper of mind, which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without an humble invitation of whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy nation. Grant our supplication, we beseech thee, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

It's good to see so many articles and books by H. G. Wells coming from your presses. I get your material in batches here in England, where I am with the U.S. Army. The other day, while poking around in a little library, I came on H. G. Wells's auto-obituary, which may amuse your readers. Wells, as you know, is now 76 years old, just about the same age as Joseph McCabe.

Wells's auto-obituary:

"The name of H. G. Wells, who died yesterday afternoon of heart failure in the Paddington Infirmary at the age of 97, will have few associations for the younger generation. ... He was indeed one of the most prolific of the 'literary hacks' of that time. ... The most interesting thing about Wells was his refusal to accept the social inferiority to which he seemed to have been born. ... He was a liberal democrat in the sense that he claimed an unlimited right to think, criticize, discuss and suggest, and he was a Socialist in
his antagonism to personal, racial or national monopolization.

"He was seriously injured in a brawl with some Fascist roughs brought about by a rare fit of indignation on his part in 1948, and his health was further impaired by a spell in a concentration camp under the brief Communist dictatorship of 1952. Thenceforth his once considerable vitality seems to have deserted him. ... From being a premature, he became a forgotten man. His immediate needs were relieved by a small Civil-List pension in 1955.

"He occupied an old tumble-down house upon the borders of Regents Park and his bent, shabby, solvently and, latterly, somewhat obese figure was frequently to be seen in the adjacent gardens. ... 'Some day,' he would be heard to say, 'I shall write a book, a real book.'"

After leaving high school I hope to become a radio announcer. I have above-average diction. Can you give me some of the tests used by station managers?

The only test I have is one used in English. Novices are supposed to read the following clearly and without mistakes in 20 seconds, which hits me as asking for too much. The test:

I bought a batch of baking powder and baked a batch of biscuits. I brought a big basket of biscuits back to the bakery and baked a batch of big biscuits. Then I took the big basket of biscuits and the basket of big biscuits and mixed the big biscuits with the basket of biscuits that was next to the big basket and put a bunch of biscuits from the basket into a box. Then I took the box of mixed biscuits and a biscuit mixer and biscuit basket and brought the basket of biscuits and the box of mixed biscuits and the biscuit mixer to the bakery and opened a tin of sardines.

Is the Soviet Union persecuting churches and religion? What is the practical policy of the Russian government regarding this much-discussed question. To believe many critics, Russia is following a plan of extermination in matters religious.

My volumes of "Questions and Answers" contain many articles on the subject of religion's status in the U.S.S.R. All show beyond debate, that religion is not being persecuted. One way of checking the charge of persecution of religion in Russia is to get the facts from the church authorities themselves. They ought to know whether they're being persecuted. This brings me to a book, "The Truth About Religion in Russia," published in Moscow in July, 1942. This volume contains an introduction by the Patriarch Sergius, head of the Orthodox church in Moscow, in which the issue is commented on candidly. The Russian Church doesn't consider itself persecuted. As for the war, the Church has prayed publicly for victory against the Fascists. True, there were excesses early in the revolution, but such conduct can't always be controlled during days of mass activity. But the broad situation is clear. The U.S.S.R., like the U.S.A., opposes any union between Church and State. Our Constitution guarantees such separation, though there are numerous signs of unconstitutional recognition of church privileges. In Russia, Church institution — "monasteries and the clergy as a caste or profession" — were "deprived of certain rights: namely, possession of lands and commercial enterprises, and various caste privileges distinguishing them from 'plain people.'" All that is good American doctrine. What makes it "terrible" in Russia is the fact that the leading figures in the Soviet Union are all Atheists. But being Atheists doesn't stop the officials of the Soviet Union from permitting worship under certain conditions. Of course, the Soviet Union doesn't grant cash subsidies to the Orthodox Church, as did the Czarist regime, but progressives look on this as a step forward. Nor can the Church authorities participate in political activities. They must devote themselves exclusively to Church affairs. Progressives accept that as a sign of enlightenment. Political churches have always been reactionary.

I know of your long admiration for France's great Socialist leader, Leon Blum. Your volumes of "Questions and Answers" contain many flattering references to this loyal supporter of democracy and freedom, a loyalty that he demonstrated numerous times while premier of France, before the appeasers put over their fatal Munich compromise. Blum, as you know, was a prisoner of Pétain and Laval until Hitler occupied all of France, after which he became Hitler's prisoner. Here in Montreal, Canada, where I live (I am a French Canadian), is a publishing house, L'Arbre, which has just issued a valuable book of Blum's speeches and articles.
William C. Bullitt, former U.S. Ambassador to France, has written a preface to it, which I am enclosing and which I think you should pass on to your readers.

William C. Bullitt has been Blum's friend for many years. Blum is now being held in Burrossol, France, under especially severe conditions, and is in constant danger of summary execution. No one is permitted to see him, not even his relatives. Blum's son, Robert Blum, a captain of artillery, is also a prisoner of the Nazis. He is being kept in one of the worst concentration camps in Germany. He is in solitary confinement, miserably fed, is denied the right to correspond, and is even forbidden reading matter. Yakob Stalin, Joseph Stalin's son, is in the same barracks. Such treatment of prisoners of war is in violation of agreements, according to the Red Cross in Switzerland, but no one's ever surprised at Nazi gangsterism. Bullitt's tribute to Blum follows:

No man is less like the legend which has grown up about him than Blum. He is not weak, but a man of unshakable physical courage. He is an internationalist, but also a great patriot. Moreover, he is an impassioned Democrat—and he is our friend.

A Frenchman once said of President Roosevelt: "He is a human being of considerable importance." That is true also of Leon Blum.

In 1938, when Blum was being forced out of power, by pressure of the Senate alone, he told me how certain he knew he would break his opponents. He did not need to appeal to the people but only to give free rein to their aroused strength. He refused to lose the reins—even though his refusal meant giving up his post as Prime Minister and damage to his party—because he would not weaken his country in the face of the growing threat from Germany.

He had a horror of civil war, a horror expressed in his speech at Luna Park which he closed with the line of Victor Hugo: "Oh Patrie! Oh Concorde, entre les Citoyens."

All his political acts, which in spite of the revelations at the Riom Trial remain misunderstood by the general public, testify to his love for France and for liberty in the world. It is for these "sins" that he is being punished today.

In writing this brief preface, I have tried not only to fulfill the duties of a friend but also to pay homage to a man—unjustly accused—whom history, rather than any living man, will adequately defend.

I enclose a press clipping which says that Mussolini has had stomach cancer for four years. Is that possible?

It's possible, but the chances are remote. A recent survey shows that if 100 patients with stomach cancer were to avail themselves of the best medical services, 50 of them would be dead in 16 months. Less than 2 percent would survive for five years. Patients with stomach cancer who do not receive medical treatment "die, on the average, within less than one year from the onset of the first symptoms," according to Science Service. The same source adds that "the highest percentage of five-year cures is 5.11."

When was butter discovered?

Butter was being churned before history began. Some years before Frank Harris died he invited me to his home one night for dinner and closed his invitation with the words, "I'll serve you butter on a lordly dish." I thought that was original with the celebrated author, critic and lover, and quoted it approvingly (with credit) until I came on it in the Bible. Deborah, if you don't remember, sang of Jael, that when Sisera stopped by, she "brought forth butter in a lordly dish." I don't know why Frank Harris changed the Bible's "in" to "on." Job also knew about butter. Twenty-five centuries ago, the Greeks spoke lovingly of "boutron," which breaks down to "bous" for cow and "turos" for cheese.

What percent of the average person's weight is accounted for by his blood?

About 6 percent.

You mention, in one of your volumes of "Questions and Answers," that Professor Albert Einstein, the discoverer of the theory of relativity, employed "The Blind Man's Idea of the Sun" as an apt illustration of the average person's conception of his system of reasoning. Can you give me the parable?

"The Blind Man's Idea of the Sun," written by Su Tung-p'o, one of the outstanding humanistic poets of the Sung Dynasty, is found in Lin Yutang's anthology, "The Wisdom of China and India." It follows:

There was a man born blind. He had never seen the sun and he asked
about it of people who could see.
Someone told him, "The sun's shape is like a brass tray." The blind man struck the brass tray and heard its sound. Later, when he heard the sound of a bell, he thought it was the sun.

Again someone told him, "The sunlight is like that of a candle." The blind man felt the candle and thought that was the sun's shape. Later, he felt a (big) key and thought it was the sun.

The sun is quite different from a bell or a key, but the blind man cannot tell the difference, because he has never seen the sun. The truth (Tao) is harder to see than the sun, and when people do not know it they are exactly like the blind man. Even if you do your best to explain by analogies and examples, it still appears like the analogy of the brass tray and the candle. From what is said of the brass tray, one imagines a bell, and from what is said about a candle one imagines a key. In this way, one gets ever further and further away from the truth.

Those who speak about Tao sometimes give it a name according to what they happen to see, or imagine what it is like without seeing it. These are mistakes in the effort to understand Tao.

What was the public debt at the close of the Civil War, at the close of the first World War, and now?
The figures for 1943-44 are astronomical, but let's not get off the beam in this matter of spending money. No matter what the bill is, it'll be a bargain if the murderous gangsters in Berlin, Rome and Tokio are destroyed and their organizations exterminated.

1865 $ 2,846,000,000
1915 26,536,701,000
1942 72,422,000,000
1943 133,000,000,000
1944 210,549,150,000

*Estimated.

Do you have a favorite Bible quotation? If so, let's have it.
It's John 8, 32: "Know Ye the Truth and the Truth Shall Make You Free."

Has anyone claimed to remember his life within the womb?
So far as I know, this claim has been made by only one person, Salvador Dali, screwball master of surrealism. He may believe that, but I don't. Dali has made a good thing of all his insanities, so he undoubtedly has a laugh on those who make fun of him. Readers who would like to know the essence of the Daliain philosophy of painting, will learn from his autobiography that it is "the sudden materialization of the suggested image; the all-powerful fetishistic corporeality of virtual phantoms which are thereby endowed with all the attributes of realism belonging to tangible objects." Mr. Dali has all the foggy attributes that should qualify him as the founder of a new religion. He has done well by himself in art, but all that's chicken-feed when one sees what he could accomplish if he struck out for the richer pastures of mysticism and Gaud-inspired verbiage. To adapt one of Dali's juicy phrases, his brain suggests the "soft and swampy opulence of an oyster."

When you wrote that squib about people who get piled up about their ancestors I was reminded of Mark Twain's visit to the Holy Land (in "Innocents Abroad") and the lament he penned after the guide had shown him the "tomb of Adam." Ever the ribber, Mark Twain let loose with a solid paragraph of solemn folderol, which I've copied for your readers. As you've always been an admiral of our humorous Freethinker, and as you've quoted his works hundreds of times, I'm sure you'll want to reprint the enclosed.

Mark Twain's lament:
The tomb of Adam! How touching it was, here in a land of strangers, far away from home and friends, and all who cared for me, thus to discover the grave of a blood relation. The unerring instinct of nature thrilled its recognition. The fountain of my filial affection was stirred to its profoundest depths and I gave way to tumultuous emotion. I leaned upon a pillar and burst into tears. I deem it no shame to have wept over the grave of my poor dead relative. Noble old man—he did not live to see me—he did not live to see his child. And I—alas did not live to see him. Weighed down by sorrow and disappointment, he died before I was born—6,000 brief summers before I was born. But let us try to bear it with fortitude. Let us trust that he is better off where he is. Let us take comfort in the thought that his loss is our eternal gain.

I've seen the phrase, "The Christian face" (Facies Christiana), but don't know what it means. Can you help me?
Havelock Ellis, in his "Autobiog-
raphy," (1939) used the term, which he applied to "the face which tells of natural instinct repressed by a perpetual stern control imprinting on the mouth the fixed lines of high tension." When I saw that super-bigot, William Jennings Bryan, in action at the Scopes trial in Tennessee, I was frightened by the way he froze his face and turned his mouth into a huge slit. I didn't know the phrase, "Facies Christiana" then, but when I first came on it I was reminded that it described the fanaticism and intolerance registered on the Bryan mug. As for my own pan, you get the idea when I tell you that Woodrow Wilson's favorite ditty could have been written about me:

As a beauty I am not a star,
There are others more handsome by far,
But my face, I don't mind it,
For I am behind it.

It's the people in front get the jar.

How big is the greeting card industry?

It's big business, and getting bigger. The American people spend about $50,000,000 yearly for about 3,000,000,000 cards, an average of 20 cards per person. Fifty percent of these cards are sold for the Christmas and New Year holidays. The industry is 100 years old, if we accept the 1842 date for the mailing of the first greeting card. With mass movements growing greater from month to month such cards serve a useful purpose, enabling people to express all kinds of sentiments without writing letters.

What is the difference between a boy hunter and a boy-hunter?

Ask Hitler.

How do you evaluate Madame Chiang Kai-shek?

She's the Eleanor Roosevelt of China.

How many times are our railroads using?

About 1,000,000,000.

What are the facts regarding the success or failure of Henry Ford's vast bomber plant at Willow Run?

The story is a melancholy one. The much-publicized Ford plant at Willow Run—which was supposed to turn out 24 bombers per day—is the greatest failure of the war. It has been a flop from the beginning, when Henry Ford made up his mind that none of its structures should be in Detroit's Wayne County, because it was Democratic. He sliced off one end of the plans in order to get all of the plant in Washtenaw County, because it is Republican and more easily answerable to his economic and political dictation. Every date set for production has been postponed. Every production quota has been revised downward from the beginning. And this from the man who boasted, in 1940, that he could build 1,000 planes daily. The Willow Run local of the UAW, CIO, which is in a position to judge Ford's boast about 1,000 planes per day, says: "The Ford Motor Company has not come within a country mile of having made good the boasts... But the company says, 'the date for full production has not yet arrived.' Unless drastic changes are made we believe that it never will." Here are some of the reasons for Ford's prodigious failure, according to the charges made by the UAW:

1. The Ford Motor Company is practicing racial discrimination in its hiring policies.
2. Ford's prejudice against Negro labor has kept down his supply of manpower which explains why the plant has never operated at top capacity. Even at this late date the Ford management gets along with only two 9-hour day shifts.
3. The labor turnover is notoriously high, probably higher than at any other similar plant in the country.

As a result of Ford's policies it has been impossible to recruit sufficient manpower to operate the Willow Run plant at top efficiency. Here are a few of the reasons:

On a half-dozen issues that vitally concern labor, the workers feel "insecurity, discontent, and anger." Ford deliberately sabotaged the Government's plan for Willow Run housing.

Ford refuses to accept the proposals to hire some 5,000 Negro workers available in the area.

The UAW report continues:

"...Anyone would have a difficult time convincing the average Willow Run worker that the officials of our Government are not afraid of the power of the Ford Motor Company. These workers have before them every day the surface evidence, at least, that the Company can, without let or hindrance, do almost anything it wishes to do no matter how
production, and as a consequence the nation's war effort, may be effec-
ted by its actions...."

The great bomber plant at Willow Run wasn't paid for by Henry Ford
or his company. It was financed by the American people. The U. S.
Government built and paid for the plant but left its operation to Hen-
ry Ford. But Ford, the mechanical genius, has messed up the project
in a way to suggest his being guilty of deliberately trying to sabotage
the war effort. We know, from the record, that until Hitler declared
war on the U. S. the Ford properties in Germany were left untouched
because of the friendly feelings entertained by the Nazis. They know
that Ford is America's original Fascist and Jew-baiter. Henry Ford
hates democracy and smiles at Fascism. Ford is using the services of
Lindbergh, America's "heroic" Fascist, Jew-baiter and Nazi-lover.

Can you give me the short poem which lists the things we can get along with-
out and ends with the observation that this can't be said about cooks?
The lines are by Bulwer-Lytton:

We may live without poetry, music and art;
We may live without conscience, and live
without heart;
We may live without friends; we may
live without books;
But civilized man cannot live without
cooks.

All I ask of a cook is that she
shall get exceptionally good food in
the proper and desirable variety,
cook it well, and serve it pleasingly.
But don't put on any culinary airs,
I warn her. Always aim to achieve
a dignified, serene, pure-flavored
simplicity. And don't try to econo-
mize. This doesn't mean I tolerate
waste. And always bring out the
best dish first. For example, if the
cook has a supply of hamburger,
hash, stew meat, lamb chops, pot
roasts and steaks, don't bring out
the least desirable dish first and
hold the splendid ones for a distant
climax. Serve them in this order:
steak, pot roast, lamb chops, Irish
stew, hash and finally the ham-
burgers. If you work up from the
commonplace to the good, you take
the risk of seeing the good meat
spoiled, or stolen, or I may croak
before she gets around to it. I have
trouble impressing this simple fact

on cooks. In short, if I were a
cannibal chief, I'd train my cooks
to bring out the fattest missionary
first, leaving the skinny school-
marm for some remote day. I'd
save Priscilla Prissy-Pratt for those
uncivilized eaters who claim they
are indifferent to what they stow
away.

Have you any inside dope on the "secret
weapons" Hitler and Goebbels are telling
about?

There are several secret weapons, one of which is being turned out by
Germany's great dye trust. By the application of Nordic genius, indel-
ible dyes will be turned into a gas which the Nazis will spray over
enemy populations—red for Russia, pink for the United States, green
for England, etc. Airplanes will
spray us and before long we'll be
yelling for peace rather than being
mistaken for Easter eggs. It's quite
an idea. Another plan is to move
Berlin to a quiet, seduced, rural
spot somewhere in the Bavarian
mountains where it won't be noticed.
But the most insidious secret
weapon is what's come to be known
as "suspender rot." The Gestapo's
stickiest agents will give us applica-
tions of suspender rot, which will
cause us to quit because no army
could fight while its pants are fall-
ing down.

I notice that Nazi agents who are doing
Hitler's dirty work outside Germany al-
ways are sticklers about the right to
free controversy. How do they reconcile
such concern over free speech with the
complete suppression of free discussion
in Hitlerland?

They don't try. Propaganda Min-
ister Goebbels makes the Nazi posi-
tion clear in the following:

"We National Socialists have
never maintained that we were rep-
resentatives of a democratic view-
point, but we have openly declared
that we only made use of democratic
means in order to gain power, and
that after the seizure of power we
would ruthlessly deny to our oppo-

nents all those means which they
had granted to us during the time of
our opposition."

We editors of the standard press would
also like to be able to tell the full, un-
vurnished truth, the way you do in all
your writings, but we're running com-
mercial establishments and have to avoid
being too candid. However, once in a
long while some editor will bust loose. This happened several years ago in "The Fountain Inn (S. C.) Tribune," of which Bob Quillen was editor. He wrote a report of a wedding in which he set out to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. I send it to you with the suggestion that you pass on this fictional masterpiece to your readers.

Robert Quillen's candid wedding notice:

Mr. Robert Chetway and Miss Alice Broadkin were married at noon Monday at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. P. D. Broadkin, Rev. M. L. Gassoway officiating.

The groom is a popular young bum who hasn't done a lick of work since he got shipped in the middle of his junior year at college. He manages to dress well and keep a supply of spending money because his dad is a soft-hearted old fool who takes up his bad checks instead of letting him go to jail.

The bride is a skinny, fast little idiot who has been kissed and handled by every boy in town since she was 12 years old. She paints like a Sioux Indian, sucks cigarettes and drinks mean corn liquor when joyriding in her dad's car. She doesn't know how to cook, sew or keep house.

The groom wore a rented dinner suit over athletic underwear of imitation silk. In addition to his jacket, he carried a pocket knife, a bunch of keys, a dun for the ring and his usual look of imbecility.

The bride wore some kind of white thing that left most of her legs sticking out at one end and the boney upper part sticking out at the other.

The young people will make their home with the bride's parents—which means they will sponge off the old man until he dies, and then she will take in washing.

The happy pair anticipates a blessed event in about five months.

P. S.—This may be the last issue of "The Tribune," but my life ambition has been to write up one wedding and tell the unvarnished truth. Now that it is done, death can have no sting.

I don't wonder that you drag in the pippik so often, since you're in Kansas, the State that a Senator once said is the pippik of the nation.

That's true, but Senator J. J. Ingalls, in a speech in the Senate, more than a half century ago, used the word "navel" instead of pippik. I'm sure Senator Ingalls never even heard of that excellent word. Here's what he said:

"Kansas is the navel of the nation. Diagonals drawn from Duluth to Galveston, from Washington to San Francisco, from Tallahassee to Olympia, from Sacramento to Augusta, intersect it in its center."

The Ingalls verbiage was a little too high-toned for "pippik" or "belly-button." It had to be the dignified, respectable "navel."

Your expression, "foolometer" fascinates me. Where'd you find it?

I picked it up from a letter by that agile wit, Sydney Smith, one of the most amusing minds in the England of the first half of the last century. Writing in 1837, Sydney Smith said:

"I am astonished that the ministers neglect the common precaution of a foolometer, with which no public man should be unprovided; I mean, the acquaintance and society of three or four regular British fools as a test of public opinion."

Bertrand Russell, in "The Quest of Happiness," discusses the subject of public opinion in a way that's shrewd and amusing:

"One should respect public opinion in so far as is necessary to avoid starvation and to keep out of prison, but anything that goes beyond this is voluntary submission to an unnecessary tyranny, and is likely to interfere with happiness in all kinds of ways."

Do you believe it's desirable for America to permit flooding our country with alien ideas?

There's no such thing as an "alien" idea. Either an idea is sound or it's bunk. An idea can be valid even though it originated in a novel in a Balkan village. An idea can be bunk even though it originated in the mind of Archbishop Spellman, in his palace off Fifth Avenue, New York City. The truth is that most of our notions and ideas have been imported—Christianity, republicanism, democracy, liberalism, Freethought, education, art, science, and so forth. We've added here and taken away there, but the things were born in foreign countries. If we were to kick out everything foreign that's in our minds we'd have brains that'd suggest chunks of liver.

I know from your writings that you have long been an admirer of the distinguished Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, Oliver
Wendell Holmes, who, as you know, was the son of a fine American writer, poet, and humorist. Your volumes of "Questions and Answers" contain numerous quotations from the writings of Justice Holmes, but you overlooked the short talk he made over the radio on the occasion of his 90th birthday, when a nationwide radio program was arranged in honor of the great liberal whose viewpoint was repeatedly emphasized in court decisions by the familiar line, "Justice Holmes dissenting." At that time the Justice himself spoke the few words that I enclose. Please pass it on to your readers, who, I'm sure, share your admiration for Holmes. As you know, though Justice Holmes died 48 hours short of his 94th birthday, he never grew old. Once, when he was still in his 80's, Justice Holmes was talking with a friend in Washington, when a beautiful young woman passed. Holmes eyed her appreciatively and sighed, "Ah, what would I give to be 70 again!"

Justice Holmes' "The Work Is Done":

In this symposium my part is only to sit in silence. To express one's feelings as the end draws near is too intimate a task. But I may mention one thought that comes to me as a listener-in. The races in a race do not stop short when they reach the goal. There is a little finishing canter before coming to a standstill. There is time to hear the kind voice of friends and to say to one's self: "The work is done."

But just as one says that the answer comes: "The race is over, but the work never is done while the power to work remains."

The canter that brings you to a standstill need not be only coming to rest. It cannot be while you still live. For to live is to function. That is all there is in living.

And so I end with a line from a Latin poet uttered 1500 years ago:

"Death plucks my ear and says, Live - I am coming."

Several years ago you printed, in one of your volumes of "Questions and Answers," a rationalistic funeral service that was devoid of theology. It was an experience of dignity and beauty. I have asked my family to use the substance of the service you worked out so tenderly and intelligently. But do you realize that we Freethinkers usually have to listen to theological mumbo-jumbo when we want to get married? Judge Jacob Panken, Justice of the Children's Court, New York City, and well known as a Socialist leader, recently used a secular marriage ceremony that Freethinkers should welcome. I enclose a copy, which I found in a recent issue of Joseph Lewis' Bulletin.

Judge Panken's non-religious marriage ceremony

Marriage is a rather serious, and at the same time, a very promising state of life. It is serious because it imposes obligations which each of you must discharge if the promise that marriage holds out is to be realized. The promises that marriage holds out are companionship, love, sympathy, joy. These can only be achieved by the discharge by each of you to the other of the obligations which flow from one to the other. The obligations are love, mutual understanding, respect and sympathy; and to bear with each other.

The fact that I officiate here and join you in marriage does not of itself constitute a marriage. What I do here is to sanction the relationship that marriage creates so that it might be properly recorded in the annals of the community. Marriage is made by you both. I cannot join you. That is and will be a function of you who are joining for life. I can only be witness to your joining one to the other. The joining of your two lives must have found root in your hearts, then the marriage is bound to be one that will be permanent in character and happy in nature. I hope that the root struck deep in each of your hearts and that they have taken root and will grow and blossom—grow and blossom in majesty so that each of you may enjoy the fruit which the tree of marriage will bear for both of you.

I cannot warrant that what I am doing now will be worth while, but you, by promise to one another in all seriousness and in response to sincerity in which you warrant that done by marriage will be successful. The young lady that you marry, Donald, is quite young, only nineteen. She apparently is very fine, though young, but she will grow and I hope she will be able to grow side by side with you so that you do not grow apart from her. I hope she will be able to grow with you so that she will always be mentally and morally your equal. I do hope that you, Donald, will not lag in your growth, that you will grow with her intellectually, and as you grow with her intellectually and emotionally, it will tighten the knot which I am going to tie in a moment. Nothing is more disastrous to the marital relationship than one growing and the other remaining in status quo. That brings in separateness, intellectually and emotionally. Two people should grow together, and those of us who
grow, become as one, for thus we understand each other.
Justice Panken: "I take it, Donald, that you desire to take Margaret to be your wife?"
Donald: "I do."
Justice Panken: "And I take it, Margaret, that you want Donald to be your husband?"
Margaret: "I do."
Justice Panken: "Have you a ring? The fact that you place a ring on her finger does not constitute a marriage, either. It is merely a symbol, nothing more, but that symbol has become an almost inescapable custom.
"I pronounce you husband and wife. May you both be happy."

It seems to me that Dr. Patsy O'Bang, who, according to one of your articles, studied medicine in London, Berlin, Paris, Pekin and Piplpikville, should have remained active in that profession, if for no other reason than its ready means of an income. Instead, he puts the mazzuma-bite on Haldeman-Julius, who has enough to put up with, considering that most of The Freeman's deficit falls to him. I agree that Dr. O'Bang is a great scholar and creative scientist, but why didn't he devote at least one of his sciences to commercial, financial ends, thereby enabling him to live well and with dignity? I am almost tempted to brand Dr. O'Bang as a sponger, though I notice you go out of your way to defend him from such an accusation. You are entirely too easy, Mr. E.H.L-J. I'd insist, even at this late date, that he re-enter the medical profession, where he could earn a handsome living with only an hour or two of work daily.

I forwarded the above comment to Dr. Patsy O'Bang, who put aside his literary labors long enough to pen a reply. Being in a hurry, Dr. O'Bang said that my reader could get his reaction to the medical profession by reading Conan Doyle's explanation of why he had quit medicine for literature. O'Bang, like Doyle, had a first case that was the final straw. Here's the case:

My first call came in the middle of a cold January night. It was raining. Smith's youngest girl had taken a dose of laudanum in mistake for paregoric. I tramped three miles through the cold and rain, falling twice on the icy pavement, and losing my hat, hunting half an hour before I could find it.

When I reached the home of my patient I found the house dark and still. I rang the bell. There was no answer. (Remember, Dr. Doyle went through exactly the same experience.) Presently I heard an upstairs window raised. A voice called down, "Be you Dr. Patsy O'Bang?"
"Yes," was my reply, "let me in."
"No need to come in. The child's all right. She's sleeping very quiet."
"How much did she take? I shouted into the upper darkness. "Only two drops," replied the voice from the window. "Well, I'd better take my head in now or I'll be gettin' myself my death from the cold." I turned to go. I had gone a few steps, when I heard the window raised again. Hope flooded my soul. Maybe the man above had relented and would invite me in for a drink similar to those Specials served by Haldeman-Julius, and a session before the fire before I had to make the long, cold homeward trek. I waited hopefully. The voice called from above, "You won't charge nothin' for this visit, will ye?" 

Maynard C. Krueger, assistant professor of economics, University of Chicago, spoke on the university's round table, September 26, 1943, during which he voiced a criticism of the capitalist system that impressed me deeply. I have obtained the original text, which is enclosed, and suggest that you reprint it. Your readers will surely find Prof. Krueger's comments useful and informative. As you know, Prof. Krueger is an active Socialist.

Prof. Krueger on the system of capitalist profit:

The private profit system has not been able to provide either social security of a satisfactory sort or full employment of either men or resources. The private profit system produces the wrong kind of people. It conditions people; it teaches people to be predatory; it puts the emphasis on and it nurses and encourages the worst aspects of what is called "human nature"—the calculating kind of selfishness and acquisitiveness which gets in the way of the kind of a life that we ought to be able to lead. It puts entirely too many people in a position where they are kicked around by private economic dictators over whom they have no control. It produces a few people with fantastic economic fortunes who exercise terrific political power and power over the agencies of public opinion. It seems to me that it warps and corrupts the minds and souls of people and all their institutions.

Tell me what these letters stand for: BCPBSDIDIO, WPB. It refers to the Biscuit, Cracker and Pretzel Subcommittee of the
Baking Industry of the Division of Industry Operations of the War Production Board.

Please give me an example of a paradox.

Two M.D.'s.

I take it all unsigned articles are by E. H.-J.

You're right, but don't tell anybody. Let it be our little secret.

What's the best way to induce chest expansion?

Buy a war bond.

Joe Goebbels is telling Germans not to worry about the scarcity of lemons in view of the fact that "they are a dangerous, weakening food." What does this mean?

In the original fable it was grapes that were undesirable.

Isn't dunking permissible if you keep your fingers dry?

Yes.

Pablo Picasso's studio in Paris was raided recently by Gestapos. When one of the gangsters saw the great artist's magnificent painting of Nazis murdering Poles, he asked, "Did you do this?" "No," Picasso replied curtly, "you did!"

How do trick riders in a circus perform so well on a horse without slipping or sliding, and why are the horses always white?

The rider prevents slipping by sprinkling rosin on the horse's back. Rosin shows least on a white horse.

For some years now it's been stylish to say that so-and-so is "civilized." Is that a Menckenism?

No. I don't know when that use of "civilized" began, but you'll find it in Oscar Wilde. For example: "With an evening coat and a white tie, anybody, even a stock broker, can gain a reputation for being civilized."

How many bees are there in the U. S., and how much honey and beeswax do they produce?

There are 250,000,000,000 bees in this country. They produce about 200,000,000 pounds of honey and 3,000,000 pounds of beeswax per year.

Aren't you being a little naive in your admiration for Mark Twain, Oscar Wilde, Bernard Shaw, and other wits? Those fellows were merely clever. I'm sure I could write the stuff, but I haven't their name.

Try it some day.

"RELIGION AND OTHER GOOD THINGS"

William E. Bohn, editor of The New Leader, is gradually turning that organ of social democracy into a medium for the exploitation of religious obscurantism. In a recent issue he dropped the words, "religion and other good things." This shows how he is trying to push a group of Socialists into the camp of the religious. The editor he supplanted, James O'Neal, would never have stooped that low, for there was a man who lived up to the Freethought traditions of the world's great Socialists. I'm sure that not 1 percent of the editorial contributors and subscribers to The New Leader would endorse Mr. Bohn's fatuous services in the decadent cause of religion. Knowing that Bertrand Russell writes occasional articles for The New Leader, I took it on myself to mail Editor Bohn a copy of Russell's magnificent essay in my series of Little Blue Books, No. 1433, entitled, "Has Religion Made Useful Contributions to Civilization?" Thus did I surrender to a messianic impulse. I don't usually go in for personal attempts at "conversion," but when I do, I fall hard. I usually let people go their own sweet way, smiling to myself if they seem to be trampling up the wrong alley. But the set-up here was made to order, and the pamphlet I mailed Mr. Bohn can do him nothing but good, if I'm right in my assumption that he has an open mind. But I'm afraid my efforts were fruitless. The wave of intellectual reaction is hitting even our established organs of liberalism and radicalism, turning them into utensils of piety. Those of us who used to work so hard for the Socialist Party, when giants like Eugene V. Debs were its leaders, see what happens when a once-powerful movement falls under the spell of a gentleman of the cloth, a preacher who took it on himself to make the party "respectable" and innocuous. Debs was a Freethinker who belonged to the old-time school that looked on the
church as one of the weapons of the ruling class, and he was right. Marx, Engels, Bebel, Liebknecht, Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Jaures, Hillquit, Berger, and hundreds of others, were all Freethinkers. But today's Socialists are trying to break with that splendid tradition. Norman Thomas, and now Wm. Bohn, want to preach a form of social democracy that will be acceptable to the pulpits. They'll end up by preaching clerical obscurantism. A radical who isn't a Rationalist is a phony. You can't fight the myths and frauds of the capitalist system and at the same time make peace with one of the most disgusting forms of intellectual oppression—religious obscurantism. No real Socialist would dream of fighting one form of bunk in the economic field and help strengthen the chains of another form of bunk in the fields of thought and culture.

** CHARMING FELLOW, THIS MR. BOHN **

When a man is caught resorting to intellectual dishonesty he often reacts by assuming a pose that's loaded with shallow wit and lumbering facetiousness. Take, for example, Mr. William E. Bohn, editor of The New Leader, organ of social democracy, who, as I've already written, is doing the work of the Lord's angels by writing encouraging words that are meat to the ribs of the parsons. At last we have a Socialist paper that tells its Freethinking readers that religion is a "good thing." The spookologists have won a trick. Editor Bohn, after reading my criticism, which I shared with my readers last month, calls me an "old Missionary" and a "bishop." As my readers perhaps remember, I sent Mr. Bohn a copy of Bertrand Russell's wonderful essay, "Has Religion Made Useful Contributions to Civilization?" (Little Blue Book No. 1463). Mr. Bohn, with painful heavy-handedness, refers to the author as "Pastor Russell." Then follows more smart talk to the effect that "I thought missionary zeal was falling off in these Freethinking days. I must be wrong. Here is a man who keeps up all the best traditions of the Sabbath School." I can hear his readers shrieking with laughter. Such humor is rare in these harsh days. But, control those belllyfaws while I look into this pathological case. The man doth protest too much. It happens that Mr. Bohn is doing the work of the Lord, and yet he calls me (a Freethinker) a missionary. It's Mr. Bohn who's boosting theology and its dogmas, yet he calls me a bishop. It happens that the bishops, if they ever hear about Mr. Bohn's pious labors, will do some polite cheering and perhaps invite him to accept a degree from some one-building Baptist college for his achievements in soul-saving. Bertrand Russell, who's one of the world's greatest Freethinkers, becomes "Pastor" Russell with this obscurantist who is misusing his pen to toady to the pastors. And because I asked him to read Russell's essay I'm keeping up the best traditions of the Sabbath School. Mr. Bohn's Sabbath Schools are distributing thousands of tons of literature devoted to supernaturalism; Mr. Russell's pamphlet is devoted to logic, sound history, scientific reasoning. Mr. Bohn is supporting the bunk of the former, and he's secretly ashamed of it, so he calls me the very thing that he knows is wrong with himself. All that points up the melancholy spectacle of a so-called Socialist editor in calhoust with the forces of intellectual reaction. According to Mr. Bohn, it's funny for one to believe in what seems to be the truth to the extent of wanting to give others an opportunity to enjoy its beauty and benefits. But it comes easily with me, having printed and distributed more than 200,000,000 booklets in 25 years, and most of the pamphlets devoted to the noble task of trying to advance the best of all causes—Freethought. I consider it an honor to be able to publish literature that decontaminates the poison gas wafted by Mr. Bohn's Sabbath Schools. Voltaire, Shelley, Erasmus, Diderot, Paine, Ingersoll, H. G. Wells, Bernard Shaw, Robert Blatchford, and dozens of other good men who believed in intellectual and physical emancipation, wrote pamphlets to be distributed among the masses. I'm proud to belong to that tradition, though my efforts are modest when compared to theirs. Such work moves Mr. Bohn to sneers. But I believe I know
what’s really the matter with Mr. Bohn. He’s a charming gentleman, well-mannered, correctly dressed, polite, gracious, sweet, and all that. He has only one fault. He’s a bore.

* * *

**MOVIE CENSORS AT WORK**

Readers who like to study the behavior of the official Priscilla Prissy-Pratt will find scores of examples in my 25 volumes of “Questions and Answers.” During the past 10 years I’ve kept an eye on the comical (and disgusting) cavortings of the men and women who have been assigned to keep the movies devoid of anything that suggests real life and anything that carries the germ of an idea. The Massachusetts censors are edging up to the front line, which is no slight accomplishment in a field that’s crowded with screw-ballish protectors of our morals. Massachusetts isn’t permitted to hear this line from “Louisiana Purchase”: “And then I’ll go on relief.” The same State’s censors also disapprove of the obscene, indecent, lascivious noise known as a bronx cheer. Ohio’s pious censors aren’t far behind in the war on the forces of unrighteousness. This was cut out of “Balls of Fire”:

“I judge I do not have to start with basic principles. Being a botanist, I find an astonishing parallel between a woman’s heart and the wind flower or anemone nemorosa. Perhaps you know the plant—how it waits for the warm sunshine and soft winds before it unfolds its petals. Sensitive and delicate, one rough, impetuous bee can completely destroy its bloom.”

This dialogue from “The Fleet’s In” was scissored by Ohio’s censors:

“Yeah, but what do turtles know about making love?”

“You’d be surprised at what goes on under those shells.”

That gives an idea of what goes on in the minds of censors. Foreign censorship is equally busy. When “Meet John Doe” was shown in Brazil, in 1941, it was first stripped of this line: “A free press means a free people.” Brazil, at that time, wasn’t a member of the United Nations, so it probably wasn’t ready to endorse one of the most important Four Freedoms. Maybe Brazil’s rulers have swung over to freedom of the press . . . please pardon the faintness of my Bronx cheer, which is hard to express in print. In the same film, Brazil objected to “Listen, the Fifth Column is despicable, isn’t it?”

British Columbia’s censors wouldn’t tolerate this line in “Navy Blues”:

“If she’s doing what she’s thinking, she’s making a good job of it.”

Australia’s censors were outraged by this line in “Juke Girl”:

“We make a living holding hands and no free samples.”

Ontario slashed this line from “The Fleet’s In”:

“But he knows the stork didn’t bring him.”

The Fax o’ Life are taboo. Ontario also gaggled at this line from “Lucky Jordan”:

“Even an ice cube has to be defrosted once in a while.”

Ireland kicked out “Sergeant York” because of its propaganda nature.

Argentina censored these lines from “Mrs. Miniver”:

“Let me get my hands on Hitler—I will smash his swastika.”

“Smash his what?”

“Swastika, the sign on the flag.”

“The Stars Look Down” offended Brazil because of a reference to the nationalization of England’s coal mines, which had to go out. Peru scissored an entire scene showing hungry miners breaking into a butcher shop.

All this reminds me of what Alfred Hitchcock said recently:

“It isn’t surprising that some movies don’t get made. The surprising thing is that any movies at all do get made in this town.”

* * *
GIFT OF BERTRAND RUSSELL’S MANUSCRIPTS

I have sent to the Department of Philosophy of the University of Missouri the manuscripts of three books by Bertrand Russell. Dr. Jay William Hudson, professor of philosophy, writes that it’s the university’s intention to have these manuscripts appropriately bound, as the property of the Philosophy Section of the Missouri Academy of Science, and deposited in the rare book section of the University Library, and inscribed with the fact that the manuscripts are gifts to the Philosophy Section. The following will be inscribed on the binding:

BERTRAND RUSSELL

MANUSCRIPTS OF BOOKS IN HIS OWN HAND

How to Become a Logician
How to Become a Philosopher
How to Become a Mathematician

PROPERTY OF THE PHILOSOPHY SECTION, MISSOURI ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

Presented by

E. HALDEMAN-JULIUS

"Let me add," writes Dr. Hudson, "that the Philosophy Section is indeed fortunate to own these manuscripts; and the University of Missouri Library is proud to put them among its treasured rarities. You have been very generous." The three manuscripts are Nos. 7, 8 and 9 of the "HOW-TO" Series, now in print.

The United States Coast Guard recently bought 100 copies of the Little Blue Book, "Dictionary of Sea Terms," for official use.

A reader, after getting my autographed photograph (for which he sent a stamped, self addressed envelope): "You've got a dandy set of hair."

Patsy O'Bang, the great biographer and historian: "With Eleanor Roosevelt and Mme. Chiang Kai-shek going full tilt, I'm thinking about writing a Little Blue Book for E. Haldeman-Julius, to be entitled, 'The Future of She Power.'"

James Harvey Robinson: "Most of our so-called reasoning consists in finding arguments for going on believing as we already do." . . . "Man is a Tory by nature and hotly resists change." . . .

Dr. Patsy O'Bang, our greatest authority on literature, lectured at Harvard recently on "The Difference Between Prose and Poetry," during which he remarked: "There was a young man named Rees, who went into the sea up to his ankles. That's prose. But if the water had been a few inches higher, it would have been poetry."

Leonard Lyons reports that when Bertrand Russell was scheduled to make a broadcast in Philadelphia, the studio manager timed Russell's
speech, and then informed the author of "How to Become a Philosopher, a Logician and a Mathematician" (legitimate plug): "Your script is exactly 150 seconds too long." Dr. Russell, world-famous mathematician and author of several important Little Blue Books, replied: "Oh, yes, I see. A minute and a half, eh?"

Patsy O'Bang, the universal what-a-man and the world's greatest unpublished literate, is working on an autobiographical novel, to be called: "For Whom the Bull's Told."

Patsy O'Bang, in his recent lecture on Thomas Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus," at Harvard: "Clothes often fake the man!"

Tom Hamilton, in his book on Spain, "Appeasement Child": "The black-shawled women waiting in the dawn outside the empty food stores, the Republican militiamen held without trial in Franco's jails, need only help from us to renew the total war against Fascism that began in 1936."

An old and true political axiom: "A country is good where people are allowed to say government is bad."


The Tenth Muse, New Orleans, La., has been sending me more goodies, including fresh strawberries. With the last shipment came this pleasant note: "Of course, some of your readers have told you how sorry they are that you are not feeling a hundred percent. Some of them have said it with pen and ink, or flowers. Some of them have said it with vegetables—perhaps—which undoubtedly has seemed amusing to you. Some of us visualize you sitting out in the center of the Dust Bowl with nothing to eat but rabbit stew, head cheese, and a few winter roots, and here we are down in the rich delta country, with the cream, top-soil of the country washed down by the over-flowing Mississippi. Is it not natural that we should think of a comrade who is off his feed when we have fresh fruit and vegetables on our table every day—and is it not natural that we should want to wish on him a few things that he would consider luxuries? Well, yes."

A reader in Paxtonville, Pa.—a young girl who doesn't want me to print her name—is writing good poetry. I've been encouraging her for many months. Paxtonville will yet win fame as the home of a new Thomas Hardy. She sends two bits of verses, which she says "are not especially good—I wrote them to be nasty." Well, they look pretty good to me, so I'm printing them below. Comments are invited.

"PORTRAIT."
You flatter Mister Goering
When you call him "Madman."
Look beyond the camouflage of medals!
Behold the abdominal abomination;
The fat and placid physiogamy!
That is no man!
It never was a man.
It never was a boy,
It never was a babe,
It is placenta!

"AND MALICE AFORETHOUGHT"
Every generation has had its fighting cock
Who spurred and killed
To crow above the dunghill of his world.
This generation boasts of two:
Bantam Hirohito
And
Capon Shicklecruber.

John Milton: "Let Truth and Falsehood grapple; whoever heard of Truth being worsted in free and open combat."

C. A. Lang, Mo.: "Letter carrier" is really two words, despite the fact you insist on hyphenating it.

Announcement on the bulletin board in front of a church:
11 A.M.—"Who is God?"
7 P.M.—"The Unknown God."

The Gospel Ambassador is a precious little pamphlet which bears good tidings to the heathen. A recent issue carries the following instructive story entitled, "Let Go the Twig." A Scottish lady was troubled about her "soul's condition," and, exhausted with praying, fell asleep and dreamed a dream. She was falling over a precipice, but caught hold of a single twig, which upheld her. While she hung thus, crying
for help, she heard the voice of Jesus crying from below, "Let go the twig." After much persuasion, "self-desperate," she let go, fell into the arms of Jesus, and the joy of finding herself there, woke her!

Reader: 'What usually passes for Christianity' in these days is a polite paganism which is both pleasant and profitable for its adherents.'

The editor of The New Zealand Rationalist says he came on a little publication devoted to a church's missionary work, in which he came on a delightful portrayal of angels in the number of eight gathered around the Virgin and the infant Christ, while Joseph looks dissipatedly on. This illustration obviously belongs to a foreign field of endeavor, for to the last angel all those portrayed are Chinese!

T. H. Huxley, the great Agnostic: "My belief is that no human being, and no society composed of human beings, ever did, or ever will, come to much unless their conduct was governed and guided by the love of some ethical ideal."

From the London Freethinker: Edwin Johnson, M.A., recalls reading a passage in Cardinal Newman's "Grammar of Assent," that "all knowledge of the Latin classics comes to us from the Medieval copies of them, and they who transcribed them had the opportunity of forging or garbling them. We are simply at their mercy." It is an interesting speculation exactly how much can a second or third century Greek or Roman Classic which mentions either Jews or Christians be trusted, knowing as we do that in the form we have them, they came out of some monkish scriptorium?

Patsy O'Bang: "I know more about E. Haldeman-Julius than any scholar in the world, for I've watched his career for more than 35 years, during which I've helped him in his literary, romantic, and alcoholic endeavors. What impresses me about the man is his firm, strong character. He refuses to duck in the face of abuse and opposition. He could, with the greatest of success, have toadied to the great corporations and their advertising executives. He could have guided his editorial policies in the safe direction of no controversy, thereby placating numerous and powerful enemies. He could have taken the respectable, conventional side of such touchy subjects as religion, politics, morals and economics. In fact, he could have done all these practical things with marked success, thus earning a good living, a fine home, and all the other evidences of sound success. Instead, he took the eccentric position that truth is important and that ideas should be discussed, regardless of whose intellectual bunions are stepped on. He won't flatter the rich boys and his subscribers, rich or poor. It never discourages him when he loses hundreds, even thousands, of subscribers because some obscure contributor chose to air unpopular notions. And what has all this disputation and obstreperous iconoclasm brought him? Just a damned good living, a peach of a home, 160 broad acres, a substantial printing establishment, a book business that keeps out of the red, and a leg or two of dimes to keep him in the things that make life gracious, including fair quantities of the ingredients that go into the 'Haldeman-Julius Special.' A bemusing, oblique character."

Patsy O'Bang: "No one has yet accused me of weakkneedness."

Herbert M. Merrill, Schenectady, N. Y.: "I've been wondering if many Americans have ever stopped to consider that a delity of infinite power could have prevented the Second World War? If Old Nick is responsible, one recalls Ingersoll's pert query, 'Why doesn't God kill the Devil?' To fundamentalists, of course, wars are punishments for our sins, and one 'Reverend' from Amsterdam, N. Y., recently wrote a letter to Schenectady's morning newspaper in which he expressed astonishment that a 'Council of Churches' had offered nine points for post-war reconstruction. According to clerical 'hardsells' post-war reconstruction should be a subject for prayer, not social engineering. Theirs is the reasoning of those who mobbed the inventor of the umbrella for presuming to 'in-
terfere with God's rain." If Attila
was a "scourge of God," why not
Adolf Hitler?"

Patsy O'Bang, the great sexolo-
gist and distinguished chemist,
created a sensation at the last con-
vention of the American Society for
the Promotion of Sexual Hygiene
when he read his magnificent pa-
per, "How to Tell the Sex of a
Goldfish." To storms of applause,
Patsy O'Bang, the Universal What-
a-Man, expounded deliberately and
with magnificent aplomb: "To the
water in the goldfish bowl, add a
half ounce of sulphuric acid. If he
comes floating to the top, he's a
boy; and if she comes floating to
the top, she's a girl."

A radio news reporter: "Italian
soldiers greeted their American
captors with the cry, "To a warm
place with Mussolini!"

Patsy O'Bang is still talking about
the two little rabbits that went into
the forest for a hare-raising expe-
rience.

One day an oysterman in Boston
got converted, at a meeting, and
took for his text, "Thou knowest I
am an oysterman." He said: "Isn't
it wonderful that Christ revealed
himself as an oysterman? He found
us in the mud. He cracked our hard
shells open, and found what we
were meant for." After the meeting
one of the men who was not quite
so moved told him that the text
really was, "Thou knowest I am an
austere man," "I don't care what it
is," was the reply, "I got eight con-
verts from it."

E. L. Kelsey, editor of The Fair-
view Post, Fairview, Alberta, Cana-
dafrica, writes that he has plagiarized
a Freeman institution—the great
Patsy O'Bang—by setting up his
own Prof. Nails O'Leary as a rea-
sonable facsimile thereof. He en-
closes marked copies of his paper in
which I find descriptions of the
birth of a hero, O'Leary, for which
maneuver the great O'Bang himself
turns a countenance stamped with
scorn. After a few weeks of
O'Leary's crottages Editor Kelsey
was compelled to run a paragraph
explaining that O'Leary is entirely
a fictitious character, for his office
had received several proposals of
marriage as well as a couple of
blind-date bids. The Post, in its
February 19 issue, introduces Nails
O'Leary ("often wrong but always
outspoken") as the great thinker
and expert on everything. O'Leary
is now an accredited member of
The Post's staff, his main jobs hav-
ing to do with news analysis and
comment. "A versatile genius is Dr.
O'Leary," says The Post, "who
knows a great deal on all subjects
and is very outspoken. A lot of
what he knows is usually wrong but
O'Leary is always ready to be con-
vinced of error, whereupon he be-
comes just as dogmatic on the op-
posite side. He is exactly the guy
for an editorial writer." We wish
Prof. Nails O'Leary a long and use-
ful career in far-away Fairview,
but surely one could never picture
a Patsy O'Bang functioning in such
an environment. Instead of passing
on the problems of a single, tiny
community, the great O'Bang de-
votes himself only to issues of in-
ternational and cosmic significance.
O'Bang is, and always will be,
the Universal What-a-Man. Nails
O'Leary to Patsy O'Bang is as an
outhouse to a marble-lined pay-
toilet.

Patsy O'Bang, the great authori-
ity on world affairs: "If the Japs
keep the Road to Mandalay,
where'll that leave poor Lawrence
Tibbett?"

Lloyd Emerson Sibereill, editor of
Imprimatur, Cincinnati, O., sends
me a copy of his Winter, 1943, issue,
in which I find:

Apropos of the niceties of social
conduct which are not always con-
ductive to the comfort of the con-
forming individual, E. Haldeman-
Julius in his American Freeman for
February 1943 gave us a tremendous
chuckle with this one: "Patsy
O'Bang, the great philosopher of de-
ocracy, found himself one evening
at a formal banquet table, next to
the haughty hostess, a pompous
dowager who had what O'Bang vul-
garly calls a 'sprung-butt.' Impul-
sively, O'Bang put into his mouth
a large forkful of steaming, hot baked
potato. He instantly spit it out on
his plate. Looking disdainfully at
his disconcerted fellow guests and at
his outraged hostess, O'Bang re-
marked, "Some damn fools would
have swallowed that."

Editor Sibereill tells me he has a
card from one of his readers saying that he has seen the story in an old issue of Life magazine where it was attributed to Sam Houston of Texas fame. Perhaps I can throw some light on the subject by warning my friend that anyone who quotes Patsy O'Bang does so to the peril of his immortal soul and professional honor, for the great O'Bang, gifted though he is in numerous fields, is a rogue, scoundrel and cribber. He never hesitates to pass off any stray bit of wit or humor as his own. He'll steal an epigram or a joke from anyone, but when it comes to property, he draws the line. Once I left my purse on a shelf near the toilet, and departed without it. There was a cool thousand bucks in that bankroll. Patsy O'Bang, the next customer, went about his business in a methodical way, pausing to give thought to my long search for the second line of the poem that opens, "Some come here to sit and think." Then his eyes fell on my heap of dough. Did O'Bang steal my pocketbook? He did not. He returned it to me, and a careful check showed that a mere $45.60 was missing, which O'Bang used for the honorable purpose of purchasing a case of Canadian rye, from which he served me generous jiggers.

While in a Joplin establishment dedicated to devotees of likker, the short, stumpy, roly-poly, genial, friendly bartender—known to me for years—confided: "We're always being told that dishonesty don't pay. I can say for myself that I've always been dishonest and I've always got along O.K." Shaking his head thoughtfully, he returned to his work.

"I'd have you know, Mr. Patsy O'Bang, that my family goes back to the Mayflower." "And I'd have you know, sir," roared the great Patsy O'Bang, "that my family goes back to the amoeba."

Charles Sedenger writes that he spent his boyhood around Third and Race Streets, in Philadelphia. I was running around that neighborhood at the same time—about 50 years ago. He says the neighborhood has changed considerably in the past half century. The opening of the Delaware River Bridge, in 1926, was the last straw needed to wipe out the identity of the once-familiar section. The house I was born in 54 years ago had to be torn down to make room for the bridge.

Patsy O'Bang, the world's greatest lover: "Bernard Shaw and I always get along with women because we understand them and they understand us. We tell them that any woman worth her salt would prefer a fifth share of a first-rate man (like Patsy O'Bang) to a whole share of a fifth-rate man."

Ko-Ko: "The way to master the art of cutting off people's heads is to start far back in the animal kingdom with a guinea pig and end up with a Second Trombone."

H. G. Wells sees an era of pamphlets that will "ventilate ideas" and points out that newspapers have failed to perform this important public service. "I think," he writes, "there is a likelihood of the bound book—that article of furniture—disappearing altogether. We are entering a period of pamphlets, and these pamphlets are going to do just the work that the newspapers have utterly failed to do; that is, to ventilate ideas and provide material for discussion. There is no need ever to return to bound books in general. I am tired of buying three or four newspapers to find out what is being concealed from us." All this adds up to a valuable plug for my Little Blue Books and larger pamphlets. During the past 24 years I've distributed more than 200,000,000 pamphlets, the greatest achievement in the history of printing, It's my ambition to reach the billion mark.

After getting his father a place on the Draft Board, Patsy O'Bang showed where he stood in the war on the Axis by appointing his uncle to the Rationing Committee, where he acted as clerk at a modest salary. One of his early duties was to inform a woman that she was expected to turn in her late husband's ration books. The woman happened to be a guest at the County Jail, the reason being the melancholy fact that she had plugged her mate full of lead. "I beg to advise," O'Bang wrote her, "that whatever
moved you to murder your husband is no business of this committee, but when it comes to keeping his ration book you are playing with fire and I warn you the penalties will be severe.

Franz Boas: “The existence of a pure race with special endowments is a myth, as is the belief that there are races, all of whose members are foredoomed to eternal inferiority.”

The British Broadcasting Corporation got this letter of resignation from the head of an important European propaganda division: “Doing foreign propaganda for the B.B.C. is like making love to a female elephant. There’s no pleasure in it, you run the risk of being crushed to death, and it’s years before you see any results!”

Heinz Norden, an old staff-member of the editorial department of the Haldeman-Julius Publications and author of numerous Little Blue Books, comes through from far-off Greenland with a letter that tells me he volunteered less than a year ago as a private and was lucky enough to make Officers’ School. And now he’s a lieutenant in the Arctic! He says that even up there he found some Little Blue Books, and adds, “that ought to just about complete the roster.” “Greenland,” he writes, “is much better than its reputation. I have never been better equipped, fed, housed and taken care of since I’ve been in the Army. Which is still not saying that it is a picnic. We all hope that we can bring this mess to a victorious conclusion soon and start to build a better world.”

The Tenth Muse, New Orleans, La., recently sent me another crate of grapefruit and cauliflower. The latter was taken in charge by my wife, who turned it into a tasty dish. I’ve never been too enthusiastic about cauliflower—which Mark Twain described as cabbage with a college education—but the way the tall blonde worked her magic, it seemed to have more than an ordinary college education. All sorts of degrees—honorary and earned—appeared to trail the pot. A two-pound T-bone helped create a mood of satisfaction with this melancholy world. I disposed of the steak without a qualm, because it was broiled many days before meat rationing started. Then followed a bowl of rice and hot milk. And all along I sipped at a Haldeman-Julius Special, from a 14-ounce glass. The day before all this happened I shipped 16 splendid hogs to market thus making my contribution to the country’s war needs to the extent of about 8,000 pounds of pork. That same day I sold 70 big roosters, at 21c per pound, and 60 cull hens who had to be punished for their unwillingness to lay much-needed eggs. Along with the poultry went several baskets of eggs, a couple of hefty cans of milk, and the loan of a sexually-powerful boar whose services were needed on a neighbor’s farm. After all that—and with much more to follow—a fellow has a claim to a good dinner.

Richard Coan, Hollywood, Calif.: “Oddly enough, Atheists, on the whole, seem to favor religious freedom more than religious persons do. The main reason for religious persecution is probably the political characteristic of some of our churches which refuse to tolerate ideas which differ from theirs.”

Sign over a bar:

He who drinks and drinks with grace
Is ever welcome at this place,
But he who drinks more than his share
Is never welcome anywhere.

Bishop Beerebelch, in a letter to Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt: “Free Speech has me as a firm friend. I have always believed in it. All I ask is that the opinion shall not be odious, the subject shall not be obnoxious, the language shall be pure, and the persons exercising the right shall be known for their uprightness, social sanity, constructiveness and proper respect for the eternal and sacred things that all well-disposed persons have come to look on as sound and correct.”

Symon Gould, Director, American Library Service, N.Y.C.: “I believe that when the cultural history of this country is written, that the Little Blue Books cannot be ignored in a true estimate of their influence in elevating the status of the
intelligence of the American people who otherwise are immune from the type of literature which the Little Blue Books contains. In fact, I would call them, without being derogatory, ‘intellectual termites’ because they start boring and continue their work until they get to the core of a person, infecting them with a real desire for good literature.”

Recently I took in a performance of “La Traviata,” by the American Opera Company, whatever that may mean. I had a front-row seat in Joplin’s town hall, where hundreds of people assembled to see Verdi maimed by a 9-piece orchestra. In the first act—the famous ballroom scene—the stage was filled with a hundred high school girls, in their $7.85 formals, and lads in their boy scout and other uniforms. The whole thing was so terrible I decided to rest back and enjoy the thing. Next to me sat a soldier from nearby Camp Crowder, who opened up a pleasant conversation by asking me, “Pardon me, but are you connected with this opera company?” “No,” I answered, “and why do you ask?” “It’s because you look as though you’ve eaten more than your share of spaghetti and meat-balls.”

Chapman Cohen, one of England’s most effective and useful writers on Freethought: “Thought that is really progressive cannot stop with the ‘reform’ of yesterday. It must, if it is of real (value), proceed to the thought of tomorrow. There is no room for orthodoxy where science is once called to arbitrate.”

People use words carelessly. I have realized this more clearly since considering the word “toleration.” “Radical,” for example, is a word that is misused by nearly everyone. People use it in the sense of freakish, stubborn, extreme, etc. It is, in the general view, a very bad thing to say about a man. The truth is that the word is complimentary in its correct sense. A radical is one who puts his mind to the fundamentals of any problem of life. He is a man who tries to get down to first principles, and to cause and effect. The word does not, properly speaking, have a political use only: it may apply to any field of thought. Voltaire was radical in that he struck at the very heart of superstition and intolerance. He didn’t just hit lightly or on the surface. A fanatic is the opposite of a true radical. The fanatic is superficial, he has the partial, shallow view: if he were at all profound, he could not possibly be a fanatic.

We can’t know the truth. “Truth,” says Bertrand Russell (and a hundred wise men have said it in their fashion), “is for the gods.” But we can read, as Bacon long ago advised his fellows, “not to believe or contradict, but to weigh and consider.” Above all, we can keep open minds. We can be ready for any bit of truth that comes our way. We can recognize a fact, and try to relate ourselves to it and make sensible use of it, instead of quarrelling with it and getting ourselves into a bad temper because life has refused to conform entirely to our little theory. We can shout until we are black in the face, and kick until we wear out our shoe leather, but we can’t destroy a fact. And why should we look upon a fact as upon an enemy? We get our hurts when we refuse to adjust ourselves to facts.

Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt’s niece, Miss Elvira, is a patriotic old maid who has been spending hours of her maidenly solitude making pajamas for the armed forces. When she had finished a number of suits, she proudly turned them over to the director of her local service organization. “They’re very nice,” said the director, rather stiffly, “but these trousers have no fly.” “Of course not,” retorted the spinner, “I intended them for unmarried soldiers.”

Dr. Patsy O’Bang, the great economist, says he has his own ways of judging the financial status of the average man. “I know that economic conditions must be booming because today I saw a rabbit run across a field and no one was chasing it,” O’Bang reported.

A reporter on The Christian Science Monitor had to mention a
dead mule in his story, but bowing to the sect's taboo he referred to "a passed-on mule."

When Antoine de Saint-Exupery, French poet, pilot and philosopher, left France for the U.S., he had to come over on a ship that seemed no longer than a life-boat, that looked as though it could be swallowed by a hungry whale, and that took 45 minutes to climb to the top of each tall wave. The worst thing was the boat's sleeping accommodations, which were arranged in dormitory fashion, one dormitory for the women and one for the men. "But," he complained, "there isn't the slightest opportunity for a discreet adventure."

*Imprimateur,* edited for the beachcombers of literature by Lloyd Emerson Siberell, Box 83, Cincinnati, O., comes through, after meditation and prayer, with this master-piece of precise statement: "Haldeman Julius, who has published millions of Little Blue Books, classics of literature, for the edification of the American public, is America's foremost humorist, in addition to having one of the best minds in the land. His American Freeman is the most entertaining periodical extant. Write for a sample copy and be convinced; or better still, send a dollar and receive it monthly for a year." Mr. Siberell's remark about my mind doesn't embarrass me because it's been said by many others, but labelling me America's foremost humorist is a new one that ought to be commented on by my readers. How many agree? How many say he's full of prunes?

Prof. Patsy O'Bang, in his great Oxford-Sorbonne-Vladivostok lecture: "Marriage is an institution that tries to teach men and women who don't like each other how they can go on living together."

Mr. Dooley: "You can refuse to love a man or to lend him money, but if he wants a fight you have got to oblige him."

One night, a radio station presented a recorded version of Wagner's glorious "Tristan and Isolde," during which Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt (acting as chairman of the Art Appreciation Committee) gave a play-by-play description of the frantic antics of the I-Cant-Give You-Anything-But - Love - Isolde. Everything was going along fine (Tristan having given her the go-by and she having just sent out for a couple of Martinis) when Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt, steeped in the pungent emotions of this great drama, turned to the mike and said: "Tristan and Isolde now drink the love potion—as the reproduction continues."

There was a little chicken who played around with the other chicks and acted like any other chick, until he got to be of a size. All other roosters were chasing pullets, but not this one. He preferred to go about his own business, never giving mind to pullets or hens. After watching him a while, his mother said, angrily: "You're turning into a queer la-la, a pansified sissy. Listen, you feathered fairy, if your magnificent old father could see you now, he'd turn over in his grave."

From *The Wichita Beacon:* "It happened at 5 a.m. Wednesday morning."

Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt gave her husband a neat kiss on the back of his bald head. Shocked out of his newspaper, he said, irritably: "That's the second time you've kissed me, dear, in four months."

"Well," crooned Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt, sweetly, "you want me to show a little interest in the physical side of marriage, don't you, dear?"

Diderot: "Lost at nightfall in a forest, I have but a feeble light to guide me. A stranger happens along: 'Blow out your candle,' he says, 'and you will see your way the better.' That stranger is a theologian."

Determined to do her bit, Mrs. Prissy-Pratt took time out from W.C.T.U. work to serve as a U.S.O. hostess. One evening she arranged a date for a soldier who was in serious need of feminine company. She brought out her niece, Miss Elvira. "I say, Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt," the soldier whispered, "is this the best you can do? This girl's
flat-chested, bow-legged, cross-eyed and pimply-faced." "That's all right, soldier," came the answer. "You don't have to whisper—she's deaf, too!"

The great Macy store announces, in big ads, the establishment of a poultry department, to which thousands are flocking for chicks and equipment. One bargain is 19-week-old pullets, "almost ready to lay," at $1.79 each, in lots of 10. Kansas poultrymen will be surprised when they hear of such a price. Out here they'd bring about 75c. And out here few people will believe that 19-week-old pullets are "almost ready to lay." It's my guess that those Macy birds won't begin to lay, on a professional basis, for another four or five months. The same ad offers a wooden chicken house, big enough to take care from 30 to 40 laying hens, at the neat price of $198—pre-fabricated, which means the buyer still has to assemble the job. Thousands of New Yorkers who are raising Macy chickens in their backyards will find, if my guess is worth anything, that their eggs are going to cost them about 50c each. But they'll have fun and it may be worth the price. Here's a chance, at no immense outlay, to indulge the passion of most city folks—to run a chicken farm. In the end it'll be cheaper for most of them to have their fun near the back porch instead of taking the plunge on a big scale up near Tarrytown-on-the-Hudson. Raising chickens looks simple, but there's more to it than most amateurs think. I'm producing about five dozen eggs daily (helped, in a sense, by my wife), so I know whereof I speak. It has taken us almost two years to learn how to get production that far—and here the chickens have a two-acre range, fresh water all the time, growing and egg mash, a 600-egg incubator, two battery brooders, a chicken house, a brooder house, and part of the crops of this 160-acre farm. When we started, we had visions of a daily schedule of 1,000 eggs. That's still far away. We'll make it, but it won't come easily. True, we haven't been giving all our time just to chickens. There are other interests—pigs, sows, calves, cows, ducks, milk, cream, butter, corn, wheat, and oats. And about those other interests I'll write after Macy puts in pig and calf departments. If that happens—and why shouldn't it?—I'll have to call in Patsy O'Bang for some observations. As he's here as I write, I've let him look over this piece. Patsy O'Bang, the world's greatest authority on animal husbandry, agronomy and the libido of the rooster, shook his head in mock mournfulness as he let out with: "This Macy business is an example of the crass materialism of the times. Notice that the emphasis is on eggs. The pullets is to become a laying hen, but she's still to remain a virgin. There's no hint of a rooster in this whole commercial project. Not a thought is given to the hen's emotional life. She's just to do two things—gorge herself with bounteous mash and lay sterile eggs. The whole thing is brutalizing. Hitler has reached down even to our pullets and barred them from the emotional satisfactions of a normal sex life. When you deny the pullet her rooster you're cutting her down in life's young morning. Let there be two chickens in every pot, but also let there be a rooster for every 15 hens. Imposed chastity is the negation of the greatest of the arts, love. Only a creature in the tradition of Bishop Beberich and Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt would bar the door where love bids to be admitted. Driving the rooster from the symphony of the barnyard is equal to exiling the oboe from Beethoven or making pencils without lead."

Thé Pennsylvania girl is back with another poem. The two I printed recently drew comments that ranged from "damned good" to "they stink." I gave only the name of her town, as she requested that her name not be affixed to her little masterpieces, but this didn't hinder a bunch of readers from pestering the local postmaster with what mayor descriptions they had, the aim being to wheedle the girl's name out of that honest official. The point below should provoke more expressions, but notice that this time I don't even give the little person's town—only her State. At that, some readers will write to the Governor in an attempt to track down literature's new voice. Here 'tis, and I say it's strong and good:

"CHANT FOR WAR"

There is a race, a holy race,
To which men can be born
But can’t aspire.
Who is this fabled Aryan?
A mustached God decrees—
The pale eyed,
The drab haired,
The snub nosed,
The thick skulled.
Only these shall breed,
Only these shall seed
The new heaven and new earth.
You forms of lower life,
Creatures of many skins,
Saffron, och, white;
Creatures of many minds,
The wily, the dull
Faithful, heretical;
Creatures unashamed of weakness or of tears;
Pools who prize love more than lust,
Whose hearts are kind and good;
Mad creatures,
Who flaunt your spurious brotherhood;
Arise!
Let no modern Satyr roam the earth
Gastrating men and freedom.
Arise, together!
Arise in wrath!
Arise with purpose!
Stampede the slaver’s studs back to their German stalls
—And bolt the door
—Forever.

Classified ad: “Attractive young woman with two cans of corn would like to meet handsome gentleman with can of lima beans. Object: succotash.”

Fred Allen, on radio humor: “I always feel that someone has just dropped a loaded privy into the air-conditioning system.”... His description of an advertising agency: “Eighty-five percent confusion and 15 percent commitment.”

Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt, in a fax-o’-life lecture to a group of new members of the W.C.T.U.: “As none of you lasses are over 17, assume you still have womanhood’s most precious asset. Guard it carefully. Resist all temptations. Remember, if you fall—what will be your fate? The first fiend will give you $50,000; the second lust-crazed wolf will buy you a country place; a duplex apartment, a car, a yacht and a station wagon; the next lecherous demon will load you with diamonds, rubies, sapphires and emeralds; the fourth will sponsor a charge account at a big store and bring you the world’s finest minks and sables; the fifth will present you with a massive annuity as the sign and symbol of your disgrace; the sixth will load you with black market stamps for canned goods, T-bone steaks, sugar, coffee, shoes and gasoline. And then what? Pouff! You’re through!”

J. R. Snyder, Publisher, The Gary (Ind.) Post-Tribune: “You have brought enjoyment, education and sound philosophy to hundreds of thousands of Americans during the past 24 years with your Little Blue Books.”

Vital statistic: C. A. Lang, my pet reader, became a grandpaw on March 31. The new boy’s dad enlisted for training as an Ensign a while before, and he had to leave just a few days before the baby was born. Writes Grandpaw: “You and I were born in the midwife age, our children in the doctor-at-home age. But I’m impressed with the many advantages of the doctor-and-hospital era that’s with us now.”... Lang then switches to our baby, The American Freeman, commenting on Sergeant A. M. Paschall’s letter on the current makeup of this organ of piety and righteousness, as follows: “The philosophical articles by H. G. Wells, Bertrand Russell and others are splendid. But somehow I got a bigger kick out of The Freeman when practically the whole thing was your own questions and answers. Of course, I don’t blame you if you have found a way to take things a bit easier by shifting most of the writing of The Freeman on others; no man can with justice expect you to burn the candle at both ends indefinitely. Perhaps you can please most of us best by hitting a happy medium of some sort—say, a third to a half Q’s and A’s.”

Mrs. Flattits says her husband has been staying away from home two nights each week because of the demands on his time by an organization which he attends and serves zealously. Its name is the Book-of-the-Month Club.

We-wuz-robbled Item: The May, 1943, Readers Digest tells about the widow who, mournful over the troubles she’s been having with lawyers in settling her late mate’s estate, comments that because of all the trouble she sometimes re-
grets that her husband died. This little yarn is credited to Walter Winchell. It ran first in The American Freeman 13 months ago. What really hurts is that Winchell received $200 for this little gag, money that should have gone to The Freeman's Deficit Fund.

Patsy O'Bang wrote this poem (a slight variation on a theme by Lee O. Harriss and James Whitcomb Riley) to celebrate his father's 80th birthday:

You are old, Father O'Bang, and though one would think
All the veins in your body were dry,
Yet the end of your nose is red as a pink;

I beg your indulgence, but why?

From a letter written by a small exhibitor to a Hollywood executive: "Don't send me no more of those pictures where the hero writes a letter with a feather. My customers can't stand them, and neither can I."

Berlin's latest popular joke: Q. What's the briefest German joke? A. We'll win the war.

C. A. Lang, Maplewood, Mo.: "Latest alliterative radio humbug: 'Heaven and Home Hour'."

Corporal, Camp Phillips, Salina, Kans.: "After my experience of last Sunday I feel I have a grievance which needs airing. I am not alone in feeling our rights have been outraged; but the rest of the men in the company are to all appearance too thoroughly frightened of the semi-literate martinet we have for a company commander, to protest. I and many others were rudely awakened by a sergeant who pulled the bed covers from the cot and ordered us to get up right away. 'You HAVE to go to church,' he shouted, 'orders of the company commander.' I attended—under protest. In all of my 36 years this is my first experience with compulsory religion. Have the rights and privileges of Freethinkers been revoked by law? Or has a commissioned officer of the U.S. Army the power to cram religion down my throat in open violation of the Bill of Rights?"

Goethe was once asked, "If you do not believe in a soul and in a future life, what do you consider to be the object of the present?" Goethe answered curtly, "Self-improvement." And that strikes me as a perfect plug for my Little Blue Books. Self-improvement is their motif, their guiding and controlling idea.

Cpl. Irving Grossberg, Australia: "I wish you every success in dispelling the poison gas on the intellectual front as we do the same on the military front."

Satan, angry over the way scientists are undermining religion, appeared before Joseph McCabe, one of the great enemies of supernaturalism, and announced, "I have come to eat you, for when you shatter the foundations of religion you strike at the Devil Himself. Prepare to be eaten immediately." Joseph McCabe requested the Devil to wait until he could consult with the world's greatest authority on religions—the one and only Dr. Patsy O'Bang, the universal what-a-man. "Ah, so you know this Patsy O'Bang," said Satan, with a sardonic laugh. "I'll wait until you get him here. I shall eat both of you, and if you can bring me that other enemy, E. Haldeman-Julius, I'll eat him also." The Devil buried himself in a stack of hymnals while McCabe telephoned Patsy O'Bang and begged him to hurry over.

"What's up," asked O'Bang; "is Haldeman-Julius at your place and is he concocting his magnificient and luscious Haldeman-Julius Special, the finest highball ever mixed?" "No," said McCabe, "I want you to come over right away because the Devil's here and He says He intends to eat me." "By God," cried O'Bang, "I believe you've already had too many H-J highballs. I'll be right over." When Patsy O'Bang entered McCabe's study, he gave the Devil one look and let out a great burst of laughter. "He can't eat you, McCabe, nor can he eat O'Bang. Look at his horns and hoofs! Granivorous! He can't do it!" Satan, his bluff called by knowledge, withdrew, whereupon McCabe and O'Bang celebrated by opening a bottle of Scotch.

Dioamas was the first among the ancient Greeks to be called an Atheist. One day this philosopher
happened to be on a ship that was being buffeted by a storm. The sailors agreed that they were being punished because their passenger was implaus. But Diagoras was able to meet this situation, saying: "Look at those other ships over there. They are in the same storm, aren't they? Do you suppose I am in each of them?"

While reading Edgar Saltus' all-but-forgotten "The Anatomy of Negation," I got a thrill when, turning to Erasmus' ever-famous 'Praise of Folly,' Saltus offered the comment that "with exquisite felicity of diction" Erasmus showed "the folly of creeds and sects." I'm proud of the fact that, some years ago, I brought out a low-price edition of this masterpiece of wit, irony and humor—and it's still in print. I was surprised to learn from Saltus that Erasmus' great book went through 27 editions during his lifetime. That's something of a record for one who took the unpopular side of controversial questions. Another phrase that pleased me in Saltus was his description of "In Praise of Folly" as being as "cold as a rapier." The thing cut a clean wound that never healed. In his next paragraph, Saltus turns to Rabelais, whom he lists among the Agnostics, quoting his famous death-bed utterance, "I am going in search of the great Perhaps."

Rabelais, need I add, is represented among my Little Blue Books, as is another great Frenchman, Montaigne, of whom Saltus says he was a thinker "who refused to take a step beyond the real." All this leads me to express the hope that before I join the angels I'll have the honor of bringing out a new edition of Saltus' "The Anatomy of Negation," one of the classics of Freethought. I was surprised to learn recently that of the dozens of books written by Edgar Saltus not a single volume is in print. What a tragedy. Maybe I'll be able to do something to alter this lamentable situation. Only the other day I was visited by three young, intelligent, well-read soldiers. Their conversation ranged far, but when I brought in Saltus' name a silence fell on my friends. They'd never heard of him. He wasn't even a name. And to think that the gifted, brilliant author of "The Philosophy of Disenchantment" has been dead less than two decades. This is the book which moved a critic to write, "if it is ever heavy, it is only with the weight of wit." Maybe I'll be able to rescue this unusual book from its undeserved oblivion. I predict that, even though our younger readers don't even know his name, the time will come—and it won't be long—when Saltus will again come into his own and be appreciated for what he was—one of the greatest writers and stylists in the history of American literature.

The condemned man ate a hearty breakfast and said: "No noose is good noose."

Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt, while sitting through one of Bishop Beerbelch's interminable sermons, noticed that the man of Gaud wasn't feeling just right. In order to help him, she led him into his study and spread him out on a couch. Bishop Beerbelch then asked her to take his temperature, but by mistake Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt put a barometer into his mouth. "How does it read?" the bishop asked her. "It says, 'Dry and windy!'"

Winwood Reade: "Doubt is the offspring of knowledge: the savage never doubts at all."

When it was found by certain unfriendly elements that Patsy O'Bang's 30-year-old father wasn't a howling success as the city's Smoke Inspector, a meeting of the party lieutenants was called to consider the question of giving the job to a more competent person. O'Bang, Sr., saw to it that he was made chairman, because he was best qualified to pass on the issues in controversy, being familiar with all the facts. As he brought down the gavel, O'Bang, Sr., said, with dignity, "I miss the old faces that I used to shake hands with." When the matter of his job came to a final vote, the old man announced: "All in favor of retaining Patsy O'Bang, Sr., in his position as Smoke Inspector will rise or remain seated. Contrary-minded are not members and will kindly leave the room." With this matter out of the way, O'Bang, Sr., spry and sound
E. Haldeman-Julius

Despite his 30 years, told about his dear father, in Ireland, who was a Catholic. Once, while in Belfast, he was captured by a mob of burly Orangemen, suspended upside-down above the river and ordered to call out: "To Hell with the Pope!" "My father thought fast—
all O'Bangs think fast—and decided 'they can always get another Pope, but there is only one me.'" ... Once he was asked by his confessor what sins he had committed since his last confession three years before, to which he answered, 'Every God-
damned blasted thing, Father—ex-
cept suicide.'

A visitor to an insane asylum got into a conversation with an inmate who claimed he was Jesus Christ. Soon a quiet, dignified gentleman took the visitor aside and whispered: "Don't pay mind to that per-
son. He's obviously insane. I know, because I am God the Father, and I can say definitely that this person is not my son."

Heinrich Hauser, South Valley, N. Y.: "Millions of people in this country and elsewhere have been babbling about a liberal education but nobody did anything about it except you."

Years ago, Bernard Shaw made a political speech in support of a So-
cialist friend. Shaw's speech missed fire from the first sentence. It didn't take Shaw long to realize that he wouldn't be able to improve on this miserable beginning. After 45 minutes of this flat talk, Shaw drew himself up, crossed his arms over his chest and, with a smile, said: "You will at least be able to inform your incredulous children that you had the rare experi-
ence of hearing Bernard Shaw when he was dull."

After writing a piece about America's most neglected author, Edgar Saltus, I turned to "A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Rationalists" and found that it gave him only 11 lines—and misspelled his name, at that, calling him Salters. From it I learned that Saltus was born on June 8, 1836, and was educated at St. Paul's School, Concord, and Paris and Columbia Universities. "In 1894," says the sketch, "he pub-

lished 'Balzac' and 'The Philosophy of Disenchantment' (a study of the pessimistic views of Hartmann and Schopenhauer). His 'Anatomy of Negation' (1885) was greatly appreci-
ated by Rationalists. He has since written a number of distinguished literary works and novels." I be-
lieve that if I were to issue Saltus' "The Anatomy of Negation" and "The Philosophy of Disenchant-
ment" I'd arouse enough interest among the thinking portion of the new generation to move other pub-
lishers to bring out his other worth-
while works. The reason I pick on the two titles in the previous sen-
tence is because I feel that the wave of intellectual reaction that has struck the country may make it difficult for standard publishers to risk the wrath of the orthodox by putting their imprint on such heterodox material. As for myself, unpopular controversy is my meat.

By the way, I can't find my copy of 'The Philosophy of Disenchant-
ment,' so I'm using this device to move some reader to serve culture and literature by sending me his copy of the book. I'll reward him with the first copy that comes off my press.

Dr. Patsy O'Bang, in his last Sor-
borne lecture: "Marriage is just like the laundry. You get out of it what you put into it, but you'd never rec-
ognize it."

Heinrich Heine: "I do not hate the altar, but I hate those serpents which lurk under the ruined stones of old altars." "I hate that abortion which is called State-Re-
ligion—that object of derision born from the concubinage of temporal and spiritual power." ... In his "Confessions," Heine tells of stand-
ning with the philosopher Hegel at an open window one beautiful star-
lit night. The poet was 22 years old at the time of this anecdote. Speak-
ing with enthusiasm of the stars, Heine called them "the abodes of the blest." But Hegel, who reject-
ed the ideas of a personal God and personal immortality, and who ac-
cepted none of the dogmas of any church, muttered, "The stars! Hm! The stars are only a brilliant eru-
tion on the firmament." "What!" Heine cried, "then is there no bliss-
ful spot above, where virtue is re-
warded after death?” To which Hegel replied: “So you want a bonus because you have supported your sick mother and refrained from poisoning your brother?”

What we authors have to sweat through in order to serve our readers! Here’s Shaw Desmond, in London, who has turned out a book, “How You Live When You Die.” He tells us that in order to gather his data he had to make “hundreds of astral visits to the spheres.” The Open Road, which has been going on for all kinds of spookology of late, should enroll Desmond as one of its featured writers. Here’s a man who hops off the world just because he wants us to have the straight dope on how we’ll get along when we kick off. Just what method of transportation Mr. Desmond uses I don’t know, but it wasn’t by motor car, with rationing being what it is. He probably sat down in his easy chair and gave his spirit a swift push. That extra brightness about him is the moonshine he picked up while detouring around his moon in order to get from Venus to Saturn. Upton Sinclair should look up this Mr. Desmond. He seems to be right down his alley. Sinclair, if you don’t remember, is the fellow who had to nail down his desk in order to keep it from floating out of his library into the rose bushes. But, don’t laugh. Sinclair says, with bland assurance, that he saw this happen with his own eyes, so it must be true. Sinclair was born to be a bishop, which reminds me of Patsy O’Bang’s definition of a preacher: “A Man o’ Gawd is one whose job it is to tell us how to solve the problems of existence which he himself has tried to avoid by becoming a preacher.” And now, for no reason at all, I turn to the world’s greatest obstetrician, Dr. Patsy O’Bang, for this sure-fire method of giving birth to a Literary Baby: “Take Life to Mademoiselle and The American Freeman, a couple of books, a few Liberties, and Time.” And now that O’Bang’s started again, let him tell you about his great discovery in the field of butter-making. “There’s no reason for cutting down on butter, for I can show how to make it from grass. All you need is a cow and a churn,” he reported to the Smithsonian Institution, which in turn recognized his genius by requesting the President to honor him with the Congressional Medal.

Letter from a 17-year-old customer who is developing a passion for culture: “I have made good use of your Little Blue Books on ‘How to Write Letters.’ Now my letters to the boy-friend sound like something but when he comes over for a visit I find myself stumped, which leads me to say that you ought to have one of your smart writers make up a book of suggested conversations. As it is, when the boy-friend shows up, I say, ‘Hello, Butch,’ and he says, ‘Hiya, Stinky. What’s cookin?’ And then I don’t know what to say next. Your writer should take up from where I left off.”

“There’s a man to see Dr. Patsy O’Bang,” announced the blonde in the front office. “He asked me to hand him this card.” On it was printed, “Ignace Galitzgaloszwicz, Hollywood, Calif.” “Show’m in,” said the great O’Bang. “Despite his international reputation, Dr. O’Bang isn’t above meeting an occasional admirer. “So,” said the stranger, shaking the master-mind’s hand. “You are Patsy O’Bang. I’ve gone many miles out of my way to meet you because I wanted to see the man who has to live with a name as odd as Patsy O’Bang.” “Oh,” said O’Bang modestly, “I’m used to it, as you, undoubtedly, are used to yours, Mr. Ignace Galitzgaloszwicz.”

Patsy O’Bang—world’s most ardent enemy of the Axis and the greatest rifleman in American history—decided to do his bit by organizing a half hundred oldsters into a home guard. Served as instructor on the rifle range, O’Bang became exasperated over the clumsiness of a rookie and snatched the rifle from him. O’Bang’s first shot scored a bullseye. “That’s the way I shoot,” said O’Bang, and aimed for another try at his luck. His second shot hit a cow in the next pasture. “That’s the way you shoot,” said O’Bang, thinking fast.

To his company of infantry in camp a first sergeant, fresh from Hahvahd, spoke dire words: “From this moment in infinity when I
blow this innocent-looking whistle, I insist—without evasion or maladroitness—that I shall see a prodigious and impenetrable cloud of dust come hurtling out of those tents, and when the dust clears away I shall expect to find two rows of statues.”

Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt was teaching Sunday-school one day when the boys knew that their teacher was to read a certain passage from the Bible. Carefully they pasted together the connecting pages. Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt, accompanied by her idol, Bishop Beerbelch, came into the room and began to read. When she got to the bottom of the page she read “When Noah was 120 years old he took unto himself a wife who was”—then she turned the page—“140 cubits long, 40 cubits wide, built of gopher wood, and covered with pitch inside and out.” Mrs. Prissy-Pratt looked puzzled for a moment, re-read the passage, then handed it to Bishop Beerbelch, who adjusted his glasses and verified it slowly. Turning to the class, Bishop Beerbelch, thinking fast, said: “Boys, this is the first time I have come across this passage in the Bible, but I am ready to accept it as evidence of the assertion that we are fearfully and wonderfully made.”

In one of my pieces I called the peacock nature’s greatest exhibitionist, which strikes me as being too extreme. First place really belongs to leaders of name-bands, especially Spitalny.

Chapman Cohen: “The Atheist rejects God from the same point of view that he rejects fairies or witches—from a knowledge of the history and origins of these beliefs.”

T. H. Huxley: “Why trouble ourselves about matters of which, however important they may be, we DO know nothing and can know nothing? We live in a world which is full of misery and ignorance, and the plain duty of each and all of us is to try to make the little corner he can influence somewhat less miserable and somewhat less ignorant than it was before he entered it. To do this effectually it is necessary to be fully possessed of only two beliefs: the first, that the order of Nature is ascertainable by our faculties to an extent which is practically unlimited; the second, that our volition counts for something as a condition in the course of events.”

Charles Darwin: “I am aware that, if we admit a first cause, the mind still craves to know whence it came and how it arose. Nor can I overlook the difficulty from the immense amount of suffering through the world. I am, also, induced to defer to a certain extent to the judgment of the many able men who have fully believed in God; but here again I see how poor an argument this is. The safest conclusion seems to me that the whole subject is beyond the scope of man’s intellect; but man can do his duty.”

H. F. Amiel: “Is it not strange that the race of man should have gone forward so far and so well, when all the while most of what it was thinking and believing was not true?”

From a Debunker’s notebook: The war is doing some subtle debunking. A marine, back from Samoan, reported that the women there aren’t Lamour-like.

Patsy O’Bung to Bishop Beerbelch: Did you ever hear me say a word of praise for your efforts to make people good?
B.B.: No.
P.O.B.: Did you ever hear me say a word of criticism of the Devil?
P.B.: No.
P.O.B.: Did you ever hear me suggest that our polite and friendly vices should be eradicated?
P.B.: No, of course not. I’ve even been told, by Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt, that you once boasted that you would rather have one Haldeman-Julius Special than all the hymnals in Christendom.
P.O.B.: Did you ever know me to give the slightest support to inspirational literature and behavior?
P.B.: Never.
P.O.B.: Did you ever know me to disapprove of worldly, lusty, earthy, salty, spicy stories and anecdotes?
P.B.: Alas, never.
P.O.B.: Have I ever failed to insult right thinkers, uplifters and
puritanical reformers, and other breast-beaters?
B.B.: Alas, never.
P.O.B.: Have I ever shown friendship for conventional, respectable, orthodox modes of thought? Or for stuffed shirts, bunk-shooters, hypocrites, theocrats, anti-evolutionists, fundamentalists, miracle-mongers, rabble-rousers, the smug, the plow, and the militantly virtuous?
B.B.: Never, to the best of my knowledge.
P.O.B.: Have I ever sought favors from or approval of, our so-called “best people”?
B.B.: The answer is, No. And I might add that you have always shown a sinful interest in the world’s most questionable men and women, skeptics, anti-theists, and their ilk.
P.O.B.: Have you ever known me to look down on so-called bad women or hold up to them, as models, our so-called good women?
B.B.: Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt has often told me about your admiration for the more wanton elements of the community.
P.O.B.: Thank Gawd, I’m still the same old Patsy O’Bang.

Winse Wakefield, Ethel, Ark.: “I must commend you on the quality of your books. They are excellently written and are a superb synthesis of the broadest books.”

Winston Churchill on how to handle Italy: “We shall continue to operate on that donkey at both ends—with a stick at one end and a carrot at the other.”

Little Blue Books are read everywhere, including down where it’s hilly in far-away Chile.

A reporter, who was interviewing Dr. Dieckhoff, last German ambassador to the U.S., on the reasons for Germany’s invasion of Russia, was told this was necessary because the Soviet Union would have attacked Germany. When the reporter asked why Russia would have attacked Hitlerland, Dieckhoff replied: “Russia opposes Germany’s destiny.” “Who doesn’t?” the reporter asked. There was no answer.

Irwin Shaw’s play, “Sons and Soldiers,” according to a Partisan Review review by that witty witch, Mary McCarthy, has a scene in which a mother is nursing a prop baby onstage, chanting, “Drink, drink, when you grow up, you will go to the best restaurants and make your own French dressing.”

This month’s howler is from The Daily Worker, which printed a report about the dogs trained to serve in the Nazi army. Instead of running to help the Nazi wounded, we’re told in dead-pan English, the canines “are going first to the fallen Russian soldiers, even ignoring nearby wounded German soldiers.” The dogs’ inherent instincts simply recognize that the Russians are better people than their German masters. This should be turned into a propaganda movie in Technicolor.

Cpl. Saul B. Kampf, San Diego, Calif.: ‘I am a ‘new baby’ to your works and find them interesting and entertaining no end. Here in the Marine Corps I find a few moments here and there to brush up on reading. Naturally it’s tough carrying anything, much less large volumes. The best remedy for the situation is the Little Blue Books.”

Henrich Hauser, South Valley, N.Y.: “At last light has been thrown on the problem of the line following, ‘Some come here to sit and think.’ It might soothe the feelings of your readers if they knew that the sentiment of the line remains unimpaired in radiant beauty and that it is to be found in every language, preeminently in Paris' subway stations and in gilded letters in the swank apartment of the famous Berlin banker, Fuerstenberg, who traced all his financial successes back to that little place of retirement and contemplation where he went to sit and—incidentally—to think.”

Dr. Patsy O’Bang, the world’s great master of political science, once permitted himself to be elected as a delegate to an important national convention, which he accepted mainly because he wanted to study certain governmental, economic, psychological, biological and alcoholic subjects at first hand.
During the first three sweaty days, Dr. O'Bang couldn't stop marvelling over the cleverness of the chairman, who not only drank two quarts daily but did his job brilliantly. At last, O'Bang took the floor, but before giving the country his advice on how to solve all its problems, he turned to the chairman and said in a voice that rang through the rafters and shook the bunting: 'Many years ago, while acting as political and financial adviser to the Chinese government, I learned of an old Chinese proverb which says that wherever an uncle kisses his nephew for the first time, there shall he gain special attainment. For instance, should he kiss his nephew on the forehead, the child will become a great thinker; on the throat, a great singer. . . . Now, I don't know where Senator Smith's uncle kissed him for the first time, but he certainly has made a wonderful chairman.'

Bishop Beerbelch, in a conversation with Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt: 'I had a wonderful dream last night. I dreamed that everything I said was important.'

H. A. Nickel, Highway Highlands, Calif.: 'As a former Kansas high-school and college student, ex-Kansas editor and publisher, I have found your efforts filled a gap in my search for truth. Kansas newspapermen probably have either ignored your efforts deliberately, or sought to hide their own lack of imagination in the publishing enterprise by overlooking your nickel and dime success.'

With the pond in the little pasture South of the house filled with mallards, white pekins and geese—and with the ducks hatching little ones all over the place—I felt that the space between the house and the barn should be beautified. I got in touch with a Missouri raiser of peafowl and bought a glorious 5-year-old blue peacock and three hens, all of them to arrive the day before Memorial Day, which meant I'd have a 2-day holiday during which I could enjoy watching them and getting them settled down to long, happy and fruitful lives on the farm. At noon, Saturday, the peacock arrived, in a crate six feet long, with his tail wrapped in cheesecloth so it wouldn't be damaged. The hens, according to the express agent, would be along later, having missed connections somewhere. From noon until 5 o'clock I kept him shut up in a stall in the barn. I couldn't wait any longer, so I turned him out into the barnyard. The fellow—just about the most dazzling bird I've ever seen—walked slowly around the place, looking the establishment over. After an hour of this he wandered into the brooder house, where he joined the chickens at the feeders. He ate heartily. Then he hopped on the roost and seemed settled for the night. It wasn't night yet, but the sun was going down and it looked safe to let the door open. This was my big mistake. When I returned a few hours later, he was gone. No hens? No place for a spirited peacock. I searched everywhere—in the barn, the garage, the hen house, the pasture around the pond, but found no peacock. I consoled myself with the thought that he might have gone to roost in one of the trees and that it would be almost impossible to find him in the dark. So at about midnight, tired and worried, I went to bed. I had visions of varmints killing him in remote parts of the farm. I tossed and squirmed until exhaustion had me, but at dawn I was up again and began a real search. I walked all over the place, but couldn't see the gorgeous bird. It struck me suddenly—and I recalled at the thought—that boys in the neighborhood might shoot him. If Dr. Patsy O'Bang had been available he undoubtedly would have convinced me that the only thing for me to do was to call up the Governor and ask him to order the National Guard into action. Sue, more conservative, suggested that I call on the sheriff to do his duty, but I countered with the argument that the bird was private property, he might still be on the place, no one was threatening him—so the sheriff might tell me to go do my own chasing. What was to be a happy, stimulating holiday week-end was now a continued round of new worries. Meanwhile, Sue, while frying my breakfast eggs, called up the express agent and learned that the
three hens had arrived safely and that they would be brought out in a few minutes. When he arrived at about 8 that morning, I had a screened-off enclosure ready for them, for it seemed certain that the hens would wander off if they found the place devoid of peacocks. A woman's got to have her man. A man's got to have his woman. I had expected the peahens to be rather plain, so finding them beautiful pleased and consoled me, though their beauty was unlike that of the male. When I was sure they couldn't get out, and when I'd supplied them with plenty of corn and water, I set about making plans. That peacock, now somewhere in the county, must be brought back. The hens were making amusing noises, but it didn't seem possible he could hear them. Maybe he could at night. But by night he might be killed. I must get that fellow back. But how? Food had meant nothing to him. He had deserted in the face of groaning feeders. Security had meant nothing to him. There were no hens, so he went off. He couldn't waste his time in a place that didn't have any peahens. He'd go in search of them. The thought came to me that self-preservation isn't always the first law of nature. If that peacock had been true to the so-called instinct of self-preservation he wouldn't have gone off at sunset and risked his life in a strange, perhaps unfriendly, environment. He wanted his hens. He wanted to satisfy his emotional urges. In short, the instinct for the preservation of the species seemed stronger than the impulse for self-preservation. But this was no time for fine-spun philosophizing. So I decided to desert philosophy and turn to logic, quickly recalling some of my lessons from Aristotle, Descartes, John Stuart Mill and Bertrand Russell. I looked the place over with the eyes of a peacock who had his heart set on deserting. If I were a discontented peacock, where would I go? I certainly wouldn't go in the direction of the house, for it was fronted by a long hedge. The world beyond that hedge looked dark and uninviting. On the other hand, the land beyond the barn looked inviting—flat pasture. He must have gone East, I decided. But did he continue going East? And if so, how far? I decided he wouldn't spend the night in the open. He'd want to roost in a tree. Then I remembered that piece of timberland near the other end of the farm, about a third of a mile from the house. He might be there now, I told myself. Getting a stick, I started out for the big clump of trees and brush. Beating my way through the dense growth, I soon heard his call. It seemed to sound like a crow's, only louder and longer. In a few minutes I spotted the fellow, and it was the most sensationally beautiful sight I've ever seen. He was walking—not running—through the woods. I called to him and waved my stick in the direction of the barnyard. He walked that way. I walked faster and got within 10 feet of him. He kept that up for about a hundred yards, when he decided he'd had enough. He didn't care to be shown back to a henless barnyard. It struck me again how animals are always realists. He knew nothing about the schedules and mix-ups of the express company. All he knew was that there were no hens when I'd turned him loose. If he'd been a human I could have used words to simulate hens, and by such symbols arouse him to the point of wanting to return to the yard that now had an ample supply of hens waiting for him. But symbols mean nothing to animals. They deal only in concrete facts. At this point my reflections were interrupted by a wonderful sight. The peacock left the ground and flew 20 feet over my head back to the trees, where he landed on a high branch. That flying peacock was the most sensational and thrilling sight I'd seen in a long time. In fact, it was the first time I'd ever seen a peacock on an extended flight. I realized immediately that my technique was wrong. I must resort to realism. So I started back to the barnyard to get one of the hens. I'd let him see her with his own eyes. That would settle him. So I got a long rope, which I tied to the leg of one of the hens. Then I enlisted the help of Sue and the choreman, a wonderful little man of 81. I explained my new strategy. We would tie the hen to the trunk of a tree and go in search of the cock. Fifteen minutes.
later we had the bait set, but found it wasn't necessary to hunt for the peacock. He had heard her quick call, which sounded like the sudden clicking of a set of false teeth. Then she'd let out her other call, which sounded like the nasal cry of an oboe, and which at other times sounded like a bassoon. That brought him to her. We were many feet away and watched entranced. He circled her and examined the rope carefully. This didn't look so good. But soon he gave all his attention to the hen. I signalled my associates. Soon we were at the tree, where I untied the rope and took charge of the hen, intending to lead her to the barnyard. He followed. Then he led the way. Then the hen got tired, sat down and wouldn't budge, so I picked her up and carried her all the way to the barnyard, passing on the way 15 cows and calves who had never seen a peacock before and wanted to get up close for a good look, which we couldn't tolerate because it frightened the bird. At last, late that afternoon, the peacock was back in the barnyard, where I turned all four loose. He immediately did some fancy strutting, his feathers spread into the most beautiful fan I'd ever seen. That night two of the hens roosted in the brooder house, a third hen roosted on the top board of the grape arbor, and the peacock settled down for the night on the roof of the chicken house. A dozen times that night I heard his resonant, powerful call. It was music. At last, I was in bed again for the rest I needed, my bones and joints sore, my muscles weary, my brain fatigued. I slept nine hours. In the morning I found them looking the joint over. The peacock took his position near a fence for strutting and exhibitionism. The hens answered his calls, but were playing hard to get. That was all right. He was here to stay. The hens would never go beyond the range of his yell. I had won one of the biggest victories of my life.

Patsy O'Bang once wrote a firm to send him a $400 refrigerator. The firm replied that if Dr. Patsy O'Bang would be good enough to send the $400 the refrigerator would be shipped. Dr. O'Bang replied curtly that if that was the way they were going to handle his account they could just cancel his order.

A French translator was having trouble with an American's play that dealt with "the unwritten law." The Frenchman could not understand how the man could kill without being slapped into the hookey-gow. When the American explained that the "hero" had done the shooting because the "villain" had had an affair with his wife, for which juries frequently refuse to convict, the Frenchman, still amazed, cried: "If that were true in Paris every man in the city would be shoted.""}

Horace Gregory, who has a long essay on Edgar Allan Poe in the current Parisian Review, spells it Allen all the way to the end. The opus is advertised on the magazine's cover—and even here the editors fail to spell the poet's name correctly.

Patsy O'Bang doped out a little freethought reasoning on his fifth birthday, when he played Adam and Eve with a little girl. The rules of the game required her to tempt little Patsy with an apple, but instead the diminutive siren ate it herself. That moment registered the birth of his Skepticism, which grew powerful with the years and landed him among the greatest minds in the history of thought.

Paul Kitchen, Bayonne, N. J.: "I trust I am not in error when I assume that your attention was drawn anew to Edgar Saltus by a little piece of mine in The Open Road. The piece was trifling and of an inadequacy which I will attempt to exorcise in a future edition of the OR. But it could not have had a happier effect if it actually prompted in you the thought of reissuing Saltus in one of the Big Book series. This would be a fine and wonderful thing. Not only are Barnes and McCabe excellent company for Edgar to be in, but his being out of print is something I do not care to contemplate. Incidentally, if you are really going to issue Saltus, I could add a footnote to that effect in my forthcoming article. It would be a breezy and cheerful note to add." Mr. Kitchen is right. I learned from his excel-
lent article the shameful fact that all of Saltus’ numerous books are actually out of print. That seems incredible, but I guess the man knows what he’s saying. At any rate, I plan to go to work on only two of Saltus’ books—the most heterodox in his list—“The Anatomy of Negation” and “The Philosophy of Disenchantment.” These Freethought masterpieces must be rescued from temporary oblivion. I feel confident, as I’ve said before, that my issuing these two Saltus works will break down the obstacles that keep standard publishers from reprinting his other works, books that were popular with intelligent readers just a few decades ago.

A Camp Crowder soldier tells me that his favorite latrine had to be repainted because there wasn’t any more room for the poems, slogans, gags, wisecracks, scandal-mongering and expressions of primitive art that bedeck such useful places. At the risk of betraying military secrets, he told me that the usual way of reading such effusions is to begin at the bottom and work up. At the very top, he tells me, was written: “What in Hell are you doing way up here?”

William McCarthy, in his new, excellent book, “Bible, Church and God,” published by the Truth Seeker Co., N.Y.C.: “Ignorance should be pitied not castigated; but no ridicule, however stinging, can be too severe for those who exploit the ignorant.” Father Tertullian, one of the founders of Christianity, himself steeped in ignorance and supernaturalism, defended ignorance in the following sentences: “I believe it because it is unbelievable.” “The Son of God died—it is by all means to be believed, because it is absurd.” “Christ was buried and rose again, the fact is certain because it is impossible.”

Birger Sandzen, Lindsborg, Kans., has sent me four of his powerful, beautiful paintings, which sends my Sandzen collection up to seven pictures, all of them magnificent impressions of thrilling Kansas and Colorado mountain and river scenes, topped off with his wonderful and charming skies, rocks and trees. I’ve been a loyal admirer of his talent since 1925, when I got my first Sandzen. His pictures have given me many quiet hours of pleasure and consolation. The other day I wrote him that I’d see to it that these pictures were left to a good museum after I go to join the angels, which drew this characteristic comment from the splendid fellow: “Please postpone your going to the angels. I know you will be an angel sometime, but I would rather have even a sinful, wicked, very human Haldeman-Julius, kindhearted and generous as he is, than an angel or a saint. I meet saints once in a while, and you also meet them, of course, but they scare me to death, knowing what a terrible sinner I am myself.”

Sign in delicatessen store: “Pickled Pigs Feet. We Put Up Our Own.”

Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt: “People ask me why I rave so much about Bishop Beerbelch and I tell them it’s because I never even knew what sin was before he came to us.”

For five years I’ve been searching for the second line of the poem that opens, “Some come here to sit and think,” and at last the chase is ended. I knew I would crack this thing wide open if I tried long enough. What chagrins me is that until yesterday I forgot to turn for help to the world’s most authoritative bard and literateur, Dr. Patsy O’Bang. He took just two gulps of a jug of famous Ozark Blackberry Squeezins and it all came back to him. He muttered that when he’s girded with Squeezins he isn’t a-skreeed of nuthin’ much. So, with a here’s alookin’ at ye, he quoted:

Some come here to sit and think
But I come here to git a drink

What pains me is the way some of the readers of this organ of piety and righteousness tried to befuddle me with a ribald, Rabelaisian line. I kept my head and continued the exploration, now happily rewarded with victory. The couplet, as worded above, suggests something out of James Whitcomb Riley, the distinguished author of the great classic, “The Passing of the Outlet,” one of the most homely and human poems ever penned. E. R. Kirk, Norwood, Mo., came close to
the real thing—but he was in error, of course—when he submitted this as the long-sought second line: “But I come here to fill the zinc.” Kirk is wrong, but clean.

Sinclair Lewis, in his new novel, "Gideon Planish," deplors the din and the dinners this way:

“In New York it is always possible to persuade from 600 to 1,500 persons to put on evening clothes and pay from $3.50 to $7.50 for a very bad dinner, at which very bad speakers, mostly throat cleaners, will arise and say nothing at all at preposterous length with an ‘uh’ between every adjective and noun. It is even possible to get these speakers, these non-private persons, not only to endure the horrors of oratorical vacuity, but also to put up with the torture of a reception before or after the dinner, when they will shake hands with strangers and smugly listen to them without once protesting. Everything you are saying to me is complete foolishness. It is not Broadway that is the main street of New York but the long, thin, prudential speaker’s table, and every familiar—too familiar—face along it knows intimately and detests furiously all the other inevitable and self-opening faces there.”

An elderly crusader was pinched during a London demonstration of ardent feminists. An old-timer, she had been jailed many times for the cause of Votes for Women. The judge sent her to the hoosegow, along with a young girl who had joined the movement only a few days before. Assigned to the same cell, the older woman soon heard her younger companion sobbing. She stamped her foot and called out: “There, there, my dear, don’t cry! Put your trust in God—She will protect you!”

We-wuz-robbed item: On May 22, 1943, Walter Winchell used “guesstimate” with the air of one who had made a discovery. I coined the word more than three years ago and used it at least a dozen times, by which time I tired of it. Skeptics may check this by pecking into my 26 volumes of “Questions and Answers,” where they’ll also find a letter from C. A. Lang, in which my pet reader writes some words of praise for my verbal inventiveness, pointing to “guesstimate” as one of my minor triumphs. It was then that I dropped it, only to see it picked up by Winchell. I’m not saying Winchell lifted the word out of my volumes of “Questions and Answers.” It’s possible the word was put forward by a benevolent or mercenary tipster who got it from this wordpecker.

David L. Cohn: “Recently in Washington, the conversation was suddenly stilled as a woman loudly said to the statesman who sat at her right, ‘Hands on the table, Senator!’”

PFC. Andrew Vena, N. Africa: “I’ve been receiving The Freeman, Little Blue Books, etc., even out here in N. Africa, all of which are greatly appreciated and used for filling in time-gaps and mental blank spaces. I find much of it interesting, educational and of practical use. One of the ‘barometers’ for judging the value, to me, of a publication is the number of clippings I find it necessary or desirable to keep or send to friends. Your Freeman and 26 ‘Questions and Answers’ volumes score high. I lament the fact that I know so few right (receptive) people to pass my Freeman to. Too many otherwise intelligent (?) guys are still saturated with religious goo and just reek with obscurantism. It looks as though every soldier and his brother either go to church, keep a Bible, carry a medal or other ‘holy’ gadget, or have some religious symbols tattooed on arm or chest. What’s more, they’re not only in mental darkness but intentionally intend to stay there. They just won’t reach over and flip the switch (read good writers’ works critically) that would flood the room (their mind) with the bright white light of verifiable knowledge from the searchlight of science and so be enabled to arrive at justifiable beliefs and sane conclusions worthy of our accumulated knowledge. It’s actually unsafe to even attempt to straighten out lots of fellows’ crooked thinking. They are so easily ‘hurt’ and offended to persuade them into a mutually beneficial or educational and intelligent discussion they sink away with the excuse that they don’t wish to be ‘dragged’ into religious argu-
ments. I tolerated two two-hour lectures out here once on religion by a couple of army chaplains just to hear what they'd say—and how. The sheer trash they'll dish out, and that a supposedly educated group of hard-fisted fighting men will listen to and believe, is amazing. My, my, but these 'soul-savers' are powerful sure of their so-called 'facts.' How on earth they can dare be so seriously emphatic about their unproven contentions I can't see. Whereas, by contrast, a true scientist who is or thinks he is right about anything will rest his case on the force of his verifiable and provable evidence instead of the force with which he can pound his fist on the table, or the temperament of his emotions."

Dr. Patsy O'Bang, the world's greatest scholar and master of 40 sciences, doesn't have much time for the radio, but one Sunday he did listen to Bertrand Russell, who was appearing with a group in 'Initation to Learning.' O'Bang liked Russell's crisp, precise manner of speaking, perhaps because it's the way O'Bang talks. "The tone of his voice is superbly analytical, with overtones that keep several lines of thought in their proper order," said O'Bang, who puts much store by the human voice. "My raptures over the Russell voice-box bring to mind Oscar Wilde's sentence on the legs of Sir Henry Irving. Irving's legs,' said Wilde, 'are limpid and utter. Both are delicately intellectual, but his left leg is a poem."

Members of the Michigan Spiritualists' Association, like all other spookologists, have plenty of bunk down the gullets of the gullible, but the patriotic motivation is never neglected. Nothing will be done to help Hitler, whose bunk veers in the direction of Astrology rather than Spiritualism. All this was demonstrated beyond debate at a recent convention in Detroit, at which members pledged to "contact spirits of dead soldiers only in the presence of relatives and every precaution will be taken to ensure that no Axis agents are listening." Up to now the F.B.L. has neglected contacts with the spirit world, but, if the situation demands, it's possible Mr. Hoover will take appropriate measures to keep stray and unfriendly spirits from helping the Axis. The editors of The Open Road are invited to explore this subject. Upton Sinclair is another expert on mysticism who ought to be able to render creative services in the cause of democracy.

Prof. Albert Einstein: "I have no use for the religion of fear, and equally little for social or moral religion. A God who rewards and punishes is inconceivable to me. A man's ethical behavior should be based on sympathy, education, and social ties; no religious basis is necessary—man would be in a poor way if he had to be restrained by fear of punishment or hope of reward."

On May 27, 1943, B. F. Douglass, 89, inventor of the screen-type flyswatter, died in Fulton, Mo. In 1900, Douglass got the idea for a screen swatter, of which millions have been sold at a nickel, one of the best bargains in the world. I'd always imagined that the screen-type flyswatter came in at about the time primitive man discovered fire, the wheel and the lever, and that the New World got its first supply when Columbus landed on this side, but here's the truth—the thing's discovery belongs to our generation, along with cellophane, zoot suits, latex, condoms, cotton cartons, pay toilets, vitamins, five-day cup cures, radio jokes, Dorothy Thompson, potato chips, walk-away drinks, curburtes, B.O., friends who won't tell you about your halitosis, bubble gum, melancholy comic sections, radio serials, dishpan hands, beauticians, morticians, Patsy O'Bang, Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt, Bishop Beerkelbach and the Little Blue Books. I've tried everything but the electric chair in laying out the hated fly—sprays, gooey ribbons that hang from chandeliers, fly-paper, sweet-smelling liquids that rot out the strongest fly's kidneys, metal traps and rolled-up newspapers—but the plain, simple screen-type swatter does the job quicker and better. With proper care such a tool should last two seasons, which makes the cost a couple of pennies per year. One Summer I let a salesman talk me into buying a Japanese swatter
that's made of woven straw. The thing was a flop because it pushed air against the fly, giving it enough warning to make a getaway three times out of five. The air-conditioned screen type cuts down the enemy without letting it know you have destructive intentions regarding its future existence. Besides, the Japanese swatter flaps and flops around too much, and that means one wrist movement out of five is wasted. One can develop finesse and streamlined style only with the screen swatters. The approach is calm and sure. The wrist action, with little practice, becomes a masterpiece of artistic motion that can be as graceful as the swaying and surging of a Zorina or a Pavlova. The brief snap that registers the end of a fly has about it the neat sharpness of the Victory notes that open the Beethoven Fifth. As exercise, it stands with polo and jiterbugging. All for a nickel. And all because of the genius of Mr. Douglass, now gone to his reward. Persons who appreciate his genius should promote a fund to pay a great sculptor to do the master in bronze. He should be shown with one of his swatters in hand, wrist back, eyes alert, nostrils distended. At his feet should be millions of the pests he dedicated his life to liquidate. But all this is futile verbiage. The world will ignore Douglass, because his invention lacks glamour, sex appeal, romance. The thing does its job, but it's homely. The world craves finery. Perhaps Mr. Douglass should have put spangles on his swatters. Even though this is nonsense, the moral is plain—the customers want glamour.

Bishop Beerbelch: Your Free-thought, Dr. Patsy O'Bang, wills when faced by the precious words of Christ. Even you must accept the ethical preaching of Jesus.

Patsy O'Bang: Not so fast, Bishop Beerbelch. You should qualify that assertion by admitting the necessity to pick and choose otherwise even you churchmen become confused by obvious contradictions.

B.B.: One doesn't grow confused when reading these words by Christ: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

P.O'B.: But He also said: "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea! and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

B.B.: There can be no question about this sentiment: "Love your enemies and do good to them that hate thee."

P.O'B.: Again I must ask you to weigh another quotation from the same source: "But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me."

B.B.: There can be no quibbling about this sentence: "Forgive and ye shall be forgiven."

P.O'B.: Oh, yes, Bishop Beerbelch, just take a look at these sentences: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned...." "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels."

B.B.: Look at this beautiful thought: "Resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also."

P.O'B.: I don't like to appear disputatious, but try to balance this sentence against the one you've just quoted: "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one."

B.B.: You will be damned for misusing your intellect.

P.O'B.: I'll be damned if I'll let my intellect remain unused.

At this point Sister Prissilla Prissy-Pratt came to Bishop Beerbelch's defense with this devastating retort: "Mr. O'Bang, you should know that if the ideas just quoted by Bishop Beerbelch were not accepted universally I wouldn't find it safe to walk the streets of this wicked city, for at any moment I might be ravished by lust-crazed men."

M a r k T w a i n: "Christianity mouths Justice—it invented Hell. Christianity mouths Mercy—it invented Hell. Christianity mouths Charity—it invented Hell."

Chapman Cohen, the well-known British Freethinker: "Up to the present we have risen little higher in our appreciation of human values than to raise a monument to 'The Unknown Warrior' (the soldier); one day we may hope to see a monument to those unknown
warriors, men and women who have fought battles often harder than those of the battlefields."

Oliver Wendell Holmes: "The man who is always worrying whether or not his soul would be damned, generally has a soul that isn't worth a damn."

Soldier, Tex.: "You'd love the way the Chapels here post the Legion of Decency's verboten list on movies—the ones they like are all horse operas—to elevate the faithful, no doubt."

Kin Hubbard: "A bee is never as busy as it seems—it's just that it can't buzz any slower."

H. G. Wells: "I doubt if anyone but a blockhead or a monomaniac can really be satisfied with his convictions of 10 years ago."

At a certain camp a Wac was brought before the C.O. by the sergeant, who charged the wrong-doer "did refuse duty and fanny-floundered. "What," asked the commanding officer, "does fanny-floundered mean?" "Making a de-risive movement with the hips, sir," was the reply.

Patsy O'Bang: "Love is the attraction that concentrates all of one's selfishness, acquisitiveness, malice and possessiveness on a particular person, usually of the opposite sex."

Frank Harris, in his "Bernard Shaw," tells of someone who watched Michelangelo working on his great statue of Lorenzo de Medici. The kibitzer kept objecting that it wasn't like Lorenzo, that he had known the great man for years and that he wouldn't have recognized him from the sculptor's presentment. At length Michelangelo turned on his buzzing critic: "Who will care whether it's like him or not a thousand years hence?"

Nazis are worried by grim-humor-ed members of the democratic underground, who are pasting little stickers on Berlin lampposts, reading: "Maximum load two party members."

During the London blitz a Dublin bartender smirked: "Thank God, the cursed English are beat at last."

"But what if the Nazis come over here to Dublin?" asked a customer. "Faith, but the English Navy won't let 'em," retorted the bartender.

Berliners these days are repeating this slogan: "Enjoy the war; the peace is going to be dreadful."

The Tibetan Doctrine (Buddhist): "When about to perform any great work, endeavor to have a trustworthy associate; if one would burn down a forest, the aid of wind is, of course, needed."

Confucius: "Is there one word which may serve as a rule of prac-tice for all one's life? Is not reciprocity such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others."

We-Wuz-Robbed Dept.: On June 29, 1943, Walter Winchell used this: Has-Benito Mussolini. It appeared in one of my 26 volumes of "Questions and Answers" 25 months before. There's still a raft of unstolen stuff in those fat, juicy volumes, so get your set of 26 volumes, prepaid, by subscribing to The Freeman for four years, for $4. A four-year renewal is just as good. If I can think of it, every time some big shot lifts pieces from this seven-pound set of books I'll hit back with a simple, candid, frank plug. If I boost the books too often, blame the crooks. But, it's hard to blame the cribbers, because the volumes are crammed with thousands of literary goodies—more than 2,000,000 words—and digging out a word, phrase or gag now and then doesn't seem to be wrong because one's first impression is that it'll never be missed. Readers are permitted to quote up to 200 wisecracks and jokes without credit, if use is limited to conversations, after which credit is supposed to be given to the 26 books. The honor system, you know. The first 200 anecdotes should give the dullest goof a reputation for wit and wisdom, after which he's expected to turn generous and give the oft-quoted books a little recognition.

Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt: "That brazen Miss Sirenvamp boasts that she has had affairs with every mar-
ried man in town except one," Mr. P-P: "I wonder who he can be."

Grace Moore: "Let me tell you of two brothers who studied for the ministry. One was a little too flippant and whimsical to reach the heights; the other, a pompous and heavy-handed party, became a bishop in due course and soon impressed Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt as a blood and spiritual brother of Bishop Beerbelch. 'My brother,' the flippant and whimsical one explained, 'rose because of his gravity; I was held down by my levity.'"

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THIS OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED on the day of Hitler's and Hirohito's FUNERAL

A reader, who reeks with piety, sends me a clipping from the Salt Lake Tribune, from which I quote:

"Admiral Byrd declined to take anyone with him to the Antarctic who wasn't a genuinely religious man, because he felt that anyone who didn't have a deeply religious faith might crack up under the hardships."

I don't know who went with the Admiral, but I do know that Byrd took along a complete set of Little Blue Books, and when he returned he wrote a letter thanking me for the good they did among his men. This meant that the men liked booklets by Thomas Paine, Robert G. Ingersoll, Voltaire, Clarence Darrow, Joseph McCabe, H. G. Wells, Bertrand Russell, Anatole France, Isaac Goldberg, Ernst Haeckel, Herbert Spencer, Thomas Huxley, Henrik Ibsen, Arthur Keith, John Stuart Mill, and other non-religious thinkers. It's the style nowadays to throw compliments to the obscurantists, so it's possible Byrd did as the clipping says. But that doesn't serve as evidence that men crack up under hardships if they lack deeply religious faith. If that were true, the Russians would have been crushed by the Nazis. Instead they stood heroically and gave Hitler his first and biggest defeat. The Russian army doesn't employ chaplains. It permits its soldiers and citizens to profess any kind of religion, but the results are mostly on the side of Freethought, the overwhelming majority preferring to get their jobs done without the help of religious bunk. Religious liberty exists in Russia, but, like the United States, the Soviet Union insists on separation of Church and State. In the U.S.S.R. religion must stand on its own legs, without subsidies or moral support from the government, which is as it should be. We're supposed to follow the same policy, but the obscurantists have succeeded in poking holes here and there and letting theological dogmas sneak through. Our supernatualists are undoing the magnificent work of the Founding Fathers, most of whom were Freethinkers."

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The Rev. Buchman, founder of Buchmanism, is against smoking. The other day he got into an argument with some of his disciples who happen to be addicted to the fragrant weed. Finally it was agreed that they should pass the question up to God's throne. They prayed long and hard. Tobacco got plastered and defended. Finally Buchman sat up. "Got a clear message from God that you were to give up smoking," "Queer," replied the other, "but I got a direct message that I could continue." Buchman got up and left in a huff. ***

White and brown-spotted Bootsy is a little, smart, alert, gadaboutish dog that tolerates only acceptable living things on the farm. If it's an undesirable human, she'll bark until he gets back to the road, unless she's reproved firmly. She has a particular dislike for boys on bicycles. One, who used to leave an evening paper, had to switch delivery to my office, for the pooch was getting closer and closer to putting the bite on him. She doesn't like bums, hoboes and tramps. She can spot a tramp at 200 yards. Old clothes mean only one thing to her—he's a bum and therefore can't be tolerated, even though the man, on humanitarian grounds, is entitled to a handout. I can't figure how she got her reactionary ideas about people. Let someone drive up in a long, shiny, sleek car and she's the perfect hostess. But let an honest worker show up for eight hours in the wheat field and she wants to chase him off the place. Late each evening, while I'm reading in a
comfortable chair in the sunroom, she waits for me to take off my shoes. As soon as the first one bumps the floor, she's at my feet. When the second one off she rolls on her back and exposes her soft belly, which I'm expected to rub with my shoeless feet. She's spoiled that way. My wife calls her Bootsy, but I prefer to call her Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt. She even answers to that name, if I do the calling. The other dog, a huge German shepherd who's about 13 years old, is solemn and stodgy, so I call him Bishop Beerbelch. He doesn't seem to mind. Pride—that's his real name—stays put, like most old people. All he expects is a good meal and a nice place to flop. But the little dog prefers to be all over the place, and it seems that her main job is to see that unwanted animals are chased away or hurt in some way. Chickens, ducks, geese, pigs, calves, sheep, cows, horses—all are accepted without even a bark of disapproval. The two cats that belong on the place aren't molested, but strange cats do well to duck. Nor are strange dogs wanted. Before she came, new dogs were always showing up for food, lodging, or sex—or all three. Now they stay away, because Prissy-Pratt doesn't like strangers around the back door. Rabbits are beginning to realize that it's wise to stay at least a quarter of a mile from the house. Rats are objects of sport. Last night she was let out of the house in order to get certain business attended to, but when we heard a commotion North of the terrace, Sue and I hurried out to see what was up. She was standing over something furry. Lighting a match, I saw a half-grown possum that looked dead. Its warm body was stiff, its mouth was open, it wasn't breathing, and it seemed that its heart wasn't beating. I picked it up by its long tail and carried it to the front door, where an electric light helped me take a better look. All my life I've heard about possums playing dead, but this was the first time I'd really seen the trick played. It worked. Bootsy lost interest in it when she thought it was lifeless. We all went into the house, where I took a stand near the door in order to watch the little actor. After a few minutes it looked around, shook itself, rolled over, got on its feet and hurried into the night. Fascinated by its clever trick and the way it worked, I eyed it until it disappeared, when it dawned on me that I'd let a killer get away. A possum can kill 40 or 50 chickens a year, which makes it a legitimate target, but because of my passion for accuracy I'd studied its behavior so long that I got away. To justify my laxness about this open killer I set to thinking that after this narrow escape the possum surely would carry itself to distant parts. Getting several bites from Priscilla Prissy-Pratt must have taught it the wisdom of giving her plenty of room. The position seemed sound, and I went back to my reading, but every little while I'd come back to my failure to have the varmint destroyed by the dogs. I couldn't rationalize the situation enough to feel entirely sure that I'd done the sensible thing. That possum may be eating chickens while I'm writing this piece—unless Bootsy saw her first. Now that I know that possums really do a magnificent job of playing dead I'll have no reason for acting the sentimental sucker next time the dog goes after a varmint.

J. Edgar Hoover, according to The Nation, once submitted a written report that insisted that a certain employee of the government should be discharged because an investigation showed the man had once taken a course in Anthropology and had attended a literary lecture of some kind in Mexico City, which were considered sufficient to brand him a Communist.

H. L. Mencken, who can be wrong oftener than necessary but who can't ever be dull, is one of the owners of The Baltimore Sun, and as such is usually given the hard job of negotiating contracts with labor unions or settling controversies. Recently, the paper's 35 mailers presented their grievances to Mencken, at which time one of the committee got a close-up view of the great wit and slambanger. So far as I know, this is the first time a member of the lower classes looked him over at off-the-elbow distances and recorded his impres-
sions. The union spokesman has a keen eye, as the following shows:

"His eyes are the kind the Irish sing about, blue. His nose is the kind the steaming, fragrant punch of alcoholic content develops—red. His cheeks show those little veins, ruddy. His legs—cheap. His pants—sleezy, at the knees. The third of a ragged cigar hung limp from the center of his mouth, and he had great trouble keeping it lit. His scarred shoes were unpolished for many a day. A necktie was twisted in a rumpled collar."

The guy who wrote the above has the right to quit the Sun's mail- ing room and turn novelist. He has what it takes.

Sign in a bookstore: "Curdle Up With a Good Murder Mystery."

Jimmie Walker says he's never read a book in his life.

Edward Gibbon, the great author of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," describes one of his historical characters in such a way as to bring to mind my colleague, collaborator and brother-in-sin, Dr. Patsy O'Bang. Judge for yourself:

"With the venerable proconsul Gordian, his son was likewise declared emperor. His manners were less pure, but his character was equally amiable with that of the father. Twenty-two acknowledged concubines, and a library of sixty-two thousand volumes, attested the variety of his inclinations and from the productions which he left behind him, it appears that the former as well as the latter were designed for use rather than ostentation."

Gibbon's man, like our own Patsy O'Bang, had something on the ball. By the way, Gibbon's booklet on Christianity is the best and most stirring history of the rise of Christianity, and naturally it's one of my own publications, having been in my list for years. You can get a copy for 25c, and a bargain it is, considering that you'll be sent one of the masterpieces of Free- thought literature. This sort of thing has brought me a "bad name" among the pious, but I'm not blushing. I'm proud of the fact that I've done my bit in the important job of bringing authors like Gibbon to the man in the street. The good people can yell their heads off. I know the job's worth doing. Such a book can do nothing but good in the war to break the shackles of supernaturalism.

Sign in a cafe which is troubled by a shortage of help: "Attain the Poise to Withstand Petty Annoy- ances."

A Yank in Tunisia liked to impress his comrades with his philo- sophical dissertations. Determined to see how his philosophy would serve him in a particularly diffi- cult situation, the men got him well soused, laid him out in a grave- yard, folded his hands over his chest, and dumped flowers on him. Then they hid to see what great philosophy the Yank would utter when he was awakened by the hot morning sun. Finally he came to, stared around, and soliloquized through parched lips: "If I'm alive—what am I doing here? And if I'm dead, why in hell am I dying for the sight of a bottle of cold beer?"

Sign in a Bank: "If You Think Our Tellers are Discourteous, You Should See Our Cashier."

Sign in a meatless butcher shop: "Leg O' Nuttin'."

The distinguished scientist, Dr. Patsy O'Bang, has just offered me a 75,000-word Ms. entitled, "Differential and Growth of Gastrular Anlagen Implanted Homoplastically Into Tadpoles of Hyla Regilla." Before accepting it, I want to ask my readers if they'll buy generously should I have the honor of present- ing it in pamphlet form. I'll be guided by their response.

Louis Untermeyer: "Suggested garden book title: 'Weed 'Em and Reap'."

A man and a small boy walked into a barbershop one day. "I have an appointment down the street a little ways so I want my hair cut first," the man announced. When this was done, he put the little boy in the chair and told him to be patient, and departed. A half hour later, the boy, his hair cut long since, was still there. "Don't worry, little fellow," said the barber, "I'm sure your dad will be back soon." Looking startled, the boy said, "He's not my father. He just came
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up to me in the street and said, 'Come along, let's both get a haircut.'

Washington officialese isn't easy to catch on to, which moves us to be loyal to our self-imposed duty of offering quick helps to those who stand in need of enlightenment. The following definitions will enable the most conscientious executive to remain permanently in cool, benign anonymity, the one situation that offers the best chance of continuing to hold down one's job:

UNDER CONSIDERATION: Never heard of it.

UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION: Will have a shot at finding the file.

HAS RECEIVED CAREFUL CONSIDERATION: A period of inactivity covering time lag.

TRANSMITTED TO YOU: You hold the bag a while—I'm tired of it.

KINDLY EXPEDITE REPLY: For Gawd's sake, try and find the papers.

IN ABYSS: A state of grace for a disgraceful state.

APPROPRIATE ACTION: Do you know what to do with it? We don't.

GIVING HIM THE PICTURE: Long, confusing and inaccurate statement given to a newcomer.

Editing more than 3,000 Little Blue Books and larger volumes is something of a chore, but no matter how difficult things get I can extract a little comfort when I compare myself with Chinese publishers, who must cope with a language containing 50,000 separate characters. For example, the Chinese dictionary fills 40 volumes, of which the first volume (478 pages) is devoted to the Chinese character “yi” and the 11,000 words and phrases in which it is found.

J. B. Olivier, QM 1/c, is connected with Fleet Airship Wing 2's station paper, and in that capacity requested permission to use some of the sage sayings, gags, wisecracks, profound lucubrations, pious jests and holy jokes of the great Patsy O'Bang, the Universal What-a-Man. He says he can think of nothing better than to fill an odd corner with O'Bang. But there's a hitch. The paper, Richmond News, Richmond Field, Fla., has its own "Sage of Richmond," namely, Prof. Dono Squatdoodle. This would make O'Bang a casualty. He'd rather be transplanted bodily, along with his philosophical and humorous pieces. And he's right. O'Bang by any other name wouldn't be as pungent. Take the children of his brain, spread his knowledge to the lads in Richmond Field, but don't let Prof. Dono Squatdoodle cop the credit—and the blame. . . . Oliver, and some others, have asked for a collection of the O'Bang wisdom. The words of that dean of all philosophy, science, wisdom and humor are available in my 26 volumes of "Questions and Answers," which can be had free, prepaid, by renewing or subscribing to The Freeman for four years, for $4. Almost 2,000,000 words—many of them by Dr. Patsy O'Bang—can be had via this painless device.

A ragged hillbilly to a group of schoolmarms from Little Rock: "It's lucky my folks was well fixed, so I got a good eddication. Otherwise I would have grewed up iggerent, an' had to teach school for a livin'!"

The officials at an election in Polk County, Ark., had installed an adding machine for use in tabulating the ballots. Adding-machines were new then, and people had no great confidence in such gadgets. A defeated candidate told the editor of the local paper: "I won by more'n 60 votes, but that damn separator beat me out of it."

The village jokers always introduced a half-witted loafer in one of the Arkansas resort towns as "a distinguished visitor from Missouri, now sojournin' in our midst." To prove how ignorant Missourians are, they would offer Zeke a penny and a dime, and he always chose the penny because it was bigger. One day a city feller called Zeke aside and tried to explain the difference in value. "I know all about that," said the half-wit, "but if I was to choose the dime, them damn fools wouldn't try me no more."

"There's a feller committed suicide down the road," said a village constable to an Arkansas Justice of the Peace. "What'll we do 'bout it?"

"I disremember just how the law reads on that," answered the
Squire, "but I think it's six months in jail, an' support the child."

A stranger spoke highly of a certain Senator from Arkansas. "Yeah," said one of the great man's neighbors, "the pore feller couldn't do nothin' but holler, an' we-all got plumb tired of listenin' at him. So one dry Summer we sent him down to Washington, an' he's been there ever since."

An old story which illustrates the hillman's weakness for understatement refers to a gang of outlaws from Oklahoma, who rode into town and tried to rob the bank. When the shooting was over three bandits lay dead in the street, and five citizens were dead or dying. An old hillman who had killed at least one robber with his revolver had a bullet through the middle, and was carried into a doctor's office. The old fellow was obviously dying, and somebody asked if he had any statement to make. "Well," he gasped. "I think them boys from the Territory is a-gittin' too big for their britches, an' somebody ought to speak to the Marshal about it!"

Sergeant, School of Special Service, Lexington, Va.: "Working for the War Department is shocking, exciting and enlightening. Army politics goes on like mad! The gay Pentagon crowd runs the place—or vice versa. Most of the officers hold strategic jobs here and in Washington. All of which makes for much kissing of a 'dread area' and back-stabbing. One false move and you're either a colonel or in New Caledonia."

C.A. Lang, Mo.: "Don't you think you had better tell the world, again, what you said quite a few years ago about Badoglio, now that he's given da big-a da Mus the coup de grace? You can stand a little of the kind of upping of your prestige as a prophet that calling a turn like that deserves."

Farmer, watching the river flood his newly planted field: "Taking the Lord up one side and down the other, He does about as much harm as he does good."

The last time Dr. Patsy O'Bang was in the East he was entertained by a New Yorker who kept boasting about the various liquors in his cellar. Finally he brought out a pint of whisky and poured each guest a modest drink. "I like it straight, except when E. Haldeman-Julius serves me one of his magnificent highballs," said Patsy O'Bang, "so I'm gonna close my eyes and hold my nose, because if I see this little drink, or smell it, my mouth's sure to water and dilute it."

A Tennessee hillbilly came to the plant of the Wright Aeronautical Corporation near Cincinnati and got himself a job. After one week he hied himself back to his mountain retreat. His pa greeted him home and asked the cause of his sudden return. "Well, Paw, it's like this: I made myself 150 bucks in one week, so I'm gonna retire." The old man retorted, "Gawd, son, why didn't y'all work two weeks so's we both could retire?" "Well, Paw, y'see them city folks was allus talkin' 'bout a feller named Roosevelt who's peers got some gal named Pearl Harbor in trouble. I never thought much 'bout it till they ups and asks me to go his bond for $18.75; that's what I quit!"

Four years, three months, two weeks and one day ago I printed a story that Bennett Cerf used in a recent Saturday Review of Literature, and I'm miffed because he repeated it without artistic skill. Here's the yarn the way Mr. Cerf dished it out:

A sailor was washed ashore on a Pacific islet. When he came to, a luscious maiden, adorned in one or two hibiscus blossoms, was gazing fondly down at him. "Sailor boy," she murmured, "I've got something for you that you've been dreaming about for months!" The sailor gazed at her in astonishment. "Now how in heck," he wondered, "did you get an ice cold bottle of beer onto this island?"

Mr. Cerf spoils the tale the way he tells it. It's bad to have the beautiful girl appear so soon after he lands on the island. He should be alone for a few months. Then there's the matter of the woman's appearance. She should have come floating in on a beer barrel. That's the way I told it. Then when she makes her inviting statement the sailor points to the barrel and asks,
"Do you mean to say there's beer in that barrel?" The story makes sense that way. Cerf spoils it by asking if she has an ice cold bottle of beer on her. How we artists suffer at the hands of bunglers.

George Jean Nathan quotes a theater critic: "The play knocks you for a loop, like small pox."

FDR is doing such a good job of beating the Axis that it begins to look as if he'll be strong enough, in time, to bring the U.S. State Department back into the democracies.

After eight dry weeks the neighborhood decided to pray for rain. "It ain't no use," said Ephram; "the wind's in the wrong direction."

Bernard Shaw: "America's astonishing feat of shipbuilding has won for her command of the seas."


Ring Lardner, in a wire explaining his absence from a banquet: "It's the children's night out and I have to stay home with the nurse."

The immense Pentagon Building of the U.S. War Department has provoked a library of gags. Here's one: A pregnant woman asked a guide to lead her out of the building because she was about to have a baby. The guard, after studying his building map, said: "I'll do my best to beat the storm, but you should have known better than to come into this mammoth building, considering your condition." The woman replied: "When I came into this building I wasn't in this condition."

Patsy O'Bang: "Love is a beautiful thing. Take my brother, Mike, who got into a discussion with his wife. She held off and panned him one on the kisser. Mike, who never strikes a woman except in self-defense, landed a neat one on her jaw, which sent her down for the count. Soon his hand swelled to the size of a ham. The doctor at the war plant where he's employed found that a bone had been broken, and that meant he couldn't work until it healed. When he explained all this to his wife, they decided, after a friendly discussion, to take advantage of the situation by going on a long vacation trip, so the other day they went off, like two newlyweds. I was touched by the happy light in their eyes and the joy with which they anticipated their 'second honeymoon.' They've sent me three postcards, and all carry the same message of love, devotion and profound happiness. It's such incidents that demonstrate the strength of the institution of marriage."

Staff Sergeant A. M. Paschall: "The most important word in a Man o' Gawd's vocabulary: 'Offering.'"

A pansy's ad in a California newspaper: "Young man with slender feminine feet likes to wear ladies' shoes, hose, etc., will wear and break in ladies' shoes, szs. 8-9 in my home or place of your choice. Spike heels O.K." Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt may be able to use this young man to break in that new brassiere she bought last week.

Dr. Patsy O'Bang was reviving his spirits in the Greasy Towel Saloon, having just finished the last chapter of his great opus on how to rebuild the world on a warless basis. After a few drinks, he realized he would soon have to be on his way, for he was already out of funds. A stranger alongside him broke the ice with this question: "I'm a man of few words. Will you let me buy you a drink or won't you?" "I wouldn't, normally," said Patsy O'Bang, thinking fast, "but you've talked me into it."

Some income tax payers act on the regulation permitting payment in four installments by buying a postal money order for the right amount and then cutting the order into four parts, after which they mail them in at the rate of one each three months. Can you tell me wherein these remitters are in error?

C. A. Lang, Maplewood, Mo.: "Perhaps the fact that some 300 words in Genesis tell the story of the earth's creation, as well as of the
development of life thereon, and the further fact that an elementary knowledge of a dozen or so sciences is really needed if one is only to compass the outlines of those events, explains why there are still plenty of dips for whom 'the old time religion' suffices."

C.A.L., Mo.: "'Dread areas of Woman,' in sooth! One may well ask, dread to whom? To use your own expression, only to saps and dopes capable of coining such self-revealing expressions and who then, on top of it all, seek to impose the compulsions of their own phobias on all the rest of us."

Staff Sergeant A. M. Paschall: "I am gratified to note that you are back in the saddle once more doing most of the writing for The Free.

man. If my suggestion and the proddings of your other readers have caused you to continue with such an important job, I know that some day posterity will thank us; that is, if real appreciation of your work isn't sooner forthcoming. That statement I made about thinking you one of the most influential and prolific writers in the United States, still stands."

A Washington, D. C., taxi driver keeps a basket of apples fixed to the back of his seat for the use of passengers, many of whom are too busy to find time even to grab a bite of lunch. The driver's invitation to help one's self to an apple creates a warm, friendly feeling. Yes, the apples are free, but the tips run above average.

The Office of War Information, in a recent bulletin on heat conservation, says, "bookshelves well filled with books provide excellent insulation for the space they cover." What happens when one gets the notion to spend an evening reading?

Mae West proves her genius in her art and in her philosophy of living. Consider just one of her contributions to civilized ways of expressing one's inner personality.
A certain essential, all-to-practical seat in her bathroom is covered neatly and securely with snug strips of white mink. I've never deposited my Chesterfieldian ana-

tomy on such a miniature, underslung throne, but I've imagination enough to grasp its sheer artistic, esoteric creativeness. She stands right up with Michelangelo, Beethoven, Charlie Chaplin and the inventors of pay-toilets, vitamin pills, sulfa drugs, and sanitary napkins. Notice her choice of pure, chaste white; not mousey grey. One doesn't have to be reminded that this little woman, with her simple gesture, has removed one of life's sharpest, bitterest and coldest shocks. She has made a lasting gift to gracious living. The idea should be put on a commercial basis so the rest of us may enjoy her sane, cozy solution to an ancient, cruel and discomforting problem. And let's stick to wink. We don't want substitutions, or synthetics, or rabbit fuzz. It's to be mink or nothing, and the color's to be white. Too hell with the expense. And what, may I ask, is to be the pioneer's reward? As always, contumely and scorn. And maybe a stretch in durance vile in the hoosegow. That's the usual reward of pioneers, and Mae West has been no exception. Look how the Priss Priss-Pratts and Bishop Beerbelches read sex into her every act, word and gesture. Why, if that poor, little woman were to join Dr. Patsy O'Bang for a weekend in a cabin in Santa Monica, all our dirty-minded, obsessed Priss-Pratts would read sex into the excursion. And, for that matter, so would I. I've grown to be suspicious over what happens in love-nests, and I'm ready to say that the element of sex sneaks into them. But Mae, the eternal philosopher with the streamlined bustle, answers with one of her sultry smiles. In an exclusive interview with the great journalist, Dr. Patsy O'Bang, Mae West said: "It's just the fatal sex appeal that got me, and when I say, 'fatal,' I mean fatal to me. No matter what I do, they say it's not nice. Any other actress can wink all over the place and the censors chuckle. I barely move an eyelid and they say it's lascivious. It has come to pass that everything I say, without exception, has got to be changed. If I say, 'Let's have a cup of coffee,' they think it's dirty." The truth is, Mae West can get more sex excitement out of a cup of coffee than Bishop Beerbelch.
and Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt could squeeze out of a bath-tub of champagne, assuming they'd try to squeeze anything out of a tub of champagne. They'd be more likely to use it to wash their feet. "Only this morning," complained Mae West to Patsy O'Bang, "I had to say a line, 'by virtue of the authority vested in me.' That's the sort of thing a judge of the Supreme Court might say. So I think nothing of it. I say it. And the people giggle. Somehow they read something sexy into it. Out the line goes, and we try to think of something else." And that's the way it goes with pioneers, as I've said before. I know how she feels, for I, too, have felt the claws of those who would tear out all that's warm, human and worldly.

Hitler: "We Germans never retreat. I am ordering my heroes to advance and march in the direction from which they came."

The nice town of Coffeyville is only 85 miles from Girard. The last time I was there, after making a talk before a convention of editors and another over the radio station, I was taken to see the city's oil refinery and a couple of other industries. Then I was shown a few well-run farms. That Kansas community had a bad flood last June, which, according to a Berlin broadcast, "destroyed all the coffee plantations in the region of Coffeyville." That's bad news, but at least the tea crop wasn't damaged.

A bookstore owner who ordered a copy of "The Encyclopedia of Sexual Knowledge" from a jobber later returned the book with this notation: "Customer couldn't wait."

Boris V. Monomack, San Francisco, Calif.: "I enjoy and admire your writings and thoughts, and I would like to know your features. I accept your generous offer to send your autographed photograph to readers who send you a stamped, addressed envelope."

J. B. Ryan, Encino, Calif.: "Your attitude towards religion and sex is a credit to human intelligence and will sooner or later be accepted everywhere in theory as it already is in practice."

Aldous Huxley, grandson of the great Agnostic and biologist, Prof.

T. H. Huxley, met Walt Disney a few years ago and took advantage of the chance to ask about the philosophy of Mickey Mouse, the idea being to get a line on Disney's hypothesis in creating Mickey's captivating character. Disney answered: "Hell, doc, I don't know. We just make a Mickey, and then the pros come along and tell what we got."

Six-year-old, to mother, who is shopping for a new doll: "These dolls haven't a deep enough suntan."

Farmer, talking up his old and dubious cow at a public sale: "Folks, I'd like to sell this here cow, but I can't say as she gives lots of milk, but I sure can tell you this: She's a kind, gentle, good-natured old cow, and if she's got any milk she'll give it to you."

While making a first-hand study of bears for his forthcoming book on zoology, Dr. Patsy O'Bang, the world's greatest Naturalist, found it necessary to do some hot sprinting, because a big bear was on his trail. After running several miles, Dr. O'Bang sat down to rest. Later, the bear came into sight, sniffing at his footprints. "My dear Mr. Bear," shouted Dr. O'Bang, as he started to run again, "since you appear to like my tracks so much, here are some more of them."

The Hahvahd influence on a young person who is specializing in flossy English: "Mothah, Mothah, come immediatelah, it appears probable one of our hens is about to lie an egg."

John Ruskin, almost a century ago: "You may either win your peace or buy it; win it, by resistance to evil; buy it, by compromise with evil."

Patsy O'Bang's father didn't do so well as city smoke inspector, which meant he'd have to be kicked upstairs to a better job, for no O'Bang could ever be fired, no matter how he did his work. So, after a few brief calls, Patsy O'Bang, the great fixer, had the old man transferred to the office of Social Service Reports, where his job as a Social Service Worker demanded that
he turn in case reports. Here are some sentences, culled from the old man's first batch of reports:

"Woman and house neat but bare."
"Woman has no job to be mentioned."
"Couple breaking up home, friends helping."
"Milk needed for the baby and father is unable to supply it."
"Until a year ago this applicant delivered ice and was a man of affairs."
"Couple have been completely stripped. Now are barely able to get along."
"These people are extremely cultured. Something should be done about their condition."
"Couple's only source of income is four boarders all out of work. They owe $600."
"Man is aggressive—has nine children."
"Applicant and wife are illegally separated."
"Boomer pays no board as he usually acts as godfather."
"These people have religious pictures all over the place, but seem clean, however."
"Woman is ailing at present—eyesight poor—does housework when able to find it."
"Applicant has one child, Lillian, who is three months old and owes twelve months rent."
"Woman still owes $45.00 for a funeral she had recently."
"Man hit by automobile—speaks broken English."
"This woman is ill. She is being treated. The gas has been turned off."
"Family's saving all used up—relatives have helped."
"Applicant's wife is a lady and hardly knows what it is all about."
"Woman taught bridge and suffered a broken leg."
"Good type American family—appear refined, but intelligent."
"Woman is willing to struggle if given an opportunity."
"Woman badly bruised—furniture man took bed springs."

Prof. Patsy O'Bang, the world's greatest physicist, yesterday gave several minutes to a report on how a new machine works at his place. "You students," he said, "will be interested in knowing that by means of a pedal attachment a fulcrum lever converts a vertical reciprocating motion into a circular motion. The principal part of the machine is a huge disc that revolves in a vertical plane. Power is applied through the axis of the disc, and work is done on the periphery, where the hardest steel by mere impact may be reduced to any shape. This wonderful machine is commonly called a grindstone."

If I'm addicted to the vice of useless knowledge, let me answer that I'm still miles behind Patsy O'Bang, the world's greatest pre-scientific farmer. Last year he let a crop of oats wait days and days while he engaged the neighborhood in a debate on whether a tank full of water, with vegetables floating in it, weighs less when the vegetables are touching the sides of the tank. Patsy O'Bang insists it does, and stands ready to prove it some day, but several neighbors who lean a little on the skeptical side suggest that O'Bang uses such discussions as an attractive way of slowing down on the job of bringing in the oats.

It is Patsy O'Bang's peculiar quirk to go in for Barrymorian clowning whenever he comes across impotence. Only the other day he met a man suspected of impotency, and he razzed him on it. "My good man," said the married incompetent, "for all your wisecracking, let me inform you that only yesterday my wife was brought to bed." "So what?" asked O'Bang; "nobody ever suspected her."

Lawyers earn a living by the sweat of their browbeating.

A true musician, when he hears a beautiful blonde singing in the bath, puts his ear to the keyhole.

Dignity can't be preserved in alcohol.

Night clubs—where tables are reserved and guests aren't.

Fred Allen, on rationing: "The army travels on your stomach."

Dr. Patsy O'Bang, the great Anthropologist, was sent to Africa some years ago by the Smithsonian Institution to head a company of scientists. Came Thanksgiving. There should be a turkey. So a messenger was sent to get a live one. The messenger finally got a bird, but while on his way back to the research center he was caught by cannibals, says Prof. Patsy O'Bang.
The cannibals consumed the messenger, but considerably sent the turkey on to O'Bang's camp. So everybody had dinner.

The world's greatest pre-scientific psychologist, Dr. Patsy O'Bang, says it never takes him long to find out how married folks get along together. If their humor is coordinated and they laugh together at good and bad jokes, they're O.K., he claims, but if they don't get along so good they pick and choose among their jokes and laugh separately. If the marital situation is especially acute, they never laugh, except in the wrong places, when one or the other says, "I can't see anything funny in that."

There's a passage in the works of Bertrand Russell that ought to be studied by all who believe in Free-thought and Rationalism. It hits hard, and it's clear. Here are Bertrand Russell's brilliant words: "Men fear thought as they fear nothing else on earth—more than ruin, more even than death. Thought is subversive and revolutionary, destructive and terrible; thought is merciless to privilege, established institutions, and comfortable habits; thought is anarchic and lawless, indifferent to authority, careless of the well-tried wisdom of the ages. Thought looks into the pit of hell and is not afraid. It sees man, a feeble speck, surrounded by unfathomable depths of silence; yet it bears itself proudly, as unmoved as if it were lord of the universe. Thought is great and swift and free, the light of the world, and the chief glory of man."

Patsy O'Bang, the world's greatest pre-scientific farmer, is also a mighty zoologist. The Smithsonian Institution has been asked to check the following data from O'Bang's notebooks: A giant bullfrog and a giant blacksnake met on a bank of the creek that cuts across the O'Bang acres. They began eating each other simultaneously. As they devoured one another it became a race as to which would survive. O'Bang watched the great struggle and reports that they both finished at the same time and vanished.

Patsy O'Bang, the great warrior and sterling patriot, in a nationwide broadcast: "We men over 50 can be of service to Uncle Sam. At least, we can give the gold from our teeth, the silver from our hair, and the lead from our pants."

Two brothers who are partners in a small-town retail coal business attended a religious revival and were converted. For weeks a controversy raged over the question of whether one or both should join the church. "It's a fine thing to join the church," said the older brother, "but for business reasons I think it would be better for only one of us to join so we can continue weighing the coal as usual."

Patsy O'Bang, consultant to the coffee industry, doesn't care for President Roosevelt's recipe. "I prefer," he avers, "to stand with the French statesman Talleyrand, who said that a perfect cup of coffee should be as "black as the devil, hot as hell, pure as an angel and sweet as love."

A newspaper sassyie page reports the marriage of Emma Sheepshanks to Billy Ramsbottom.

Four-year-old Patsy O'Bang, Jr., discovered that one of the buttons on his pop's pants was missing. "Button off, dad," he cried, "right in the busiest place."

A writer of lively letters closed one of his epistles with this: "Yours for a second front, a third strike, a fourth dimension, a fifth freedom, a sixth sense, a seventh heaven, an eighth wonder of the world (peace), a ninth printing, and 10 percent of all our income for war bonds."

Only Hollywood could take a moron like Mickey Rooney and turn him into a star.

A good joke makes the whole world kin.

The other day I got a chuckle out of a letter from the editor of The New Yorker, in which he remarked that some letters from readers had requested an article about Joseph McCabe. Anxious to please, the editor asked me for McCabe's New York address so he could send a writer to do a profile about the
great Freethinker. I had to break
tell him that Joseph Mc-
Cabe, the author of more than 200
books, lives in England. Such is the
reward, or punishment, for being
the world's greatest scholar. The
editor of one of our most promi-
nent publications doesn't even
know which country he's in. Aside
to McCabe when he reads this: Buy
an extra bottle of port and have a
good laugh.

When Gypsy Rose Lee tried to do
her strip tease in Boston the cen-
sors insisted that she put a rhine-
stone in her navel.

Prof. Patsy O'Bang, who gave
Albert Einstein the mathematical
foundation that made possible the
discovery of the Theory of Relativ-
ity, was at a social gathering one
night, and was asked by the hostess
to explain Einstein's theory. "It's
all most simple," said Dr. O'Bang.
"I was once walking with a blind
friend and said that I'd like a drink
of milk.

" 'Milk?' said my friend, 'Drink I
know; but what is milk?'

" 'A white liquid,' I replied.

" 'Liquid I know; but what is
white?'

" 'The color of a swan's feathers.'

" 'Feathers I know; what is a
swan?'

" 'A bird with a crooked neck.'

" 'Neck I know; but what is this
crooked?'

"Thereupon I lost patience. I
seized his arm and straightened it.
'That is straight,' I said; and then
I bent it at the elbow. 'That's
crooked.'

" 'Ah!' said the blind man. 'Now I
know what you mean by milk!'

This is as good a place as any to
tell about the late Mrs. Einstein's
visit to a $10,000,000 observatory,
where she was shown the immense
telescope and other gigantic equip-
ment. Impressed, Mrs. Einstein
asked what all this stuff was used
for and was told it could among
other things, enable one to learn
the shape of the universe. 'It looks
like a waste of money,' said the
practical Mrs. Einstein; "my hus-
band can do that on the back of an
old envelope.'

A cartoon in The Saturday Re-
view of Literature pictures a greet-
ing card executive at his desk. Be-
fore him is one of his writers, who
recites:

Roses are red
Violets are blue
The Draft Board just got me
So phooey to you!

Movie ad: "George Washington
Slept Here," with Ann Sheridan.

V. W. Blair, Chicago, Ill.: "Many
of your publications have been
helpful to me."

Patsy O'Bang, in his fiery oration
before the Third Assistant Cooks'
Convention: "Our females used to
diet only to reduce, but soon they'll
be reduced to dieting."

My readers already know about
the beautiful paintings the mysteri-
ous Tenth Muse has sent me. All
I know is that the artist is a wom-
an, that New Orleans is her home,
and that she's visiting New York
City. This sounds like something
romantic out of an adventure story,
but I'd rather know the woman's
name so I could write her my
thanks. Her magnolias are in the
sun-room, where I see them many
times daily. Here's the too-flatter-
ing card she wrote when she sent
the pictures:

In transit, via Railway Express,
Magnolia Water-color Paintings
To E. H. H.,
The Humanist,
Sage,
Word painter,
Wit,
Mollified Boccaccio,
Gentleman,
"The Well amid the waste!"
A tribute to his inspiring books,
A tribute to a prismatic personality.
Thinking that my paintings
hang where he works
shall make me glad!
The Tenth Muse.

C. A. Lang, Maplewood, Mo.:
"May I add a qualifying word, as I
see it, to A. M. Paschall's statement
that the prohibitionist's and cen-
sor's prime motive is vanity and a
desire for publicity. I believe be-
hind that is a still more primitive
urge: the desire for power, power
to regulate or rule the ways of oth-
ers. The prohibitionists and cen-
sors merely limit themselves to the
negative, or 'thou shalt not,' aspects
of the more general urge—until
they get some elbow room, when they usually become positive enough—which motivates every imperfectly civilized individual. And that means practically all of us—more or less.

From a private's first letter home: "The food in this camp is absolute poison, and such small portions."

The wit of the gutter is always better than the wit of the drawing-room.

George S. Kaufman, famous playwright: "Lot of people seem worried about these millions of women who are in industry. It's feared they won't quit their jobs when the war ends, which leads many to ask what's going to happen to all the men when they come back. The men can stay home and have the babies. All that the boys will need to go into production is a small amount of retooling."

Morris H. Kamman, Jr., 2nd Lt., Signal Corps, Drew Field, Fla.: "Florida is a pleasant place to spend the Winter, though horribly damp. I'd heard much of the 'beautiful Spanish moss' which looks like some ghoulish idea of decoration to me. A deathlike grey mass hanging from a lot of slowly strangling trees...."

"By the way... if you haven't seen it, I recommend heartily Julian Huxley's article in the December, 1942, Fortune, written in answer to a flock of befuddled philosophers who all suggest in their various ways a return to God... and Time ran a review of Huxley's article under religion in their issue. I detest the general policies and interests of the Luce publications... but they occasionally let loose with a well-earned blast at the ecclesiastical world.

"I see where the church, with a bevy of lies, as shown by The Nation, beat a bill for the introduction of sanity and modern human ideas into the state of Massachusetts, and retained the ancient, bestial perversion of thinking so dear to the clerical heart...."

"And the confounded drays working like dogs to pick up local elections... which reminds me, have you ever tried a Southern Comfort cocktail? Take one jigger Southern Comfort, one teaspoon curaçao, one teaspoon lime juice... nectar with a punch.

"When the war is over, I'm quite likely to pop in on you for a few days... just to guzzle those Hal'deman-Julius specials... loll in your library... feed the ducks... and delight in your conversation and thought... Until then, I can only wish you the best of luck, health, and smoother sailing for the fine work you are doing."

It was the day before Christmas and the neighborhood was watching the Patsy O'Bang home, where all sorts of deliveries were being made. As is their way, the neighbors tried to identify each item. Finally, Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt called her husband to the window and cried: "Look, Oswold, the O'Bangs are bringing in their yule-log." "No," corrected Oswold, "that isn't a yule-log. That's Patsy O'Bang himself."

Recently I wrote several pieces about Prof. Albert Einstein and called him Alfred in one place. Fortunately, I caught this bull before it got into print. That's almost as bad as the columnist who wrote a few days ago about "Chamberlain's recent radio broadcast," and The New York Times's piece about a man "who found an empty bottle of beer."

Elmer C. Helm, Brentwood, Md.: "Last night Gabriel Heather had much to say about the prayers of some men trying to reach Malta. He declared their escape was undoubtedly a miracle. What I cannot understand is why God interferes in one case where a man has a Bible and a prayer, and ignores a dozen others who are likewise equipped. A thousand men pray and are killed. Another thousand do not pray and they escape. All that means nothing. But let one man pray and escape, and then it becomes a miracle. A lady said to me the other day that she thought God would not let Hitler win. I replied that he was letting him run amok a long time. Her explanation was that God wanted to punish the rest of us for our shortcomings, and was using
Hitler to that end. You can't beat them. God is on our side, but he does not want to make it too easy for us. Gone are the days when a Joshua could double the length of a day. We do not now see a repetition of the phenomenon witnessed at the destruction of Sennacherib. Those were the good old days."

Prof. Albert Einstein on art: "I believe with Schopenhauer that one of the strongest motives that lead men to Art and Science is to escape from everyday life, its crudity and hopeless dreariness, the fetters of ever-shifting desires. Man tries to make for himself, in the way that suits him best, a simplified and intelligible picture of the world, and thus to overcome the world of experience. He makes this cosmos and its construction the pivot of his emotional life in order to find the peace and security which he cannot find in the narrow whirlpool of personality." · · ·

We're hiring tens of thousands of chaplains and spending hundreds of millions of dollars on chapels. The argument has it that all this will help make the men fight better. The Russians don't go in for this sort of intellectual infantilism, and they seem to be able to fight pretty well. Their realistic views may have something to do with this. Money, time and energy spent on spookology can't add to an army's fighting capacity. Turning the money, time and energy to practical, tangible things like guns and ammunition could bring any man's army that much closer to victory. Pass the Lord and Praise the Ammunition.

If only all others were as wonderful as we take ourselves to be. · · ·

Louella O. Parsons, the roly-poly movie gossip for Hearst's highbrow readers, recently pulled the prize boner of the year when she wrote: "Clare Olmstead and Conrad Nagel are 'that way' about each other." One of her stooges had reported that the two had been seen dining together, and she had concluded that Clare couldn't be anything but a woman. · · ·

The late E. A. Filene, owner of a great Boston department store, was newdealish in his political opinions. Once he told a conservative audience: "Why shouldn't the American people take half my income away from me? I took it all away from them." · · ·

Today's tremendous upsurge of religious propaganda bespeaks the attempt of our Tories to prepare for the reaction they hope to bring about after tomorrow's peace. · · ·

Our legs fall asleep occasionally, but our heads are asleep all the time. · · ·

I got a smile from a report made by a paper salesman to the manager of his house in Topeka, Kansas. "Haldeman-Julius," he wrote, "buys more paper by accident than most of our accounts buy on purpose." · · ·

John Nayler, Calleva, Findon Road, Worthing, England, is a subscriber to The American Freeman and a Freethinker. Recently, according to his letter, he dug into his family records and brought forth the story of James Nayler (1618-1660), a soldier under Cromwell, a Quaker, later a preacher and a great sufferer for his faith. He was many times imprisoned because of his unorthodox views on religion. Mark you, he wasn't a Freethinker; he was a believer in religion, but because he refused to accept the ideology laid down by the established leaders he was persecuted. While walking through the streets after being released from one of his several imprisonments men walked bareheaded before him, while some sang "Holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts." They regarded him as the Messiah. John Nayler writes: "At Bristol he was arrested after one of these demonstrations, sent to London, and charged with Blasphemy. After a trial in Westminster Hall, lasting 11 days, he was found guilty—the penalty being death. His judges mercifully (so it is said) changed the sentence to the following: Two hours with his head in the pillory in the Palace Yard, Westminster; whipped by the common hangmen on the way to the Old Exchange, London (he was given 310 lashes and his back ran blood); a further two hours there in the pillory; his tongue bored through with a red hot iron; the letter "B" branded on his forehead; then taken to Bristol, ridden through the streets
with his face backward, returned to London, and put on the hardest labor. He served two years. When released he set off to walk to Yorkshire, was maltreated by footpads near Huntingdon, died, and was buried at King's Repton, October 21, 1656. He left a widow and two daughters.

Mr. Nayler adds that "it should be noted that both persecutors and persecuted were sincerely religious people and believed they were carrying out God's will." But were they?

For no sane reason I've recalled this ditty, used many years ago by a vaudeville actor whose name I've forgotten:

The man who has plenty of peanuts
And giveth his neighbors none,
He shan't have any of my peanuts
When his peanuts are gone.

Elmer C. Helm, Brentwood, Md.: "This story is going the rounds: A soldier was being tried for the theft of a necklace taken from a statue of the Virgin Mary. He did not deny having the necklace, but protested that she gave it to him. He said he had gone there to pray, and that he was bewailing his poverty, whereupon Mary removed her necklace and handed it to him. The matter was referred to the priests, who were asked if such a thing were possible. That put them on the spot. They had to say yes, and the poor soldier was acquitted."

The late Heywood Broun on Westbrook Pegler: "The trouble with Peg is that he was bitten early in life by an income tax."

Add this one to the thousands of New Deal stories going the rounds: "Pop," said a young man to his slightly deaf father, "this is the new deacon." "New Dealer?" asked the father. "No, pop, not new dealer. New DEACON. He's a son of a bishop." "They all are," said pop.

The editorial writer on the Sacramento (Calif.) Bee in his most helpful and informative manner: "The Chinese language has only about 15,000 words, but it is very difficult to master because none of them are in English."

Study one Abbott and Costello gag and you've studied all. And looking over all their gags one ceases to wonder why the comedians won first place among the box-office giants of 1942. It's gags like the following that send the audiences rolling in the aisles:

"What's a hothouse?"
"A hothouse is a greenhouse."
"What's a greenhouse?"
"A greenhouse is a building that's painted white."
"How can a greenhouse be painted white?"
"It could be painted red and it would still be a greenhouse."
"Say, are you color blind?"

For the duration it's "briefsteak."

A mouse, after it had wend on a cash register, said: "Oh, man, this is going to run into money!"

My old friend, Allen Crandall, who is farming at Stockdale, in northeast Kansas, has written a charming booklet entitled "Ink on My Fingers," in which he discusses Frank Harris' life-long struggle for literature and human freedom. The pamphlet was set up and printed in the author's miniature home printing plant, and a smashing good job it is. His Harris essay closes with this moving evaluation: "That such a man sleeps in the soil of France, along with thousands of other valiant fighters for human freedom, is the best augury that that unhappy country will one day rid itself of its yellow-livered Lavals, Petains, Darlins, and smarmy 'Aryan' beasties." In another place he says that as the elder Bob LaFollette said of Ingersoll, so may it be said of Harris: "Freedom was what he preached: he wanted the shackles off everywhere." This, writes Crandall, "is the one sin for which there is no forgiveness from the great army of the knavish, the timid, the menial, the complacent, the time-servers." From the introduction to my edition, in four Little Blue Books, of Frank Harris' master-piece, "The Man Shakespeare," probably the greatest book ever written about Shakespeare, Crandall quotes: "...English is positively poorer than it was in the time of Shakespeare, thanks to the prudery of our illiterate middle class. Divorced from reality, with its activities all fettered in baby-linen, our literature has atrophied.
and dwindled into a babble of nursery rhymes, tragedies of Little Marys, tales of Babes in a Wood. The example of Shakespeare may yet teach us the value of free speech; he could say what he liked as he liked; he was not afraid of the naked truth and the naked word, and through his greatness a Low Dutch dialect has become the chiefest instrument of civilization, the world-speech of humanity at large."

A woman entered our front office recently and asked: "Is this the postoffice?" "No," she was told, "this is the Haldeman-Julius-Publications." "Oh," she exclaimed, "I noticed the big sign at the front door said 'Haldeman-Julius Publications,' but I thought it might be the postoffice anyway."

Reader, Maplewood, Mo.: "If the two major parties had the wit to nominate Henry Wallace and Wendel Willkie for the Presidency, in 1944, many liberals would be hard put to make the decision on election day. That, at least, is how things look to me just now. But I'll hazard the pessimistic prediction neither will do either."

Reader: "College girl (my daughter) home for Christmas, discussing with me the much-vaunted prayers for deliverance of Eddie Rickenbacker and party: Said I, 'Looks like God could have sent them a nice fat goose just as well as that tough inedible old gull.' "Huh," said she, 'God would have sent a ship before they even began to starve if he'd really been cookin' with gas.'"

Mark Twain, speaking of a dinner he had in New Orleans: "... the chief dish [was] the renowned fish called pompano, delicious as the less criminal forms of sin."

Mark Twain, describing a monument in Vicksburg, Miss., on the scene of the surrender of the city by Gen. Pemberton to Gen. Grant: "It overlooks a picturesque region of wooded hills and ravines; and it is not unpicturesque itself, being well smothered in flowering weeds." My pet reader, C. A. Lang, Maplewood, Mo., picks up the story from here: "Little did he think when he wrote that, that some 60 years later (May, 1932) the same could be said of a monument erected to his own honor at his birthplace in Florida, Mo. On that occasion my family and I spent a night in that nearby dead place. We slept on the benches in the State Park—because there seemed no better place in the town. Next morning, early, we went up the hill to see the monument. We disturbed no one except some 50 dogs. With sad irony I remarked it was a safe bet not one person in the village had ever read 10 pages of the great author's work. The monument is a handsome, permanent work; but no one had been near it, apparently, since its erection. The thin stony soil was eroding from around the foundation; but the weeds gave faltering promise that if only left alone they'd stand off destruction. If man won't save this worthy memorial, ambitiously conceived, no doubt, and nobly executed, I hope at least he has the sense to let the weeds do it. I'll go back and see when the war's over—and let you know how things look.

Benjamin Franklin: "Without economic freedom no other freedom can endure."

Max Nomad: "The Kaiser looks like a liberal when you compare him with Hitler."

In one of my pieces recently I said it might cost us $500,000,000,000 before we're through with the Axis. To give you an idea of its meaning, consider these facts: It would make 900 pure gold Statues of Liberty; it would cover a football field more than 300 feet high with $1 bills; it would buy 60 rows of motor cars, bumper to bumper, encircling the earth; you would have to write a check for $317,800 every 20 seconds all year to spend it; you could buy 10,000,000,000 Little Blue Books, and for such a nice order I would allow 2 percent off for cash.

Luella A. Huggins, attorney at law, Kermen, Calif., wants to be helpful in our search for the rest of a poem that opens with the line, "Some come here to sit and think." As my readers know, I've been try-
ing for many months to get the thing straight, and without success. Reader Huggins suggests it might be some lines about Rodin's famous statue of The Thinker. Rodin's man, we recall, is seated and suggests a person in the throes of thinking. His entire body shows the strain. Rodin's man certainly went to a certain place to sit and think, but this doesn't solve our problem. We still must learn what he was thinking about. Notice, please, that Rodin's man isn't standing or walking. He's sitting, which is the ideal pose for one who takes on the thankless job of thinking. Rodin's man sits still long enough to do some real thinking. Most of us go through the motions of thought without either the thought developing or showing in the results. Can it be that Attorney Huggins has directed us to the solution of our little problem?

Stalin: "Not one step back. That is the nation's will."

My thanks to J. Engler, Miami, Fla., for a crate of magnificent oranges and grapefruit. My vitamin problem is solved for at least a week, during which, twice a day, I down a 14-ounce glass of orange juice that's good and tasty to the last drop and that puts new energy into my brave glands. There are two articles of diet that I never tire of—eggs and oranges. Even thick, juicy steaks will pall on me, if they're approached after too short intervals, but never the innocent fruit of the hen or oranges. They're the aristocratic commoners.

F. Conrad, Tuscon, Ariz.: "We've got to fight back the forces of reaction with words and slogans when they cloud issues with their stereotypes, insinuations and innuendoes. I offer the following: Globalonita—a synonym for 'A Luce O'Nations' (derivative from 'Hallucinations.') In other words, the baloney is in Clare's head and not in what Vice President Wallace said."

During his long career as scientist, philosopher, economist and all-around teacher of the human race, the great Patsy O'Bang, the universal what-a-man, has found that holding down a job interfered with his lofty efforts and noble flights of thought, so he invariably shied from anyone that might have the notion that he wanted work. His efforts as a political scientist attracted attention, and early in his career he was offered a job by the ward boss of the local machine, but O'Bang put patriotism above pelf. He would have none of it, but since the money looked inviting he arranged to have his father accept the position, which happened to be that of Smoke Inspector. When O'Bang's father complained that he knew nothing about the duties of a Smoke Inspector, Patsy O'Bang assured the old man that political appointments are sometimes made without scrupulous regard for the fitness of the applicant. After all, the municipality was looking for a way to honor the O'Bang name, not for a sweating roustabout. So O'Bang's father took the job. Later, the old man came home with the appalling news that it was a part of his job to turn in reports on his activities. At this point Patsy O'Bang took over and gave three full hours to his father's problem. He felt he owed this to his parent, especially since the rent was overdue and the first month's salary would more than take care of that item. At last, the great O'Bang finished the report, which he had the old man sign in his official capacity. It read: "This is to certify that I have inspected the smoke of the city for the past month, and have found same to be of good quality."

A woman riveter at Lockheed is called a riveteruse. Women mechanics are mechanelettes. Female welders are weldistes (to rhyme with modiste.)

George Bernard Shaw, when asked whether he thought Hitler would commit suicide if he lost the war, replied: "Nonsense! I know lots of people who think he will hang, just as they seemed to think about the Kaiser last time. But I think he will go to Ireland, hire a magnificent lodge and live happily ever after."

The Tenth Muse, the New Orleans reader who sent me two watercolors, says she's worried because I
hung them in the sunroom, where they're exposed to direct sunlight. "They will fade," she warns, "if you keep them there. Water-colors are not what they used to be. My magnolias are best suited to brighten a dark corner. If you like flower paintings in the sunroom, I will send some I have done in oil." Good idea. And, let me add that The Tenth Muse sent me some fresh strawberries (in January!) and some small tasty citrus fruit, the name of which I've forgotten.

One of the last things said by Alexander Woollcott: "Germany is as responsible for Hitler as Chicago is for The Chicago Tribune."

Lone chick, taking a melancholy look around the electric incubator full of unhatched eggs: "Well, it looks like I'll be an only child. Mother's blown a fuse."

Prof. J. H. Leuba: "The cry, raised on every hand, that Christianity has failed is answered by the counter-cry, 'Christianity never yet has been tried!' To this a sociologist makes the retort, 'If a religion which has existed for 2,000 years and has been held officially by the most powerful nations for 1,500 years has not been tried, it is a failure.'"

Patsy O'Bang's father, the greatest showman of his day, taught P. T. Barnum everything he knew. Once he became discouraged because Barnum didn't show the proper respect for one of his creative ideas, so O'Bang, Sr., pulled up stakes and left to go into show business for himself, but before deciding on just what form he would exploit he turned to the bottle for a spell of consolation, for O'Bang, Sr., was as great a boozier as he was a master of mass psychology. Ordinary whisky wasn't strong enough for Patsy O'Bang's father, so he made his own by the barrel, which he drank almost as fast as made, with only a modest surplus of likker for his friends. At the time just mentioned O'Bang hit the stuff extra hard, with the result that when he woke up he saw thousands of pink elephants and purple snakes, but instead of being discouraged O'Bang Sr., immediately hired a hall and sold 25c tickets to those who cared to see "The Great O'Bang Zoo." Some customers, totally devoid of imagination, insisted there were no animals in the hall and rushed to the sheriff's office to complain about the great father of the one and only Patsy O'Bang. The sheriff, who had stern ideas about law enforcement, went to the bare hall to arrest O'Bang Sr. but before he could serve the warrant O'Bang, Sr., brought out what was left of his barrel and gave the sheriff three drinks in quick succession, after which he paid O'Bang, Sr., $750 for a third interest in his wonderful show.

Allen Crandall, amateur farmer-printer-author, Stockdale, Kans.: "Apropos of recent books I've ordered from you, I like your little manual, 'How to Become a Writer'; even the skillful way you manage to list nearly all of the Little Blue Books! Of course, no one expects the reading of such books to make him a writer, but I like your stuff and your style."

Sgt. Chas. Overill, Army Air Base, Rapid City, S. D.: "Regarding deathbed utterances, the writer offers one posthumously: 'Death is the manner in which, graciously or ungracefully, the customer surrenders his appetites. For man is but a bundle of appetites; and to the degree he satisfies them is he termed successful or not, and the manner he goes about satisfying them is he termed civilized or not.'"

Dr. Patsy O'Bang, the great surgeon, looked over the young woman after she had been struck by a car, and observed, "It looks as if you've been knocked down and banged up. But I guess your lucky, at that. You weren't banged down and . . . !"

I regret to have to report that up to the moment of going to press Hitler was still alive.

Boake Carter, who recently announced his conversion to the religion of the Talmud, showed in one of his columns that his piety goes 'way down under, for after calling this a "War of Expiation" he let loose with this blast of super-duper bunk: "It may well be that Stalin is indeed another Cyrus, raised up
by God to assist the Anglo-Saxon Celtic-Judaic people, as once before in man’s history.”

Many of our celebrities are secret Freethinkers, their independence in religious matters usually emerging after death. Alexander Woolcott was such a person, according to the Associated Press, which, on January 25, 1943, reported that the author and critic had asked that there be no religious ceremony at his funeral and that he be cremated. “Associates,” said the news reports, “said Woolcott never was a member or a regular attendant of any church.” What’s surprising about this is that never during his active career had he written so much as a line to indicate his attitude. Many men of the Woolcott type bow politely to the gods, smile, and go their way without a word. At least, it saves arguments.

As a young editor, Mark Twain once was asked by a subscriber: “I found a spider in my newspaper; is it good luck or bad?” Mark Twain replied: “Dear Subscriber: Finding a spider in your paper was neither good luck nor bad luck. The spider was merely looking over our paper to see which merchant is not advertising, so that he can go to that store, spin his web across the door, and lead a life of undisturbed peace ever afterwards.”

Stenographer: “Is ‘waterworks’ all one word, or do you spell it with a hydrant?”

Patsy O’Bang: “Wisdom, knowing what to do next; skill, knowing how to do it; virtue, not doing it.”

Soon after I began sorting clippings for my Newsclip Filing System I labelled one folder “Asinniana.” Before long it grew so fat that it spilled over into a half dozen folders.

“Balcony Empire,” by Reynolds and Eleanor Packard, gives an inside look at that super-man bum, Benito, who, despite other failures, still shows energy as a Casanova. It was the smug sex-conqueror who replied when a reporter, according to the Packards, once asked Mussolini what he did when he woke up in the morning. Mussolini answered: “I jump right out of bed, no matter how beautiful the face beside me.”

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, when asked by the police to tell what she might know about the murder of Carlo Tresco, anti-Fascist editor of an Italian language newspaper in New York City, replied: “You might find his killer among 100 jealous husbands.”

A young copywriter in a big advertising agency says there’s no privacy in the busy establishment since the boss put in a public address system for quick paging of executives. There’s even an outlet in the Men’s Room, and it’s disconcerting. Snugly ensconced in what is usually supposed to be a private nook, minding his own personal business and deep in thought, he suddenly hears the receptionist calling: “Mrs. Tuttle! Mrs. Tuttle!” Of course, Mrs. Tuttle isn’t there. The young copywriter is there all alone, sitting and thinking, which reminds me that thus far I’ve been unable to supply the answer to those who asked for the line of poetry that follows, “Some come here to sit and think.” It’s possible the piece of literature is so rare that it’s unknown to most readers, but determined publicity may yet bring an informed person out of the shadows.

The late Alexander Woolcott liked to recall the night he sat eating peanuts in the front row of a vaudeville house, until several performing monkeys deserted their act on the stage to poke into his pockets.

The other day, while wasting a couple of hours at a movie, I saw a newsreel in which Vice President Wallace went through the useful routine of telling us how important it is to destroy Nazi brutality. That was all to the good, but he had to spoil it all by drenching his performance with supernaturalism and fundamentalism. The Nazis were “Satan and all his angels.” The Holy Bible got a close-up with streams of pious verbiage. Gawd’s whiskers were swept all over the scene—in the name of democ-
racy and freedom. Why can’t our statesmen do their stuff without resorting to superstitions that have been offensive to educated people for centuries?

Patsy O’Bang: “Presbyterianism isn’t a religion; it’s a Scot arguing with God.”

Reason—not superstition.

Little boy, to his Sunday School teacher: “Why didn’t Noah swat both flies when he had such a good chance?”

Title of sermon delivered in Detroit by the great Baptist divine, the Rev. J. Frank Norris: “The Bureaucratic Price Fixing—the Mark of the Beast, One of the Sure Signs of the End of All Things and the Coming of Christ.”

Defense counsel to jury: “My client may talk like a fool and he may act like a fool, but don’t be deceived, gentlemen. He really is a fool!”

Classified ad: “Dog for sale, eats anything. Fond of children.”

Ex-Governor Eugene Talmadge, in an Atlanta, Ga., newspaper: “I firmly believe that racial discrimination is a divine thing.” That makes Hitler a super-saint.

I don’t like the old custom of “honoring” dead Nazi fliers. If a Nazi flier gets bumped off—which is the right thing to do at all times—why not bury the brute and turn to the others? Here’s a headline about the Nazis killing 34 pupils in a school in suburban London. And here’s another headline which tells how the British paid “honors to dead Nazi Fliers.” Why do the defenders of democracy have to follow such a disgusting practice? Nazi fliers are murderers—and such criminals don’t deserve honors.

Mark Twain: “A man is accepted into a church for what he believes and he is turned out for what he knows.”

Goethe: “When from time to time a man arises who is fortunate enough to discover one of the grand secrets of Nature, others immediately start up and endeavor strenuously to conceal it from view. It is so, was, and probably ever will be so. The conflict between light and darkness appears to be interminable.”

Agnostic: “It (religion) spreads the habit of submission which induces people to accept authority without questioning.”

Inscription: “There is not enough darkness in all the world to put out the light of one small candle.”

From the Chinese: “Last night, I dreamt I was a butterfly, and now that I am awake, I do not know any more whether I am a man who dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he is a man.”

Aristide Briand, the French statesman, was so fine an orator that he could move to tears the most hard-boiled and cynical audience. Once, after a powerful and moving address, a friend asked whether he was sincere in what he said. “How should I know?” Briand retorted.

Voltaire: “England has 42 religions and only two sauces.”

William James: “When you have to make a choice and don’t make it, that is in itself a choice.”

Patsy O’Bang: “I see that one of my favorite comedians, Victor Moore, at the age of 67, took a wife of 22. I predict that when Charlie Chaplin reaches 67 he’ll fall for an old battle-axe of 17.”

Your prosperity always gratifies your friends, if they can share in it.

I don’t believe stories that claim slaves in time grew fond of their slavery.

What makes the devil so strong is his bait—the promise of a good time.

Wasted words—the verbage of the rich when trying to convince the poor that their lot is really the better of the two.

Dr. Patsy O’Bang, the world’s greatest authority on women and love, tells me he has always found romance expensive. “A woman,” he argues, “is always paid for her ‘fa-
vors'—either before or after. If she's paid in advance, there's usually no controversy. It falls into the arena of pure business. It's when she's paid afterwards that notions of romance—or indirect blackmail—enter. This throws everything outside the realm of pure business, thereby making the situation unpredictable and complicated, and more expensive.

Old men who have their health can get a lot of fun out of life.

It's smart to be polite.

No wit tries to be witty every day. He knows that, like romance it's better new and then.

Don Herold: "Marriage—a woman's hair net tangled in a man's spectacles on top of the bedroom dresser."

Oliver Wendell Holmes: "Easy-crying widows take new husbands soonest. There's nothing like wet weather for transplanting.

F. E. Macha, Pittsville, Wis.: "Your article in the last issue, 'Religion and Other Good Things,' is the best you've written in some time. Keep on."

This classified ad hints at the rebirth of an ancient and honorable American institution: "Girl for bundling. Experience unnecessary. Good pay after job is mastered."

Patsy O'Bang, remorseful over his excessive consumption of alcoholic beverages, lifted his glass while at the Greasy Towel Tavern and cried to the bartender: "There are a thousand reasons why I shouldn't drink this glass of whisky, but I can't think of one of them now."

Malcolm W. Bingay, in the Akron Beacon Journal (June 6, 1943) offers the owning class's current evaluation of the Socialist Party: "The Socialists are still with us but nobody fears them any more. They are led by the gentle, cultured philosopher and minister of the gospel, Norman Thomas, who pleasantly titillates rather than agitates."

Sentences from Patsy O'Bang's notebooks: "Will Durant's genius consists of an infinite capacity for faking brains." "Bismarck, after his first meeting with the third Napoleon: 'That man has a great unrecognized incapacity.' "We have too damned many open mouths and closed minds."

"Theologians are masters of the art of being wrong with aplomb." "Repartee: Reciprocal insults punctuated with smiles." "A preacher was worried by some of the lady back-biter's of his congregation, and he proceeded to lecture them. You see a woman passing on the other side of the street and asked, 'Do you know her?' and someone says, 'Oh, yes, that's Mrs. O'Leary—a very nice woman but—' Some of these days a lot of you women will go sliding into Hell on your butts."

Richard E. Greene, Burbank, Calif.: "Enclosed is a money order which should cover the accompanying orders and leave a balance sufficient to buy you and the great P. O'Bang a drink. If there is any left after that, toss it into The Freeman's Deficit Fund. For my money, you are not only the foremost humorist of the country but of the entire world. Come to think of it, maybe the fur-lined thunder-mug should go to the great P. O'Bang, for his claims to have been responsible for your sprightly pieces these many years."

The &persand, an amateur publication edited and printed by Alonso B. Leonard, 236 Scioto ave., Chillicothe, O., includes The American Freeman in his list of "fighting magazines." He describes it as an exponent of "left-wing liberalism." The Freeman, he writes, is among the "few remaining vestiges of that freedom of the press which existed in the U.S. before the big publishing chains, big advertisers and big business perverted the nation's press. You won't find publications like The Freeman carried on newsstands because the dealers are afraid to handle them," writes Editor Leonard. "They have a cause which they honestly believe in and which they are fearlessly fighting for." Mr. Leonard should have added that it's no cinch issuing a paper like The Freeman, because the readers fail to pay enough to cover the costs of the publication, thereby producing a hefty deficit. For years, the editor of The Freeman
has been paying most of this deficit out of his own funds (which he got from sales of his popular Little Blue Books, of which more than 200,000 have been distributed), but this can’t go on forever. Subscribers who believe in a free press should renew their Freeman subscriptions promptly—even ahead of time—and then add a generous donation to the paper’s Deficit Fund. The Freeman’s future rests with its friends. They can show how much they want the publication by the way they tackle the problem of the deficit. As stated before, not a penny of these contributions go to the editor, who is glad to give his time and energy without salary. Every penny donated to the Deficit Fund goes for paper, postage, and the like.

Marie Condon, Edgewood, Pa.: “I am the 17-year-old daughter of Edward Condon, who, over 20 years ago, wrote Little Blue Book No. 878, entitled, ‘Curiosities of Mathematics.’ Pop was surprised to find it still in print. Pop says to tell you that you are now doing business with the second generation of satisfied Condon’s. I’ve been reading The Freeman since 1941 and consider it tops. During that time I’ve introduced it to several grateful friends. It makes a swell birthday present. While I’m at it let me put in my vote for continuing The Freeman as a ‘one-man show.’ It’s for your stuff that I buy The Freeman and I feel gypped if I don’t get at least 2½ pages of it. I am also a satisfied user of your newscip filing system, which I find is just the thing for filing photos and negatives.”

A cow-puncher sat down to get a hair cut and shave and the pretty manicurist inveigled him into a finger nail deal. After trimming the nails and fondling him for a while, she asked, “Do you want me to push the cuticle back?” “No,” he answered, “when I hired you to pretty up my nails I didn’t expect you to poke into a matter that a man should do for himself.”

During the past 25 years I’ve made it a habit to send free copies of my pamphlets to the N.Y. Public Library, Fifth ave. and 42nd st. This is the only institution in the U.S. which I keep on my “pet list.” I do this because, when I was a young man, I used to do a lot of reading in that library, at both its present location and when it was in that cozy, old building down near Lafayette Square. I always found the staff helpful and friendly. In fact, it was this library and its enlightened and cooperative employees that helped inspire me with the desire to publish good literature at low prices. Sending it a few free books is small pay for the many services rendered me while I was groping through the maze of ignorance into the light of truth and reason. Its books and magazines helped open my mind. And it happens that the young fellow it helped so patiently is in a position to distribute hundreds of millions of good books at low prices to the thinking portion of the community. This goes to show how one can plant the seeds of enlightenment without the slightest knowledge of results only to learn later that they have grown into hefty oaks. I consider the N. Y. Public Library the greatest library in the U.S., not only because it keeps abreast of the world’s intellectual progress but it also has the good sense to employ men and women who consider it a part of their duty to help spread respect and love for truth and culture. The N. Y. Public Library is a vast monument to democracy. It’s powerful not only because it’s rich in ideas, but it’s filled with social-minded impulses. I have only one complaint—its staff compelled me to wear a coat on the hottest days of Summer. Is it still bound by that rule? Maybe some reader will send me the answer.

The other day I was visited by a pleasant, courteous soldier from nearby Camp Crowder, Mo. He’s been a reader of mine for years. Within 15 minutes I learned the appalling news that the poor boob believes in astrology, graphology, spiritualism, spookology, mysticism, levitation, spirits, numerology, the God-idea, a system of rewards and punishments, immortality, conversations with the dead, telepathy, extra-sensory perception, the power to foretell events, and every other kind of bunk in the calendar of quackery. And the guy reads every-
thing I write and publish! You can imagine how that put me down a few notches. He tried hard to convert me, and because I wasn’t downright rude and insulting he went away with the impression that I’m a tolerant fellow.

The Fifth Freedom, according to Alonso B. Leonard, Chilloofo, C.: “The right not to worship, and don’t forget it!”

Joseph Lewis, who serves the cause of Freethought by digging up useful and informative quotations from great Agnostics, Rationalists and Skeptics, calls attention to what Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll said when he was asked whether the Negro would find his proper place in society or whether he should return to Africa. The following paragraph was written by Ingersoll immediately after the Civil War:

“I see no reason why the white and black men cannot live together in the same land and under the same flag. The beauty of liberty is, you cannot have it unless you give it away, and the more you give away the more you have. I know that my liberty is secure solely because others are free.

Ingersoll’s beautiful and humane sentiment is as appropriate today as when it was written three generations ago. In fact, the threat to liberty is more pressing in these days of Nazism and native Fascism than in the post-bellum years when the magnificent voice of Ingersoll thrilled and inspired our people. We know where Ingersoll would stand were he alive today. He would be among the leaders of the democratic forces who would preserve what is precious in the American way of life and would thunder against those totalitarian beasts who would hurl us back into the abyss of medievalism. The great men who fought and bled for liberty in the past sound as though they’re part of this generation when their sentiments are examined. There’s a freshness and pungency about the utterances of the splendid pioneers who fought the reactionaries of their day, and in fighting them they created lines of argument and patterns of behavior that belong to our generation as much as they were living parts of it. Patriots aren’t digging in the ashes of a dead past when they delve into the writings or deeds of men like Voltaire, Erasmus, Paine, Adams, Franklin, Jefferson, Heine, Hugo, Goethe, Schiller, D’Holbach, Diderot, Gibbon, Garibaldi, Mazzini, Gorki, Tolstoy, Berkmann, Liebknecht, Luxembourg, Ebel, Marx, Lenin, Ingersoll, Debs, Blatchford, Hillquit, Berger, Kirkpatrick, Renan, Volney, Nordau, Most, Kautsky, Mill, Montaigne, Reade, Juarez, Nietzsche, Spencer, Engels, Shelley, Swinburne, Reclus, Kropotkin, Trotsky, Shreiner, Haeckel, Huxley, Beethoven, Darwin, Emerson, Thoreau, Jaurès, Wilde, Goldberg, Blum, Altgeld, Darrow, Lowell, London, Saltus, Ellis, Matteotti, Gimlan, Philipp, Garrison, Brown, Twain, Lewis, Tucker, and other soldiers in the liberation war of mankind.

Patsy O’Bang: “There’s one job I wish I could land—that of the Recording Angel. Think of having nothing to do but keep a record of the private aspects of behavior. In my capacity of literary adviser I’m suggesting to Haldeman-Julius that he try to get the publishing rights to the more spicy passages in that vast file. What kind of filing system does the Recording Angel use? Does he just write down our sinful acts in a huge journal? Or does he classify the data under such headings as Adultery, Fornication, etc.? If this is his method, Haldeman-Julius should try to sell him his excellent Newsclip Filing System, or supply it without cost on condition that he’s given a signed testimonial.”

Patsy O’Bang admits he’s one of few men you can call a genius without making an ass of yourself. The same has been said about Oliver Herford, but that doesn’t bother the great Patsy O’Bang, the universal what-a-man.

Oliver Herford: “My wife has a whim of iron.” “A woman’s mind is cleaner than a man’s—she changes it oftener.” “The patients in a throat-specialist’s waiting room came to cough and remained to sneeze.” To a backslapper: “I don’t know your face but your manner is familiar.”
"What is my loftiest ambition? I’ve always wanted to throw an egg into an electric fan."

Dr. Patsy O’Bang, now at work on a 10-volume history and criticism of Rabelaisian literature, sent this inter-office communication to E. H.-J.: "Get me a typist right away, preferably a redhead. I want her good and I want her bad."

When he got one to his satisfaction, O’Bang went to work on his Preface. He always dictates his prefaces first thing. He’d like to do his indexes ahead of his prefaces, but there are technical difficulties. In his first paragraph he let loose on the American professors who have done so much harm to real literature by their Prissy-Prattishness. Here’s a sample sentence: "The American educator is a tolerated parasitical peripheral excrescence."

The redhead posed her graphite long enough to tell the great master: "Them’s fightin’ words where I come from."

The editor of a prison newspaper refers to his readers as "Canned Manpower."

George R. Salyer, Rochester, N. Y.: "I got a chuckle from your dissertation on fly-swatting but wondered if you had ever noticed one fact of fly physiology (?) which can increase your score greatly. If you wait until a fly starts to ‘wash his face’ before you start to swat you’ll do much better. You’ll gain the fraction of a second it takes for him to get his feet down."

Bernard Shaw: "Churchill’s recreations are civilized—painting and bricklaying—not hunting and shooting."

"That’s everything except the urine analysis," said the examining physician. Then, to the raw recruit, he added: "Just urinate in one of those bottles on the shelf down there at the end of the room."

The recruit eyed the exhibit dubiously. "Do you mean all the way from here, Doc?"

Maggie O’Bang, a cousin of the great Patsy O’Bang, worked as a charwoman in a big bank, where she polished floors. When she asked for a raise, the Fourth Vice Pres-ident said he didn’t see why she should get higher pay than the other women engaged in the same work. "It’s the quality of my work," argued the woman. "My department is the only that had its floors polished so good that three ladies has fell down on their fannies."

The zooty cavortings of Charlie Chaplin (boy of 54) and Oona (girl of 18) make me think that my own Patsy O’Bang has busted through under a nom de guerre. It’s all in the O’Bang tradition. The funny little fellow meets the beautiful daughter of the playwright who invented Strange Interludes. Her interest, she tells the reporters, is purely esoteric, but the photograph of the wedding party shows a smiling Chaplin, which suggests that he has designs on the "is" in esoteric, probably intending to change it to "ir." And blue-pencil the "er." Along comes the OPA (villain) and barks about the gasoline that went into the honeymoon journey. But Chaplin keeps smiling. Then up pops the menace, a girl named Joan, who keeps running in and out of the lobby, bathroom and bedroom, screaming, "You are the father of my unborn chee-ild! Oh, my poor broken heart! You must give me more money!" Charlie crawls out of bed, digs into his pants’ pocket, produces a wad of bills, throws her some, and yells, "You haven’t had the agreed blood test, and until then you can’t say that little bastard is mine. Here, take this filthy lucre and let me enjoy Oona, the One and Only." Mourning becomes Joan. The OPA reappears and cries, "Your honeymoon motor car hit 80 between L.A. and Santa Barbara—how come?" But Charlie makes no reply. He’s too busy with Oona. The public understands and sympathizes. Any man who had Oona in his car and didn’t hit 80 must be a dope. Patsy O’Bang would have slowed down to 90 at the sharp curves. The press says Charlie had Oona in the front seat and a case of champagne in the tonneau. That’s the way Patsy O’Bang would have done, except that he would have added a case of Canadian rye. All this, needless to say, is in the spirit of O’Bang, if not the factual record, for O’Bang, considerably older than Chaplin, is still a bach-
elor. He has had more than his share of emotional, esthetic, alco-
holic and romantic thrills, and is yet to pay off. Compared to the
great O'Bang, Chaplin is a corny amateur... Later. Lawyers em-
ployed by the OPA advised the di-
rector of the L.A. OPA to forget
about the reported speed of 80 miles
per hour, because the only evidence
was a newspaper report and the
press is notoriously inexact when
reporting hurry-up weddings of
celebrities. As for the ration cou-
pons used on the wedding trip, here
the OPA also decided to lay off.
According to the legal minds on the
case, an elopement doesn't come un-
der the heading of pleasure. It's
strictly business. Evidence was of-
fered to show that Chaplin, before
and after the ceremony, didn't
drive his own car. He was too busy
holding Oona's hand. Had he been
driving his own car, said the OPA,
it would have been pleasure un-
alloyed and unessential, but hiring
someone to do it for him put the
thing on a business basis. The OPA
lawyers went on with further anal-
yses of the evidence, but here the
data became too involved for this
layman. However, out of the con-
fused mumbling came one bright
sentence: "If Chaplin had used the
motor car for an extra-marital af-
fair, the driving would be classified
as pleasure."

Bishop Beerbelch, in a sermon: "I
am now going to read you a few
passages from Job, and shall change
a few words so that it will make bet-
ter sense.... Later: "I don't be-
lieve that any man or woman will
have to try forever in Hell. To
begin with, there's no human con-
stitution could stand it."

Bertrand Russell, discussing the
re-education of the Germans after
the war: "Defeat itself will have a
highly educative effect."

A fat Nazi officer is walking. A
newspaper runs after him and offers
him a portrait of Laval. "Mr. Gen-
eral, would you buy Mr. Laval's por-
trait for only 20 cents?" "Go away.
We can buy Laval himself for less
than that."

A Berlin humorist was arrested by
the Gestapo who told him they
wouldn't let him go until he told all
the stories he knew on Hitler, Goeb-
bels and other Nazi leaders. He has
been in jail for three years, and he's
still talking.

Paul North Rise, Chief of the
Reference Department, N. Y. Public
Library, Fifth ave. and 42nd st.,
N. Y. C. : "I was much interested in
the tribute that you paid to our Li-
brary for its help to you when you
were a young man in N. Y. Such
tributes mean a great deal to the
officers and staff of the Library,
and they justify our feeling that
such an institution is contributing
greatly to the people of our com-

munity. We are grateful to you
for the valuable pamphlets you
have given us in the past and for
those that you say we will receive
during the next year.... Inci-
dentally, I am glad to report that
we have seen the light since you
were compelled to wear a coat on
the hottest days of Summer. Should
you visit our Main Reading Room
on any hot day this Summer you
will see a great many men, without
coats who are using the room."

Berlin wisecrack: "When Hitler
thinks for us, we perish. When
we'll think for ourselves, Hitler will
perish."

Dazed German soldier: "Accord-
ing to Goebbels, we are victoriously
retreating, while the Russians are
pursuing us in full disorder."

From a radio commercial by a
confused announcer who was plug-
ging furniture and other home es-
sentials: "We offer the discrimina-
ting an extensive line of homo-
sexuals."

Ad inserted by Seventh Day Ad-
ventists in The Atlanta (Ga.) Jour-
nal:
"HAILSTONES-FROM-HEAVEN!"
A Terrible Storm Predicted
Millions of hailstones, weighing more
than 50 pounds each, soon to strike this
earth with relentless fury.
Will Atlanta Survive?
Hear the Clear Bible Answer

A certain hillman's wife was
much larger than he, and more
muscular, and had a violent temper.
One day he appeared in the Ozark
village badly battered, with his
clothes in tatters and his face cov-
ered with blood. "Why, Jim, where the hell have you been," someone asked. "I ain't been nowhere," the poor chap replied. "I been home."

**WE-WUZ-ROBBED DEPARTMENT**

The June, 1943, *Reader's Digest* credits to William Saroyan a story first printed here two and a half years ago. It goes like this:

A man who had a cello with a single string used to bow on it for hours at a time, always holding his finger in the same place. His wife endured this for months. Finally in desperation she said, "I have observed that when others play that instrument there are four strings, and the players move their fingers about continuously."

The man stopped for a moment, looked at his wife wisely, and told her, "Of course the others have four strings and move their fingers about constantly. They are looking for the place. I've found it!"

In my version the hillbilly is a one-stringed fiddler. Changing the instrument to a cello is silly and pretentious, though the impulse to add something original to the yarn showed a commendable desire to make creative contributions to art. Imagine taking a story about an accordionist and changing his instrument to a beautiful, gilded harp! We'll let that pass.

The same issue of *The Digest* credits a minor author with a hillbilly story that was run in *The Freeman* three years ago, except in my version the heroine is an Ozarkian while in the *Digest* piece she's up in Maine. Here's the modest piece:

Aunt Sally had lived her life in a Maine town. Now she was dying. She had lived frugally, and she did not change in her last minutes. After asking that she be buried in her best satin dress, she added, "It's full, and before you bury me I want you should cut a piece out of the back so you can make a skirt for Susie. It's good stuff and it'll wear."

"But, Aunt Sally, you wouldn't want to go to meet your husband with the back of your dress cut out?"

I exclaimed.

Aunt Sally grinned for the last time, "Do as I tell you, I buried John without his pants!"

There used to be a saying that if an editor were reduced to a Bible and the latest edition of the World Almanac it'd be possible to get out a paper. A silly statement, but pop-ular with newspapermen 25 years ago. I suppose that piece of nonsense is still repeated in editorial rooms. The same kind of editor, when he demands brevity, points to Genesis as a prize example of how to boil a yarn down to the lowest possible word-count. "Look at what Gawd did in the first chapter of Genesis," he likes to pontificate, "Only 298 words and yet the story of Creation is covered. Learn to do likewise." True, the verbiage in Genesis doesn't take long to set into type, but wouldn't it have been better if Jehovah had been a little less stingy with His prose? Imagine the stupidity of an established, creative author who tells his biggest story in such a stupid, inadequate way that readers have been arguing over it ever since. A report is supposed to enlighten. Genesis doesn't. It confuses. It leaves important questions unanswered. But to return to the We-Wuz-Robbed theme, two columns wouldn't be enough to repeat the stories lifted from my 26 volumes of "Questions and Answers" in the last month alone. The editorial scissors are working full tilt. These volumes—which contain thousands of funny stories—have taken the place of the Bible and the World Almanac in many editorial offices. Well, that shows a praiseworthy desire to brighten up one's pages. All I can add is that the wise reader won't wait to pick up the pieces one by one in the standard press. Instead, he'll get a complete set of the 26 volumes and go exploring on his own, and I guarantee a happy, smiling, good-natured excursion. You can get the entire set (which weighs more than seven pounds and contains more than 2,000,000 words) free, carriage charges prepaid, by subscribing to *The Freeman* for four years or renewing for four years. The cost of such a four-year subscription is $4, and the vast set of "Questions and Answers" in 26 volumes will be the reader's reward. I'm glad to be able to report that these snappy, good-natured, cute, informative, inspirational, uplifting, pious and reverent volumes are going out at a fast clip. Really, I'm overwhelmed. I've actually reached "better-seller" rating, something I've never had before. Not until I brought out these 26 volumes of
"Questions and Answers" did I get into the class that sees its verbiage reached for by nervous and impatient customers.

Clement Droz, Washington, D.C.: "I like your viewpoints and your humorous anecdotes a whole lot, therefore I hope you will go back to your old policy of writing at least half of The Freeman's copy yourself."

An Ozark boy visited several nearby villages, and met several attractive girls. He was about to marry one of these, but his father told him solemnly that he (the father) had been over there some 16 years previously—meaning that the girl was the boy's half-sister. So the boy gave her up, and found a girl in another settlement, only to be told that his father had been over there also. The same thing happened a third time, and then the boy confided in his mother, who said, "Go on an' marry whoever you want, son. Don't pay no attention to him. Fact is, he ain't your father nohow!"

Patsy O'Bang's grandfather lived to be 101. When interviewed on his 100th birthday, he said: "I don't know how I did it. I just kept on living from day to day."

Old man Taylor was bragging about his tree-dog. "Just last night," said he, "there 'peach the biggest coon I ever seen. Gawd-a-mighty, boys, that coon was four feet long, an' must of weighed a hundred pounds! He'll meat the whole family a month, an' we're a-goin' to use his hide for a wagon-cover!" A few days later the State game warden arrested Taylor for killing fur-bearing animals out of season. "They fined me $10, boys," the old man complained loudly. "Ten dollars, just for havin' one measly little coonskin, not much bigger'n a chipmunk! I tol' the judge that I'm the biggest liar in Crawford County, an' I could prove it by anybody in this here town, but the dumb judge said I couldn't be believed."

John Dos Passos: "In a Southern community I asked how a certain program to build up the family-size farm could be termed 'communist.' An observer replied, 'Around here, communism anything you don't like.'"

A couple working in the same department of a war plant took the afternoon off to get married. After a short, snappy ceremony, the groom turned to the witnesses, pointed a warning finger at them, and blurted: 'Idle talk caused this.'

Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt, when called on to attest to the profoundness of Bishop Beerbelch's mind, quotes this sentence from one of his scholarly sermons: "We men of God as such are not supernaturally able; we are able supernaturally."

"Whereabout was you borned at stranger?" asked a brave in the Ozarks. "Out o' wedlock, by God!" shouted the stranger, who was a bit sensitive on this point, "an' what you got to say about it?" "Well—there's some mighty fine folks a-livin' out your way," answered the villager lamely, but thinking fast.

The country around eastern Oklahoma gets pretty dry in the Summer. A backwoods preacher at Wauhilla was praying for rain. "Oh, Lawd, send us gully-washers an' goose-drownders! It's the poor little children I'm a-thinkin' about, Lawd—I've saw rain, myself."

Sentences from Patsy O'Bang's notebook: "All people are bores. Clever people know this to be true, so they have learned the neat trick of hiding out when their brighter side isn't on the beam. For each second that Oscar Wilde poured out epigrams and paradoxes there was a stream of small talk about the weather, what to wear, what to eat, the need to change underwear, the mislaid rubbers, the need to do something about that skipped movement, and many other prosaic details. Being clever, he revealed that side only to permanent bores. Only a fool tries to be smart when propositioning a taxi-driver, standing in line at a railroad ticket office, checking a parcel, talking a hotel clerk out of a room when the establishment's jammed, putting through a long distance telephone call, paying his banker's service charges, forwarding papers to his rationing board, signing for a spe-
cial delivery letter, outlining his possessions to the assessor, or putting in a winter’s supply of coal. The man who’s described as clever is usually limited to about 10 minutes of bright thinking per week. If he can do it for 10 minutes each day, he’s an authentic genius. And no matter how truly great his intellectual sophistication, he never minds meeting the worst kind of bores if they have sense enough to admire him. Of course, he won’t stand for too much, but he’ll always take a certain amount. That way he gets his reputation for being amiable, when the truth is he’s only vain.”

Sergeant Trumbull, at phone: “... and rush over a carton of sanitary napkins for Major Streeter... yes, the full name’s Major Mary Southerwaite Streeter!”

Having just finished an elaborate paper on the sex life of the beetle, which had taken many months of exhausting mental labor. Dr. Patsy O'Bang decided to knock off long enough to enjoy some of the lighter aspects of existence. This meant that he was prepared to fall in with good company and stay with it as long as it remained in funds, but as it’s against his ethical code to sponge without giving ample value in return, he offered a half interest in a project that held every promise of bringing in $10,000. The objects of his generosity were three newspapermen who already were several sheets to the wind. After enjoying their treaties for three or four rounds, he proposed that they continue spending, but only if it was agreed that he was to let them become owners of a substantial fortune. “If you gentlemen of the press will promise to spend another two-score dollars I shall agree—and my word is as good as my bond—to let you have $5,000 of a $10,000 contest I’m certain to win.” “But how?” asked the press writers. “I have entered a contest for the best suggestion for making automobiles safer,” replied Dr. O’Bang, as he downed another double shot of rye. “The money isn’t actually in hand yet, but I know you’ll take my word that I’ll win—and half of it will be yours through the mere device of continuing this pleasant and whole-

some round of pleasure.” “What was the suggestion?” they asked, to which Dr. O’Bang replied: “I told them the way to make automobiles safer was to take off the wheels.” This struck the journalists as logical and sound, so the deal was closed immediately by jovial hand-shaking. The more they drank, the more convinced the newspapermen became that they were imposing on O’Bang’s liberal nature, so when they spent the agreed $20 they insisted on adding their combined funds, which amounted to $50. O’Bang protested, but the majority voted him down, so he was compelled to accept hospitality far beyond the agreed limit. They all had ‘em a time.

An old Ozarkian, who had never gone to church or taken any interest in religious matters, was confined to his bed. Doctor Hensen told him that he was a mighty sick man. “What do you think of this here death-bed repentance, Doc?” asked the patient. “Well, I don’t know much about that,” said Hensen, cautiously, “but it’s probably better than nothing.” “Well,” said the old man, “if I ain’t feelin’ better tomorrow, damned if I don’t try it!”

Two drunken backwoods doctors met by some mistake at the home of a woman who was ill. Glaring at each other, they both entered the sickroom and sat down, one on either side of the bed. Fumbling under the blanket for the woman’s wrist, they somehow bungled it and clasped hands, so that each doctor was feeling the other doctor’s pulse. There was a long silence. Then one physician made a snap diagnosis. “She’s seven months in pregnancy!” he gasped. “Nonsense!” cried the other doctor, “she’s just plain drunk.”

A man in Henry county, Mo. complained that his wife had left him. “I got lonesome, without nobody to talk to,” said he. “Well, why don’t you git married ag’in?” a neighbor asked. “Naw, I wouldn’t want to do that,” he answered. “Well then,” said the neighbor, “I reck’n you’ll just have to take up talkin’ to yourself.” The lonesome chap shook his head. “I tried that,
but it ain't no use. In less'n a week, I got so I don't believe a damn word I say!"

Patsy O'Bang's in the habit of wearing his neckties until they're through for good and all. By the time he's ready to discard one, it's covered with gravy, egg spots, cream drops, bacon grease, beer and H-J. highball stains, mustard smears, fruit juices, butter, coffee, and the like. The other day he stepped into my clothes closet and picked out a good one, which he confiscated. Ripping off the one he had on, he handed it to me. "Here," he laughed, "take this down to the kitchen. Tell Mrs. Haldeman-Julius it's better than a soup bone."

A backwoods boy came riding in to mill with a sack across his saddle, corn in one end of the sack and a big rock in the other to balance the load. A stranger suggested that he throw away the rock, and divide the corn so as to put half of it in either end of the poke. "No, I reckon not," said the boy acidly, "Pap he done it this-a-way, an' so did gran'pappy. I reckon they knew what they was a-doin'."

B. L. Taylor, C. Ph. M., U. S. Navy, is having censorship trouble, which accounts for our failure to hear from him. Readers may remember the pleasant and informative letters he used to write from the Pacific theater of war. "It is so now that I cannot tell you of any events of my life here, for such would give away the location of Navy 129," he writes. But he hit on a device that defied even the strictest censor. He spat on his hands, backed up for a fresh start, and came through with:

This censorship has got my goat, I could not mail the page I wrote; All I can do is send a buck, And wish The Freeman lots of luck.

There's an idea for all of us, especially the folks back home, who aren't having letters censored. The Deficit Fund of The Freeman has been a neglected orphan for too long. If a friend in the far Pacific can lay off fighting the Japs long enough to do his bit for The Freeman, there's no reason why readers back home can't do even better, since no one is taking any shots at them, most of them are working at good wages, and all of them could help the paper meet its deficit. They should put their mind to the problem of meeting the paper's pressing needs.

An old woman in the hills near Springfield, Mo., was told that a local girl had turned out to be a poet. The old lady was horrified. "My Gawd, who'd a thought it? An' she as good a mother as ever walked!" A moment later the old crone leaned forward, her eyes sparkling with curiosity. "Did you find out who with?" she whispered.

North of the house is a hog lot that should satisfy the most aesthetic requirement of the most fastidious hog. I know this sounds braggy, but truth demands candor. The lot contains two acres, with a high row of catalpas on the West, thereby supplying shade. To the North is a draw that usually contains water and always has a deep, cool, inviting wallow. I've seen dozens of hogs in its thick goo, and know that if they could talk they'd say it's better than the most uppity pool. Then there are five individual hog houses, built to precise specifications. They're on skids, so they can be moved when the real estate under them threatens to get rank, which hasn't happened yet. They make a neat white row. To the East is a farrowing house capable of taking care of two sows when the ordeal of motherhood brings them down. Then there's a smaller enclosure for the shoats and giltts, the latter being moved to the lot when they're heavy with pigs. In that small place they have a carefully made corn feeder, capable of holding 50 bushels, a feeding floor, running water piped up from the house, a stout shed for purposes of sleep and recreation, and a feed house that holds 500 bushels of corn. Nearby is a swill barrel, which is also supplied with fresh water piped from the South. What more could a pig expect? And yet, when four sows were turned into the big lot last week because they were piggy, only two used my architectural creations. One went into the farrowing house to have her pigs; the other went into one of the little houses. The third sow went to the North end of the lot.
where she built a nest in a piece of thick weeds, and soon delivered six white pigs. The fourth would have none of this. She jumped the fence and had her six pigs in the brush under the catalpas at the side of the road. She was only two or three feet from the lot, but she could have been in the next county for all the good she did. A four-foot fence separated her from the lot. When I found her she had just had her litter, and as it was almost impossible to see her from the road, I decided it was safe to leave her there for the night, after which a plan could be tackled with a view to bringing her back where she belonged in the first place—in one of the individual hog houses. In there she'd be near feed and water, she'd be safe and comfortable, and her pigs would have the maximum chance to survive. The next morning I consulted Mr. Bowman, my 81-year-old choreman, and he agreed that we must get her back into the lot, along with her six cute babies who were already frisking up and down the place for about 25 feet but always within quick reach of mama, who grunted when she thought it necessary to rebuke her children. “There’s no danger they’ll leave,” said Bowman, “and the sow will stay until we get them back where they belong. There’s nothing to worry about.” True, but the job still had to be done, and I wasn’t sure just how we’d go about getting her and her litter over the fence or around through the gate at the South end of the lot. To get her down there meant about 300 feet of ground to be covered, which didn’t sound so easy when one’s passengers were a tired, suspicious sow and six new pigs. Mr. Bowman was airy and confident, which reassured me. He isn’t afraid of a sow or a boar, though he always carries a heavy stick when he enters the lot. Even when I’m armed, I’m still afraid of the friendliest looking sow, while a boar turns my blood to ice even when he’s asleep in the deepest part of the wallow. I both respect and fear hogs. “The trouble,” says Mr. Bowman, “is you don’t talk to them. Watch me. I talk to them all the time. They understand when I use plain, simple words.” Boman is five feet tall and weighs 90 pounds, yet he, assisted by his 60-year-old son, milks six cows, cares for nine calves, keeps the barn clean, cares for chickens and hogs, and in many other ways serves to keep the farm going. The next morning, Mr. Bowman and I got to work on the sow, a big gal who weighs about 300 pounds and whose teats almost sweep the dust. “We’ll chase the sow to the gate, and the pigs will follow,” he said, but it didn’t work out that way. We’d go through the thick brush, get scratches all over our arms, and find ourselves frustrated every time we managed to chase her 10 or 15 feet, for she’d turn around and force her way back to the nest, from which the babies hadn’t budged in the first place. We tried chasing her three of four times, but without luck, even when Bowman used his most seductive vocabulary. No, he didn’t cuss. His speech is always too orderly for that. He coaxed. He urged. He humored. He reasoned. No dice. He’d stand between her and the hedge, where he’d poke her with the club and give her logical reasons for going South to the gate. Again, no dice. She’d circle the nest and flop down where we’d started from. “This can’t go on indefinitely,” I broke in, wiping sweat from my face. “She’s hungry and thirsty. Surely she knows by now that the proper place for her and her litter is the hog lot. Hogs are realistic, sane, bright creatures,” I said. “They’re sure smart,” said Bowman as he rested on the ground. I could see that the little, old man was beginning to get foot-weakly. “Hogs consider themselves our equals, and the equals of anything alive. They’re democrats. Cats are Fascists. They look down on the human race. Dogs are servile. They look up to humans. I’ve written all this before, which you can find in my collected works. I always like to quote myself. It helps me keep in the mood to plug my books, which I enjoy selling. This is not to quote the terms of sale.” “I believe,” said Mr. Bowman, ignoring my palaver, “we had better let them alone until this evening, when my son will help us. Meanwhile I’ll bring her an ear of corn.” “Yes,” I agreed, “you’re right about wanting to bring only one ear of corn. You
old sow, who's your friend? Move back, nice girl." And before this
line of chatter was through, Louis had the six babies in the coop. It
had worked like a charm, and with amazing speed. Louis took one end
of the coop and I the other, while the old man devoted himself to the
sow. We moved down the road about 20 feet and stopped to watch
Mr. Bowman. With his club, he poked and shoved, but she wouldn't
"I'll make the pigs squeal. That'll bring her down this way." I yanked
out one squirming pig, held it over my head, gave it a squeeze and then
shook it like a tambourine. A hefty squeal came out of the little thing.
It brought mama down to the coop, which she sniffed at and circled.
Meanwhile, Louis and I had run off a few yards in order to fathom the
sow's intentions on our health. She wasn't being mean, didn't intend to
be mean, and would follow us if we kept up the routine of shaking a
pig whenever mama lagged. Four times I stopped, picked up a pig,
held it over my head, squeezed it, and shook it the way a dancer man-
ipulates a tambourine. The squeals always brought her. After the
fourth stop it was just a hop into the gate, where we made a pig
squeal again. Then the babies were dropped into a house. Mama was
right there. Everything was in or-
der. The hog lot was a place of
peace and order again. So I hurried
back to the house to write this
piece while my impressions were
still fresh.

My old friend and limitless ad-
miration, Upton Sinclair, got a nice
present on, or reasonably near, his
65th birthday—the Pulitzer Prize
for fiction. It was about time the
home folks paid their respects to
this soldier of the quill, who for 40
years has been popping out every
kind of volume—52 fat books and
about 50 pamphlets, some good, im-
portant ones and some that are rec-
ords of his adventures in spook-
land among ethereal spirits. On
one page—I wouldn't believe this if
I hadn't seen it with my own eyes—Upton told about a wielder of
mystic powers who passed his hands over the author's desk, said a few
words, flexed his pippik—and the
desk wafted towards the ceiling
where, after getting its bearings, it sailed through a window into Mrs. Sinclair’s rosebushes. It was a wonderful experience, and Upton recorded it for future students of the amazing science of spookology. This reminds me that some of my readers have asked me if Patsy O’Bang isn’t really a caricature of Upton Sinclair. Of course, the answer is, No. Patsy O’Bang, the universal what-a-man and master of 40 sciences, is always right, and is a recognized authority on debunking. Bishop Beerebelch isn’t Sinclair, either. The bishop is without social awareness, which isn’t true about Sinclair. Sinclair reeks with social awareness. But I catch on. I should create an intellectual who, unlike Patsy O’Bang, is always wrong. The thing sounds subtle—perhaps too fine for my crude, albeit pious, readers. Soulful idealists with incipient stomach ulcers have never been personified by a comic character, to my knowledge. The man must be something from beyond this world, yet a part of the human scene. Really, it’ll be taking on too much. To illustrate Sinclair’s beyond-this-world temperament, consider this report of his visit to a roadside market, where he asked to be shown what the proprietor had in the way of dates. He studied the stock carefully, and after many fits and starts finally pointed to one date and said, “I’ll take that one.” But seriously, while in the market a stray dog dashed up and took a nip at his shin, according to Florence Wagner. Upton, says the charming Mrs. Wagner, “pulled up the leg of his trousers, glanced at the bleeding wound, turned to his wife, Craig, who was sitting in the car, said, ‘That dog bit me’—and went on buying dates.”

James Huneker described Franz Liszt as a “venerable man with a purple nose—a Cyrano de Cognac nose.” Anton Dvorak, he said, “smells of the pure open air—a milkman’s composer.”

We rarely try to go beyond making ourselves agreeable to ourselves. Vanitas vanitatum, et omnia vanitas. We imagine we like to admire genuine superiority, but it’s ourselves we admire. We prefer flattery to truth. Truth is hefty, but vanity is tougher. A man will build a one-seat out-house and call himself an architect. He’ll flirt with an old hag and tell Casanova to move over. He’ll comb the lice out of his hair and boast that what’s left is a self-made man. He’ll hum “Dixie” and show what’s wrong with Brahms.

Hotel clerk to honeymooners: “Sorry, we have only one room, and that has twin beds.” After a whispered conference, the bride sighed: “I guess we’d better take it, darling, but I sure am disappointed. I thought we’d be able to spend our first night together in a room by ourselves.”

Congressman Thomas B. Reed, in a speech delivered in the House of Representatives Feb. 1, 1894, made a neat point when he compared the strong bull of Bashan with a salt-water smell. “Who doubts the superiority of the bull?” he asked. “Yet, if you drop them both into the Atlantic ocean, I will take my chances with the smell.” This reminds me of Clarence Darrow’s defense of the scorned razor-back hog. Take your fat, heavy hogs and turn them loose in the wilds with razor-backs, and which will be more likely to survive? From the hog’s viewpoint, the razorback is the better hog. He fits into Emerson’s idea about nature having made up her mind “that what cannot defend itself shall not be defended.” Death is nature’s way of correcting her mistakes. And its best and final test is survival. Take weeds. Living as I do on a farm, I always have to think about weeds. They’re always around. You fight them and win for a few days, but they come back. No matter how much we swear at them, we can’t suppress our admiration. They’ll never die. James Russell Lowell, in “A Fable for Critics,” said “a weed is no more than a flower in disguise.” But, unlike the flowers that we know, they never get hurt by drought, snow, frost, stamping herds, or the rooting snouts of hogs. “Sweet flowers are slow and weeds make haste,” said Shakespeare. Needless to say, they’re beautiful. What’s more, they’re strong, endowed by a friendly nature with a fierce vitality. The only reason we hate
them is because we haven't learned how to make them produce a profit. Once they bring in money they'll take on new, vast beauties and esthetic poets will write sonnets to them and composers will create symphonies in their honor. It's natural for us to judge things by their effects on our economic well-being. That's plain selfishness, and what's more natural and understandable than plain, candid self-interest? Thus far we have learned to select only a few growing things for straight-line, mass production. Agriculture, the oldest industry, is still young. We've learned more during the past century than we managed to pick up during the first 10,000 years of agriculture. So, give us time. Even weeds may be made to fit into our economy. At that, some of the most precious crops we produce today were looked on as weeds not so many centuries ago.

An unidentified writer tells of a shipwrecked sailor who, landing on a lonely beach, saw a gallows. "Thank God," he cried, "I'm in a Christian country!"

Hitler has learned what the world already knew—that Russia is too big to be spanked.

Thomas Jefferson was a materialist. Take, for example, what he wrote in a letter to John Adams, in 1820: "To talk of immaterial existences is to talk of nothing. To say that the human soul, angels, God, are immaterial, is to say they are nothing, or that there is no God, no angels, no soul. I cannot reason otherwise." In his diary, John Quincy Adams, on January 11, 1831, wrote as follows about Jefferson:

"If not an absolute atheist, he had no belief in a future existence. All his ideas of obligation or retribution were bounded by the present life. His duties to his neighbor were under no stronger guarantee than the laws of the land and the opinions of the world."

The label "atheist" didn't appeal to Jefferson himself, but that isn't important. He knew how the word has come to be synonymous with adultery, lust, rascal and criminal. So we pass over the name and look at the essence, and doing that we are justified in placing Jefferson's name high up on the list of Free-thinkers.

The reason a company of wits keeps mum is because all are afraid of being robbed of their gags.

One of the nicest things about money is that it enables you to buy Little Blue Books.

Clare Boothe Luce, congresswoman from Connecticut, carries a St. Christopher medal to protect her car from blow-outs and skids.

A news story about the surrender of an Italian general and his staff says they showed up carrying suitcases. This was sensible, since they knew they were going on a long trip, but that doesn't stop one from laughing. Mussolini and his armed forces have become funny. Here I'm reminded of Clemenceau's amusing observation: "There are three supremely unimportant things—the opinions of Poincare, the love affairs of a man of 80, and the Italian army."

Mrs. Priscilla Prissy-Pratt and Bishop Beberlee were dining together when a shifty-looking individual entered the cafe and accosted Bishop Beberlee timidly: "Excuse me, but do you happen to be Mr. Prissy-Pratt?" "No, I am not," snapped the great churchman. "Oh-er-well," replied the other, "you see, I am, and that's his wife you're out with."

This ad in a daily paper would indicate that they're taking 'em pretty early in the war plants:

EMERGENCY—Used Diapers Wanted. Due to loss of stock we are forced to acquire as many as possible good used diapers for the service of our customers, many of whom are in defense work and therefore depend on our diaper supply service.

Cook, giving notice, explains why she's quitting: "Because, Ma'am, there's too much shiftin' of the dishes for the fakeness of the food."

Benjamin Franklin: "They that give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"Your remark about Madame Chiang Kai-shek being the 'Mrs. Roosevelt of China' reminded me that I got a thrill out of her rejoinder to the President when he assured her in that recent conference that as fast as the Lord would let us we'll send help to China. I refer to her answer that she heard there was a saying that 'the Lord helps those who help themselves.'" —Reader.

Editor: "Patrick Lee of 573 Second street, South Boston, and his wife Mary, were placed on probation for five years each by Judge Frank J. Donahue in Suffolk Superior Court yesterday after they had both pleaded guilty to manslaughter and neglect to provide for two of their children, who were found dead of starvation in their home on January 3 last. The children were twins, five weeks old.

"This is the most horrible thing I have ever come across," said Judge Donahue. These children were starved to death. They were killed just as much as if their heads had been cut off with an axe." —Boston Post, February 16, 1945.

This in somber Massachusetts where scientific birth-control is forbidden by law.

FRANKLIN P. COLLIER, JR.
Melrose, Massachusetts.

Editor: Mme. Chiang's speeches have shown that a Chinese woman can "put it all over" American statesmen in the use of the English language and vocabulary, particularly the latter. The opinion that there are superior and inferior races is being dissipated by her speeches. Biological origin dwindles to insignificance compared with education and social environment.

While the nerve-transmission speed of a human being is 1,000-fold that of a jellyfish, we're not going to wait 300 million years to become "men like gods," nor several generations to breed recessive genes out of our systems. The tools with which man is now equipped won't let us. We've been racing with steam power and the gasoline motor, and while the tortoise-thinking of many of our contemporaries, including professors, is lagging far behind, atomic power, which will completely exterminate the human species if used in war, or allow us to realize the vision of a Fournier d'Albe of man controlling his solar system and solar cluster, is "just around the corner." Those who talk about the possibility of adjusting humanity to an "economy of abundance" only after many generations, do not see the genie of atomic power already hovering over cyclotrons and other disrupters of atomic nuclei.

HERBERT M. MERRILL
Schenectady, N. Y.

Correcting Democracy's Faults

Editor: It's been evident to me for a long time there's something basically wrong with what H. G. Wells so aptly calls "... that creaking simulacrum of popular control and consent," the parliamentary system of government. But before I say more about it I want to add with emphasis that this is not to say there is something wrong with democracy; the former is perhaps only one of several ways to make the latter work. In the ninth chapter of the first part of his book "Phoenix," which you have published for him, Wells puts his finger precisely on the sore spot. This chapter, in my opinion, is the most important in the whole book, for here not only does Wells point out the most important fault of democracy; he also offers some valuable suggestions for correcting it. I've long been impressed with the fact that so few who appear to know what is wrong with the social and economic aspects of human affairs —sociologists, economists, anthropologists: social scientists, in a word—ever enter the political arena where, alone, the legalistic obstacles to progress may be laid low. Only the pushers and schemers and convivers at self-aggrandizement, as a rule, ever strive after political of—
This creature of Christian Theology. Take a look at the gent who is running, who created this our chemical environ of damned orderly meaninglessness. He likes brazen and unabashed grovelling, handshaking, backslapping, music a la Sankey barbershop chords da capo ad nauseum, tale bearing, corny hallelujahs ad infinitum, wars, plagues, ingrown toenails, wife deserters,ynchings, malicious gossip, et al. Take a look at the oaf sitting up there, hands across his paunch, a king-size King Henry VIII leering at his one big happy family below.

SGT. CHAS. OVERILL

Rapid City, S. D.

Editor: When you first mentioned that line, "Some come here to sit and think," I was confident that you would be flooded with replies by return mail. In fact, I recall from my Mennonite youth in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, that copies of this masterpiece decorated the walls of more than one public place that conveniently the calls of the pious who weekly gathered for their holy exhortations. It is very disconcerting, too, that I never memorized the entire poem which consisted of about six or eight four-line verses. You see, I came upon it so often that I took for granted no person would ever request a copy. He would only need make it a point to answer a call during his weekly visit to the house of Gawd, and the knowledge of the masterpiece would be his for the reading. Perhaps I failed to recognize the advantages of the pious and ascetic environment in which I lived.

I do not insinuate that Mennonites had a monopoly on this piece of art. It is quite possible that I saw it scribbled on the structures for the lesser pious. But even in the religious environment of my younger days I was struck with the seeming ineptitude of its appearance in a religious atmosphere. However, whether the poem was originally inspired by an ascetic soul is beyond my knowledge. But it is within reason that it could have been. For while asceticism is one of the features of the Mennonite creed and that its members appear more or less rigidly ascetic to outsiders, it has been my experi-
ence that a surprising number of Mennonites enjoy robust living with pleasurable moments the same as any normal group would.

But to get back to our masterpiece. The tide of Father Time has wrecked or remodeled many of the sacred walls upon which our masterpiece was a literary adornment. Now a global war is upon us with gas rationing one of its by-products, and as I live 50 or more miles from the haunts of my youth, it will be some time before I can make the necessary investigation to resurrect this ageless gem for which you yearn.

J. CLAYTON SHANK
West Chester, Penna.

* * *

CORRECT

Editor: Here is my answer to the brain-teaser in the February issue of The Freeman. How in heck could the sky-pilot make arrangements for the date of a funeral sermon more than two weeks in advance, unless he had the gift of prophecy?

T. M. JOHNSON
Arlington, Wash.

* * *

Editor: I was surprised at Mark Twain's speculation on, and apparent inability to explain, the origins of Southern intonations and ellisions in our language. Such as "suh," "honah," "Gov'nuh" and "be-fo' the waw"; and playing "k'yards" or riding in the "k'yahs." I may be wrong but it's plain enough to me: there's probably something in the Negro's organs of speech that makes the correct sounds a bit difficult and these easier; or the correct English sounds may have been entirely absent in his native speech in Africa just as the "J." is said to be missing in Japanese—and this second reason may in the beginning have been the result of the first, that is, difference in anatomical structure—but in any event, or however caused, it seems to me it's the Negro's contribution. Webster's dictionary recognizes the existence of "Negro dialect" in America. And so, with every white person in the South surrounded for several generations by so many Negroes it would have been strange indeed if these departures had not become general. I lived in Southern Illinois for only two and a half years where, to some extent, this dialect and also some strong survivals of the old English spoken by the settlers of North Carolina—and later, as they drifted West, of Tennessee, Kentucky, Southern Illinois and Missouri, Arkansas and Oklahoma—still persist. Yet after all brief a residence among these people, my friends and relatives remarked on the "twang" or "brogue" in my speech when I returned to St. Louis.

Maplewood, Mo.

C. A. LANG

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Editor: Would it be blasphemy for a simple "infidel" and all-around "heretic" to ask one of our American Cardinals to indicate how many thousand lives of Polish Jews are equal to the life of one Spanish nun? Not but what Father Coughlin and Dictator Franco should agree on a proper ratio, especially as the latter, in feeleltating Hitler on his birthday, hoped that Nazi arms would "triumph in freeing Europe from the Bolshevik terror."

No doubt Franco is delighted at the speed displayed by the Fuehrer in delivering over to his "tender mercies" many refugee former officials of the Spanish republic, including Largo Caballero. Nevertheless good Catholics can well ask if one of the dead nuns, who may have been a victim of popular resentment in the Spanish civil war, was worth more than 10,000 of the million or so Jews who Hitler and his sub-fuhrer Himmler are killing in cold blood? And considering the state of "Mother Church" in Germany, such Catholics are in a position now to appreciate Franco's "sincere expression of friendship and affection" for the most inhuman monster in history.

Maybe I'm feeling too vindictive, but every American, Catholic or non-Catholic, who favored the cause of Franco in the Spanish civil war, should learn that telegram to Hitler by heart as his or her penance for disloyalty to democracy. It would be infamous for the "free nations" to tolerate Fascism in Spain after their victorious forces have occupied Rome and Berlin.

HERBERT M. MERRILL
Schenectady, N. Y.

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Editor: I've been reading Mark Twain's "The Innocents Abroad." I
recommend the book to all students of bunk. You have more than once alluded to Twain’s lusty skepticism and courage in exposing the pretensions of the god-mongers. In this book you are amply vindicated in your judgment of him. He minces no words in pointing out how from the Azores to Constantinople and back again, in all countries visited, filth, poverty and ignorance varied in direct proportion to any prevailing degree of piety—of whatsoever faith. The fun starts at the book’s very beginning; by the time the party reaches the Holy Land, Mark is really hitting a stride. But his blandest and yet somehow most devastating acid is saved to be poured on that boldest of all affronts to intelligence, that most crowded of all conglomerations of holy humbug, The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. It is a subject for none-too-happy reflection that it was said to be the privilege and pleasure of the readers of most any newspaper some 75 years ago to have the benefit of such incisive and easily grasped criticism. Today intimidation and their own greed, hypocrisy and cowardice have brought most papers to the point where they regard such writing no longer “respectable.” Again and again, too, I was impressed with the truth of the saying attributed to Mark Twain that the difference between the wrong and the right word was the difference between the lightning bug and lightning. His ready facile style seems almost careless at times and yet it scintillates with those happily chosen, lightning-like words. Often he seemed almost to quote as he heard them the exact words of the various pious guides and guide books when talking about alleged holy places. But he manages to give them just the right additional slant of naiveté to expose their inherent absurdity. At that, though, I imagine much of it eludes the true-believing; but the comparatively emancipated who read this book the first time are sure of many a merry chuckle.

I see Geo. Seldes takes a real crack at The Reader’s Digest in his November 16, 1942, issue of In Fact. It seems the situation is even worse than I had suspected. The truth is I haven’t time to read the Digest from cover to cover and no doubt I’ve been missing some of the worst stuff in it although I do remember a few of the items Seldes mentions and also that I resented them at the time. However, I suppose such a resentment is so common a reaction for any liberal who looks into any popular publication that he finally grows indifferent to most of it. I’m glad to see Seldes do something about it by probing a bit beneath the surface. That accusation he lodges against Editor Wallace, of the Digest, that he has his writers plant articles in other magazines for the prestige it accords them, so as to lend them authority when he later “digests” them for the Digest is certainly rich.

Maplewood, Mo. C. A. LANG

HECHT’S THEORY OF MIND

Editor: Ben Hecht is one of the most brilliant minds in America. He writes quite a bit of hack copy; but when he really sits down to create he soars higher and more gloriously than any other American writer. Compared to the Hemingway-Steinbeck school of belles lettres—well, comparisons are odious. However, he is completely snubbed by all the Philistine Guardians of our Intellectual Gates.

In Hecht’s last volume, “A Book of Miracles,” he sets forth the theory that the human mind is an appendage, like the appendix or tail bone, which has long outgrown its original use. But, unlike the appendix or tail bone, the human mind is proving to be a Frankenstein that is apparently bent on destroying mankind itself.

Hecht expresses the theory that mind was first handed man by a kind evolution or quirk of nature as a strict defense mechanism against stronger breeds of animals, adversity, etc. Man was all right as long as his mind was just a shadow margin sharper than the minds of other animals; but the moment that Fate committed an abortion and allowed it to outgrow its basic usefulness all hell broke loose.

The moment man became conscious of his wonderful appendage, and the fact that he was “intelligent,” he immediately began to strut. The ego developed. Then the
ego invented God in its own image. From that moment on history has been one blood-soaked page after blood-soaked page, with man split up into various groups fighting constant and various wars while praying to constant and various Gods.

Hecht's truly brilliant theory explains away all of man's foibles, hysterics, religious sadism, and every other crime committed under the sun. With an appendage running wild, and illusion piling upon illusion, all of them completely false; what else could mankind ever expect to be but a bloody burlesque show? When a crawling worm of animal life imagines itself possessed of a "soul," of being the "center of the universe," the creator of the only true "God," and destined to strum harps forever on Golden Streets, or burn for eternity in Hell, doesn't it add common sense to Hecht's theory?

JAKE TRUSSELL, JR.
Kingsville, Tex.

Editor: Here is a partial transcript of a letter I recently received from a Marine Lieutenant in the South Pacific. This boy has been wounded three times, and has probably seen as much action in this war as any man alive:

"... I hear there has been a lot of uncouth gamering back in the States over the fact that some of us boys in the foxholes break down and say a little prayer now and then. Apparently the god-slobberers back there take this as a personal triumph over us naughty unbelievers who may in desperation let slip a word of prayer at a time when we are having the tar scared out of us and seeing our friends get their heads blown off. All right, suppose we do say a prayer of some sort. So what? Do those stinking little pimps of piety think we pray to their fat-headed abortion of a God—their slimy, jealous old eunuch? To hell with that monster. When we pray, we pray to a god of cold, blind force and cold blind chance. We doubt that our words are heard or that whoever might hear them would give a damn anyway, but we toss off a prayer when we are scared, simply because we are scared and want all the percentage we can get. When the pressure is off for a while we see more clearly than ever that religion is based squarely on one thing—fear—and that whoever pretends otherwise is either a hypocrite or a blockhead, or both. If war corrupts our intelligence and makes us pray, let those snivelling church lice keep their mealy mouths shut about it. Let them mind their business, if they have any, and we'll mind ours. We don't want them claiming company with us!"

Encino, Calif.
J. B. RYAN

Editor: I am as sure that Edgar Saltus is completely out of print as one can be sure of most things in this fictitious life. He was published in the 20's by Brentanos, who are defunct. Peter Eckler took a few titles over, and Eckler is also nicht mehr. Houghton Mifflin, who published his "Balzac," remained it years ago. Belford-Clark, who originally published his "Anatomy of Negation," are among the forgotten. Mitchell Kennerly, who was the first publisher of some of Saltus's best, is dead but not forgotten.

As a matter of fact, not only is Saltus well out of print, but the copyrights on some of his best stuff, his exquisite introductions to (and translations of) such figures as Gautier, Balzac, and Merimee have long ago run out. They are in the public domain.

Yours in Uno Salto,
Bayonne, N. J.
PAUL KITCHEN

Editor: Your account of how Diagoras, the first Athlete among the ancient Greeks, mollified the sailors who, in their belief they were being endangered by a storm because of his impiety, murmured against him, is a good example of defective reasoning such as persists on every hand to this day. Those sailors, amusingly enough, could see the absurdity of their misgivings when Diagoras called attention to other ships being battered by the same storm; ships in which he, the impious one, manifestly was not riding. Why did it not occur to them that if their Delty were such a brainless butcher that he must kill all in their own ship in order to reach Diagoras, he might be even so
clumsy an ox as to sink a whole fleet in order to accomplish the same purpose? Or, if they were so dull as not to think of this, and if we grant that their Zeus, or whatever deity it was they worshiped, desired to punish Diagoras and that he had the power to do so, why could they not concede him also the slight additional fineness needed to discriminate among them? That is, to single out Diagoras from the rest and, with a bolt of lightning for instance, slay him alone? That they did not arrive almost instantly at such conclusions—and this applies with exactly equal force to our pious contemporaries—was evidence not only of defect in their power to reason, but—though probably not consciously admitted even to themselves—that they were fearful because their own faith and piety were shaky. Indeed, it was undoubtedly both—and still is. For it’s clear that the modern lighters of candles in thunderstorms, the supplicators for rain or fair weather, the beggars for health, prosperity or what not else, and the subscribers to the broad notion of Sin—guilt complexes, that is, among which faltering faith is only one subject among many—are not likely to have brains sturdy enough to reason freely and sanely about the origins, motives and methods of deities, ancient or modern.

The June number of The Reader’s Digest panders to moronic vanities with an intelligence test that’s a Lulu. The prefatory announcement that it’s sure to “have you tied in mental knots for an hour or so,” and the assurance that you’re “obviously a genius” if you get every answer right, led me to expect some teasers on the Smith, Jones, Robinson level, at least. I was therefore astonished to find one chestnut after another probably as old as my grandfather. I wrote out all the answers in less than half an hour with the radio and some chatter going meanwhile. True, there were a few new trick-worded queries among the 25 and I fully expected to be tripped by some of these. Knowing how dumb I am in many ways, imagine my disgust at finding every answer correct. Naturally this raised my opinion of The Digest to a new high. If you ever expect to get really rich, and have

7 or 8 million readers for The Freeman, you’d better begin soon to flatter us readers in some such way instead of letting us know how stupid we are from month to month. You haven’t another hundred years in which to make a pile, so I’m telling you to begin soon. But don’t be surprised if I part company with you when you do.

And now that the second line to that noble example of an almost lost art, that classic line beginning, “Some come here to sit and think,” is about to emerge—thanks to a vast amount of brilliant research and weighty logic, why don’t you start the scholars on that corollary project: the search for the concluding line of another probably lost gem, which, as nearly as I can remember, began, “Oh, here I sit in silent bliss.” Many’s the time I’ve thrilled to the luscious rhyme, yet so faulty is an aging memory, I couldn’t recall it all to save a toad’s life—any more than you could the other one. So zealous have we become in recent years with all sorts of cleanup campaigns that even if we manage to return to the haunts of our adolescence where these classics adored to repel ancestral walls, we find them long since covered with many coats of paint. If this keeps up culture will to us yet be lost.

Your comments on Wm. Saroyan’s “The Human Comedy” reminded me that I had earlier come to about the same conclusion as you when you saw the picture. When I tried to read the book I quit on about page 10.

Maplewood, Mo. C. A. LANG

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public address nowadays without exhorting us dimwits to give praise, thanks and humble genuflexions (I may have muffed the spelling there) to the Big Shot on the golden throne, and suchlike unintellectual shenanigans. In point of fact, I can’t quite figger the guy out. He has more brains per cubic inch than any President we ever had, yet he persists in the above-mentioned mental pyrotechnics. Is it politics—or am I full of prunes and prudence?

Portland, Ore. VICTOR BAGLEY
Editor: Outdoor nature surely doesn’t inspire one to believe in God. Snow-mantled Mount Rainier, rising nearly three miles in the sky above its evergreen base, tells one of only raw nature. The Pacific to the West, rolling its waves monotonously, its shell-rattling surf crawling ceaselessly on the beach, reminds one of but godless nature. The tangle of rocks and timber and tumbling waterfalls in Western Washington (whence I’ve returned), do not preach the theology of the priest. The sough of the wind, the music of the rivers on their way to the sea, the colors in the sunset, the charm of silent places, the lure of lake and sound and bay do not lead to the church, and the call of the outland and the sky is not a call to the ministry. The priest was right who told us that a study of nature leads away from God.

JOHN D. McINERNEY
Riverton, Nebr.

Editor: Your hero, Patsy O’Bang, reminds me of that great lover, critic, toper, fisherman, poker shark, porch climber, defender of the faith, and all-round genius, the redoubtable Finnegan Swake. The great Swake is known far and wide for his piety and good works, as well as for his prowess along more secular lines, such as filling inside straights, locating grog on election day and hiding under the bed without sticking his feet out.

Finnegan’s touching reverence for the cloth is shown by the fact that he never fails to intone “Sold, American!” in a loud clear voice when the priest finishes the Latin chant of a Sunday morning. Finnegan Swake’s contributions to the collection plate are equally famous, consisting of a fishhead, two pancakes and a soft-boiled egg in the short space of 20 years, during which time he has filched from said plate only the negligible sum of $624.30 and two counterfeit quarters. Being the gentleman that he is, Finnegan uttered not a word of complaint about the quarters, and kept right on attending services in spite of his painful disillusionment. The heavenly father rewarded Finnegan’s forgiving conduct with an unexpected opportunity to purloin a gallon of excellent sacerdotal wine, so Finnegan is more than ever convinced of the importance of virtue. At this writing, he is hoping to be made a deacon. Yes, Deacon Finnegan Swake! What a red-letter day that will be!

Encino, Calif.
J. B. RYAN

Editor: H. G. Wells recently remarked that the newspapers as we know them today are on their way to extinction: news henceforth will come via the telephone as we get the time of day, or from the radio. I might add that long ago things have come to exactly that pass in many a family; they already get all the news they want from the radio and, while they still buy papers, it’s only for the funnies, Ripley, Martha Carr, and the latest trades in the ball teams, and the daily horoscope. Even in that eminently, suitable business of starting the fire I doubt that 1 percent of the papers get used, finally. The fire is no longer allowed to go out.

Maplewood, Mo.
C. A. LANG

Editor: I have just finished Howard Fast’s “Citizen Tom Paine,” and I am constrained to condemn the author for his vicious delineation of Paine’s character. Why was it necessary for Mr. Fast to repeat the slanders of Cheetham and Gouverneur Morris? If Paine was a drunkard all his life—and that is the impression one gets from his book—I wish we knew the brand of liquor he used so that we might give it to others. Lincoln’s classic reference about Grant could very well be paraphrased here.

There is no record that Paine drank to excess during his 37 years in England. While he was employed at the Excise Office, charges were brought against him to cause his discharge for trying to improve the conditions of his fellow-employees. It is significant, however, that no complaint of intemperance was made despite the most strenuous efforts to besmirch his character.

Yes, Paine drank when he returned to America after his struggles in England and France where he narrowly escaped with his life. And in his old age as he passed the time in his little room in Greenwich Village, he drank because “in gratitude more strong than traitors’ arms quite vanquished him.”

From the testimony of all who
knew him, of men and women whose integrity cannot be questioned. Thomas Paine lived as blameless a personal life as any man who walked the earth. Fast's portrayal of Paine as a drunkard is unforgivable, and because of the unfounded liberties he has taken with the life of the author of "Common Sense," "Citizen Tom Paine" has properly been classified as fiction.

Purdye, N. Y. * JOSEPH LEWIS *

Editor: Of all publications that come to my attention The Freeman remains my favorite. It seems to be the only sheet in this world of piety and righteousness which gives the unbeliever a fair hearing. And, paradoxically, it is one of the few that puts up an intelligent defense of the Angels themselves. I refer to your stout defense of the civil liberties of persecuted religious minorities, such as Jehovah's Witnesses. What would happen to the thousand and one sects if it were not for magnanimous Agnostics who consent to referee their fights, who are in fact the only ones sufficiently disinterested to handle that thankless task impartially.

Some interesting discussions ensued when the boys get hold of your paper. I have observed that the average soldier's religion, when he has any, consists of unconscious prejudices utterly innocent of all critical thought; attendance at church services when that is the only alternative to a noxious detail; and fervent prayer when he is scared. From a Freethinker's viewpoint, the churches should be welcome to such consolation as can be had from that type of adherence. A self-respecting Institution could take little pride in it.

PVT. DEAN MUMY

Hawaiian Islands

* LIGHT ON A PRESSING PROBLEM *

[Freeman readers are beginning to take seriously the job of finding the words that come after, "Some come here to sit and think." The latest to join in this labor of love is Attorney Ivan H. Light, who writes:]

Editor: In your May, 1943, issue of The American Freeman, a new attempt was made to throw light upon the origin of that provocative line, "Some come here to sit and think." You stated that Attor-