

PACIFIC WEEKLY

A WESTERN JOURNAL OF FACT AND OPINION

FEBRUARY 1, 1935



WHY I JOINED THE NEWSPAPER GUILD

BY REDFERN MASON

LINCOLN STEFFENS

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VOLUME II

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NOTES AND COMMENT

AMERICA suffers considerably from the impression of Americans created by hip-hip-hooraying, fist-crashing citizens of this country who make a loud noise, but get no where, that is, permanently. This Huey Long person is a perfect example of them. Just what he is doing in Louisiana we have been too much concerned about things that perhaps may count to try to understand, but we do know, just from the newspaper pictures and the headlines that he is providing more material for "typical Americans" delineations in forthcoming British novels.

ONE of those Republicans who stays Republican and will continue to be a Republican when, startled and unbelieving, he falls before the inevitable revolution, was in upon us the past week and actually discussed the Republican party's probable candidate for President in 1936. Here are 19,500,000 citizens of his country on the relief rolls and the rumblings of demands for social and economic justice are shaking the foundations of the land increasingly day by day, and our Republican party member, abiding and everlasting, takes up our time mumbling about a possible Republican party candidate for President.

MORE to the point, we suggest that you read and read carefully William Grandgent's article, entitled "Soviet Justice," in this issue. We are glad to print it. In the first place, because it so intelligently and with such apparent logic sets forth the arguments and the attitude of those who are trying to understand and who apparently can conceive the verity in the Soviet experiment, and in the second place because it gives our aforementioned Republican friend and others of his ilk some idea of what is in the minds and conceptions of the educators of this country; those who are training our youth and those who have such an important part in our intellectual development. You can't just shush this thing off; you can't say "Oh, that's just so-and-so." It's much more than so-and-so; it's really such and such, and as such it provides for us, or it should provide for us, some sort of a red light in the distance over a bad break in the track, or a collapsing bridge. It behooves us to slow down, back up, or better still, build an entirely new track and start in a different direction.

OH, THE tragic humor of the drama now being enacted in the Criminal Syndicalism cases in Sacramento. Latest reports of the prowess of our State police and Red Squads are breath-taking. A Mrs. Rachel Sowers, employed for two years by the Department of Criminal Investigation and Identification (the anti-radical section) testified on the witness stand that she knew all about the deep-dyed communists through a careful two-year study of radical literature. She bought last May, she testified, in the subversive hot-bed in Sacramento (the Workers' School) books and pamphlets of an inflammatory nature. They Told All. The books and pamphlets were: "Soviet Russia Today" (circulation 35,000 monthly, editor, Edwin Seaver, one of the recognized American novelists and critics), the *Daily Worker* and *Western Worker*, (which are sold on the streets in every large American city as are the Hearst and Scripps-Howard newspapers, and for the same price, a nickel) and "Why Communism," a small nickel pamphlet by Mossaye Olgin which has sold 200,000 copies in America the last half-year, 40,000 in California, and which can be purchased now from any Workers' Bookstore in the United States.

For this "underground information" the taxpayers pay their money. No wonder we need increased sales and income taxes.

And one other great point the prosecution scored. Caroline Decker has been identified as a radical, a leader and organizer of the agricultural workers in California. Identified, gentle reader.

Remains now only to identify Franklin D. Roosevelt as President of the United States and we shall feel saved.

BEGINNING this week Sidney Robertson will edit a music page in PACIFIC WEEKLY. She is eminently fitted to do so. It will be devoted to reviews and news of music events in San Francisco as well as in other parts of the Coast and will endeavor to be comprehensive and interesting. We are sure that Mrs. Robertson can make it so.

We asked her to tell us about herself so that we could tell you about her with more detail than we possessed at the moment. She typed off some notes for us and they began:

"Sidney Robertson: story of her life which needs cutting as usual." But it disclosed that she is a Stanford graduate in 1924 and "cut her eye-teeth reviewing San Francisco concerts for college magazines". She spent three months in C. G. Jung's seminar in analytical psychology in Zürich in 1925; was a student of music in Tours and Zürich and two years in Paris; pupil of Alfred Cortot, Ernest Bloch, Harold Bauer and Frank Wickman.

For six years she was associated with the experiment in education in Menlo Park under the leadership of Mrs. Frank Duveneck, where she led children's orchestras, choral groups and folk dancing when not teaching piano to folk varying in age from 4 to 82. When the school turned over to Henry Cowell a discarded bathtub he needed for his cabin in the hills, Mr. Cowell proposed to give the children a yearly concert in return; so Mrs. Robertson started a series of ten-cent children's concerts which ran for three years, presenting men like Cowell, Imre Weiss Haus, Arthur Hardcastle to the children along with more conservative performers.

LINCOLN STEFFENS SPEAKING--

CARMEL HAS decided against the bond issue for a city hall. That is Okay with me; I am prejudiced against city halls. I have seen and smelt so many of them. But I'm afraid my fellow-citizens are doing what they're doing for a wrong reason, with a wrong objective. It's the bonds they're against, not the city hall.

THE UNITED STATES Chamber of Commerce denounces publicity of income tax returns on the ground that it is an incitement to crime. Agreed. German Nazis invited a Czechoslovakian radio expert to a hotel dinner across the border, then plugged him. He was sending the truth into Germany. No trial, no justice, no bunk. They are 'way ahead of us.

A STANFORD PROFESSOR has just committed suicide—one—so far. The Japanese have a word for that—hari-kari.

EDWARD A. FILENE, the great Boston department store man, is coming to Carmel this week. Anyone here who happens to cross his path will see a "new capitalist". About the only one that developed out of that wild illusion called the new capitalism.

THE U. S. SENATE has kept us out of the League of Nations Court, us, and the President. The vote was a nice gift for his birthday and I suspect that he shares our grim satisfaction. He "had to" be for the League "to the death"; the obligations of the Democratic Party etc., etc., bound him and this decision will probably turn out to have been the death of the European Supreme Court. Wishful thinking, this, but not lonely.

A FOREIGN OBSERVER came here this week and left us one or two comforting reassurances. He said the danger of war is retreating. "Hitler and Thyssen do not want to fight for a couple of years—till they have equipped the German Army and filled their present profitable orders for steel. Japan has decided to leave Russia be. And pursue the line of least resistance through poor, weak China to the conquest of Asia. Nothing but a Revolution somewhere can stop a war anywhere."

OUR SCHOOLS might call the attention of our children to the importance of learning early to spell by reading them the story of Hauptmann's word for "boat". He spelled it "boad". He called it "boad" in the ransom correspondence and in his diary. It may be the cause of his death. It is very important to learn early to spell correctly.

PETER DUNNE, a humorist who was the famous author of "Mr. Dooley" in my day, wrote a story once of how we Americans discovered Japan and "opened them up".

"But we didn't go in, you know, they came out," he wrote. The Japanese came out and made a study of Western civilization, including the United States. They proved that a nation of people can learn. They learned about armies, navies, diplomacy and imperialism. Now they show that they are learning about law and order. There is great disorder and much lawlessness in China, and they have been going over there in the interests of business and peace. Some people think they are going over there to conquer and govern China, and

they may be right. But all they say is that they are re-establishing order. This last week they went across the Chinese borders and are now actually conquering disorder in Manchuria and a lot of territory and people for Japan.

Sometimes it looks as if Japan were created as a satire on and for Western civilization.

O. O. McINTYRE reports a controlled boom on in Florida. We should send experts there to see how they control a boom.

HUEY LONG of Louisiana is going a little bit too fast, if I know anything about German history. The dictator, who seems to want to dictate to the United States, has been putting down a rebellion already.

THE AGITATION against the colleges is working pretty well. Several professors have been coming down here lately and I find that when they speak the truth they lower their voices, as I remember students and professors used to do in Europe. I think we're going to get each one of them split into two parts, a dark part and a light part—one part which they keep to themselves and the other for the students and the public.

MAX EASTMAN, the Eastern poet, humorist and critic, has been here visiting me. He is an old, old friend of mine and yet I seem to discover, to my amazement, that what he lacks is humor. He is going East, he says, to write another book on humor and it was he, not I, who after an hour or so of chat sat up suddenly and said,

"This is a funny conversation. You seem to be making propaganda on me to be humorous. You, on me."

And I did not laugh, I almost wept, for he had put his humor on a humorous spot.

Why can't people practise what they preach?

THE GULLS, thousands of them, went up in the air last Tuesday at noon and flew around wildly, just like a lot of business men.

I asked a native what the birds were doing and he said seriously, "Warning us of rain."

"Why do they do it?" I asked. "Are they paid for it?"

"No, they do it for nothing."

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WHY I JOINED THE NEWSPAPER GUILD

BY REDFERN MASON

WHY do I belong to the American Newspaper Guild? Because writers, even in this California of ours, are encouraged to find "romance" in journalism at \$15 a week, while the typographers, thanks to their superior common sense, are earning from ten to fifteen per cent more than "the poor devils who write for the press."

The Guild demands a minimum wage, the right of collective bargaining, the regulation of pay and hours, just terms of severance, and so forth.

Its members seek the right to follow their calling with the same integrity as is exercised, in their own pursuits, by clergymen and doctors. They want to be able to record the news truly, without suppression, distortion or equivocation.

It may seem an unrealizable ideal, for it is much more profitable in journalism to be venal. We see the hirelings of the profession rising high in the ranks, not by writing what they actually believe, but by looking at the news through the perverting lens of private interest.

The Newspaper Guild seeks to restore the Fourth Estate to the position which it once occupied, when to say "It was in the paper" meant "It must be true". Today that phrase usually means "It is probably a lie".

When we formed the Guild many of us fondly imagined that the publishers would share our ideals, recognizing that better conditions of work and a higher code of ethics would mean better and more trustworthy papers. We were wrong. The tendency of the publishers is to regard the writer as a sort of intellectual drudge, who will sell his ability and his conscience to the highest bidder.

In organizing under NIRA we were obeying the law. The publishers are disobeying the law; they are hampering the President in his endeavors to restore the country to prosperity. When one of the publishers was ordered to reinstate a man who had been forced to resign his position because of Guild activity, he refused to comply, and raised the cry that the freedom of the press was menaced.

Strangely enough, the publishers do not contend that the independence of the printers constitutes a threat to the freedom of the press. True, they may have done so in the past;

but the public has found out that the contention was false, and it has gone the way of forgotten lies.

If the irresponsible discharge of typographers is not allowed, why the irresponsible discharge of writers?

But then the printers have a union; they can defend themselves; the publishers think the writers are defenceless.

The publishers themselves are a closed shop, with no "scabs". Can it be that only vested interests are permitted to combine for self protection? Or does the organizing of brains constitute a danger to the freedom of the press?

What is it that the newspaper men ask for? What they are seeking is fair treatment and the right to follow their profession in honorable fashion. But the publishers have turned thumbs down and, for that reason, the writers are turning for help to labor.

When the history of the Guild movement comes to be written, it will be noted with astonishment that the newspaper proprietors, with monumental stupidity, drove the writers in to the arms of the one foe that the publishers fear.

For generations newspaper men have been deluded by the fetishes of "romance", individualism and professionalism. These illusions the publishers have fostered until they themselves came to think that "professionals" would never link their cause with that of labor. There they made a capital mistake. The high-handed treatment of Guild members is steadily turning the more conservative members of the craft to a more liberal attitude of mind.

Every man who works for a living is, in the essential significance of the word, a laborer, no matter what he may do. The title "professional" may flatter a man's vanity; but it will not provide food for his family when he has lost his job.

So for protection the writers are turning to Labor, and they are not turning in vain. Labor will welcome them into the fold.

It is possible that the publishers may come to terms and stave off disaster. But if they fail to seize their opportunity, they may be the means of bringing about the affiliation of the American Newspaper Guild with Labor.

DR. TOWNSEND ARRIVES

BY JOHN C. HENRY

WHILE wise men wondered and economists shook their heads, a little band of quiet crusaders recently marked another step in their march to a new Utopia for America. The Townsend old age pension plan, hope of many and despair of as many more, reached the floor of the House of Representatives, sponsored by Representative John Stevens McGroarty, gray little California poet of 72.

Its fate, for the time being, rests with the House Committee on Ways and Means, headed by solemn Bob Doughton of North Carolina, administration loyalist. For his part, the

North Carolinian showed little hesitancy in indicating that the proposal will get little consideration from his committee, particularly with an administration old age pension measure being drawn by the President's advisers.

In other quarters, however, the crusading flame burned no less steadily. Representative McGroarty, for instance, spoke naively of the certainty of finding 218 members of the House willing to sign a petition to bring the measure out of committee. Serving his first term Mr. McGroarty expressed the conviction that "there are 218 men in the House who are fair

enough to let this thing be fought out on the floor". Those who aren't, he added grimly, just "won't come back any more".

And in a hotel room downtown, the skeptic finds some cause to wonder if perhaps Mr. McGroarty is not less naive than he seems. For here the mail comes tumbling in from all over the country, addressed to Dr. Townsend, hailing him as the new Messiah of those who have given their all. Here the steady blue flame is supplied by the quiet but determined ex-country doctor, the sparks fly from a bustling and dynamic director of publicity who talks breathlessly of the plan, the surety of its adoption, and who voices dire threats of the fate to befall those who oppose this newest of new ideals.

Administration big-wigs, not excepting President Roosevelt, are no longer major figures in their calculations. The President thrice declined to see the doctor, so did Relief Administrator Hopkins and PWA Administrator Ickes. By their refusals, so shall you know them, the "voice" of Dr. Townsend declares, henceforth they are numbered merely among those who will be swept aside.

As the instrument of sweeping, the cloistered crusaders point to dozens of rolls of petitions piled up in a closet, to stacks of unopened mail swelled every few hours by new deliveries.

"Look at the stuff," one of them declares, "we didn't even ask for it. The senders want to form Townsend clubs, to join clubs, to express their support for the movement. They promise to bring pressure on their Congressmen; it will be too bad for the fellows who block this thing. Open some of those letters, any of them, pick them out yourself."

The publicity director leaps at the pile, grabs a handful, tears them open.

"Look here—'Dear Dr. Townsend. Best man in the world'. That's from Grand Forks, North Dakota. Here's one from Greenfield, Iowa—'Please let me know where and how I can put in an application for the \$200. Will be ever so much obliged. God bless you.' Another from Wellington, Texas, says they have 1200 names on a petition addressed to their Congressman. I hope it's Blanton. A man in Harwich Port, Mass., says: 'We here on Cape Cod of all ages are in favor of your plan'. Here's what a dentist in Keystone Heights, Florida, thinks: 'The wise ones said that Columbus was crazy. They who dared to destroy foodstuff and restrict production have little grounds for asserting that OARP will not be a blessing to all'. A woman in Alabama wants to know how she can form a Townsend Club, so does a newspaper editor in McComb, Mississippi. That's one newspaper we have with us anyway.

"And look at these petitions! We're going to send them all to California and have everything presented to Congress at once. There'll be millions, 20 millions, 25 millions of names. And seventy per cent of them are under 60 years of age!"

A knock on the door interrupted the recital. A messenger was calling for something.

"We're having the original copy of the bill photostatted," the breathless publicity director explained. "Some day it will be an historical document. The Magna Carta of the old folks."

Back on Capitol Hill, the petition and the letter writing flood washes also. From all districts in all states they come in in varying quantity. Some of the members commit themselves, more of them sit tight and say nothing. Democrats take refuge in the explanation that they favor some form of old age pension, probably one based upon the President's recommendations. Republicans have an even better defense, namely that Congress is being run by the Democrats so let them dispose of their own "hot potatoes".

As for the mail, Representative Snell, Republican of New

York and minority leader in the House, sums it up with emphasis, "Oh, my God, it's terrific."

As for the plan, Representative McGroarty, adamant against any compromise, sums it up with "It can't lose; there's magic in it."

A LETTER FROM H. M. KALLEN

THE EDITOR, Pacific Weekly.

Dear Sir:

A couple of days ago I received a copy of the Pacific Weekly of January 4th. I presume it was sent to me because of a reference to me on page 9 under the rubric "Lincoln Steffens Answers".

Permit me to say that if you printed Lincoln Steffens' letter in reply to me you should have in all fairness also have printed my letter to which he made the reply. If you had, you could not possibly have attributed to me the opinions that you do.

It is not my opinion "that it doesn't matter for what reason you are shot, or to what end: what matters is, that you are shot". What I said in my letter is this:

Now you are suggesting that the Committee should condone in Russia what it condemns in Germany, in Italy, in Spain, and in other countries. This is a hypocrisy which I cannot share. The Russians now being persecuted and killed by the government of Russia may be guilty as hell, but they are entitled to a fair trial, to the best defense that can be provided for them, and to the same clear and unmistakable establishment of their guilt which the National Committee demands for political prisoners in the United States and other non-Communist countries. The honor and good name of Soviet Russia merits the same concern as the honor and good name of non-Communist countries.

Permit me to add that Mr. Steffens and the committee which he graces as president are in effect affirming that the end justifies the means. In justifying the summary executions by the present government of Soviet Russia they are justifying the imprisonment of Mooney, the behavior of the California vigilantes, and all the other evils which the lovers of freedom and justice in this country organize to combat.

In effect, you and Steffens, like so many others in retreat from liberty, are bringing to life an ancient ecclesiastical assumption which dates back to Augustine. This assumption runs: I am right and you are wrong. When you are in power it is your duty to tolerate me because I am right. When I am in power it is my duty to persecute you because you are wrong.

Even so, I believe you have sportsmanship and fair play enough to give this letter the same prominence that you have given Steffens' answer to an unprinted one, misrepresented in print.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) H. M. KALLEN

(We were about to make reply to Dr. Kallen's letter when there arrived by mail the article by Professor Grandgent which appears on the succeeding page. We thank the professor for relieving us of a job to which we did not feel at all equal, but which seems to be no task for him.—Ed.)

SOVIET JUSTICE

BY WILLIAM GRANDGENT

HUMANITARIANS and liberals of all political colors ranging from underwear pink to black, through various shades of brown, blue, and silver have joined in a great outraged cry against the recent executions in Soviet Russia. These include the many-faced pious persons who condemn war but clamor for preparedness, who condemn nationalism but flaunt an arrogant and noisy patriotism, who deplore the vast inequalities of wealth and opportunity, the mass misery, the perils which confront contemporary society, but at the same time insist that nothing must be changed. They are the people whose influential spokesmen control most of the outlets for the expression of opinion in the press, over the radio and on the platform.

Every day the press carries news of individual and mass executions by governments. In the last six months the victims of government "justice" in Germany, Italy, Austria, Spain, China and elsewhere by methods ranging from the firing squad to refined torture runs into the thousands. Yet perhaps not even the Hitler "purge" of last June has aroused such an outcry of indignation as the Soviet executions. Throughout the world, including the United States, suppressive violence, police brutality, the terrorization and imprisonment of "subversive" elements, the killing of workers, the destruction of even the illusion of democratic rights, are alarmingly growing. The terrorization, torture, starvation and murder of great masses of colonial populations by the official representatives of "respectable" democratic nations form a vast agonizing chapter of contemporary history that hardly ever gets into the news. Yet the report that a hundred or more conspirators were arrested and executed by the Soviet authorities as a sequel to the assassination of Sergei Kirov has aroused throughout the world a fury of righteous indignation which no other comparable incident has been able to excite.

As in all periods of great social upheaval, the vast majority of people of all classes today are confused, bewildered, blindly groping their way through the intricacy of the problems which beset them, ready to turn to anything that seems to offer a safe and fairly familiar solution to their difficulties. Most people are tolerably honest, decent and humanitarian in their conscious ideas, though recent history has abundantly proved how irrationally and brutally the ordinary, average man may act in a crisis. And most people react violently to injustice and abuse of authority when they are not directly involved. But these same people will condone and even participate in injustice and violence when they themselves are or believe themselves to be threatened.

The people who are protesting against the executions in Russia are probably unaware, for the most part, that they feel as violently as they do about this incident because Hearst and the other news monopolists want them to feel precisely this way. To combat the indisputable fact of Russia's extraordinary successes in solving its economic, social and cultural problems, while the rest of the world is rapidly sinking into chaos, the entire capitalist press has in the last few months launched an intensive campaign to discredit Russia. For the growing number of people who have come to fear and hate fascism, the most effective way of doing this is to make them believe that communism and fascism are the same thing with different names, and to construe all news to this end. Thus the Soviet executions are compared to the Hitler purge, large headlines announce the outbreak of antisemitic riots in Russian factories, strikes in Poland are reported as having taken

place in Russia, Warsaw and Riga become the chief source of news about Russia. As conditions in Russia improve and conditions in capitalistic countries grow worse the defenders of capitalism are committed to a position that is increasingly indefensible, and hysteria, suppression of news, and lying must more and more take the place of objective presentation of facts and coherent argument. When an incident like the recent conspiracy to overthrow the Soviet regime by assassination of the leaders occurs, it is to be expected that Hearst and his tribe will play it up to the limit.

I am not writing to influence the opinions of people who are already committed to the kind of thing for which Hearst stands. I am trying to reach the persons who are not yet irrevocably committed to a definite point of view, who have been watching the development of Soviet Russia with increasing interest and sympathy, and who are now genuinely disturbed by what seems a recurrence of the Terror. I am trying to express the point of view of such persons.

What distresses such persons most is the report that the Russian government should still execute people "without trial". (One would not expect those who have been swallowing whole the lies about the wholesale executions and the starvation of millions in Russia in the past seventeen years to get as excited about the killing of a mere one hundred odd on this occasion, though curiously enough this episode has set Hearst off on the maddest of his orgies of lies and vilification.) Those who are distressed are those who believed that this was a thing of the past, that Soviet Russia had reached a state of security which would enable it to exhibit a tolerance and mildness that would put to shame all capitalistic countries, bent upon increasing violence. Now the weaker and less logical ones are assailed by doubts, and a few may even echo the shameful words of that soft-headed liberal, Oswald Garrison Villard, when he says: "Now those latest killings have made me doubt that it (the Soviet regime in Russia) will last long enough thoroughly and fairly to try out the Communist theory. For I am never to be won for the doctrine that the end justifies the means, or that that government can purify the world which is but a blood-cemented edifice erected upon the sufferings or the dead bodies of vast multitudes."

Anyone having a little perspective will immediately perceive how specious it is in the light of the history of Western civilization of the last four hundred years, in which our particular kind of social-economic system was created, to single out a seventeen-year-old society which has had to fight for its very existence against a murderously hostile world as a signal example of a "blood-cemented edifice erected upon the sufferings or the dead bodies of vast multitudes". When it comes to bloodshed and infliction of misery and injustice, it does not behoove the apologist of a society which has a tradition of slavery, witch-torture, lynching, economic exploitation, oppression of colonial possessions, civil war, imperialist war and appalling economic, social and cultural lags, to throw the first stone.

No. The Soviet executions of last month, whatever their implications, cannot be made the excuse for a wholesale condemnation of the principles and the practice of communism in the U.S.S.R. Whether or not one approves of the actions of the Soviet authorities in this instance has nothing whatever to do with the rightness or wrongness, the workability or non-workability of what they are trying to do over there, any more than slavery and witch-torture had to do with the rightness

or wrongness of our form of society in the United States. If the success or failure of a social and economic philosophy depended upon the immunity of the society in which it operated from mistakes, imperfections, injustice and other evils, human society would have perished long ago.

Perhaps it is the part of wisdom to deplore these executions, without either on the one hand trying to justify them, or on the other hand presuming to condemn them. The Soviet authorities may have been moved by an irrational fear. They may, just as plausibly, have been confronted with an emergency so serious that it called for drastic action. All governments resort to extreme measures in emergencies, and the Soviet regime is no exception.

Without subscribing to the theory that the end justifies the means, one must not ignore the fact that difficult ends require exceptional means, and that where the life of a whole society is at stake desperate measures are sometimes necessary. We believe, and I think rightly believe, that the higher a civilization, the higher the regard for human life, for individual freedom and opportunity to develop. But these are not things which are guaranteed to us by nature itself. They must be achieved by a social order that is economically sound and productive and that can guarantee to all its members the essentials of life.

The world has taken many backward steps in the last few decades. While the Soviet Union has created a new order which already makes it possible for the people within its sphere to live better and more fully and to advance toward higher stages of culture, it is too much to expect that in its desperate battle with a hostile world it should already be in every respect a model of wisdom, tolerance and justice; that it should

be in a position to adopt the policy of "turning the other cheek". A society can be no better than the elements which compose it and no better than the conditions amid which it exists allow. We are not in the privileged position today of being able to choose between violence or non-violence. What confronts us is the choice, on the one hand, between violence exercised to maintain a privileged minority class and a social economy committed to increasing suppression of democratic rights, lowering of living standards, and retrogression of all culture; or, on the other hand, the struggle to achieve a society from which the basic cause of present-day violence shall be eliminated. No realist today can ignore the fact that the maintenance of our social-economic system based on private profit will involve increasing violence, growing misery for larger and larger masses, the whipping up of racial and national hatreds, and a rapid retrogression to barbarism. Those of us who resolutely stand for a basic change cannot shut our eyes to the inevitability of violence. We recognize that the world is faced with desperate alternatives. And we choose as we do because we recognize that the revolutionary way out is the only way to preserve the things that we have learned to value, and that, as we are caught between violent alternatives, we cannot but choose the way of minimum violence and maximum benefit to society.

And so, while we deplore every instance of violence and oppression and injustice in the U.S.S.R., we refuse to blind ourselves to the fact that the Russians have none the less taken a giant stride into the future, that they have eliminated one at least of the basic causes of violence, oppression and injustice with which we are still afflicted, and that for them every month, every year brings a guarantee of greater freedom and greater achievement.

STARVATION AND STATISTICS

BY PETER QUINCE

I AM A social worker. Yesterday I spent three hours "mopping up" on as many cases. It really is not difficult. All one needs is a sharp pencil, a chart and a bright smile. The smile is of particular importance. You will understand why as I go along. But before proceeding further perhaps I'd better spend a minute or so on the chart.

The chart is at once a very simple yet elaborate affair. It is about twelve by nine inches, of semi-stiff paper which is cleverly divided into neat compartments, and when filled out the essential history of a family can be determined at a glance. Not that anything will be done about it. But it will be useful to plug more than one of the gaping holes increased unemployment and mass misery are shooting into the Blue Eagle front. Eighteen-dollar-a-week clerks will compile the information into impressive statistical array. The figures will march across the newspapers, prodded forward by words not less lovely than perfumed blossoms the feet of which (according to several poets) are sunk deep in stench. The figures lie. That is their one purpose. I know. I make many of them out at the source.

With the chart the social worker receives a book of instructions from the office of Harry L. Hopkins, Administrator of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. The instructions are brief, and to a liberal, perhaps, startling. Differentiation is clearly made between white and non-white. It is extremely difficult for a Negro, Filipino, Spanish, Mexican or

Oriental to get relief. Thousands of cases, after going through the initial humiliating interviews set up as barriers by the relief offices, never get any help at all. When questioned by me as to why they were refused relief, the answer of one young Filipino illustrates the answer of all. A bewilderment of the face gave way to a bitter grin. A gesture of the hands. "Don't know. Tell me come back all time. Come back. Maybe," he touched my skin, "sun burn me more 'an you."

Discrimination becomes a fine art. Youth under twenty-one find, on applying for relief, that they are liable to close police scrutiny. Not that it is criminal to be without parents. It is merely more difficult. A young woman is expected to survive on a smaller check than a young man. Attempts are constantly made to drive youth into the COC camps, now under military control. The federal government has found one group, however, against which it is difficult to discriminate. They are known as "trouble-makers", "subversive elements" and "agitators." They are also known as Communists. When they are hungry they let the world know about it. They organize committees and invade relief offices. They battle cops who stand between them and bread. And whether it is in New York or Chicago or Denver or Los Angeles a not particularly intensive search in the files of the relief offices will reveal cards which bear the inscription: "Communist: give him what he wants."

The statistics gathered by the FERA are supposed to give

a true picture of the unemployment-relief situation. Not a soul, Roosevelt has said, will go hungry. Here are a few of the many reasons why I say these statistics lie. And they lie with the knowledge and connivance of the Federal Relief Administration. In a family of ten, if one person is working for a weekly wage of eight or ten dollars, that family is considered self-supporting! A person working one day a week is regarded as gainfully employed. These cases run into the hundreds of thousands. With the great majority of non-whites rejected from relief, (Hopkins has stated that 20 million people are now on relief) it would appear that if the government's "impartial" statistics were less partial Hopkins' figure would probably be half again what it is.

Now let us take a look at the government's attitude to labor. The handling of strike situations is of particular interest. By inference the instructions provide relief for "persons who, although not in sympathy with the strike, were 'shut out' because of the strike" as well as for "strike breakers" previous to their return "to work during the strike or (persons) who obtained new employment at the factory during the strike". As regards the strikers themselves, we are informed to hold ourselves in readiness at all times to receive "a general administrative order to 'automatically discontinue' relief." To charge that Wall Street (with its Chambers of Commerce and Industrial Associations) consulted with the FERA when these regulations were written, is absurd. Wall Street, I should say, wrote the regulations first and consulted with the FERA afterwards, if at all!

But to return. I had three cards at hand, you will remember, and was on my way to "mop up". I remember the first case as that of "the black hole of Calcutta". That is what Mrs. Mailis called her ugly, big-as-a-packing-case, basement home. A pile of clothes, recently washed, and now ready for hanging, was heaped on the washboard jutting out from the kitchen sink. My tools came out as she invited me to have a seat. Her voice was precisely English. She was thirty-two years of age. Her face was still handsome. A graduate of a San Francisco convent, she had married a non-commissioned officer whose duties had taken the couple to Shanghai where they had lived the past ten years. Mrs. Mailis, a competent stenographer, had been continually employed abroad. Suddenly, as the result of a bullet wound received while on a punitive expedition into the interior, her husband had developed chronic lung trouble. (An American-owned factory, it appeared, was in need of protection from a group of Chinese workers who had considered it high time the factory was exploited for the benefit of the mass rather than of a few.) Service physicians recommended that her husband immediately be sent back to the Naval Hospital in San Francisco. Mrs. Mailis was assured that, in compensation for total disability, he would receive from \$50 to \$110 per month. Mrs. Mailis quit her job, her house kept by cheap coolie labor, and came to America with her husband.

Now her husband is discharged from the hospital. He is still considered totally disabled. He receives not \$110 or \$90 but only \$30 a month compensation. He is querulous, petty with a sickness hounded by poverty. Mrs. Mailis cannot get work. In addition to the rent, which is \$13 a month, there are doctor bills, food, fuel, light bills. Mr. Mailis needs special food. They are forced to go to the relief for help.

"There are a few words," she said, "I only recently learned in America. 'Red tape' and," she found the phrase, "'passing the buck'. The pension is three weeks overdue now. Two days ago I went out in the morning. I visited the Navy people and they promised to write Washington. We were desperate. I went to the relief. From 25 Oak street they sent me far down Mission street. From there I was sent to the Trav-

eler's Aid, then to O'Farrell street and finally back to Oak street. I had no carfare. I hadn't eaten all day. I was asked questions. Have you ever been asked questions in America?" I nodded my head. "I almost became hysterical. They wanted to send me away without anything but when I demurred"—the word stuck in my mind; I'd never heard a case use it before—"they finally agreed to send me a food order. I received it this morning. For a week we've been living on corn meal." She passed a hand over her face.

"I want to go back to China," she continued. "Both my husband and I. We don't know whether the compensation—it came through once—will come through again. My husband may die here. In Shanghai I may be able to get my old job back. Oh, my husband will die in China, but it won't be of starvation! But they won't even let me go back to China. They won't grant me a passport unless I have written evidence showing I can support myself there. I'm trying to get it. I also wrote my mother, in England, asking for passage money. When I told the relief people about it they suggested that if, instead of going to Shanghai, I used the passage money to live on, possibly I might get a job before I ran through the funds." She smiled wanly. "Passing the buck. That tells the story, doesn't it?"

I felt maybe it was no use. But I talked about classes. I talked about dignity, a middle-class heritage which prevents people from fighting. We talked for an hour, and when I left I knew I hadn't gotten far. Mrs. Mailis cannot forget Shanghai, cannot forget her comfortable home on a circling street with a lovely-sounding name—now that she is so far from it. She cannot forget that three or four Chinese servants will do the washing, cooking, scrubbing that she is now forced to do, and for a remarkably low wage. Some day, I thought, the Mrs. Mailis of the world, instead of seeking to run back into the past, will discover that to "demur" is not to fight, and that fighting is necessary in combating misery, starvation, fascism and the diseases of these. Mrs. Mailis is of the middle-class. She will not discover these things for herself. It is the working-class which will discover it for her.

I located my second case in the garret of a house so broken with age that I almost hoped for another San Francisco fire. The husband was sixty years of age. The wife was two years his junior. The federal relief considers this couple still capable of work. The only argument against this was the fact that nobody wanted to hire them.

"A person my age," says the man, "might as well be dead." There are so many times when there is nothing I can say.

"How much relief are you getting?"

The woman answers. "I get \$1.90 a week. My husband gets \$2.10."

I hadn't come up against anything like that before. "Does he eat more than you?" I asked.

She didn't get my point. "He has an ulcerated stomach," she said.

I began to get angry. "Listen," I said. "You gotta fight to get anything. There's a relief workers' union. They'll help you fight. You can't get anything yourself. You've got to have hundreds behind you. Of course," I added, catching my breath, "as soon as you start fighting you'll be called a Red. Anybody that puts up a fight is called a Red these days."

"Oh," said the woman, "we wouldn't want to be called Reds."

"Sure," I said slowly, "I guess it's better to go hungry than to be called a Red."

"Sure," agreed the old man, and then he threw me a quick, suspicious look. Maybe there was hope in that look, but I went away with a sinking feeling. I thought: it is up to the Youth. The middle-class wants to run backwards, the aged

are frightened. It is up to the working-class youth. I am sure of that now.

My last case was that of Mary Jepson. I knew, before I knocked on her door, that she was of American white stock, the mother of four children, none of whom was working. The father was also unemployed. When I made myself known Mrs. Jepson was relieved to find that I was not a bill collector. There was a worried smile on her face as she invited me in to the drab living room. I asked questions.

It was about five o'clock. Supper was waiting in the oven, yet Mr. Jepson had not yet returned home. He was looking for work, Mary Jepson explained hurriedly, but Ellen, the nine-year-old girl sitting opposite me, suggested, by the startled expression in her eyes, that her mother was lying. From experience I have a good idea that Mr. Jepson was at a corner pool room or beer parlor trying to shut out the horror of past and future unemployment, of interminable days pounding the sidewalks in search of work, of misery and slow starvation. Mrs. Jepson asks whether or not they will be put back on relief.

"Have you been taken off relief?" I asked in surprise. I explained that I was collecting this information for the Federal Government and that there was nothing I could do about putting people on or off of relief. That was up to the local administration. "Why did they remove you?"

"We had twenty-seven dollars in the bank."

"Couldn't you get along on that for two or three weeks more? Maybe your husband could get a job by that time."

"He won't get a job," she said. "Besides," she went on, "we need the money bad."

"Look," I said, "would you mind telling me why? Maybe I can help you." There was sympathy in my voice and she was like to cry because of it. Social workers, as a rule, are bastards, depending upon sex.

Johnny, her seventeen-year-old son, walked into the room. "That's what the guy told you when he asked if you had any dough in the bank, Ma." I offered him a cigarette. A light came and went in his eyes. "I'll roll mine," he said curtly.

"It's on accounta Joycie we gotta save," said Ellen. Johnny's distrust kept him nervously pacing between the living room and the kitchen.

"She's going to have a baby," Mrs. Jepson explained. "Oh," she turned to Johnny, "he can't do any harm. Not more than what's done." Then to me: "I suppose you'll say it's my fault. I suppose you'll want me to turn her over to the Juvenile." Her voice raised the edge of hysteria. "Well, maybe if I didn't have to scrape and worry so about rent I could pay more attention to her. Maybe if I didn't have to find out where the next meal was coming from I could see who she went out with. See, I can't lay awake half the night thinkin' about our gas bill and rememberin' at the same time that Joycie's only turned sixteen. Or do you think I could maybe?" She got herself in hand. "Well, she ain't goin' to Juvenile. She'll stay here where she belongs, and when we raise her baby we'll tell it why it wasn't born according to law."

I got hold of Johnny. I took him into the hall. I didn't want the kid, Ellen, to overhear. I spent five minutes telling Johnny about the relief workers' union. It is a rank and file organization. It will send a delegation to the relief office with Johnny and see to it that relief is granted his family. I told Johnny the union address, the day and time its grievance committee met. I gave him a pencil and he jotted down the information. I did not give him paper from my tablet, nor did I write the address myself. The perfidy of social workers such as myself has been traced before on less evidence, and jobs have been lost. Johnny grinned and looked up. He didn't refuse my cigarette now. His eyes were shining. His jaw had

a good aggressive cut to it. Ten minutes ago I had looked forward with vexation to going home to a cold supper, but now, somehow, I didn't mind any more.

VERSE

BY FRIEDL VON CASTELHUN

SONNET

HARDEST of anything I know is this . . .
I have forgotten as you said I would —
At every hot assurance how I stood
Firm to the end of discourse to dismiss
Your bitter knowledge with my fervent kiss,
Vowing my vows as every lover should,
And meaning more than any mortal could;
Nor knowing how impossible is bliss.
This is most difficult of all I know . . .
When chanced I in dim halls and unknown ways
To hear the song so long I did not dare
Let tremble on my lips lest other days
Undo me with their memory; 'twas not so.
It seems this weight is more than I can bear.

MADRIGAL

OH little love that lived in vain
And yet were such a gladsome thing,
To all your happiness I sing
A lilting lyric; to your pain
I yet must heave a sigh again
To prove I do remember. What the sting
Of parting? Were our hearts on wing
One brief ecstatic hour, then we gain.

Oh little love that was so gay
That hid a smile in every tear . . .
I shall not weep that you are gone,
And yet shall hold you no less dear.
Ask now the price that I must pay
To free my heart—I would be on!

EPISODE

I am most interested in this thing you say.
You are a little mad, I, know, and yet
There is a nearness in the night that puzzles me,
And in your mind an understanding I cannot forget.
And you are like a door I may go through;
And I myself am like a door to you.

SONNET

OF lovely women it was always thus,
Helen imperative as she was fair,
And Cleo fond of politics and fuss.
Sappho was strong of will; in truth I swear
Circe her scientific mind first place,
And Lilith had a sharper wit than Eve,
Casting a memory other than her face
To mock the peace of Eden at her leave.
So must it be for having always been,
Beauty alone shall never hold full sway.
Lucretia's brain could formulate more sin
Than all the lovely bodies since her day.
And you, my dear, must lose your greatest charm
Had Dido been a fool who meant no harm.

THE THEATER

THE CINEMA SABOTAGES ITSELF

BY WINTHROP RUTLEGE

THE MOVIES continue to wend their tortuous and chaotic way toward frills, fatuity and fascism. It isn't in the cards for them to do otherwise. It now appears that if a producer does make a picture with something intelligent and revealing to say about our best of all social systems he is not permitted to advertise it as such. The result is that the public passes the film by and never knows what it is missing.

The instance which prompts the above is that of "The Man Who Reclaimed His Head", which is now dying for lack of proper publicity nourishment at the United Artists. The film, besides exhibiting Claude Rains in a magnificent performance, tells how the French munitions interests betrayed their people into the world war and how they continued to sell arms to the Germans after war had been declared.

It appears that the people whose job it is to see that the American public is exposed to nothing more stimulating than pure pap on the screen didn't know what was going on until "The Man Who Reclaimed His Head" had been completed. Then, in deference to the fellow-bankers who had spent money upon the film, they permitted its release. But they forbade the studio staff or the theaters showing it to advertise or publicize it as an exposé of war-making.

The results of such actions will be far-reaching. Producers will no longer make pictures foredoomed to die because they cannot be advertised and the intellectual level of the cinema, never what you might call lofty, will sink to a deadly norm. This is a quite logical and entirely reasonable course of action on the part of the American bankers. As a matter of fact, I congratulate them for a perceptiveness I never gave them credit for. They reason most rationally that since "Devil Dogs of the Air" is to set the pace for thinking in the American cinema, then why take the edge off the glorious cinematic war game with such inquiring films as "The Man Who Reclaimed His Head"?

The antics of the local press agents on the latter film, as viewed in the San Francisco dailies, were ludicrously gymnastic. One story made a great hullabaloo of the fact that whereas the audience didn't see Rains at all in "The Invisible Man", he would be visible from head to foot in "The Man Who Reclaimed His Head". Another compared it to the famous murder mysteries of the screen and modestly admitted that it was the best of them all. All publicity carefully avoided telling anything about the actual content of the film and the paid advertising did likewise. It was one of the prettiest pieces of self-sabotage the cinema has yet performed.

The fact is that "The Man Who Reclaimed His Head" is the most stimulating and well contrived film of the winter season. Eschewing the fantastic melodrama of "The President Vanishes", it tells a bitter tale of the device by which human fodder is fed into the war-machine—and for whose profit. It is imaginatively photographed, splendidly acted, clearly thought out and uncompromising in its conclusions.

Rains is seen as a brilliant Paris journalist who hires out—or as he says, sells his head—to a publisher with political ambitions. Rains makes the publisher a power with a campaign

for peace and against the munitions makers, whom he exposes as a link in the nation's chain of war-mongers. He writes editorials under the name of his employer, who rides into public acclaim on them.

Then the publisher is approached by the industrialists, who convince him that his direction is the wrong one. They use blocks of stock to back their argument and soon we see the publisher trying to make his bought brain follow his personal ambitions. Then the war comes and the owner of the journal writes his own editorial, making the about-face from pacifist to jingo. Rains is drafted and sent to the front.

The rest of the story is not so important. Rains learns that his ex-employer is preventing him from getting leave. He deserts, returns to Paris and kills him. By killing he feels that he has reclaimed his head. As the film ends he is being taken to prison to await trial. The film points out nicely the futility of trusting world peace to ambitious politicians and in addition tells a story which never flags in interest. Its weak point is its dialogue, which is too profuse and too poorly written. The need for a Hecht-MacArthur combination is a crying one.

DAVID COPPERFIELD" (Warfield) is an engrossing adaptation of the Dickens novel, ably presented by a large cast of capable thespians and photographed against a background full of the Dickens era. The outstanding performance is that of the priceless W. C. Fields as Micawber. The film is perhaps the best cinematic adaptation of a Dickens work yet to reach the screen. The fact that it somehow seems rather pointless is probably the fault of its author rather than that of its adapters.

SAN FRANCISCO at last has a permanent producing company, and a worthy one. The old Alcazar has reopened with Harold Helvenston directing a capable cast in A. E. Thomas' "No more Ladies". The Thomas play is a sparkling affair, amusing enough to excuse its lack of cerebral matter. It deals with the adventures of two spirited youngsters who attempt marriage with full consciousness that their scant respect for monogamy is going to make it difficult. They survive the first infidelity only after the wife has invited a group of the victims of her spouse's bedroom escapades to a week-end party and stayed out all night with one of them.

What is important about the opening is that Harold Helvenston has proved himself a director and scenic designer fit to compete with the worthies in the professional ranks. His settings and his direction both showed finesse and thoughtfulness. He is apt to go far and the Alcazar company is fortunate that it has him. It plans to produce a new play every two weeks and to avoid the "stock" label and its consequences by occasional and shrewd changes of cast. But for the time Georgia Caine, Marion Burns and Walter Bonn will do very nicely. They are performers of grace and distinction. The company, by the way, has an imposing list of plays on its tentative schedule, including many of the finest things Broadway has offered in the last few years.

'MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG'

BY ELLA WINTER

THIS NEW YORK stage hit opened at the Curran Theater in San Francisco this week. Messrs. George Kaufman and Moss Hart have taken an old theme—the gradual disillusionment and corruption by fame, money, fortune and social success of a gifted and idealistic young artist. In this

case it is Richard Niles, the playwright, of whom his friends expected great things from the time of his first "failure" on the boards of the Provincetown Players.

What made this play the most talked-of in New York is that it is written back to front. It starts with the bored and false first-night party for the famous playwright's latest play in 1935, and works its way backward to 1916, each scene giving the high spots of the main actors' lives. Thus, starting with what they are, each scene sheds more light on how they came to be that way. It is a little the way we find out about people in real life; we meet them, and bit by bit as we get to know them better we learn of their earlier lives, maybe see photos, meet others who knew them well, and so make our picture.

Yet on the stage this method has its drawbacks. The suspense of seeing "what will happen" is turned into a curiosity that, as it becomes satisfied, makes you want to see the previous scene again. You feel you did not get the significance of the scene just acted because you didn't know about the one that was coming. It is very like walking into a movie in the middle. When you've seen it out, and seen the first half that you had missed, if the movie is at all real you want to stay all through again, seeing the second half in the light of what you now know.

Maybe that is just what the playwrights wanted to achieve: make you go to their play again.

The acting in three instances was excellent—Richard Niles, played by Douglass Montgomery, growing better and better as he grew younger in the play; Julie, the idealistic girl who adored Niles and watched over his talent only to grow into a drunken wit when she saw him throw his ideals away for fame and success, played by Erin O'Brien-Moore; and the mother of Althea Royce, Niles' once glamorous but now shrewish actress wife, Miss Irene Franklin. This actress brought the opening night house down with her refreshing and honestly played part of the old vaudeville actress who sees through the shams of her daughter's life and tells it to her, straight.

Althea Royce herself, played by Frieda Inescort, was a little too shrill, too obviously the cynical theater-goer's idea of a "star". Many of the actresses, especially in the first scene, wore their clothes badly and did not move about the stage gracefully. It created in this reviewer the reflection, what a large part in the grace and charm of a woman her walk must play. Niles' boyhood pal, Johnny Crale, was also well and sympathetically played by Harry Ellerbe.

We hear that Douglass Montgomery is a young California socialite who had bad stage fright. We hope he has stage fright every night if it makes him play as well as he did all through, but especially the scene in which he breaks down and weeps because his little wife and her people bawl him out for sitting and scribbling instead of going out and earning a man's livelihood as a drug-store clerk or real estate agent or something else really respectable. He must have reminded many in that audience of similar scenes in their own homes and exactly how they felt at the time. So he didn't go and hear Debs speak—and that was his first surrender. (Those prevented from going to radical meetings today, please note.)

The huge cast of 92 seemed somewhat unnecessary. A few party-goers might with care and artistry have given the same mob feeling as did the crowded stage, so jammed with people that one was left with a feeling of awkward restraint, as if one's own corns were being trodden on.

The play does, however, leave you plenty to think about, both its content and its form—and that after all is one of the purposes of art.

MUSIC

EDITED BY
SIDNEY ROBERTSON

MARCELLA SEMBRICH died early this month. To opera-goers of the nineties she was the last word in perfection, no dramatic soprano of her time achieving anything like the success with the public that she did. Louis Persinger once remarked that violinists commit far more crimes against the name of music than any other class of musicians, excepting only singers; to this rule Sembrich was the glorious exception. The stature of Melba, Calvé and Gadschi diminish visibly beside her. This was partly because as a girl she was trained as a pianist and violinist as well as a singer, and until fairly late she made no decision as to which she should make her career, so that her knowledge of music was varied and extensive. Moreover she had the temperament which made music in and for itself far more important to her than Marcella Sembrich, as a singer, ever became. Managers sighed with relief when it came time to deal with her, for most of her associates preferred prima donna temperament to peace and dignity. Sembrich's reputation, however, was never any great concern to her. She found it took care of itself. She and Nilsson were largely responsible for the success of the Metropolitan when opera was first given there. She toured in concert also and was one of the first singers in this country to find folksongs worthy of a place on her concert programs.

Maurice Grau brought her to San Francisco in 1901, when she was forty-three, in a company of singers which one can only agree with Mr. Grau was truly "an all-star aggregation", for it included all the famous names of the day: Emma Eames, Sybil Sanderson, Nellie Melba, Louise Homer, Calvé, Gadschi, Schumann-Heink, Fritz Scheff, Antonio Scotti, David Bispham, Edouard de Reszke and Marcel Journet. No wonder a critic said that at a performance of Lucia di Lammermoor "Mission Street quaked with the thunder!"

Here is a part of Ashton Steven's review of "Traviata": "Sembrich took the flute music of 'Traviata' on the tip of her birdie voice . . . and the crowd went delirious in the spell of a woman's glory! . . . Wagner might have been yet unborn (He was, in San Francisco.—Ed.) and the Verdi of his later operas only a dissonant nightmare, for the way the house thrilled and throbbed to the fancy-work trills of old 'Traviata'. All our noble theories about the dignity of opera and the mission of music went a-glimmering when Sembrich wanted in the vocal embroidery of 'Violetta'. We cared not . . . that the heroine was pectorally plump and hearty when a very stage consumption carried her to another world to the tune of waltzful, triplet strings. We wanted the voice in just that rippling richness, whether the plot fitted or not. In truth, Verdi made it quite impossible for us to remember that the story of 'Camille' was being told . . . This was a sensational success that began at the beginning and lasted through to the final note and was warm and sizzling to take out to those who had stayed at home."

What a good time he must have had!

Grau's company was in San Francisco again in April, 1906, the company this time including Tetrassini and Caruso, who was seen outside his McAllister Street hotel immediately after the earthquake, clad in a long nightshirt and peaked nightcap and clutching to his bosom the box containing his jeweled decorations. Most of the company fled California and swore never to return; but Sembrich stayed and gave a concert for

the benefit of the city's needy musicians which netted them \$10,000 and gave Sembrich a quite special place in San Franciscans' hearts.

In 1909 Sembrich retired from the Metropolitan, but she continued to sing occasionally until 1917. Her voice was so perfectly trained that it gave pleasure to the end of her life, seeming to lose in power and range rather than in beauty and ease. She loved to teach and although is not known to have launched any one pupil toward fame, her colleagues often asked her help, and not a few contemporary opera stars are said to have profited at one time or another from her advice.

PROBABLY the greatest piano playing ever heard in San Francisco was done by Josef Hofmann at his concert two years ago, when among other things he gave an unforgettable performance of the Brahms-Handel variations. One felt that here was the absolute master of the instrument in his prime, and that for once the whole meaning of the music was laid bare. Hofmann is playing tomorrow night in Carmel and Monday in San Francisco.

He was quoted recently as saying that his most treasured artistic tribute came from the manager of a concert he gave not long ago in the little Spanish town of Bilboa. After the recital the manager rushed to him and said: "I thank you for your fine art. I thank you for the large audience you have brought to my theater. But above all things I thank you because so many people came to me in the lobby and kissed me for bringing you here."

AN interesting thing has come about through the residence in Carmel of Charles O'Connor, harpist and singer of Irish ballads and folk songs. Mr. O'Connor is generous with his music and so the community's music-lovers are able to hear him over and over again at the homes of various friends, with the result that this music is being heard now by a small audience to whom it is thoroughly familiar, thus producing as nearly as is possible today the conditions under which folksongs originally were heard. This is only possible, of course, thanks to Mr. O'Connor's authentic feeling for the songs which brings his audience almost to participate in the singing. Individuals call for their favorites, laugh broadly over the humorous ones, repeat the words silently with him and nod to the tunes. His performance is always moving and the accompaniments, many of which are his own, are dramatically and rhythmically fitting, though harmonically they are not always as archaic in feeling as some of the melodies. He sings also some of Mrs. Kennedy-Fraser's arrangements of songs from the Hebrides, besides a large repertoire of Irish songs in Gaelic and English. One of the latter, "How beautiful are the lordly ones in the hollow of the hills!" might have been sung by David to King Saul in the youth of the Hebrew race. It happens to be about fairies, but it has the feeling of the Psalms.

IF THE San Francisco Symphony Orchestra is not speedily hauled out of the doldrums, it will prove to be the only major symphony unable to survive the depression. Thirty-thousand dollars added to the funds in hand (largely in the form of pledges) will assure a twelve-weeks' session. At the request of the Senior and Junior Chambers of Commerce, Mayor Rossi has issued a call to 600 citizens to form a committee to save the symphony, but his appeal hasn't so far met with very lively response and anyway, a committee of 600 is a trifle large and unwieldy.

The City Art Commission proposes to put before the electorate a charter amendment setting aside one cent on the tax rate for the benefit of the symphony and allied cultural ac-

ivities. This it is calculated could provide the orchestra with \$70,000 a year and under these conditions Peter Conley, orchestra manager, believes San Francisco could have the greatest symphony orchestra in the world, charging no more than 25¢ for admission.

Meanwhile orchestra members feel that since Dobrowwn, Pennington and Horace Britt have been brought here on contract for 12 weeks and will undoubtedly be paid the amount of their contracts (the conductor's salary is \$12,000), they too should be paid a 12-weeks' salary, though their contracts are only verbal. The justice of this is clear, but if there were money enough to do that there could be a 12-weeks' symphony season. And funds are \$30,000 short of making that possible.

THE dancing of Massine, one of the few dancers on the stage today who was trained in the Imperial Russian School, was the one bright spot of the performance of W. de Basil's ballet in San Francisco. The ragged edges of the ensemble, both dancing and music, could only be justified in an organization which had come to a country town to give the first performance designed to pull things together before its formal debut. To present a modern score such as Petrouchka with an orchestra whose members are unaccustomed to playing together and without rehearsal is inexcusable. It was pathetically evident that there was but one Diaghileff.

BOOKS

FOUR GOOD JUVENILES

(Reviewed by Dorothea Castellhun)

Two out of the four books for young people published by the Viking Press which lie before me have their scenes laid in foreign countries. In another there is also what one might call a touch of Europe in the characters of Herr and Frau Geranium. And, although Texas is in our country, yet the southern coast fringing the Gulf of Mexico is so far away from most of us as to seem a little foreign.

The "juveniles" of a past generation—but who ever called them that in our youth?—generally dealt with scenes closer to home. There were delightful exceptions, of course, and Hans Brinker was surely one—but we never dreamed of anything like the wealth of brilliantly colored and beautifully printed books such as bring home to our children intimate pictures of little foreign children all over the world! Geography must certainly be a much more pleasant study now than in the day when we stayed at home in one city or village and read about mountains and rivers and foreign lands only in dull, brown-covered books with no touch of color in the stiffly drawn pictures. We had no every-day movies to make real to us far-off romantic islands, the people of the jungle, or the quaintly-clad children of ancient villages of Europe and Asia. Our families hadn't yet reached the stage of going off on long motor trips such as my seven-year-old son took so calmly when we crossed the country last fall. Niagara Falls, the Mississippi River, the Great Salt Desert, the Rocky Mountains—they are all real to him, not just words in a geography book. I am certain he knows more about his country than I did at twice his age!

Such books as the following fit easily into the literary life

of the modern child who is used to thinking of any part of the globe as just around the corner:

HANSI, by Ludwig Bemelmans... (Viking Press) \$2

When Hansi was sent to spend the Christmas-vacation with his uncle and aunt in the Austrian Tyrol he went all by himself, and the story is delightfully told, with all the details which children adore. Everything connected with the start of the funny little train which winds its way slowly up into the snowy mountains is given in its proper order and in a manner to satisfy even the most insatiable of train-loving little boys. And this incident is typical of the style of the whole book. Hansi's adventures should please boys and girls from six to ten. It is the large, picture-book style of volume, with a wealth of amusing, brightly-colored illustrations by the author.

BLUEBONNETS FOR LUCINDA, by Frances Clarke Sayers. (Viking Press) \$1

Younger children will enjoy little Lucinda who also went on a train ride to pay a visit; but instead of climbing snow-covered mountains, her train took her to see the beautiful wild flowers of warm southern Texas, called "bluebonnets". Barnacle, the cat, accompanied her, and their adventures when they reached the home of Herr and Frau Geranium are told with simple charm by Miss Sayers and are quaintly illustrated by Helen Sewell.

DOBRY, by Monica Shannon. (Viking Press) \$2

In the front of "Dobry" is a tiny outline map showing Bulgaria, with its coast line on the Black Sea, the countries of Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia and Romania surrounding it on three sides, while a thin caterpillar of Balkan Mountains crosses it. This is a great help in case you are a little hazy about just where Bulgaria is located. The story of Dobry who grew up wanting to leave the fields and lands of his family in order to become a sculptor makes an unusual book for older boys and girls. There is an interesting colored frontispiece showing how bread is baked in huge batches in an enormous outdoor oven; and many black and white illustrations throughout the book. These were done by Atanas Katchamakoff, a sculptor now living in California, who was himself a peasant boy in Bulgaria and therefore puts into these pictures delightful memories of his own childhood. Miss Shannon also lives in California, which should give "Dobry" a special interest to western readers.

TABITHA MARY, by Ethel Parton (Viking Press) \$2

Life a hundred years or more ago in old New England probably seems as strange to present-day children as the scenes in any geographically foreign country. So that, although "Tabitha Mary" takes place on our native soil we might put it with the foreign books and not be accused of stretching a point too far! I cannot help feeling a special interest in Tabitha Mary because, like Miss Parton, I spent my childhood in Newburyport, the old Massachusetts town which is the scene of this book. I too have heard many old legends and stories such as fill the pages of this amusing tale of the little orphan, true stories which never lose their flavor. There is an indescribable charm about that old seaport city that lies stretched out along the Merrimac with the salt tide flowing up it every day from the nearby Atlantic. A charm that we perhaps scarcely realized as children, when we lived there, but which gradually was borne in upon us after we left home for more progressive, lively cities. The jacket of "Tabitha Mary" says that this is a book for girls from eight to twelve, and undoubtedly girls of those ages will enjoy it. But it seems to me that the full appreciation of Miss Parton's gift of story telling and her fine humor will be more likely to come from "girls" much older than that; from those of us, in short, who are called girls only by courtesy!

CORRESPONDENCE

HE FEELS BETTER NOW

Sir: Your magazine is a joke to any thinking person and a disgrace to the Pacific Coast. It is puerile and childish from cover to cover and does not contain one intelligent remark. Please do not insult my decency by forwarding another sample copy.
Oakland. William C. Todd.

THEY ADMIT IT PRIVATELY

Sir: Your "Frank and Honest Word" [Issue of January 18] is "grand". How many people we know who ought to read and profit by it. But will they?

There's no accounting for the fact that there are still people in the United States who believe that all's well with Our America, and no matter how the truth is presented they resent it.

Do you mean to say that the Fleishhackers and the Gianninis have seen the light? If so, why don't they come out and admit it? It might have some effect on some of the other upholders of the dying system of greed.

I would like to have about fifty copies of this page alone, if that is possible.
Altadena. Kate Crane-Gartz.

WE'RE NOT NEARLY THAT

Sir: I was all off in my priori ideas about Pacific Weekly. I'd supposed that Mr. Bassett was a rather conservative old gentleman (don't know how I got that idea) and that as a consequence Pacific Weekly would be a rather stodgy production with only now and then a little leaven. But this is good—very good—and I apologize for my doubts and will do my best to get subscribers.

That sort of thing should go in San Francisco. Will spread it around. Good luck.
San Francisco. S.M.L.

CONTRIBUTORS THIS WEEK

REDFERN MASON is a musician of note and a music critic for more than twenty years on the San Francisco *Examiner*; forced to resign because of his activities in the American Newspaper Guild.

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SIDNEY ROBERTSON is told about in Notes and Comment.

DOROTHEA CASTELHUN is the author of a number of girls' books.

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Inspects Carmel's Shops

BLUE AND YELLOW, green and rose make bright inlaid flowers upon the burnished black of Mexican wooden trays, lacquered, lately unpacked by the AZTEC STUDIO SHOP. Some are 20 inches across, but there are lesser sizes...Whether tea-laden at sundown or stood on edge against neutral walls the rest of the day, these striking trays bring forth the exclamation,

"How lovely!" from the most stolid observer.

Wide, shallow bowls can also be had at THE AZTEC SHOP in like decoration.

THE BETSY ANNE FOOD SHOP is no place, I'd have you know, of frivolous frosted layer-cakes and gay-topped cupcakes to the exclusion of Real Vittles. Good, old-fashioned pot roast is within the BETSY ANNE show-case, ready for more slices to be cut and taken home; a spaghetti-and-meat dish is present in husky quantity, macaroni-and-cheese tempts silently but powerfully from a man-size dish. And cooked corned beef is flanked upon the right hand, believe it or not, by an enormous bowl of San Francisco* Baked Beans.

*Editor's note—Boston, town of the bean and the cod, doesn't rate mention, I felt, on this coast, so I met the situation as above.

IF YOU ARE, have or can borrow an eight-year-old person with curls, hurry to the studio of LEOTA TUCKER, whose windows look out upon the Court of the Golden Bough, and discover what can be done. If the eight-year-old shows a happy aptness for the violin, this always beautiful instrument can share in a portrait which will voice the very music of camera art.

Even if it's some time since you were eight and you have, like this department, straight hair and a slightly crooked nose and you play only the jews-harp, Miss Tucker can bring out what Oke, a little Japanese photographer who once did noble by our Nell, called 'ze charACKter, miss—ze char ACK ter!' You won't need the violin at all to bring out your beauty of soul. And considering how

much of this there is, you will not adjudge Miss Tucker's price high.

THE LITTLE HOUSE OF BEAUTIFUL THINGS not only opens upon The Court of The Golden Bough but it has a special little garden-court of its own to which, says Miss Rene Wilson, its owner, visitors steer straight as a die.

Once back from there, they pause with particular delight before a Chinese wardrobe between 200 and 300 years old and higher than their head. Its carving in lacquer-red and gold cannot be duplicated today even in China. Of teak throughout, the wardrobe separates with uncanny cleverness into a long fire-bench, and into upright cupboards.

You look about at table-screens of delightful Japanese prints, you covet seven-branch candle-sticks of ancient brass, you long for jewelled bracelets with turquoises. But you come back to this monumental example of Chinese workmanship and art. I was too stunned to ask the price. If you muster up courage, let me know.

SPEAKING of red, THE DOROTHY SHOP on Dolores Street has among a goodly number of \$7.95 notables now being specially shown, a number of what I call "Carmel Reds" in dresses of silk, wool, and wool crepe. Carmel, you know, has a chilly brightness that sets off shades of red ranging from scarlet to wine, from poppy to crimson. Mrs. N. B. Bradley, manager of the DOROTHY SHOP, offers at this low price one red-topped black dress upon whose scarlet waist and sleeves metal threads twinkle in and out. Now-you-see-'em-and-now-you-don't sort of thing.

CABBAGES AND KINGS on Ocean Avenue offers for \$9.50 the lightest, warmest and cuddliest scarf in Indian-red plaid you ever lay awake nights longing for. It's in the window now—or was when I last sighed for it by daylight. If you've the good sense I credit you with it won't be there long.

P. S.—Thank God it isn't fuzzy.

EUGENE J. REED WRITES US FROM NEW YORK: "PACIFIC WEEKLY MAY PROVE TO BE THE SHOT OF ADRENALINE THAT WILL REVIVE TO THOUGHTFUL CONSCIOUSNESS THAT NECROTIC GIANT IN THE WEST."



**"TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS IN A NEWS ROOM",
BY W. K. BASSETT, A NEWSPAPERMAN'S STORY, WILL START
IN PACIFIC WEEKLY FEB. 15.**