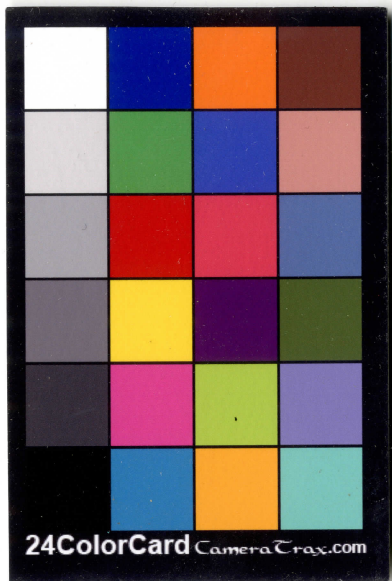


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"The Sense of Humor," alone, costs \$2.00. With a year's subscription to the **Liberator** (which has just been reduced to \$2.00 a year) the price is \$3.50 for both.

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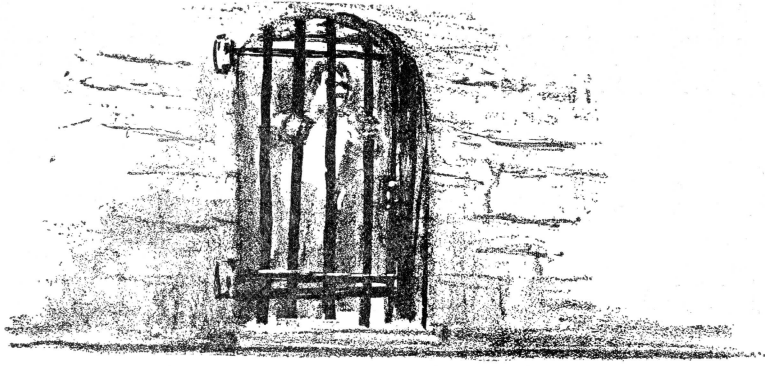


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## America

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We still offer an "Asylum" to liberty-loving Europeans.

# THE LIBERATOR

Vol. 4, No. 11 [Serial No. '44]

November, 1921

## The American Famine

By Michael Gold

Drawings by Hugo Gellert

**W**HO can understand that calamity known as unemployment? Who can understand the famine of six millions of men and women in the midst of the heaped-up riches of the richest nation in the world? Who can understand the simple fact that men go mad with hunger and women's hearts break, and children die of starvation while all around them are the opulent cities, the huge factories and bursting granaries and warehouses of our civilization?

The Russian famine is not hard to understand. Seven years of war, revolution, and the Allied blockade, aided by the mindless fury of the Sun, have combined to slay millions of innocents. It was almost inevitable. The wonder is that the whole Russian nation is not wandering up and down the gray river-banks, stark-eyed and ghastly, nibbling at dusty leaves and grass and looking to the western horizon for the help that does not come.

Yes, it is a sacred wonder that there are millions of men and women still in Russia who build locomotives and tractors, and teach the peasants, and organize vast industries for the future, and dream and work, and love, and hope, and fight under the Red Flag for the great brotherhood that shall yet descend upon this sad earth.

But who can understand the famine in America?

It is here again, this mysterious plague of unemployment that breaks out every seven years in the capitalist world. No crops have failed; no factories have burned down; no blockade has been built against us; no epidemic has swept away millions of our workers. Everything remains as it was two or three years ago, yet seven million men and women, and their dependents, must starve.

The rich are holding the usual pompous conferences, and are hiring thinkers to smear the crime of unemployment over with long words and statistics. The poor are holding their conferences on every street corner and in every wind-swept park, but they seem as futile as the rich. After all, the thing has happened, and it will happen again. It is the lash of some unknown God whom we have neglected to propitiate. It is magic. It will soon pass away, and rich and poor will heave a sigh of relief and settle down as before until the next crisis.

Who can understand the recurrent crises of unemployment in America? And who can wait until the last great crisis, when the poor will be forced to see that there is no door out of their misery, but the Revolution, and the thinkers of the rich will be at the end of their palliatives.

Unemployment is nothing but poverty. It is the demonstration that working men are slaves, are wage slaves, and cannot live but at the consent of a master. During an unemployment crisis the skeleton in the closet of capitalism stalks through the land with horrible gestures. Poverty, which is meek, becomes unemployment, which is bitter and reckless, and that is why the rich discuss it, as they do not discuss poverty.

Ah! how it punctures, like a surgeon's lance, the pussy sac of capitalistic hypocrisy! They can ignore the state of the poor no longer; they can offer no more spiritual remedies, no more tonic of "Americanization," no more settlement houses or "profit-sharing" schemes. Starving men are realists, and want jobs and bread, and society while it remains competitive, will never be able to guarantee them.

In every unemployment crisis that I can remember the same flurry of relief work and unemployment schemes of liberal thinkers has rushed through the capitalist world. The present unemployment famine in America has shown the familiar symptoms of capitalist panic, inefficiency and downright dirty thievery. All the old familiar faces have been seen. There have been the road-building propagandists, the free-lodging-house Samaritans, the Christian soup-line superintendents, the seasonal trade-standardization sharks, the federal employment agency Dr. Munyons, the high taxes howlers, the reduced freight-rate Lydia Pinkhams—all, all have given their song and dance before the footlights.

George M. Cohan says that "the American flag has saved many a bum show," but this is the bummiest show in the world, and we are sick of the liberalistic and governmental performers in it. They seem so wise and serious; they burst into such epic pages of statistics; but they have never done anything to solve unemployment and they never can.

In less than ten years there will be another fierce, dreadful wave of unemployment—another American famine.

I am not a divinely-informed prophet who say this—any American workingman will give you the same information.

Yes, if a chart were made of the flow of capitalist bunk during the present emergency the curves would be found closely similar to those of the previous crises. They can do nothing—they do not wish to do anything. They have not the courage, the intelligence, or the passionate human love that can be stung to horror by the sight of seven millions of human beings starving in the midst of plenty. They are money-makers all—predatory, unscrupulous, vain, cal-





lous, money-mad, ignorant and hypocritical.

It is interesting to make up the chart of their blundering criminality in this present crisis. For months the labor newspapers had been speaking of unemployment. Workingmen knew what was happening, because it was happening to them. But the first day that it was noticed in the capitalistic press, so far as I can find, was on June 4th of this year. The Hoover Committee on Waste reported that more than a million men were out of work in free America. It also said, in passing, that between four and five million men had been jobless during January and February.

This was the prologue to the "bum" show that followed, and that is still being played on the national boards. The riot of hypocrisy that has broken loose in the six months since then! The ocean of drivel, ignorance and well-wishing folly! It has been a sordid spectacle, one fit to drive a simple, clean, honest, social-minded dog or wolf to bay at the moon.

*June 6th*—Department of Labor report says unemployment rose during May, and that no marked revival of business must be expected before the spring of 1922.

*June 12th*—The steel mills at Pittsburgh are now running at only 20 per cent of their capacity.

*June 13th*—The annual convention of the American Federation of Labor is about to open. Mr. Gompers outlines the major issues for the newspapers—unemployment, immigration, the open shop, railroad rates, and "the problem of Russian affairs, the cancer that is eating at the vitals of the world."

*June 16th*—President Hopkins of Dartmouth, in commencement address, "Urges Education to Curb Discontent." (*Tennyson and Browning for the men sleeping in the parks!*)

*June 21st*—From the Amherst College centennial, a headline reading: "Coolidge Urges Spiritual Values—Declares They Are the World's Only Reliance in Dealing With Present Problems."

*July 3rd*—The New York Times, which gives problems like unemployment half a column a week, devotes eleven eight-column pages to the Dempsey-Carpentier prize fight. *Half-a-million words!*

*July 4th*—The New York Times reprints the Declaration of Independence in a large ornamental box on its first page.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men were created free and equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness \* \* \*"

*July 7th*—Dr. Thomas W. Salmon tells a Senate committee that 400 ex-soldiers committed suicide in New York state in the previous year, and that most of them would be alive had they received the proper attention.

*July 12th*—Three hundred unemployed ex-service men in Bridgeport march on the city offices and ask for work. They get a speech.

*August 5th*—First news of the horrible famine in Russia. Every newspaper in America exults, crows, chortles, slobbers with glee, grows grave and moral, points the obvious lesson, that under American democracy such things could not happen.

But how about this?

*August 8th*—"A suicide wave has spread over the United States since the first of the year," according to Dr. Harry M. Warren, President of the Save-a-Life League. "In the first six months of this year there were no fewer than 6,509 suicides reported."

Unsettled economic conditions, with loss of employment and business failures, are blamed by Dr. Warren for the "wave."

"The League gets thousands of letters from different parts of the country telling of sorrows beyond endurance, and begging for any possible help," says Dr. Warren. "Quantities of inspirational literature which the League provides free of charge have been sent out, but more funds are needed."





(*Inspirational literature for the starving unemployed father of a family about to shoot himself. Doctor, what he wants is a job!*)

August 23rd—Hundreds of American men and boys, unemployed, enlist in New York in the Spanish Foreign Legion to fight in Morocco in the shabby little imperialist war conducted by the ancient oppressor of Cuba. The men are to be paid 60 cents a day. Most of them, when interviewed by bright young reporters, divulged the fact that they did not care for fighting, were not looking for adventure, but were starving, and enlisted for the three meals a day. (*What strange brains the masters have developed in their yahoos! Men become desperate enough to kill themselves, to go to Africa to fight savage tribesmen in the desert, but they are not brave enough to stay at home and break the bonds of the rich which have condemned them to starvation. The victim shouts, "Long Live the King!" as the royal axe falls on his head.*)

August 30th—Mayor Hylan appoints a fine-looking set of civic statesmen on an Unemployment Committee to solve the great problem. John Sullivan, President of the local A. F. of L. council, is a prominent member. Splendid things are to be done. It is a crucial hour, says the Mayor; half a million men are out of jobs in the city, of whom 75,000 are ex-service men. Something must be done.

Sept 1st—Bird S. Coler, of the Mayor's Committee, and Commissioner of Public Welfare, says no unemployed men need go hungry or without a place to sleep this winter. The city has provided for all.

Sept. 9th—Urbain Ledoux holds his first slave market auction of unemployed men on Boston Common.

Sept. 19th—Mayor Hylan calls on all patriotic citizens to help in the crisis, and suggests a Business Revival Week as a remedy for unemployment.

The Boston Labor Council deplored Ledoux's auction block, and asked Mayor Peters to forbid the use of the Common again.

Sept. 20th—Ledoux comes to New York and the police club and break up his meetings. President Harding announces a great unemployment conference in Washington, for which he names all the social workers, professors, bankers, mayors, business men, lawyers and labor leaders who usually go in for this form of parlor game. Gompers and Schwab are members of the pleasant, bunk-shooting party.

Sept. 21st—Forty men being given sandwiches and cake in Bryant Park by six benevolent old women are clubbed and beaten by the police, and several of the old ladies are knocked down.

Sept. 27th—Opening of the grand unemployment conference at Washington. Harding makes a speech in his best manner, filled with his usual weird, mysterious circumlocutions, his small town pomposities, bar-room nobilities, Sunday-school pieties. The high spots:

"There is always unemployment. Under the most fortunate conditions, I am told, there are one and a half millions in the United States who are not at work."

"You are not asked to solve the long controverted problems of our social system. We have builded the America of to-day on the fundamentals of economic, industrial and political life which have made us what we are and the temple requires no remaking now."

(*In other words, the Conference is solemnly instructed to do nothing, since capitalism must not be tampered with in*

*any way, and unemployment is a fundamental and necessary part of it.*)

Sept. 27th—Ledoux goes to Washington with a party of unemployed to see the President. He asks Harding to publish the names of those who made more than 100 per cent profit during the war. "Mr. Harding was most kind and courteous, and listened sympathetically, but he said it was impossible to do this under the present laws." Ledoux also asked the President to issue a proclamation appealing to the generosity of the rich in help of the jobless, but the President listened sympathetically to this also, and said it would be done only as a last resort.

Sept. 28-29-30—The Conference still meets at Washington. It still discusses the ten or twelve stock solutions of unemployment that can be found in any liberal journal, and need not be repeated here. It adjourns finally to October.

October 10th—The newspapers say that the conference may break up. Gompers threatens to resign, as he has learned the employers plan to carry through resolutions recommending the open shop and a general wage reduction as the only cure for unemployment. What was the conference called for? To solve unemployment. Who believed it would solve unemployment? The Christian Endeavor leagues, the settlement house Messiahs, the keeper of the general store at Tibb's Corners, Mr. Gompers, and about eighty millions of other faithful and newspaper-reading Americans, including the editors of the New Republic.

The American Association for Labor Legislation, the accredited mouthpiece of the most liberal elements in the country, offers a cure for unemployment as follows:

- 1—Federal employment agencies.
- 2—Great public works.
- 3—Regularization of industry.
- 4—Unemployment insurance.

But the New York Times says editorially, "a certain degree of unemployment is curative of many social disorders." And Harding says to the conference, "There has been vast unemployment before, and there will be again. There will be depression after inflation, just as surely as the tides ebb and flow, but we can mitigate, we can shorten duration, we can commit all America to relief."

Let us leave them, the sedentary swarm of politicians, uplifters, and place-seeking liberals, and go out into the open air again, where rain falls on starving men, and revolutions are made. Let the talkers mitigate, shorten duration, and commit all America to relief, while we seek the facts of life. Unemployment is not a thing in books, a matter of figures and graphic charts. It is the raw brutal terrible reality of starvation and cold and death. It is famine and desperation, and it must be felt as one feels the death of a friend if it is to be understood. The liberal intellectualistic attitude seems to be that one must not grow emotional over the social facts, but that one must study, ponder, collect data, write articles in the liberal journals and economists' reviews, read many books and attend many conferences. One must do nothing. To do anything is not a mark of serious thought. One must be genteel and restrained. One must not become what H. G. Wells calls the "Forgodsaker!"

Have any of these gentlemen ever really stood about in the freezing rain in thin rags, hungry, jobless, friendless, half-dead with worry? I have. Millions of men in this country are doing this to-day, and for them it is an emergency, not the academic problem it is for the liberals. The

truth is, the college trained man who is always sure of a fair job, the minister, the lawyer, all the bourgeois thinkers, can never understand these proletarian problems as they must be understood. What the liberal movement needs in this country is what the Russian movement needed in the seventies, a return to the people. Let them get into labor unions, the factories, the mines, and the farm granges. Let them write directly to the people when they have anything to say. Upton Sinclair seems naive and full of infantile indiscretions of thought to the over-cultured, but he is the greatest propagandist in America to-day because he has always written to the masses, and not to the limited groups who read George Santayana and Thorstein Veblen.

So many fine articles, so many well-spun, well-balanced, well-informed glossy articles were written on unemployment in our liberal and radical weeklies; and then a man of simple, direct feelings appeared on the scene and did more in two weeks than the rest had done in ten years. Urbain Ledoux came and found great masses of men starving. He conceived a dramatic method of flinging their misery into the teeth of polite society, and he acted on it. His slave market was a great inspiration, and it has brought forth more fruit than could have been believed. No one will ever do anything for the unemployed until they organize themselves and force some sort of recognition from the society that tries to forget them. Ledoux saw this. His trip to the President, with his "human documents" and his demand for a list of the war profiteers was an event that rang from coast to coast as no article ever could. It was an act, and acts do something.

Ledoux is a follower of Abdul Bahai; he has many sweet, quaint, foolish metaphysical obsessions; he is an early Primitive in economics; he does not like to worry the authorities, has a deep respect for law and order, but nevertheless he is a man—a full-blooded, passionate, brave and impressive social man. And he knows the people. The American radicals can teach him economics, but he can teach them how to move the people.

"Human documents?" Yes, Ledoux is right; they are the truest books from which one can study the facts of the class struggle. One can controvert a theory, an article or a pamphlet, but who can answer the dumb eyes of a starving, jobless man? What Presidential rhetoric is there that can clothe and feed the forsaken millions, and give them friends and warmth and a human and happy place in life? What have statistics to say on a cold night to the men huddling in Bryant Park, and what message has Parsonry for the hollow bellies and aching hearts? What cheer brings Good Taste, that delicate scribe who fills the professional journals, and what east-wind nourishment are the multitudes to suck from the valiant speeches that fill the congressional halls and aldermanic chambers of the nation?



Ah! liars, hypocrites, rogues, and sluggards! word-bedazzled office men and frock-coated congressional bores! wealthy pimps of the souls of men, financiers, bankers, statesmen, economists, professors, white-collared lackeys and fools! you are digging well, silly moles, at the foundations of your stately civilization. It will fall. These slow, suffering masses who drift about your cities and whom you insult, will awake some day and will rend you. Patience and ignorance are not eternal. Do not count on them forever. Justice is a pyre that must be heaped to the heavens before it bursts into flame. But O, the great leaping, red cleansing conflagration at the end; O, the holy ashes from which the Phoenix shall rise!

I went about New York for several days with Hugo Gellert, the artist, to see the human documents of the famine in America, to see the patient, ignorant men whom the rich are killing and taming in this periodical Spartan massacre of the helots. One morning we stood before a bread-line on the Bowery. The dawn had forced its way through the sullen wall of sky. There was a faint, bitter light in the city like that on drowned ships. The houses were stern and charred remnants against the sky; they were smouldering in gloom. The elevated roared by, strange dark Caliban rushing on the errands of man. All was old and bitter. Thousands of tired men and women, half-asleep and bloodless, were on their way to the factories. Wagons rattled by. It was the black, black city of New York, and before a mission of Jesus Christ, who died for Love, as Keats died for Beauty, and as Liebnecht died that there might be bread and peace in the world, three hundred men were shivering in line.

They had waited for an hour or more in the darkness and cold; they were soon to be rewarded with coffee and stale crullers. Who were they? Who make up the unemployed? Workers all; three huge ruddy lumberjacks from the Maine woods, standing proudly and sombrely as dying trees; dozens of sailors, in their rough clothes; battered, emaciated factory hands, dazed old derelicts with white, unshaven chins and watery eyes; strong young men, veterans of the war, hanging their heads in shame, stokers, cooks, waiters, mechanics, farmers, drivers, clerks and longshoremen, the useful citizens of the world, the creators of wealth, the hard-handed architects of society.

They did not speak; they stood there with hands thrust deep in pockets, braced against the wind; they were dumb; each understood the other's shame; it was not necessary to say anything, one to the other. I, too, felt ashamed, as I stood and watched; for I had five dollars in my pockets, besides the certainty of a month's living.

These men had nothing.

The Bowery is a little city of the damned. It is the bottom of the whirlpool that sucks forever downward the frail boat of the wage worker. Here men come when they have failed in the economic struggle, when they have made a misstep to one side or the other in the eternal tight-rope balancing over the precipice of hunger that is the proletarian life. Here they come when they are weakest, and seek Lethe in drink and dirt and shiftlessness. Here they come when they are sick and friendless, and need a quiet place to die.

There are 600,000 men out of work in the imperial city of New York, 75,000 of whom are veterans of the war for democracy, freedom, life, homes, wives, children, music, laughter, recreation, health, friendship—Jobs.





The Bowery is always full of homeless wanderers, but now it is crowded with these men. The unemployed swarm on every corner, and in all the missions and lousy lodging-houses, blue with pipe-smoke. We went into one of the missions that are scattered so freely under the hurtling elevated structure that mounts the Bowery. These are the missions of those who are rich and who preach humility and brotherly love to those who are poor. It was a long, bare room, with a reading table at which some men sat sleeping for the few hours before they would be turned out into the night. A smuggy, cheap shrine stood in one corner, and over the reading table was hung an American flag. A hundred men in working clothes and overalls sat about—silent and sullen. They did not speak—there is nothing to say when men are hungry. They sat and waited.

No watchful priest or attendant was about, and a drunken man had come in. He staggered about, a thick-set Swede with a raw, red face and blue, wondering babyish eyes, offering everyone a drink of rot-gut from a quart bottle. No one would take it. No one would joke with him, or answer him.

"Aw, c'm on, less all be happy," he pleaded. "C'm on, fellas, less be happy!"

But they were too hungry and sane to be happy in this way. Happiness does not come out of a bottle, nor is it found in a phrase. It will only come when men are free and creative, when they are never hungry or afraid, when the Red Flag waves over the whole wonderful earth, and there are no rich or poor.

Around Cooper Union, where the Bowery splits off into Fourth avenue, the unemployed sit on the benches under the shadow of the statue of Peter Cooper, who invented some marvelous machine or other that has reduced the burden of labor. They sit there every day and every night. They rarely speak. They sit and wait. They read old newspapers, and watch the busy people go by. They dream of nothing—they are hungry. They sit and wait.

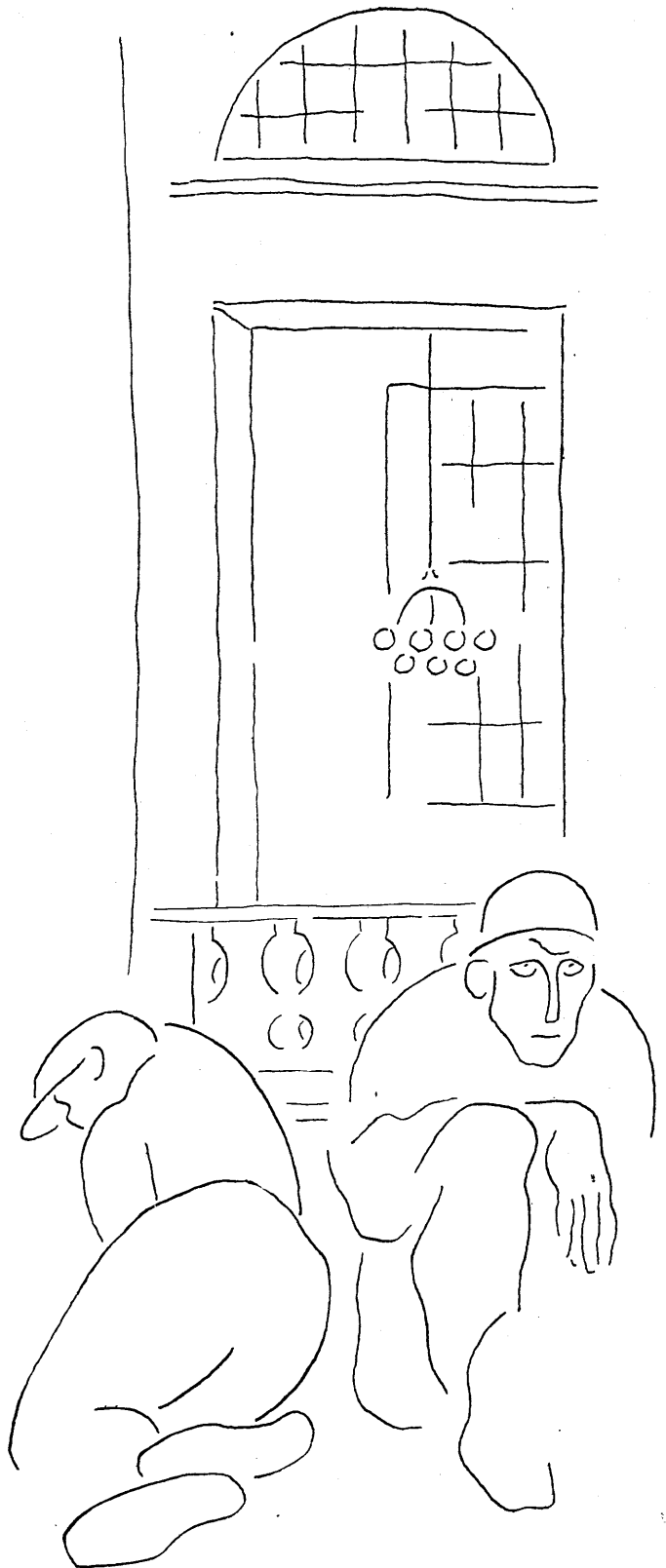
There is the Bowery Y. M. C. A., a massive red-brick structure with hundreds of rooms and beds for those who have jobs and can pay. The unemployed flock here, too—we saw hundreds of them one night watching the free moving pictures that are provided for the starving. A handsome young bank president fights on the screen a villainous Wall Street broker for the hand of the most beautiful camel-hair-eyebrowed heroine in the world. Ah, what a theme for the downcast hearts of starving men—what a banquet of comfort and joy! There was a big bulletin board in the lobby, with a bold legend chalked on it: "GOD FORGIVES AND FORGETS—WHY NOT YOU?"

A dapper little superintendent came up to us, looking at Hugo's portfolio with interest, as we were reading this masterpiece of the Christian brain.

"Ah, an artist!" he said with the ready professional smile, and he offered to shake our hands, but we turned away in contempt.

Forgive and forget!

It rained the next morning as we set out on our rounds, the city lay wrapped in a grey, weary smoke of rain. The faces of the houses were wet, the pavements underfoot were slimy as an eel, there was a chill wind that drove the rain. The damp must have penetrated through the paper-thin shoes of the homeless thousands, the wind must have cut through their greasy, wrinkled rags. Along the Bowery one



saw knots of them flattened out against the walls of the damp buildings and cowering in doorways. They were still dumb—and they seemed even sadder and lonelier than yesterday; the gray wide chill solitude of the day, when there





was not even the sun, and the city seemed a great cortege of mourning, oppressed these sad outcasts.

About Cooper Square they had abandoned the benches and were standing in doorways and under the sheltered entrance to the Cooper Union library. They were in the reading room, scores of them, gazing like slow-witted kine through the endless page of the meadow-wide newspapers; they did not read with intelligence, as do men of brains and perception such as ourselves, they were thinking of the coming night, when they would have to go out to find a bed and a crust somehow.

Hugo and I went to the Grand Central station where the American Land Brigade had established a farm employment bureau for ex-service men. About four hundred men had applied here daily for jobs, the papers said, and about thirty and forty a day got them. The bureau took up a great marble corridor on the west side of the station, a gigantic balcony overlooking the shuffle, the chaos, the movement and splendid excitement of the main floor of the station.

Hundreds of young men were here, all with the bronze service button in their lapels, many with the silver button that tells of heroic wounds. These were the boys who had been martyred for Wilson's ideals. These were the boys who had been roasted in a hell hotter than the insane creation imagined by the Christian priesthood. These were the boys who had shed blood for freedom. Now they stood about in beggar's rags, hungry and jobless, with the dumb, animal look that one sees everywhere in these faces. The nation that had sainted them, that had demanded the "supreme sacrifice" of them, now turned them away like mongrel dogs.

Scores of them were lying on the bare marble floor, sleeping in all this din. Others squatted about on their haunches, miserably conversing. Above them and around them was the huge, wonderful monument of American industrialism, the superb arch of ceiling, a blue sky dotted with golden stars, the great Romanesque square columns, tall as mountains, the marble floors and walls and balustrades, luxury unbounded. It was a fitting frame to their misery. It was American shallowness, putting all its ardor and idealism into steel and stone, and letting men decay. It was American hypocrisy, a gorgeous body in which beat a putrid and inhuman heart. At ten o'clock every night these veterans were put out of the marble corridor, and they too must find the crust of bread and the sleeping place somehow in the immense unfriendly city.

Scores of other ex-service men make a dwelling place these days of Bryant Park, which is a fine green square next to the wonderful Public Library at Fifth avenue and Forty-second street. Hundreds of the unemployed have made this park their rendezvous; the whole place can be seen crowded with hungry idle men every day, sprawling over the benches, sleeping on the grass, moving up and down the walks in close companionship like sheep in a storm. They have formed some sort of organization here, and have their own law-and-order committee and other representatives. Charitable men and women come here and distribute sandwiches and clothing occasionally, and Ledoux held some meetings with them, and once or twice even the men were afforded the good old lesson that the State is not the friend of the workers, and were clubbed by the police.

The cold, lustral rain that was still falling had driven all the men out of the park on this day into doorways and other shelters. Fifty of them were jammed as tightly as human



beings can be jammed without adhering into a little recruiting tent on the grass. Five or six of them shivered under a beautiful marble fountain, and a bunch huddled under a noble statue of William Cullen Bryant, poet of Calm and Serenity. In the library reading rooms we found dozens of others, prowling about disconsolately, too distracted to read. The rain fell for about two hours more, and when we came out at least a hundred men were again promenading up and down the walks, for the grass and benches were still wet, and it was cold.

A group of them had gathered about a little runt of a Jew, a five-foot hobo without a collar, who had a droll, wise, shrewd face like a gargoyle's, and the most mischievous little brown eyes. The men loved him, he was their fun-maker and jester. They buffeted him about, they kicked him and slapped him affectionately and he laughed and dodged their rough blows.

"Come on, Shorty, make us a speech!" they cried.

"G'wan, I ain't the Mayor!"

"Come on, ye gotta, Shorty! Give us a speech!"

They stood him on a bench, and he grinned like a satyr, and put his hand in his old dusty coat, like a statesman.

"Ahem!" he began pompously, and the crowd rocked with glee.

Other men came running up for the fun that is the great heroic gesture of mankind in misery. Someone produced a long false beard that had been gotten God-knows-where. Another stuck his derby on Shorty, and a clean, middle-aged man, who looked like a respectable clerk, took out his precious glasses from their case and lent them to Shorty.

How they roared as they saw their favorite in this wonderful make-up! They could not contain their laughter; they slapped each other on the backs, and the tears came to their eyes.

"Give us a speech, Shorty!" they shouted.

"Gen'lmen," Shorty began, lifting a dirty hand, "attenshin. I'm goin' to undress you all on a great subjec'. Lissen; I'm a Bullshevik, and I wanta ye to vote for me, see?" "Hooray!" the crowd roared.

"I'm goin' tuh speak on unemployments. You know what



that woid means, donchyer? It means bein' a millionaire without any money, see? Well, I just come back from Washington, boys, where I seen President Harding. He wuz playin' gol-luf on his front lawn when I come up to see him, and when I told him I come from the Bryant Park boys he says he's too busy; he's only got time to see the boys from Fifth avenue. But then, when he found out that he used to buy his chewin'-tobacco from a rich uncle of mine that runs a tobacco store in Marion, Ohio, he seen me, 'cause he knew I wuz honest.

"I told him about the unemployments, and he lissened. Then he says, 'Shorty, I'm sorry to see you're hangin' out with that Bryant Park bunch. They're a bad lot, and they'll spoil ye. Ye're too good for them—'"

Here the crowd hauled Shorty down with a great whoop of indignation and pummeled him amid uncontrolled laughter. Shorty dodged about like a cat; he came up on his feet every time; nothing would ever keep Shorty down for long. He was the perfect city gamin, and he was in his element here. They set him up on the bench again. He took out a few frayed green cigar store coupons and held them up between his fingers.

"Some kind gen'men has just given me a hundred dollars for the boys out of work," he said with a big grin. "Who'll give me another hundred?"

He read several telegrams from an old yellow pad someone handed up to him.

"Bryant Park Committee—Send a hundred boys over to Blake's restaurant for supper. Tell them to walk quietly by two and threes and make no noise. We don't like noise, especially the way they eat soup.

(Signed)

The Holy Rollers."

There were loud cheers.

"Another telegram, gen'l'men.

"Bryant Park Committee—Send two hundred fellers over here for a job Monday morning—seven o'clock—at the workhouse. (Signed) The Board of Health."

"Yes, gen'l'men, they're doin' everything they can for us. They all got kind hearts, and some day they're goin' to give us the earth, yes, they are. An' I'm goin' to be President some day, and I'll give ye all jobs, and we'll have gol-luf parties on the White House lawn, yes, we will."

It was just fooling; it was the unconscious wisdom of the proletariat, that waits for its proper time to burst through all the shells and shams; it was Gavroche predicting the tumbrils, and they understood him, these men, though he did not know all he was saying, nor did they. The grim jests of the proletariat; they have tumbled down many a throne!

Someone said to me the other night:

"But how *do* these men live?"

I don't know; they live somehow; and many of them die.

I was coming through Union Square one night. A young fellow stepped out of a doorway and asked me for a cigarette. I gave it to him, and gave him some money, too. Then I talked with him for a moment. He was a young, clean-looking chap, with a strong, lean American face, and blue, friendly eyes in which the tears shone as he unburdened himself to me.

"God, I don't know how this'll end for me. I've been out of work four months now. Haven't eaten for two days. I

can ask for a cigarette, but haven't got the nerve to ask for money. The cops would pick me up, anyway, and I'd rather starve out here than behind bars. Used to be a mechanic in the Altoona railroad shops, but there isn't a thing doin' anywhere. A thousand men for every job. I get to places at six in the morning and they're already taken, and a big mob hangin' around outside. God! it's hell! I never knew I could get so low!

"How do I live? I don't know; parks, handouts, that sort of stuff. Haven't eaten for two days now, and wuz just getting to the point where I didn't care. God, look at all those autos goin' by, hundreds of them all day. It makes me sick to look at 'em sometimes; people with money, and I don't know where I'm goin' to sleep to-night. I never knew the world could be like this!"

No one seems to know. He wrapped himself again in the obscurity of the door-way, and shivered in his lonely misery. Half a million men in the city, without friends, without women, without food and shelter, without a single one of the simple, warm, human earthy things that make Life bearable! And the city does not care. The preachers preach their sermons; the poets write their delicate lyrics; the business men sit in their fine offices, solemnly conducting the world's affairs; the politicians make fine speeches; the debutantes give their dances; the actors strut about the stages; the editorial writers ladle out words of wisdom; there is laughter, life, color, wine, wealth; the whole monstrous city moves down its primrose path, like a courtesan plying her trade in the very shadow of the cross on which the Son of Man is writhing.

How clean and brave it is in Russia! How much better to starve and die there! There no one hides the hunger of millions behind the folds of a flag! There no one feasts while his brother starves! There misery is inevitable, it is the cruelty of nature, which can be borne, not the cruelty of man to man!

And here nothing will come of it all. We will know hunger and famine again. "A certain amount of unemployment will always be with us," says the President. Over there they are working, fighting, building, striving to the last nerve to abolish hunger, to create a world out of this misery that will be fair, just and beautiful, with Life for all, even the lowest.

But here all is still dark.

## THE LIBERATOR

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*A Drawing by George Bellows*

### Amaryllis Sings in the Shade

**I**N the dark, in the quiet shade  
I have hidden my flower face,  
The shadows in the glade,  
Fall down like folds of lace.

I have loosened my long hair,  
In the dark, in the quiet shade,  
I can see nothing there,  
But a pool where the shadows wade.

The leaves fall into the pool,  
Each like a quiet thought,  
I drink the beautiful,  
Like a silver draught.

I shall not be afraid  
Of the ghostlike stars that creep,  
In the dark, in the quiet shade,  
Where the shadows sleep.

I shall not start in fright,  
When the rabbits run,  
But tender-shaded night,  
Oh, shield me from the sun!

Shield me from life, and the light,  
For I dare not see  
The world and its blazing sight  
That the darkness hides from me.

In the dark, in the quiet shade,  
Be kind, oh quiet night,  
Oh pools where the shadows wade,  
Save me from life, and the light!

Marya Zaturensky.

### Galleon Dawn

**B**LUE day, high day,  
Sailing past mine eyes,  
Like a graceful galleon  
Bound for Paradise—  
New day, tall day,  
Tell your cargo's worth,  
Let your masthead clip for me  
Horizons of mirth. . . .  
Slow ship, go ship,  
But let me first surmise  
What you bear: Nippon ware,  
Peacock vanities,  
Mauve silk, pale fan,  
Brought by wavering caravan,  
Indolent perfume, Mandarin dyes,  
Ivory carved in Hindustan,  
All unload and load again  
For my hungry eyes.

I shall stand upon the shore,  
Fleet day, fair day,  
Knowing that you come no more  
Down this way—

I shall see your proud head  
Specked upon the skies,  
I shall stand with bowed head  
And hungry, hidden eyes,  
Graceful, graceful galleon—  
So faint . . . so far . . . so wise

Lois Montross.



# A Mulatto Girl

## In Police Court

THE long migration's ended now. The town  
Has trapped them and they know not where to turn.  
From jungle clearings where the hot suns burn  
They came, and now, as bootblack, waitress, clown,  
Old Abyssinia's children stare or frown  
And wonder why their masters do not learn.  
The iron door swings, men sneer, the judge grows stern;  
Young Sheba comes to trial for being brown.

The pumas and the panthers white men keep  
In cages; chains and red-hot irons will quell  
The riot and cut down the panther's leap.  
And she, dark jungle beauty, soon will tell  
How once she crooned a white man's child to sleep,  
Yet soon will pass from tenement to cell.

Your Honor, Judge, I seen her go in a room with this here  
white man; and says he paid her five dollars.

Oh! You get a good price from the white boys, hey?

I'd rather be a prostitute among friends than a despised  
nurse maid and kitchen helper for those who hate me.

Most of my customers at least appreciate my body; they at  
least think it's too bad I have to sell it to live decently.

You don't look as if you ever did any real work.

The white folks I worked for, Judge, acted as if they thought  
this was what I ought to do. They seemed to fear that  
if they paid me good wages I would spend the money for  
pretty clothes, for advertising purposes.

Judging by your appearance, they were right. And you can't  
come here insulting your superiors. . . . Thirty days.

Her grandma was a cotton-picking slave.  
Her mother wed a man from Tennessee.  
And here she stands, unable to be free  
Because she is so beautifully brave.  
She stands long-limbed and lovely near the suave  
Derisive judge and hears the penalty.  
They call her now a prostitute, "C. P.,"  
And joke about a syphilitic grave.

They shove her out and call another case.  
Obscurely now among the crowd there slips  
Her lover with her shadow on his face;  
They took his girl upon the workhouse trip,  
So will he pray to God to save his race,  
Or will he tote a pistol on his hip?

## The Deserted Room

WITHIN a little room on Mullet Street  
The shadows darken and the curtains stir;  
The bed against the wall is just a blur  
Of white, and on the floor a trampled sheet.  
Now comes no muffled sound of stealthy feet  
And now no bidding for the lips of her.  
Only one tries the door where many were,  
Only the glum policeman on the beat.

And when she's free from jail she'll not come here  
Again. The bulls would watch. Yet this is where,  
For one brief space of misery and fear,  
She sold her love as poets sell their ware.  
This was her beauty's garret, now so drear,  
Where proud she seemed with roses in her hair.

Stirling Bowen.

## A Question

DARK-VOICED and deeply passioned as the dim  
Vermillion-lighted mysteries of faith and music  
In cathedrals old and holy;

Dusk-eyed and velvet-throated as the slim  
Young warm Madonna-Magdalens of saints  
In painted windows rich with melancholy;

Dear friend and distant stranger: when the sum  
Of all our light, our wisdom, is gone out,  
And night has dimmed the candle of her vesper,

Do you not sometimes simply rise and come,  
Feeling along the ray of my desire  
With silent hands and barefoot steps that whisper?

I see the dusky circles of your eyes  
Like burnt hot torches in your moon-pale flesh,  
Your lips like warm wounds painted on its pallor,

Your quickened vivid breasts that fall and rise  
Only too tenderly to pierce the veil  
That clings on them, but cannot hide their color;

It cannot hide the flowing of your limbs,  
The pure bold flame of motion that you are—  
Earth's vestal unto earth's divine communion.

Is it a lonely phantom that but swims  
Up from the depth of my own long desire?  
Has not my dream in yours a dream-companion?

Your speech is motion—mine is poetry.  
You will not answer what I dare to ask;  
You will flow silent as a sacred river.

And I who watch you in sad ecstasy,  
Have said my question as a saint his prayer,  
To float with you in your still breast forever.

Max Eastman.



The Blue Laws Reach Heaven



# Chop Suey

By Francis Edwards Faragoh

HER name was Narcissa, and such a name in a neighborhood of Rosies and Esthers and Yettas was sure to cause trouble. She sold the papers in the little booth underneath the steps of the elevated. There were laughs in her blue eyes and a million silent songs in the yellow-gold waves of her hair.

She had never walked hand in hand with love. Kisses of her adolescent playmates meant just fun to her. She did not understand thieving fingers that lingered in her palm as they placed there coins for the papers. At night she went home to her mother, to the small third-floor flat, to the tarnished brass bed, a relic of more prosperous days, and slept undisturbed, colorless sleeps. But her name was Narcissa.

Normally, she should have been a stenographer. All the girls in the neighborhood were stenographers. But while it was easy for the Yettas and Sadies to go to the corner "business college," a girl whose name happened to be Narcissa could not be expected to keep her pink fingers on the keys of a typewriter. So she stayed at home, reading, looking into mirrors, draping her developing body with fantastic hangings, sitting at the window to drink in the champagne of East Side life as it leapt up from the narrow, crowded streets.

That was in the days of Papa Goodman's prosperity. The ready-made pants business was very successful, and the family talked of moving to the Bronx. Even her mother no longer stayed at the small "factory" in the back of the store. There was a new girl in her place now to do the basting. Mrs. Goodman could stay at home to read gayly covered Yiddish translations of French novels, romances, stories of adventure. Now she had time to go to the movies and dream stories of glory for Narcissa in the dark, breath-warmed fairy palace of make-believe.

Mrs. Goodman had always been a patron of the movies and of the little East Side theatres where, for a small price, one could identify one's poor, work-beaten person with the suffering mothers of the stage, with the proud mothers who married their daughters to handsome, dark, curly-haired doctors and lawyers after many trials and sacrifices. Mrs. Goodman, during these years, lived again the happy life of her girlhood, a life that had really started with secret, laugh-smothered kisses on the bank of a dirty, sun-swept Russian river, and ended in the sweat-stained back room of her husband's factory.

This sentimental streak in Mrs. Goodman's suppressed, never fully awakened soul was responsible for the name Narcissa. To her it meant great ladies, princesses perhaps—ladies. And while Papa Goodman continued to enlarge the business, adding more and more workers and more and more ready-made pants to his stock, such a name was justifiable.

But Papa Goodman worked too hard. His great will could not battle against the disease that was the price of furious work-mad nights in the "factory." His body, that had starved its way to success, could not stay with him in the fight. He died.

There was little money left. After the tears of the funeral, after the eight-day vigil in stockinged feet, during which she received the gift-bearing relatives in dramatic

silence, Mrs. Goodman once more became lost in the purple clouds of dreams. She could not continue the business. And so she bought the booth under the elevated steps, and there Narcissa sold papers. It would have been nicer for her to go to "business." But filing girls received only ten dollars a week. There was more money in selling papers in the booth, where some beauty-struck nervous patron would always forget to ask for his change.

Narcissa liked selling papers. There were people about her, there was the noise of the trains overhead, wonderfully dressed women passed in splendid gowns. For her the East Side held many wonders. She was sixteen now.

On the corner right opposite the booth was a theatre. In front of it, under the large red-white-blue electric sign, were the pictures of actors and actresses—beautiful people, with dreamy eyes and pink faces. The inside of the theatre did not interest her much. The plays bored her, and she thought that those nice people of the pictures acted very silly on the stage. After several experiments she never cared to go to the theatre again.

But the "Chop Suey Palace" on the other corner, just across the street, was different. The very word "palace" called to her mind marble walls and drooping trees, knights, proud, beautiful ladies, golden coins. She knew of such things from her mother, who, after they had eaten their lonely suppers of fish and thick, greasy soup, used to tell her of the wonders of romance.

"Chop Suey!" That was the perfume of the Orient, the caressing music of unseen harps. Dreamy, pale-faced men in white sheets. . . . Clouds of settling smoke. . . . Wild dances that ended in whispers and died away in the blue shadows.

She did not know what the two Chinese words meant. Once she asked a man—and he smiled and replied with an ugly question which she understood instinctively. After that she did not care to ask others. But as the lights were turned on toward night and soft music filtered out from behind the orange curtains of the windows, she longed to be among the palms, the music.

Once she tried to go up to the "Palace." She walked up the narrow, creaking stairs and passed into the small, dim-lit lobby. But the man at the door, a fat, narrow-eyed Chinaman, shook his head. He said nothing but his pointed fingers, long and yellow, waved her away. She blushed and shamefacedly walked back to her booth. After that the place seemed to her even more mysterious, more fascinating. But she never again attempted to go there.

In front of the theatre stood Moey. He was there every day, from early afternoon till after the time she had closed her booth. Moey was always well-dressed. His wide green cap pulled slightly over his eyes, a cigarette loosely hanging from his lips, he was the picture of content. The narrow, tight coat, its lapels pointing over his shoulders, was always faultlessly pressed. There were sharp creases on his trousers. His face a bit pasty and sunken, was smooth-shaven. And he would stand in front of the theatre all day long, dis-

appearing for hours sometimes, but always coming back to continue his vigil.

Narcissa did not like Moey. He seemed to have no reason for standing there. Of course there were times when Moey appeared busy. That was when other youths slim and well-dressed as Moey himself, came to him. Then the cigarette would come out of his mouth, and his eyes would narrow as he whispered earnestly to the others. Sometimes great ladies would come, ladies in beautiful coats, red-cheeked with flaming lips and bright eyes. Any one of the Sadies and Esthers would have known who these dazzling ladies were, but Narcissa's sixteen-year-old soul had been nurtured on romance!

When these women came, there was generally a smile on Moey's face. His eyes, sleepy at other times, would dart furtively around. And occasionally one of the girls cried. But Moey's smile never disappeared. Narcissa was sorry for the beautiful ladies, and she hated Moey for making them sad. Then she was happy again, for some of the girls would soon be walking with other young men, arm in arm, toward the little boarding house around the corner. However, Moey seemed to enjoy that, and there was satisfaction in his leer.

In the beginning Moey, noticing Narcissa's beauty with experienced eyes, used to come to talk to her. His voice was always low, just the least bit hoarse, and he was always very courteous. But Narcissa did not like him. The rings under his eyes, the loose droop of his lips, repulsed her. When once he touched her arm, the moist, clammy hands nauseated her. After many attempts Moey grinned, shrugged his shoulders, and walked back to his post.

All that, however, was before she saw Moey enter the "Palace." She watched him push his slim body through the swinging door one day and disappear from view. He was on his way to the dreamland. Soon he would sit in the blue, perfumed smoke, bathing himself in the soft music! He was one of the initiated! The man at the door did not wave him away! Narcissa pictured him at the silver fountain, looking through smiling eyes at the white-robed men who had come to him out of the mist. From then on she no longer thought Moey repulsive. He had taken on a romantic color, a garb of mystery. He was one of the elect. He was free to go to paradise and gaze at the marble walls!

This picture was not spoiled for her even when she saw him next day in front of the theatre again, trim and narrow-eyed as ever. For now he was one of the dream-people. And she thought there was a certain wistful beauty in his smile. Even the smoke of his cigarette, as it curled softly upward, seemed purple.

After that she watched for him. He had now become one of the characters of her visions. She felt that it would be nice to speak to him again. Perhaps he would tell her of the castle beyond that door . . . of the music, the bright women. . . . Perhaps some day he would. . . Why, of course he would take her! Not immediately—she did not dare to hope for such luck. But after a while, when they were good friends. . . Her heart filled with passionate longing at the thought.

Then one day Moey did come to her again. This time she smiled and looked into his eyes without terror. His eyes were mild, she noticed. True, they were a bit hazy, but still . . . there seemed to be kindness about them. She was very much ashamed of herself when she felt the old nausea at his touch. How silly! After all, he could not help it if his hands happened to be cold!

The next day she did not draw her arm away. She let him rest his moist, pale palm on her white skin. She listened to his low voice with smiling eyes. What a fool she had been! He was really very nice. And he was permitted to go to the Chop Suey Palace. She had seen him enter!

Their talks became more and more frequent. Moey spent whole afternoons at the newspaper stand. They were very friendly. He joked to her and spoke of her beauty, her hair, her eyes. Narcissa liked this talk. For the first time she thought of herself as a person who had a right to demand admiration.

She did not dare to talk of the Palace. But she stole little glances at the orange windows and caressed the golden letters on them. Then, once, Moey's eyes followed her gaze. He leant closer:

"Nice little place that, across the street!"

Narcissa's heart beat faster. Her eyes danced as she answered:

"Lovely!"

Gently, Moey touched her arm.

"We ought to go there sometime!"

At last! there it was! The wonderful invitation!

"When?" she breathed.

Moey lowered his eyelids. A pleased smile played about his thick lips.

"To-night?" he suggested carelessly.

Narcissa wanted to shout with joy. But she caught herself.

"I—I guess I'll have to go home! My mother . . ."

"Oh, tell her you'll be a little late!"

Timidly she looked up.

"Very?"

"Naw! We'll just have a little supper. . . . Then we'll take an auto ride. I know a nice little roadhouse on the way to Westchester. We can dance there. . . ."

She had never heard of a roadhouse. But one could dance there! Was it another palace, even more glorious than this one on the corner? And an auto ride! Once during those departed days of prosperity she had taken a ride in a taxi. But this was an automobile—a real one!

Narcissa closed her eyes for a moment. A slow, dreamy smile crossed her face. She nodded. And the tight, grateful touch of Moey's hand seemed to her like a caress. . . .

That evening two of the pretty red-cheeked ladies saw Moey lead Narcissa through the swinging door. One of them, a yellow-haired, large-hipped girl, turned to the other.

"Look, there's the Dip with a new girl! Ain't that the jane that was sellin' papers on the corner?"

The other girl, the one with the blue rings under her clouded eyes, nodded.

"Poor kid!" she said. For a moment she seemed to want to go after the pair, but just then a man passed and she smiled up at him, forcing a sham little gaiety into her tired glance.

## II

"Like it here, kid?"

"Yeah, it's all right."

But there was no enthusiasm in Narcissa's voice. She and Moey were seated at a small soiled table of the "Palace." In front of them were coarse, angular Chinese plates, little steaming heaps of rice, tea. In the center, in a red, lacquered pot—Chop Suey! Narcissa wanted to laugh. So this was it! This was the meaning of those glorious golden let-

ters on the windows. Chop Suey! These thin, long slices of onion and meat and celery. Noodles!

In place of the palms and marble fountains there were only ugly tables, dirty chairs, cheap, colored lamps. Slouching, mean, stupid Japanese waiters where she had imagined knights in armor. Ladies? Oh, yes, there they were, sleepy, painted editions of the ones she knew from the street. Curiously, they could no longer deceive her. She felt, if she did not understand, the tales in their eyes.

"What's the matter, kid? Got the blues or somethin'?"

"No, Moey! I—I guess I must be tired. It's nothin'."

Moey leaned across the table. His smooth, oily hair almost touched her face. "Gee, you sure look good to me tonight. I could eat you up instead of this chop suey!"

She drew back. That ashen, grinning face again frightened her. She knew that in a moment she would have to scream. In her throat there was a dry, empty ache, and her hands trembled.

Then the music started. With sinking heart she realized that it came from a mechanical piano in the corner. A little formless terror came into her eyes. Where were the white-garbed musicians? The golden harps, the violins, the flutes? Where was the caressing velvet of the songs? This music was harsh, coarse. It leapt up and struck her face. It jeered at her, mocked her.

Moey placed a hand on her arm. "Wanna dance, Babie?"

An hour ago such an invitation would have meant dreamy waltzes under soft-hued lanterns to her. Now?

She rose, nevertheless, and allowed Moey to lead her to the little clearing in front of the piano. She let him put his arm around her waist. As his hand touched hers, she once more felt that disagreeable bitter feeling rise in her mouth. Moey started to move to the music. Listlessly she followed. A loud, jarring chord came from the instrument. Moey crushed her helpless body against his slim form, and she could feel the greedy hand tighten on her flesh. Dizzily she whirled to the cruel sound of the piano. She no longer knew where she was. The tables, chairs, painted women, smelly dishes all seemed to have melted into a hazy mass that threatened to crush her any moment. She felt Moey's hot breath on her face. She felt his clammy body against hers. . . Round and round, faster, always faster . . . his leering eyes biting into her neck, her hair. . .

Suddenly, with a sharp sob, Narcissa stopped. She pushed Moey's encircling arms away from her body. Her eyes, a moment ago moist with passive impotence, now shone with a hysteric glow. Her hands, feeling soiled from his touch, dropped inertly to her sides.

Moey seized her shoulder.

"What's the matter with you? Ain't you feelin' good?"

Tears came into Narcissa's terror-stricken eyes. Her mouth twitched and her words came in a panicky gasp.

"Don't you touch me! Don't you dare to touch me!"

Then, as Moey still continued his hold on her shoulder:

"You hear? You lemme alone. . . ."

The dancers stopped. Some of them laughed. The crimson of rage came into Moey's sunken cheeks.

"What the hell is the trouble with you?" he snarled.

But Narcissa no longer heard him. She was on her way to the door, her cheap little hat and faded coat forgotten on the chair. From a table near the door a quiet, gray-haired man rose.

"Can I help you, miss?"

"You lemme alone . . . lemme alone . . ."

The man's soothing voice. "It's all right, girlie! I'm an inspector. . . . Did that fellow try to do anything to you?"

People now crowded about them. On the outside of the ring Narcissa could see the angry, purple face of Moey.

"Come, tell me what he tried to do?"

Narcissa could not speak. Silently she shook her head. One of the girls grinned.

"Aw, what the hell, officer! Moey won't hurt a fly!"

Laughter greeted this. Rage rose in Narcissa. She shook her fist at the speaker.

"That's a lie! A lie! He tried to . . ."

Again the voice of the inspector: "Well, tell us!"

Weeping frankly now, her voice broken by sobs, Narcissa whispered: "He . . . he took me up here!"

"Took you up here. Yes! And . . . ?"

With wild eyes she looked at the speaker.

"He spoiled everything."

The inspector's tone betrayed impatience.

"Now, cool down and tell us all about it. What else?"

"What else?"

"Why . . . yes! There's nothing wrong in just taking you up here. Didn't he . . . ?"

Narcissa's little hurt soul cried out: "Don't you understand? He took me up here, and spoiled everything."

"What did he spoil?" The man's voice hesitated between amusement and wonder.

Narcissa's impatient hand swept round in a circle. "All the . . ." But as she looked at the laughing faces around her, at the hard eyes, she suddenly realized that it was of no use. They would never understand. She only said in a spent, weak whisper, "The chop suey!"

The inspector shook his head. Slowly the dancers returned to the floor. Once more the music came. There was a relieved look on Moey's face. The girl with the hard lips grinned: "You better let the kid go. She's dopey or somethin'."

Blindly Narcissa groped her way through the door. One of the men slouched over to Moey's table.

"What's the matter, Dip? Where'd you pick up that looney jane?"



Gropper

"What the hell can I do?"



“What the hell can I do?”

*Gropper*



# The Unemployment Conference

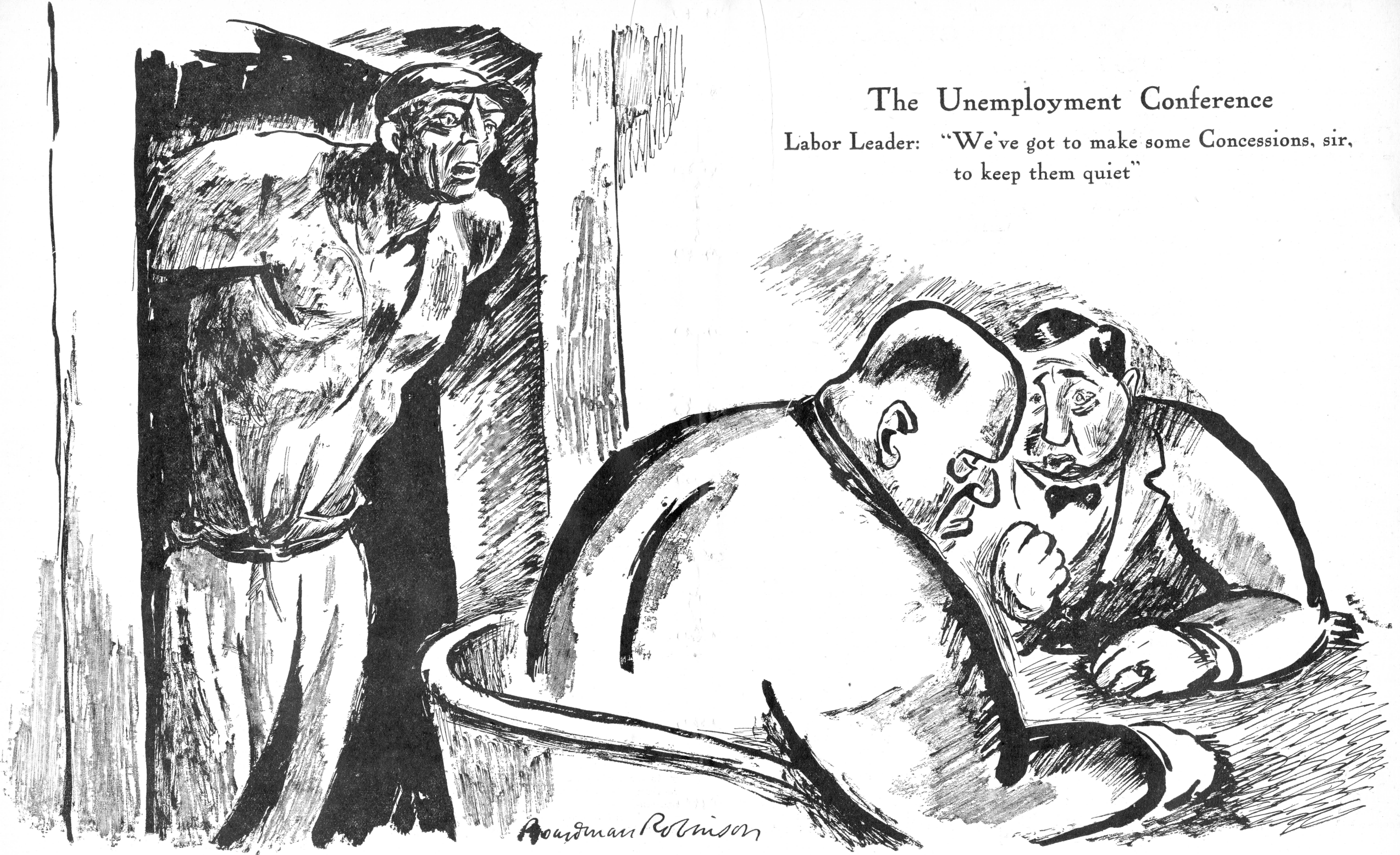
Labor Leader: "We've got to make some Concessions, sir,  
to keep them quiet"



Howardman Robinson

# The Unemployment Conference

Labor Leader: "We've got to make some Concessions, sir,  
to keep them quiet"



Howardman Robinson



# The First Woman of Russia

By Louise Bryant

(Note.—This is the only interview Madame Lenin has ever given to a reporter.)

COMMISSARS' wives, contrary to the popular legend, lead a hard life. There is, for example, Nadejda Constantino<sup>v</sup>na Krupskaya, wife of Lenin. In spite of ill health she remains an active party worker, and has given to the socialist state its remarkable plan for adult education. How well her plan works is shown in some striking statistics given me by Minister of Education Lunacharsky. In Moscow alone 80,000 people have learned to read and write—that is a fair sample. The Red Army remains only 25 per cent illiterate. The Tsar's army was 85 per cent illiterate. Communists fight illiteracy like the plague, and make class consciousness an inseparable part of all education.

I was very glad when Krupskaya invited me to visit her in her apartment. The kind of books people read, the pictures they have on their walls, the colors they like—all these things spell character, and I was curious. It was just at sunset when I walked through the Kremlin gates towards the Hall of Justice where Lenin has his office and where, in another wing, he lives. The dying sun cast gold and purple splashes over the turreted buildings, giving a fantastic, unreal appearance to the old fortress. I had no difficulty in getting by various guards. I had not only the regular pass, but a letter written by Lenin in his own hand and stamped with the official seal.

Before Krupskaya's door I encountered a single guard standing with a fixed bayonet. He was a simple peasant with a round, good-natured face. When he read my passes he smiled and said: "The Comrade is waiting." Then he knocked gently and Krupskaya herself came out and took both my hands in warm welcome. As soon as we were in the little hallway she locked the door and put the key on a shelf near by. Then she led me into a very small but very clean bedroom. I looked about and realized that there were but two tiny rooms—this bedroom and another small room which was used for a dining and living room. The Lenins were living up to the strictest regulations for over-crowded Moscow!

The room we were in contained a bed, four or five chairs, a desk, a well-filled book-case and a couch. Every piece of furniture was arranged precisely, there were no papers or clothes scattered about in the usual Russian manner. Before we were seated a pretty girl of about eighteen came in and Krupskaya said: "This is my niece. She is usually with me. I love her and want you to know her."

Krupskaya spoke English, but with the hesitancy of one who has lost practice. Feeling that I noticed her groping for words, she began to apologise. "How shall we speak?" she asked. "John Reed always preferred to speak French, but perhaps it is difficult for you."

I said that her English was excellent. At that she smiled. "Very well. We will speak English. And if I speak slowly it will not matter. I have saved the whole evening for you. But you must not compare my vocabulary with that of Kolontai or Balabonova."

With the easy air of intimacy characteristic of most Slavs she began to tell me a story of an experience she had in the summer. An English delegate came to see her and brought along an interpreter. "I must say his English was infinitely worse than mine. In fact, he made little effort to understand me at all. I heard him misquoting me as long as I could bear it, and then I excused myself in English, and began to straighten out my interview."

Soon after we were seated, a sleek, friendly cat walked across the floor and jumped up into Krupskaya's lap. I told her that I had read a story in America about Lenin's fondness for cats. He was reported as keeping seven.

The story made Krupskaya laugh. "It's a splendid example," she said, "of the way everything about Russia is exaggerated. Now the truth of the matter is this. Both my husband and I are fond of animals, but no one in Russia feels like keeping pets—it is a matter of food. A cat is a more or less independent beast. We have one cat between us. But an American reporter would not think the story worth writing unless we had seven!"

It was very cool and restful in the little room with the quietness of twilight everywhere. The windows were open and I noticed plants in little pots on the window ledge—red geraniums and lavender and yellow primroses. There was not a single picture on the soft gray walls. I particularly like the effect of no pictures in small rooms. Krupskaya with her low voice and black dress, her pale face and white, ringless hands fitted harmoniously into the room.

She asked me why I was going to leave Russia, and I explained that I wanted to write another book and collect Jack's manuscripts for a memorial edition. A look of pain came into her face. "It was a miracle almost," she said, "that a foreigner could have written the one book which caught as by magic the real spirit of the revolution."

She leaned over and touched my hand. "How difficult it must be!" she said. "Are you quite alone?"

I nodded, and there was a pause, then she got up abruptly and exclaimed: "Come, let us have tea!" How truly Russian was that remark! How many times during hard moments have I heard them make this same homely remark.

Her young niece now called us into the next room—a room as simple as the first. There was a little mahogany clock ticking cosily away in a china closet, there were plants on the window ledge, more books, half a dozen chairs and a round table covered with a black oil-cloth. There were no servants. Krupskaya herself made the tea.

She told me that she had just finished reading Upton Sinclair's "Jimmie Higgins." "It is a good book," she said; "it gives me a very definite idea of what an ordinary American Socialist is like. It is sad also and disillusioning and therefore instructive. I would like to know about Sinclair. Is he a Communist? And has he written other books?"

I told her briefly what I know of Sinclair. She was interested and said she would like to read the "Jungle" and the "Brass Check." I said: "I'm sure he would send you autographed copies of them all if he knew you were interested."

"Krupskaya was pleased but unconvinced. "Really," she



Nadejda Constantinova Krupskaya,  
Wife of Lenin

said; "why should he? He has probably never heard of me." There was something very charming about her naivete.

We talked a long time about her work, and she asked me about the people I met on a long trip through the South. A number of the people we talked about were members of her educational committees. At last I asked the question I most dreaded to ask. I wanted to know if the retreat back to modified capitalism which the new decrees were putting into effect discouraged her. She spoke to me then very much as if I were a child.

"No. I am not discouraged. I have always known the great change will come. In Russia years ago change seemed impossible, just as to you, who are an American and come from the country least touched by war and thoughts of revolution, the idea that America will change appears incredible. But this change we dream of is inevitable. By that I do not imply that it is near. We will save all the fruits of the revolution we can. That is why we meet the situation face to face. The compromise is hard, but it is necessary. But no matter how hard it is, always be sure that we are not discouraged and that our hopes do not die."

When I rose to go Krupskaya took my hands and looked

into my eyes. "You will come back to us?" she asked. "Ah, yes, now you must always come back. . . ."

How well I understood that remark! I who am bound through eternity to Russia by an honored grave on the Red Square.

At the door we shook hands again, and I heard the key turn in the lock as I walked away. When I reached the street, night had descended over the city and the air was cool and sweet. Soldiers were singing on their way to the Kremlin garrison. . . .

## The Newsboy

**D**ISPENSER of an adult world's romance—  
The loves, the hates, the scandals and the sin  
Of all men pass through him; yet does his glance  
Betray no evidence of aught within  
Save youth abundant, and the will to live,  
To seek adventure in Life's market place.  
He has no part in what his hands must give;  
No word of Fate reflects upon his face.

He calls his wares with malice unto none,  
And little does he reck of what he cries:  
Of joy or pain, of battles lost or won,  
He sings alike; and in his eager eyes  
Stirs no emotion, save the joy to stand  
And count the shining coppers in his hand.

Helen Frazee-Bower.

## Aftermath

**D**EAR, they are singing your praises,  
Now you are gone.  
But only I saw your going,  
I . . . alone . . . in the dawn.

Dear, they are weeping about you,  
Now you are dead,  
And they've placed a granite stone  
Over your darling head.

I cannot cry any more,  
Too burning deep is my grief. . . .  
I dance through my spendthrift days  
Like a fallen leaf.

Faster and faster I whirl  
Toward the end of my days.  
Dear, I am drunken with sadness  
And lost down strange ways.

If only the dance would finish  
Like a flash in the sky . . . oh, soon,  
If only a storm would come shouting—  
Hurl me past stars and moon!

Louise Bryant.



NOVEMBER, 1921



Nadejda Constantinova Krupskaya,  
Wife of Lenin



Painting by Anna Cohen, Age 14

# Would You Like To Be a Child?

By Floyd Dell

EVERY once in a while something happens to make me wish I were a child again. I did not have very much fun being a child, and generally I am thankful to have got through that painful period alive. But I am sometimes persuaded that childhood could be made really enjoyable. The latest thing to make me wish I could try it over again under happier auspices is the Ferrer School Art Exhibit at the Civic Club.

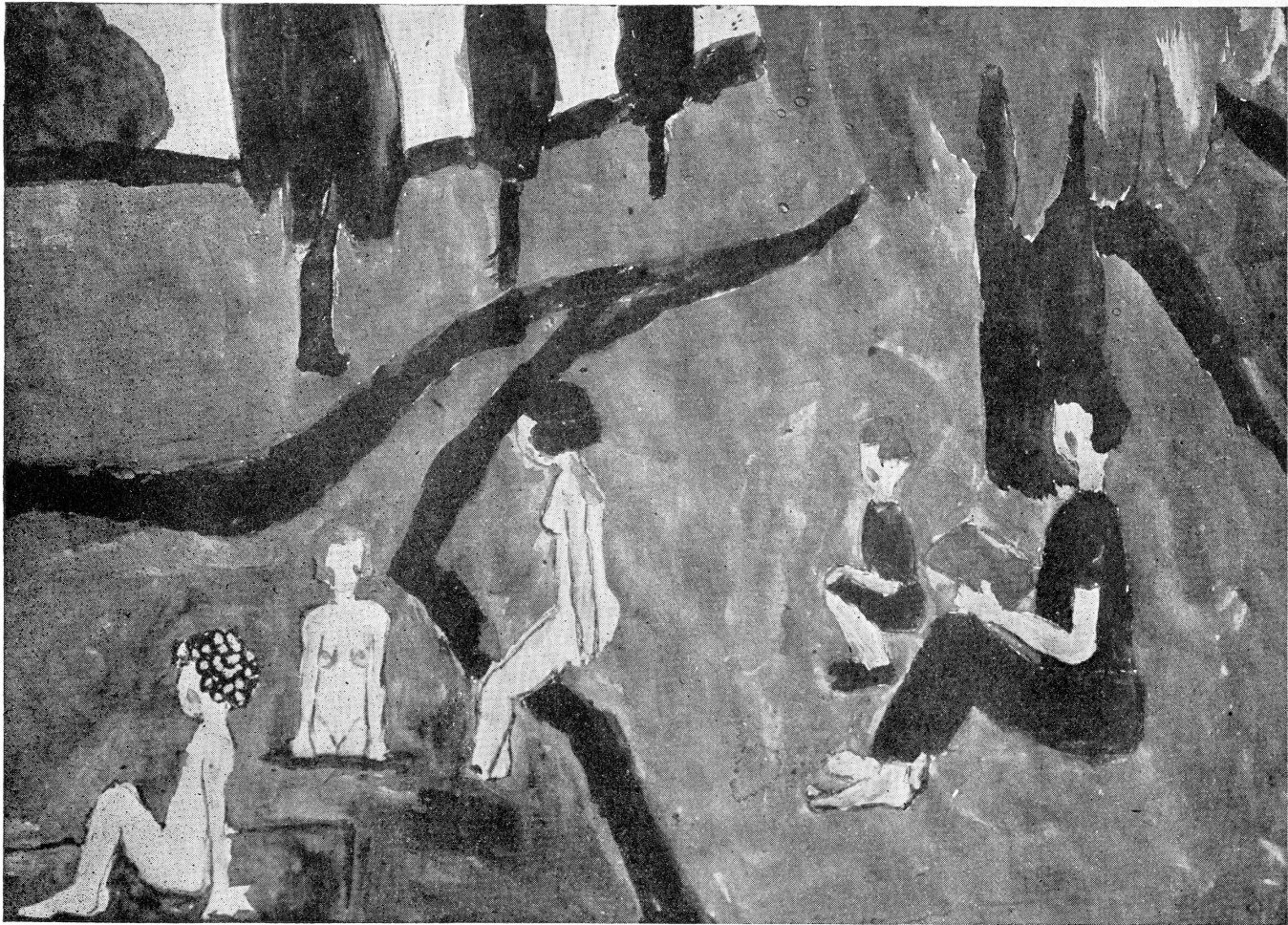
My own youthful artistic efforts, chiefly in colored chalk on the sidewalk, were considered mere disorderly conduct, and were severely discouraged. Perhaps for that reason I rejoice in the riot of color on the walls of the Civic Club. And the thought that children nowadays (at least now and then, and here and there!) are not merely permitted, but encouraged to splash around in color—that they are being praised instead of scolded for it—warms my heart.

I have my own theory of art. I believe that everyone ought to be an artist; also a musician; also a writer; also an actor; also an orator; also a dancer; also an architect—and

any other joyous and comparatively useless form of human activity which I have forgotten to mention, too! Just by way of becoming a real human being.

Whether the children who are doing beautiful things in the Ferrer School art class are going to grow up to be artists, I have no idea. Some of them have so much artistic gusto and technical skill that I suppose they will become artists. That aspect of the exhibit interests me less than perhaps it should. I am less concerned with these pictures as the products of young artists than as the products of happy children.

It must be an immense satisfaction to put colors together the way seven-year-old Eddy Lorie does. Eddy can't, apparently, draw a man or a cow so that anyone can readily recognize the species, but his landscapes are amazing and beautiful. The pity is that they can't be reproduced in black and white so as to give any idea of their fascination. I don't know, I say, whether Eddy is going to become a professional artist or not, but if he becomes an engineer or a nov-



Painting by Anna Cohen, Age 14

elist or a grocer, I'm sure he will be a happier human being for having made those lovely pictures.

Sasha Winick is also seven years old. And Sasha is the superlative joy of the whole exhibit. Sasha is fond of mountains, and there is an arctic air about most of his compositions. But the colors of these mountains are sheer poetry. There is something miraculous about those colors. They are pure romance, pure vision, pure fantasy. They take one into the realm, savage and enchanted, which Coleridge explored a little for us in *Khubla Khan*.

We come back to familiar earth again in the drawings of ten-year-old Elizabeth Sinclair. These are, more than anything else in the whole exhibition, what the casual observer would call "genuine child-drawings."

Billie Sebasta, also ten years old, is more ambitious, and her drawings are more dramatic. They have a touch of what seems to an adult a premeditated humor, though it is probably a naive attempt at realism. Some of her pictures might be illustrations to Daisy Ashford's book.

Mary Sinclair, six years old, appears to be a savage satirist, her favorite subject being her own sex! Is this an adult misinterpretation? Perhaps. Is a six-year-old child capable of brutal comic irony?

Hardly in words—but with a pencil? I am not so sure she couldn't be! I incline to regard Mary as an infant Rebecca West—and I await with impatience the ruthless caricatures of her sex which she will draw at a more mature age and from wider observation! And if I am right, then, women, beware—here is one who will see you at your worst and put you down in merciless and unforgettable curlycues!

I suspect that Leon Aarons, nine years old, is a pessimist. There is something sombre and stormy about his pictures. Especially in contrast with ten-year-old Inco Koclis' sober landscape, and eleven-year-old Gerda Koclis' happy peacock picture. Do you doubt that one can read temperament so easily in a picture or two? I don't. I feel extraordinarily well acquainted with the Ferrer art class.

Sidney Goldberg, nine years old, uses color for its own sake. He never paints two sides of a house the same color, and every little hill has a color all its own. His recklessness, too, is pretty well justified by the effects he produces. Herbert Goldberg, eleven years old, is a colorist like his brother, but with a more delicate color sense, and more ingenuity in his arrangements.

Rose Trumkin, thirteen years old, has an unusual appreciation—unusual in artists of all ages—of the value of the human figure as a design, and her pictures make one think of Japanese prints.

Josephine Sebasta, four years old, is the youngest artist represented. Her one picture, to which the attention of Freudians is hereby directed, is straight

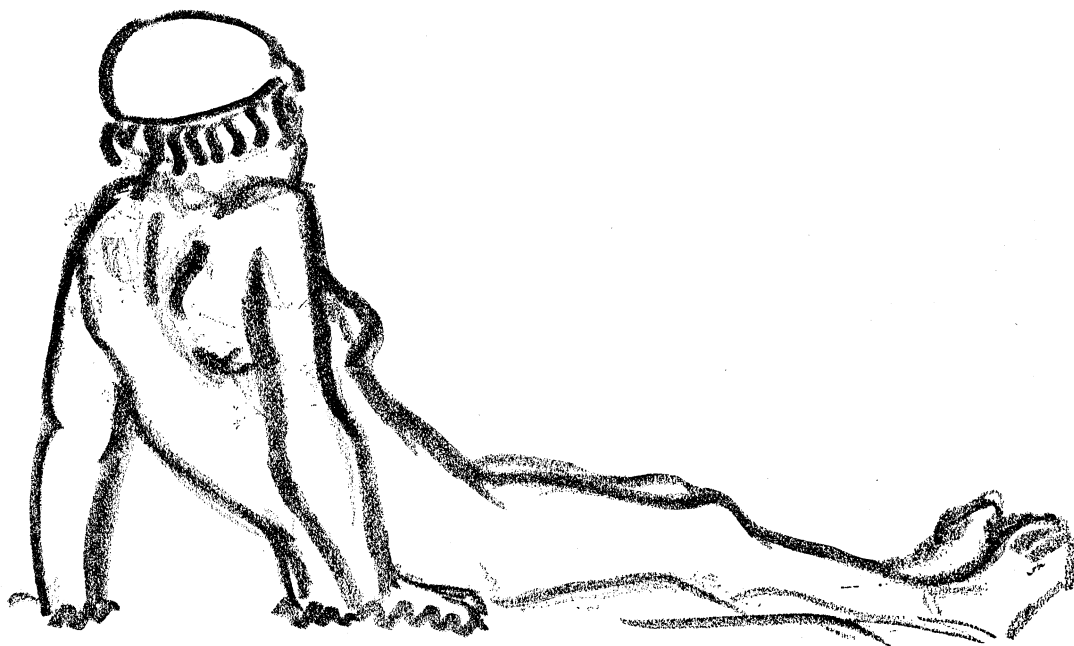
out of the child-mind. Most people would think it—well, not exactly beautiful, and I do not affirm that it is, but I find it very interesting!

Brunhilda Sebasta, an older sister of Josephine's, contributes some strange and effective designs. Have you heard that Paul Poirret buys designs at a few centimes apiece from French school children, and that the amazing and delightful shapes and colors in his stamped silks are the literal reproductions of these childish fantasies? I do not vouch for the story, but I like it.

Irving Steinberg, fourteen years old, is the only artist who undertakes to tell a story. His picture is "The Wandering Jew's Vision." I don't know whether the Ferrer art class teacher has any prejudice against story-pictures; I suspect that children are naturally inclined to agree with dogmatic art-for-art's-sake theory, and don't want to mess up their aesthetic emotions with anecdotal effects. It is sad to reflect that as they grow up they are going to be met more and more by the question, "But what does it mean?" I hope they don't become angry and reply, as artists are too apt to do: "Why, you poor fish, it doesn't mean anything. It's a picture!"



By Mary Sinclair, Aged 6



William Pogrebysky, aged 16.



By Mary Sinclair, Aged 6





**William Pogrebysky, aged 16.**

The two most adult artists in the exhibit are William Pogrebysky, aged sixteen, and Anna Cohen, aged fourteen. William is an experimenter, with leanings toward cubism and symbolism, and traces of what seem to be the influences of Matisse and of Maya art. He can draw like a house afire, and his reds and oranges are gorgeous.

Anna is also a sophisticated young artist, who at times seems to be undertaking to carry on the Jugend tradition. I like her realistic effects best, and I am the proud purchaser of one of her pictures, a bathing scene, which I trust is an authentic representation of daily life at Stelton, N. Y.

I hope it will not seem vulgar of me to end on a financial note. These pictures are selling. But I am sure nobody buys them out of a sense of duty, or in the expectation of a rise in their market-value. They are being bought because when you come into the room you feel happy at once, and you wish to take some of this happiness away with you. It is a glimpse of children joyously and intensely at play. And once more I say, I envy them!

## Novemberanda

**M**R. HARDING'S conference on disemployment should not be confused with the powwow on unarmament. One is for and the other is against, or vice versa. The only thing the two conferences have in common is the con.

**T**HEY used to say the packing house used all of the pig except the squeal. Judging from the present outcry against security taxes, the business man is at last making a genuine effort to utilize the squeal.

**T**HERE is so much argument in the Cave of the Winds over the tariff and tax revision bills that it looks as if the present Congress would not accomplish anything constructive except handing the treasury to the railroads.

**B**ERNARD SHAW says he won't come to America because he doesn't want to go to jail with Debs or have his wife mobbed by the K. K. K. We hope that G. B. S. will reconsider. Here in New York a person who is sorry for the unemployed is merely cracked on the head and given a nominal fine.

**"FIFTY** Polish marks may now be purchased for one cent." Buy them through the laughing-stock exchange.

**I**T is now charged that Soviet Russia is trying to abolish fairy stories. It will be a sad day when we are no longer allowed to believe in wise kings, beautiful princesses and press reports from Riga.

**T**HE English quickly put the quietus upon any action toward disarmament by the League of Nations. The concert of the powers is rapidly dwindling down to a solo on the Anglo-Saxophone.

**A**T his home-coming party President Nicholas Murray Butler was introduced as "a man with an international mind and a national heart." His mind is wandering, but his heart is in the right place.

**T**HE French government is deluging the people with arguments in favor of large families. Obviously birth control is not compatible with earth control.

**F**ORTUNATELY the exact location of this den of iniquity was suppressed by the censor. A New Jersey Methodist minister has discovered a Y. M. C. A. camp where boys are allowed to play mumblety peg on Sunday.

**W**E gather from the instructive addresses at the Chemical Exposition in New York that a soldier killed by poison gas is no deader than one blown to pieces by a shell—and there is more of him, available to ship home.

**A**LL stand up and sing the Ku Klux Klanthem.

**T**HE tars and stripes for everybody.

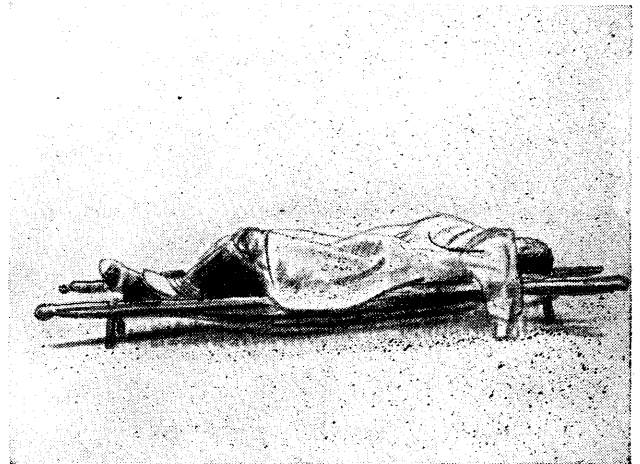
HOWARD BRUBAKER.

## Passion Death

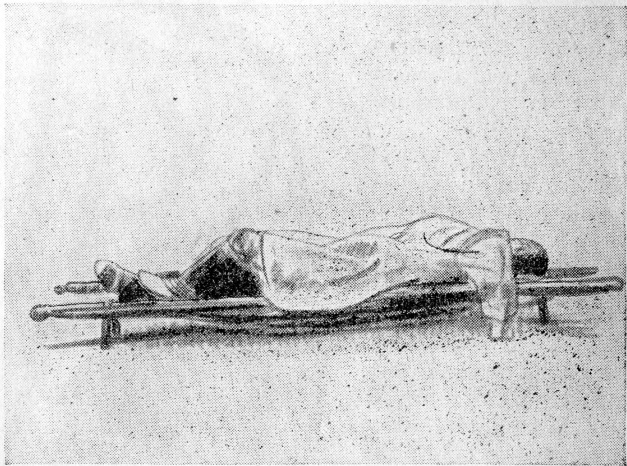
**T**HIS morning—lo! sat I, Black,  
Upon rock  
With glossy neck;  
Sea was blue as silk!  
Suddenly—  
Three times croak broke out of me—  
Sky was white as milk!

With this croak-running thrill  
Ran through body  
Like chill—  
That body black as silk!  
Suddenly  
Chest split crimson out of me  
Heart fell white as milk!

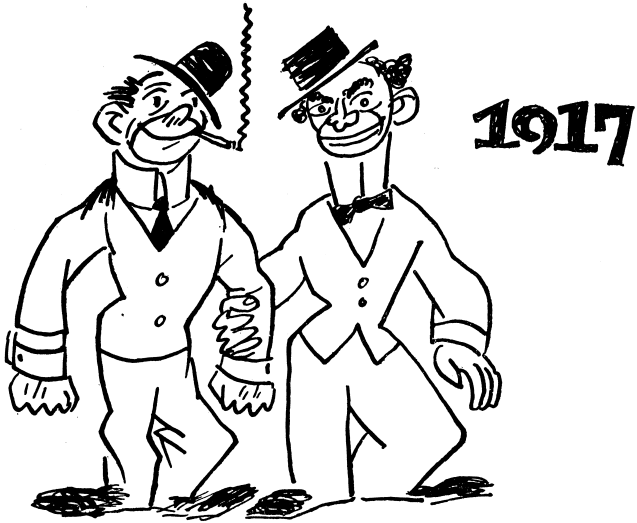
E. U. F. L.



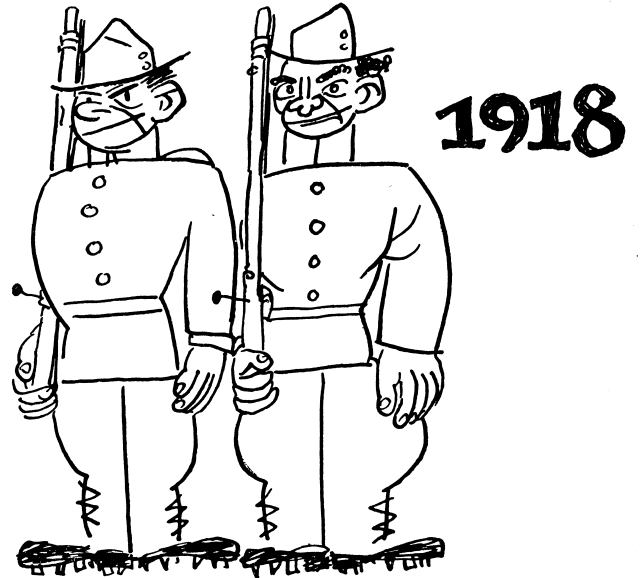
Drawn by George Bellows.



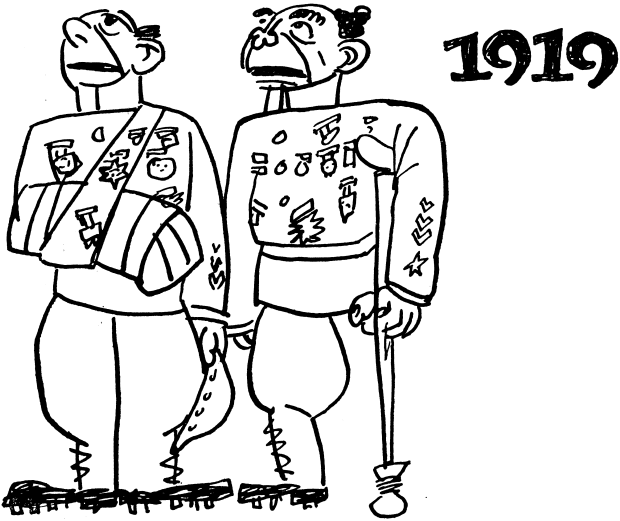
*Drawn by George Bellows.*



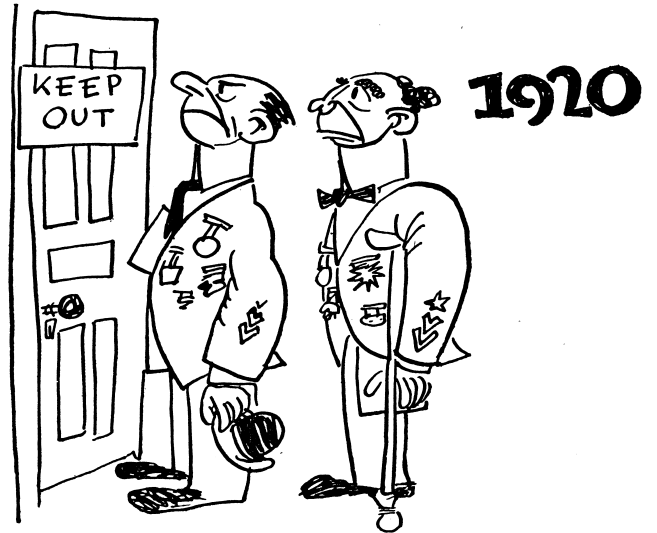
Gee! we're happy we're gonna have war—working ten and twelve hours a day ain't much fun for us guys.



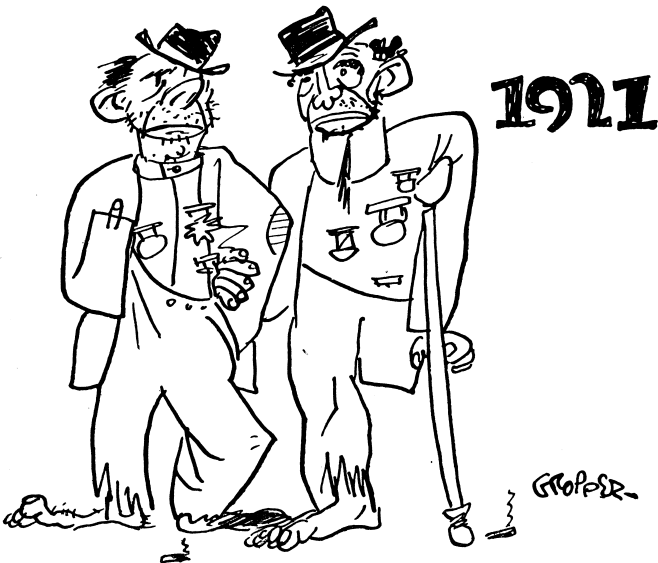
The papers say that the Germans are the worst people on earth. By Golly, we'll clean 'em up.



Thank God, it's over.



They promised us our jobs, bonus and a decent place to live in—



No jobs, no bonus,—now all together, boys—  
“My country, 'tis of thee—”

# The History of Five Years

by

## William Gropper

# Wanted: a Religious Revival

By Charles W. Wood

**T**HERE is something the matter with the world today. Fortunately we now know what it is. The preachers have been hinting at it for some time, but not until the master minds of Wall Street spoke could we be quite sure. They have now spoken. One after another has been interviewed, and the verdict is unanimous. There is nothing wrong with the system: to speak of changing that is madness. But contracts have been broken. Orders for goods at twice their present price have been ruthlessly cancelled. People have hesitated to let go of their rolls. Workingmen have not been at all enthusiastic about getting a reduction in their pay. What we need, says every authoritative statement issued these days by the financial experts of the Nation from Roger Babson up, is a good old revival of religion.

Unfortunately, they haven't told us how to get it. That, I suppose, is where I come in. I have pondered the problem for some time. I have watched the decline of the church. I have even stayed away from church myself and have analyzed my motives for doing so. I am now prepared to present my findings with a complete plan for a religious revival.

In the first place, I have discovered a widespread misunderstanding as to the reasons that prompt people to stay away from church. It has been supposed that they lost their faith, thus became to some degree unorthodox and finally indifferent. Nothing of the sort. The fact is that they have been scared away for fear of losing their orthodoxy.

Orthodoxy is the most highly prized possession in America today. No 100 per cent. New Yorker, especially, would be without it. You may take away a New Yorker's liberty and

he will sing the Star-Spangled Banner while you are doing so. You may take away his job and he will give three cheers for the Constitution, while he is trying to borrow three cents for a late breakfast, consisting of two rolls and a walk in Central Park. You may even take away his booze and he will still stop short of armed rebellion. But once disturb his orthodoxy and the real New Yorker will fight.

If you don't believe this, you can find out for yourself. Get on a soap-box in Union Square and announce that you have your doubts about the Immaculate Conception, or that you sometimes think a dead man is dead for keeps. You'll be mobbed: not by church-goers, but by orthodox citizens who succeeded in retaining their orthodoxy by the simple expedient of keeping out of church.

It is a well-known fact that there isn't any orthodoxy left in the theological seminaries; and every candidate for holy orders nowadays crosses his fingers while he repeats to the bishop the long list of compulsory *I do's*.

"Do you believe that God made the universe in six days and then got tired? Do you believe that He made the human race and damned it to eternal torment? And do you believe that he eventually hit upon the big idea of consorting with a Yiddish virgin and making her pregnant, so that her child could be killed and give us all a chance to take a bath in his blood? Do you believe that this is the one and only perfect plan of salvation and that anyone who puts his faith in some scheme of human reorganization instead ought to go to hell and will?"

I have forgotten exactly how the questions are worded, but that is the gist of the examination. And as I said, neither ministers nor candidates for the ministry take the questions seriously. They answer "I do," of course, because their job depends upon it and because, moreover, they are afraid the congregation might be shocked if they should confess to any reservations. But Union Square, or that part of it at least which isn't Jewish, steadfastly believes all this. And Union Square is ready at all times to bleed for it.

But Union Square is not religious. It is simply orthodox. It can't worship because it doesn't go to church, and it can't go to church without losing its orthodoxy. It's an awful mess all around, and, as we have now learned from the financial experts, it is this very mess which is the matter with the world at large. Orthodoxy, they must have discovered, is not religion, for a profound belief in hell doesn't seem to keep anybody from going there. And worship by it-



"Oh, by the way, dear, have you a nickel for the porter?"



self is not religion, for do not even Sunday School Superintendents sometimes show up short? Some way must be found to let true believers worship while permitting the truly worshipful to believe. That, I take it, is the revival of religion which all the Wall Street sharps are now howling for.

The Catholic Church, it must be observed, is not nearly so great a failure in this respect as the Protestant. It is only in Latin countries, in fact, that the Catholic Church has of late completely failed. This, of course, is because the Catholic Church uniformly uses Latin while the Protestants of every country employ a language which the communicants can understand.

It is obviously impossible to retain orthodox beliefs and talk about them, too. If we talk about them long enough, we are apt to think about them; and pretty soon we find ourselves no more orthodox than the theologians. Thinking is a nuisance anyway. What New Yorkers want is to be indisputably right without thinking. That is what orthodoxy consists of; and that is why the orthodox must insist upon everybody believing exactly alike. Otherwise, while the orthodox might continue to be as right as ever, he would not be undisputably right.

The problem of a religious revival is now seen to be more simple. Forst, let us decide all together just what is the undisputable truth about everything. Let us then persuade God to put it into a Book. Then let us translate the book into some language which nobody understands. After which we might burn the book with appropriate religious ceremonies and promise God that we will never under any circumstances allow anybody to refer to anything which the sacred volume contained. After that, there being no discussions which might disturb our beliefs, we would all be free to worship regularly. And whenever any disputed question arose, each true believer could cross himself thrice and repeat: "I believe whatever the Holy Book had to say on this subject, world without end, Amen!"

One of the councils of the early Church adopted this plan in part, and Christianity had an uninterrupted run of a thousand years. The mistake was made, however, of preserving the record, and it was inevitable that somebody should one day begin to talk about it.

Political orthodoxy in the United States is also a case in point. Not until we agreed unanimously to forget what the Constitution had to say could we begin to worship it as devoutly as the occasion made imperative. Then there was a fervid revival of patriotism throughout this glorious land, the effect of which has hardly yet worn off.

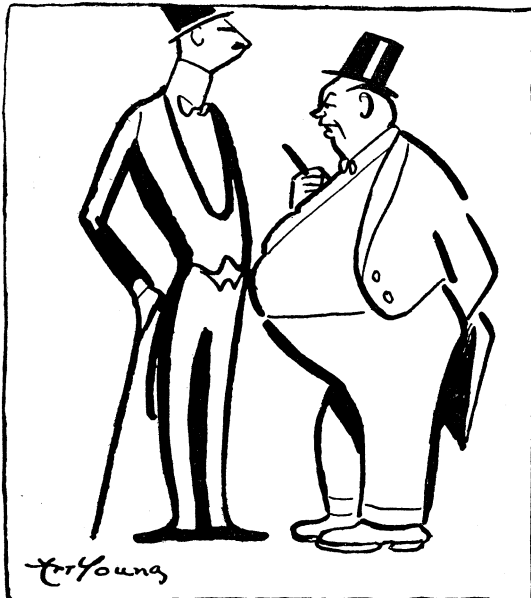
If my readers will pardon me a moment, I should like to explain right here that, when I started this article, I intended to write a dramatic criticism. I was thinking of "The Spring," by George Cram Cook, and I was thinking of how



### Thirty Minutes For Lunch

wonderfully this psychic drama seemed to leave all believers and unbelievers satisfied. It did so by employing the simple expedient of presenting all sides of the spirit question, so that one had no idea at any time what the playwright believed. It was as though Bishop Manning and Percy Stickney Grant were to talk, friendly like, from the same pulpit, with nobody contending that it mattered a damn which one of them was right. Science and religion were both tolerated, and the result was a kind of worshipful mood on the part of the audience which didn't upset anybody's ideas about anything. It was like a Chinese substitute for war proposed to me in Peking. "An international court," said the proposer, "would never do. It would always be trying to decide issues, and it is this very attempt to decide things which makes people fight. Why not all sides sit down instead and drink tea? Then, after a while, nobody would feel like fighting; and if the session were continued long enough, all the issues would have settled themselves."

I couldn't help thinking then of what might happen if all the religious denominations could unite and elect George Cram Cook pope. But the more I pondered, the more difficulties got in my way. In the ideal world state, composed entirely of 100 per cent. Americans, no discussions of any sort can be allowed.



## Unearned Increment

No questionings, no disputes, no sinful doubts—that should be the aim of every true American. It doesn't matter so much what we all believe, so long as we all believe it and remain steadfast in the faith. Unanimity, one-ness—one-ness with God, one-ness with public opinion, one-ness with the churches and the courts and the jails, with the Flag and the Flag-pole and the Soldier's Monument—these are the objectives which the genuine religious revival will attain.

And, praise God, we are on the way. With very few exceptions you can hardly tell today what newspaper you are reading or which political party is in power. They are all alike, or are imitating each other as well as can be expected. The theatre, likewise—the hit of the season is the play which is just like every other play. The same situations, the same sentiments, the same jokes—new things have passed away and all things have become old. If it were not for the churches, we might all have reached an agreement upon everything. The American mind might then become one perfect blank and all could worship in perfect harmony.

But the churches, unfortunately, are still dividing. They are still examining the records and trying, sacreligiously, to find out what is what. In far Shanghai I met a Chinese Christian, who informed me that he was a Southern Baptist; and in still farther Mukden I met another convert, who had never been outside the Province of Manchuria, who told me in catechism English that he was an Irish Presbyterian. Then there's Percy Stickney Grant and Bishop Manning in the same fold in New York. Folks like them can disunite more successfully than two denominations ever could.

The Church in America is the last sanctuary of the unbeliever. Outside of the Church, there is no shelter for the protestant. We can't have a religious revival so long as the Church is allowed to exist and Churchmen are allowed to have opinions on everything. In the near future, I predict, all Communists in America will flee to the Church for safety. If the Liberator is to remain anti-religious, it must become an organ of the Methodist Sunday School. Far-visioned men like Ralph Easley and Archibald Stevenson are already recognizing this and are attacking heterodoxy in its natural

stronghold. The problem, then, is simple. Let us by all means have that revival of religion and let us begin by abolishing the Church.

I move for a Congressional investigation at once to fix responsibility for the wrecking of one of the best ideas of the year. When last seen, this idea was riding the waves at the Henry Miller Theatre. "The Scarlet Man" was possibly the best play of the season. Certainly it was the worst. It was heralded as a farce-comedy, but the play was half over before one got a glimpse of either comedy or farce. In the last act, however, the audience was fairly deluged with both, with a hail-storm of satire thrown in for luck. The audience, however, which may have come with umbrellas, had by this time generally disposed of them, and the net result was an unexpected ducking.

I do not pretend to be an authority upon the history of drama, but if I remember right, someone told me once that he believed there was a time when the antics of a hunchback or a cripple were considered funny on the stage. Some of those plays, I fancy, might seem like poor comedy today. I was just wondering how long a run "Dulcy" is going to have.

"Dulcy" isn't a cripple physically. She is simply a moron of a well-recognized type, and the play depends for its humor upon her arrested mental development. Her sad case is so exquisitely portrayed by Lynn Fontaine that the play should interest psychiatrists and educators even though we do outgrow our present attitude toward it. The whole company, in fact, is good, and the theme is excellently worked out by George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly, "with a bow to Franklyn P. Adams." It is realistic. It is convincing. It sure does hold the mirror up to nature, as thoroughly almost as one of Eugene O'Neil's clinics, but I left the Frazee Theatre honestly wondering whether I could call it funny.

In spite of the bow, "Dulcy" is not the Dulcinea of F. P. A. His Dulcinea is not a character and probably was never intended to be: she is just a name upon which to hang a lot of bromides, as a casual slap at the common slovenliness of our conversation. "Dulcy" of the play is more than bromidic: she is an all-around, 100 per cent nuisance and genuine damn fool. She is, however, feminine: her mental shortage hasn't done a thing to disguise that. Therefore, if you happen to be sore at women, if you have said in your heart that they "don't know nothing and always was," then you will undoubtedly enjoy "Dulcy." In all probability you will do more than that. You will probably buy tickets and distribute them among your women acquaintances, as thousands of New Yorkers seem already to be doing.

## Announcements

**W**E have reduced the price of THE LIBERATOR to 20 cents a copy, 2 dollars a year. We are grateful to those who have stood by us through the high cost of paper, and we invite those who have felt unable to do so, to come back.

We have won our suit for an injunction in the courts of California to restrain the police of San Francisco and Oakland from interfering with the distribution of THE LIBERATOR. In Los Angeles, John H. Ryckman has generously offered to have the magazine on sale at 4707 Budlong Avenue. Buy it there if you can not get it on the news-stands.

In the next issue Max Eastman will respond to the critics of his "Opinion On Tactics."

## Leave Me To My Own.

O H, leave me to my own,—  
 One of a nameless band  
 Of gipsy star and silent butte and fir,  
 Unglorified, unknown.  
 Oh, let me stand  
 Again in the lavender  
 Of dusk, a slumbering pinion-pine  
 At timber-line,  
 Brooding of head,  
 Among the ageless dead,  
 One with the mountain's cliff and imperturbable stone.  
 And when the winter winds intone  
 Among my boughs a dread  
 And melancholy sweep  
 Of song, and some mysterious hand  
 Brushes my heart  
 In a mournful melody, weep  
 No tear for me, nor moan—  
 Pray, stand apart  
 From me, and leave me to my own;  
 For in the blue valleys of this land,  
 When the after-glow  
 Lingers among the glaciers, I shall know  
 Again the calm  
 Of dusk, the dewy balm  
 Of slumber, release  
 From pain—and utter peace.

Oh, leave me to my own—  
 To the wild companionship  
 Of firs that toss  
 In the windy night, and drip  
 Their wild wet rain upon the moss;  
 To the columbine  
 That strives to slip  
 Shyly among my roots and tip  
 Its wine  
 Upon my grassy shrine.  
 Oh, leave me to the never-ending sleep  
 Of the ages as they creep  
 Over the soundless solitude—  
 To the brotherhood  
 Of woods and streams  
 And waterfalls that fling upon the night  
 A stoney broken music from their height—  
 Oh, leave me to my dreams.



Cornelia Barns

“That’ll teach ‘em a lesson!”

## Vengeance

By T. M. Morrow

**W**ILKINS' fish shed has the appearance of having been designed especially for the convenience of smelt fishers. Its lower story is set back a dozen feet from the face of the cribwork wharf while the upper story projects until it overhangs the water the better part of a foot. In the recess so formed there is always shade from sun and shelter from rain. Consequently there sprouts forth therefrom any day in the summer, while the tide is coming and for a couple of hours after it has turned, a veritable forest of bamboo fishing-poles. The record for the locality, I believe, is eight smelt, all caught at one time upon one line attached to one pole. The name of the lucky fisherman and the date of the exploit are not on record, but the number of fish is a matter of tradition among the frequenters of the place. These are mostly boys of various ages and such men as by reason of old age, infirmity, disinclination to labor or lack of employment find smelt fishing an agreeable mode of killing time or earning a few cents.

Nobody knows how long it is since old Bob Melanson started fishing smelt at Wilkins' fish shed. Morton, who is

boss of the shed and comes out occasionally, red-faced, bare-armed, clad in a huge apron of soiled white duck glistening with fish scales, to gaze scornfully upon the fishermen who waste their time upon such small fry, will tell you that the old man has been coming there ever since he first started to work at the shed.

“That was twenty-two year ago an’ he looked jes’ about as old then as he does now. I thought he mus’ be gettin’ on to a hundred then; so he ain’t no chicken, that’s a sure thing. I don’t see how he ever catches anythin’, he’s so blind. But he keeps on comin’ an’ he alwees gets a few. They buy ‘em from him over at Watson’s place an’ I guess he makes fifteen or twenty cents a day on an average. He was tellin’ me one day that’s a! the money he has fur spendin’, what he gets this way. He lives with his daughter that’s married an’ she keeps him from starvin’ an’ gives him the clo’es that he wears, though I don’t think they cost her a whole lot by the look of ‘em. Whatever he gets this way he has fur tobacco. At that, I don’t think he’ll ruin his health from smokin’.”

Every day, from the time that the smelt leave the fresh water of the river in the spring until they seek it again in the late fall, the old man stands there, leaning against one of the posts. He does not dare to sit down, after the manner of the others dangling their legs out over the water.

To him, smelt fishing is a serious thing. Once in a while, when he catches a particularly large smelt or gets a number

ALFRED A. KNOPF



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at once, his face, wrinkled, peak-nosed, fringed about with dirty white hair, breaks out with a smile. The upper lip stretches tightly across his toothless jaw; the lower jaw pushes forward and three blackened stumps of teeth are revealed standing like the ends of decayed piles in the salivated sea of his mouth. The teeth close over the stretched upper lip. Then the face drops back into its former vacuity of expression. But all last summer the old man was worried. He made good

catches; once he received fifty-five cents from Watson for his day's catch. But every day a cat used to come from somewhere and get at his fish. He couldn't see it but the other fishers would tell him of it. "Look out there, Bob," some one would yell, "there's that cat at your fish." But they never told him until the cat had thrown half a dozen or more fish out of his basket upon the wharf, had man-gled some of them and was smelling about, selecting a fish

to carry away to some secure place for eating. It was a good joke to those others. A few smelt more or less were nothing to them. To the old man they were a serious thing. As to the cat, it seemed to sense the infirmity of the owner of the basket that it robbed and know where it could steal with impunity.

Whenever the old man heard the warning cry, he would pull in his pole as stealthily as lay in his power and, turning, made a swipe with the butt end of it in the general direction of his basket. Long before that blow came, the cat would grab up a fish and run, tail in air, up through the team-wide passageway leading in through the fish shed from the street.

"T'e damn cat steal my fish. Don' steal nobody's fish but my fish. Poor blin' man like me, steal my fish. An' I don' get many fish. T'ose ot'er, t'ey got sea-worm. I got to fish wit' herrin'. If I catch t'at cat, I show him. B' God, yes, I show him, t'at cat."

One day there came crawling down to the wharf, slinking out from under the timbers supporting the shed, a miserable shadow of a cat. It was blind; both eyes were tightly gummed up. The mange had eaten into his hide, leaving great filthy bald spots amid the fur that you could see had once been tortoise shell. As it passed the fishers, those who saw it turned away in disgust, not that they were inclined to be squeamish at all, but the sight was far from appetizing. Wearily, the wreck drifted toward some highly-scented fish offal lying in an angle formed by the shed and the fence shutting off the next property.

"Hey, there, Bob," one of the boys shouted. "There's your cat." The old man drew in his pole and turned the butt end toward his basket. Then he smote. A ripple of laughter ran along the wharf.

"Not there, Bob," said the boy. "He's over in the corner at some stuff they throwed out of the shed. Come along; I'll show yuh." He grasped the old man by the sleeves. "If yuh're careful an' go slow, yuh'll catch him. He's in the corner by the high fence."

A look of hope came over Bob's face. "You help me, boy. Help me an' I'll give you five cent—when I get ut."

"All right," said the boy. The fishers on the edge of the wharf snickered.

Into the corner crept the man and the guiding boy.

"There he is," said the boy, in a tone of mock triumph. "All yuh got tu do is reach out yuhr han's an' grab him."

Bob's shaky hands reached out eagerly until they touched the cat. Nearly dead as it was, it still shrank away and opened its mouth in an attempt to spit at the intruder. The bony fingers closed upon the animal. Then the whole weight of the old man descended upon it.

"I got him," chuckled Bob, as he rose, the cat tightly clutched in his arms. "B' God, I got him." The cat struggled feebly, writhing to break the old man's hold. "Boy, boy, where are you?"

"Here, right here."

"Help me, help me over tu the edge. An' I'll make it ten cent—when I get ut."

The boy grasped Bob's sleeve and led him forward.

"Am I there? Am I there, boy?"

"Jest one more step. There; if yuh went any farther, yuh'd fall over."

"What yuh goin' tu do, Bob?" asked one of the fishers.

"You'll see what I'm goin' tu do."

The grip on the cat tightened. The brute scratched fran-

tically with all the strength that remained in it at the clothes of the old man. Bob's arms swung backward. The cat let out a yell, a hopeless, despairing yowl of misery, as Bob lunged toward the water and opened his arms. For the fraction of a second one claw stuck to his sleeve. Then, spinning end over end, the cat fell toward the water. The water sprayed up and it sank from view. Once it rose, clawing feebly, to the surface. Again it sank and rose, this time not quite to the top of the water. Then it sank out of sight entirely.

One of the fishers pounded Bob upon the back. "Well done, Bob," he shouted, leering at his companions as he said it. "Three cheers fur Bob."

The grinning boy led Bob back to his post. Panting, with a new light on his face, the stumps of his teeth showing, the old man picked up his pole and resumed his fishing.

Down the passageway from the street tittupped a cat, long-faced, wise-looking, its mouse-colored fur sleek and shining, its green eyes glistening. When it reached the wharf, it picked its way daintily on its padded feet toward Bob's basket. Dabbing into it with one forepaw, it threw out on the planking fish after fish, mangling some, letting the others lie.

Bob was having a run of luck. Smelt after smelt he caught and threw toward his basket. As the fish fell, the cat grabbed each one playfully and chewed it.

And the fishers kept silence.

## BOOKS

*Three Soldiers, by John Passos, Doran*

*You're in the Army now;  
You're not behind the plow.  
You son-of-a-bitch,  
You'll never get rich:  
You're in the Army now!*

THE bugles jeer it at you, your first evening in camp, when you're a green rookie—so green that you let slip wonderingly, "Gee, I didn't know soldiers wore overalls!" And your tent-mates, and the Regular Army corporal says, "You got a hell of a lot to learn, buddy, I'll tell the world." The next day you come back from starting to learn it, dizzy and dazzled and tired, and flop onto the refuge of your blankets, and some one says, consolingly: "Well, the first seven years are the worst—after that, you get used to it."

This book tells us what we got used to. Or rather, it doesn't tell—it *is* the thing. The blood and bone, the living texture, the actual fibre of the Army itself.

I don't think any one who was in the Army will deny that, whether his conclusions differ from those of Dos Passos or not. Perhaps he liked the Army—he may easily have liked it more than Dos Passos did—but the thing he liked or disliked is here, in its full vitality, between the covers of this book.

Of course, there were Intelligence Officers who visited the Army in O. D. Cadillac-limousines, and then were detailed to London or Paris or Washington to write recruiting posters. They can send reviews and letters to the *Times* denying that any such thing existed. And those training-camp birds,



and Air Service officers—maybe even a Regimental Sergeant-Major or two. But I said any one who is in the Army. You guys—but what's the use of arguing—you know!

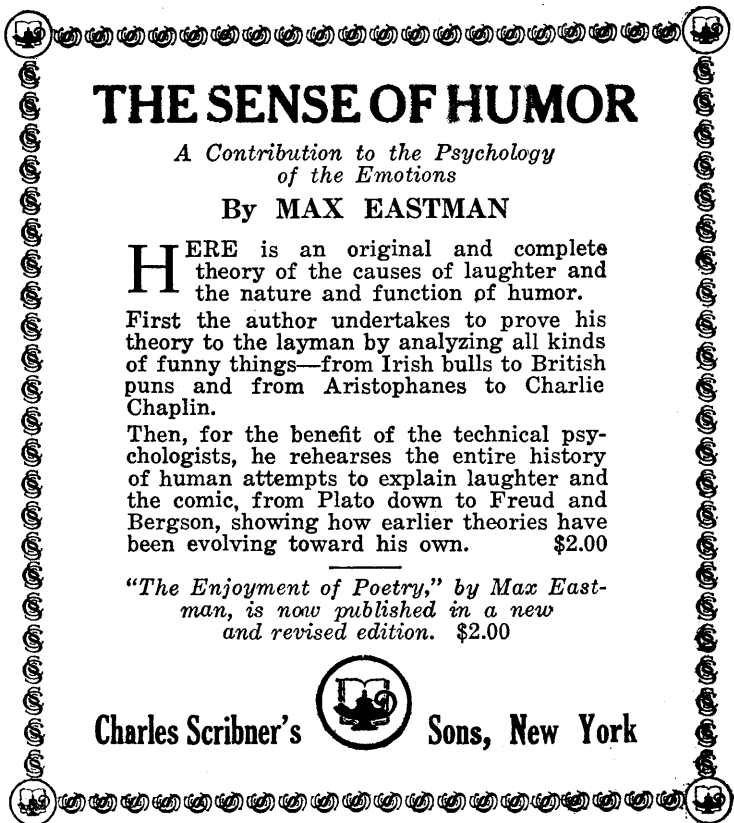
If you were just a high-ranking buck private, one of the three million that did guard and K. P. and latrine police and squads east, in camp; that stumbled through barbed wire in the Argonne, or served 75's on the Vesle; you know as well as I do that this book doesn't over-paint the picture—it under-paints it. There are some things that can't go into a novel: the interesting sanitary arrangements of an Army, for instance, and the job of attending to them; the ultimate indignity of a certain kind of inspection, which removes the last distinction between you and the horses and the guns. The dreary, monotonous talk in barracks, not about sex, but about all the sordiness and perversions that make up a soldier's view of sex—and sometimes the worse than talk. The fright. The terror. The frank, white-faced fear of "cashing in your ships" if you've been at the front. The even more deadly fear of being afraid—of showing yellow—if you haven't.

Crabbing? No, I'm not crabbing. I know the disease rate was kept down by that inspection, for instance, lower than in any army in the war. I'm not even a pacifist. If I were in Russia I would be in the Red Army—I hope. And I believe in conscription, too—in Russia. It's the way to fight a war. But wars mean an army—and this is what an army is. There's no use kidding ourselves, this is what it is. May I not, however—as Mr. Wilson would say—may I not express the hope that this book will be taken as something besides a mere propagandist tract?

It is much too good a novel for that. The "realistic" literature that we had during the war, it is true, owed its value primarily to just that function. But Dos Passos has done very much more; he has, in fact, done a thing quite different. If his book is critical of the army, it is only accidentally so—it is so, only because the army, truthfully portrayed, becomes a matter to which we, his readers, react critically. The book is not a critical book, nor a controversial book. It is a supremely good story, told supremely well. One might almost say that its very subject is accidental. It is a story about human life, and the particular slice of life in question happened to be the Army.

"Three Soldiers" is a fine novel—the best produced in America, it seems to me, for many years. It is the sort of novel for which "Main Street" and the rest have been preparing the way—the authentic flowering of American realistic fiction.

Because it is such a good book, its few imperfections are important. The technical defects don't particularly matter. Ex-doughboys have been writing to the papers, explaining that in the Army your heart is not examined by a recruiting sergeant—that he should have been a hospital sergeant. Maybe so. As long as we are at the game of showing how much we remember about the Army, I could point out a few things myself—for instance, that you don't dump garbage overboard in the submarine zone, and you don't salute indoors. But Dos Passos would reply, I imagine, that he isn't writing a set of drill regulations, but a novel about the war, and in the Army, whether such things were supposed to happen or not, they did happen occasionally. The only thing



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Charles Scribner's Sons, New York

that annoys me is the strange lack of non-coms, and of captains. There is scarcely a captain in the whole book—nothing but lieutenants and majors; while in actual practice, as everybody knows, a captain is one of those things no company should be without. Also, Dos Passos keeps speaking of "the" corporal of the company, and "the" sergeant, whereas an infantry company, of course, has one top kick, half a dozen or so duty sergeants, and one corporal to every eight men.

Here is the story of war from the army's point of view at last—from the point of view of the private, who is the army.

I wish I knew why he enlisted. Can you tell me that? I wish I knew whether this book will discourage him or his grandson from enlisting in just that way again. I wish I knew why he says, with Henslowe, "As for the war, I wouldn't have missed a minute of it," and half means it when he says so. I wish I knew why I feel in myself—wearisome and awful as the army was, glad as I was to get out—a latent craving that I should have to fight with all my brains, to get into it again, if there were a new war and the rest of the fellows went. To get into it on one side or the other. . . .

For with all the hate—beside it—below it—there was something we liked about "that man's army." There was. I don't know what. It puzzles me. Floyd Dell calls it "homosexual irresponsibility" or something long and psycho-analytic like that. Sherwood Anderson has a solution for it in "Marching Men." And John Dos Passos, though his army breaks John Andrews, and ruins Fuselli, and smashes Chrisfield's life, has come out a robust artist, with a deeply human touch.

ROBERT WOLF.

**T**HERE are a few copies left of the hand made prints of J. J. Lankes' wood cut "The Two Kids," which was reproduced in last month's *Liberator*. The prints are on hand made Japanese paper, printed, numbered and signed by the artist. Size  $5\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$  inches. Price \$1.00 plus 10c for postage and packing.

Through the generosity of Mr. Lankes, each dollar which you send us for the prints will be given to the Committee for Relief of Children in Soviet Russia.

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